

[#DRAFT PAPER]

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How Can We Use Bi-Handed Drawing, Breath, and Sound to Investigate Cyclical Spiral Energy?



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Abstract

This 'altered state consciousness' research uses directed intuition-platforms such as immersive drawing and breath-induced vivid dreaming practices to investigate the gap between binary linear philosophies and entangled emergence theories, such as Lyotard's Discourse Figure (1974) and Golding's Radical Matter (2017).

The research formalises my independent research into intuitive agency and intersects art practice with neuroscience investigations into altered states of perception such as Buddhist and Vedic tantric breathwork and meditation, also, my own bi-handed drawing practice, my 2-directional simultaneous writing practice, breath-induced vivid dreaming method and 'sonic breath toning'.

A recent development of this bi-handed practice is 2-directional writing, simultaneous writing forwards and backwards with both hands. The significance of deep research into these techniques offers findings relating to evidencing the role of intuition in visual and performance 'soma-neuro-immersive happenings'.

Moving between upright and horizontal bodily (soma-neuro-immersive) states, the research moves between waking cognisant drawing activities, hypnogogic/hypnopompic visualisation activities, and sleeping breath induced vivid dreaming activities. Early theories of elevated uprightness in humans include Plato's 'featherless biped' (Plato: XX). Horizontal processes include those of rigor mortis and petrification as yogic phases (Burley: 2014, Hopkins: 2008), elevated upright processes include tantric quantum expansion practices such as heat directed vortex energy [kundalini] (White, 2000). Tantric somatic technologies use breath generated heat to destabilise and restabilise the holding patterns registered in the body/ brain (and 'mind'). Seated meditation then enables a bridge state between horizontal sleep and upright (including seated) waking, utilising the 'natural' elevation in the 'floating' 'S' shape of the spine during which 'straightness', 'stretching' and 'extended elevation' may spontaneously occur. (Bruce: 1993, Jung: 1932, Mullin: 1986, 2006, White: 2000, Ray: 2001).

Due to the unique architecture of the human skeleton, in particular, the 'S' shape of the spine, specifically the angle that the cervical vertebra of the spine joins the skull and the symmetry of the tilted pelvis (Dart: 1925, Lovejoy: 2010), these elevation meditations (towards levitation) techniques are uniquely possible in humans. It is this 'S' architecture (as 'freeing the arms') that will be explored in my figurative and abstract sculpture, and bi-handed drawing practice. The 'S' also appears as the looping Infinity Symbol, and Lyotard's Libidinal Band (Lyotard, 1974) and is proposed here as the geometry of the circulating flow in tantra (S-Tantra). The 'S' and Moebius strip shapes also arise spontaneously in my bi-handed drawing practice. This proposal includes bi-handed drawing performance and optional workshops and soma-neuro-immersive headphone experience of 'sonic-breath-toning', both research methodologies my art practice presently investigates at The Royal College of Art. Please see links for examples of my work.

Keywords

hypnogogic, intuition, agency, meditation, sonic, breath, breathwork, vedic, trance, tantra, buddhist, vajrayana, hypnopompic, vivid dreaming, dreaming, circadian, experimental, art practice, art, methodologies, bi-handed, expanded art

Introduction

My art practice led independent research is an inter-disciplinary discourse borrowing from the ideas and **'theory-fiction'** style of Lyotard as art practice, philosophy, astrophysics, dream yoga, and meditation. This research borrows and aligns the concept of Lyotard's libidinal band with *breath directed* bipedal uprightness and aspects of *cosmic breath-directed spiral verticality in disk galaxies* (Ghosh et al 2022a) and proposes the examples of *breath-directed* bi-handed drawing and bi-directional writing as observable stabilised spiral spatio-temporal *happenings*, referred to here as acts of **soma-neuro-emergence**. Drawing upon recently published research that makes such contemporary speculations possible and correlations in ancient Eastern metaphysics, in particular early Buddhist teachings (EBT) on impermanence and the inter-spiritual concept of kundalini spiral energy¹ and Zen this research approaches *existence* and *being* as **continuously cosmologically emergent**. The research further concentrates on the 'bending' nature of the spiral as enabling the essential 'folding' move in the Möbius strip /libidinal band deployed by Lyotard. In contrast to bipedal uprightness the research also links my Breath Induced Vivid Dreaming [BIVD] (Wilson: 2005, 2016) method that posits dreaming, hypnagogia, hypnopompic visualization as horizontal circadian paradigms.

Based upon the **twisting bending folding circulatory** nature of the Möbius strip² and correlations in **disk galaxy astrophysics**, **Lyotard's libidinal band**, and **kundalini yoga** and **Zen meditation** the embryonic research outlined in this poster presentation posits a **post-ontological** view of things/not things. These connections at first glance may strike as speculatively stretching, but I invite artists, thinkers, and researchers to consider the possibility of a soma-neuro-emergence materiality that *emerges spirally* and *breathes*: opening a door to a post-ontological position that avoids foundational universalism, dualism, and nihilism. Sketching and painting intuitively my bi-handed drawing practice frequently depicts Matriarchal figures and morphological birds and draw upon Plato's Featherless Bird³ and narratives of mythical avian humanoids. I term these **meditative practices** as acts of **'elevation towards levitation'**. It is these spontaneously drawn motifs created using both hands that drive my two critical obsessions, that of why humans are uniquely bipedally upright (*elevation*), and *why do yogis and mystics claim abilities of flying and levitation?*

Over 2500 years ago Siddhartha (Buddha) effectively used his personal meditation practice and impermanence logic to reconfigure Vedic monism, and almost fifty years ago Lyotard reconfigured Freud's 'desire' (as 'intensities') as the engine of his 'libidinal band'. Lyotard's

