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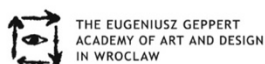
# CHROMA HAZE – Subjective Perception of Color

PhD Thesis in the Field of Art, in the Discipline of Fine Arts  
and Conservation of Works of Art.

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# I. INTRODUCTION

History knows many artists who were mesmerized by the magic of color. I'm definitely one of them – color has got me spellbound. It is the main source of inspiration not only for my artistic creation, but also for something as complex as life itself. It is the driving force behind my creativity. Every day, when I create, the desire to use a certain color comes first, then comes the formal need to give it a shape. I often feel a lack of words, whether in the process of formulating thoughts or conversations. The reason is not that I don't know them. I just perceive the surrounding world with images. Words are different in each language while color, like the picture, is universal. With the help of color, we can express all emotions without using even a word. The ability to read them lies in our subconscious.

Color has always been the basis of visual perception. According to Miyahara<sup>1</sup> Junji, 87% of all human-absorbed information is optical. Moreover, most of these impressions are determined by the perception of color. For me, as a humanist, it is fascinating, even unrealistic, that something as common as color is not that obvious.

For artists, color is a tool. We often do not think about the meanings of shades, we simply combine them intuitively, sometimes using the knowledge of choosing shades. In my opinion, the potential of color cannot be overemphasized.

There are many figures whose views contribute to the work I have proposed and will be the basis for further consideration: John Gage, Adam Zausznica, Kassia St.Clair, Maria Rzepińska, Krzysztof Skarbek, Jean Michaele Basquiat, Henri Russeau, Frida Kahlo. I will describe a few of these characters more broadly in the following chapters. The person who had a direct impact on the development of my work in 2013-2018 is Professor Krzysztof Skarbek. His work impressed me a lot. Prof. K.Skarbek was also a person supporting me in preparing my Master thesis. In this work I explained the influence of color on the development of my artistic creation. I also described the therapeutic power of color. I would like to continue this topic and broaden the area of interest. *Chroma Haze* is a term that I have proposed to describe a particular phenomenon, a situation when a colour vision appears before a figurative or meaning form. It's about the lure of color that captivates. It's about trans which color provokes, and about joy and movement that it brings. *Chroma Haze* is an emphasis on personal attitude. By using this term, I want to tell my story, the story of chaos, the state of my mind. As an artist, I believe that the ability to feel colors and think with images is a gift. However, it relates primarily to my creative work, which is mainly a process of chaotic choices and turbulent feelings, which eventually turn into a whole. It is also a story about the subconscious and intuitive decisions that always turn out to be best.

At the very beginning, I would like to briefly describe what *Chroma Haze is*. There are two issues that determine the status of my perception of reality. Firstly, I have astigmatism, which greatly affects how I see the world around me. This defect is quite developed; therefore, it is necessary to use eye correction in the form of contact lenses or glasses. This makes my eyes sensitive to the sunlight which is often even blinding for me. The second thing that greatly affects my daily functioning, and therefore also the creation, painting, color and themes selection, is the fact that I suffer from bipolar disorder. This disorder affects my overall functioning, I can risk saying that it helps me shape the direction I am going towards as an artist. This disease usually means the occurrence of alternating depressive and manic states, the course of which is different for everyone who suffers for this disease. In my case, this condition works rather in my favor, I am then very productive, and mania revolves around creating. In such moments, I get up to create and go to bed only out of necessity. However, I have to pay for any overactivity at a later date. Although drugs help to stabilize certain moods that may pose a potential risk, hypomania stages still occur. It was during one of these days,

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<sup>1</sup> Miyahara Junji, *Invention and Innovation, How White Lighting Was Created*, Cracow, Universitas Publishing House, 2019, p.17

when I went to the studio without contact lenses on, I was bombarded with a multitude of colors and shapes. I was overwhelmed with the fact that it's not the themes, not the forms, but the colors that really motivate me to create. Then I saw *Chroma Haze* - surrounding swirl of colors, slightly disorienting however, stimulating and bringing hundreds of new compositions. Since then, more colors have appeared in my works, more details, more everything. Also around this time I started working on a drawing series *Humdrum*, which I will dedicate a few pages to the following dissertation. I will also describe few paintings that have been painted during three years of doctoral studies. It seems to me that in new works, both painting and drawing, it is not possible to decide unequivocally which color is the guiding one. When we come face to face with the image and narrow our eyelids, we see *Chroma Haze*, a storm of intersecting colors that are enclosed in shapes forming a whole.

