



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

# **Inner View**

**From an introspection**

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**“Suffering is justified as soon as it becomes the raw material of beauty”**

(Jean-Paul Sartre)

## Beginning

Nowadays, it is quite difficult to propose something absolutely new within the field of art. Since, I consider fairly true this popular saying “everything had been already done”. Picasso razed with most of the subjects in the last century. He once said that even on the floor, he found inspirational shapes. Therefore, I decided to write mostly about myself, my creative process and the relationship in between my real life and the consciousness of my project, as a way to collect my thoughts and verbalize them, not only for you- but for me as well.

I must emphasize, that my artistic education has been extremely significant, especially the doctrine taught by my school back in Perú. Where, in addition to give a considerable importance on learning the technique of color, chiaroscuro and composition; we were exposed to deal constantly with our teachers questioning on our work. They mainly asked us about the reasons of our taken choices. “Why?” seemed to be their favorite word. And obviously, a simple “because I like it” it was outrageous, an inadequate response to any teacher.

Although I still paralyze a bit facing the “empty canvas”, in a way I think this had encouraged my self-inspection towards any new project and it trained me to give a meaning every time to my art pieces. Thus, my experiences and feelings are an often source of my work; however I cannot imagine myself creating something based on joy.

Sadness, as I will clarify in depth later, lives in all of us and we all question it, as analyze the philosopher George Steiner in his “Dix raisons (possibles) à la tristesse de la pensée” wherein he made an introspection exam of the reason, he had listed probable causes why thinking can turn into sadness and later on lead to melancholy. Some of them are- for the lack of control on the thoughts; because thinking is never enough or does not remain in our mind; or because of the grammar the thoughts remain culturally limited, etc.

Another theory based on scientific studies, such as Professor Eduardo Punset suggests, in his book “El Alma está en el Cerebro” in the last ten years it had been proved that our brain could change its volume, more than a ten percent. Not because the aging process, because of depression, a disease not characterized by values related to intelligence or creativity, but to a deep sadness.

I would try to explain better my creative process and how the need to express comes as a consequence of a specific motivation. This similar statement it has been followed for many other artist, considered as autobiographical which I identify with. I employ art to express myself, to settle my own debts, to clean my mind, to take my body further on; in other words to improve myself and keep on working.



Figure 1. "comiendome la cabeza" (wracking up my Brains) still motion pictures of the video/animation

### **Creative aptitude**

Eduardo Punset (1936) a Catalan professor, well-known in Spain as an eager science diffuser, who had wrote various books about the human and social behaviour from a scientific angle, such as "El Alma está en el Cerebro" wherein he explains from his view where the imagination, emotions and memories come from. Because, according to the ancient thoughts, these elements were the three faculties of the soul.

"Creativity, according to the experts, seems to be set as an attitude towards life: it is the impulse of create and generate ideas. And a creative person is an individual who conscious or unconsciously chooses the creation path" (Punset, *El Alma está en el Cerebro* (The soul is in the brain) 2007, 301).

The author stands that a creative person is independent by choice, even though sometimes this brings up negative consequences.

The Greek mythology conceived creativity inspiration as a divine puff. With the time, the myth of the artist possessed by muses got rationalized and it was considered, sometimes like mere insanity. It was not until the Middle Ages that the Christianity started to contemplate the artists as an instrument of God, the Church didn't recognize their prestige. The Greeks inspiration concept was regained during the Renaissance enhancing back the artist to the status of gods. Then, during the Romanticism the creativity urge was related to the idea of suffering and madness. The stereotype of madness and indomitable

character was kept until the last century, after that the artist adopted unusual lifestyles as bohemian, beat or hippy. Maybe that idea still endures, precisely for its relation with broken structures.

Aristotle said "There was never a genius without a tincture of madness". The relationship in between creativity and insanity has been well studied, for some this rapport is clear enough, but for some others the creativity only comes in good health. Doctor Robert Sternberg stands that creativity comes as an interaction between genes and environment. It means if someone has creativity potential but lives as a prisoner with any inputs, this person won't be able to develop his congenital skills.

Punset explicates that the specialists already revealed why a person is more creative or imaginative than the others ones, because of: A certain genetic disposition, a weak - but global brain activation and a learning experience.

### **My process**

In my opinion, art needs a stimulus based on the artist's inner view in order to develop an honest process bound to real feelings. What it matters to me is what the artist believes in, the real motivation. Maybe, in sorrow or in sadness, it is more common to find that honest impetus otherwise, just staying at the surface it's not enough.

Motivation → Expression

Art is very important as a language of communication, whether it is made only for the artist's own sake or to be shared with others. Everyone has the faculty to create and develop their own personal images in their minds. Each person needs to express themselves in some way; it is for the human race a way of preservation. And the election of our own artistic technique comes as a truthful consequence of what we would like to convey. Artistic creativity allows us to get into our deepest insides, playing with the boundaries as a dialogue in between the fiction and reality. The introspection through the construction of plastic images assures us that we are recalling past issues or conflicts and when we work on those representations (images) we are working on ourselves, modifying and transforming them. When I think about a project, somehow I get the images in my mind of how it would look like finished. Sometimes is just a glance, but it's something to start working from. As well, from time to time I have a feeling, like a hunch, that I follow until the piece is done; and only then, I could realized why I did it. The impulse that leads us to create comes in different ways. I do agree with this popular saying "Inspiration only comes

while we are working". Then, the urge to create feeds on itself in the artwork, in theory it should work like a cycle.



Figure 2. "come close to me" woodcut on paper, 43 x 30cm.

### Inner view

I remember as a child growing up in a catholic private school, watching the other girls having perfect lives, I felt different, like a weirdo. Obviously, now I know it wasn't at all like that, everyone struggled. But at that age, it was impossible for me to see it. I asked my parents to take me to a psychologist, because whatever it was happening to me, it was really overwhelming and I knew that I couldn't deal with it by my own. It was because of embarrassment or money or the fact that my mother got pretty indignant with my request, but they refused. Then my father told me something that he constantly said during the years and I believe marked my personality: "Your best psychologist, it is yourself"

In my view, I go for the first awareness, the primary sensations without giving any real thought about it and this usually comes as melancholy. I am not a religious person, but I do believe in the duality of

thoughts and things, this lies central in oriental philosophy. The concept describes two opposite forces, interconnected and interdependent in the natural world that give rise to each other in turn. They constantly interact, never existing in absolute stasis. The duality focuses on the idea of achieving a balance such as female and male, low and high, cheerfulness and desolation.

Hence, when it comes to me, the inner unhappiness is the leading source that I get whilst I'm looking for inspiration. My creative process is just a matter of decisions made based on which feeling I am more comfortable with. It is a personal choice honest to my personality and my beliefs.

