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I HAD A DREAM

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Confirmative Praxis M7X02024

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2. Abstract

Confirmative Praxis

This report combines personal narrative and pedagogical disquisition, articulating a reaction to and appreciation of the world of Surrealism and dreams. The mysteries of one's subconscious and its relation to the self and how it can change the perception of one's world on waking from a dream, my work is a personal interpretation of said dreams, expressed in a surreal and symbolic way. This report includes two distinct voices: an academic voice which adopts the conventions of critical discourse, and an auto-ethnographic voice which articulates an effective response to the ideas presented in the text. The auto-ethnographic voice in the thesis will operate outside the stylistic conventions adopted for academic reflection.

This report is a sincere and poignant response.

[121 words]

3. Introduction

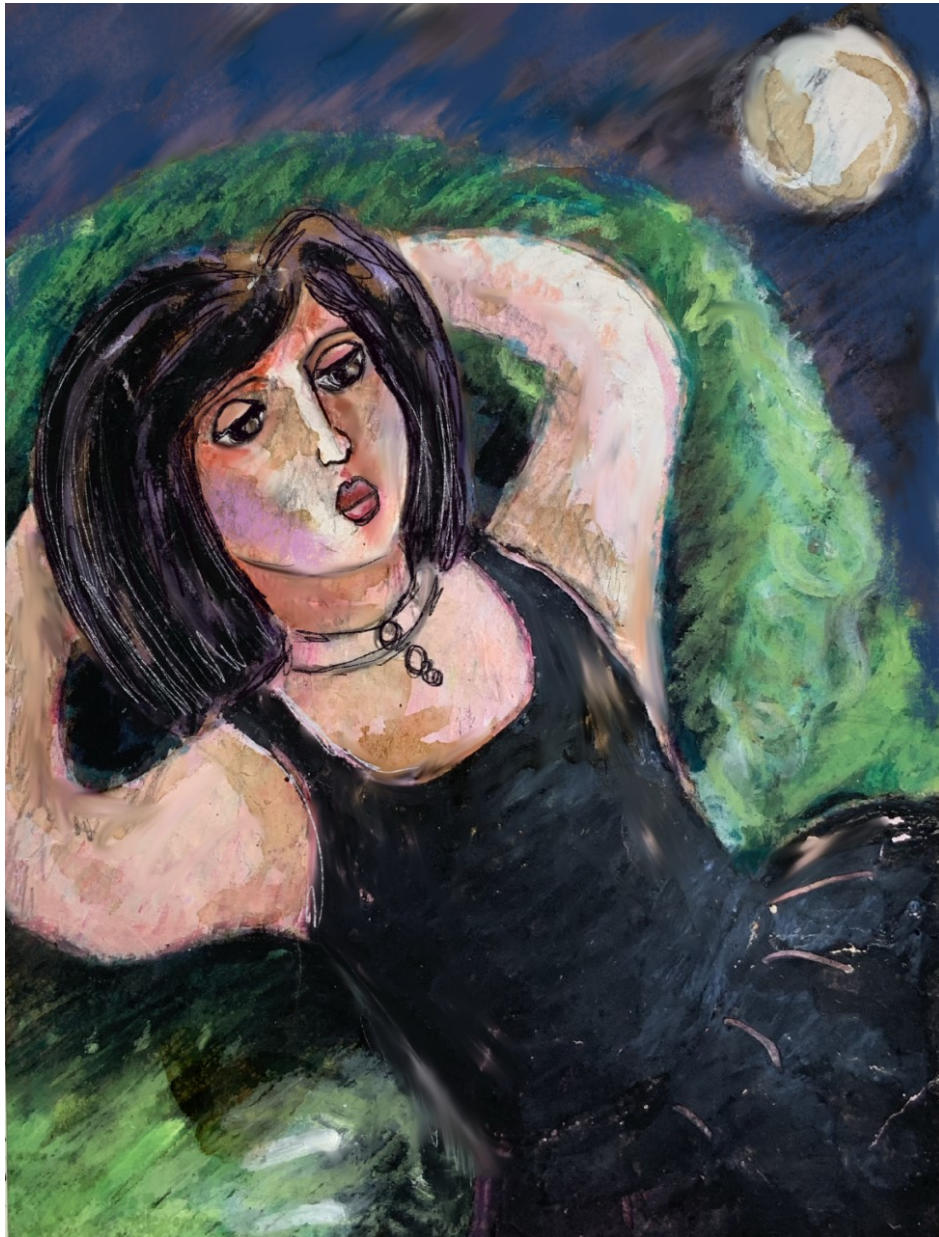


Figure 1: Lyneth Howells, *I dream*. 2023.

"I have always been amazed at the way an ordinary observer lends so much more credence and attaches so much more importance to waking events than to those occurring in dreams... Man... is above all the plaything of his memory." (Breton, 1990: 82)

On March 15th, 2014, my whole world dramatically changed. I had a particularly troublesome day at school, as the children were excitable and volatile, and unlike my standard late finish, I left as soon as the bell rang.

I returned home, harassed and deeply traumatised by the day's events. That evening I suffered three heart attacks and died. I had several shocks from a defibrillator and was kept alive by two paramedics who gave me restorative breaths and a heart massage. Technically I was dead for 45 minutes. I was placed in an ICU ward in an induced coma on life's edge. Here my subconscious became a reality.

My dreams and experiences during the coma later influenced me and my role as an artist. The impact of this venture has permeated my dreams for the last number of years.

The creative practice I have embarked on has been a journey to expose the many responses to the subconscious part of my mind and the now expressly vivid dreams I have had since. These dreams are so important, as they influence my everyday life. I wish to transport the viewer to another place within my mind, expressed through a dynamic visual spectacle.

Here is the initial idea for my master's. During the coma, I lived in my subconscious mind. I was overwhelmed by how I fitted into this weird reality comfortably. It was, in fact, my reality for quite some time. The emotional responses to this new world were incredibly vivid, and my memory of this experience remains.

This near-death event deeply triggered my fascination with the subconscious mind. It had created an alternative reality: an actual world of emotions and senses affecting my everyday life. Since this phenomenon, I have monitored my dreams over the past number of years. Using many materials, I wished to explore and illustrate the memories of my

dreams, serving as an expression of the many facets of perceptions. I intend to present my audience with an encounter; this work is an accumulation of my dreams, memories, emotions, and thoughts. Using the sketchbook as a visual diary and form of documentation, I have interpreted my experiences buried in my subconscious mind, the dark recesses of who I am, the contradiction and innocent, through visual images which have occurred during sleep, and re-arranged them through different media for the observer to relate to, deconstruct and discuss. This project bares my heart and soul.

[448 words]

Chapter One

Dreams

Dreams can be manipulated, distorted, and altered; this subjectivity refers to the complexity of the subconscious mind and, as such, poses questions about interpretations and multiple diverse thoughts. I refer to Surrealist artists such as Salvador Dali and Marc Chagall and contemporary artists that work in this *modus operandi*, such as Juli Curtiss and Mary Reid Kelly.



