



Oneironautics as a Gateway to Visionary Art

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this thesis was to gather information on oneironautics as a potential tool for visionary artists. Contemporary visionary art aims to see the unseen and depict it in a visual form that is clear to our ordinary perception. Contemporary visionary artists depict realms that cannot be observed in physical reality. The theoretical part of this study explored the history and importance of visionary art, and the research section suggested practical exercises that can broaden the perception of the mind.

The aim of the case study presented in the theoretical part was to investigate one of the first contemporary visionary artists Ernst Fuchs, contemporary visionary artist Yayoi Kusama, and contemporary artist Dave Green. The key results suggested that oneironautics, a form of lucid dreaming, indeed, can be used as a potential booster for visionary experience and visual enhancements of an artist.

The goal of the practical part was to showcase an installation in the gallery Himmelblau. This installation consisted of four visionary paintings based on the personal experiences of the author, miniature sculptures, and ambient music. The findings based on the research in the theoretical part and on personal art practice indicated that oneironautics is an efficient method of broadening the perception of a visionary artist.

Key words: visionary art, lucid dreams, oneironautics

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GLOSSARY

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Oneironaut – an active explorer of dreams. The term derives from the Greek words "oneiro", which means a dream, and "naut", which means a sailor, a voyager, or an explorer. (Cassidy n.d.)

Oneironautics - an active form of lucid dreaming in which oneironauts specifically travel within the dreamscape and do something within the dream (Zugor n.d.).

1 INTRODUCTION

First things first, the practice of dreaming has been known to humans since ancient times, starting with written records in the early Sumerian era, or 3100 B.C. Further to this, it has influenced the formation of lore and religious and supernatural beliefs. (Sharpless & Doghramji 2015, 1–2.) On the other hand, there has always been a need for curiosity and a desire to decode the world of dreams and visions as a possible clue to existential mysteries. Therefore, the world of dreams can serve as a potential mind-opening tool for those artists who want to bring visions from the dreamspace to our tangible mundane reality.

Dreams can lead to the initial discovery of self, illuminating the hidden suppressed memories that sometimes can take the form of recurring dream plots and nightmares. According to a psychologist and professor emerita at Tampere University specialising in mental health, trauma, and child and adolescent development Raija-Leena Punamäki (b. 1952), humans respond to trauma in a bidirectional way. That means that the ego self attempts to prevent the recall of traumatic events, but these traumatic memories are constantly shown to a dreamer in their dreams. (Punamäki 2007, 211–251.) Furthermore, recurring nightmares act as a stress-causing factor. It is believed that constant stress can affect overall health and decrease cognitive abilities and memory capacity (Bremner 2006, 503–512). If new coping mechanisms are not found, nightmares can stay present and appear as a source of stress.

On the other hand, practices of lucid dreaming have shown therapeutic effects on the psyche. It was agreed by all that lucid dreaming can be an efficient therapeutic method in treating patients who suffer from recurring nightmares (Brylowski 1990, 79–84; Abramovitch 1995, 140–145; Zadra & Pihl 1997, 50–55; Tanner 2004, 1139–1146; Spoomaker & van den Bout 2006, 389–394; Aurora, et al. 2010, 389–401). The practice of lucid dreaming, particularly an active form of lucid dreaming which is known as oneironautics, is analysed throughout this thesis as a potential tool for creativity with therapeutic side effects. Oneironautics is used as a tool for visionary art, and visionary art based on lucid dreams can be

applied as a potential additional therapeutic method for treating recurring nightmares and trauma-based memories.

It is believed that an artwork produced in art therapy can serve as a tool that connects the body and consciousness. Moreover, the practice of art therapy in the form of drawing or painting contributes to kinaesthetic experiences that can bring pleasure. Afferent nerves of the somatic nervous system receive sensory information from touching art supplies, and this can evoke different emotional reactions. (Hass-Cohen & Carr 2008, 24.) Art therapy practices based on kinaesthetic experiences can help to maintain feelings of control and mastery, which is mediated by sympathetic-parasympathetic balance (Hass-Cohen 2003, 24–38, 2007, 41–48). Therefore, visionary art based on oneironautics can broaden the perception of an artist and can be used as a potential therapeutic tool in treating recurring nightmares and as a booster of artistic creativity.

2 THE DEFINITION OF VISIONARY ART

Visionary art is a type of contemporary hieratic or sacred art (Rapp 2010). This type of art searches for dimensions that usually stay out of sight. The visionary artist, writer, and lecturer Laurence Caruana (b.1962) underlines that contemporary visionary art's new language can be described as seeing the unseen through mind-altering states, expressed in a visual way that is understandable to our ordinary sight (Caruana 2010, 9).

Caruana emphasises:

All visionary artists are united by this spirit of ongoing experimentation. And their works bear testimony to those mind-altering, soul-shattering but potentially enlightening experiences which may transpire over the course of each experiment. The aim of these experiments is to bring alternative states of consciousness to reality. Or rather, to bear witness to other realities which are made evident in alternative states of consciousness. Hence, the images, colours, reflections, modes of perceiving and indeed the insights which the artist himself has witnessed in a dream, vision, trance, revelation, mediumistic or drug-induced state are what he seeks to reproduce in a plastic medium, so as to give it a more or less permanent reality 'here', in the world of our shared perceptions and spoken dialogues. (Caruana 2010, 10–11.)

Contemporary visionary art is a relatively young art style that was formed at the same time when fantastic realism was invented by a group of academic painters Ernst Fuchs (b.1930), Rudolf Hausner (b.1914), Wolfgang Hutter (b.1928), Anton Lehmden (b.1929) and Arik Brauer (b.1929), in Vienna after the Second World War. Contemporary visionary art was directly influenced by figurative surrealism because it leans towards a more precise depiction of dreams and visions, while automatist surrealism tended more towards abstraction. (Percival 2020.)

However, the most important factor that defines visionary art is not the subject matter but the way it is depicted. Percival emphasises that:

In visionary art, we find a dedication to seamless detail and precision of form, a subtlety of technique that renders the medium as translucent as possible so that the image is presented immediately to the viewer (Percival 2020).

From a technical point of view, visionary artists strive for the precise rendering of their visions. It is believed that there is a unified technical approach to visionary art, which is characterised by the precise depiction of grasped visions, fine lines and mystifying details, and gradual transitions. The mediums can vary from oil to ink and computer graphics. (Percival 2020.)

2.1 History of visionary art

Humanity has been accessing the realm beyond the mundane plane throughout history. Traces of hieratic or spiritual art can be found in ancient cave paintings, geometric patterns of Sufism, Norwegian woodcarvings, and even works of such famous artists as Hieronymus Bosch (b. c. 1450) and William Blake (b.1757). (Percival 2020.) The presented Picture 1 shows a painting by Hieronymus Bosch. It is filled with scenes of heaven and hell and is painted in the Flemish style, Northern Renaissance.

As mentioned earlier, contemporary visionary art was born from fantastic realism that was invented as a style by Ernst Fuchs, Rudolf Hausner, Wolfgang Hutter, Anton Lehmden, and Arik Brauer in Vienna after the Second World War. Fuchs, Lehmden, Brauer, Hausner and Hutter, who formed the style of fantastic realism, also became the first generation of visionaries. Classical academic approaches to painting, impressionist colour theories, and fantastic themes are considered the main features of fantastic realism. (Percival 2020.)



PICTURE 1. Hieronymus Bosch. The Garden of Earthly Delights. 1490–1500.

(ARTnews 2020.)

The second generation of visionaries like Mati Klarwein (b. 1932), De Es Schwertberger (b. 1942), and Robert Venosa (b. 1936) descended under the influence of Fuchs and his school in a period starting from the sixties to the eighties of the 20th century. Another significant visionary artist of the same generation is Alex Grey (b. 1953), the founder of Sacred Mirrors, which is known for his anatomical and geometric vivid paintings inspired by psychedelic substances. (Percival 2020.)