Disagreement and anxiety are an important part in carrying out my artwork. It is usually from there where I start; the motor that moves my production process. From grief, arises a consequence; in the pursuit of joy is where my artistic process begins. It is through soreness, that I start and maintain a relationship with art. This is how I reach the balance on the duality, "enjoying" sadness while it lasts, because I know it is just a matter of time to reach happiness once more.

A question that comes into my mind - do I have to be suffering to create? In a way I believe I do, but I don't dwell on it. It is more than just being in pain; it's about seeking inside myself all of the unfinished business that I would like to close or things that I've never said and finally get the courage to do so. It is due to my constant melancholy (or it could be pessimism?); I work with the moment that I am living or the issue that I am going through at that specific time when I propose an art project.

I would never pretend to be that poor struggling artist from the XIX century part of this archetype where the young manic-depressive poets had to suffer to be able to write nicely and end up torturing themselves till death.

As I will explain during a next chapter, anguish is intrinsic to every human being. It is not a condition that only artists share. Living in pain or come through an ordeal it's not a delight to no one. I don't play the role of "the victim" actually it's the other way around. For me to work from sorrow, it is a way to do something about it and to make the agony and the anxiety stop and leave them behind. It helps me to transform a bitter feeling in something better, more sane. I could call it as a cathartic act, because it "purifies" pending issues. It is through this process that I am able to find peace and sanity with myself.

The ones who suffer understand better the suffering of the others, because they could see themselves through other ones sorrow. This is how I approach to the viewers, by empathy. I show them my work and only some of them will make a connection with the art piece, because not everybody has the same



background of experiences. It is then, that the communication gets made, finding an active receptor with some kind of feedback.

I do my pieces mainly for me, where the beginning and the motivation are absolutely mine. The aesthetic decisions are the result of a natural intuition (maybe influenced by all the technique that I learned through my university years). But it is obvious they will be exhibited in public, every time it's shocking for me see someone standing in front of it and staring at it.

As Max Ernst once said: "I only had to dutifully reproduce that that became visible within me".

Another question that often comes - is why my image is constantly involved?

"Kahlo said that she painted herself because she usually was alone and as well, because "herself" was the subject she knew the best. She would say with regard of this matter: *there was a need of my painting to go through that (herself)* " (Herrera 1992).

Once, I heard that the repetition of your own figure comes because you need to tell the world:

Hey, HERE I am!

To reaffirm yourself as a person, for me, in this case I would tend to claim:

This is WHO I am!

After giving much thought to this topic, I believe there is not just one single reason why I use my image. My personality is involved, being an individualistic person who has been never too concerned about the world's problems or society issues. I always find myself as the first resource both mentally and physically to my work.

During my upbringing, it was a very important deal to conceal our family issues from everyone. The using of my own image as "airing my dirty laundry" in which I reveal personal stuff, it generates me embarrassment. I feel ashamed while I see my picture out there, because beside of that, it is a representation of a reality that I don't like but I do belong to. This feel of shame trespass the cultural boundaries that protect what society considers intimate from what it could be show. Then, this is my own breaking into public.

At the same time, the exposure of my image is a crucial step in my "therapeutic process" as a way to objectify the issue, forcing me out of my lead role (the main visual character) and allowing me just to contemplate the results as a third person. Sometimes it's better to move away and gain some distance to really appreciate the work; take out all personal load by turning my portrait into an object, in order to become just into another viewer.

Perchance exposing myself may be the way I try to integrate myself into society - having my work as the "lifeline" that keeps me connected to the real world, as a link in between me and the concerned viewer. It works as a "two ways street" where I could achieve a real communication with the observer and at the same time, they could feel identify with me. Thus, I could say that what I'm looking for it would be sharing feeling, just some empathy. Funny for me to state this, because it is precisely the opposite of my selfishness, perhaps the social behavior as a basic need of the human being has no exceptions.

Last but not less, include my portrait to present myself in front of everyone under the name of an Artist it's a reaffirmation of my life choice. Wherein I believe in my work and I recognize myself as a plastic artist.



Figure 3. "en-cajada" silkscreen on an IKEA carton box

While I work  
The way I take my decisions it's because of a feeling  
A Hunch  
I don't think that much  
In fact, my worst decisions had been made after I gave it too many thoughts  
So, why should I rack my brains?  
I need to keep in silence  
And let the shapeless feelings  
Turn into images  
Take their places.  
This is not mystical  
I let "my inner guidance" do the work.  
Intuition seems too personal  
Too unpredictable  
It's Hard to explain, perhaps too unreliable,  
It is by definition impossible to be analyzed.  
And the only proof that I have is the final result.  
The explanations usually come later on  
It is while I'm working that I realise the truly meaning of my taken choices.



Figure 4. "en-cajada" silkscreen on an IKEA carton box

## About M. Heidegger

I cannot pretend to make a deep analysis of Martin Heidegger's discourse, owing to my limitations in language and philosophical appreciation, although I will make my best explaining the relation that exist between his statement and this thesis, the nature concern that everyone has as being part of this world and how the artists look for their unique path. I would like to outline the main ideas developed in it, contextualize them, make my own interpretation and relate them with this thesis aim.

First of all, we should refer to Hegel who long before Heidegger surprised everybody by saying that the art was part of the past. Many, drawing a parallelism with the controversial "God is dead" of Nietzsche, gave to Hegel the term "the Art is dead" although he never expressed it in these words. With his claim, Hegel showed social rootlessness and the lost of authenticity of the creative process. Art was not something independent in society anymore. With the growth of government, industry and law, art was increasingly conditioned and it seemed more a sub-product of these, rather than a vital meaningful process to the people. In the same way, that the avant-gardes had opposed the bondage of the artist before the nobility and clergy, represented by Neoclassicism and Romanticism; Hegel was highly critical with the new role of the art after the Second World War. Which had been absorbed by the art institutions, museums, art market, it was no longer in control of the content or the impact of the art piece indeed.

In his essay "The origin of the work of art" (1935) Heidegger asked himself in which extent and how Art becomes into something really important in people's lives. According to him, the essence of Art involves a Truth, as vital for the artist as for the viewers. Heidegger statement was really impressive in the world of philosophy, because he was the first one to link Art and Truth. Before him, the Truth was exclusive of sciences as Art was a matter of aesthetic, perception, good taste, etc. For Heidegger, it is the search for this Truth, the engine and what gives sense to the artist and to his work.

