

# *Expression Idiomatique Anglaise*

*by Arslohgo*



*Arslohgo. „Expression Idiomatique Anglaise“, Digital Transformation. 5940 x 4200 Pixels. CMYK, 300 ppi*

## *The Punchline You Understand – and only then See*

There are works one looks at twice: once with the eyes, once with the mind. And then a third time, when it dawns on you that the two viewings did not see the same thing. “Expression Idiomatique Anglaise” belongs to this rare category — images that seem innocuous at first and then, in the moment of understanding, explode with a silence louder than any commentary.

The title is the key, and it has been deliberately withheld. Arslohgo does not name the work — he names the category. An English idiomatic expression. Which one? The image answers: a human head, a young man with a contented, dreamy expression, merges with the sky above Dinard. Clouds penetrate his skull, wind their way through his face, replace his hair, become his consciousness. His head is literally in the clouds.

### ***Head in the Clouds***

The English idiom — someone is dreamy, out of touch, lost in thought, not paying attention — is not described here, not illustrated, but enacted. The image is the idiom. Not a picture of it, not a representation of it: the thing itself, materialized.

#### *Lohgorhythmics as Visual Wordplay*

Arslohgo's lohgorhythmic methodology, which in other works meanders between languages and connects layers of meaning through phonetic or semantic kinship, takes a specific form here: that of the visual idiom. The idiom is the source material — not a word, not a sound, but a frozen metaphor that in everyday use has long since lost its metaphorical content. Nobody who says someone has their head in the clouds thinks of clouds. The idiom is dead in the sense of the living.

Arslohgo brings it back to life. He takes the dead metaphor at its word — at its literal word — and makes visible what it must once have meant before it hardened into an idiomatic formula. This process has something of an archaeological act about it: the excavation of the original image from beneath the crust of conventional meaning.

And yet the work is not a didactic language-textbook image. It is not the illustration of a vocabulary item. The fusion of face and cloud is too complex, too painterly, too ambiguous in its mood to be a mere illustration. The young man does not look rapt or absent — he looks calm, almost knowing. As if having one's head in the clouds were not a flaw but a state of its own value.

*The Composition: Fusion Rather than Collage*

Visually, the work is a masterpiece of controlled layering. Unlike many double-exposure works that celebrate the rupture between planes as an aesthetic moment in itself, Arslough here seeks seamlessness. The transition between skin and cloud texture is fluid, warm, almost organic. The lighting conditions of both image layers — the soft, golden evening light on the clouds, the even, pale light on the face — are calibrated against each other so that the chimeric reads as natural.

The left side of the face shows this fusion at its most intense: where the temple area flows into a cloud spiral, it is impossible to determine where the face ends and the sky begins. It is a zone of the undecided that the brain cannot resolve — and is not meant to. This very irresolvability is the pictorial equivalent of the idiomatic condition: someone with their head in the clouds cannot themselves determine where they end and the dreaming begins.

The right side of the face, by contrast, remains more clearly defined: the eye looks directly, the mouth is closed, relaxed. This asymmetry is not a mistake — it is a decision. The subject has not been entirely dissolved into the clouds. There is still contour, still presence. The head is in the clouds, but the person is still there.

*The Expression: Reverie without Melancholy*

The face itself deserves its own attention, because it could have gone in several directions. A contemplative work about being lost in one's own thoughts might have chosen an absent, vacant, melancholic expression. Arslough does the opposite. The young man seems present, mildly amused, at ease. The gaze — directed slightly upward and to the side — recalls someone who has just had a pleasant thought, not someone who has lost their way.

In this way the work undermines the negative connotation of the idiom. In both German and English, having one's head in the clouds marks a person as unworldly, impractical, ungrounded. Arslough refuses to adopt that verdict. His head-in-the-clouds is not a deficit — it is a mode of being with its own value. The clouds are not an obstacle. They are his element.

This reinterpretation is political in a modest register but entirely consistent: a quiet rehabilitation of the dreamy in an age that places productivity and groundedness above everything else.

*In the Context of the Sky Series and the Dinard Project*

As part of the SKY series, which unfolds its theme of sky across three levels — visual, textual, and sonic — “Expression Idiomatique Anglaise” occupies a singular position. It is the only work in the series that confronts the sky explicitly with the human subject. The other works show sky — as backdrop, as concept, as projection surface. This work shows what happens when a person does not stand beneath the sky but inside it.

The textual level of the series manifests here not as embedded text within the image but as the title itself — the title is the text, is the language, and the language is the work. The reference to the idiomatic, to the English expression, to the linguistic construct that functions as a title rather than naming the work: this is a conceptual turn that pushes the relationship between image and language in Arslougho’s body of work to its limit.

And the sonic level? The phrase head in the clouds has its own sound — the soft, open English of the phrase, the Brittany-photographed, French-embedded, German-titled category of an English idiomatic expression. The work is linguistically polyphonic before it is even looked at.

*Conclusion: The Dead Metaphor Lives*

*“Expression Idiomatique Anglaise” is Arslougho’s gift to dead metaphors everywhere. It asks: what is still hidden in the images we use every day without seeing them? What if we took them at their word? If we re-liquefied the frozen, reopened the conventional, brought the dormant back to life? The image offers no theoretical answer. It is the answer.*

Medium: Digital Composition