Percival (2020) mentions a few contemporary artists whose works emphasise a darker aspect of visionary

- Hans Ruedi Giger (b. 1940)
- Odd Nerdrum (b. 1944)
- Zdzislaw Beksiński (b. 1929)

Picture 2 shows an example of a darker aspect of visionary art. Giger was known for his erotic, alien-related, and possible transhumanism themes.



PICTURE 2. H. R Giger. Necronom IV. 1976. (Arthive n.d.)

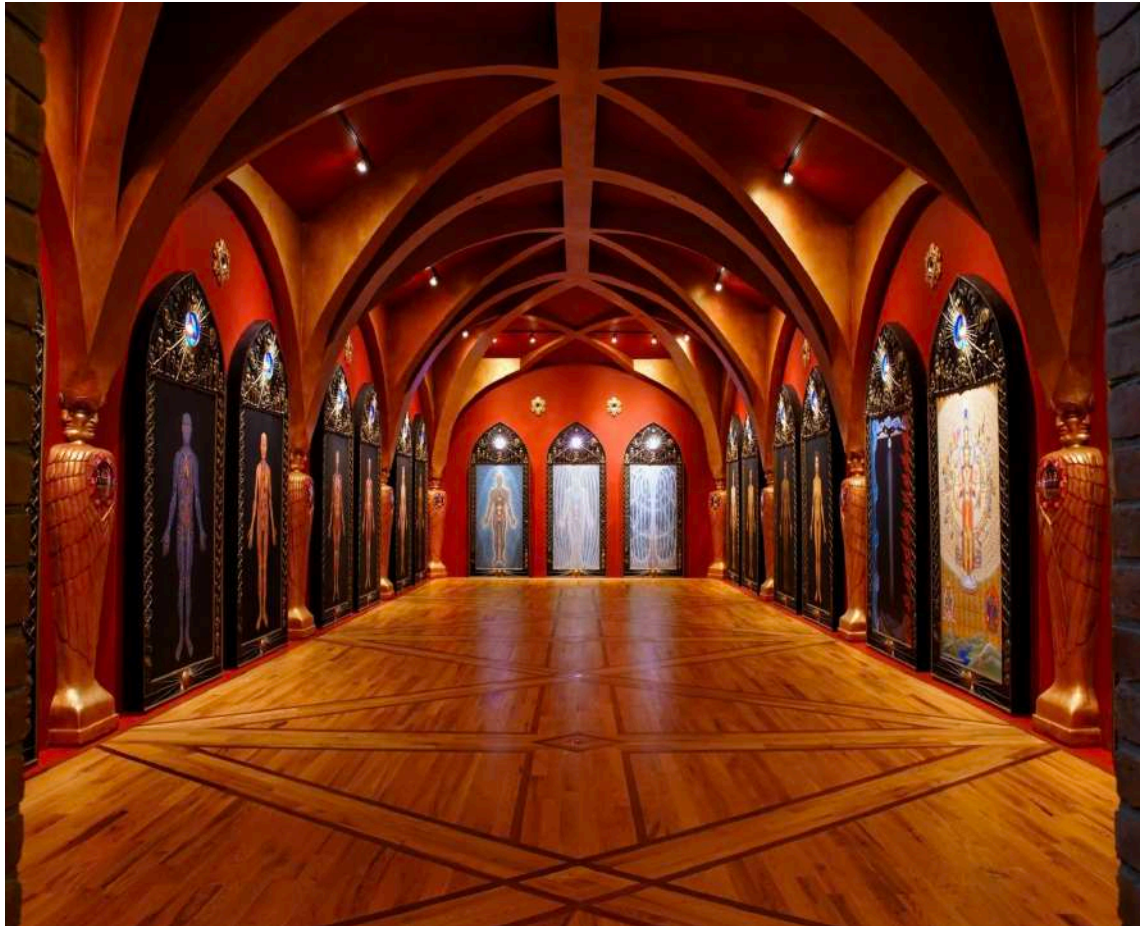
2.1.1 Why do we need visionary art?

Visionary art aims to depict things that either stay out of sight, remained unnoticed by a world focused on consumerism and capitalism, or dwell deep within our subconscious. Another key point to remember is that visionary art is a contemporary form of hieratic or spiritual art (Rapp 2010). Without a doubt, religion has its spiritual side, but it tends to be more politically oriented. However, there are apparent parallels between art, religion, and spirituality:

Art and interreligious dialogue as a field for academic inquiry is increasingly acknowledged today, in a time when religious differences continue to supply sources and arguments for conflicts and controversies all over the globe (Giordan, Pace & Illman 2012, 43).

On the contrary, the term spiritual does not equal the term religious, even though these terms are considered synonyms that are interchangeable. Modernism is criticized for its rationalization, and it is accompanied by a growing interest in emotional experiences of faith (Giordan, Pace & Illman 2012, 44). According to the docent of the faculty of arts and rector Tuomas Martikainen (b. 1971), the meaning of the term spiritual is more positive than the meaning of the term religious at the present time (Martikainen 2007, 367–370).

The main goal of contemporary visionary art is to make the existential paradigm more meaningful, to decode the grasped visions through the language of art with its powerful effect on the mind and the psyche. Perhaps, this can reflect some fractures of the Universe we live in, serving the community in which it is being made and displayed by uniting people in gatherings and sacred sanctuaries. For instance, contemporary visionary artist Alex Grey is known for his community-serving role as a leader of the Entheon (Picture 3), the sanctuary of visionary art, and CoSM, the chapel of sacred mirrors. These sanctuaries were founded by Grey and his spouse and are intended for community gatherings where people can join and create visionary art together. (Grey n.d.) Indeed, contemporary visionary art can be viewed as an interdimensional wormhole, a tunnel between two points separated by time and space which can connect different communities and people.



PICTURE 3. Alex Grey. The Great Hall, Entheon. (Cosm n.d.)

On the other hand, visionary art can be applied as a form of art therapy because the visions grasped from the subconscious can help to understand the conscious self better and give profound insights into the role of an individual within their community. Visionary art requires kinaesthetic activity, and it helps to achieve pleasurable sensations from the tactile processes of painting or drawing, which results in a feeling of satisfaction. It happens because afferent or receiving nerves of the somatic nervous system carry sensory information from touching art supplies, and this can result in a joyful sensation. (Hass-Cohen 2008, 24.) Visionary art can sustain the connection between the suppressed parts of the self and the surface level of the conscious self, which contributes to feelings of balance and serenity between different aspects of the self.

3 ONEIRONAUTICS AS A VISIONARY TECHNIQUE

3.1 The definitions of lucid dreaming and oneironautics

But how exactly does an artist become a visionary artist? To attain a perception of the world that is different from our ordinary sight, a visionary artist might want to alter a state of mind through many techniques and ways. It is believed that:

Altered states of consciousness (ASC) represent a marked deviation in the subjective experience or psychological functioning of a normal individual from her/his usual waking consciousness (Dittrich 1998, 80–84).

Studerus, Gamma & Vollenweider (2010) underline that altered states of consciousness are distinct from the waking consciousness of an individual by their difference in subjective perception. On the other hand, altered states of consciousness are short-lasting, compared to psychiatric conditions. Among others, some altered states of consciousness can be self-induced by drugs, meditation, hypnosis, and others occur without preparation, like a hypnagogic state. (Studerus, Gamma & Vollenweider 2010.) A hypnagogic state of mind is a condition when a person is not fully asleep but is about to do so. States of mind can be also altered through sleep deprivation, sensory deprivation tanks, lucid dreaming, shaking, dancing, torture, etc.