Heidegger interpreted the term "Origin" rather than "a beginning" but as "a source", the place which from arises the essence. As well, he questioned the supposed one-way relationship in between the artist and his artwork. Wherein the work was born from the artist, but where both are defined respectively. The work, the truth, the reason of interest fulfills the artist and the artist to his art piece. This resourceful rapport between one and the othe is what he understands as Art. In a way Heidegger described us Art in a more characteristic Easter philosophy than the East approach; he presented us Art

as Whole and its Source, at the same time. Art presents itself as a constellation, wherein all the elements belong are interrelated among themselves through feedback or resource dynamic. Some of these, beside the artist and the artwork, are the viewers, the exhibition room, the criticism or the publications.

Furthermore, Heidegger wondered in which way the artist could express with his own artwork a truly authenticity. There are important concepts as “sorge” and “dasein”, these ones represent and organize the creative process and the motivations that guide the artist to create. Sorge, in his various connotations, it could mean “be careful”, “to be worried”, “pay attention”, “to take care of” or “to be aware”. Moreover, the term Dasein, concept created by Heidegger, it would mean “The I” the being where it comes from the engine and the artist’s impulse, as the method to become authentic. The artist should “care” (sorge) to find out his own Dasein, his place in this world and in that way, give an own sense to his art. It is not about any political or ethnical position, but to leave aside the stereotypes and preconceptions of the social imagination and talk about their own truth, their life experience. In this way the artist can create something original that define him as unique. This is the statement, why this essay of Heidegger is important for this thesis, under my interpretation; because it perfectly defines its purpose, describe how significance is for an artist to express his own point of view (intimate) and personal view over all what surrounding (inner view).

In closing, I would like to quote Kandinsky, who had been attributed words as “the art tries to see the invisible”. Heidegger in his own way, said the same when he defined the artwork as a poetic representation of the duality between the visible and the invisible, between light and darkness. The artists live concerned about finding the hidden behind the visible, to express that Truth so impalpable and fleeting that Heidegger talked about.



Figure 5. “shoot me first” silkscreen and woodcut on a cork board

## Sadness

George Steiner (1929) is a writer, literary critic and intellectual with Jewish origins. He wrote in 2005 the essay “Dix raisons (possibles) à la Tristesse de la Pensée” wherein Steiner drew on a theory developed earlier by the German philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775- 1854) one of the Idealism greatest exponents. This philosophical trend maintains that reality “in itself” cannot be perceived as it is; we can only build cognitively, with our subjective perception a mere approximation to this one. Previously, in his book “The Essence of Human Freedom” in 1809, Schelling made reference to “an inseparable sadness of any finite life” and it would be a kind of engine or foundation of the “overcoming pleasure”. Steiner’s aim was to take this statement as a starting point and try to develop the different faces and motivations of this original and innate sadness, but in a more structured way, as a “Decalogue”.

Some of them, the most important from my point of view are the boundless of “the Whole” through thinking, the awareness of the existence of the “unthinkable”, the insecurity created for the lack of control over thoughts, the untranslatable of the thoughts through the language, the inaccessibility of the other’s thinking, and the inability to concentrate fully, suffering inevitably a kind of blur even in the most lucid moments. Another possible reason it would be to know deep inside that there is a lack of originality in almost all of our thoughts, changing only our way of expressing them.

These and others are the reasons why we suffer an inevitably and non-stop sadness or existential anguish. This “no balance” state drives us to act in search of something better, which is part of the essence of the overcoming spirit, as Schelling said.

“Human existence, the life of the intellect, signifies an experience of this melancholy and the vital capacity to overcome it” (Steiner 2005, 7)

The art and the creative processes are by themselves an entity focused on overcoming these obstacles or limitations of the human thought. In general lines, the artistic creativity tries to reach what lies beyond, overcome the straitjacket of language, focus, or abstracted as it’s required giving new and more enlightened views. It experiences the complexity of perception and subjectivity. Furthermore, the artist's creativity persists in his search for originality and even plays with the unconscious and its most hidden instincts.

## **Art as a confessional**

“Painters who use life itself as their subject –matter, working with the object in front of them, or constantly in mind, do so in order to translate life into art almost literally, as it were. The subject must be kept under closest observation if this is done: day and night, the subject – he, she or it- will eventually reveal the all without which selection itself is not possible; they will reveal it, though some and every face of their lives or lack of life through movements and attitudes, through every variation from one moment to another”. (Freud 1996 (1954), 219)

What is the reason artists reveal in their works private details of their lives? Why is it so important to write diaries or to take family snap pictures and keep them? Autobiographical art has been part of the artistic scene forever - with a vast variety of media range from drawings, paintings, prints, photographs, installations, and performance to video. These artists deal with memories and their aim is to transform their own life experience into an artistic experience for the public. More than often in their processes they make use of their self-documentation in order to achieve a proper narration of their private stories.

In reference of the artists who influence the most in my work, I would have to mention the autobiographical ones, these artists who have made their own life the theme of their work. Or at least those who need to bring something personal out of their system. For me, talking about personal issues it's not a walk in the park, but it is truthful. That is why I really value the effort of autobiographical artists. They have the urge to talk about certain experience in their own lives, perhaps of one specific episode. It is not easy to have a happy life. I think we've all been through some unpleasant moments which we save in our minds. I am not referring specifically to people traumatized, but with something enough important to themselves that make them have the urge to express it. In my personal taste, I find more interesting and with more content work when is a product of a real situation. Clearly, this does not exclude my criticism on the quality of their work.

Artists such as Yayoi Kusama, Jo Spence, Frida Kahlo, Tracey Emin or Henry Darger have worked guided by their feelings and sensations left after experiencing certain situations. Each of them, in their own way speaks of the events of their lives. And make very personal and quite different aesthetic proposals.

**Jo Spence** (1934-1992) was a critical British photographer around the seventies and eighties. Based in her political socialism and feminism view, she brought up a critique of modern humanistic documentary photography found on a naturalistic conception of a photographic truth and a representation of the poor as victims. Challenging the ideas at that time, she was concerned on who take the pictures and how this generated an unequal relationship between the photographer and the subject. In this way the photography came back to be part of anyone's life and not anymore just exclusive for museums or high culture. This is the key why Jo Spence focused on her self-representation as an examination through her own body of the construction grounds of the social identities showed in pictures.



The breast cancer was diagnosed in 1982, after that her work changed to the representation of health in relation to gender and class conditions and the processes of photographic therapy. Spence documented her experience in her physical, emotional and social dimensions; and how she criticized some medical process, the manipulation of the patient, her daily life with the disease and her search for new habits and alternatives therapies.