Figure 2: Salvador Dali , *Metamorphosis of Narcissus* 1937.



Figure 3: Marc Chagall, *Birthday* 1915.



Figure 4: Julie Curtiss, *Appetizer*, 2017.



Figure 5: Mary Reid Kelley, *This is Offal*, 2016.

The audience feels connected when faced with large-scale illustrations and sculptural elements that can be touched. The work will be an installation in the gallery where the observer can be submersed into my psyche.

Dreams differ from one person to the next. A dream is ambiguous and has no external markers. However, dreams have influenced art, Philosophy, and Science. Dreams illuminate the external world as well as the inner world of our minds. Dreams are so personal to the individual and, at times, difficult to articulate to others. Dreams have been studied for thousands of years and have become a powerful instrument for scientific understanding and importance in art.

There is at the back of every artist's mind something like a pattern and a type of architecture. The original quality in any man of imagination is imagery. It is a thing like the landscape of his dreams; the sort of world he would like to make or in which he would like to wander “ (Chesterton 2004:1)



Figure 6: Henry Fuseli, *The Nightmare*, 1781

In the Renaissance period, the artist represented the subject of the Biblical dream, the divine vision; 19th-century Symbolists chose to express subjective psychological and spiritual states, the Romantics expressed feelings of the mystical, and the Surrealists, in turn, used their dreams to create wild, bizarre artworks reflecting their subconscious conditions, as a window into their deepest selves.

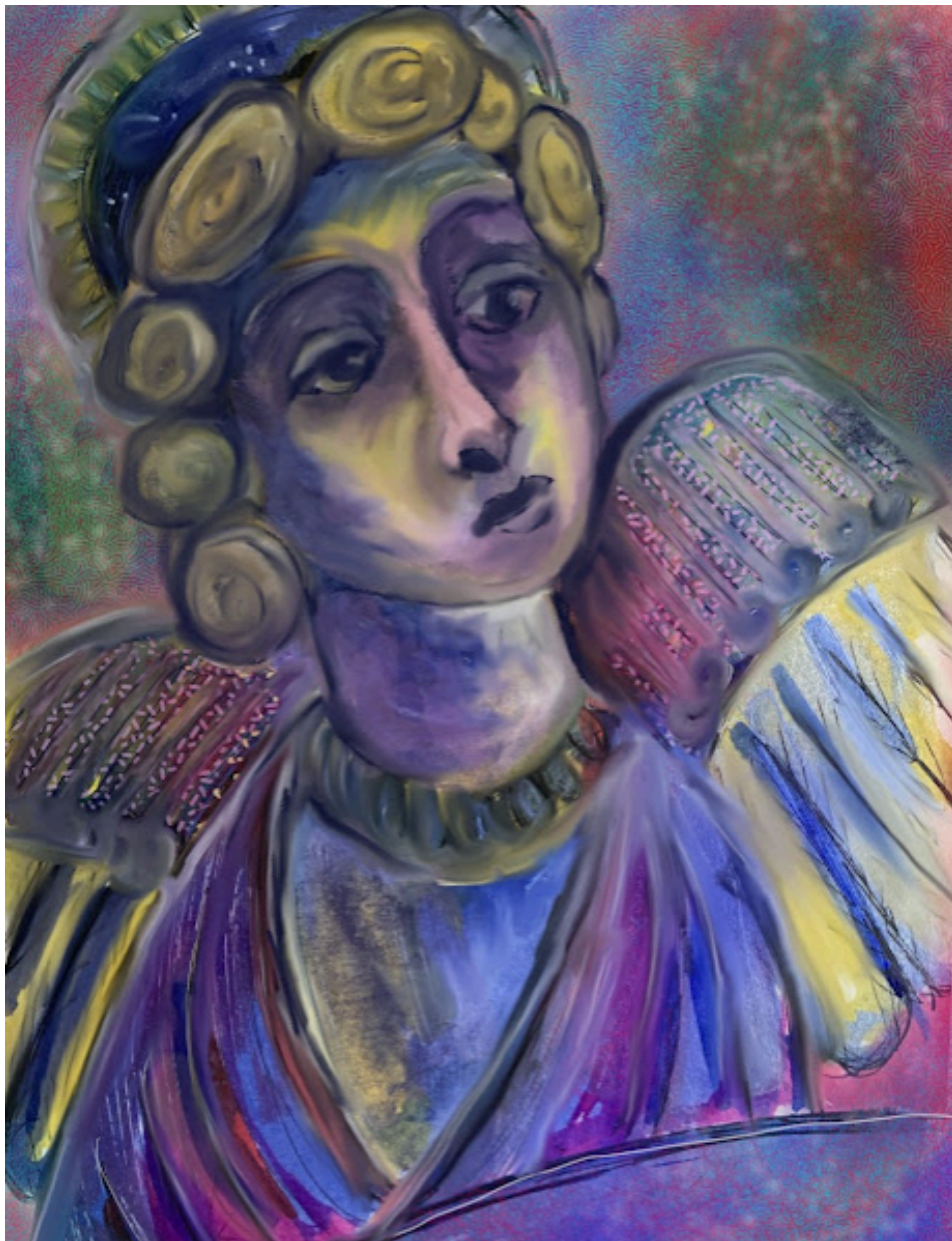


Figure 7: Lyneth Howells, painting and procreate. Angel 3. 2023

Celestial dreams are one of the crucial subject matter of my visions. When I was in my coma, I felt blessed that I came before a God-like form that told me that the world wanted me back and it was not my time. Since then, celestial beings have been part of my nightly slumber. My illustration represents the celestial visions I see at night. The beings are neither male nor female depicting a holistic unified image. The colour palette is a gender-neutral purple to create an aestheticism of harmony.

Dreams and nightmares are the same, and the reaction to the dream creates positive or adverse reactions in the sleeper. Goya's print, (*The Sleep of Reasons Produces Monsters* 1799), from his series *Los Caprichos*, shows how artists depicted dreams with the sleeper underneath their dreams and expressed the ambiguous image of the dream above. The figure's nightmare or dreams depict the sleeper being attacked by monsters representing pre-enlightenment superstitions and values that Goya felt held back his country's progress and modernisation. The dream and the dreamer represented Goya's belief that man can overcome superstition and ignorance if reason and fantasy are united in the free thinker. (Fuller, P 1980:221)



Figure 8: Francisco Goya, *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*, 1797-1799

Like Freud, I believe we dream for a reason; that reason is to deal unconsciously with the problems the conscious mind cannot deal with in every day life. The statements Freud made in "The Interpretation of Dreams" are about the conscious and unconscious, and he gave these parts of the mind that make us human titles. (Freud, 1997:59) In effect, he established the foundation for our current thinking about the mind. Before that, the thinking was much more spiritual or even alchemic. Dreams affect us, and we carry the residue through the day. Freud hypothesised that these memories continue to exist outside our awareness, unconsciously. My dreams affect my day, and my day affects my dreams, but why do we dream? Ernest Hartmann, a professor of psychiatry at Tufts University School of Medicine and the director of the Sleep Disorders Center at Newton Wellesley Hospital in Boston, Mass, theorises that Dreaming holds a process that is not random; however, that the emotions of the dreamer instead guide it. (Hartmann, 1993) When one clear-cut emotion is present, dreams are often straightforward. However, people who experience trauma--such as a car crash, an attack, or a fight often dream, e.g., I was on the beach and was swept away by a tidal wave. This type of case is paradigmatic. It is evident that the dreamer is not dreaming about the actual traumatic event but instead picturing the emotion like I am terrified or overwhelmed.

