

Patrycja Styrna

"Traces. Image as an experience of oneself in the creative process and art therapy".

"Man always paints himself. Even in abstraction. The CV is the most important. It tells who a person is, what is inside him. Art only finds a response when the artist manages to present himself suggestively. "

Jonasz Stern



1. Jonasz Stern „The Red Table”, 1978

The subject of the written and practical doctoral dissertation: "Traces. Image as an experience of oneself in the creative process and art therapy".

Basic assumptions:

- art as a source of knowledge about man.
- work as an emanation of emotions.
- art helpful in rehabilitation. Art and its therapeutic aspect, influence on the improvement of human health.
- the work as a characteristic and reflection of our ego.

Creation of works based on:

- gesture painting
- creative expression
- the body as a tool for self-expression
- color as a medium in the expression of experiences
 - reference to the mandala, work with the wheel, painting emotions.
 - creating on large formats

A picture, a work of art, increases contact with oneself, with our center, uplifts, carries with it certain values that are beyond everyday life, material existence. It is a need of the spirit which is fulfilled through art. The work also embodies our belonging to the world and nature. First of all, it serves to disseminate certain ideas and to direct the way of thinking of society. It integrates and opens ideas to the world. As a carrier of content, experiences that are passed on from generation to generation. Art is like a bridge that connects them, it is our history, like our memory, written in genes, which is transferred from our earliest beginnings. What would human life be without art? It is a reflection of ourselves, it is our mirror in which we view ourselves. It is thanks to her that we can reach the deepest layers of ourselves. People need contact with art. One cannot be completely separated from it, because there is a human need for beauty and spiritual rest.

Art as therapy, which is the area of my interest and is connected with my work, is a recognized method used in working with diseases and dysfunctions. It helps to find the purpose and meaning of life, it is an attempt to tame stress and fear. A wide range of artistic techniques makes it possible to locate the problem and solve it. In the face of illness, through the use of art, or rather the act of creation itself, we can adopt a transcendent attitude towards danger, fear of death or disease. Art plays an important role in influencing a person's emotional state, helps to regain mental balance, relieve frustration, reduce depression or anxiety, help turn negative attitudes into positive ones, and reduce aggressive behavior. Artistic creativity enables non-verbal representation of the interior, feelings, desires and emotions. A spontaneous creative process can contain and provoke the emergence of conflicting elements of the individual's nature. They are projected beyond themselves through a creation process that eases inner tensions. Creating a plastic projection initiates reflection on my own feelings, attitudes and needs, it also helps to reveal and understand who I am at this moment in my life. There is a strength of spirit in art that is able to overcome body pain, nostalgia and inner anxiety. Since ancient times, art has a great therapeutic power, used in working with dysfunctions (e.g. addictions, social pathology) or diseases (e.g. cancer, mental illness). The aim of art is an attempt to find meaning and purpose in life, supports personal development, helps to accept oneself, reduces or reduces

anxiety and stress, but most of all it allows to recognize the essence of the problem and helps to solve it. People have long used art to express pain, fear, joy, communicate with others and tell them about the world around them.

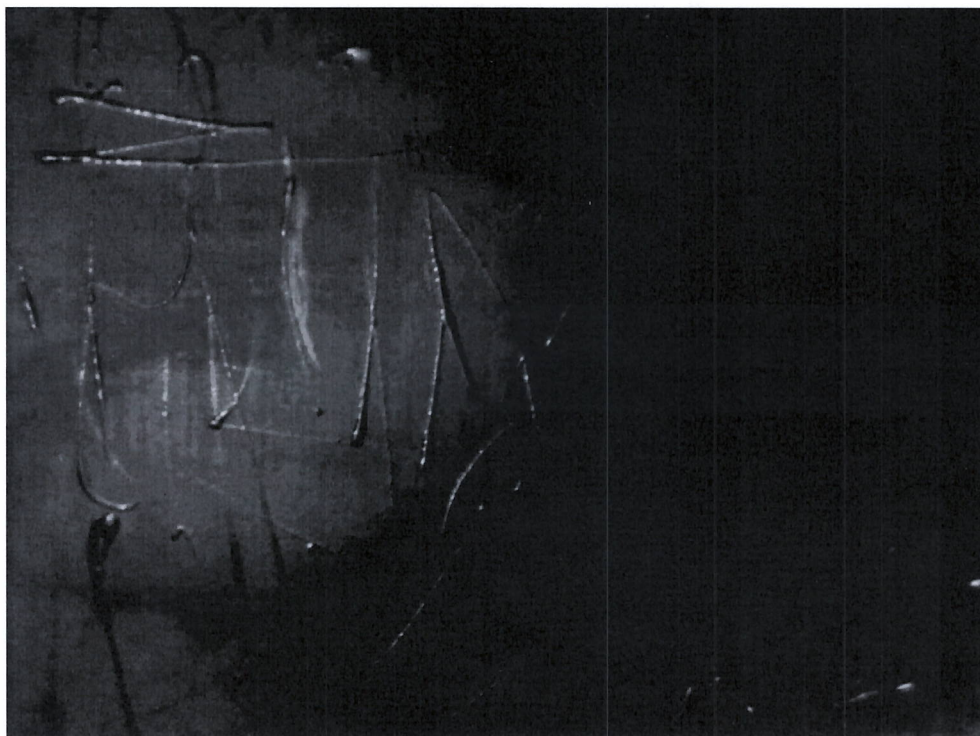
My goal is to show the impact that art has on improving the well-being of a person struggling with illness or other problems related to behavior disorders and to show that in the face of disease, art, or rather the act of creation itself, allows a person to assume a transcendent attitude, in the face of a threat, fear of death. or in the disease in which he finds himself. In the inner reality of a person who participates in the creative process or art therapy, changes are made, because he not only does something, but also transforms himself under the influence of this action. In art therapy, the very creative process in which the person participates, which in itself has a healing effect, helps to integrate the human being, allows to act in a safe space where a person can express their emotions or tame them without fear. The aim of art is an attempt to find the meaning and purpose of life, it supports personal development, helps to accept oneself, but most of all it allows to recognize the essence of the problem and helps to solve it. I am trying to develop this approach and be able to apply it in practice, so that it brings tangible results.