For instance, a lucid dream is a state of mind in which a dreamer realises that they are dreaming and becomes aware of it within a dream scenario. It is defined that “In a lucid dream, one is aware that one is dreaming during the dream. Thus it is possible to wake up deliberately, or to influence the action of the dream actively, or to observe the course of the dream passively.” (Stumbrys, Erlacher, & Schredl 2013a, 124.) This leads to the conclusion that a dreamer is fully aware of what is happening to them in a dream state. To put it straight, it is a clear state of awareness of being inside a dream. While there are many types of dreams that vary from each other, the most significant difference between a lucid dream and all other types of dreams is a state of clear awareness of being within a dream scenario, within the dream space. It can occur on a natural basis or can be practised through intention and exercises.

Oneironautics is actually a form of lucid dreaming in which oneironauts specifically travel within the dreamscape, investigate the locations and surrounding of lucid dreams, and do something within the dream (Zugor n.d.). To travel within the dream space, one must be extremely aware of being within a dream scenario. On the contrary, lucid dreaming practice can simply include being aware of dreaming and focusing on one's feelings, etc.

The practice of oneironautics is aimed at the exploration of the dream space and active position of an oneironaut. This technique can be used by a visionary artist for a variety of reasons. It is not the easiest and most instant tool that will lead to new sources of inspiration, but it is one of the safest. Based on many years of personal practice and experience, it can be viewed as a technique that can lead to new, previously unavailable locations that are full of potentially educational and fascinating insights and symbols.

3.1.1 How a visionary artist can benefit from oneironautics

Historically, shamans have been travelling to other realms and gathering information for their community. For instance, shamanic ritual practices in foraging societies usually appear in the form of group rituals, in which the whole community gathers, sings, and chants under the guidance of a shaman. These rituals are intended for spirit and ancestor communication, which is believed to have a powerful impact on the enhancement of spiritual forces and divination capacities for healing, community-serving, and general problem-solving. (Guerra-Doce 2015, 91–112.) Thus, a shaman is a typical figure who is associated with the role of a conductor that resembles a visionary or an oneironaut, except that a shaman is not conveying their visions into artworks. Shamanic practices have been analysed and researched throughout history, so it can be useful to make a parallel between a shaman, an oneironaut, and a visionary artist.

Indeed, shamans reach the spirit realm through dreams, along with altered states (McDonald, Veth & Lewis-Williams 2012, 19). An archaeologist James David Lewis-Williams (b. 1934) defines the three-stage model that appears in texts on shamanism and rock art:

Stage one: In the “lightest” stage, subjects see bright, geometric, visual percepts (entoptic phenomena, phosphenes, or form constants) that include zigzags, dots, grids, nested catenary curves, crenellated lines, and meandering lines.

Stage two: Moving into a “deeper” altered state, subjects try to make sense of the geometric percepts according to their emotional state and to what their culture has led them to make of the percepts. For instance, meandering lines may be seen as snakes.

Stage three: Geometric forms may persist peripherally. Entry into this stage is often via a vortex or tunnel; both flying and subterranean travel are widely reported. (Lewis-Williams 2002, 121–135.)

Even though this three-stage model illustrates the common scenario of mind-altering through a variety of ways, it resonates with most of my active lucid dream experiences. It recalls some of them that resemble the pre-cited process of entering the realm of spirits, which is similar to shamanic practice. This model describes the surroundings in lucid dreams that take the form of geometrical figures in the shape of a tunnel, a vortex, or a grid. These geometrical figures exist centrally, especially the vortex or the tunnel. Sometimes they are located peripherally or mixed with dream figures and surroundings that resemble nature, urban landscapes, and architecture. For instance, an image of an enormous grid made of hexagons and squares appears at a certain level in the dream space when an oneironaut is flying toward it. In addition to objects and surroundings that can be seen, there is an opportunity to change the appearance of an oneironaut’s own body. It is also possible to shapeshift into animals, plants, or other figures and manipulate the dream space.

Consequently, visionary artists might find that the forecited dream locations and scenarios can be mind-opening fuel for their creativity. An experience might be very similar to a psychedelic experience if it is being practised with intention and on an ongoing basis when the oneironautics technique is being applied. There is a wide variety of scenarios, dream figures, and hidden locations in lucid dreams, and access to them can be, indeed, very beneficial for visionary artists. Moreover, it does not have the side effects of psychedelic substances, but it might have some negative impacts that can be diminished with practice, like sleep paralysis. This is a natural phenomenon that sometimes occurs simultaneously with out-of-body experiences and lucid dreams when the body is paralysed, and the consciousness is awake. The side effect can be simply ignored because despite its terrifying nature it is physically harmless. It is also believed among those who

are experienced with dreams that it can even be beneficial for lucid dreamers because it is easier to leave the body when it is paralysed.

3.1.2 Techniques for oneironauts

The most common technique for beginner lucid dreamers and oneironauts is those from Carlos Castaneda's books. According to anthropologist, author, and teacher Carlos Castaneda (b.1925) one of the easiest techniques to become aware of being in a dream is to start searching for the hands of a dreamer and to look at them (Castaneda 1993, 15). This trick helps to understand that a dreamer or an oneironaut is inside a dream scenario. However, there is a broader range of techniques that can amplify the mind's perception and shift the focus of awareness.

A group of oneironauts and programmers from Russia and Eastern Europe named Dream Hackers created their community and online forum in the 1990-the 2000s. It was dedicated to lucid dreams and oneironautics, and it was a place where they introduced the topic of dream cartography. All of them were influenced in one way or another by the books of Carlos Castaneda. Castaneda was an anthropologist and author whose books on lucid dreams are based on the teachings of Yaqui Indian sorcerer Don Juan Matus (b. 1891).

The Dream Hackers' name derived from the fact that many of them were programmers by occupation, and they believed that it is possible to hack a dream, which is, in their opinion, a program written in code. To hack this code, one must know certain tricks and worms that can penetrate the software of a dream. The dream cartography technique suggested by the Dream Hackers was tested throughout the thesis.

According to Dream Hackers, dream cartography gives more opportunities than other techniques. Instead of focusing on the interpretation of recurring dream scenarios and interaction with dream figures, they suggested focusing on the surroundings of both conventional and lucid dreams. An oneironaut must pay attention to landscapes and surroundings in regular and lucid dreams and put them on a map later when awake, taking cardinal points into account to create a

map. The East and West swap, and the North and the South swap their places in the Dream Hackers maps. (Izrigi n.d.) The dream cartography technique improves dream recall, leads to profound insights, and might intensify the experience.

The results based on studies and records in personal dream maps and diaries made by the Dream Hacker group presented that the majority of locations visible in everyone's lucid dreams are similar. And even though some differences and things varied from one oneironaut to another, the main similarities of dream surroundings visible to everyone astonished the Dream Hackers. For instance, the universal dream matrix contains places like labyrinths, industry zones, locations like "heaven" and "witch's woods", and the zone of cataclysms and transmutation. Many oneironauts from the Dream Hackers group reported information on these similarities. (Izrigi n.d.) This particular technique has been tested by me for many years, and it resulted in a series of profound experiences full of insights. The dream diary and dream maps were created to establish a habit of dream recall.

Other techniques that were applied in practice and described in the online forum of Dream Hackers were borrowed from the book "The Second Ring of Power" written by Castaneda. The stalking techniques that were used by Indian sorcerers included a series of exercises that should be performed in the daytime, in which a stalker is observing his or her weaknesses in everyday life (Izrigi n.d.).

In addition, the purpose of this technique is to get rid of activities that take too much time and energy from an oneironaut. It is believed among Dream Hackers that the practice of lucid dreaming, especially in the form of oneironautics, requires a lot of concentration. A lack of it is the main reason for the sudden abrupt of lucid dreams. And the ancient practice of stalking aims to illuminate those areas of life or qualities of a person that consume too much energy. (Izrigi n.d.) For example, bragging about one's achievements can contribute to a feeling of superiority and grandiosity of this individual, which is considered bad for such practices.

