

Life—a dream?—or even better “The Dream—a Life” (as Peter Altenberg formulated it in one of his splendid stories)? Dreams have inspired humans since antiquity in all branches of art, to follow these strange half-realities and possibly make them useful. It’s not the processing and working on mythological themes that is meant here, but rather very seriously the problem of acknowledging dreams as belonging to the reality of human life as well as the difficulty of their content and possibilities of interpretation.

There’s an old saying that whoever sleeps doesn’t sin—but whoever dreams can definitely sin. The church had problems in the Middle Ages about how to deal with sinning in dreams. Philosophers have intensively—even methodically--worked with the chaos of dreams, which are unrestrained in making the most abstruse connections between otherwise separate areas of reality. That was condemned to failure.

In the literature of the Classical Age, one dealt with dreams more heuristically. In dreams, life is reflected, albeit in code, in its diverse weavings and interconnections of separate realms of life and experiences. Goethe’s *Werther* shows where it can lead when one develops a life dream out of a deep feeling that is not a real plan, and therefore fails—with a bitter end. Karl Philipp Moritz, the inventor and founder of the psychological novel, showed in his prototypical novel of personal development, “Anton Reiser,” how a character can find his own way, even in the area of tension of the comparison between dreamed of ideals with the clearly more dismal state of reality. His “Walks in Syracuse,” nourished by factual events, leads suddenly into dream sequences that create a new, different reality.

One hundred years later a new, scientific study of dreams begins. Sigmund Freud does not so much try to get wise to the “nervous age” shortly before World War 1, but rather much more tries to make sense of nervousness within and without. He develops a theory of symbols of dream content, classifying the symbols and their evocative effect onto the personalities that he is examining.

Many artists are influenced and inspired by Freudian psychoanalysis and especially its dream interpretation. In the visual arts and literature it is primarily the surrealists from Andre Breton to Salvador Dali or Max Ernst.

The surrealist methodology of *écriture und peinture automatique*, of free association in writing and painting, finds its voice in the painting of Jackson Pollock, for example, who was actually a surrealist—not an expressionist. His many apparently indecipherable paintings bring expression to his way of painting—he doesn’t want to portray and interpret feelings, he wants to bring these straight to the canvas.

All dream researchers agree that dreams have their basis in an individual’s psychological experiences of waking life. Later artists, like here and today Felicia Glidden, have found and developed pragmatic approaches to dealing with their dreams and translating them, at least basically, for all people. That has had sobering

effects on the views of science and the belief in facts with regard to dreams. From 1990-1992 the American artist Janine Antoni created a work that she called "Slumber." She spent nights in a gallery and sometimes in a lab and let her EEG be taken. That went on for weeks. She fed the jagged amplitude lines incurred in the EEG into the control system of an automatic loom that, with its design, wove a principally endless fabric web. The EEG records all brain activity, including dreams. Some peak sequences could be assigned to dream events, and were thus made visible in an abstract way, i.e. were translated into "scientific" images.

Felicia Glidden goes a completely different way of her own. For a good 25 years she tries to remember and document her dreams. She discusses them in regular meetings with other women (not just artist women) because perhaps the experience of dreaming as well as dream symbolism could be determined by gender. That is what Freud also supposed. For Felicia dreams are, at first, just a confusing sequence of events without a reasonable connection, however some recurring sequences lead to the conclusion that—if the carrying out of real daily life is reflected in a senseless way in the dream—there must be images that correspond to this reflection. That means Felicia wants to investigate the symbolic images behind the multimedia dream experience (it consists of actions, persons, and sounds). If they should become tangible, she can again translate them into universally comprehensible artistic images. "Translate" has a double meaning here. Because it also means the crossing of a stretch of water. The exhibit that is presented to us here depicts exactly this attempt to cross, the title "Unterströmungen/understreamings" is not chosen without reason. And the most conspicuous part of this exhibit is surely the constructed installation on the middle level of the gallery with the title "Between Two Rivers/Zwischen zwei Flüssen." The stationary part of this installation is a type of wall of "bricks," as she calls them, but these building bricks are not made of sturdy material, but rather rectangular stones of thin steel bars that were sewn into material. Handmade paper was then placed inside the bricks that, after drying, comes off the material and sticks to the steel. The paper remains in varying conditions—some fully retained, some ripped, some just rudimentary. So the bricks are partly see through, partly not. There are bare bricks scattered throughout the whole thing. From two different corners she then projects a video onto this permeable wall, that appears as if reflected. The projection perspective is slanted from below diagonally through the room and to the wall. A dream image appears in a space-created multimedia format, over which Felicia herself speaks. Her passages are clips from her reflections of dreamwork, they describe unexpected repetitions and intensification in their dream sequences. One of the essential elements in her dreams is water, which she portrays in the videos in various forms, not only physically but also phenomenologically. And of course her voice is not the only source of sound, we hear water sounds, street noise, church-like cowbells, street musicians, an old soul song and much more. Through the simultaneity of different and changing video and audio sequences it is easy for the observer to let oneself get in a trance at the spectacle that is not really a spectacle in the real sense of the word, but rather works like an introspection, a look into one part of one's own irreality, one's own dream world. The water is there for omnipresent oceanic evocations that

are generally tied together with sexual fantasies and illusions. Here Felicia draws close to Freud's dream interpretation, where sexual energy of the libido dominates dream events, because the libido is the dominating aspect of the unconscious that, only in the dream, can force its way half-realistically. For the moment, this has nothing to do with the immediacy of sexuality.

But this aspect definitely comes into effect when the water sounds become a supportive element of the accompanying musical performance of Alain Wozniak, Felicia's husband. He writes congenially conceptualized pieces that match with Felicia's installation, and he formulates from them in his performance improvisations that have an extremely reinforcing effect. We have here a directly and harmoniously interactive artist pair, whose mutual product is "Between two Rivers": this installation feeds itself on the libidinous energy of two artists who stand in harmony with one another and thereby make yet another dream real.

In her pictures and sculptures Felicia explains—this time alone—individual aspects of her approach, but there is no direct mediumistic connection with the installation. Felicia Glidden is an artist who is versed in many genres of art. But she always works with energy, strength and unusual approaches—almost multi-medial again. In the texts of her installation one hears her consider questions of (dream)time, (dream)reality, (dream)symbolism and yes, if you will, also dream-paths. And it becomes clear that she deals with all of this from the point of view of physical materiality. In her pictures this is created in such a way that she again and again sands down, or washes away with a wet sponge, the paper or the screen, then the faded colors and layers of paint, in order to avoid a certain purity of color and the color's agency. This reflects the ever uncertain remainders of dream memories.

In her sculptures, mostly from cast iron, less often from bronze, other aspects of the dream get expressed. There are some bowl-like casts that partly work with sexual allusions to feminine sexuality in a nearly archaic sense: the bowl as a thing that can receive something, that is ready for conception. Others, in their conception on a heavy foundation with a structure that fans out on top, are reminiscent of modern ruins, namely the Twin Towers at Ground Zero. Applied to the work with dreams, symbolically they might mean that dreams probably really have their foundation in the real living of life of the individual, so that stereotypes are found in the dreams of all people. But from this "foundation" the most varied dream currents develop that naturally swirl in all directions, although they are unconscious reflections of what one has experienced. Dreams are also peculiar to the individual. But they offer obvious schemas, also when they sometimes find cohesion merely through a ribbon wrapped around (red, red alert!).

We find ourselves at an exhibit that demands our attention on multiple levels and only reveals its full meaning if one appreciates all of its aspects. That is an engaging undertaking. I hope I have offered clear guidance for this endeavor.