

had them work with several images from four painters of the "inner worlds." Kidd and Kidd's experiential method provided an expansive window through which to explore the metaphysical experiences in lucid dreaming and engaging art as a mode of inquiry. The intelligence of the visual image became an aid to move the inquiry further.

The experiential method follows three dynamic movements: (1) a sustaining dynamic movement, staying with the vitality of the experience and identifying experiential expressions; (2) an expanding dynamic movement, focusing on emerging themes and intuitively turning toward meaning; and (3) a uniting dynamic movement, returning to context through reflective synthesis.²³

In the study, modern art became a visual means to inquire into the phenomena of hyperspace lucidity. Besides selecting known images from classical to Impressionist to Surrealist paintings, I included some of Gordon Onslow Ford's "inner world" paintings (Figure 11.2), John Anderson's "depth paintings," Roberto Matta's "psychological morphology," and Lee Mullican's "instant paintings," which I recognized as having elements of hyperspace lucidity. Lucid dreamers viewed slides of the images. Ironically, they remarked on aspects of the work of

Figure 11.2.

Gordon Onslow Ford, *Blue Bonding*, 1991, 61½" × 77", acrylic on canvas.



the painters seeking to depict inner worlds as familiar elements in their lucid dreams! Some of the archetypes of nonrepresentational forms that the dreamers recognized were seen in the mass spirals, oscillating light lines, clusters of dots, and concentric circles in the paintings.

These visual images provoked the dreamers to describe their experiences of lucid dreaming in more detail, whereas previously they had labeled them as ineffable. Forgotten details of the experiences were enhanced, colors remembered, and even types of dreams that had been forgotten came back to mind, such as hypnagogia. The visual vocabulary assisted the dreamer to "reexperience" the dream and recall its details, giving him or her better tools with which to articulate the experience.

Within the process of using the method, it became clear that even the most metaphysical qualitative method was too limited to capture the phenomena. *Creative epistemology* was needed to modify the method. After the interviews with the four painters and four lucid dreamers, I clustered the themes; instead of describing the experience, however, I created what I called *invisible dialogue*. Although the painters and lucid dreamers were not interviewed together, the correspondence of the emerging themes and the usage of words between them were so compelling that I made the clusters into a dialogue. Instead of describing to the reader the findings, the invisible dialogue clearly revealed to the reader the common ground.

Within the experiential method, after theme analysis, the next step is to expand by "amplifying" description. However, instead of expanding as per the method, I further condensed the clusters from the invisible dialogue. Words in narrative form became too limiting. As Matta had made clear, "If we are not using poetry, we are repeating things." The poetic space was the chance to elucidate the "felt sense" of the experience.

Using *poetic epistemology* and referencing the Persian tradition of poetry, I intuitively selected words that strongly "stood out" within the clusters of the theme. Then, using the surrealist method of automatism, I brought the words into relation with each other while staying present to the description. I called the creative act that emerged out of this approach *poetic synthesis*. This hermeneutic of creation offered realizations and insights. As Eisner reminds us, "Poetry was invented to say what words can never say."²⁴

The phenomenological research, *Images of the Lucid Mind*, connected hyperspace lucidity in lucid dreams and in the images of the inner worlds depicted by a particular group of modern painters who explore nonrepresentational aspects of the inner worlds. This study demonstrated that through visual images the dreamer can articulate more easily the seemingly ineffable experiences from lucid dreaming. It also illumined that the incubation and intention to explore transpersonal experiences in lucid dreaming and the application of creative artistic epistemology toward the same goal can provide common ground, even if they

employ different modes of inquiry. In addition, the research showed that approaching art with the intention of inquiring into the mind is an important way of knowing about consciousness. Above all, it illustrated that even if we use different vocabularies and different methodologies to explore transpersonal experiences, the actual phenomena remain constant and infinite.

In experimenting with various methods, it became clear to me that multiple innovative methods for exploring multidimensional experiences offer a closer "felt sense" of the phenomena. If the first study investigated the possibility of incubating spiritual experiences in lucid dreaming, the second study described the parallels between two modes of inquiry, guiding me to take the challenge to a wider audience.

THROUGH THE LIGHT: AN EXPLORATION INTO CONSCIOUSNESS— ART-BASED RESEARCH (PAINTINGS), 1996–1997

The next natural movement was to have the painters and the lucid dreamers meet. The research unfolded in two sections: the contemplation of artworks by experienced lucid dreamers and highly practiced meditators, followed by a public exhibition of the paintings recognized by the lucid dreamers and meditators as relating to their inner or dream-time experience. Art-based research not being recognized as valid at the time, the Institute of Noetic Sciences nevertheless became a granting agent, supporting this visionary research.