So in today's society in the Western world, dreaming is connected and guided by emotion. Jung saw dreams as the psyche attempting to communicate important things to the individual, like a way of knowing what was happening. He also believed that dreams are an essential part of the development of the personality – a process that he called individuation. (Stevens,A 1991:199)

Dreams were considered strange occurrences that were regular during sleep but poorly understood by the masses as to the reason why. They have been ascertained as meaningless, and systematic studies of dreams were not pursued scientifically for a long

time. Psychologists believed dreams had specific meanings and believed in different theories on how dreams were formed and affected humans.

There are three major theories:

- The psychodynamic theory of dreaming
- The physiological theory of dreaming
- The cognitive theory

I'll explain:-

Physiological Theories of Dreaming = This is where dreams are simply the result of trying to make sense of the high amounts of cortical activity and the processing of information gathered by the brain. During sleep, the brain has time to process this information.

Psychodynamic Theory of Dreaming = Dreams are meaningful, and dreams' primary function is to express one's deep desires and needs which are buried in the unconscious. As Andre Breton says, "Can't the dream also be used in solving the fundamental questions of life?" (Breton, 1969:12)

Cognitive Theories of Dreaming = Dreams have essential psychological functions that help people solve ongoing problems. This is where my thoughts on dreaming and my personal experience relate as dreams relate to the status of our endless needs, and dreams function to assimilate new data and disclose memories.

They are a window into our subconscious and can reveal a lot about our innermost thoughts and emotions. Whether you remember your dreams or not, you dream every night. Dreams can be strange and surreal but can also be incredibly meaningful. They can be a source of inspiration, a way to process your emotions and even a way to solve problems. The most common dreams are nightmares, daydreams, and lucid dreams. But there are also other varieties of dreams - False Awakening Dreams - Recurring Dreams - Healing Dreams - Prophetic Dreams – Progressive Dreams, and the one I tend to



Figure 9: Lyneth Howells, Adventurous world. 2023

experience the most is the Epic Dreams (These are the type of dreams that are so vivid and compelling that you can't ignore them). They possess beauty and archetypal symbolisms and profoundly impact you, feeling like a life-changing experience.) In fact, at times, I think I have been watching an epic movie in which somehow I was the principal

character. My work is about this thought process. When depicting my dreams, I am inside the dream as a participant, which can take many forms, from perpetrator to victim to hero.



Figure 10: Lyneth Howells *Illustration 1*.2023.

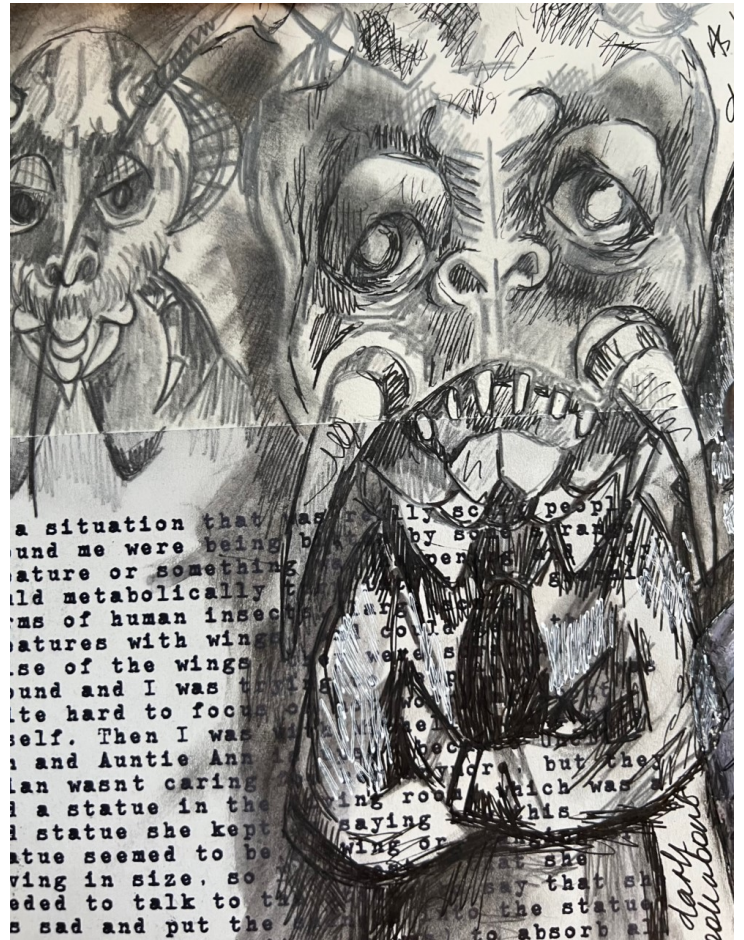


Figure 11: Lyneth Howells *Illustration 2*. 2023.

Primal urges drive the subconscious desires and fears, which escape into our subconscious during sleep. Dreams reflect the views of the individual's culture and their life in the now. Their religious, social, and historical settings and knowledge craft their visions.

The liberation of one's soul. Or as Sigmund Freud says,

"The dream is the liberation of the spirit from the pressure of external nature, a detachment of the soul from the fetters of Matter" (Freud, 1997:77)

I noticed connections between the dream imagery and my daily struggles and achievements by keeping a diary. Dreams are metaphors for issues and challenges in our waking lives. As Lauri Loewenberg points out, "Your dreams are merely the nightly results, and honest commentary, of your actions, [sic] behaviours, and attitude from the day," (Loewenberg, 2011:96) She also said. "The best way to have a peaceful and pleasant dream is to handle your issues during the day as well as working on having a better attitude about them." (Loewenberg, 2011:123)

Most memorable dreams are translucently allegorical and can often be narrated as inconceivable madness. How many insouciant dreams do you remember that include normal events? No, the strange aberrant dreams usually stay with us when we wake. The subconscious mind is more honest about fears and realities than the conscious mind.

For many years Philosophers have been trying to solve the issue of the relationship between the mind, brain, and body. For over 500 years since Descartes, the Cartesian split between mind and brain has been inaugurated and built into the knowledge structure. The individual's thought was divided, separating their conscious from unconscious, however, when REMS (Rapid Eye Movement) was discovered, the apparent cognitive state of dreaming was irrefutably evident, and the body and mind were the same.

We still have a lot to discover concerning our grey matter. Many claim they do not dream at all, but this is not technically true; all people dream, yet in waking, half your dream is forgotten, and in 10 minutes, it is gone for most. Since the coma, I have retained the majority of my dream in order to write down or illustrate. The first step in interpreting your

dream is to consider how you feel, as your emotions in your dreams are significant; the imagery helps the brain to formalise some meaning. So how do you analyse this, as an evolutionary theory, a neurological or holistic theory.?