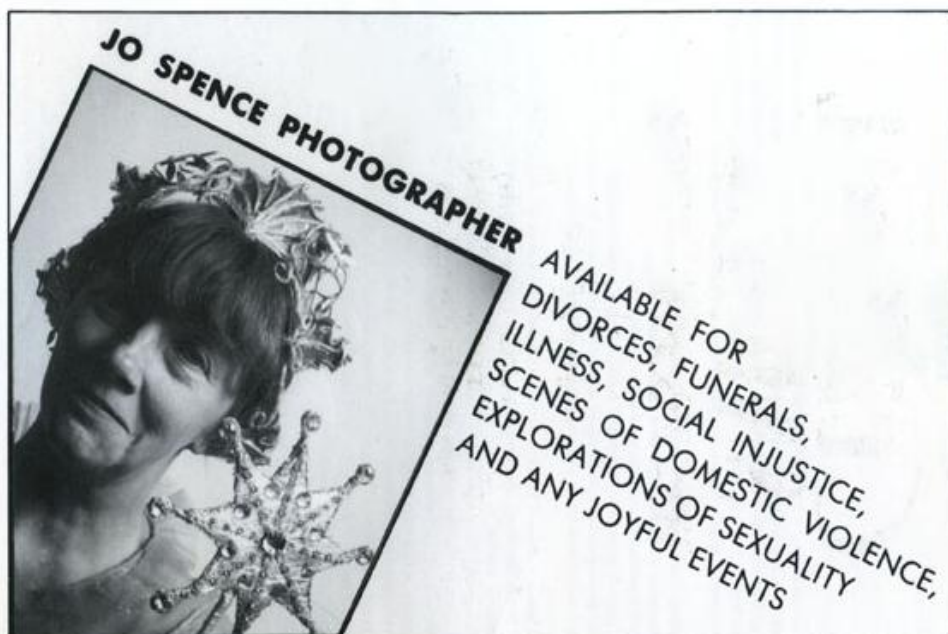


Figure 6. Jo Spence  
Photographer - Calling  
card 1986



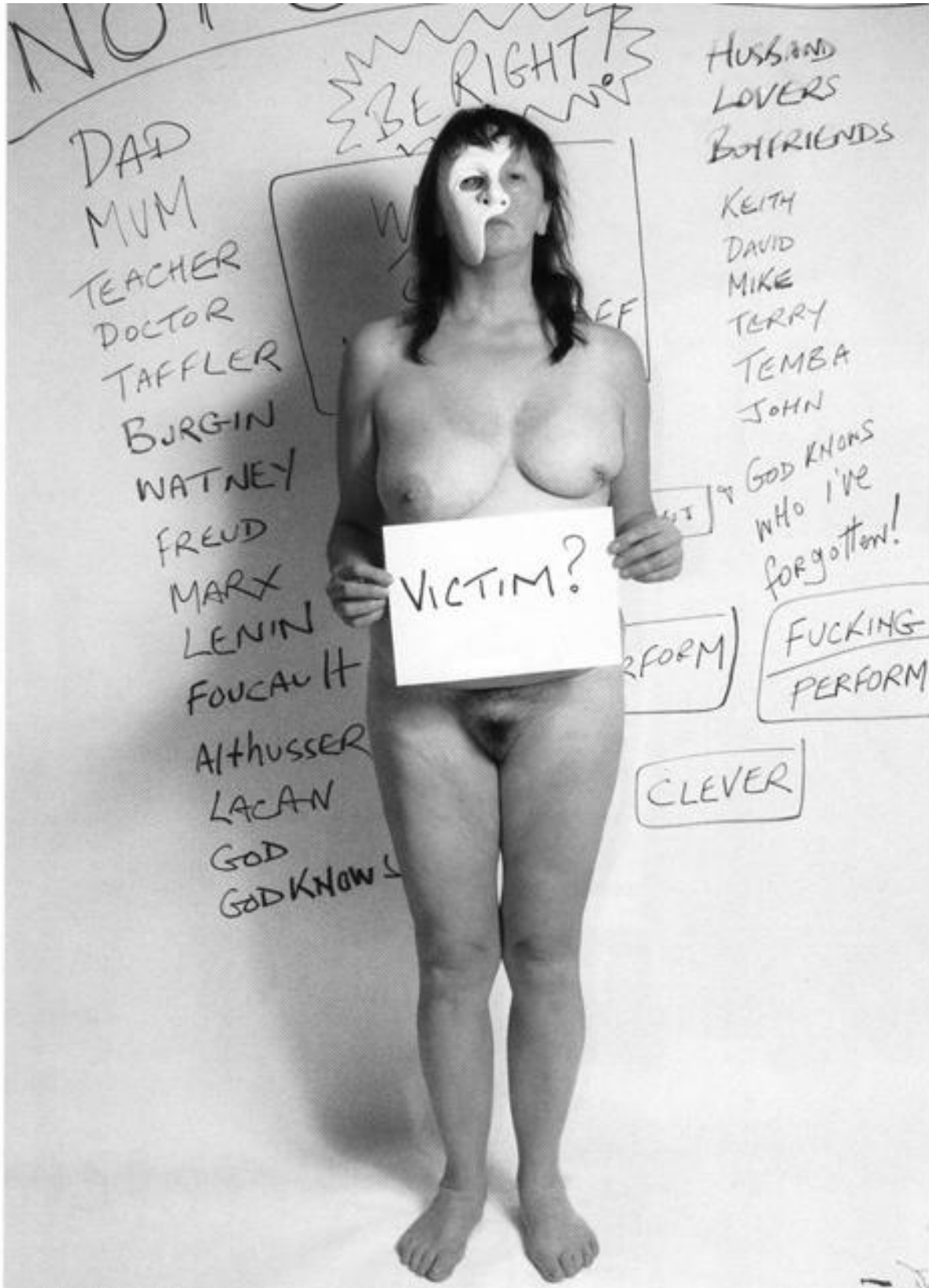


Figure 7. Jo Spence and David Roberts "Not our class?" 1989



Figure 8. Jo Spence and Tim Sheard "Exile" from "Narratives of Dis-ease" 1990

**Yayoi Kusama** (1929) was a Japanese artist who based her work in conceptual art producing a mix of autobiographical, psychological and sexual content. A good part of her work is the result of a harsh childhood, where as she describes being an unwanted child by parents who didn't love her. The polka dot pattern that she uses in her artwork is a vision of her obsession developed by her lack of emotional balance. She began to have these hallucinations when she was a young girl. Her obsession with repetition, pattern and accumulation are all shared on her paintings, sculptures, collages, performances, videos and happening as her visions did, covering everything she saw. Nowadays she still produces art and lives, by choice, in a mental hospital in Tokyo.



“If it was not for art, I would have killed myself a long time ago” Kusama is often quoted as saying. (brunodillen.com s.f.)

I feel quite identify with Yayoi's work, a cause of her constant repetitions of a pattern, as a representation of her compulsions.