4 VISIONARIES AND LUCID DREAMERS

4.1 The fantastic realist and visionary– Ernst Fuchs

Austrian artist Ernst Fuchs (b. 1930) was the founder of the fantastic realism art movement and the Vienna school of fantastic realism. He was also recognised as a part of the first wave of visionaries. The fantastic realism style was created and developed by the artist himself and a group of his fellow academic painters Anton Lehmden, Arik Brauer, Rudolf Hausner, and Wolfgang Hutter, and it was based on classical Renaissance painting and modernism and influenced by surrealism. (Rapp 2010.)

To begin with, it is worthwhile noting that it all started at the end of World War Two when the capital city of Vienna was destroyed and when people were experiencing both post-traumatic stress and starting to have first glimpses of hope. It was the time when the akademie der bildenden Künste, which was partially destroyed, opened again. The post-war stress served as a source of the need for change, and this was the moment when the first visionaries were sown. Fifteen-year-old Fuchs and sixteen-year-old Erich Brauer (later Arik Brauer) found out that their interest in expressionism did not meet the expectations of their teacher of that time, Professor Robin C. Andersen. Nevertheless, while studying at the academy, akademie der bildenden Künste, Fuchs and Brauer found another teacher, who became a source of inspiration for them for many years, Professor Albert Paris Gütersloh. However, only five of them became the core founders of the fantastic realism movement, and they became recognized as the first generation of visionaries: Ernst Fuchs, Arik Brauer, Anton Lehmden, Rudolf Hausner, and Wolfgang Hutter. (Rapp 2010.)

Fuchs's innovative approach to art was misunderstood many times. For instance, his works and works of Hausner and Janschka were removed three times from the foyer of the Vienna concert hall in 1946. (Muschik 1974, 67.) It happened because the audience of that time could not understand their approach to art. For information, Hausner was a member and a co-founder of fantastic realism and one of the first visionaries who was also very familiar with rejection. His works were labelled as degenerate during the Nazi time. (Rapp 2010.)

Fuchs was receiving images and information from his vivid dreams consciously. For example, the visions of a colossus and an angel (Picture 4)came to him at the most challenging time in his life in very profound dreams, which he described as “I dreamt in a way which I had never dreamt before: strong and colourful, glowing...” (Fuchs 1970, 162). The artist emphasizes the significance of a visionary experience received in a state of a lucid dream:

My encounters with the phantastic, with that world which the corporal eye rarely or never sees... had always taken place before on a different level: on... the painting or drawing surface, the plate on which images impressed themselves ‘automatically’ as in a state of trance... Never before had I dreamt so violently, never seen such a vision, had never before ‘really’, with ‘open eyes’ been transferred into this other world. For, I am sure of this, such a dream is not seen in sleep, the state of the dreamer is awake, a brightly awake one... (Fuchs 1970, 162.)



PICTURE 4. Ernst Fuchs. The angel of the lord. 1983. (Wikiart 2012.)

Fuchs accentuates that he conveyed messages that “man only sees in his dreams or hallucinations”, and that “for me, the threshold has to be crossed from inner images to their expression in wakeful being – the transformation of dreams and fantasy into the world of reality and its plane of visual imagery” (Fuchs 1978, 49). Here, the artist claimed that he brings visions from one reality to another,

which can be associated with shamanic journeys that were briefly explained in chapter 3.1.1.

Fuchs was known for his rediscovery of the *mischtechnik*, the old master's painting technique, that was used by Dutch masters like Bosch. The main medium is the egg tempera mixed with oils. He combined this technique with a renaissance approach to realistic paintings, on top of that he added impressionist colour harmonies and subjects that are visionary, hieratic, and imaginary. (The Vienna academy of visionary art n.d.) He was inspired by the works of the great surrealist Salvador Dali (b. 1904), Christian and Jewish mysticism, and Carl Jung's (b. 1875) depth psychology (Hester 2021). All things considered, Fuchs's approach to art was both traditional and innovative, but the most significant part of his work is that he created visionary art making parallels between the real and ethereal, incorporating themes from worldwide religions and Jung archetypes, thus, making the ethereal part of his works valuable for society.

4.2 The polka dot visionary – Yayoi Kusama

Yayoi Kusama (b. 1929) is a Japanese 94 years old contemporary artist known for her impressive infinity rooms (Picture 5) filled with polka dots and never-ending patterns of all kinds. The enormous amounts of dots and other shapes are reflected in mirrors, thus, multiplying infinitely. Her installations and paintings are filled with intense visual elements that form a coherent endless whole that repeats as a fractal.

Kusama's unique style allowed her to gain recognition in her home country and worldwide. She was born in Japan, Nagano, as the youngest daughter of a conservative family. When the artist started expressing the desire to make art as a child, her family members did not accept it wholly. Instead, they wanted her to follow a traditional housewife path. Additionally, her mother took Kusama's drawings away and forced her to spy on her promiscuous father, which resulted in fear of intimacy and the male body for the young artist. (Tate n.d.)



PICTURE 5. Yayoi Kusama. Installation view of Infinity Mirror Room—Phalli's Field. 1965. (NPR 2022.)

Moreover, since the age of 10, Kusama has been suffering from psychosis, hallucinations and nightmares. For instance, an image of a pumpkin appeared to her in childhood as a vivid visual hallucination that “began to speak to me in the most animated way.”(Whyte 2018.) Kusama's artistic capacity arose from her psychosis and hallucinations, even though she has been tremendously haunted by them. The artist underlines that “artwork is an expression of my life, particularly of my mental disease.” (Kedmey 2017.) Indeed. Kusama's Visionary experience has always been fueled by hallucinations (auras, dots, pumpkins), but she perceives her art as a therapeutic tool for dealing with severe mental illnesses because she has been a patient in a mental health facility for more than 50 years. Images of dott-filled pumpkins that fill the infinity rooms are a great example of this visionary experience that is self-reflected in such a powerful visual form (Picture 6).



PICTURE 6. Yayoi Kusama. Infinity mirrored room — All the eternal love I have for the pumpkins. 2016. (Voon 2017.)