“ In sleep, fantasy takes the form of dreams. But in waking life too, we continue to dream beneath the threshold of consciousness, especially when under the influence of repressed or other unconscious complexities” (Jung, 1993:125)

Our subconscious never sleeps. It is always active and perceptive. It controls vital functions, which is one reason for such a connection with my subconscious mind as my body was functioning by machine, and my subconscious was free to explore more than usual. The dreams were not lucid as I could not manipulate them, as in my dreams, I truly believed this was real. I went to sleep and woke still in this reality.



Figure 12: Lyneth Howells. *When I sleep*. 2023

My mind prepared me through visions like a rehearsal before I awoke or even died. This was a defence mechanism, and my brain was safeguarding me from the reality of what was happening. Dreams, at times, follow a linear pattern but, on average, are abstract. Our thought processes and ideologies of the self can be expressed in many ways. Our inner voice helps us with the world around us; it helps with how we think, how we relate to external experiences, and how we respond to them.

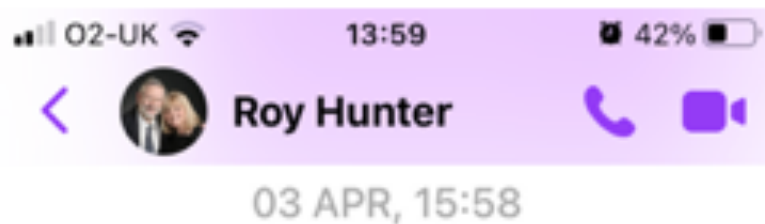
Therefore this work has become a creative analysis and heuristic research, expressed through art "a research approach which encourages the individual to discover and investigate further into themselves," (Moustakas, 1981:207)

An inquiry into interpreting the self through dreams as a means by which I could explore some significant aspect of my life and understand it better and transform this into artwork. I have found that sharing my inner self through the creation of artistic representation using metaphors and stories is a handy tool for clarifying understanding and creating knowledge that others can relate to. In most dreams, perceptual modalities and sub-modalities that dominate in wakefulness are heavily represented. Dreams are highly visual, in full colour, rich in shapes, full of movement, and incorporate specific wakefulness categories, such as people, faces, places, objects, and animals. My art expresses that dreams also contain sounds (including speech and conversation) and, more rarely, tactile percepts and smells. These experiences in typical dreams have an evident sensory character (i.e., they are seen, heard, and felt) and are not mere thoughts or abstractions. My work brings in all the sensory interpretations of the dream. I am trying to combine the phenomenological similarities, reflected in neurophysiological similarities, between waking and dreaming.

Artists and creative thinkers throughout history have always expressed their interpretations of the world and self through metaphysical language, visual stimuli, and metaphorical

interpretation. These illustrations and sculptures are metaphors and personal interpretations of my inner thoughts. It is challenging to describe internal states, abstract ideas, and complex notions without using metaphors and surreal imagery. Our dreams are full of information, advice, and even warnings about things we need to know about ourselves. We look at ourselves in a more profound light. (Hunter 2025:127)

I learned that both 'kerma' and 'karma' (or cause and effect) are just vehicles for knowledge, learning and experiencing as the soul evolves through many life times. Dreams empower spiritual being.



My work is a description of me. Formal content analysis has revealed that mood, imaginativeness, individuals of interest, and predominant concerns are correlated between one's waking and dreaming self. Dreams reflect one's interests and personality, like mental activity during wakefulness.

The most striking feature of conscious experiences in sleep is how similar the inner world of dreams is to the real world of wakefulness. Certainly, the dreamer might sometimes be uncertain whether they are awake or asleep, as I explained earlier. Indeed, dreams are not created in a vacuum but closely reflect the organisation and functions of the brain. It is helpful to consider similarities and differences between waking and dreaming consciousness to gain insight into dreams' phenomenology and neural basis. The translation of my dreams is a combination of both realities into the waking. Both my worlds inhabited the same realm. I felt very comfortable with this, and to develop this work, I deconstruct the dreams into sections—analysing parts and the whole.



Figure 13: Lyneth Howells. Illustration 3. 2023



Figure 14: Lyneth Howells. Dead Dad. 2023



Figure 15: Lyneth Howells. Cup cake. 2024.



Figure 16: Lyneth Howells. Heads. 2023.

Another area I have brought into my work is called Dream Enacting behaviour (DEB) which typically occurs during transitions from dreaming to wakefulness. The most common dream-enacting behaviours include speaking out, crying, smiling, laughing, expressing bodily fear by jolting, eating noises, anger, and talking. These behaviours occur especially

during intense dreams, such as nightmares or even erotic dreams. I have often woken from a dream crying, laughing, or shouting. Some say these dreams are brought on by indigestion or as Ebenezer says in A Christmas Carol, to his vision of Marley, “You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!” (Dickens, 1843:20)



Figure 17: Lyneth Howells. Before Bed 2024.



Figure 18: Lyneth Howells. In Bed 2024.

This part of the brain being used is called the Mirror Neuron System. It is responsible for behaviours, postural poses, and emotional expressions when asleep. It is quite a feat for the brain to express itself this way, but the mind can orchestrate this multiplicity of dream features, and I am one of those capable of doing so. I often wake my husband up by

talking or organising an army into battle. There have been experiments that have found experimental findings which use real-world sensory stimulations on the body during REM sleep to see how it affected not only the dream characters (Nielson,1993) eg, the dog had invaded our bed and lay on me; in my dream, I was caught in a bear trap only to wake with my leg numb due to his weight. Dreams are a remarkable experiment in psychology and neuroscience, conducted every night in every sleeping person. They show that, disconnected from the environment, the human brain can generate an entire world of conscious experiences.

Dreams are as simple or as complicated as the dreamer is himself, only they are always little bit ahead the dreamers consciousness. (Jung, 1968:122)

A shadow of the real which is how I want my work to be seen.

Years ago, I did a project where I dressed in different clothes and looked to portray stereotypes using work like Cindy Sherman to inspire me. I still find this relevant to the work I am doing now as I am portraying imagery that has me in common but is so diverse in style and materials that it has challenges that manipulating art helps release these thoughts. I am different in each dream, and like Sherman, “I am the same person but different.” (Sherman, 2000: 14)

When I was in a coma, I was a mother with a child. When I awoke, I had to have bereavement counselling. I had a totally different identity.

Dreams differ from one person to the next. A dream is ambiguous and has no external markers. Yet dreams have influenced art, Philosophy, and Science. Dreams illuminate the external world as well as the inner world of our mind. Dreams are so personal to the individual and at, times, difficult to articulate to others. Dreams have been studied for thousands of years and have become a powerful instrument for scientific understanding and importance in art.