Figure 9. Narcissus garden, 2009, Installation, Victoria Miro Gallery, London UK





Figure 10. Infinity Mirror Room (Phalli's Field), 1965, sewn stuffed fabric, mirrors, 360×360 x 324 cm. Installation, Floor Show, Castellane Gallery, New York.

**Tracey Emin** (1963), an English artist, whose father was married to another woman while he was with her mother. She lost her virginity as victim of rape when she was thirteen years, and at eighteen she was pregnant with twins but had an abortion because she was scared of what her parents would think. She was part of the group Young British Artists (YBA) next to Damien Hirst and Sarah Lucas on the 90s, who were seen as outsiders, rebels with confidence. She knows what she is doing; she only happened to be an interesting and controversial person. As a character she is well known for her drugs, alcohol abuse, scandals and wild sex life. She actually exploits her life story revealing intimate details to engage the viewer.



“The individual and the universal, the intimate and the public, are continually interwoven in Emin’s work” (Ilka Becker 2001, 120)

Installations, drawings, videos, photographs, neon lights, performances and printings, all are Emin’s great media versatility utilized to show her powerful discourse nourished by truly stories of lust and pain. She has said “There should be something revelatory about art. It should be totally new and creative, and it should open doors for new thoughts and new experiences”.

About Tracey Emin, I’m amaze by her self-confidence as an artist and how she dares to expose her image and her private life no matters what.



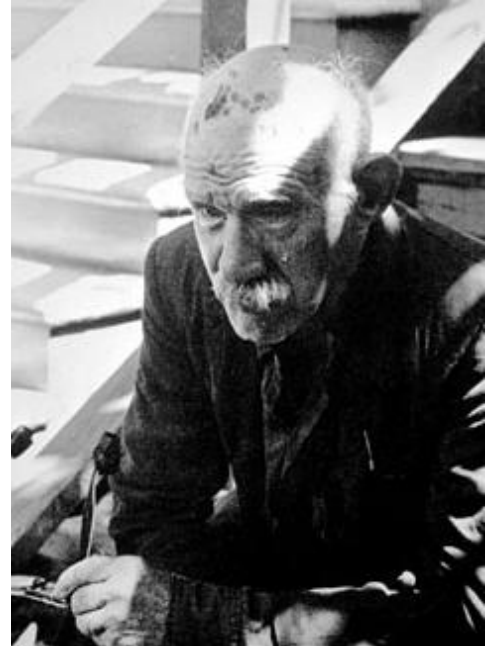
**Figure 11.**  
Everybody I have  
ever slept with  
1963- 1995. 1995,  
appliquéd tent,  
mattress and light  
122 x 245 x 215cm





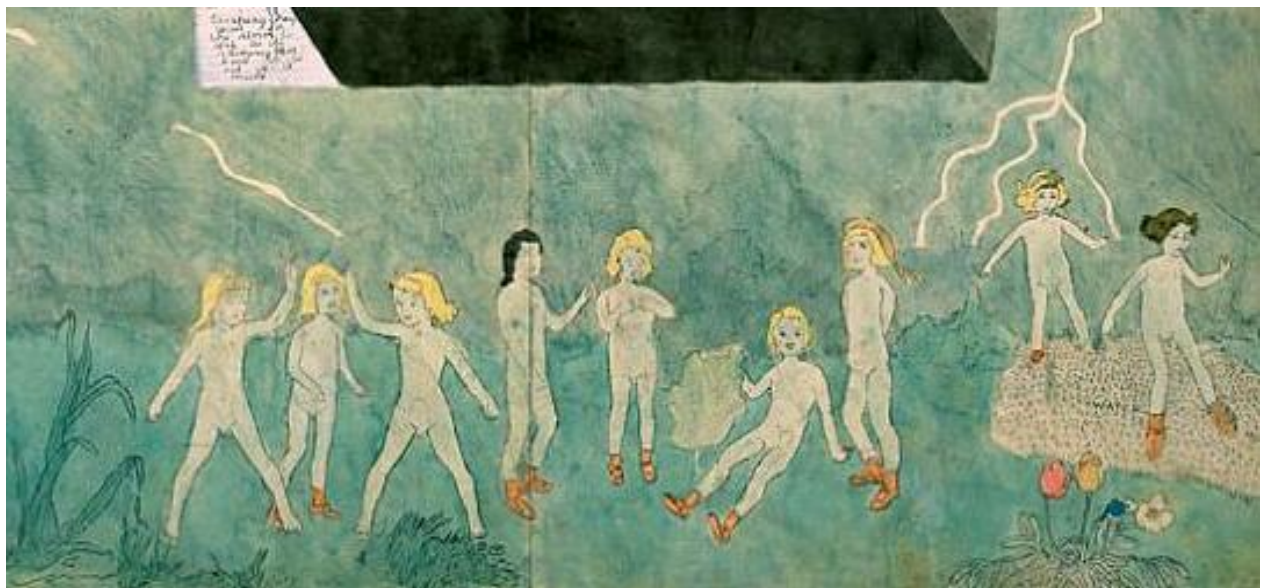
Figure 12. My Bed, 1998, Mattress, linens, pillows, objects. 79 x 211 x 234 cm Tate Gallery, London UK

**Henry Darger** (1892-1973) was an outsider artist, a US writer and illustrator who lived most part of his life isolated in his flat. After his parents died, he spent his childhood in children homes and treated by psychiatrists because of his “mental sub-normality”. Darger lived as an outcast, he was a solitary and a very catholic man who attended mass every day, used to pick up garbage and barely had contact with real women. All his artistic material was found after his death in his flat rented for 40 years. it was a room full of disturbing naïve/horror paintings and drawings of the shocking scenes described in his bloody thirsty nineteen thousand page manuscript called “Story of the Vivian Girls in what is known as The Realms of the Unreal or the Glandeco-Angelinian War



Story, caused by the Child Slave Revellion” filled with little girls with male genitals, murderers and tortures but without any direct sexual allusion. People who knew him said that he may have suffered of paranoid schizophrenia; although he was eccentric, he was not insane.

Darger, in my view, found a way to release all what he had inside him. For many reasons he was very withdrawn in his own realm, but that didn't inhibit to express himself, far from it, this encourage him to find his own way of communicate.