¹ Kundalini as a term appeared in the Upanishads (9th – 7th Century BCE). Gopi Krishna states 'As the ancient writers have said, it is the vital force or prana which is spread over both the macrocosm, the entire Universe, and the microcosm, the human body... The atom is contained in both of these. Prana is life-energy responsible for the phenomena of terrestrial life and for life on other planets in the universe. Prana in its universal aspect is immaterial. But in the human body, Prana creates a fine biochemical substance which works in the whole organism and is the main agent of activity in the nervous system and in the brain. The brain is alive only because of Prana...' Gopi Krishna, Kundalini Questions and Answers (Smashwords ed.). *The Institute for Consciousness Studies*. pp. 6–8 (1995) and Kindle Edition: 2015. Yogi Bhanan instituted Kundalini Yoga and Meditation in America in 1969 and communicated his teachings predominantly by recorded and published spoken lectures. He rejects the snake concept of 'kundalini' and states it as being 'a coiled lock of hair'. See <https://www.libraryofteachings.com/>

² A non-orientable surface that appears to run both clockwise and counter-clockwise. Originally a single strip of paper joined and half-twisted. Discovered by Listing and Möbius in 1858 but also appears in early Roman mosaics (circa 3rd Century AD).

³ Plato, Statesman, section 266e, *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 12 translated by Harold N. Fowler. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press (London, William Heinemann Ltd, 1921).

libidinal band is a Möbius strip that operates at infinite speed along which intensities flow, and doing so, avoids distinct ontological unitary grounding (Lyotard: 1974, Sim: 2017). It is this non-grounding and incessantly moving intensity that is compared here with Buddhist impermanence as the proposition of **post-ontological materiality**.

The proposition also compares how Lyotard's 'wish-desire' flow 'folds over and 'hollows out' a 'theatrical volume'⁴ (Lyotard: 1993, Sim: 2017) with EBT concepts of ignorance and illusion (Wilson: 2016). Lyotard's intensities flow, twist, bend, and his -

Möbius Strip + fold movement

...provides a basis for **material existence** and **individuated experience** to arise without grounding either as distinct isolated individual objects or reverting to phenomenology or nihilism. In other words, both Lyotard and Buddha propose a floating or levitating system that neither transcend (Kant: 1788, Buroker: 2006) or negate (Adorno: 1990) dialectical dualism but paradoxically reject/confirm both. What intrigues is Lyotard's use of the infinitely moving twisting nature of the Möbius Strip and discrete folding process to animate or materialize his theatrical volume that 'gives rise to representation and theory' (Woodward, EUP). Woodward states 'the theorist is like a spectator who views the representation of the world (outside the theatre) on the stage (inside the theatre).'⁵

As well as being a central force in Freud's 'neurosis', *desire* is also posited by EBT as the root of all suffering.⁶ Aligning Lyotard's theatrical volume with Buddhist ignorance the theatrical volume functions as the illusory yet material stabilisation of independent things as arising out of flowing heated unstable intensities/desire. In order to distinguish between Lyotard's theatrical volume and the adaptation made here they will be referred to as 'theatrical volume^L' and 'theatrical volume^W'. This is to preserve the integrity of Lyotard's original proposition and to also provide a clear appreciation of the value of his model. Theatrical volume^W operates in exactly the same way but is perused through a Buddhist lens.

Approach

What follows is a pooling of four interdisciplinary spiral concepts that connect cosmos, humans, and art practice –

- a) **Post-ontological materiality** as Lyotard's *Libidinal Band*, Buddhist Impermanence
- b) **Disk galaxy astrophysics** as Vertical Breathing Motions in Tidally-Induced Spirals in the Universe (Ghosh et al: 2022a)
- c) **Anthropological yoga-physics** as in kundalini yoga and meditation taught by Yogi Bhajan, Zen meditation as taught by T.D. Suzuki, and the double 'S' architecture of

⁴ J.F. Lyotard, translated by Iain Hamilton Grant, *Libidinal Economy, Theories of Contemporary Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993) see pp. xii, 3, 11, 23. S. Sim, *Lyotard Dictionary* (Edinburgh University Press. Kindle Edition: 2017)

⁵ Ashley Woodward. Jean-François Lyotard (1924–1998), *The Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, ISSN 2161 0002, <https://iep.utm.edu/>, 16 May 2023

⁶ Naming of the fuel of *illusory* arising is not the focus here, only the *emergence* nature of arising.

the human skeleton (Dart: 1924, Lovejoy: 2010, Capellini et al: 2022) enabling breath-directed spiral energy generation and flow

- d) **Soma-neuro-emergence** as bi-handed drawing and the floating capability of the double 'S' spinal to direct and observe the stable/unstable basis of the emerging 'unified' figurative image

Post-Ontological Materiality

How does the EBT claim of 'no-self' aid a post-ontological materiality?