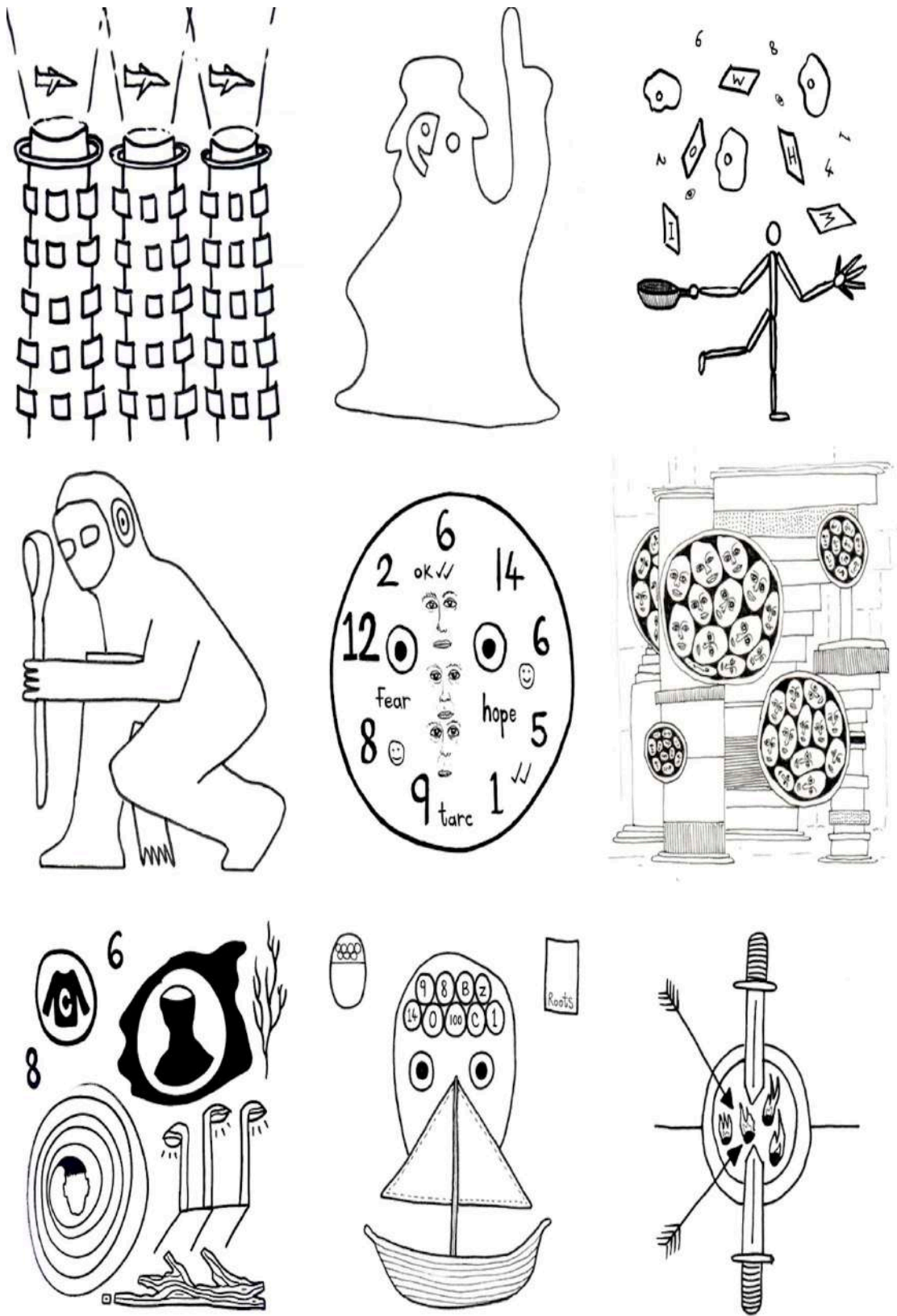
4.3 The lucid dreamer - Dave Green

Dave Green (b.1985) is a London-based lucid dream artist who creates simple drawings (Picture 7) in his lucid dreams and then re-creates them when awake. Green studied art at Sheffield Hallam in Yorkshire. At that time, he was inspired by David Lynch and surrealism, and his video works of that period were very experimental. The artist was striving for a place in a community that would share ideas based on creativity and eccentricity. However, he did not feel like a part of the art school because of its preoccupation with postmodern theory and the limitations of the contemporary art market. (Green n.d.)

The artist has been practising active lucid dreaming consciously since adolescence, and at the age of 17, he was able to create a drawing in a lucid dream and then re-create it after the awakening. However, young Green realised that his nocturnal art adventures were valueless to his art school community at

that time and to art dealers. (Green n.d.) Eventually, the artist started to get recognition for his lucid dream works during the COVID-19 lockdown through his social media like Instagram and YouTube. Besides, his detailed videos of the art-making process on YouTube helped him to establish a deeper connection between himself as a lucid dream artist and his audience. For instance, Green posted a drawing dedicated to his brother who died as an infant. This particular video elicited a response from a viewer who was affected by a health issue of her sibling. The viewer claimed that she discovered a world of dreams that helped her to combat feelings of pain and anxiety. (Green n.d.)

Certainly, Green's unique approach to art makes him stand out from the rest of the artists who make art based on their altered state of mind. The simplicity of his style goes along with the innovativeness of the chosen method. Furthermore, his inventive technique of making drawings in a lucid dream can act as a potential therapeutic tool leading to better self-reflection, self-understanding, and opportunities to find peace with one's uneasy feelings. On the contrary, the artist emphasises that lucid dreaming and dreams, in general, are very much neglected in Western culture, which is why spiritual art and art based on lucid dreams can shed light on something that is slightly overlooked at the moment. Green underlines that he feels more comfortable when art is asking questions rather than providing answers, and he does not want to pin it down too much. However, he would like people to reflect on the nature of reality. According to Green, lucid dreaming can serve an individual on a personal level as a source of profound meditation. The artist incorporates Buddhist approaches to meditation in a lucid dream in his practice for well-being and gaining insights. (Appendix 1.)



PICTURE 7. Dave Green. Drawings. (Green n.d.)

5 MY PROJECT PART THAT WAS INSPIRED BY ONEIRONAUTICS

5.1 The preparation process

My preparation process began in October 2022, when the first ideas for the art project started to enter my mind through the recall of my past vivid lucid dream experiences and the intake of new, totally new visions. The idea of combining the painting (or paper-based part of the project) with miniature sculptures and ambient music was approved in October of 2022 by my advisor Tiiu Baldwin.

Later, the idea was announced to other teachers, and it was discussed with the rest of the group. Eventually, this particular proposal was accepted by everyone, and it was decided that the installation will be placed in the gallery Himmelblau, Kutomosali three, on and in front of the first wall on the fourth floor (three B). With this in mind, the preparation process for the Degree Show started in the autumn of 2022.

5.1.1 Paper-based part of the project

Since my art project included a lot of work with paper-based items, this particular chapter is focused on the paintings and drawings that were made on paper for the Degree Show. The paper choice fell on the bamboo paper made by a familiar brand Hahnemuhle, which is known for its refined and sustainable qualities. A set of watercolour tubes by Sennelier was ordered from TAMK in the late autumn of 2022, along with nine pieces of bamboo paper, 70*100 cm each. The process included a few stages, first starting with dream recall through a dream diary. After that, the sketching phase came into action. Later, the main part of the process started when the initial idea for a sketch seemed appropriate and when it fitted into the criteria for a particular painting.

Basilisks/Guardians

This is a work inspired by a personal vision of gigantic reptiles that guard specific astral realms. These beings can be seen as frightening because they belong to different natural sights or locations within the dream space and protect them from harm or any unwanted attention of intruders. However, it might be that their scary appearance is only a riddle in disguise for oneironauts who have pure intentions. My personal lucid dream experiences served as the basis for this particular piece. Different visions of dragons and snakes of enormous sizes with piercing glowing eyes were burst upon the eyes a few times in lucid dreams. Interestingly, different mythologies and spiritual movements talk about similar creatures who appear in many forms. For instance, there is a Brazilian legend of a fiery Boitata, a gigantic guardian of the Amazon region, who appears as an enormous snake with glowing eyes. According to a legend, this snake protects the rainforests and indigenous people from fire, harm and intruders. (Medianet n.d.) This corresponded to a personal experience in which a giant snake with a body full of glowing eyes appeared to me. This creature did not let me in and made me feel very terrified.

For this piece, several techniques were applied in practice. First of all, the initial sketch was made on a small piece of bamboo paper. This helped to set up the main forms and to decide whether it is working or not in terms of composition, tonal values, colour solution, and rhythm. When the initial idea turned into a clear and detailed sketch, the second phase came into action. The main elements were transferred onto a big piece of paper through manual sketching, and the first washes of colour were applied to the paper in the wet-into-wet technique to build the main forms of basilisks.

When the first layer became dry, the next washes made of one colour or a few colours were applied on top of the first layers in the glazing technique and in the dry-into-wet technique. Other parts that needed improvement were cleaned with a dry paper towel in the lifting technique. Additionally, metallic pigment mixed with salt was applied to the background. The latest phase included detailed work with patterns inside the basilisks, the dry-into-dry technique was used in this stage. The final results are visible in Picture 8.



PICTURE 8. Elina Kinnunen. Basilisks/Guardians. Finished work. 70*100 cm.
Watercolour, gouache, metallic pigments, and salt on bamboo paper. 2023.