**Figure 13. At Norma Catherine, Escaping, They Wait for the Storm. Works on Paper (Drawings, Watercolors) 48.3 x 120.9 cm at Gallery St. Etienne New York, USA**

“From the very beginning Darfer himself played a major role in the *“Realms of the Unreal”*, first as a passionate Christian fighter against the Glandelinians. An incident in his real life made him change fronts: Darger collected thousands of photographs, drawings, advertisements and newspaper clipping of little girls. They served as models and inspiration for his artistic work and decorated the walls of his room. Using carbon paper, Darger, who definitely considered himself an artist, copied them into his illustrations. Then, in 1912, he lost the photograph of the girl Annie Aronburg, a murder victim. He prayed to God to help him find the picture and even erected an altar with offerings- yet in vain. Darger’s faith was severely shaken. He left the Catholic Church and – in his imagined world- joined the Glandelinian army. Reality and fiction definitely began to merge. Darger meticulously depicted the atrocities done mainly to little girls. Their violations became his personal revenge on God.” (Dichter, Kittelmann och Zander 1999, 99)



Figure 14. At Jennie Richee Escape by their help(detail)undated. Watercolor, pencil and carbon tracing on pieced paper 48.3 x 179.07 cm at the American Folk Art Museum, USA



Another British artist, who does not belong to the autobiographic ones, but piqued my attention, is **Banksy** (1974?). Because of my engraving background I feel very attracted to his aesthetic and mass produce results in public places. The locations where he decides to make his interventions are crucial (site- specific art) the street art guarantees freedom. Thus, the wall to be used gains importance because of its position in the context required for the art work.

He makes art following his own lessons learned during life. Through the stencil technique and graffiti Banksy expresses his mind on the street, leaving satirical daring pro-peace messages.

What I like the most about Banksy, is how he works as a trespasser of the public space and he handles to manage his aim. Banksy has a very political message and because of his way to show it to the people, he makes it easy to see and understand. From the choice of the images, the location where he place them, and his insolence, he makes a very clear statement accessible to everyone.



Figure 15. A side of *Poundland* a shop of cheap jubilee merchandise on North London 2012

“When I was nine years I was expelled from school. It was punishment for swinging one of my classmates round and round before dropping him onto a concrete floor. He was taken away from school by an ambulance that had to pull right into the playground and pick him up on a stretcher.

The next day I was made to stand in front of the whole school at assembly while the headmaster gave a speech about good and evil before I was sent home in disgrace.

The unfortunate part is that I never actually touched the kid. It was my best friend Jimmy who had put him into casualty. Me and a boy called Martin watched Jimmy grab the kid’s hand and swing him until he was too dizzy to stand up and when he let go the kid just seemed to fly off and land on his head. It was not even malicious, just stupid. However, Jim was a big chap for his age and could be very persuasive. So when we notice the kid wasn’t getting up Jim convinced Martin to say that it was me who had done it. The only other witness was the kid himself who didn’t regain consciousness for a week.

I tried many times to explain that I hadn’t done it, but the boys stuck to their story. Eventually my mum turned to me and said bitterly what I should have guts to admit when I was wrong and that it was even more disgusting when I refused to accept what I’d done. So I shut up after that.

The kid sustained a fractured skull and some mental problems. He couldn’t remember how it had happened and he didn’t return to school for a long time.

I think I was lucky to learn so young that there’s no point in behaving yourself. You’ll be punished for something you never did anyway. People get it wrong all the time.”

(Banksy 2005, 93)

### **Inside the Project:**

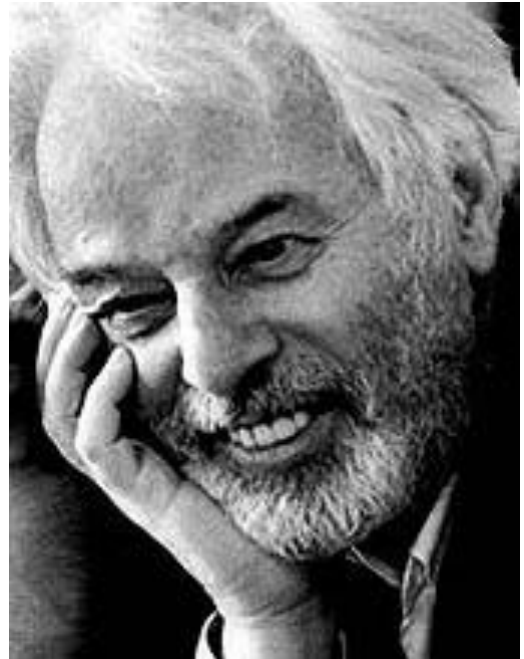
An essential element in the concept behind this project is the presence of Alejandro Jodorowsky and his theory of psychomagic acts. This technique combines eastern philosophies, mysticism and modern psychotherapy. It is used to heal patients with emotional problems. The principle relies on the belief that the unconscious mind takes a symbolic act for a fact. This could help to solve some types of non rational conflicts.

In some level, we are the result of our families, our traumas and our character. It seems like we usually misbelieve, we are just destined to repeat the same errors or go through the same circumstances of our ancestors. At the same time, he proposes that traumas could be healed, but we need to know what was the cause, when and how all this happened in order to take up again the symbols of that event and reuse them in a therapeutic way. In fact, according to him, we could reprogram ourselves, leaving behind the past loads. The mind can somehow be tricked by those symbols significant for us.

Jodorowsky, once said on his second interview by Fernando Sanchez Dragó:

“First you would like to change, then you have to acknowledge that you CAN change, and finally you have to dare to change, assuming all that comes with it”. (Jodorowsky 2006)

**Alejandro Jodorowsky** (1929) is a multifaceted Chilean artist, film maker, writer, philosopher, comic writer, mime, actor, clown, performer, psychotherapist, even tarot card expert. Since very young, he started to produce in the theater field, writing, acting, making puppets, designing, directing, etc. In fact, he is the precursor of the “happenings” (surrealist ephemeral acts). He left to France to study pantomime with Étienne Decroux and he worked with Marcel Marceau. Some years later in 1957, he started to make films, and one more time he became quite versatile holding many functions. All this background, especially in theater and happenings, were the grounds of his **psychomagic** theory, because it is through these



performance acts that he realized how important symbols and representations were. Jodorowsky made a link in between the representation and the meaning of this one subconsciously, this combined with his

belief in art as a responsibility of creation due to improve ourselves, facilitated him to develop the curative idea of psychomagic acts.