Whilst Lyotard is interested in the redirection of intensities to disrupt fixed universalised systems, in particular Capitalism, EBT charges impermanence as the operative logic of dynamic *aggregate unity* and in doing so rejects ontologically *absolute unity* (Wilson: 2016, Ronkin: 2005).⁷ The EBT claim of 'no-self' as *aggregate unity* may be further understood as **non-unified spatio-temporally stabilized emergence**.⁸

Excerpt from *A Study of Ignorance*: Margot F Wilson (2016)

'A final point to make is that we can regard Buddhist attachment as the inherent need to avoid, deny or minimize the effects of impermanence. This is achieved through fortifying the ignoring process as fluency of action, irrespective of the quality of outcome. For many it feels right or *better to feel in control and be wrong than to feel out of control and be right*. This corresponds with the Buddhist ego self that is attached in its own continuance: a bi-product of which is separation of identity that fuels the potential for alienation. Such illusory separation and alienation form part of the Buddha's claim that 'everything is suffering'. However, there is, as is consistent throughout the Buddha's teachings, a red herring twist. This is: that the conceptual alienation can only exist between 'truly' separated selves, therefore if there really is no separated self, there can be no *true* separation or alienation. This is just another way of stating that Buddhist suffering refers to the ignorance of no self and not the problem of real alienation per se, otherwise there would be no potential to resolve problems relating to alienation. Therefore, the Buddha's claim that there is suffering, and there is a solution to suffering, relies upon the principle of separation of identity and alienation as being illusory. Otherwise, his claim would be that suffering exists and cannot be escaped or resolved. The Buddha does not deny that we look, feel, and operate like individual selves. He rather claims that how and why we do so is incorrectly understood. The theoretical framework of current

⁷ In my MPhil thesis I use Buddhist atomism to differentiate between unity (absolute) and unity (aggregate). Ronkin states: 'While the analogy of atoms may be useful here, dharmas notably embrace both physical and mental phenomena, and are generally understood as evanescent events, occurrences, or dynamic properties rather than enduring substances.' N. Ronkin, *Early Buddhist metaphysics: the making of a philosophical tradition* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005). See also P. Tan, 'Buddhist Atomism: The Theories of Paramanu and kalapa in Post-Canonical Buddhism,' SD 26.2 Buddhist Atomism, [http://dharmafarer.org/wordpress/wp-con ... m-piya.pdf](http://dharmafarer.org/wordpress/wp-con...m-piya.pdf).

⁸ For an excellent discourse on Buddhist positions on interdependence and free will see - N. Gier, and P. Kjellberg, Buddhism and Freedom of the Will: Pali and Mahayanist Responses, in Freedom and Determinism, Ed, J. Keim Campbell, M. O'Rourke, D. Shier, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), and Repetti, R., 'Recent Buddhist Theories of Free Will: Compatibilism, Incompatibilism, and Beyond,' *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, vol. 21 (2014).

neuroscience provides us with important conceptual tools with which to give new relevance to the early Buddhist understanding of these matters.’ (Wilson: 2016)⁹

Though addressing completely different cultural geographies and eras both Lyotard and Buddha reach for a claim of **no** absolute unity, universalism, individual unity, or unified ideology of things. Recalling this project as ‘theory-fiction’, it proposes both Buddha’s ‘no-self’ claim and Lyotard’s libidinal band concept as being **post-ontological**. Credited with the coining of **postmodernism**, Lyotard states that the *Great Zero* is ‘designed to puncture the pretentiousness of all dispositifs and metanarratives.’¹⁰ It is in this sense that Sim writes ‘perhaps we could ‘even regard postmodernism as a dispositif’, in that ‘any power the dispositif has is illusory.’¹¹ In effect Lyotard conceptualises generative terms that self-destruct; not towards a nihilistic end but to dramatize (theatrical volume¹²) the making of the point that there are no apparatuses in themselves because that would open the door to superstructures as hierarchical, dialectical, and metanarratives, all of which are instruments of securitised power and capitalism. How Lyotard reaches his materialist argument is his ingenious **folding** motion of the libidinal band, slowed down by the **tensor bar** until a spatio-temporally fixed theatrical volume¹³ emerges. Entering this dramatic scene this research imagines the loops of the Möbius Strip as bending towards parallelism, the loops slowly becoming visible to each other, then at specific points, namely 60° and 90° become optimally visible. These geometrical connections or **click moments** (encounters)¹³ stabilize as spatio-temporal emergence and dialectic duality. Concluding a material curving universe that is impermanent (unstable) and as it bends and folds it encounters the *unstable as stable*. This is known as Buddhist ‘momentariness’. It is the folding power of the curve as circle, spiral, and Möbius Strip that makes these paradoxical speculations possible, which is why the **action** basis of **Zen Buddhism** is of special interest here.

Crucially, it is the folding or bending operation that underpins these theory-fiction speculations, thus, the Möbius Strip may be stated as a continuous twisting curve motion, folding gradually through spatial temporal degrees of an invisible sphere until it stabilizes as a theatrical volume^{LW}.

Building upon this materialist curving and folding impermanence this theory-fiction next correlates the twisting folding of the Möbius Strip to the critical ‘bending’ motion of **tidally-induced spirals** in disk galaxy astrophysics.

Disk Galaxy Astrophysics

Ghosh states ‘when the tidally-induced spirals are strong they drive coherent, large scale vertical breathing motions ($V^{\text{breath}} > 0$)’ further concluding ‘the breathing motion of the Milky Way may

⁹ M.F. Wilson, *A Study of Ignorance: Suffering and Freedom in Early Buddhist Teachings and Parallels in Modern Neuroscience*, (MPhil Thesis: University of Glasgow, 2016) p 112-3

¹⁰ Sim, p. 56.

¹¹ Sim, p. 56.