“Yet it is in our idleness, in our dreams, that the submerged truth sometimes comes to the top.” (V. Woolf, 2002:47)

Today's society's interpretations vary from culture to culture. In some societies, dreams are dismissed and considered irrelevant to daily life. In others, they are sources of important information about the future, the spiritual world, or oneself. Psychologists such as Freud (1900) proposed that dreaming and the meaningful content of dreams are related to cognitive functioning. Researchers are unable to study the effects of dreams on mental functioning. This forces them to perceive dreams as the result of random neural activity. However, researchers disagree on the purpose of dreams. Therefore, there are various beliefs and theories related to dreams and dreaming. I interpreted this work, so I placed the dreams in a ball. Bit like a planet, an opaque celestial body with a physical environment, a world with a life of its own.

The meaning of dreams varies across different cultures and times. There are theorists who



Figure: 19 Lyneth Howells Dream Ball 2024 (A)

(B)

focus on the content of dreams. Freud believed that people could increase their self-awareness, which would help them cope with problems and traumas they have experienced; he focused on the actual content of a dream (manifest content) and the hidden meaning of a dream (latent content). (Freud, 1997). Carl Jung believed that dreams allow us to access the collective unconscious. This is a theoretical repository of information shared by everyone. According to Jung, some symbols we see in our dreams reflect universal archetypes with similar meanings for everyone, regardless of culture or location. (Stevens, 1991). I started looking at how my dreams are interpreted and wondered if surrealists interpreted their work. Each artwork has its own story but also reflects more significant tendencies in contemporary art.

The dream is often occupied with apparent very silly details.....deep in the dreamer's secrets and discover with astonishment that an apparently quite senseless dream is in the highest degree significant, and that in reality it speaks only of important and serious matters. (Jung. 2016:24)

Chapter Two

Surrealism and Symbolism

We look to images to explain the incomprehensible, yet we only see what we are prepared to understand through our biases and experiences. The image created can stir both admiration and hate depending on what the viewer thinks they see. “Can’t the dream also be used in solving the fundamental questions of life?” (Breton, 1969:12)

In my work, there are underlying meanings, as symbolism is one of the essential elements in art, giving the work soul and depth. Symbols can be comprehensive, like a crow can mean death, or flowers can mean life. It can be the colours and shapes used or the image metaphor. Freud introduced several theories that dealt with “the unconscious and its critical role in behaviour “ (Hunt 2018). When we analyse our dreams, it affects our day-to-day mood. A 15th Century Florentine philosopher Marsilio Ficino in particular, interpreted dreams, and his concept of “ VACATIO ANIMAE (The Vacation of the Soul) that when sleeping, the soul can be free from mortal restraints of the body and achieved a higher state.(Parkinson 1988). I believe the mind tells us answers. I think and have expressed through my work a freedom of the imagination through surrealism. The thinking is still active without waking the sleeper. So what we dream can have significance. For instance, I dream a lot about insects, and I found out that interpreting dreams of insects has been a practice spanning millennia. From the ancient writings of Artemidorus to great literature, from Lewis Carroll’s Alice in Wonderland to Franz Kafka’s Die Verwandlung (The Metamorphosis). Dreams help organise our thoughts and solve emotional or intellectual problems. This work is personal because I am showing the audience my inner being. Like Dali’s Dreamscapes, Alfred Hitchcock’s Film Spell Bound (1945), and Mary Stephenson, contemporary canvases of dreams depict what is inside the creator; it is part of their memory it makes us who we are.



Figure 20: Salvadore Dali, The Dream,1931

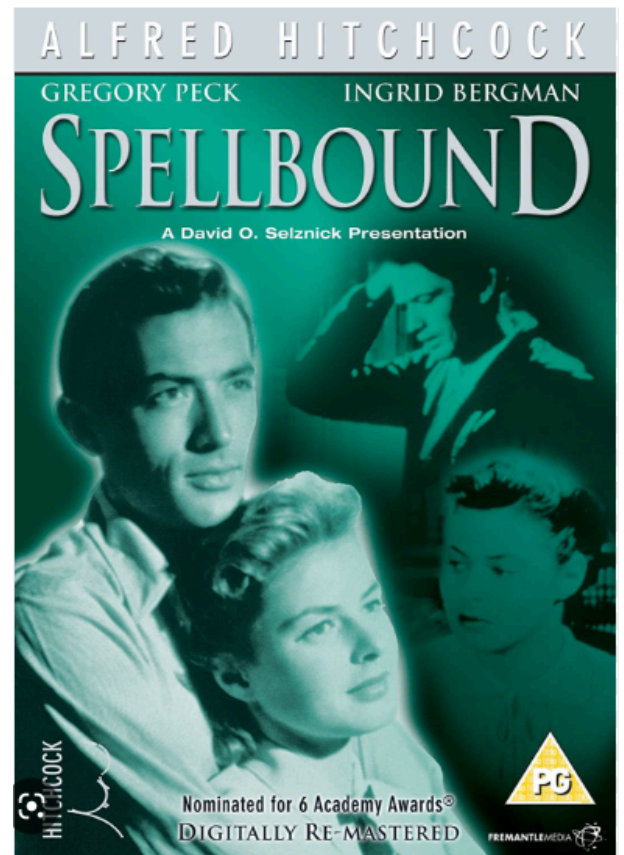


Figure 21: Alfred Hitchcock, Spellbound,1945



Figure 22: Mary Stephenson, Shellfish, Shellfish Details, 2019

Art combines the artist's experiences, memory, feelings, thoughts, and self-awareness.

"We are what we think; all that we are arises with our thought. With our thoughts, we can make the world.(Byrom, 1993: 8) . Alternatively, as my favourite quote which I have memorised says, "Cogito ergo sum," I think, therefore I am." (Descartes 1985)

Surrealists used images that came to them in dreams to create bizarre artworks reflecting their subconscious state, an experience between the visible and the nonviable. It is sometimes hard to depict the indescribable to represent the manifestation of the subconscious pictorially. This is why I have used various skills to express my dreamy phenomena. Symbolism was a reaction to Naturalism and Realism, and still, Surrealists use symbolism to interperate their dreams. As Man Ray stated, "In the morning, when I wake up, if I have a dream, I draw it right away." (Ray, 1978:38). So do I.

There are universal dreams noted worldwide, and it is not surprising that I have dreamt of all of them. Dreams About Being Chased - Dreams About Being Naked - Dreams About Flying - Dreams About Teeth Falling Out - Dreams About Death and Dying - Dreams About Taking a Test - Dreams About Pregnancy - Dreams About Water - Dreams About Infidelity - Dreams About Food - Dreams Where You Cannot Move - Dreams Where You Cannot Speak - Dreams About Animals and Recurring Dreams. (Goodwyn 2018).



Figure 23: Lyneth Howells ,Combination of Dream imagery, 2024.

I have used graphics, drawing, photographs, and sculpture to articulate my understanding of self, trying to make sense of my experiences in my dreams. It is as if I have found a way of sharing my inner self through the creation of artistic representation using metaphors and stories and hopefully clarifying an understanding that others can relate to. Artists throughout time have expressed their inner selves through representations of dreams.