“The psychomagic tries to save time, speeding up the awareness. Just like a disease could be suddenly confirmed, the cure could be reached as well at once. Just as an unexpected illness is called disgrace, the sudden healing is called miracle. However, both share the same essence: they are forms of the language of the unconscious. Thanks to a prompt detection by the Tarology, to a deep understanding made by the study of the genealogic tree repetitions and psychomagic acts, we could approach to that inner- peace, product of the discovery of our true identity; which let us live happily and die without any anguish, knowing that we had not wasted our time in this dream called “reality”. On the other hand, valuables as these interventions could be, if the patient does not put as much effort as the therapist and does not do a mental mutation, all the work becomes just into a soothing- symptoms, which seems to eliminate the pain, but it actually leaves still intact the wound [...]” (Jodorowsky, *La Danza de la Realidad* (The Reality Dance) 2008, 377)

As I see it, Jodorowsky proposes a hypothesis absolutely consequently with his many and different experiences. This is just a theory, does not have to apply on every single person. Like any other healing process, the patient faith is vital (as he mentioned above), maybe it could work just as a placebo, but this depends on the patient mind. During all these years he has been aware of the “bizarreness” that his methodology involves however, as weird as his requirements seem, they are extremely important because of their meaning. The symbols and metaphors are the key to the subconscious reprogramming. For instance, “Once an insecure woman in her thirties, emotional and material greedy came looking for his advice. He recommend her to buy a couple of beautiful apples, to keep one in her backpack and the other one, in her other hand. Then she’d have to take the subway and look carefully at the passengers until she finds one person who really inspires her to give the apple away. Finally, after this action, she’d have to get out of the subway biting the saved one. Like this, she would understand that through giving she will receive as well.” (Jodorowsky, *La Danza de la Realidad* (The Reality Dance) 2008, 419)

I did have to read a lot about Jodorowsky’s life and proposal in order to embrace his advice and perform it as a personal closure ritual. A **ritual** engages actions performed for their symbolic value as well, a ritual expresses itself to make a statement, reaffirm or call on what it represents. The range of action involved in a ritual, is quite wide due to their symbolic nature. In my case, my approaching to “the

ritual” besides their symbolic load; it’s to reuse the term, indeed to utilize it in opposition to previous home-made rituals fashioned by myself concerning to this specific situation.

“In psychology the term ritual is used in a technical sense for a repetitive behavior systematically used by a person to neutralize or prevent anxiety; it is a symptom of obsessive-compulsive disorder.”

(Wikimedia Foundation Inc. 2010)

### Woman Tied to a Past Love



Figure 4. Still motion pictures from the video *Woman Tied to a Past Love*

I began to think about this project a few months ago, and actually it was at that time the only exit that I found to solve an unsustainable situation. As a next part of my last project “Comiendome la Cabeza” (wracking my brains) it felt logical to do something about it and finally put an end to my fixation.

Hence, I considered doing some kind of ritual to release my mind. Maybe an exorcism would work, I said. The reality is that I wasn’t feeling that way anymore. I just wanted to leave this feeling behind and move on. But, an exorcism involves in a very negative way the inner demons, and this was not at all the essence of the memory in question, indeed it was completely the opposite; it had been an ideal remembrance treasured for years. The fixation was nestled in my mind, the exaggeration developed into obsession for several months and turned it into sickness, at the end I was feeling so nauseous and fed up with this issue that my mind was asking me for quiet. Thus, I decided to do it as a closure which made much more sense with my aim at sanity; “turn the page” and move on. At this point I drew on Jodorowsky’s psychomagic hypothesis. And I started to research more about him and his theories I found another of his books “Manual de Psicomagia” (Psychomagic guidebook) wherein he posted more than 300 pieces of advice for people in very specific cases. Among them there was one called “*Woman tied to a past love*” designed to help women to leave behind a love from the past. I thought it was fairly suitable for my goal. It consists in putting the key of you house in your vagina over the course of six days, one hour per day, and then on the seventh day to send the same key to the person you would like

to have the closure with and then change the lock to your home. I decided to go through this action and finally get my long awaited closure.

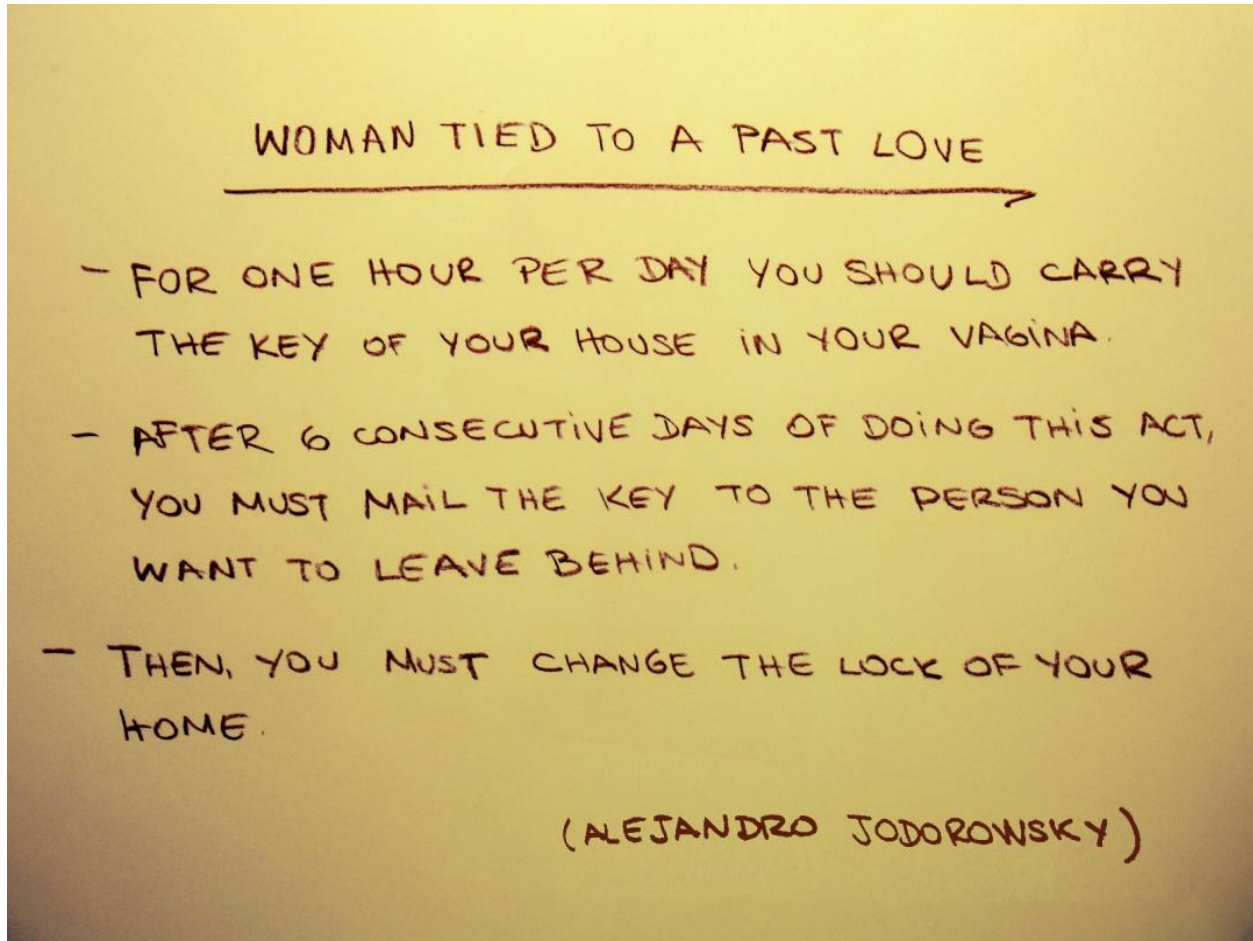


Figure 5. Still motion picture from the video *Woman Tied to a Past Love*

Closure refers to a conclusion to a traumatic experience in someone's life. There is a pleasure in the tension as an anticipation of closure and it will drive us towards its resolution. When we experience closure, we close the door on the confusion of the past. Closed doors are hard to open again and therefore allow you to focus on the future. When we do achieve closure, our brains give us a dose of serotonin, as a reward of doing the right thing and most certainly we begin to feel good. "The need for closure" is a phrase used by psychologists to describe an individual's desire for a firm solution as opposed to enduring ambiguity.

