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“I get my ideas out of my dreams...if you're lucky enough to use something you see in a dream, it is purely original. It's not in the world – it's in your head. I think that is amazing.” Alexander McQueen



Image 1: Boy entering Dreamscape installation

Much like the renowned fashion designer, I am interested in this basis of human subconscious thought. Over the years, I have completed several projects regarding this subject. Thus, there was no question in my mind what the content of my senior project would be.

Another interest of mine has been textiles, and the exciting developments the textile design world is currently experiencing through the use of technology. According to the Textile Art Council, “the visual language of textile now reaches across many disciplines in fine arts and design. And the traditions of textile design and techniques embrace technology to redefine what a textile is and can be”

(<http://www.textileartscouncil.org>). For example, programs like Adobe Illustrator now allow us to create designs and patterns on a computer, print them out, and then transfer those onto fabric. Thus, for my senior integrative project, I decided to combine my love for contemporary fiber arts and dreams to create an experimental textile design installation of large-scale inflatable fabric sculptures based on dream images. The goal of my project is to design inflatable's that embody my dreams and create an installation that conveys a visually immersive experience that one might deem “surreal”.

## DREAMS

Throughout history, dreams have been analyzed in terms of what they represent, how the human mind works while asleep, and the question of why we dream. In the early 18th century, dreams were interpreted and examined in terms of their meaning, but, by the 19th century, this idea had fallen out of fashion. In the 20th century, Sigmund Freud revolutionized dream interpretation with his idea that dreams have a deep rooted meaning in childhood fears. Freud studied dreams as a way to understand aspects of personality, and, more specifically, psychological problems and disorders. He believed that dreams were repressed urges and desires released by the unconscious during sleep. It wasn't until 1953, when a student at the University of Chicago, Nathaniel Kleitman, discovered R.E.M. or Rapid Eye Movement during dreaming, that the science behind dreaming was forever changed (dreamgate.com). The discovery of the sleep cycle created awareness that dreams occur during the R.E.M. part of sleep, when the mind is the most active (helpguide.org).

## CREATIVE PROCESS

Over a period of three months, I kept a dream journal that consists of 46 dreams in total. This lengthy documentation allowed me to analyze my own subconscious thought where I could pull imagery. The imagery of my dreams will be represented through designing large-scale fabric sculptures that will be inflated in order for the viewer to escape into my dreams that I have contextualized. For example, the pyramid inflatable stems from a dream I had October 6th where I walked into my dark family room to find my roommates sleeping in giant pyramid sleeping bags with their heads popping out of the top. There were several sleeping bags in the same beige color that were floating in a shallow pool of water. While this dream my sound eerie, I was at piece with this subconscious thought and remember wanted to find my own sleeping bag to climb into.



Image 2: Pyramid inflatable. Processes including dip-dyeing, screenprinting, and hand painting onto polyester

While analyzing my dreams, I researched several theories that German psychologist, C.G. Jung had created through interpreting several of his own patient's dreams. Two of his books, *Memories, Dreams, and Reflections* and *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious*, helped bridge the gap between philosophy, mathematics and modern psychology. Jung explains, "...there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually, but is inherited" (C.J.Jung, 85). This quote was backed up with a great analogy comparing the ways the human mind operates to a computer. Jung explains that a computer can run many different programs in the same way the human mind can perform several different behaviors at one time. Both our mind and the computer store these programs in some sort of long-term memory system. These organizing systems inherently organize memories in an "unconscious" manor. This concept of unconscious memories allowed me to analyze my own dreams to see how my mind works while asleep. Before entering the installation, the audience will be presented with an artist statement that will also explain what I have learned from Jung's discoveries.

## INFILATABLES

Before I considered working with inflatables, I first needed to know how they worked. The *Inflatocookbook* was the most helpful source. The cookbook is a self-published book on inflatable's that was created by the avant garde architecture group "Ant Farm" in the 1970's. In this source, I learned of the types of materials that are most commonly used when creating inflatable art pieces. The most commonly used material is polyethylene, which is a tough, pliable plastic that is impervious to moisture and lighter than water. While this is considered a textile, I knew I wanted to experiment with using fabric over plastic, which was a big risk. Fabric is not nearly as durable, resilient, and permeable as polyethylene. I also learned that the plastic material is often taped or heated to create a seal that inhibits air from escaping the structure. Instead, I experimented with sewing the fabric. I also had to consider how to make a ventilation system, which includes tubes for air to travel in and out of the structure, how to anchor the inflatable, and how to mathematically calculate the volume of each shape in order to properly inflate the structure. I did several models in order to find out what materials would inflate. The inflatable concept has inspired artists like Andy Warhol and Claes Oldenberg in projects like *Utopie* and *Archigram*, along with contemporary designers like Verner Panton and Issey Miyake, who have incorporated blow-ups into their work (*Blowup*). These inflatable structures evoke a sense of optimism and escape that I aspire to incorporate in my *Dreamscape* installation. Creating inflatable's allows me to be limitless in the scale of my fabric designs.



