

Magda Hueckel  
**REM Cycle (2009)**

Photographs made for the cycle represent exploration of the unconscious emotions which appear in dreams. An unclear fear, anxiety, premonition, feeling of lostness, are shown through two loosely related series (“Atrophies” and “Hypertrophies”), connected by the symbolic space of a forest. The work concerns the inability to control one’s own life, the random chance which rules it, an awareness of the unavoidable fate, decay... The title refers to the Rapid Eye Movement sleep phase, characterised by elevated brain activity and the appearance of dreams.

The project was supported by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of Poland.



*REM Cycle, Atrophy IV, V, III*

„Although the gesture is culturally recognized as a sign of doom, something inevitable, what is more important is the fact that, again, the look is eliminated from the Hueckel’s self-portraits, which in the case of *Atrophies* is a demonstrative refusal. The static image of a woman situated in the centre of the picture becomes a visual source for the forest that stretches around with its rotting and decaying flora, which in reference to the title constitutes a metaphor of pathological modifications of a body and human organs, characteristic of atrophy. The vision is continued in the bigger photographs of *Hypertrophies* – they lack the presence of a human being and focus on plant tissue which is dry, black, or covered with pathological spots. *Hypertrophies* achieve the status of autonomous representations, hallucinogenic projections of a human mind. Following the title of the cycle, they are an echo of the pictures that appear under our eyelids while sleeping, when all anxieties and fears assume a visual form. Nevertheless, Hueckel’s project allows to refer them to the subject, as well as offers them sovereignty, emphasizing the existence of obsessions themselves.”

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



*REM Cycle, Hypertrophy III*

„These photos have a strongly performative influence on the viewer, who in a way becomes their co-creator; his imagination is set in motion and his emotions are graduated, as he does not receive a readily made answer. It is he who must add the thesis, to conclude the work - and this should be very personal and subjective. (...) For the "REM cycle" is an exploration of unconscious emotions which appear in dreams. It talks about intangible fears, anxieties, premonitions, and being at loss in a symbolic space of a forest; thus in a space which is unknown, convoluted, dense, full of hidden symbolism, and at the same time a space which is living, sovereign; a space of nature, which is stronger than culture, still mysterious, still unexplored, still evoking fear and respect. These ambiguities of nature, dreams and fears point to an inability to control one's life, avoidance of chance which rules over life, decay, lurking death and mortality.”

*K.A. Gajda, "Photography of a nightmare", editorial to the exhibition catalogue "REM Cycle", Art foto Gallery, Częstochowa 2010*



*REM Cycle, Hypertrophy VII*

„Hueckel examines the fears and obsessive illusions hidden inside the visions of these dreams. However, she doesn't recreate the visual form of the latter but instead tries to picture what they conceal. She reaches beneath their façade to reveal what Sigmund Freud would call our subconscious, hysterical phobias. This act of uncovering can be seen as an individual wrestling with what's hidden in the depths of the mind and which forces its way out in uncontrolled moments.”

*D. Łuczak, "Images underneath the eyelids", editorial to the exhibition catalogue "REM Cycle", Art foto Gallery, Częstochowa 2010*



*REM Cycle, Hypertrophy V*

**TECHNICAL DATA:**

**Atrophies**

number of works: 7

size: 30x30cm

technique: B&W photography, silver gelatin prints

**Hypetrophies**

number of works: 7

size: 85x85cm

technique: B&W photography, pigment prints at the  
Hahnemuhle Photo Rag Baryta paper 315g