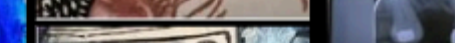


There are as many symbolic meanings for food in dreams as there are types of food. Not surprisingly, Freud said that dreaming of food symbolizes sexuality. The Ancient Greeks equated dreaming of food as sexually symbolic as well. Food symbolizes what we take in. Food is also a critically important need for human beings - deprived of food, we die. Food in dreams can indeed be sensual - the act of eating is highly sensual and romantic dinners frequently precede sex. Fruits that resemble body parts, such as bananas and peaches, may carry sexual meaning in your dream.



Biting
LH

Dream work is drawn from psychoanalysis - free association, dreams, and subconscious. These works illustrate the fantastical mind of the artist.



The dream may represent feelings of loneliness or vulnerability in your life. Sometimes, however, it may represent the desire for change or personal and professional challenges that cause feelings of failure, exhaustion, stress, or uncertainty. You may feel like you are about to fail or that you are failing. **BEING EATEN.**

Surrealism is highly inspired by the theories of psychoanalysis as the artist explores the subconscious and the interpretation of dreams even at times the hidden memories that we have consciously forgotten. Dreams as an art theme has been relevant throughout the years and the representation of dreams is abundant. Inspired by surrealism my art stems from my dreams and my interpretation of them, distorted imagery and juxtapositioning metaphorical images.

Free dreaming allow us to access absolute reality!

While GREEN leaves depict hope, renewal, and revival, dead leaves represent decay and sadness. In general, leaves are symbolic of fertility and growth, and in the Chinese tradition the leaves of the Cosmic Tree represent all of the beings in the universe.

LH

We are crazy in our sleep and visit places of wonder. What is sleep after all? but a process by which we dumped our insanity into a dark subconscious pit. Walking through forests of colour finding strange and unusual things. Surrealism at its best.

Figure 25 Lyneth Howells Powerpoint 2024 (B)

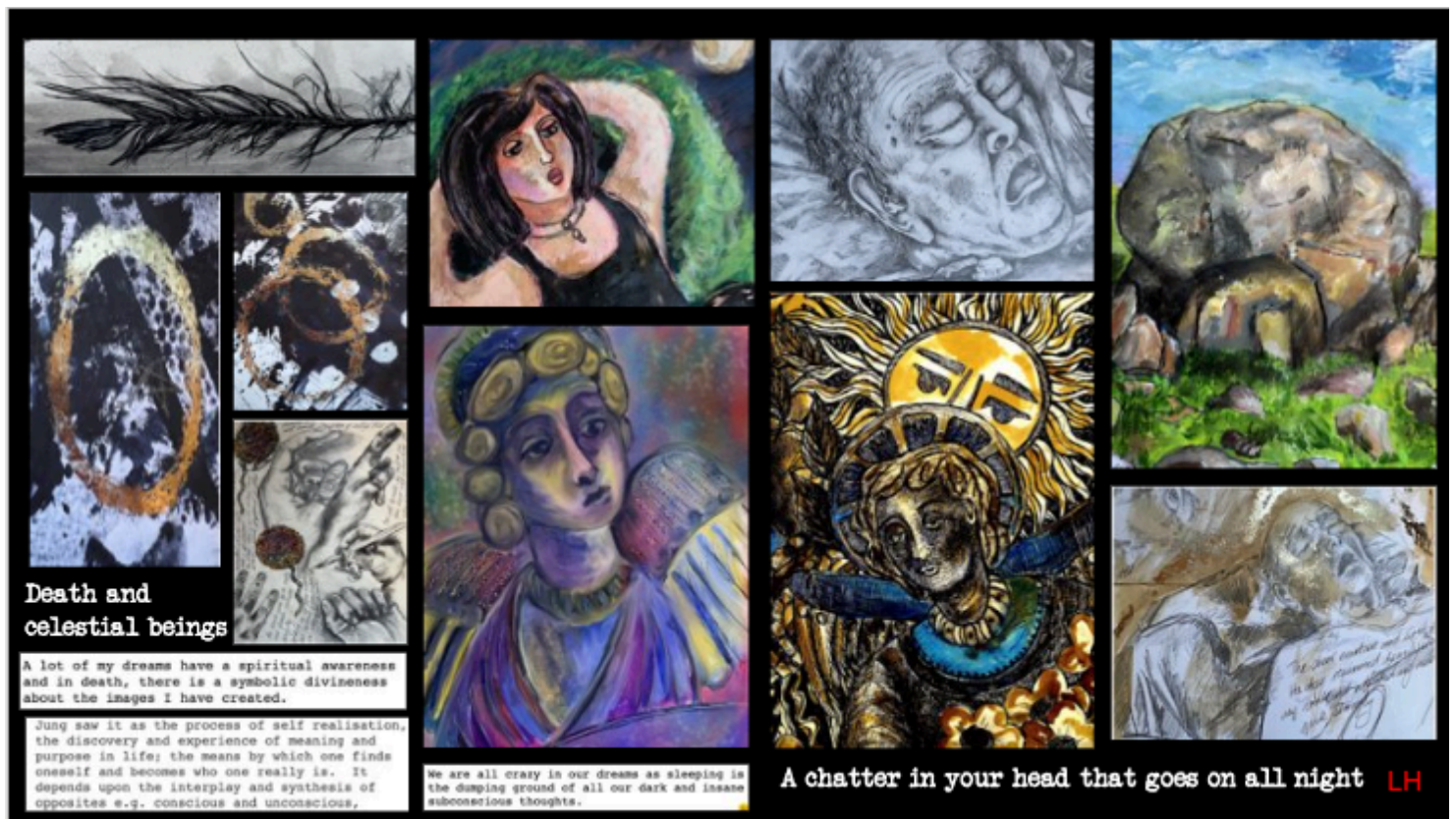


Figure 26 Lyneth Howells Powerpoint 2024 (C)

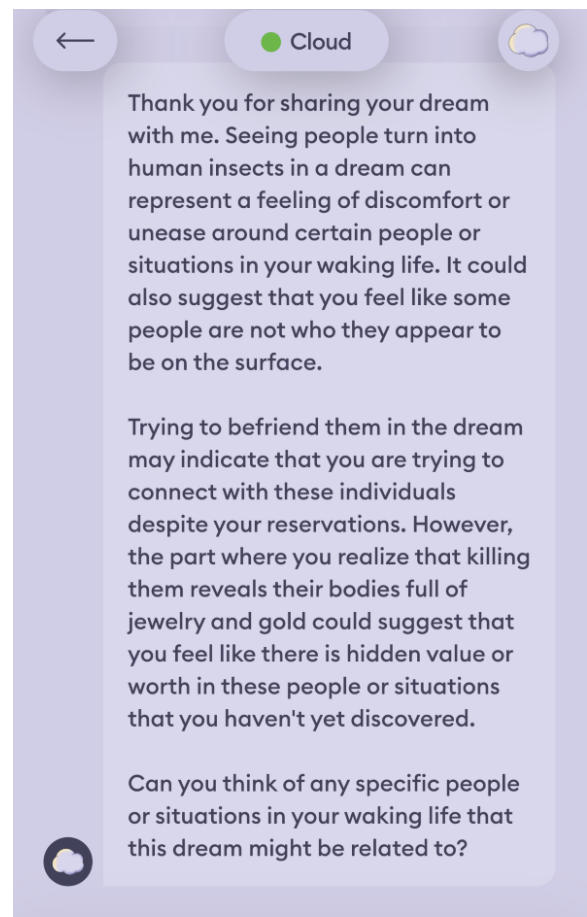


Figure 27: Dream App on line to interpret dreams.

