

# PacificSun

YEAR 60, NO. 15, APR 13-19, 2022



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## LUCID ART

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# Dream Scene

*Dr. Fariba Bogzaran comes alive in dreams and brings dream to life*

**BY JANE VICK**

**“H**OW CAN you prove whether at this moment we are sleeping, and all our thoughts are a dream; or whether we are awake, and talking to one another in the waking state?”--Plato

Ever had a lucid dream? Not sure what a lucid dream is? Allow me to illuminate.

Lucid dreaming is a unique dream state in which a person becomes aware that they are dreaming, and can even manipulate their dreams. Essentially, it is a conscious state of mind during the (REM) dream state. A 2020 *Healthline* article describes lucid dreaming as a state of “metacognition,” or awareness of awareness. It’s something akin to miraculous.

Dr. Fariba Bogzaran, artist, scientist and founder of the Dream Studies program at John F. Kennedy University in Berkeley—to say the least about her—is aware of the stupendous dimension and potency of lucid dreams, and has spent the better part of 30 years studying them. She was a researcher at the Stanford Sleep Laboratory study alongside Stephen LaBerge and conducted the first quantitative research on lucid dream incubation and spiritual experiences in the late 1980s. Bogzaran has written two books on the subject, *Extraordinary Dreams* (2002) with Stanley Krippner and *Integral Dreaming* (2012) with Daniel Deslauriers.

She teaches lucid dreaming at the California Institute for Integral Studies (CIIS) and lectures on her subject internationally. Bogzaran also co-founded the Lucid Art Foundation, alongside the now-deceased surrealist painter Gordon Onslow-Ford.

It comes as no surprise, Bogzaran is also an artist, and she currently has an exhibition of her work on view at the Bolinas Museum. The show, entitled *Focus/Fariba Bogzaran: The Art of the Lucid Mind*, features multi-media works full of inquiry, utilizing light, texture, color and motion. Her work is a testimonial to the mystical, philosophical realm of dream, and a pathway from dream to waking life. I was thrilled to speak with Bogzaran recently about her work as a lucid dream expert, her perspective on the value and meaning of lucid dreaming, and her creative process.

During her studies in lucid dreaming in the 1980s—both with Stanford and LaBerge and in her thesis—Bogzaran was also a Tai Chi practitioner. Tai Chi is an ancient Chinese form of moving meditation with a rhythmic, water like quality that seeks to harmonize and balance the inner and outer world, much like Bogzaran’s work with lucid dreaming. At a Tai Chi retreat, while working on her thesis, Bogzaran met a woman from Inverness who invited her to move there to pursue the quiet and space she desired to continue her research—dedicated to lucid dreaming and spiritual experience. In the Inverness hills,



**ART IN DREAM** Dr. Fariba Bogzaran often enters a hypnagogic state when creating.

Bogzaran created a retreat space, where she worked to explore the dimensions of her dreams to an even deeper degree. Bogzaran was actively walking through dreamscape, asking questions like: “Who am I?” “What is the nature of reality?” “What is the nature of time?” and expressing her findings through research, writing and multimedia art.

It was in 1989, as she continued exploration and expansion in

her work with lucid dreams, that Bogzaran met the surrealist painter Gordon Onslow-Ford—one of the last members of the Surrealist art movement in Paris. Unbeknownst to either of them, Onslow-Ford had been living on the other side of the ridge that Bogzaran walked every morning. For two years, Bogzaran would take reflective morning walks, looking down at a house and studio without knowing they were



Photo by Sina Dehghani

Olso-Ford's. When they met and realized their proximity, they were also astounded to find incredible kinship between his painting and her lucid dream work.

"The painting he was doing on the other side of the ridge was akin to what I was exploring in my lucid dreams," said Bogzaran. "I recognized his paintings. It was the beginning of a great friendship. He became my mentor. Before I met him, I was of course already a

painter and a lucid dream scientist, but he helped me with techniques of lines to explore the inner worlds. He was not a lucid dreamer, but knew how to explore the mind through painting."

Bogzaran felt that through her connection to Oslo-Ford she also found her connection to the lineage of surrealism, of which dreams and art are the very lifeblood.

Bogzaran feels that lucid dreaming informs her reality

and that reality informs her lucid dreams. Her capacity to lucid dream is at this point so developed that she can bring an idea from her waking life into a dream state for further investigation and development. Bogzaran feels that a major part of the practice of lucid dreaming is self-exploration, and using a different space to understand who or what we are, what our world is like and what our reality is like. She often asks her students, when teaching the practice of lucid dreaming, *why* they want to become lucid in a dream, to better help them understand just what they are looking for in their dreamscape.

"Lucid dreaming is the art of the mind," said Bogzaran. "Dreams are a collage of personal and collective narratives—a tapestry of all sorts of different aspects of life, current and past concerns with a dash of mystery, of course. And when in the dream we become aware of our dream creations, it's quite remarkable. Then you have choices about how you want to participate in your dream."

The goal, which Bogzaran both cultivates and was born gifted with, is also to integrate the dreams into waking life. Having the lucid dream is mystical and intriguing, certainly. However, unless the wisdom and insight gleaned is integrated into waking life, the project is only half complete. The dream is an opportunity for mental exploration and expansion, but one which also acts as an invitation, or a call to action, to make changes in the waking world.

Bogzaran now uses something akin to lucid dreaming to produce her art, which is called a hypnagogic state—a meditative state much like lucid dreaming but not achieved through the REM cycle. Bogzaran will drum upon her canvases until she has achieved an uninterrupted, hypnagogic state, and then begin to paint, from a sense of total connection to her creative self. She seeks to see what happens to her perspective in this waking/dream state in which ego cannot disrupt, and brings that insight back to her canvas. In this way,

Bogzaran is able to keep a collaboration between her waking and dreaming mind. She uses this state for both inspiration and problem solving in her art, even lying down next to her work and dozing off, bringing the piece with her into a deeper dream state for further inspection.

Bogzaran always wanted to be free to dream, in waking and asleep. She has built her life, her art and her scientific research around this ethos.

Find her work on view at the Bolinas Museum, now through June 5, with programming on April 23 and May 21.

For more information, visit [bolinasmuseum.org](http://bolinasmuseum.org) and [faribabogzaran.com](http://faribabogzaran.com)

## My Lucid Dream

**H**ERE IS AN interesting and life-changing dream I had in 2018, for which I was completely conscious, identical to my consciousness in waking-life.

I was on a train, not riding inside but atop the train, standing, with another man. I was a man also, of Asian origin, my hair black and shoulder length. We were moving along the edge of a cliff at a bracing speed. The drop was steep, and dizzying; below, down a great distance, there was water.

We jumped.

I was illuminated with fear—electric with it. Every single particle in my body was vibrating, radiating with an unending, searing fear. And then, a voice: You are falling. There is nothing you can do. You cannot stop the fall, you cannot control it. Let go. Do not resist, do not deny, do not fight. Let go. The one, miniscule, remaining part of me still clinging to resistance released. I felt completely singular; a single, conducive, entire whole being, falling. We landed in the water. Shallow. I felt the sand brush my toes. We stood up, walked out and I woke up.