

IN DREAMS

by Jessica Gohlke





"This world is but a canvas to our imagination."
- Henry David Thoreau

This half hour drama/mystery takes us into the life a middle-aged artist turned curator, MAYA, who has spent the last 15 years juggling the demands of family, home and career. Prior to her becoming a wife and mother, she spent a brief moment in the glittering limelight of the NYC art scene. That was when artists could still afford to live in the borough known as Brooklyn.

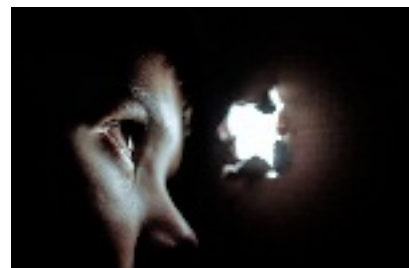




Without sentimentality, this short film treats the backdrop of NYC as a character in the drama. Much has changed in the last 15-20 years, but the energy, glamor, desperation and dog-eat-dog mentality still burn in the Big Apple's core. Despite the inherent social stratification, people from all echelons of society rub shoulders. The theme of interconnectedness runs through the story as the arteries of the subway.

Maya's family belongs to a dying breed of middle class transplants that manage to carve out a comfortable existence by luck and cunning. The brownstone where Maya lives suggests a private school upbringing for her kids, but Maya's children have attended public school since Pre-K. The bills get paid but the college fund hasn't seen action in a very long while. The stresses of Maya's life weigh on her, and she uses yoga to cope as well as rich fantasies of escape. Sometimes Maya just years...for what she is is not sure.

In addition to Maya's world, there is also the world of her children, the eldest of whom is fast becoming a teenager. Theirs is a particular upbringing, where most kids are loaded with responsibilities young. Add to this, the pressures of relationships via social media – deemed artificial by certain segments of society. And then there is the future with its impending climactic doom and ever faster moving technologies. Will we one day be able to create machines as complex as the human brain? Will those machines be conscious? In this story, those questions are part of a larger inquiry into the nature of experience itself. Is the observable world all there is or just a tiny sliver of the universe's fabric?





*"I dream my
painting, and then I
paint my dream." –
Vincent Van Gogh*

MAYA CONLAN

is approaching 50 and living a fairly comfortable, slightly dissatisfied, life in Brooklyn. Though she sometimes asks herself why she doesn't move back to Ohio, she knows that leaving at 17 for art school was the best thing she ever did. Following that early education, Maya ended up in a squat in Oakland, which remains the most glorious and tragic period of her life. Having found her way to NYC via freight trains, Maya met her future husband at self-described "Euro Trash" party just as her paintings caught the attention of a savvy young gallery owner. A few dazzling and decadent years followed. And then, somehow, it was 15 years later – the parties fading to memory.

Smart and attentive, Maya is a committed mother with a comfortable life. But Maya's mind has been drifting back to the time, years ago, when she was just taken notice of by the art world. And sometimes, when she allows it, Maya slips back deeper to a first love and then, before that, a troubling event in childhood. It is probably restlessness that leads her to Eugene Stanek whose vast art collection is highly coveted, but on display only for himself. Stanek presents a seductive, but ominous figure – a man with secrets to rival Maya's own. As Maya gives in to temptation of this complicated relationship, haunting memories from her past surface. Somewhere in there, the boundaries between real and imagined begin to blur.





EUGENE STANEK

is an elderly hermit, Polish by birth,
but English by way of World War II.

Even if he didn't shroud himself in mystery,
his story would be captivating. Having escaped
death as a child, he grew up mostly in an English
boarding school, estranged from his eccentric father,
his sole relative, who was more preoccupied with collecting
art than caring for his son. Escaping to America to attend Yale,
Eugene meets the only person he has ever remembered loving other
than his childhood friend, Herbie. Her name is June, and they would have married
if

they were attracted to more than each other's minds. After an extensive few years of
traveling around the world, Eugene settles in New York where he enjoys one full year of fun
before inheriting his father's art collection. Life (and mental illness) rumbles awkwardly on. 50 odd
years later, Eugene refuses to leave his apartment and shuns not only solicitors. but also most visitors.
When Eugene meets Maya, he senses a likeminded soul. They both have secrets, though Eugene's may be a
bit more
sinister.



DUNCAN, 48, handsome with a seductive Irish brogue, is funny, upbeat and slightly old-fashioned. As the boss of his own digital marketing firm, he is content both at home and work, which is what makes his strange disappearances all the more unusual.

ANNIE, 13, is managing the awkwardness of tweenagedom better than most. However, her emotional withdrawal is unsettling to Maya, who has always felt extremely close to her daughter. Bright and charming when she wants to be, Annie can also be manipulative and even inadvertently cruel.

LUKE, 10, typical of boys his age, loves soccer and video games more than anything. He is sweet natured and easy going in almost all things, except when it comes to his new VR game, Hypnos, which he can't get enough of.

BARBARA, 47, is a successful defense attorney and Maya's best friend from college. She is single and happy that way. Prone to brashness, Barbara is used to getting what she wants. She is not fond of most people, but would jump in front of a train for Maya.

JACEK, 30s, has an enigmatic role in Stanek's household. Having left Poland as a child, he yearns to go back, though is scared to leave the comfort of his current arrangement.

EVA, 60s, is Stanek's deeply loyal housekeeper. Her long-suffering outer veneer is mostly a ruse to keep anyone from looking too deeply.

JOAN, 17, squats in an art collective in Bushwick, having run away from a troubled past. Tough on the outside, she hides a lovely and fragile interior, which she channels into her beautiful artwork.

MARK, 48, Maya's ex-boyfriend who has resurfaced in NYC after 20 years of beach bumming and surfing through Central and South America. His yogically honed and tattoo covered body is the key to understanding his tortured nature.

JESSICA GOHLKE

A graduate of Sarah Lawrence College and NYU's 'Sight and Sound' workshop, Jessica's feature writing credits include *A, B, C...MANHATTAN*, which premiered in the Un Certain Regard section of the Cannes Film Festival in 1997 and subsequently screened in the American Spectrum section of the 1998 Sundance Film Festival. Jessica went on to co-write and co-produce *GOING UNDER*, a dark drama starring acclaimed actor Roger Rees. The film went to numerous festivals, including the Sao Paulo International and Cinequest, and was awarded Best of the Fest at the Northampton Film Festival. *GOING UNDER* had a brief theatrical release before being distributed by Blue Underground on DVD. Jessica also wrote and directed two short films, one of which, *BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP BLUE SEA*, features a leading-role performance by Edward Norton (viewable on her website). Jessica's screenplays have placed in numerous screenplay competitions. Recent highlights include First Place for *GUIDE TO LIGHT* in the Big Idea Writer's Challenge (sponsored by Script Magazine) and Finalist for *BULL RIDER* in both the Cinequest Screenplay Competition and Table Read My Screenplay Competition. Currently residing in Brooklyn with her husband and two children, Jessica is focused on bringing her latest writing projects to the screen. This includes *THE DRUMMER*, a film about the devastating effects of war on returning veterans, which has Danny Glover set to play a lead role, and the TV serial *LAND OF PRIDDY*, a story about some hard living bull riders in Texas, and the struggling rural community where they live.

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"My originality consists in putting the logic of the visible to the service of the invisible." - Odilon Redon