

Dreaming of 'Mall World'? Thousands Report Shared Dreamscape

Jessica Tilton holds up a large, detailed map of "Mall World," her recurring dreamscape, in her Texas home.



New York City, New York Nov 6, 2025 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - For Jessica Tilton, the nightly descent into sleep is a journey into a familiar yet unsettling landscape. Every night, she dreams of "Mall World," a sprawling, labyrinthine complex encompassing everything from hospitals and schools to airports and amusement parks. The setting, complete with fairgrounds, mountains, a parking garage, an underground market, and a theater against an ocean backdrop, feels both familiar and alien.

Ms. Tilton, a 32-year-old artist and content creator from Texas, has experienced these dreams for years. Recently, she's gained the ability to navigate and remember the sprawling locations. This inspired her to meticulously map her dreamscape and share it on TikTok:

<https://www.tiktok.com/@tiltonicatiktok/video/7557400272918613278>

Her video exploded, garnering over a million views, and revealing a startling truth: she's not alone. Thousands on TikTok and Reddit are reporting similar dreams, collectively calling it "Mall World."

While the dimensions and layout vary, these Mall World dreams share uncanny similarities. Dreamers describe identical food courts, staircases leading nowhere, and a pervading sense of nostalgia, confusion, and emptiness. The spaces are often liminal, populated by figures who seem more like scenery than active participants. For some, the experience borders on a nightmare.

"When I first shared the drawing, it was an incomplete sketch that I shared on a whim," Ms. Tilton said in a recent interview. Though aware of online discussions about Mall World, she'd never shared her own experiences. "Once I made the drawing, I was like, 'Oh, maybe a couple of people will think that's cool' or say 'I've been there,'" she said. "I just like to share my art. I wasn't really thinking much of it. And then when it started blowing up, and so many people were reaching out, it kind of took over my life for the last few days."

So, what exactly is Mall World? Theories abound. Some point to Carl Jung's concept of the collective unconscious, suggesting a shared repository of universal archetypes. Others propose it's a level of collective unconscious accessible by those who participated in the gifted and talented program in the 1980s and 1990s. Wilder theories even implicate the CIA's MK-Ultra mind control experiments.

Dylan Selterman, a scientist at Johns Hopkins University specializing in dream research, dismisses these theories as lacking scientific basis. "If people are reporting very similar specific physical features of the mall in their dreams, we don't have any evidence for the collective subconscious or some kind of telepathy that would explain that," Dr. Selterman said. "It could be a coincidence. It could also be a form of social contagion, like if somebody says, 'I had this dream about a mall,' and then it's now in the discourse, people might be picking up on that, and then it gets incorporated into their dreams."

He notes that shared dream themes, like losing teeth, are common. Given the prevalence of malls in waking life, their appearance in dreams isn't inherently unusual. However, without substantial data, the true cause of Mall World remains elusive.

"Sometimes people dream about weird stuff," Dr. Selterman concluded.

Ms. Tilton, while enjoying the community that has sprung up around her videos, leaves the exploration of Mall World's origins to her followers. "I think that we live in a spiritual world, and that there's a lot that we don't understand and we're not supposed to understand," she said. "It's important that we don't, you know, go into mass psychosis over this." Original Story By Jessica Roy Oct. 16, 2025 via

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/16/style/mall-world-dreams-tiktok.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlmIINO239pw>

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