The combination of the two previous studies informed this follow-up research, which begged for yet another creative method. For the first part of the study, I invited lucid dreamers and meditators to the studios of painters who had participated in the previous study, *Images of the Lucid Mind*, adding the work of another painter, Richard Bowman, who worked with intense colors akin to hypnagogic experiences.

Participants were invited to contemplate the works by sitting in front of the ones that moved them for half an hour and then to write a description of their experience. Theme analysis of the writings showed how the visual images elicited experiences that were familiar to those in dreams, lucid dreams, or meditative states. The collective response to particular paintings determined which pieces were then chosen for a major art/research exhibition called *Through the Light* (1997), held at the Arts and Consciousness Gallery at John F. Kennedy University in Berkeley, California.

Curators often build exhibits around a particular theme that arises in the curator's mind and, if the artists are alive, are produced with their participation. The *Through the Light* research project was not a curated show in a traditional sense; instead, the selection process came out of the collective resonance of the pilot study in the studio. The selection process was informed by the qualitative study.

The carefully installed exhibition reflected the phenomena of light and space in lucid dreaming. The research was extended to public participation by inviting the attendees to select a painting that resonated with them, contemplate it, and write a description of their experience. Similar themes emerged: forgotten hypnagogic experiences and (forgotten) dreams articulating certain transpersonal experiences. A few individuals even began spontaneously writing poetic prose.²⁵

None of the artists whose work was part of the exhibition spoke about hypnagogic experiences, hyperspace lucidity, or lucid dreaming. Yet their creations and the experiences of the lucid dreamers who had viewed them confirmed the reality of phenomena of the inner world that can be experienced through lucid dreaming, deep meditation practice, and a creative process that carries an intention of exploring the depths of the mind.

The installation of the exhibition was an integral aspect of the research. The paintings selected for the entranceway resembled the nonrepresentational fields of light in hypnagogic lucidity; the main room contained paintings akin to spatial fields within hyperspace lucidity. Thus the viewer entered into the numinous and then passed *through the light* to enter into another space/time. The experience of going through the light into spaces similar to transpersonal and energetic experiences in hyperspace lucidity gave the viewer an embodiment, a "felt sense" of being inside these experiences.

Encouraged to take part in the research, 49 people who visited the exhibit participated. The experiences evoked intense emotions for many, including joy and a sense of awe akin to experiencing these phenomena in lucid dreaming or deep meditation. Although words often fell short in the viewers' ability to explain and describe their reactions, it was clear that the images and their relationship to each other within the installation space had created an environment to awaken and elicit aspects of hyperspace lucidity.

Through this research, it became clear to me that visual art is an important mode of knowing and that it has a place as an integral aspect of inquiry methods when exploring ineffable experiences. Following this research, Gordon Onslow Ford and I continued our dialogue and developed an art direction, calling it *Lucid Art*. Lucid Art converges the phenomena, expressed in a work of art that elicits in the viewer aspects of the inner worlds. This concept emerged directly out of the research studies described previously.²⁶

ONE NIGHT OF SLEEP: ART-BASED RESEARCH (VIDEO AND PERFORMANCE), 2004–2008

Motion and sound relative to images are also integral aspects of the experience of dreaming; thus focusing on words and still images as the primary mode of inquiry is limiting. The natural next step was to create images that combined sound, movement, and color to create a multivisual and auditory experience. I performed a

literature review of varieties of sensorial experiences within dreaming, lucid dreaming, and numinous and hyperspace experiences. I also studied content analysis and possible dream experiences throughout a single night. Based on the visual and auditory emerging themes, I created a video to show the phenomenology of dream experiences according to the scientific map of one night of sleep. These experiences ranged from hypnagogic experiences, different stages of sleep, and different types of dreams, to REM, lucid dreaming, and transpersonal experiences.²⁷

Presentations of art-based research are often misunderstood if the venues are not art related. After I presented these videos at three different conferences of the International Association for the Study of Dreams, it became apparent that the inquiry was not for aesthetic purposes only, but rather an attempt to research the lucid mind via different modes of inquiry. On the topic of video as research, Janice Rahn writes, "This cross-disciplinary position brings into question the relationship of art as a specific autonomous language and the role and purpose of art in its larger social context. The art discipline contributes a vocabulary and a variety of nonconventional approaches to using video, as well as an evolved critique of mass media."²⁸

During my 30 years of engaging and exploring through science and art, I have noticed that the findings from scientific inquiry are often more valued than those from artistic inquiry. Art is often seen as a form of aesthetic pleasure or expression for a purely visual feast rather than an important epistemology. My own conclusion, however, as presented in a lecture at the Institute of Noetic Sciences in 2000 called *Art as Research and Research as Art*, is that there are six main areas of similarities between scientific inquiry and artistic inquiry: (1) choosing the inquiry, (2) gathering material or data, (3) choosing a method, (4) experimentation, (5) result, and (6) communication (e.g., writing, exhibition, film).