“Cant the dream also be used in solving the fundamental questions in life?” (Breton, 1969:12)

Surrealism and symbolism expressed in art has always fascinated me, and Paula Rego's work has that element of surrealism and juxtaposition that I like. Paula Rego was a Portuguese-British visual artist known mainly for her paintings and prints based on storybooks. Rego's style evolved from abstract to representational. Her style and, at times, macabre imagery inspired my illustrations. They have a feeling of nightmares and storytelling dreams through the visuals. She uniquely combines visuals, and the image captures emotion, time, and memories. (Crippa, E. 2021)

So I wrote to her daughter to ask her if her mother's work related to dreams, as I thought. I wanted to explain how her mother's work has greatly inspired my illustrative and creative life.

Letter sections

Dear Ms. Willing,

My name is Lyneth Howells, and I am a retired art teacher who has returned to college to achieve a long life ambition of gaining a Masters.

Before I start, I would like to say how much I admire your mother's work I could not think of how to write to you with questions that sounded highfalutin and intelligent.

So I have decided to write this from the heart..... When I first saw your mother's work, I was overwhelmed with a myriad of emotions. I loved how she investigated the dark, and the light of what I thought was a dreamworld, her fairy stories, and expressions of her inner values. I wanted to be like her expressing stories from childhood memories and interpolating them in a surreal way, reconfiguring the narrative of the wicked stepmother to harmless nursery rhymes. As a child, I was often told stories by my mother, grandmothers, and great aunts as a form of moral guidance, and I wondered whether you were read stories by your mother and talked to her about your dreams. Did your mother discuss her dreams with you?.... I saw many of my dreams in your mother's work. Did your mother

work from dreams or just from mystical stories written by Hans Christian Andersen or the Grimm Brothers, and whether as a child, you were at times spooked by her work due to her morbid surrealism and distorted imagery?.....I was wondering how much did she inhabit that world she created, and did she bring it with her into the relationship with you and your siblings? Or did she shut the door to the art studio and separate her work from day-to-day life.? I carry it with me constantly. My dreams affect my art, my art affects my life, and my life affects my dreams..... My instillation is a mixture of painting, illustration, and modelling, all expressing my dream mind in a personal and emotional way. I hope you will find time to respond and I thank you for your time reading this letter.

Your respectfully

Lyneth Howells

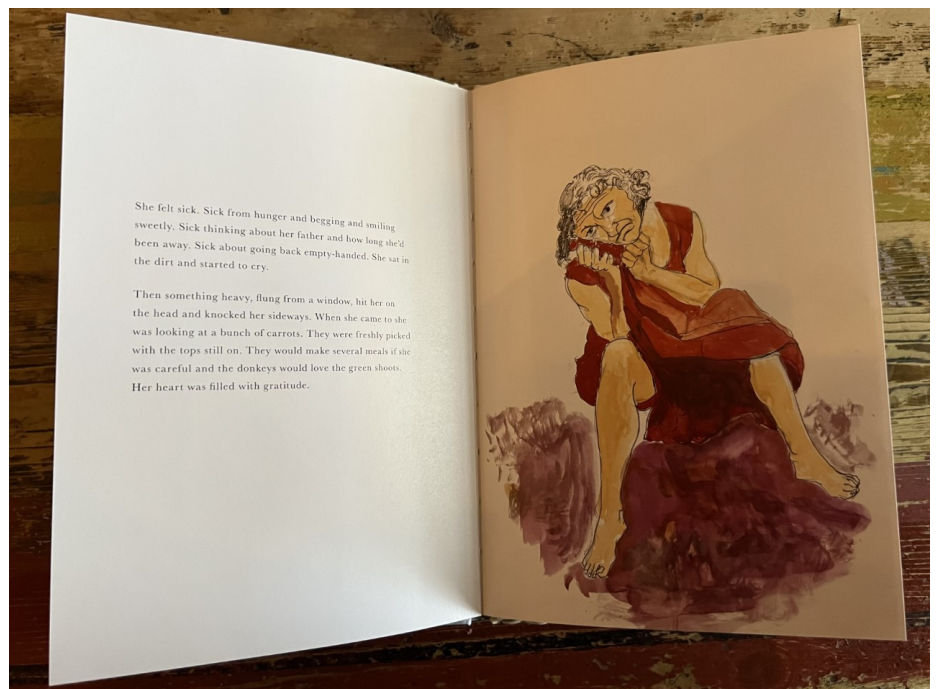
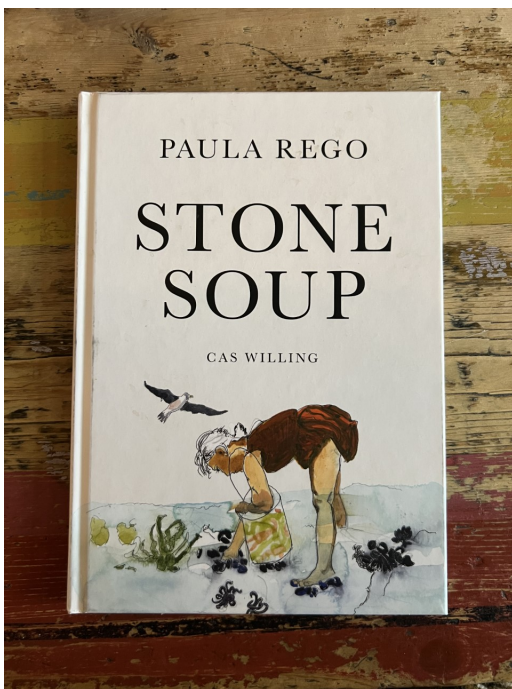
Dear Lyneth

I was very moved by your letter and have sent you a scarf my mother owned for you to wear at your graduation. Paula didn't use dreams directly as inspiration for paintings.

That's not how it worked for her. She was interested in how dreams worked things out unconsciously and paintings can often work unconsciously too but not as literal copies of dreams. Not for her. She would say everyone has to find their own way into their work and she would wish you good luck and daring. 'You can do anything in your paintings' you can kill people if that's what you need to do, but you can't do it in real life.

Cas

Cas also sent a book that she and her mother produced.



Inspiration to create artwork for wall where my sketchbooks will be placed in their reading area. I am so excited. This was amazing, and yes, you can do anything in your dreams as you can in your art.

Figure 28: Paula Rego and Cas Willing . Stone Soup

[1,192 words]

Conclusion

So I am creating an instillation in which the observer can participate—expressing my inner mind. I will connect as many senses to the work as possible as I taste, hear, smell, and have feelings in my dreams but I will be portraying them not as nightmares but as visually pleasing experiences as part of the work. The plans will be suspended from the ceiling as spheres of different sizes to express their intensity.