2. Patrycja Styrna, gouache on paper, 50 x 60 cm, digital technique, 2018



3. Patrycja Styrna, "Traces - Phrases I", gouache on paper, 50 x 60 cm, digital technique, 2018



4. Patrycja Styrna „Traces”, acryl and gouache on canvas, 40 x 50 cm, 2017

The created series of self-portraits consists of reflections of parts of the body, face, hands and the entire figure on photosensitive paper, as well as personal items belonging to people participating in the activities. The resulting works are to be a kind of record of the trace of our existence, an emanation of emotions, and also have the character and effect of art therapy. The workshops and the works performed are to show the influence of art and the creative process on the improvement of human well-being. In particular, they are to be used in work with patients struggling with oncological diseases.

Through the resulting image, we can see ourselves in it, to what extent it becomes our reflection. Can it be a helpful medium in discovering oneself, its layers, sometimes hidden; I would like to look at this through the chosen medium of the photogram. Possibilities of processing a work that this technique also gives, creating a collage, a certain story, reflecting the body, objects that belong to us on photosensitive paper. Maybe the contact of the body with paper and showing someone's world also through the reflection of his personal objects, the action of light; the touch of matter to matter, and as a result showing "ephemeral", is a bit like a return to the roots, to the primeval times, to the touch of earth, rock, dye, unlike in the times when everything is focused on perfection, perfection, the cult of the ideal body. Where man loses himself, his identity, or rather looks for it anew. in the mass of information, splendor, where there is more and more of everything, and as a result, a certain void is felt. This is a new experience for someone who would like to look inside themselves or see themselves in a completely new version. The grasp of the moment, being, not only looking through the lens itself, but also "experiencing oneself", a literal self-portrait. When we can reveal ourselves as a bit ephemeral being, because in fact we are also like that, with our emotions, the whole world of internal experiences, our essence, soul, immeasurable, fleeting. The reflected hands are a portrait of the author, a model of man in general, a human entity existing and fusing in the cosmic and sacred order, in the unity of the universe. It is the mystical nature of photography, which, born in the positivist era of the cult of technology, from the very beginning directed social attention towards technical aspects, leaving the magic of creating an image in the sphere of interest of a few individuals. A physical gesture that uses light, photo-chemicals, a fixative and a developer becomes a trace of spiritual expression - a joyful creative act. Experience with a photogram, where the body connects with the developer and gives effects like in informel painting, where each work is a monotype, the only record of a single moment, unique. The works are an external display of the subconscious and a denial of objectivity in photography. The possibility of imprinting on paper, placing a hand, face, hair on it, leaving a trace by creating an image out of it and showing what characterizes us, is a good way to find yourself. This is a new experience, a perspective worth trying when it comes to using this technique in the field of art therapy. Art serves development, in this sense I would like it to be a medium and a field for creating new meanings, opportunities, also in discovering oneself, improving human well-being on many levels. The works performed and the experiences experienced for those taking part in such classes are intended to expand awareness. The essence of these activities is to gain a sense of agency and control over reality, distancing oneself, self-observation and self-knowledge.

The photos capture important moments in life and the emotions unconsciously associated with them. Therefore, personal collections can build natural bridges that help to reach, discover and communicate emotions and memories, even those deeply hidden and forgotten. Photographs can therefore be important elements of a psychotherapeutic relationship. Therapists discover that client photos often serve as tangible, symbolic self-definitions and transitional objects that provide insight not achieved on the same level with words.

