

Magda Hueckel

OBSESSIVE SELF-PORTRAITS (2006-2008)

The cycle refers to the fear of inevitable destruction of body caused by illness, age or injury. At the pictures we can see healthy body perceived by a person with the obsession. The cycle belongs to an open project entitled "Emotional self-portraits".



Piekary Gallery, Poznań 2009, fot. Witold Kanicki

"Although the photos show fragments of her body superimposed on decaying plants or fruits, the association with the fading of a soul cannot be easily or painlessly exorcised. In a way, her works resemble sketches of some mysterious diseases, drawn in a diary by a retired dermatologist. The visual aspect of these obsessions seems to focus on the fragility of the shell covering the awareness of life and endless withering which pulsate underneath. The young, attractive body of the artist, when covered by grotesque spots and wrinkles of rotting fruit, makes us think of old age, which also symbolizes a certain kind of wisdom. After all, fruit can bear seed within it and, like woman, become the vessel for new life. A vegetable could also represent a new human being, possessing life in the biological sense, yet lacking the possibility of contact with our world – in a vegetative state. Both grim and painfully true."

*B. Konopka, "Magda Hueckel and georgia Krawiec - Transgression" (fragment)
Editorial to the exhibition catalogue "Transgression", FF Gallery, Łódź 2011
Fotografia 35/2010*



"The manner in which Hueckel constructs the vision of her obsession is not reduced to taking advantage of the technical potential of the medium only. It is quite meaningful that a self-portrait and still nature in the form of rotten fruit are combined. The artist's play between the genres produces definite results, as expressed in her works. Body parts emerging from the black background become almost sculptural elements in the pictures. The body, which is treated like an object, is covered with the traits of damage, thus indispensably signifying the process of destruction and of time passing by that is an inherent element of the existence of a living creature. Thus the body assumes the role of an object in a narcissistic still nature. At the same time, a human aspect is present in the still nature, which by definition is deprived of the physical presence of a human being. The transgression occurs only at a visual level, though, as the body substitutes traditional iconography, which refers to the fundamental issues of existence via nature and symbols."

D. Łuczak, "(Re)visions of Magdalena Hueckel" (fragment)

Editorial to the exhibition catalogue of Magda Hueckel "Obsessive self-portraits", Piekary Gallery, Poznań 2009



"Hueckel shows the fear of bodily decomposition quite subtle. In a delicate, almost imperceptible way it comes from the outside, as something alien that may be difficult to familiarize oneself with. However, the time passing by as presented in the pictures is not deprived of meaning, nor is it ownerless – it belongs to EVERYBODY. The pictures of the artist's own body become an illustration of time passing by in general, which is a straightforward and obvious consequence of life (including the life of the body, whether human or not). We need to emphasize that these works have been created by a young person (she started working on them at the age of twenty-something), who has tackled a subject that is pushed beyond the horizon, and she has attempted to bring it back before our eyes. "

K. Majak, "Familiarization" (fragment)

Editorial to the exhibition catalogue of Magda Hueckel "Obsessive self-portraits", Piekary Gallery, Poznań 2009



"These works make you concentrate intensely on the deformities of the body which emerges from a dark background. The aesthetics of x-ray pictures evokes or even visually represents the fear of a disease and decay of the body. However, the radicalism of the cycle is mainly shown in the peculiar game between genres – self-portrait and still life. On the one hand, the body is objectified, exposed like a laboratory object by the use of the black and white aesthetics and fragmentation of the body covered in injuries. The body takes place of an object in a vanitas still life. On the other hand, however, a human element is made present in the still life which lacks human presence *ex definitione*."

D. Łuczak, "Subjectivity dispersed in images – Self-Portraits by Magdalena Hueckel", *Fotografia 33/2010*



"A transgressive cycle entitled Obsessive Self-Portraits 'touches' upon passion in obsession, in its separation from the senses. The pictures search for explanations beyond biology and on the borderlines of the visible. The effect achieved by this multi-exposition, by placement of organic remains on parts of the artist's own body, 'inserted' in black x-ray-like backgrounds, is a gesturing of this pathology. Encumbered with a layer of projected futility, accentuated mutations, monstrous eczema and an eruption of defect, the tissues suddenly come live for the view in a compiled record

as morgue-like hallucinations – on the disembodied matter, there come to view its borderlines and incessant temporal processes."

E. Jarosz, "Magda Hueckel: Emotional self-portraits" (fragment)

Editorial to the exhibition catalogue "Emotional self-portraits", Wozownia Gallery, Toruń 2009

TECHNICAL DATA

number of works: 31

technique: gelatine silver prints + aluminium + glass

sizes: I 16 x 21cm | II 14,8 x 19,5cm | III 13,5 x 16,3cm | IV 12,5 x 17,8cm | V 16,6x24,7cm | VI 18,9 x 27,9 cm | VII 13 x 18,5cm | VIII 20 x 28,9cm | IX 19 x 29,8cm | X 28 x 18,3cm | XII 16,8 x 26cm | XI 25,7 x 17 cm | XII 17,5 x 26cm | XIV 17,2x17,8cm | XV 28 x 18,5cm | XVI 18,9 x 27cm | XVII 16,5 x 23cm | XVIIA 15,5 x 27cm | XVIII 13,5 x 19,5 cm | XIX 28,5 x 18,5cm | XX 28,5 x 18,5cm | XXI 28,5 x 18,5cm | XXII 14,8 x 19,5 cm | XXIII 14,8 x 19,5cm | XXIV 14,8 x 19,5cm | XXV 14,8 x 19,5cm | XXVI 27 x 17,5cm | XXVII 22 x 29,5cm | XXVIII 3,5 x 13,5 cm | XXIX 13,5 x 13,5cm | XXX 13,5 x 13,5cm