¹² M. Wilson, *How does ‘erasure’ of a work of art help us visualise Buddhist and Lyotardian ‘emptiness’ as an argument against ontological commodification?* (RCA Graduate Diploma-Fine Art Essay: 2023)

¹³ Golding defines ‘emergence’ as ‘density, intensity, opacity’ and ‘not just trace or presence/absence’. J. Golding, *Seminar* 18 Jan 2022. Also see Golding’s footnote 47 in Jonny Golding, Martin Reinhart, and Mattia Paganelli, eds., *Data Loam: Sometimes Hard, Usually Soft: The Future of Knowledge Systems*, Edition Angewandte (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021)

well have been driven by spiral density waves' (Gosh et al 2022a).¹⁴ Other factors of significance to this research are the spatio-temporal angles of spiral pitch (30° and 60°), the 'bending' motion of the tidally-induced spiral that moves away and towards the centre, and the 'vertical breathing motion' pertaining to the increased turbulence of gas. When I first read this paper, I playfully replaced all the galactic terms with soma-neuro corporeal terms, and as anticipated discovered that the breathing spiral processes vividly mirrored those purported by kundalini yoga and meditation metaphysics and my direct meditation and performance drawing experience. Considering the universe as vertically breathing provokes an image of a torso made upright by a waxing and waning tidally-induced spirals with arms that stretch laterally and move through spirally-pitched spatio-temporal angles. Like the human life, tidally-induced spirals also fade over time, an operation Lyotard employs as 'disjunctive bar' that slows and grounds as 'binary logic and the law of noncontradiction' (Woodward EUP).¹⁵

Gosh et al's research questions whether it is specific fly-by interactions that excite the spiral motion or vice versa, concluding that tidal interactions excite bending motions and snail-shell structures (phase-space spiral) in the Solar neighbourhood (Ghost et al 2022a).¹⁶ Munari et al (2015) also conclude that a stellar base can also drive such breathing motion in disk galaxies.¹⁷ The imagery produced is that of gaseous spiral volumes emerging as expanding and contracting with arms rising, passing through stationery angles, churning in a perpetual bending motion until the spherical, and I add, Möbius geometry, deflates and decays. It is the view of Gosh et al that 'disk galaxies contain a finite amount of gas' and that 'interstellar gas' performs a 'cooling and facilitation of the generation of fresh spiral waves' (Gosh et al 2022a). Gosh further states 'this is because stars are in the breathing motion', and that 'the vertical potential will change with time and the distribution will be affected' concluding that 'a strong spiral structure can drive large, coherent vertical breathing motions irrespective of their formation scenario (i.e., whether induced by tidal interactions (as shown here) or generated via internal disc gravitational instability (e.g., Faure et al.: 2014; Debattista: 2014; Ghosh et al.: 2022a).'¹⁸ It is extrapolated here that the dynamics of spiral – angle – breath – arms - presenting as coherent dynamic verticality correlate with Eastern inter-spiritual kundalini theory as a spiral force reported as occurring in the human body. Next exploring anthropological yoga-physics¹⁹ this research proposes to establish further correlations between cosmic and soma-neuro emergent kundalini spirals.

Anthropological Yoga-Physics

Meditation is typically conducted in a seated cross-legged 'easy pose' optimising the self-balancing architecture of the double 'S' shaped spine. This is due to the unique architecture of

¹⁴ Kumar, Ankit, Soumavo Ghosh, Sandeep Kumar Kataria, Mousumi Das, and Victor P Debattista, 'Excitation of Vertical Breathing Motion in Disc Galaxies by Tidally-Induced Spirals in Fly-by Interactions', *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*, 516.1 (2022), 1114–26

¹⁵ It is this *dispositif* directed bar that tempers and grounds the intensities (of libidinal band) into a stabilised disjunction as a theatrical volume.

¹⁶ Gosh et al. (2022)

¹⁷ U. Munari, F. M. Walter, Flash-ionization of pre-existing circumstellar material around Nova Oph 2015, *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society: Letters*, Volume 455, Issue 1, 01 January 2016, Pages L57–L61.

¹⁸ Kumar, Ankit, Soumavo Ghosh, Sandeep Kumar Kataria, Mousumi Das, and Victor P Debattista, 'Excitation of Vertical Breathing Motion in Disc Galaxies by Tidally-Induced Spirals in Fly-by Interactions', *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*, 516.1 (2022), 1114–26

¹⁹ Note, I have chosen this term to distinguish between cosmic and human domains.

the human skeleton as the double 'S' shape of the spine, the angle that the cervical vertebra of the spine joins the skull, and the symmetry of the broad and tilted pelvis (Dart: 1925,²⁰ Lovejoy: 2010,²¹ Capellini: 2022²²). The floating, self-balancing, stretching, elevation techniques of meditation are uniquely possible in the double 'S' anatomy, and to date applies only to humans. Capellini et al (2022) propose these findings 'specifically point to a series of chondrocyte regulatory mechanisms underlying human-specific ilium development' and that '... this is really pointing to the origins of bipedalism in our genome' (Capellini: 2022).²³ The tilted pelvis is also critical to the double 'S' architecture that enables balancing of the heavy head and freeing the arms. This double 'S' configuration dynamically wobbles in a stable/unstable state, flexing, elevating, expanding, compressing with each consecutive breath. The act of meditation is the generation of **material stability** – as stillness – such that the theatrical volume^w may be grasped both as inhabitation and realisation. This manoeuvre is especially active in **paradoxical Zen meditation**.²⁴ While Zen as a technique is specific to Japanese Buddhism kundalini is considered as a spiral an energy force that cuts across Eastern yoga metaphysics (Jung: 1934,²⁵ Krishna: 1970,²⁶ Bhajan: 1977,²⁷ Dixon: 2006,²⁸ Steiner: 2019²⁹) and was instituted as an America-based spiritual movement by Yogi Bhajan.³⁰ In effect the kundalini spiral functions like a conductor coil that both amplifies and stabilizes the combustive electro-chemical energy flow of the soma-neural system, which on its own **excites** dramatic vital sensory experience (theatrical volume^w), whilst meditation as extended momentary **stillness** ignores such experience and in doing so permits the **neutral non-dualist observation** of **real illusory** experience (theatrical volume^w). Zen meditation makes an art form of 'real illusion' and does so through both movement-based activities (often repetitive mundane tasks) and concentration meditation on Nature such as a looking through almost closed eyes at blade of grass or grain of rice. Meditation of both kinds is not possible without the floating capability double 'S' spinal to navigate and observe the stable/unstable basis of arising soma-neuro-emergence. Furthermore, gnosis of *real illusion* as a theatrical volume^w is only possibly through the ability to experience inside and outside of the meditation practice, affirming material reality but denying independent unity. Thus, meditation and contemplation upon Zen paradoxes make possible the momentary grasping of dynamic contradictions.³¹ The same applies to understanding kundalini energy and visual fireworks that may accompany meditation as *real* but also *illusory*. It is proposed here that though in its inception