Spiralled into Oblivion and Back

The idea for this particular piece did not come to me in a specific lucid dream but rather originated from a series of lucid dreams and daily observations. The visions of past lives can be traced to many personal lucid dream experiences. The concept of reincarnation can be considered a part of many spiritual movements and even religions. The spiral can be interpreted as an ancient symbol of rebirth because this symbol was used widely in ancient artworks of the Neolithic Era, especially in ancient tombs in Newgrange, Ireland, as seen in Picture 9 (Beyer 2018). The first rays of the rising Sun illuminate the passage and chamber of the Newgrange tomb at the time of the Winter Solstice (Boyne Valley Tours n.d.). This fact indicates a possible connection between death and rebirth themes because the spiral symbol is positioned inside the tomb, and the spiral symbols become especially illuminated at the time when days start getting longer again. Thus, seasonal changes of the years marked with Solstices used to play a significant role for ancient civilizations, and the spiral was used to point to them symbolically.



PICTURE 9. Nigel Killeen. Newgrange, Ireland. (Getty Images n.d.)



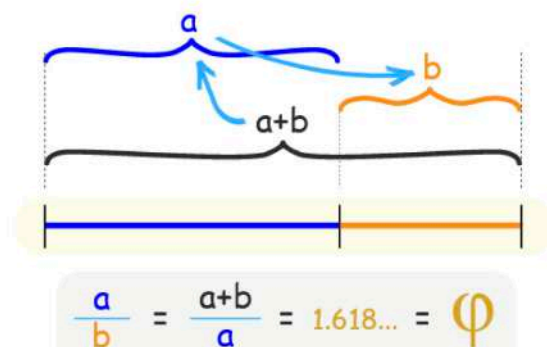
PICTURE 10. Spiral patterns in nature (Canva n.d.).

We find the golden ratio when we divide a line into two parts so that:

the long part divided by the short part

is also equal to

the whole length divided by the long part



PICTURE 11. Golden ratio (Golden ratio n.d.).

The spiral pattern can also be found in nature, such as in the shapes of galaxies, flower buds, and seashells (Picture 10). It is found in the Fibonacci sequence and the Golden ratio. The Golden ratio is a mathematical ratio that can be found in geometry, nature, and art. Two numbers are in the Golden ratio if the ratio of the sum of the numbers ($a+b$) divided by the larger number (a) is equal to the ratio of the larger number (a) divided by the smaller number (b). The Golden ratio is about 1.618 and is represented by the Greek letter phi, ϕ . (Picture 11). Subsequently, the Fibonacci sequence is an example of the Golden ratio, it is a sequence of never-ending numbers, starting with 0 and 1, continuing by adding two previous

numbers: 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144, 233, 377, 610, 987, 1597, 2584, 4181, 6765, 10946, 17711, 28657, 46368, 75025, 121393, 196418, 317811,...(Golden Ratio n.d.) Based on a series of daily and nocturnal observations, the decision was taken to use a spiral as a symbol that originates from nature and is associated with an ongoing cycle of death and rebirth.

Spiralled into Oblivion and Back was painted with watercolours and gouache on bamboo paper. First of all, areas that suggest stars were masked with masking fluid. When these areas became dry enough, the masking fluid was removed. The main mass that suggests outer space and the galaxy spiral was painted using the wet-into-wet technique. Later, the dripping technique was used to create textures and blots. The glazing technique was applied to build the figures that are visible in Picture 12.



PICTURE 12. Elina Kinnunen. Spiralled into Oblivion and Back. Finished work. 70*100 cm. Watercolour and gouache on bamboo paper. 2023.

Shapeshifter

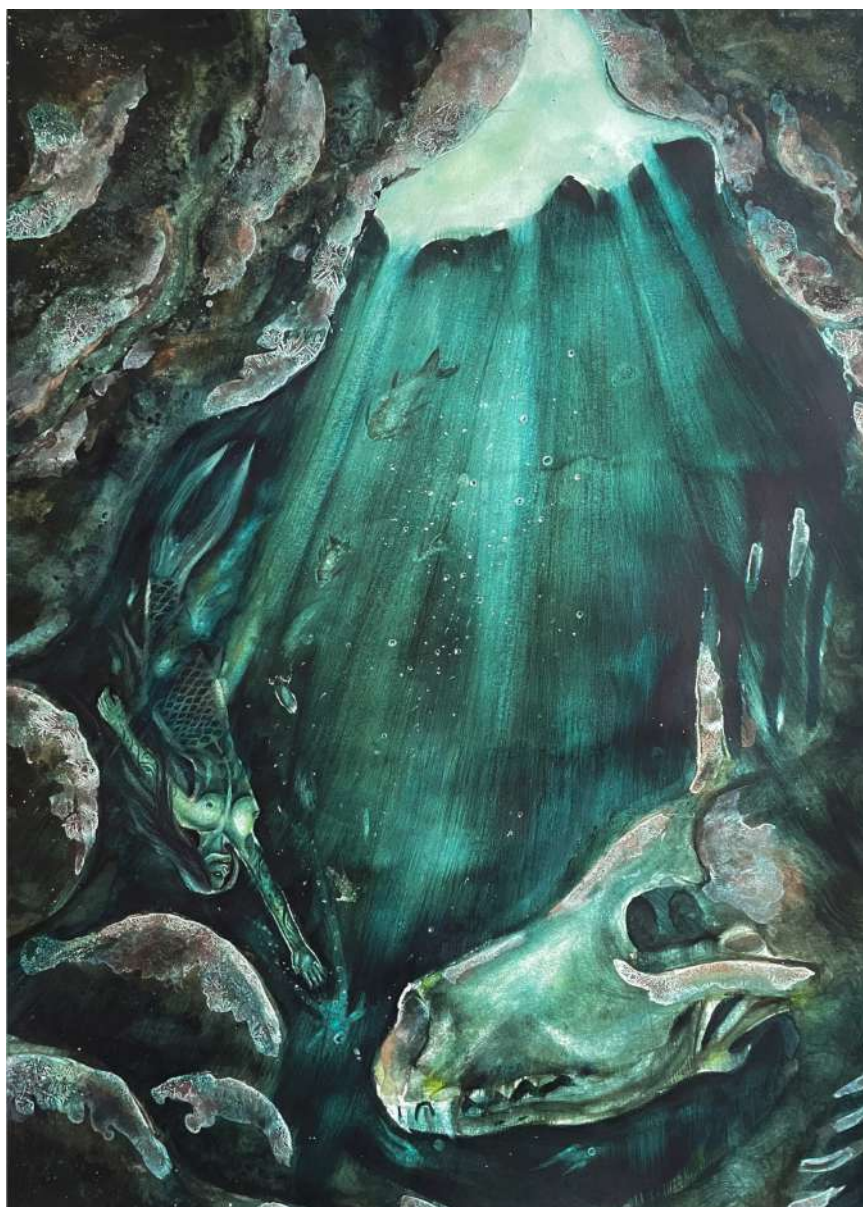
Through a series of personal lucid dreams, one may notice that it is easy to shapeshift into anything. A vision for this painting was received in a hypnagogic state of mind when the brain is tired but is still awake. For this piece, several watercolour techniques were applied in practice. First, areas reserved for the stars were covered with masking fluid. The masking fluid was removed when the fluid became dry enough. The painting was painted with washes made of a few colours using the wet-into-wet technique. The figures, mountains, and the tree spruce mass were painted using the glazing technique. The areas that suggest Aurora Borealis were painted using the lifting technique with a big brush. Picture 13 shows the finished work.



PICTURE 13. Elina Kinnunen. Shapeshifter. Finished work. 70*100 cm.
Watercolour on bamboo paper. 2023.

Abyss

The idea for this piece came through a series of experiences in which water scenes and areas of water bodies were visible in a state of awareness within the dreamscape. Symbolically, mermaids are associated with the subconscious and the water element. Here, the main masses were established using the flat wash technique, in which the main mass of the water was suggested. After that, the rays of light were made using the lifting technique with a big flat brush. Later, the figures of the reptile's skull, the mermaid, and the mass that suggests rocks were painted using glazing and salting techniques. Picture 14 demonstrates the finished work.



PICTURE 14. Elina Kinnunen. Abyss. Finished work. 70*100 cm. Watercolour on bamboo paper. 2022.