“Because living always means building spheres, both on a small and a large scale, humans are the beings that establish globes and look out into horizons. Living in spheres means creating the dimension in which humans can be contained.” (Sloterdijk, 2011:28)

Some will be painted, others drawn and some will be sculptures in their own right. The images on the walls will be from my sketchbook, and my other 11 sketchbooks will also be visual at the gallery as I feel the work produced over the three years should finally be recognised. There will be a recording of my voice that will have a tone emanating hypnotic language to seduce the observer and relax their minds. Originally I wanted to build a box-like installation, but after seeing the gallery, a hidden doorway into the room with my work will be far more dramatic.

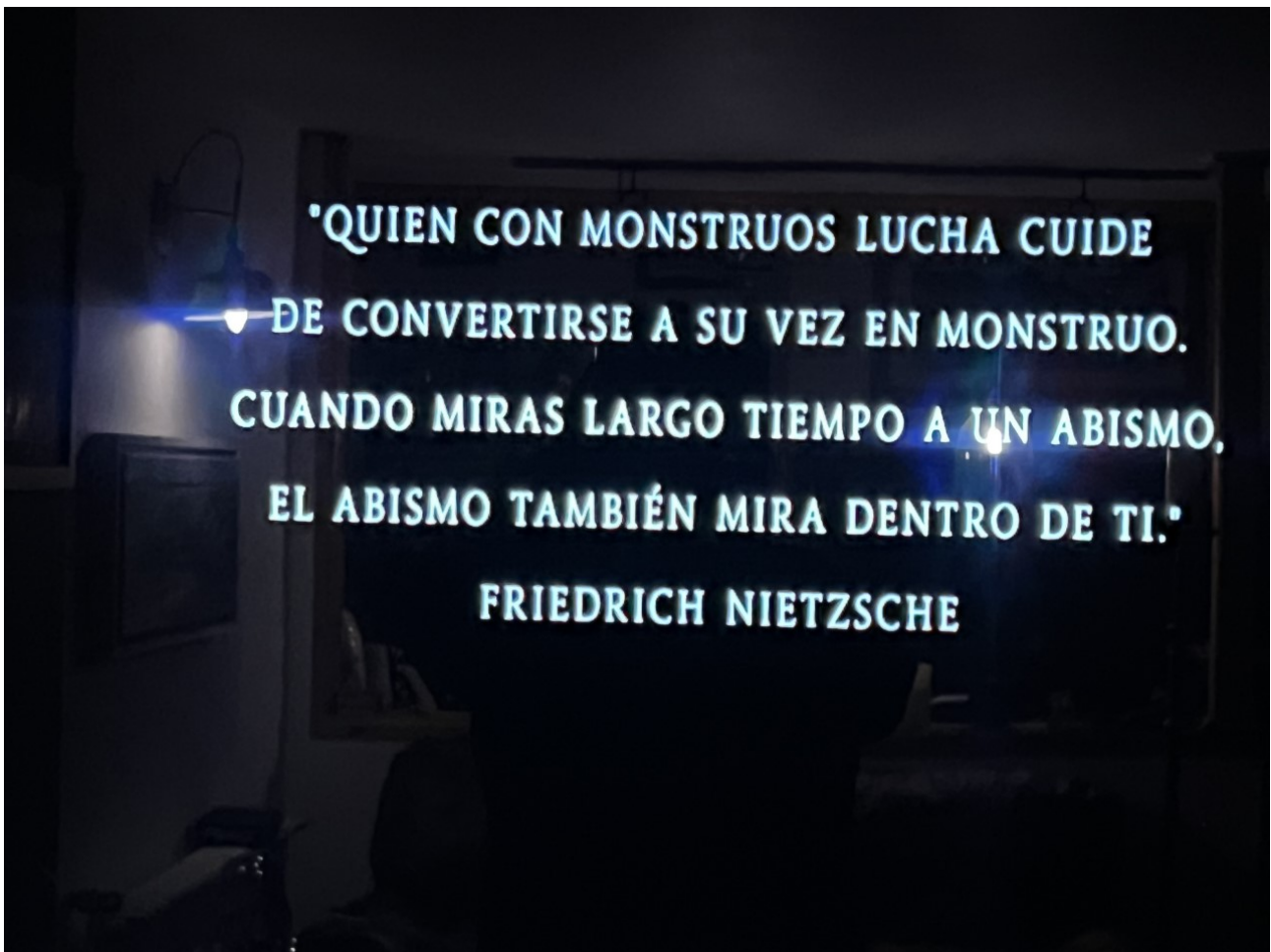
The entrance to the room will be camouflaged by a wardrobe with collages of my actual dreams paper mache all over.

Bringing the wardrobe to college was a feat and a half trying to organise and transport it into the college and getting it somewhere workable, but I managed it with some help.

The work will be simple from the outside, but the surprise will be dynamic when you step in. The wallpaper will be taken from images in my sketchbook surrounding the wardrobe. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as a student, and it is far better than a retired old lady. There are parts of the three years in this work, from my first project on the inner voice to the bubbles created during covid. I aim to achieve well as I have pushed myself to bring all

this work together. I have completed more than enough work even though I had a heart operation and my hand was reconstructed this final year. I am proud of my achievements and hope my instillation will be unique.

The final pieces are to be transported in, and lighting, sound, and smell are to be created. The sketchbook imagery blown up to scale the walls, and I have a wardrobe to cover in ,y written dreams. Can't wait for this to be over. Then it is on to my next adventure in art.



This was a film I saw recently.

The one who fights with monsters must be careful not to turn out to be a monster himself. And if you look into an abyss a lot, the abyss will end by looking inside you.

(Nietzsche, 2003) (TV)

Perhaps I may move on from dreams but a dream which is not interpreted is like a letter which is not read.

[516 words]

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10. Illustrations

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- Figure 3: Marc Chagall, *Birthday*, 1915. 31 3/4 x 39 1/4" (80.6 x 99.7 cm) Museum of Modern Art in New York. Oil on cardboard. [Digital image].
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- Figure 26 Lyneth Howells *Powerpoint* 2024 (C). [Digital image].
- Figure 27 Dream App on line to interpret dreams [Phone image].
- Figure 28: Paula Rego and Cas Willing . Stone Soup [Phone image].

11. Film

Dead of Night (1945) - Directors: Alberto Cavalcanti, Charles Crichton, Basil Dearden and Robert Hamer

Nightmare (1956) - Director: Maxwell Shane

Waking Life (2001) - Director: Richard Linklater

12. Exhibitions

Art & Industry, Stories from South Wales

The Rules of Art. National Museum. Cardiff

Owen Griffiths. Thinking Green.

David Hurd: Swaps. National Museum. Cardiff

The Rules of Art? National Museum Cardiff

The Sea Horizon. National Museum Cardiff

Artes Mundi 10 National Museum Cardiff

Sarah Poland Silence – The Messenger and the Metaphor Elysium

Art in the Bar – Asiya Clark: Affinity

Angela Dickens: Faces in the Green Bush