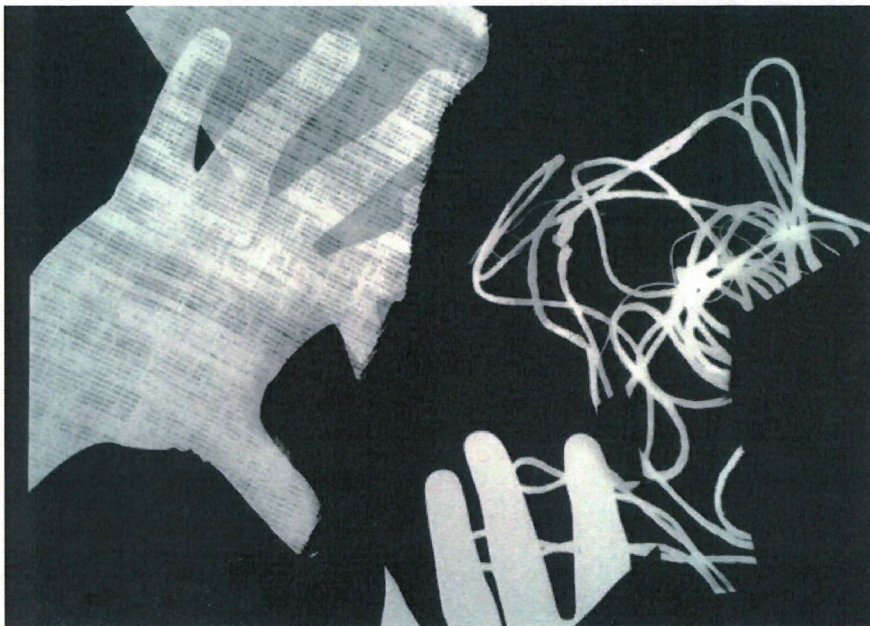
In the created photogram, you can discover what is significant in it, not only visually but also emotionally. Such meanings are hidden in everyone's photos, but when they are used as part of a therapeutic dialogue, a relationship with the unconscious can be built in a more direct and uncensored way by consciousness. During art therapy sessions, we use them not only as an object of contemplation, but also create them, talk to them, listen to them, reconstruct them, illustrate new narratives, collect, process in memory or imagination, include them as part of therapeutic self-expression or even combine them with other photos to create dialogue.

The veil is a symbol of a mystery, things that are hidden, invisible and hidden, although they are almost on top, while unveiling it is a symbol of cognition, revelation, new beginning, initiation, and opening the eyes to new experiences. It is also the state that separates life and death. In this aspect of nudity, not only physical but also spiritual, we can treat ourselves on photosensitive paper, where we literally or symbolically reveal the covered part of ourselves and we can look behind our veil by convention, i.e. into the depths of the body or soul. Access to spiritual mysteries was given through the unveiling of the human body, the ritual unveiling of the Egyptian goddess Isis was a symbol of the appearance of divine light, and the nakedness of Christ on the cross was sometimes interpreted from this point of view as a sign of the mystery of the resurrection. In philosophy, the veil is the condition for the existence of all transient phenomena, because it reveals the true meaning of existence hidden at the very basis of all being and only thereby gives the world its true fullness as the nature of objective phenomenon.

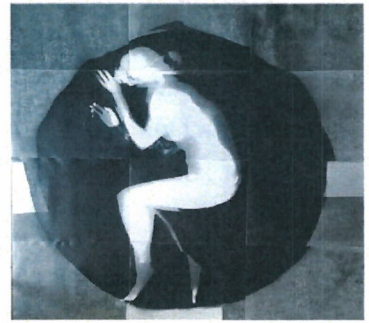
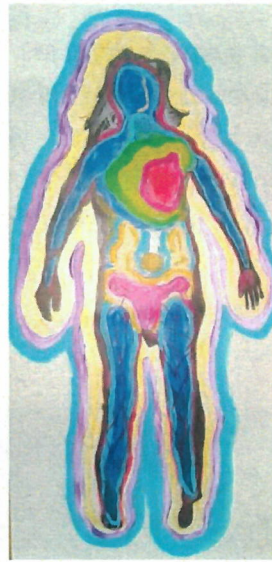
The trace has many meanings - on the one hand, it can show the physical aspect of our activity, existence, leave what is visible for us, but there is also the other side of who leaves this trace. For him, leaving his mark, as well as for those who read it, may have an individual meaning, give meaning to his existence. It can be a kind of saying goodbye to your memories or a welcoming gesture, help you see yourself fully, who he is, what is important to him. When it comes to the use of photography in art therapy, and especially when it comes to using this technique in art therapy with people with cancer, it opens up new spaces for action. It gives you the opportunity to talk to yourself, and you can express yourself through the use of other techniques; painting, drawing. The possibility that an X-ray gave in order to see the disease in us literally, here, deliberate reflection of ourselves, our parts of the body and our objects gives new possibilities of reading but this other less tangible, visible sphere,

emotions, experiences, memory. It is not just a personal trace that we leave behind that is physically tangible and visible throughout the rest. It can be a trace that speaks for everyone, for an entire generation, but also a personal trace. The body speaks for us, the medium itself is a medium, like through dance or movement, a way of expression; a man can do a personal dance with his own body. Through them, he can show his fears, desires, opportunities or their lack. It speaks of both life and our passing.