5.1.2 Miniature sculptures

The choice fell on miniature sculptures consisting of rocks, pebbles, moss, and broken glass because of their tangible nature that complements the ethereal subject of paintings and the main theme of the research organically and efficiently. It was decided that the sculptures resemble tangible gateways or portals to the world of lucid dreams.

The first rock-balancing sculptures were arranged in the winter of 2021. They were constructed of stones that were foraged in the same place. Later, these first sculptures served as a reference for final artworks. Pictures 15 and 16 illustrate the first rock-balancing sculptures that were created outdoors. The initial plans helped to establish a general idea and a sense of spatial relationships between the elements. The final versions of miniature sculptures were arranged at the gallery Himmelblau during the exhibition building process. At this point, additional materials such as moss, broken glass, branches, and metallic sculptures were used, too. Pictures 17 and 18 demonstrate the closeups of the final land artworks at the gallery Himmelblau.



PICTURE 15. Elina Kinnunen. The first rock-balancing sculpture. 2021.



PICTURE 16. Elina Kinnunen. The second rock-balancing sculpture. 2021.



PICTURE 17. Elina Kinnunen. The final miniature sculptures. 2023.

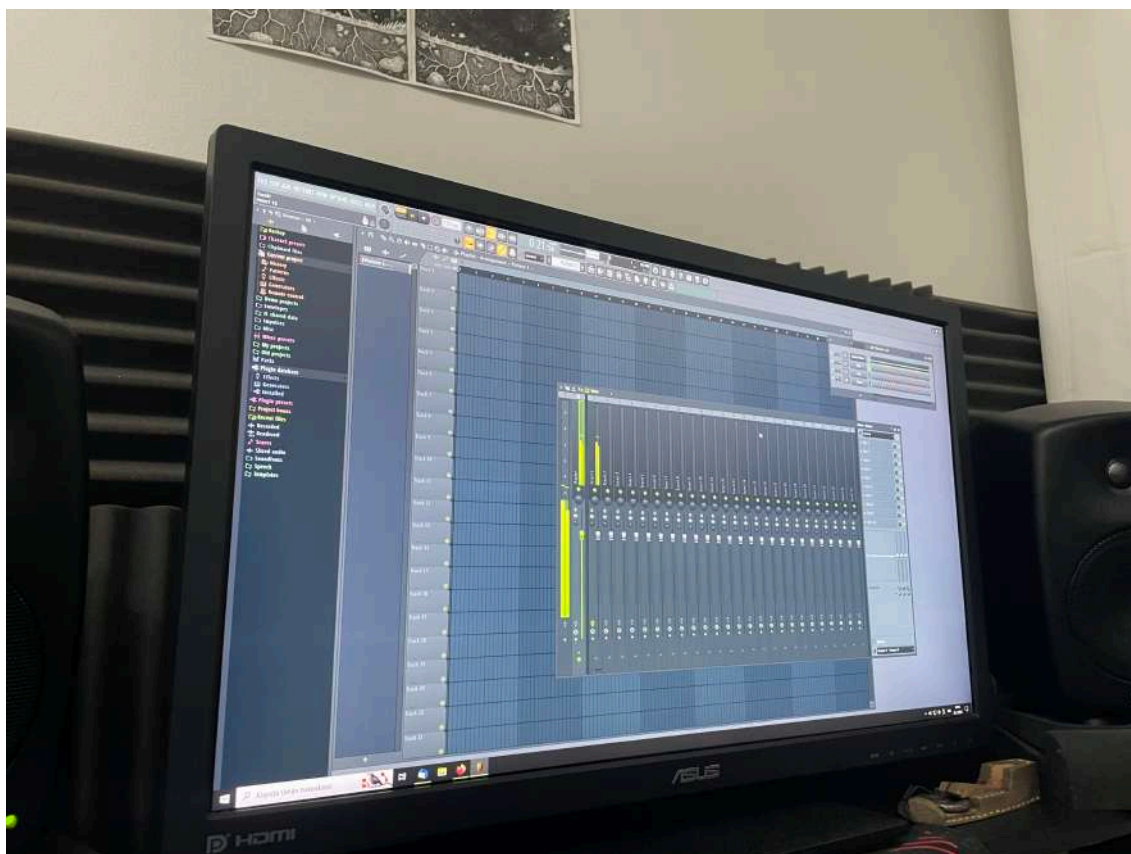


PICTURE 18. Elina Kinnunen. The final miniature sculptures. 2023

5.1.3 Ambient music

It was decided to make ambient music in collaboration with an artist Teknojta for the music part of the project. The ambient music's purpose was to set up a mysterious mood for the installation. The main software that was used here is the Fruity Loops program which contains ready ambient samples. Here, samples named space drone and biohazard were used for the track. Later, my growling voice was recorded with a microphone and sent to the main computer.

Following that, Russian and Yakut jaw harps were played and recorded with the microphone. The information was transferred to the main computer and turned into samples that were arranged and composed using the software. Pictures 19 and 20 demonstrate the track from the Fruity Loops program and a recording of jaws harp sounds. The track was uploaded to a personal Soundcloud profile: https://soundcloud.com/elina_kinnunen/lucid-dream-ambience-1?si=c2ff968951284d57ab9f120fb3bfe7ca&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing



PICTURE 19. Elina Kinnunen. Using the Fruity Loops software. 2023.