²⁰ R. A. Dart "Australopithecus africanus: The Man-Ape of South Africa", *Nature* (1925), **115** (2884): 195–199

²¹ A. L. Machnicki, L.B. Spurlock, K.B. Strier, P.L. Reno, and C.O. Lovejoy, 'First Steps of Bipedality in Hominids: Evidence from the Atelid and Proconsulid Pelvis', *PeerJ*, 4 (2016), e1521

²² M. Young, R. Daniel, M. Grabowski, B.M. Auerbach, B.S. De Bakker, J. Hagoort, and others, 'The Developmental Impacts of Natural Selection on Human Pelvic Morphology', *Science Advances*, 8.33 (2022)

²³ M. Young, R. Daniel, M. Grabowski, B.M. Auerbach, B.S. De Bakker, J. Hagoort, and others, 'The Developmental Impacts of Natural Selection on Human Pelvic Morphology', *Science Advances*, 8.33 (2022)

²⁴ Zen meditation is practiced with the eyes open and not confined to seated postures. The word Zen mean to actively 'see, look'. Suzuki is credited with introducing Zen philosophy and meditation to the West. D.T., Suzuki, *An Introduction to Zen Buddhism*, Foreword by C. Jung. (New York: Grove Press, 1964)

²⁵ Jung, C. G., and Sonu Shamdasani, *The Psychology of Kundalini Yoga: Notes of the Seminar given in 1932*, Bollingen Series, 99, second printing, and first paperback printing (New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press, 1999)

²⁶ G. Krishna, *Kundalini: The Evolutionary Energy in Man* (Boston : [New York]: Shambhala ; Distributed in the U.S. by Random House, 1997)

²⁷ Yogi Bhajan, *The Master's Touch: On Being a Sacred Teacher for the New Age*, 1st ed (Los Angeles, CA: Kundalini Research Institute, 1997)

²⁸ J., Dixon, *Biology of Kundalini* (Self-Published: Lulu, 2008)

²⁹ R. Steiner, *Kundalini: Spiritual Perception and the Higher Element of Life* (Germany: Rudolf Steiner Press, 2019)

³⁰ A., Shearer, *The Story of Yoga: From Ancient India to the Modern West* (London: Hurst & Company (Publishers) Ltd, 2020)

³¹ Note Zen koans operate like red-herrings in that they may be radically absurd and indecipherable, staging contemplative encounters that destabilize the stable. The *real illusory* is the such a dynamic stable/unstable position.

Lyotard's 'theatrical volume'¹ is entirely unrelated to Eastern meditation and philosophy, the libidinal strip concept provides a valuable cogent framework.

Applying now the Zen/kundalini hypothesis as utilizing the floating nature of the dynamic double 'S' spine through the lens of my personal breath directed bi-handed drawing practice I will switch to a first-person voice.

