

Gallery Guide

Dreaming

We all dream. Dreaming has several connotations, one being what happens when we are sleeping; the other instead relates to what we emotionally wish and hope for. Dreaming and imagination are both processes of the human brain, and neither are based on reality. The distinction is that imagination is a rational process in which we take information and then use it in a creative manner to create something new; dreams, on the other hand, come from the unconscious.

Dreams can be a wonderful stimulus for imagination. Dreams used in art have a long history, as artists have depicted what might be perceived in a dream-like state, or they have illustrated ideas conjured during dreaming. In the 20th century, the idea of dreaming took on another slant with the Surrealists, Symbolists and Expressionists, as they explored the unconscious as written about by Freud. The concept here allowed freedom to artists to explore not only what they perceived in the outside world, but to combine images that might not otherwise seem related, allowing the unconscious to emerge as creative director.

In this exhibition, **Dreaming**, the artists use imagery that feels dream-like, whether realistic or abstract. What makes work like this so compelling is that the viewer then is asked to take an active part in interpretation. As viewers, we are not *told* what to think or feel, but must allow our own reactions to guide us as to meaning or our emotional visual connections. Our understanding of the works relies on our *own* personal experiences rather than an intellectual understanding of what the artist wants to convey. So, enjoy!

Reginald Coleman's works are paintings and collages in which he places images culled from his vast source of clippings. The works shown here are targets, with the larger image always a circle, the smaller section including text or imagery, all in a 2:3 ratio format. Coleman places a strong emphasis on design, but his process is very intuitive while he creates, choosing text and imagery that creates subconscious connections. Many of the works address race and dignity, and are sometimes humorous in their connections of images. As viewers, we are drawn in by our attempts to read the text and draw relationships between the images that couldn't really exist in real time.

Clark Ellithorpe creates abstract paintings with soft floating shapes that interact by placement, space and at times, line. They have a dream-like quality with their soft and elegant color relationships, organic forms, and often scribbled lines. These works

elicit emotional response simply because they seem to come so directly from the artist's process, as if he just allows his hand and eye to take over and create. We can almost feel his placing one shape down, and then responding to that shape with another gesture. The works seem to come from a deep subconscious state, and yet allows us as witnesses.

Anne Hughes works feel especially dream-like with their floating images and soft pastel shapes. She utilizes symbols in her works combined with unreal landscapes and figures; the vision is much like what we might see in our dreams. Her works create a search for meaning. She writes that for her, "art is meditation," and we sense that in experiencing her works. The soft pastel edges of forms and brilliant colors used evoke an emotional response from viewers

The graphic works of **Teresa Pankratz** are actually based on her dreams from a year. She spent the year remembering, recording and then drawing her dreams in order to celebrate her 59th year. These works became the basis for one of her artist's books. The works themselves convey that dream-like compression of time, with images that make sense in those stories that appear while we are sleeping. Because in the 21st century we are accustomed to seeing images overlaid that have unexpected relationships, we can accept the reading of these works from her subconscious. The beautiful drawings intrigue us to find meaning and connections in the liminal world she creates.

Jim Waid paints works that combine recognizable images with abstractions, creating an atmosphere of immateriality. Organic shapes, forms, flowers and leaves float through his canvasses as if they are part of a dream. Waid exaggerates color and space to achieve this feeling of floatation. There is a nebulous quality to the space found in his paintings that give a sense of drifting and layering, as if we ourselves are floating. The paintings exude airiness, a gentle movement from one form to the other, yet supply us with some realistic imagery to intrigue our imaginations. We are perplexed and enchanted by the unreality of flowers existing in such a space, and in the end, are delighted and intrigued by what we know cannot be true. Waid's richly saturated palette add to the enchantment.

The works in **Dreaming** transport us from the everyday reality to a sense of wonder that can be explored in dreams. Artists use whatever inspiration frees them to create and explore. These works reflect an appreciation of the subconscious mind and the freedom it allows us to imagine, feel and ultimately, learn.