Image 3: Model using hair dryer to inflate polyester fabric

## PATTERNS, TEXTURES, AND DESIGN PROCESSES

Textile design is a very broad term and can include working with broad range materials such as paper, synthetic fabrics like polyester, and organic fibers like cotton or silk organza. My concept will incorporate several different types of fabric that will be altered. Depending on the imagery behind each varying inflatable sculpture, I will manipulate the fabric using various techniques, including screen printing, painting, devore, shabori, and the heat press techniques of wrinkling, creasing, crushing, pleating, embossing, and laminating. Each fabric piece and the techniques I use will give varying life to each sculpture and help represent the meaning behind each piece.

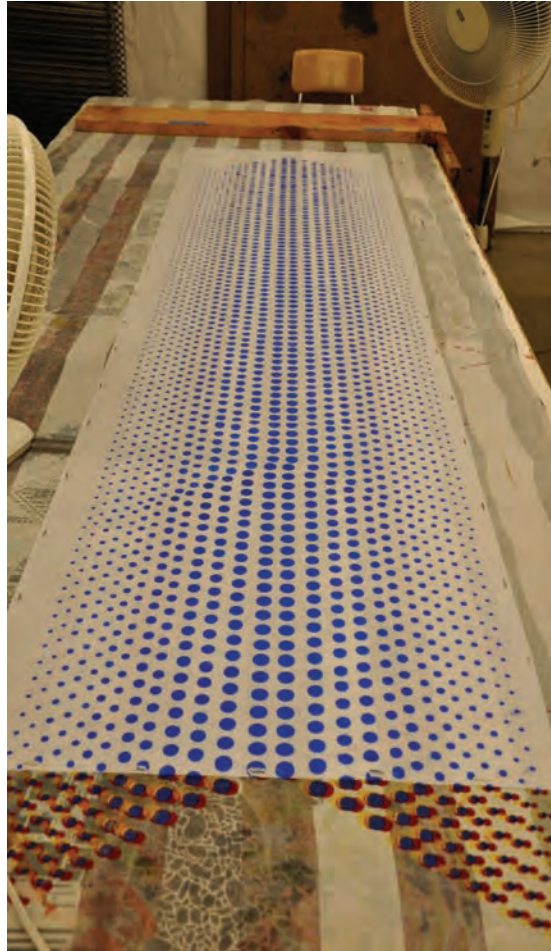


Image 4: Screenprint created in Adobe Illustrator and then transferred onto a photo-emulsion screen. Textile pigments printed on nylon rip-stop

## INSTALLATION ART

Along with psychology studies, I also gained inspiration from installation artists, architects, and furniture designers. Verner Panton was considered one of Denmark's most influential 20th century furniture and interior designers. His vibrant colors and innovative use of modular molded plastic furniture inspired me to experiment with my own ideas and materials. Yaacov Agam, a sculptor that made his largest contributions to optical and kinetic art, inspired me to work as an installation artist and think more three dimensionally. Lastly, Tara Donovan, an artist who works on site-specific installation art, encouraged me to consider alternative materials that are unconventional in the inflation process. Donovan is known for utilizing everyday materials such as clear plastic cups that I would also like to incorporate in other elements of the environment I intend to create.



Image 5: Yaacov Agam's installation located in the modern art museum, Paris France



Image 6: Verner Panton's vibrant furniture located in the modern art museum, Paris France

## CONCLUSION

Now that the installation is complete I can reflect upon my work and process. The excitement of watching viewers enter my installation was magical. The goal of my project was to design inflatables that embody my dreams and create an installation that would convey a visually immersive experience where viewers could walk into another realm. I feel I accomplished just that. The process of creating inflatables and watching them come to life is very exciting and something I never thought I would be doing. A lot of people have asked me what I intend to do with the inflatables once the installation is over. Talking with my peers, I have found a connection that would allow me to work with music festivals that would be interested in purchasing my work. In the future, I will continue to artistically pursue installation art and inflatables throughout my career. It will be very exciting to see where I will go and what I will do next.

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