Art Practice as Soma-Neuro-Emergence

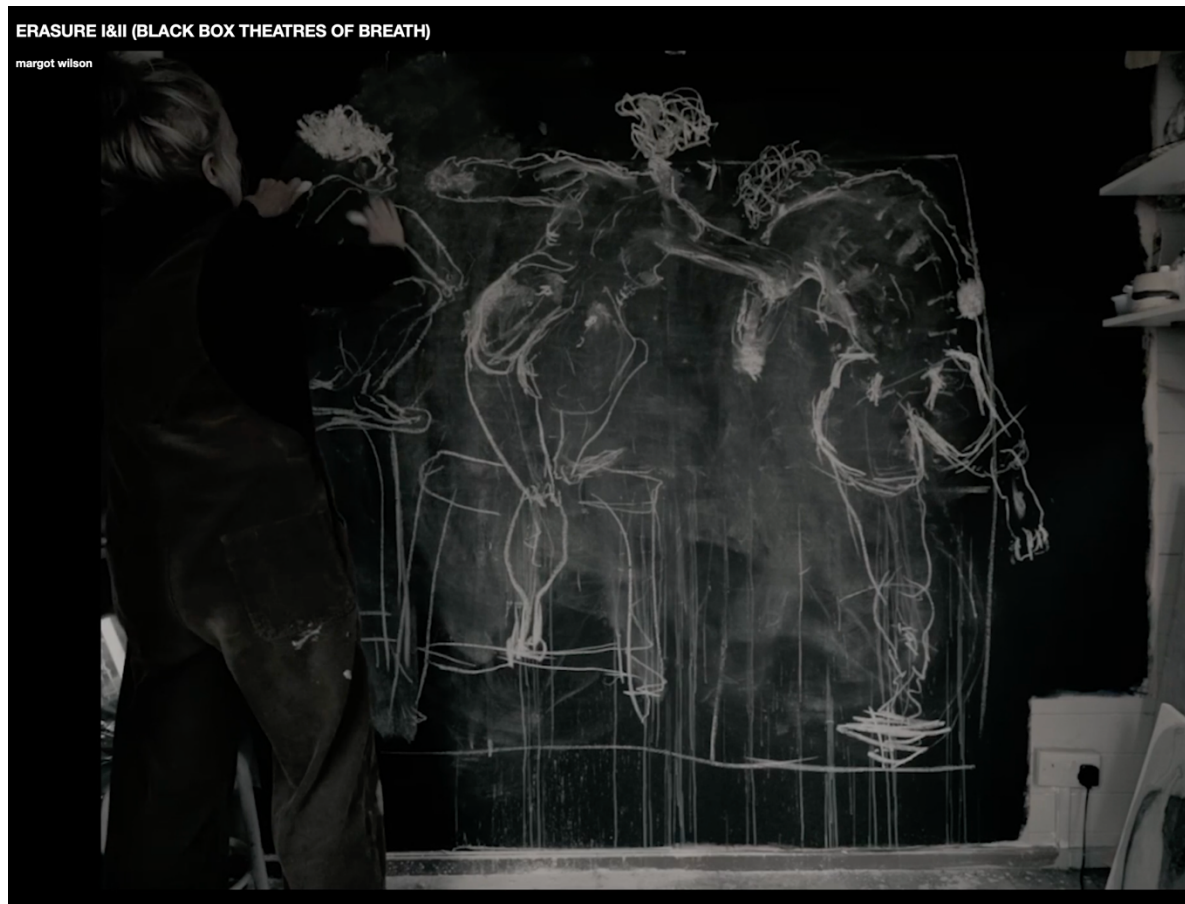


Figure 1 Bi-Handed Drawing Performance, Video, 2022 – see <https://vimeo.com/813538719?share=copy>

To summarise, my art practice led research proposes a post-ontological materialism comprising of the 'bend' in cosmic and human spiral energy, and 'fold' move in Lyotard's libidinal band and 'theatrical volume'¹ theory. My personal practice is that of bi-handed drawing and bi-directional simultaneous writing. Drawing and writing with both hands is a rare but not unique phenomenon and is not dissimilar to ambidexterity capabilities in that the soma-neuro-immersive activity allows the artist to 'switch between explorative and exploitative behaviours.'³²

'Ambidexterity' is a dynamic capability that enables an individual or organization to switch between explorative and exploitative behaviors, which can lead to innovation and appropriate decision-making. Exploration requires detachment from present duties in

³² Kokubun K, Yamakawa Y, Hiraki K. Association between Behavioral Ambidexterity and Brain Health. *Brain Sci.* 2020 Feb 29;10(3):137

order to experiment freely, allowing for new discoveries and innovations, while exploitation is about focusing on the current endeavor in order to improve or maximize benefits or opportunities.’ (Kokubun et al: 2019)

There is little available research on bi-handedness other than dominant handedness and ambidexterity investigations. To date I have come across less than half a dozen practicing bi-handed artists, each working in their own unique way. The most well know is Chen Siyuan, who at the age of 24 in 2012 was filmed writing calligraphy with both hands simultaneously.³³ Using a pointillist method, D.P. Truong draws two different portrait images on two pieces of paper at once.³⁴ The technique though not long developed is impressively stable and precise, rendering an entirely credible artwork. With regards to my own practice, my bi-handed drawing practice concentrates on rendering a single human figure or abstract form. Drawing different figures on different parts of the paper or chalkboard occurs but it is the concept of the emerging ‘unified’ figure that I am investigating. What I propose here is that regardless of the speed and fluidity of the mark making happening, bi-handed drawing situates the artist as the breath directed spiral elevation that bends into a spatio-temporal theatrical volume^w birthing a unitary figurative visual image. As the limb-bars of the *soma-neuro breath directed spiral elevation* slow and stabilise laterally, I propose that shapes are born in ways not dissimilar to disk galaxies in the universe. Thus, the emergence, arising, birthing of stable shapes (as figurative or abstract) correlate to the emergence, arising, birthing of stable disk galaxies, only possible because of the bending nature of impermanent breathing spiral and folding Mobius activities. Accepting this is quite a reach, in its simplest terms I propose bi-handed drawing (and art practice in general) generates a spatio-temporal theatrical volume^w as a process that requires a dynamic equilibrium of stable and unstable breath directed actions that allow the artist to simultaneously coral his/her/their attention on the figurative artwork and emergent soma-neuro process flow. In effect, I imagine artist as *cosmos* and drawn figures/imagery as dynamic *constellations* of post-ontological material universe.

Figure 2 Bi-Handed Drawing, Chalk, Blackboard 100 cm x 90 cm (2022)

³³ See video and article here - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-asia-20697278>

³⁴ See video here - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJfZ3_MMsK0

Similar ideas may be observed particularly in Zen informed Abstract Expressionism, Beat poetry, and the music and sound art of John Cage. I add to this Kaprow's *happenings*, Schneemann's kinetic drawing and the work of the Japanese Gutai movement, with the exception of Schneemann were influenced by Eastern and/or Suzuki's Zen teachings. As a contemporary art practitioner in the 21st century I find myself returning repeatedly to the mid 1950s and 1960s when Suzuki taught Zen Buddhism at Columbia in New York (Pearlman: 1962).³⁵ At the same time yoga teachers and gurus such as Yogi Bhañan, Mahesh Maharishi, and Osho literally took away the breath of America and made the power structures of North America (and beyond) take a beat at the potential and threat of **super-human** (soma-neuro) technology. Western science and philosophy predominantly consider the connecting of cosmic motions to human motion as the exotic domains of ancient Eastern metaphysics and Renaissance occultism and astrology whilst art is received as a bridge between the explainable and unexplainable.

