

UNFOLDING DREAMS AND MEMORIES

Consider *dreams*.

Consider *memories*.

Consider how one can fold into the other, intertwining through time and space, unraveling and recombining deep within our thoughts, and then unfold again, yielding new insight.

Lately, I have been considering these things. When I was a girl, growing up on the Beautiful Island, life was crowded with experiences and impressions that now seem far removed. A tropical riot of color, air heavy with humidity, the dusty playground, street vendors and crowded markets, the deep blue of the ocean and green of the hillsides – it was a sensuous place to be a kid. All these experiences of the senses – smells, sounds, colors, tastes – still reside evocatively in my memories, as real as life itself. And yet, they've become out of focus, the unraveled strands of a life lived apart from childhood.

Sometimes, though, this treasure chest of early memories emerges clearly in dreams to reawaken that previous life, so long ago. The strands come back together and an echo of that earlier life returns to consciousness. The Dream unfolds the Memories.

This intertwining of Dreams and Memories has intrigued me for many years, and has been a consistent undercurrent in my painting for as long as I can remember. Even if the explicit subject of a painting is elsewhere, I have come to realize that this elusive nature of the impact dreams and memories have on our personal reality has always formed a subtext to my work. With this series of paintings, I am seeking to make an explicit exploration of this idea. Some of the paintings may reflect direct experiences or memories of my early life, while others are more abstract reflections on the ways in which the strands of memory gather together to shape present reality.

Encompassing both space and time, dreams and memories interact in deep ways to shape our lives. Memories are the building blocks of our very identity, but they are nebulous things – products, really, of how we *choose* to remember, rather than an unadorned former reality. And dreams – not aspirational dreams, but the strange, ephemeral visions that come to us in sleep – are the mind's way of synthesizing our experience of life, unfolding and displaying our memories to new examination.

Nebulous. Ephemeral. Intertwined. Unfolding. From a formal point of view, how does one capture these qualities on canvas?

To convey these ideas through painting, I have been exploring various techniques, in various combinations, including acrylic washes, pastel chalk dust, pen and ink, and traditional brush-applied acrylic. Especially with the washes and chalk dust techniques, there is spontaneity and a certain controlled randomness to the process that seem to suit these nebulous, ephemeral qualities that I hope to evoke in these paintings. The soft washes and chalk dust work together to create a space in which dreams and memories can flow. It is a space without specific location or certain time, but it contains our life's experiences. With the more precise pen and ink and brush-applied acrylic, the actual stuff of our dreams and memories move with complete freedom within this space, evoking the motion and temporal experience of our mind's reflections.

As this show is being held, I am making my first visit back to my childhood home, returning after more than 40 years to that strange land of my memories. The process of creating these paintings has partly been a response to the uncertainty of what I might find when I get there. The circle will finally close, but will the dreams and memories unfold a new reality?