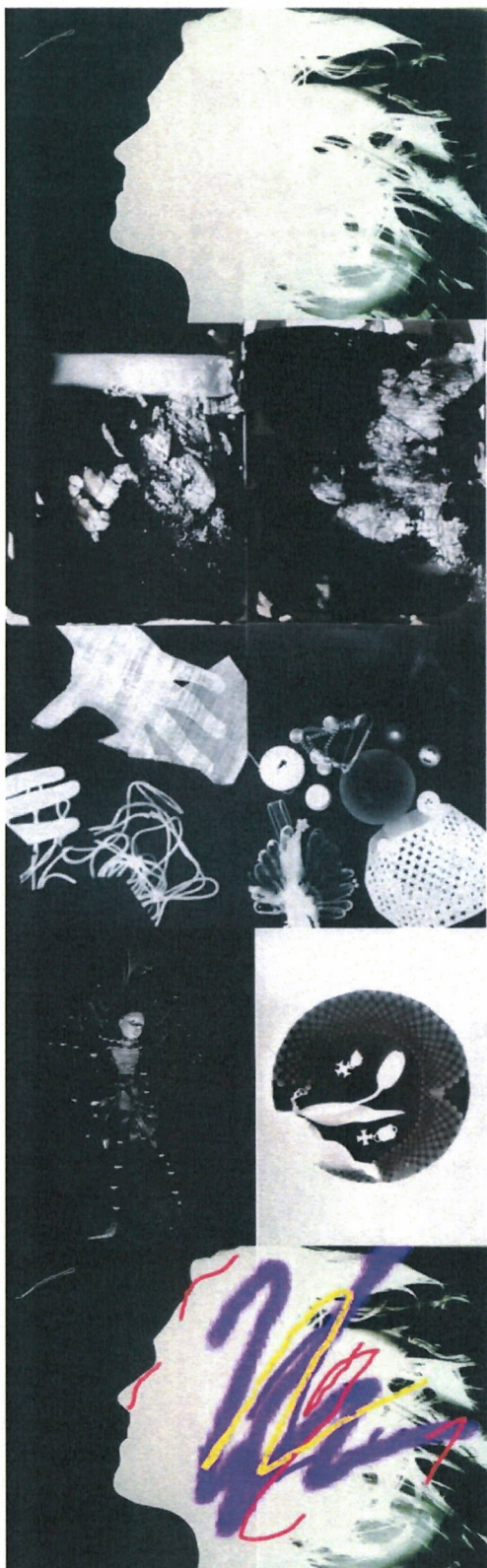
Creation is more than just a creative process, it is an insight into our I, our work becomes not only our sacred, but a universal sacrum, through it we reach not only our center, but it also embodies our contact and belonging to the world of nature, the universe. We are looking for contact with it, because perhaps we are getting more and more distant not only from nature itself, but also losing the way to ourselves. The painting gives us the opportunity to find it.



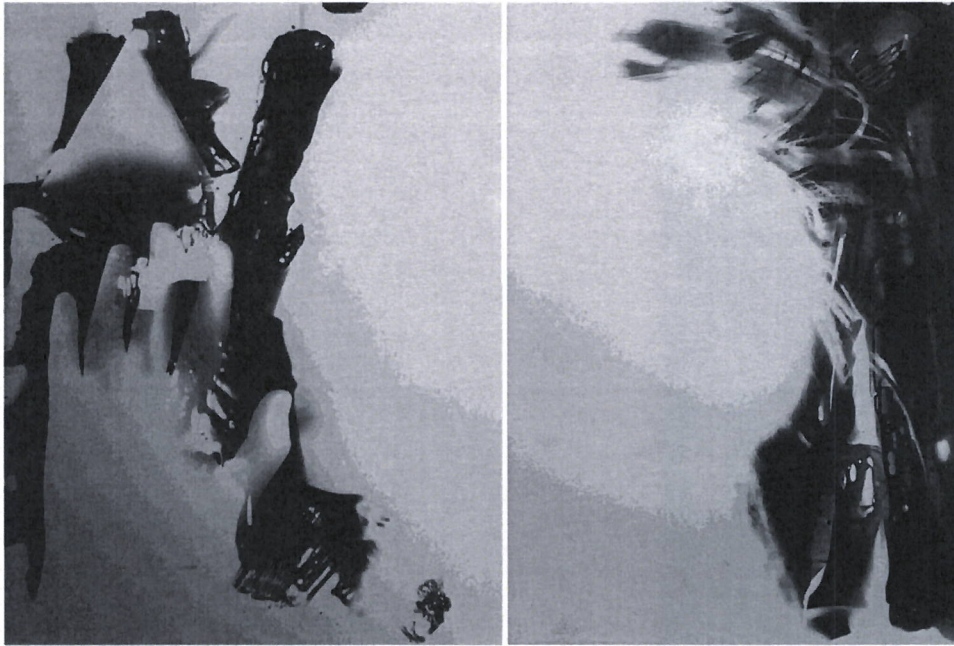
5. Patrycja Styrna, „Hands”, photogram, 24 x 30,5 cm, 2018.