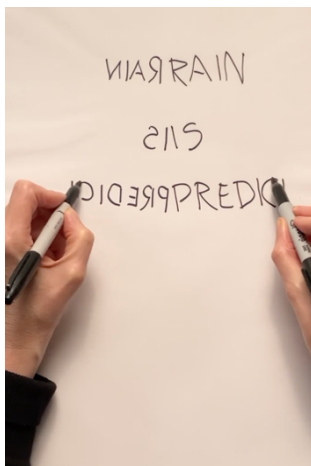


Figure 3 Simultaneous Bi-Directional Writing, Pens, Paper (2022)

My own bi-handed drawing practice emerged in the 1970s as a child whilst experimenting with mirrors and turning magazine pictures upside-down. In 2022 writing backwards and forwards in two directions simultaneously occurred spontaneously at the end of drawing session. This is in its infancy as a method of exploration but has the feeling of developing in surprising ways. My bi-handed art practice aims to visually articulate this cosmic/human connection as the emergence of figurative visual images by means of some-neuro-emergence (as breath-directed stable-unstable materiality). It is only recent developments in Astro-physics and my introduction to Lyotard during Professor Johnny Golding's Radical Entanglement Seminars (2021/2) whilst at The Royal College of Art that have allowed me to put together this prospective theory-fiction.

I repeatedly ask myself '**what does all this mean**' and '**who cares?**' Viewing art as the bridge the responses that always arise are as follow:

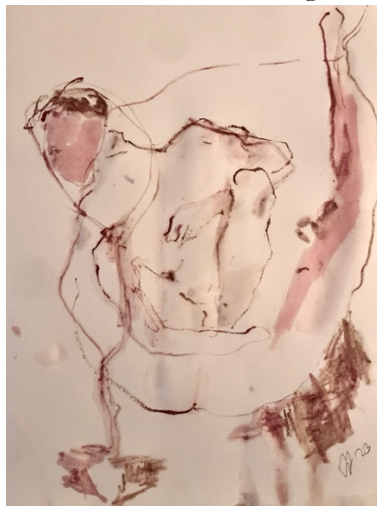
- the potential of a post-ontological (Buddhist/Lyotard) view of material emergence
- a theatrical volume^{LW} framework of the 'real illusory' as contributing to new critical contemporary approaches to such issues as the climate crisis, radical dialectical geo-economic politics and combative binary power structures.

³⁵ E., Pearlman, *Nothing and Everything: The Influence of Buddhism on the American Avant-Garde, 1942-1962* (Berkeley, Calif: Evolver Editions : Distributed by North Atlantic Books, 2012)

I dedicate my practice led research to creating observable and experiential happenings in which the glimpsing of inside and outside the theatrical volume^W as the *real illusory* as the stable/unstable may be inhabited by others (audience/public). I also invite collaboration with neuroscience research into bi-handedness.

In conclusion, I propose that drawing figuratively with both hands simultaneously produces Zen-like action-meditative states in which the artist may observe both inside and outside of the theatrical volume^W. In other words, be utterly still and moving at the same time. Just as the figurative image appears as unified the drawing process is akin to that of streaming and stabilising chaos. As the spiral kundalini energy flow bends to drive upward verticality the arms float upon breath allowing the mark making to arise spatio-temporal figurativeness. This is the concept of 'riding the breath' or riding the directed-breath. **This is a theory-fiction.**

More Bi-Handed Drawings:



Bi-Handed Ink and Watercolour drawings on paper (2022). See my website to view more work.
www.margotwilson.com

Addendum

I include here a brief overview of the Breath Induced Vivid Dreaming technique that emerged out of my experimental meditation practice in 2005.

Breath Induced Vivid Dreaming & Hypnagogic Visualisation

Circadian consciousness here is the view that cyclicity found in nature, plays a vital role, and possibly enables the paradoxical dynamic state of consciousness, as the continuity and transformation (of me-ness/self). A growing view in neuroscience, which I also share, is that dreams serve three essential purposes:

- The first is reconciling the day's experience with stored (past) events.
- the second is the discarding of obsolete and contradictory settings into the dream event.
- the third is that dreams act as a creativity gymnasium in which the dreamer experiences absurd and paradoxical situations that do not occur in the waking world. As Karl Friston states, **dreaming is an opportunity to 'sample overwhelming surprise'** (Hobson, 2009, Friston, 2012).³⁶

Dreaming now is considered to play three functions. The first is to reconcile the order of the day with existing memory and experience. The second is to experience states of psychosis as a form of necessary safety valve to protect humans from going mad with 'the uncertainty of life'. (Walker: 2017). The third is that dreaming is a strategic way in which the brain tests absurd, radical, and paradoxical experiences as a means of increasing survival capability. Waking necessarily leans towards holding (stable) and dreaming leans towards change (unstable). When sleep is critically disrupted the instability that should occur during sleep as dreaming, spills into waking, at times producing psychosis. Walker considers dreaming to akin to states of psychosis, schizophrenia and that every night it is a fundamental requirement that we go 'mad' in our dreams so that we can be sane in waking. (Walker: 2017, Hobson: 2013, 2014, 2018).³⁷ I further reframe dreaming as follows:

- **Dreaming** is a process of reconciling the day's experience with 'held' experience.
- **REM Dreaming** performs this function every day according to an individual's circadian cycle.
- **Vivid Dreaming** instigates the release of holding patterns via breath directed excitation the brainstem, throat region and amygdala.

³⁶ 'In active inference, the inferred states of the world include the trajectory of our bodies and their relationship to the environment. These beliefs are fulfilled through classical motor reflexes, thereby minimizing surprise (variational free energy) to produce the sensations predicted. In effect, this means that wilful movement is prescribed by prior beliefs about what will happen to our bodies next. There is a large body of anatomical and physiological evidence suggesting that motor commands are — in fact — descending predictions about the proprioceptive consequences of intended or willed behaviour.' (Adams, Shipp and Friston, 2013). Hobson, J. A., & Friston, K. J. (2014). Consciousness, dreams, and inference: The Cartesian theatre revisited. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 21(1-2), 6–32. p 21 also, 'In one sense, these ideas are also your ideas (however latent), because you have to know what you are going to see next before you can confirm it by reading these words — this is the essence of active inference and how we sample the world to minimize surprise.' p 26.

