



THE INTERNATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

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## HEY, HOT SHOT! CONTENDER: SARAH FULLER

By [jen snow](#) on October 28, 2008 2:55 AM



*Self Portrait Sleeping With Pinhole Camera*, 2008, by HHS entrant Sarah Fuller

Since it is clearly always all about me, I'll admit, it is 2:45 a.m., as you probably already saw in the time stamp, and I am awake. And working. And chatting intermittently on instant messenger with, among others, fellow non-sleeper Jen Bekman.

Look at entrant [Sarah Fuller](#)'s work. Fuller submitted three photographs from a series titled *Dream Lab*, which is a collaboration between her and the [Dream and Nightmare Lab at The Sacred Heart Hospital in Montreal](#). She creates portraits in an attempt to "produce new knowledge about the hypnagogic stage of the sleep cycle."

What is fascinating, though, is a mix of the experiment and her imaging technique. Fuller captures her subjects, including herself, at the super vulnerable moment of literally falling asleep. Before "falling," actually, as she notes that the camera's shutter is tripped even before the customary head nod at the start of sleep.

Looking at her portraits, the moment of falling seems both magical and so normal, so recognizable. Her photos are so honest and so silly and so special at the same time.

Fuller writes:

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"Artists like Salvador Dali used this stage of sleep to harness creative imagery and problem solve. Dali also employed the 'upright napping' technique which involves falling asleep upright and seated in a chair. I have used this technique in my series. Typically in the lab, sounds are used to awaken the participants but the study I am currently working uses a flash (visual stimuli) and the sound of the camera (audio stimuli) to awaken the person from an upright nap. Participants sit quietly in a darkened room lit only by a single black light and try to fall asleep. When the researcher observes the EEG indicating a shift to sleep, the camera and flash are triggered, thereby illuminating the room. In essence, what results is a photograph of the exact moment the person is falling asleep, just before the customary head nod. Conceptually I am intrigued by the fact that as this photograph is taken, each person is literally in another state of consciousness."

I must admit, a few days ago I fell asleep while getting my hair cut. Not during the quiet part where my hairdresser (Keith at Devachan) cut each curl individually, methodically. No, I fell asleep while my head was inside of one of those huge hair dryers attached to the wall. Also, the hairdresser was pointing a second hairdryer into my hair drying helmet in order to do some sort of special, extra (and extra loud) drying to my hair. And I fell asleep. One of those falling asleep sitting up things where your head actually falls forward. My head fell forward and hit the inside of the hair dryer. I wish I could make this stuff up. I also wish that Fuller had been there to capture it on film.

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