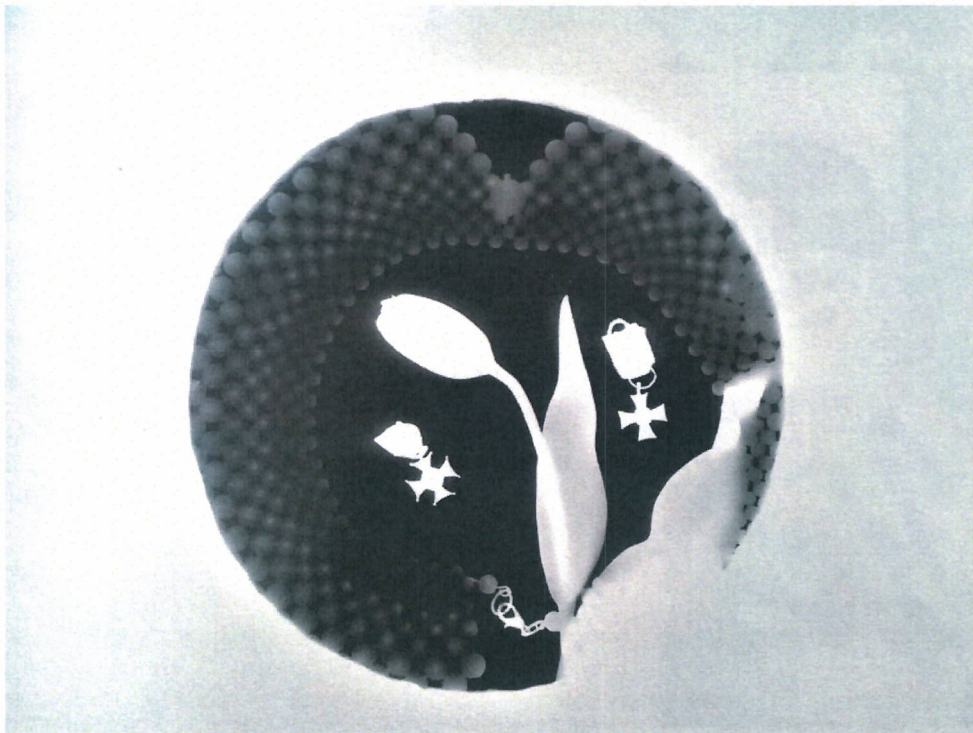
6. Patrycja Styrna „Trace”, realization of the artistic concept of the trace – self – portrait, photograms, 152, 5 cm x 48 cm, with collage, 100 x 200 cm, 150 x 160 cm, and work on foil 100 x 200 cm.



7. Patrycja Styrna, An example of a full self-portrait - concept, photograms, 48 x 152, 5 cm.
Reflections of face, hair, hands, personal items, created mandala with selected items.