The art-based research videos offered a perspective meant to communicate the reality of different experiences in the dream state. I created original sounds and images and combined them with other artists' works in which I found resemblances to particular states of consciousness within sleep. Although the artists themselves did not relate their work to any particular states of consciousness, the works might have reflected certain archetypal experiences, as revealed through previous research and literature. These compositions gave a visual key to the inner experiences. I also searched archives of videos and still images for aspects of hyperspace lucidity. At the time, very little was found on the Internet. Yet through editing and special effects, I was able to communicate what previously was reported in writing.

After the viewing of the videos, the discussion focused on the audience's own resonance and their familiarity with the imagery and experiences. The digital epistemology served as a phenomenological method based on the archetypal themes, which in turn elicited in the viewers aspects of their own inner experiences. The digital media became a tool for enabling the audience to speak about the forgotten dreams—areas of dream experiences that can be hard to describe in words.

Ironically, the experiences at that time considered indescribable have today, using sophisticated digital animation, become ubiquitous; we can even see animating effects in movies and advertisements, such as when a car that is at first moving through space in its normal form suddenly becomes particularized into thousands of dots and then recombines into its normal shape. Or fast-moving lines suddenly become a form before returning back to a line—these are similar to the initial visual images within hyperspace lucidity.

Over the course of my four-year inquiry into video art research and the exploration of various lucid dreaming phenomena, the creative process informed and evolved the method to allow participants to step into a holographic space. In that space, not only was there the presence of a video but also live performance, sound, and poetry, creating a palpable environment that brings the “felt sense” of various lucid dream experiences. As art historian and cultural analyst Griselda Pollock calls it, the space served as a “visual field.”

In the 2005 multimedia art piece including performance and video, *Creation vs. Destruction*, the audience was no longer a passive witness as in the experience of watching a movie; instead, the theatrical and interactive nature of the multiple methods jolted the audience into becoming lucid in waking.²⁹ The research experiment sought to have the audience reexperience aspects of the dreaming mind and be lucid in it. This method was expanded by performative acts of certain archetypes. For example, if the viewer was watching a film scene of a typical sleep paralysis encounter, with an incubus approaching and pressing the chest of the dreamer, the actor who played the role of the terrifying incubus suddenly and unexpectedly also appeared from behind the film screen into the audience. Now the audience was no longer vicariously experiencing someone else’s dream, separated by their own experience from an event; the audience had the direct experience, with the presence of this archetype in their own space. Within the sleep paralysis scene, the experience turned from a terrifying encounter to lucidity of the fright to transformation of the emotion into a numinous experience.

The multimedia act gave the audience the full experience of various phenomena—visual, auditory, and performative—and created a palpable dream space to reexperience and be fully lucid and make the transformative choice, perchance to experience transpersonal experiences in lucid dreaming. The audience response was palpable as participants’ realized that the video presentation and performance was not simply a form of entertainment, but rather a deep inquiry into consciousness in sleep and its transformative potentials.

LUCIDITY: ART-BASED RESEARCH (INSTALLATION), 2013

In 2013, I was invited by art historians Peter Selz and Anne Brodzky to bring multiple methods of inquiry into consciousness to an exhibition of my artworks at the Meridian Gallery in San Francisco.³⁰ I continued this inquiry using

Figure 11.3.

Fariba Bogzaran, *Morphology: From Matter to Light*, 1995, 13" × 10", pencil on paper.



installation methodology with 30 years of my own artworks. In a two-week installation period, I constructed the space with works that would elicit a particular inner world experience for the viewer (Figure 11.3). Art works demonstrated the morphology of form into creation of a space akin to many experiences within lucid dreams, hypnagogia, and hyperspace lucidity.

I titled the exhibition *Lucidity* and used the three floors of the gallery as different epistemologies. The first floor introduced multiple paradigms of knowledge; the second floor concentrated on (two sections) scientific knowing and contemplative knowing; and the third floor exhibited modes of transpersonal knowing. Seen from another perspective, the three floors represented the three shamanic planes: the underworld, the middle world, and the upper world. Creative epistemology connected the entire exhibit into a whole. The installation followed these epistemological directions for acknowledging the validity of multiple ways of knowing.