At the same time as part of the ritual (and its term reuse) I will fight compulsion against further compulsion. Compulsion is defined as a persistent impulse to perform the same action, it's a repetitive behaviour created like a response to an obsession. This behaviour is intended to neutralize or stop discomfort caused for some dreaded event.



**Facts**

The result was an installation *Woman Tied to a Past Love* on the third floor of Röda Sten Gallery in Göteborg, Sweden, 2010. A grey wall, about five meters length and more than two and a half meters tall, filled with the phrase “enough is enough” written on white chalk in a patterned compulsive way; as a background for the still motion animation/video display.

The video piece is a collage of “frame by frame” pictures with video and a very soft piano melody. The images are the result of the seven days ritual tracking, drawings and sensations mostly done on my abdomen because it’s inside it, where I experience and accumulate all the discomfort, anguish and pain. The video is projected on a sketchbook (29 x 42 cm). Instead of employing a large format, I sought for a more intimate environment for the video content. The sketchbook that the video is projected down upon is placed on a small white table about 80 cm high. This way of placing the things, aims to recreate a creative space (including the doodles in the sketchbook), rather than a simple support for the projection. Finally, underneath the table there are a couple of small hidden speakers playing constantly the melancholic tune.

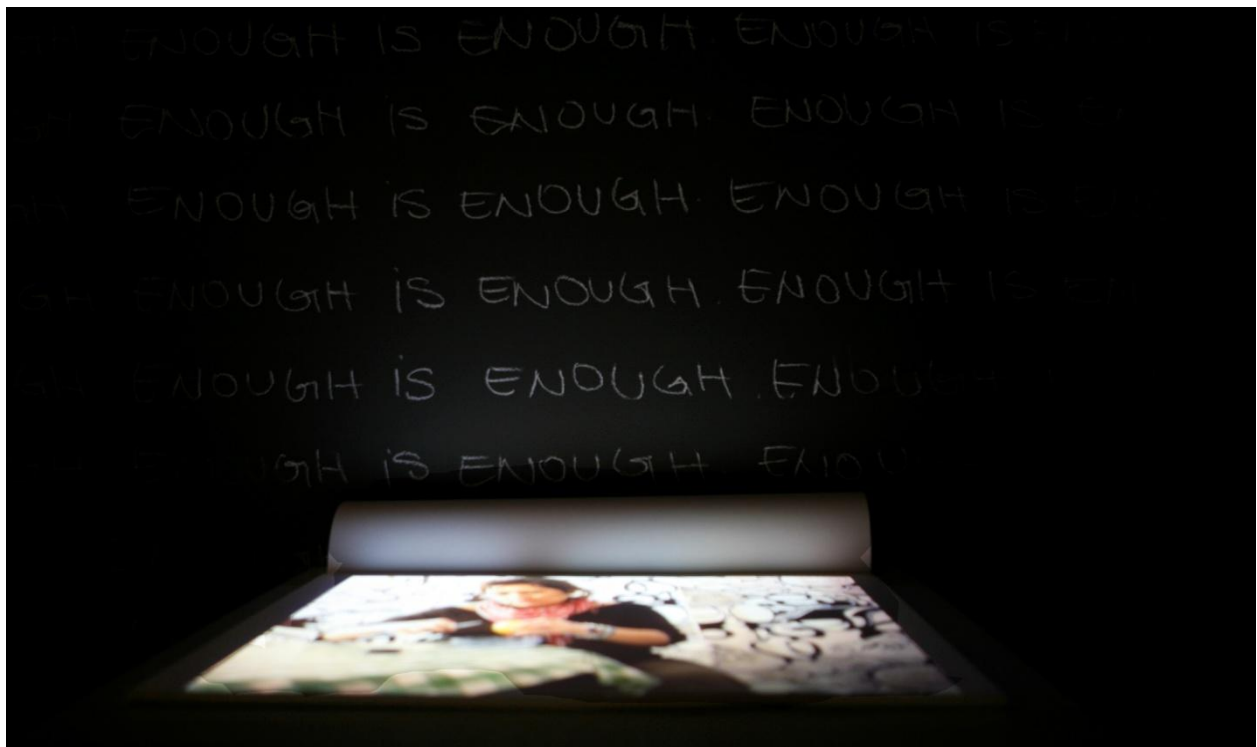


Figure18. Installation *Woman Tied to a Past Love*, Röda Sten- Göteborg, Sweden

## Summary

It had been my purpose through this thesis to talk about myself and *my creative process*. To start with the importance of my artistic education and their principles- of good employment of technique and a constant questioning of myself about the reasons on my work.

In order to develop my process I look for feelings and sensations in my prompted *personal self-inspection*, always following my *intuition* which it constantly resort to my background and the recurrent employment of *my image* in my work, me always as the lead; by the use of my own embarrassment to make me come through on public.

The *melancholy* as a condition that every human being shares it helps me in my seeking for happiness, as so many other *autobiographical artists* do. They take art as a confessional, where they reveal their private life to the world, each one on their personal language.

I present myself as an artist, reinforcing my choice in life. I do believe that everyone has to look for their place in world, in their truthful and unique path, what it's important is to listen to that curiosity or care and to do something about it.

The influence of *Jodorowsky's* proposal on my last project, where I carry out one of his "*psychomagic act*" using as a *symbol* "my house key" entering in my vagina, which represent in my point of view, the couple intimacy; and the metaphor relies on the act of change the lock of my house after sending the key away, as "you are not more welcome".

The importance to have faith in the *ritual* to reach the seeking goal, it is necessary to believe first if you want to get reprogram and in my case, to achieve my awaited *closure* and finally move on.



Figure 19. Installation *Woman Tied to a Past Love*, diferent angles



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\* The pictures out of my projects images are taken from different websites with non profits purpose just to illustrate better this thesis.