8. Patrycja Styrna „Selfportrait”, photogram, 21 x 61 cm, 2018.



9. Patrycja Styrna, Mandala „Ancestors”, photogram, 21 x 30,5 cm, 2018.

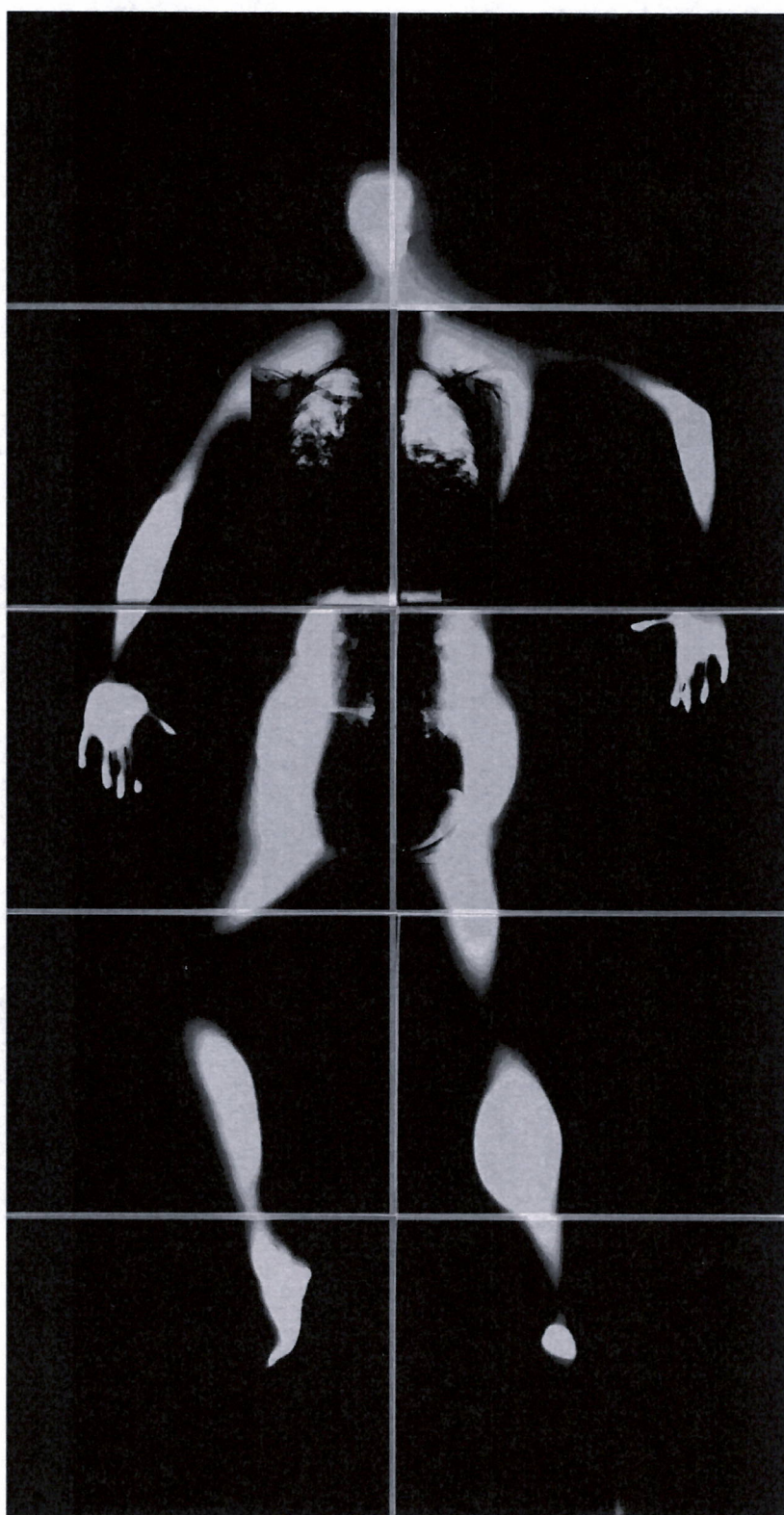


10. Patrycja Styrna „Mandala I - selfportrait”, cardboard, a collage made of a cut printout of a previously made photogram - a self-portrait; middle - a printout of my photo on the foil, 40 cm, 2020 r.



11. Patrycja Styrna, Trace II, Mandala – Selfportrait, fotogram 150 x 160 cm.

The reflection of the body in the circle as a representation of the beginning of life, the womb, the human being inscribed in the circle - the mandala as a process of individuation.