On each floor, I created a particular space with images and conceptual objects that led the viewer to move from one plane of existence to the next. On the top floor, I installed paintings inspired by experiences of hyperspace, Kundalini

experiences, and experiences of the numinous. The installation was also elemental, moving up from the first floor: earth, wood, fire, water, space, and energy.

This installation was created to reveal the parallels between art making and scientific inquiry. It showed how one can use different instruments to inquire into the same phenomenon. In my work, each of the compositions is an expression of an inner experience that eventually became a co-participant with the creative process. Thus I see each work as an experience while being created, but perhaps also as a portal through which others may enter into a particular space. When the art works are in a specific relational space with one another, they elicit a particular lucid experience. Most of the images in the exhibition had been elicited by several extraordinary lucid dreams or dreams specifically incubated for the exhibition. Since the works were inspired by impersonal transpersonal experiences, the "I" or sometimes the "subject" had disappeared and in most works only energetic traces remained.

Acting as an artist-in-residence, I would visit the exhibition frequently and engage with the audience and their experiences. In particular, I engaged with one participant who was visiting the gallery for the fourth time and asked why she kept returning. She answered, "I can't put it into words, but the space makes me feel good. It calms me down. It brings a sense of awe." I asked her if there was a particular painting or object that elicited these feelings. She replied, "It is the combination of all of it." Thus the experience was no longer about the artist or one individual work; rather, the particular relational space created with a particular intention (of certain lucid dream in mind) enabled a "visual field" that elicited in the viewer experiences similar to those reported in all the other research related to transpersonal experiences in lucid dreaming. Art theorist Graeme Sullivan, in a discourse on art as a way of knowing and painting as research, takes a deeper view of the role of art and artists: "The capacity to look beyond what is known to seek possibility of new understanding is what artists do. Knowledge may be power but insight makes a difference."³¹

The installation addressed the self as a multidimensional being and acknowledged the value of multi-epistemology. Most of the viewers gravitated toward images experienced in hyperspace lucidity. Having walked numerous groups through the exhibition during the six weeks of the show, I observed how people reacted inside the different spaces of each floor. Particularly on the third floor, which concentrated on my 30-year inquiry into the transpersonal aspects of lucid dreaming, I saw similar reactions among the individuals walking through the space—they seemed to enter a quiet, reverent state. The installation was made such that in the narrow long room, one entered into form; as one slowly walked toward the end, the forms would morph into light and then into essence. Many visitors were visibly moved while walking through the tunnel-like space. There was no interpretation of images or forms or references to the known, but it created a familiar collective experience. Since I do not seek to illustrate hyperspace

lucidity in painting, but rather I reenter the phenomena through the act of painting, it allows the canvas to become the occasion of a new experience and inquiry for the viewer.

CONCLUSION

Researching the transpersonal aspects of lucid dreaming requires the researcher to use not only multiple methods, but also innovative ones. My own progression went from focusing first on the hard scientific quantitative method, and then to qualitative methods, in particular phenomenology. I next explored the same phenomena in art-based research with still images, then digital images, and finally installation art to invite others to enter into these worlds. The incomprehensible remains incomprehensible; however, looking back over 30 years, I see increasing openness toward this inquiry and emerging glimmers of understanding.

Lucid dreaming itself is one method of exploring the phenomena of the inner world. The *Lucidity* exhibition showed that the multiple forms of inquiry require creation of a familiar space so that many can co-participate with their own creative and innovative consciousness. Through this relational space, perhaps new insights and realizations might emerge. Rather than one mind creating one method to explore the phenomena, collective minds create a space in which the phenomena are elicited and experienced through poetic synthesis to give glimpses of the experience.

If these experiences have archetypal roots, collective co-participation moves beyond the mind of one researcher seeking to grasp this vast knowledge or reduce it to understanding. The openness to inquiry with pure intention can bring realizations that might not include new information, but that elicit confirmations.

The key to this practice is to *sustain* the experience and to approach the inquiry with an absolutely open mind to allow creative consciousness in each case to inform the next step. Inquiry, therefore, becomes the practice. The cultural movement toward the interdisciplinary view of consciousness and an integral view of dreaming seems to be the next paradigm, shifting toward co-participation for approaching subtle inner realities. The intersection of the new physics, consciousness, and art might be the catalyst for the development of a new creative multi-epistemological method to explore transpersonal experiences in hyperspace lucidity.