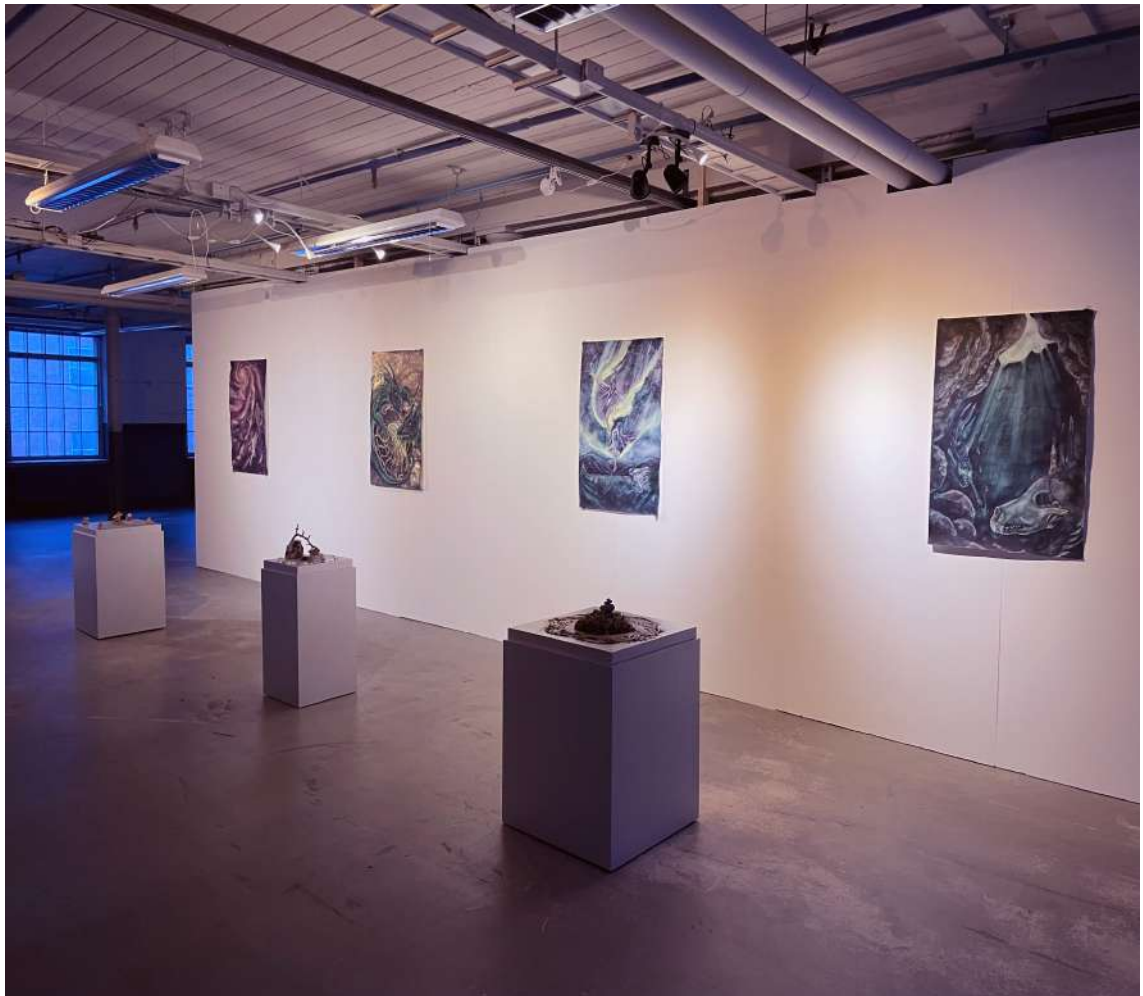


PICTURE 20. Elina Kinnunen. Recording the jaw's harp sounds. 2023.

5.2 Building the exhibition

The building process started at the end of February 2023. Picture 21 illustrates the first version of the installation, in which four paintings, 70*100 cm each, were arranged on a 9,6 m long wall with a gap of 170 cm between them. The three stands were used to display miniature sculptures in front of the gaps between the paintings so that there will be enough space for visitors.

The chosen installation of the artworks did not lead up to the best results, according to my advisor, Tiiu Baldwin. The gaps of space between the works were too broad, which distracted the attention from the works. The paintings were installed again with smaller gaps in between them which helped to make the whole installation look more coherent, as seen in Picture 22.



PICTURE 21. Elina Kinnunen. The first installation. 2023.

5.2.1 Final results

The final installation consisted of four paintings arranged close to each other in the middle section of the wall and three silver stands displaying the miniature sculptures. The ambient music was coming from the speakers in the closet section. The installation included space between the stands so that visitors could navigate freely through the place.

Picture 22 illustrates the final installation and the scale of works within the space of Kutomosali three at the gallery Himmelblau. Pictures 23, 24, 25, and 26 are focused on the details of the paintings. Pictures 27 and 28 give attention to the details of the sculptures and the position of the elements within the installation. The four paintings act as focal point of the installation, while the miniature sculptures complement them without causing too much attention.



PICTURE 22. Elina Kinnunen. Installation view. Paintings: “Spiralled into Oblivion and back”, “Basilisks/Guardians”, “Shapeshifter”, “Abyss”. 2023. Photograph: Victoria Fofanova.



PICTURE 23. Elina Kinnunen. Details of the painting "Spiralled into Oblivion and back". 2023.



PICTURE 24. Elina Kinnunen. Details of the painting "Spiralled into Oblivion and back". 2023.



PICTURE 25. Elina Kinnunen. Details of the painting "Basilisks/Guardians".
2023.



PICTURE 26. Elina Kinnunen. Details of the painting "Shapeshifter". 2023



PICTURE 27. Elina Kinnunen. Installation. 2023.



PICTURE 28. Elina Kinnunen. Details of a miniature sculpture. 2023.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The thesis aimed to collect information on oneironautics and demonstrate the efficiency of this mind-altering technique as a potential tool for contemporary visionary artists. The theoretical part of the thesis contained an overview of contemporary visionary art, its history, and its importance. At the same time, the research part suggested techniques that can help to achieve the active lucid dreaming state of mind. Furthermore, it focused particularly on oneironautics because it is an efficient technique that alters a state of consciousness with fewer side effects.

The case study focused on contemporary visionary artists like Ernst Fuchs, who was gathering information and inspiration for his works through vivid conscious dreams, Yayoi Kusama, who has been making art fuelled by her aural and audial hallucinations and an artist Dave Green, who is working with the medium of the lucid dream itself. The latter's artist approach to art is considered very innovative because the artist creates "drawings from dreams, not of dreams" (Green n.d.). Not only he uses the dream itself as a medium for his drawings, but he also re-creates them when he wakes up from a lucid dream to make them tangible.

On the contrary, my art project part of the thesis presented a series of works based on oneironautics that depicts the surroundings of the dream matrix, portray common archetypes, and illustrate the potential abilities for visionary artists that are available in the realm of active lucid dreams. Furthermore, the thesis suggested that oneironautics can lead a visionary artist to a series of profound insights. Moreover, the practice of oneironautics does not require extraordinary or time-consuming efforts, even though it certainly demands motivation and consistency when applying its techniques in practice regularly. With this in mind, a contemporary visionary artist can benefit from oneironautics as a mind-altering tool for broadening the perception.

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PICTURE 12. Elina Kinnunen. Spiralled into Oblivion and Back. Finished work. 70*100 cm. Watercolour and gouache on bamboo paper. 2023.

PICTURE 13. Elina Kinnunen. Shapeshifter. Finished work. 70*100 cm. Watercolour on bamboo paper. 2023.

PICTURE 14. Elina Kinnunen. Abyss. Finished work. 70*100 cm. Watercolour on bamboo paper. 2022.

PICTURE 15. Elina Kinnunen. The first rock-balancing sculpture. 2021.

PICTURE 16. Elina Kinnunen. The second rock-balancing sculpture. 2021.

PICTURE 17. Elina Kinnunen. The final miniature sculptures. 2023

PICTURE 18. Elina Kinnunen. The final miniature sculptures. 2023

PICTURE 19. Elina Kinnunen. Using the Fruity Loops software. 2023.

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PICTURE 21. Elina Kinnunen. The first installation. 2023.

PICTURE 22. Elina Kinnunen. Installation view. Paintings: "Spiralled into Oblivion and back", "Basilisks/Guardians", "Shapeshifter", "Abyss". 2023. Photograph: Victoria Fofanova.

PICTURE 23. Elina Kinnunen. Details of the painting "Spiralled into Oblivion and back". 2023.

PICTURE 24. Elina Kinnunen. Details of the painting "Spiralled into Oblivion and back". 2023.

PICTURE 25. Elina Kinnunen. Details of the painting "Basilisks/Guardians". 2023.

PICTURE 26. Elina Kinnunen. Details of the painting "Shapeshifter". 2023

PICTURE 27. Elina Kinnunen. Installation. 2023.

PICTURE 28. Elina Kinnunen. Details of a miniature sculpture. 2023.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview with Dave Green

INTERVIEW WITH DAVE GREEN

Question 1. How would you describe your working process?

I create artwork directly in a lucid dream. I enter a lucid dream, get a pen and a piece of paper in the dream environment, make a drawing and then create a copy of that when I wake up. For example, I create portraits where I meet specific people in my lucid dreams, and I create a portrait of that person in my dream, and then I re-create that in my waking life. So it is like a drawing created from an interaction with the person in my lucid dream. So the drawing is always a part of the story, a part of the larger narrative.

Question 2. Do you think spiritual art based on lucid dreams is important? How can it benefit society on a collective level?

That is a big question. I would say dreams are very much neglected in Western culture historically and even more so currently. So in that respect, it is beneficial to shed light on something that is slightly overlooked at the moment, but I hesitate to pin it down too much. For me, when you start pinning art down and attempting to spread a specific message, that becomes a bit unsatisfying. I think I am more comfortable when art is asking questions rather than providing answers. So, I like to leave it open, and I do not want to pin it down too much and say that I am trying to make people think in a certain way. But I would like people to reflect on the nature of reality.

Question 3. How can your lucid dream-based art benefit you on a personal level?

And in terms of it benefiting me on a personal level, the things that I gained the most benefit from lucid dreaming is what you might call a sense of well-being, that is not to do with the artworks, that is to do with the Buddhist approach to dreaming and meditating in a lucid dream.