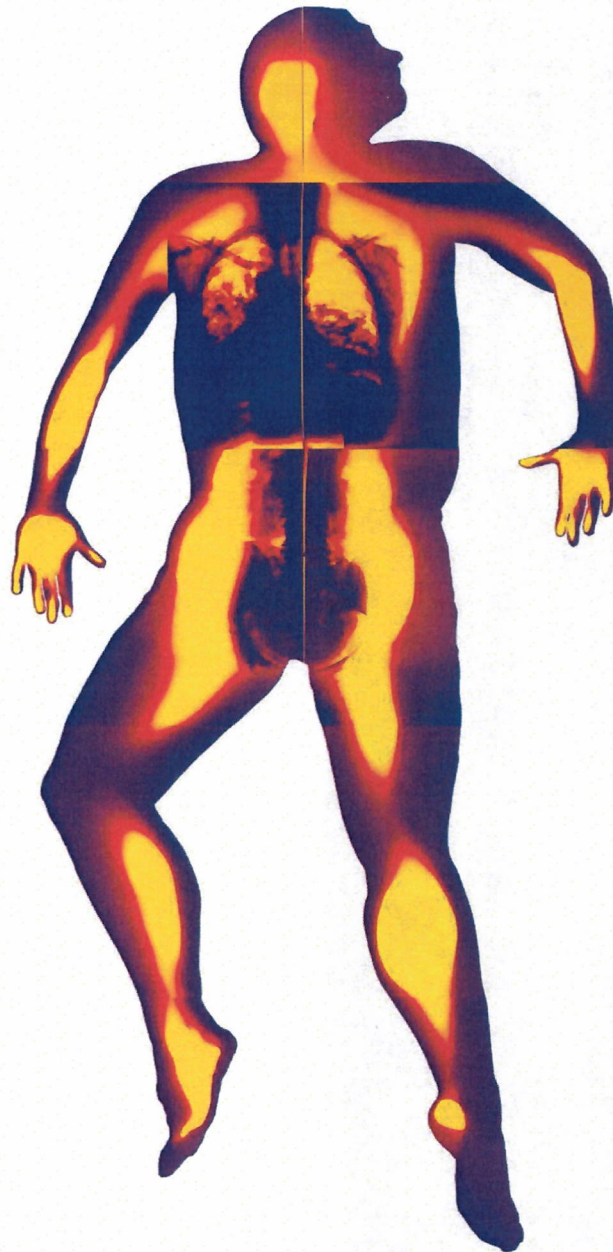


12. Patrycja Styrna, silhouette - Piotr S., photogram, X-ray, 100 x 200 cm, 2018



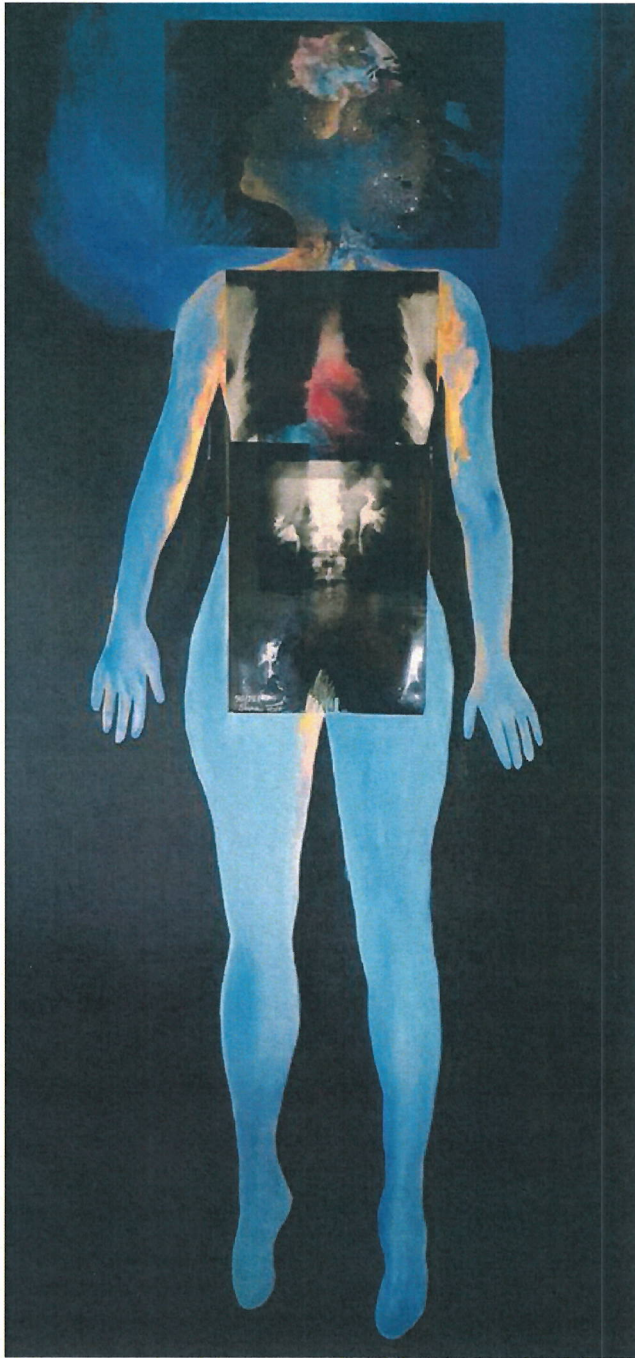
13. Patrycja Styrna, Trace III – Mandala, Piotr, photogram 150 x 160 cm.

The reflection of the body in the circle, as a representation of the beginning of life, the womb, the human being inscribed in the circle - the mandala as a process of individuation.



14. Patrycja Styrna, digital work, print on foil, 100 x 200 cm.

The work done by me illustrating the figure of Piotr and the way a patient's work may look like using VR technology, where the patient paints after his performance - figures during art therapy - rehabilitation.



15. Patrycja Styrna „Trace I”, canvas, acrylic, collage with the use of own X-rays, 100 x 200 cm. The work was created on the outline of my figure made on canvas. In the upper part, i.e. the portrait, I used a foil printout of a previously made photogram - face reflections on photosensitive paper.



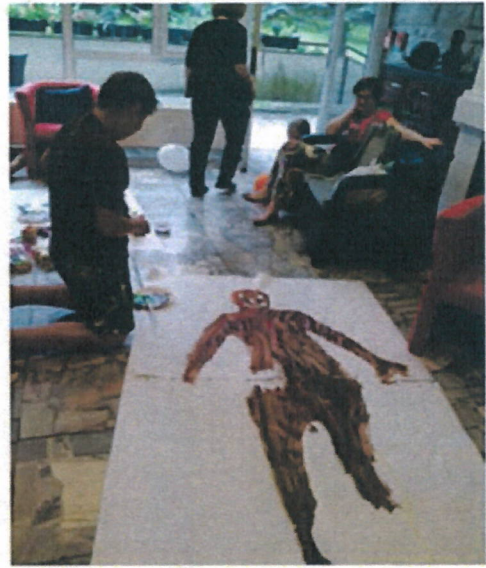
16. Patrycja Styrna „Trace IV”, canvas, acryl, the work was created on the outline of my character made on canvas, 100 x 200 cm.

The work is to be an example of working with your own body - a reflection in art therapy; filling one's reflection with selected colors, referring not only to showing emotions with the use of colors, but also to the spiritual or energetic layer of a person. With regard to the Buddhist so-called "Rainbow Body" - "Rainbow Body", that is, the emanation and dissolution of the physical body in the essence of the five elements. Elemental control skills during the dying process. This is the highest spiritual achievement in Dogchen, the essence of Buddhism.



17. Patrycja Styrna, my art therapy work on foil, 100 x 200 cm.

A printout of my character on foil from a previously created photogram, where I reflected my character on photosensitive paper. The work shows my body, its individual parts, which are presented with different colors, each color shows a different emotional charge, and internal organs are also presented with selected colors, which may, for example, also represent some ailments that previously occurred.