NOTES

1. Stephen LaBerge and Howard Rheingold, *Exploring the World of Lucid Dreaming* (New York: Ballantine, 1990).
2. Fariba Bogzaran, *Images of the Lucid Mind: A Phenomenological Study of Lucid Dreaming and Modern Painting* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI, 1996).

3. "Hermenutic of creation" is a term I coined and first used in the book *Integral Dreaming*; Fariba Bogzaran and Daniel Deslauriers, *Integral Dreaming: A Holistic Approach to Dreams* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2012).

4. "Epistemic uncertainty" is a mathematical term but I adopted it as a philosophical term to explore the knowing within not knowing; Bogzaran and Deslauriers, *Integral Dreaming*.

5. Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, trans. Ch'u Ta-Kao (London: Buddhist Society London, 1948).

6. Baha'u'llah, *The Seven Valleys and Four Valleys* (Wilmette, Illinois: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1945).

7. Stephen LaBerge and Lynn Levitan, "Discovering Dreamsigns: What Makes a Dream Seem like a Dream," *NightLight: The Lucidity Institute Newsletter* 1, no. 2 (1989): 5-10.

8. Howard Gardner, *Creating Minds: An Anatomy of Creativity Seen through the Lives of Freud, Einstein, Picasso, Stravinsky, Eliot, Graham and Gandhi* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).

9. Stanley Krippner and Joseph Dillard, *Dreamworking: How to Use Your Dreams for Creative Problem Solving* (New York: Barely Limited, 1988).

10. Bogzaran and Daniel Deslauriers, *Integral Dreaming*.

11. Stanley Krippner, Fariba Bogzaran, and Andre Percia de Carvalho, *Extraordinary Dreams and How to Work with Them* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2002).

12. Yves Tanguy eliminated the line of horizon, which implies objects float in space without reference to time.

13. E. Eisner, "Art and Knowledge," in *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research*, ed. J. G. Knowles and A. L. Cole (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008), 5.

14. Charles Tart, "States of Consciousness and State-Specific Sciences," *Science* 176 (1972): 1203-1210.

15. Andreas Mavromatis, *Hypnagogia: The Unique State of Consciousness between Wakefulness and Sleep* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987).

16. Mind Mirror is a small electroencephalograph (EEG) device created in 1976. It detects the frequency of brain signals and functions similar to a biofeedback device.

17. Thrangu Rinpoche, *A Guide to Shamatha or Shiné Meditation* (Boulder, CO: Namu Buddha, 1990).

18. Stephen LaBerge, *Lucid Dreaming* (New York, NY: Ballantine, 1985).

19. Fariba Bogzaran, "Experiencing the Divine in Lucid Dream State," *Lucidity Letter* 10, nos. 1-2 (1989): 169-176.

20. Ted Esser, *Lucid Dreaming, Kunalini, the Divine, and Nonduality: A Transpersonal Narrative Study*, unpublished dissertation, California Institute of Integral Studies, 2013.

21. Gordon Onslow Ford, *Creation* (Basel, Switzerland: Galerie Schreiner, 1978).

22. D. Kidd and J. W. Kidd, *Experiential Method: Qualitative Research in the Humanities Using Metaphysics and Phenomenology* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990).

23. Fariba Bogzaran, *Images of the Lucid Mind*.

24. Eisner, "Art and Knowledge," 8.

25. Fariba Bogzaran, *Through the Light: An Exploration into Consciousness*, John F. Kennedy University (San Francisco: Dream Creations, 1997).

26. Fariba Bogzaran, "Lucid Art and Hyperspace Lucidity," *Dreaming* 13, no. 1 (2003): 29-42.

27. These art-based research projects were presented at the following conferences of the International Association for the Study of Dreams: Copenhagen (2004); Berkeley (2005); Montreal (2008).

28. Janice Rahn, "Digital Content: Video as Research," in *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research*, ed. J. G. Knowles and A. L. Cole (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008), 303.

29. Fariba Bogzaran, *Creation vs. Destruction*, multimedia performance with Emily Anderson and Seth Eisen, Berkeley, CA, 2005.

30. P. Selz and A. Brodzky, *Lucidity: Fariba Bogzaran: A Retrospective* (Society for Arts Publication of the Americas, Meridian Gallery, San Francisco, 2013).

31. Graeme Sullivan, "Painting as Research," in J. G. Knowles, & A. L. Cole, *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research*, ed. J. G. Knowles and A. L. Cole (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008), 242.

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