

Uniwersytet Śląski w Katowicach
Wydział Sztuki i Nauk o Edukacji
Instytut Sztuk Plastycznych

Katarzyna Gielecka-Grzemska

Within anxiety structures
— *graphic reflections*

PRACA DOKTORSKA

Promotor: prof. dr hab. Joanna Piech-Kalarus

Promotor pomocniczy: dr hab. Natalia Pawlus

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Abstract

In my deliberations, I focused on anxiety, which sustains us in a state of constant carefulness, feeding our mind and body with uncertainty.

I pay attention to the source of this state and present this problem with means of artistic expression I'm most familiar with – graphic art. It seems that art in general, through the sensitivity of creators, is the most appropriate way to describe such complex emotional states.

Throughout the whole process of creating my graphic works, I found my works to be affected by considerations from areas such as philosophy, psychology, sociology and even sciences like neurobiology. These texts became a source of my inspiration, to a large extent cementing and arranging the images which sometimes instinctively appeared in my head in the process of creation.

In a written complement to my doctoral thesis, I have touched upon the key issues needed for understanding the subject of anxiety in my art works - the difference between anxiety and fear. I explained it with the help of philosophical thesis of Søren Kierkegaard or Poul Tillich.

By highlighting the socio-cultural sources of anxiety, I tried to show how they build contemporary concerns. My research for this subject was heavily based on texts by Prof. Kępiński and Karen Horney. I concluded that, sometimes too rigid, social norms into which we are pushed, become a source of uncertainty and numerous doubts.

Constant competition and hostile relations in social life are the source of many apprehensions arising in our everyday life. All these are fueling our anxiety.

I also posed a question regarding the modern world and whether it's given us any respite from anxiety. It seems that the source of human unrest is not declining. In this thread I point to the omnipresent volatility and an excessive amount of stimuli that fill our reality, eventually building up our contemporary fears. The key role in this process is our constant thirst for information

fueled by the media surrounding us, and the digital world.

I also pointed out the creative aspects of anxiety, which can be a strong source of inspiration for artists, and their necessity to arise awareness and self-criticism. I have explored a kind of anxiety and restlessness, which force us to experiment artistically.

All the above issues led me to my graphic reflections on anxiety – a series of ten graphics created in screen printing technique. Using graphical media, I was able to show the emotions swirling in people, their influence on our body, which is a reflection of inner dilemmas, as well as a certain record of experiences. The main and the most vivid point of my prints became the human being – a figure sometimes shown fragmentarily, blurred with an understated background. For me the human body has always been a natural carrier of emotions. The ever-changing human physique, its anatomy, strength and fragility are fascinating and have always been a rich source of inspiration for me. In my compositions, the human figure is often heavily cropped, uncompleted and blurred. Hiding a part of the silhouette refers to the fear of the undetermined, of the future, the great unknown of what lies ahead. We do not know what awaits tomorrow, how the concealed part of the story will play out. In my graphics I present the struggle taking place between human and himself, surrounded by silence. The background of the graphics embodies silence – concrete, cold grays built with crumbs of the traces I collect. Sometimes the character of my story levitates immersed in the structure of this silence, all while trying to find a small point to hold on to. Sometimes, he is fascinated by the silence, examining surrounding particles with his fingers. This is how our fears can shape us and be source of artistic inspiration.

An important aspect of graphic works creation, which I describe in the last part of the text, is technology of printing. For years I have been creating graphics using screen printing techniques. It gives me the opportunity to combine traditional graphic traces with processed digital images. All the graphics were hand pulled. The advantage of this is the fact that there is no perfect repeatability, no mechanization, monotony or boredom. I have a chance to experiment and play with the form of printing. In the process of creating the matrix and the films, on „empty canvas” (which is the picture of human body), I apply multi-layered traces, which blend into the character

figure and the background creating the graphic story. For these precise prints I often use CtF films. I experimented with various additives that changed the effects of ink coverage, sometimes giving additional texture.

To sum up my reflections, I have leaned towards the conviction of the dynamic power of anxiety, which in a properly selected dose, not to harm but trigger difficult emotions. Emotions which the artist is able to translate into the language of art.

In conclusion, I found that it's sometimes worthwhile to look at our own fears and let the current of uncertainty become a creative drive – but most importantly, don't let yourself drown in it.