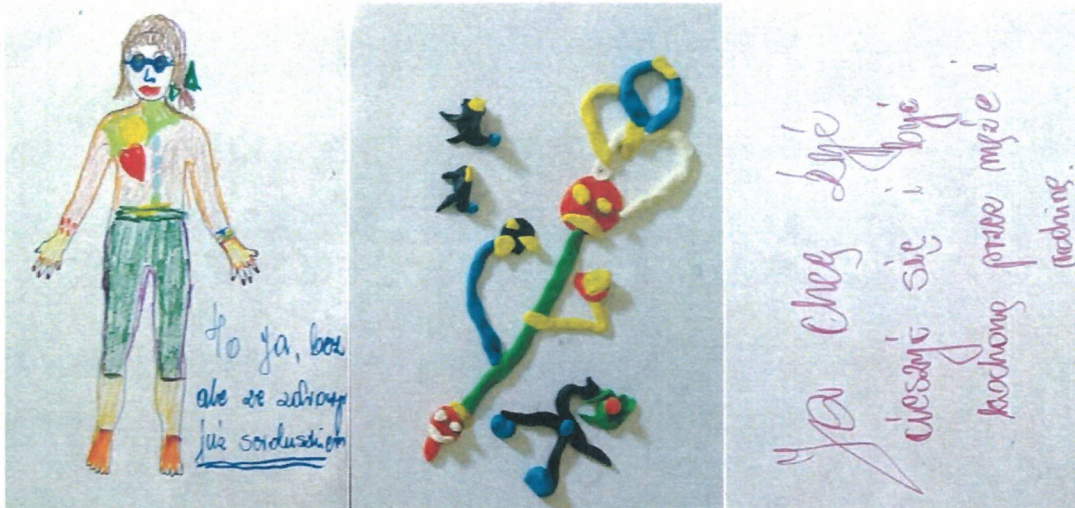
18. The son's work on the outline of his ailing mother's body, the brown color, according to him, was supposed to show the disease, and then the green spots painted over were to start the process of treating her ailments. Work done by patients during art therapy classes conducted by me at the Unicorn Psychooncology Center in Krakow



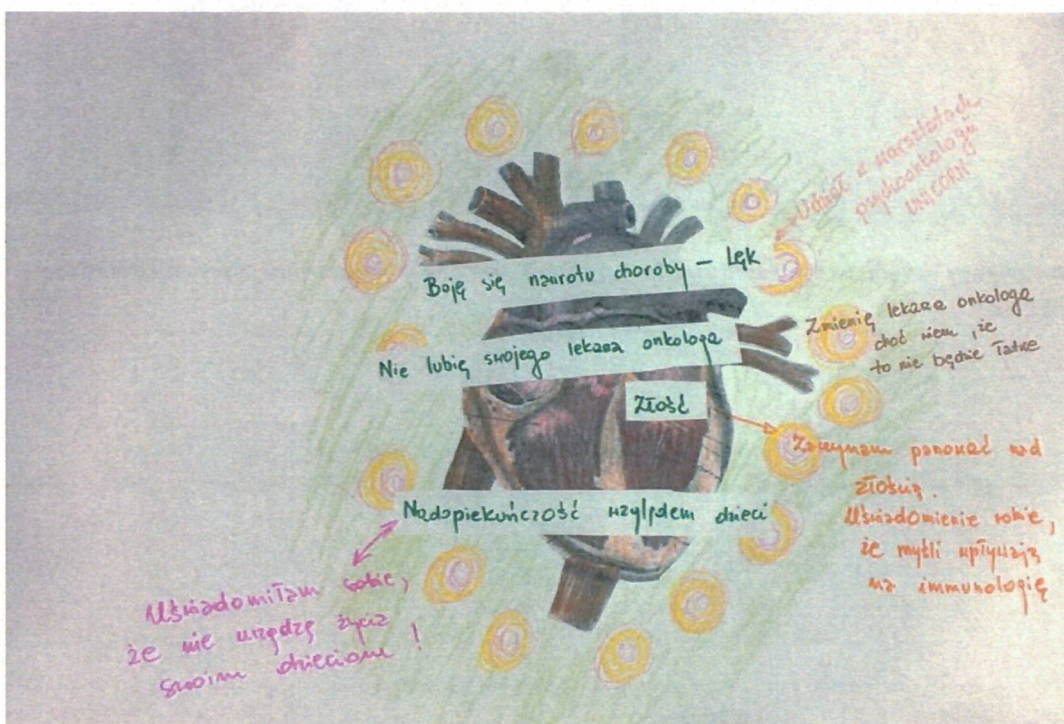
19. The patient paints on her body contour; the work embodies the process of treating her disease with the help of the colors and shapes she chose on the plan of the figure. Work done by a patient during art therapy classes conducted by me at the Unicorn Psychooncology Center in Krakow.



20. Mandala – selfportrait, patient's work in art therapy classes



21. Patient's work in art therapy classes. Working with a character, with your body and illness, visualizing yourself and your surroundings, relationships with loved ones, expressing yourself with words - what I want.



22. Patient's work in art therapy classes - "My heart - Self-portrait on the plan of the heart", on which he expresses his fears, fears, and can also work on the image of his heart, trying to free himself from them.



23. Art therapy patients' work, expressing feelings, fears, drawing their problems, ailments related to the disease.

Shyne Petyle
2.05.2022