³⁷ Walker, Matthew. *Why We Sleep* (London: Allen Lane, 2017) p 193

Dreams are typically fragmentary in their nature. Lucid dreaming attempts to direct and sustain continuity of story and unified coherent perspective (as meaning) within the virtual experience. Vivid dreams may be understood as a hybrid between lucid and REM dreams and are particularly intense and memorable.³⁸ All four types of dreams are composed of ‘virtual scenes’ which sometimes form part of a ‘story’ and sometimes remain fragmentary.

Walker states:

‘I therefore wondered whether the brain during REM sleep was reprocessing upsetting memory experiences and themes in this neurochemically calm (low nonadrenaline), ‘safe’ dreaming brain environment. [...] This was the theory of overnight therapy. It postulates that the process of REM-sleep dreaming accomplishes two critical goals (1) sleeping to remember the details of those valuable, salient experiences, integrating them with existing knowledge and putting them into autobiographical perspective, yet (2) sleeping to forget, or dissolve, the visceral, painful emotional charge that had previously been wrapped around those memories. If true, it would suggest that the dream state supports a form of introspective life review, to therapeutic ends.’ [Walker: 2017]³⁹

A central aspect of my art practice is that of hypnagogic/hypnopompic visualisations conducted during the periods of falling asleep and waking up. During this circadian phase I practice drawing with both hands and constructing 3D sculptures. I have also taught this visualization method to over 500 clients.

Over the years my goal has been to maximise and optimise every stage of the circadian cycle as sleep and waking. Connecting the significance of **horizontality to sleep and dreaming** and **verticality to bipedal mobility** this honed further my meditation and art practice research. There is no doubt that this paper touches many bases that at first glance may appear unrelated, however, over 40-years of concerted investigation of agentic elevation in humans I return to ancient Eastern holistic perspectives, many of which were appropriated and developed by Renaissance occultist, theosophists, and artists such as Blake, Carrington, Cage, and Beuys. I accept that the scope of what is outlined here is too broad and complex for a PhD project. What I aim for is that presenting a contemporary holistic post-ontological materiality proposition that certain links and claims may be of interest to other specialist researchers.

Going Forward

About to embark on an **MA Contemporary Art Practice** at the Royal College of Art, my aim is to use expanded bi-handed drawing practice and sound performance to further investigate the above claims. My hope is to better articulate and enrich the details of these claims with the aim of taking the project forward as either a funded art practice led PhD or make public my findings as exhibition and publishing. My hope is that scientists, thinkers, researchers, and philosophers

³⁸ BIVD dreaming is induced especially vivid dreams that last for between 7 – 10 days.

³⁹ Walker, *Why We Sleep* (London: Allen Lane, 2017) p 208.

better than me will draw upon this material to, at the very least, consider and develop post-ontological materialist theory.

I believe, in quite different ways, both the Buddha and Lyotard reached for the same goal, the Buddha through paradoxical theory and compassion-oriented living, Lyotard on the other hand navigated his own unique response to world systems and theories of knowledge and existence. It is these radically different yet intersecting approaches that inspire me to mine the distant fields of astrophysics, neuroscience, meditation, and astrology, in search for correlations. For me the answer lies in the elevatory nature of the breath directed spirals that underpin the universe and the same material (paradoxical) operation that drives the evolution of human consciousness, observable first and foremost through human generated art.

Author

I am a London-based Scottish multidisciplinary artist interested in breath as agency in expanded drawing, video, and performance art. My practice uses breath, light, and intuition to navigate material emergence and liminal human agency. I experiment with spiral forms across all media and use erasure and destructive techniques to remind myself that the secure life begins and ends with the breath.

Drawing with both hands simultaneously produces an 'opening' sensation in the head/brain that almost shivers. As the information flows through my eyes and my hands I can feel the bumps and ridges of the nerve tracks the line travels along. The lines that appear on the paper are experienced (by me) as 'out of time', 'shaking', 'shivering', 'stretched', 'not of me'. Akin to automatic writing perhaps. Of interest, I have binocular vision which is most likely the reason why I took to drawing this way as a child, copying directly from *History of Art* magazines (1950s series). My bi-handed drawing and painting practice draws upon tantric and occult trance practices to argue against material dualism. My drawing also experiments with graffiti, drawing directly onto porcelain (terra sigillata), a technique I will use in the making of the sugar cones installation.

I have a BA (Hons) Philosophy at Birkbeck (2013) and MPhil (R) Philosophy, University of Glasgow (2016). The eastern philosophies of kundalini, tantra, Vajrayana meditation and Zen action and neuroscience theory underpin my methods both as drawing and writing and in 2017 I completed an MA Creative Writing as Theatre and Poetry at the University of Sheffield. In 2019 I was accepted to The Royal College of Art's MA Writing and continued to their Graduate Diploma in Fine Art, recently receiving an A* Distinction which comes with the invitation to choose a place on any of the MA programmes. I join their MA Contemporary Art Practice in September and aim to develop my bi-handed drawing, painting, and writing methods, breath directed sound art and performance practice. Forging links and collaborations with neuroscience and astrophysics is at the forefront, summarising my research quest as one, through art practice, seeking to establish the term soma-neuro-emergence as the stable/unstable basis of authentic human-technology and contributing argument for a post-ontological material universe.

Artistically, I collaborate with photographer James Merrell and composer/sound designer Marcus Herne.

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