

# Lines of thought

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I've worked for many years exploring the intersection of art and science, regarding each as an open and systematic inquiry into the deep structure of human experience. Artistic and scientific themes have run alongside and interpenetrated each other throughout these years, both within my work with Interalia and also in my artistic practice.

My work as an artist draws from scientific concepts of mathematical, natural and physical processes. The processes have been as important as the final work.

My art seeks to give form to those processes of thought which have yet to be fully articulated and to explore the enormous scope of the beautiful and delicately balanced neural choreographies designed to reflect what is occurring in our own minds as we think.

Drawing inspiration from neuroscientific literature and imagery, I create drawings that offer an interpretation on mental processes to reveal the nature of human consciousness and the process of thought, bridging the connection between the mysterious three pound macroscopic brain and the microscopic behaviour of neurons.

There are many definitions of what drawing is, but one I am particularly interested in is that 'drawing as the trace of a line of thought'.

I like the idea of *dragan*, the old English term for drawing—there is this idea of something that is dragged across a surface, leaving its trace imprinted. There is also the idea of *disegno*, being about how we project what something could be. So, one is about the trace of an experience and the other is about the projection of a potential experience, and sometimes it is in between those two things.

In a recent series of drawings, *lines of thought* (Figures 1-3) I explore the process of thinking.

A line is drawn, in ink, on black paper. At first, the line is not easily distinguishable. Remembering the first, the second line follows. Remembering the previous, the next responds. And so on.

I am drawing, if you like, in the dark, attending and navigating through the space of the paper. Responding to the time past and moving towards something that is not yet realised.

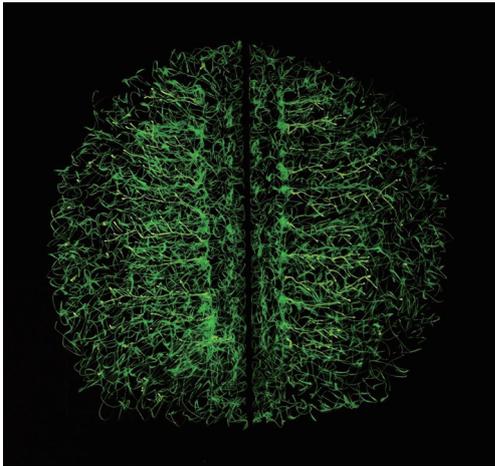
After a while the first lines reveal themselves, ink drying on the black paper. The process of receiving, registering, memory and volition continues. Line is responding to the previous.

Gradually, the structure begins to unfold.

Another recent series, *In thought (eyes closed)* (Figures 4-6), explore the idea of visualizing form. The drawings are made initially with my eyes closed, contemplating a form or following a thought process, one hand feeling the boundaries of the paper, the other drawing. When I feel the form is ready, or the thought process complete, I open my eyes. The image before me provokes further thoughts and, with eyes remaining open, I continue working on the drawing, highlighting and refining.

The final part of the process is the viewer, whose eyes move across the work, leaving a trace of the image in their own mind.

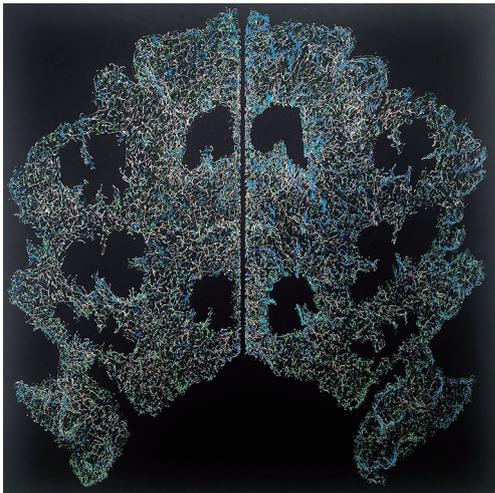
Richard Bright studied Fine Art in London, which is where his interest in the interaction between art and science began. After leaving art school he went on to take a physics degree, while lecturing and giving workshops on art and science. He founded The Interalia Centre in 1990, to provide an international forum for the exchange of ideas, exploring the relationships between the arts and the sciences. During the 1990's, Interalia successfully ran 11 conferences, "Dialogues" between artists and scientists,



**Figure 1** *Lines of thought* No. 28 (pen and ink, 25 cm × 25 cm).



**Figure 4** *In thought (eyes closed)* No. 34 (pen and ink, 20 cm × 20 cm).



**Figure 2** *Brainscape* No. 34 (pen and ink, 30 cm × 30 cm).



**Figure 5** *In thought (eyes closed)* No. 46 (pen and ink, 20 cm × 20 cm).



**Figure 3** *Emerging* No. 19 (pen and ink, 30 cm × 20 cm).



**Figure 6** *In thought (eyes closed)* No. 48 (pen and ink, 20 cm × 20 cm).

“science-in-art” residencies, as well as taking the art/science debate into the business environment.

Richard Bright was the recipient of the Wellcome Sci-Art award in 2000 (with Professors John D. Barrow and Martin Kemp), for the project ‘Connections in Space: from the quantum to the cosmos’ and Art/Science advisor for The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

He launched the Interalia Magazine in 2014, an online magazine dedicated to the interactions between the arts, sciences and consciousness ([www.interaliamag.org](http://www.interaliamag.org)).

His artwork can be found at [www.richardbrightart.com](http://www.richardbrightart.com).

### Acknowledgements

None.

### Footnote

*Conflicts of Interest:* The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

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