What stimulates my imagination very strongly has multiple faces and is not limited to visual suggestions. I am interested in the scientific approach to certain issues, research, theories. I am not saying that I am a specialist or that I fully understand them, but they are an important stimulus for me, which pushes me towards creativity, even when such a stimulus has an indirect effect on my artwork. There is one issue that I would like to broaden at this point, it is important to me, because it casts a shadow over all my behavior and decisions, both now and many years back. When I talk about the fact that interest in science has an indirect effect on my work, I mean that I often do not directly understand what I read. Each information I assimilate I want to break down into the first parts, without focusing on mindlessly remembering the presented fact (which is usually the result of many other components). I always want to know where the information comes from, I want to know its mechanisms and functions. This usually leads to the fact that instead of focusing on remembering the fact- presented truth, I ask and "dig". Some may say that this is a good feature, that inquisitiveness and meticulousness is an advantage, but I need to deny it. This leads to an eternal insufficiency, frustration at the fact that I cannot easily understand and remember everything. In life, I understood only what I had been able to "dig to" or experienced myself. It is similar with painting. When I see a painting of Rousseau, I feel like extracting the species of plants presented. But I'm not a botanist – so I reach for botanical atlases. When I see a work of Frida Kahlo, I want to know what species is the monkey that sits on her shoulder. It's all positive, but I have these thoughts – more, better, further, deeper – several times a day, and they cover many aspects, including everyday life. I am not able to meet each of these cravings, because there is no time for it: day has a limited number of hours. This is why I define my interest in the scientific approach to perception as an indirect inspiration. In order to fully understand visual perception phenomena (as I would like to) I would have to be a qualified physicist, chemist, biologist and anatomist. To then interpret this into artistic value, one would have to be not only an artist, but also a philosopher and art historian. I noticed that only while creating this problem disappears. In the process of creation, I can let all the emotions and inspirations out, with a free mind. Sometimes it is a fact, such as the fact that the smell of rosemary stimulates the vision of the green -blue part of the spectrum. Sometimes the stimulant is just a reaction to something read, like "wow, that's amazing." I feel as if, when creating this feature, which forces me to go into detail, triggered a subconscious desire for perfection, to laboriously develop a detail, to clean surfaces, not to allow myself to make mistakes. When a painting that can be described as "expressionist" or "unfinished" comes out from under my brush, I feel the need to fix it. It's a feeling comparable to itching - you can experience it, but it's tiring, harassing. I am not sure if it's related to my disorder. Maybe it is, or maybe not. All I know is that this is the part of me that I haven't won yet.

## II. INSPIRATION

### Silhouettes of the Artists

The style I have developed as the most relevant to my aesthetic vision is based on a dichotomy. On one hand, I am attracted to dark themes that treat life with a distance and focus on spirituality, on the other hand, my love for color results in animal and botanical motifs with multitude of details shades. The formation of this style is the result of a clash of many inspirations and stimuli. In this chapter I will describe the silhouettes of artists whose work has had a great influence on the formation of expression of my works. These artists, despite their different approaches to life, art and different intentions, had a common denominator, which was undoubtedly a great passion for creating. In the following chapter, I will describe what I think is most important in their work and what I value most. Further in the chapter, I will describe the scientific views on color perception that have influenced my painting practice.

### Frida Kahlo

Frida Kahlo's work has been present among my inspirations almost always. As a 15-year-old, I looked through albums of her works. It was then that my first painting attempts took place, quite inept. Kahlo's work seemed brutal to me at the time, I was actually ashamed to look at it, I thought it was "sick" and strange, but I kept coming back to them. All previous impressions are still valid, however alongside these new ones appeared. Frida Kahlo's works are actually "sick" and strange, just like her. Frida, however, was also sensitive, beautiful, loving, flamboyant and courageous. She herself was kind of an art. Her presence, creativity, life and surroundings are a cohesive whole, full of passion, life and color. Suzanne Barbezat writes in Frida Kahlo's biography: "Frida decorated the premises with works of folk art and preferred traditional Mexican furniture, textiles and utensils. Together with Diego, they continued to expand their collections, filling the house with handmade items made by Mexicans. Huge statues of Judas hung in the corners of the rooms, and on the canopy above her bed Frida placed a *skeleton of calavera*."<sup>2</sup> This *calavera* skeleton is one of the leading inspirations that can be found in my artwork. *La Calavera Garbancera* or *la Catrina* is a figure created by Jose Guadalupe Posada Aguilare, who was a Mexican artist creating lithographs and illustrations on socio-political topics(il.1). His works influenced the formation of many Latin American artists and cartoon makers, mainly due to the satirical overtone of the works. He used images of skeletons, skulls and bones to convey the character of specific social groups<sup>3</sup>. *La Catrina* is a woman of high society, a lady who was personified in the form of a skeleton in an elaborate dress and a hat with feathers, according to the fashion prevailing at the time. It's his most popular idea, which stimulates the art industry to this day. Clear inspiration can be seen, for example, in Tim Burton's movies *The Nightmare before Christmas* and *The Corpse Bride*. As the death cult in Mexican culture is popular, *La Calavera* was quickly absorbed into the Latin American aesthetic. In the opinion of Mexicans, death is a continuation of life. The earthly existence is to be only a tiny episode, real life is to begin shortly after death. Death is therefore an essence of life, and its visualization in Mexican culture is not horrifying. Images of death are presented in the form of dancing, drinking, joyful skeletons, often in the form of cutouts from thin colored tissue paper.

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<sup>2</sup> S. Barbezat, *Frida Kahlo Privately*, Warsaw, Marginesy Publishing House, 2017, p.139

<sup>3</sup> L.C. Hults, *The Print on the Western World. An Introduction History*, pub. The University of Wisconsin Press, 1996, p. 750

# LA CALAVERA OAXAQUEÑA



*La Calavera valiente* / *Todos quítense el sombrero*  
*Hoy acaba de llegar;* / *Que así la deben mirar.*

Porque yo soy de Oaxaca  
 Y no hay hombre para mí,  
 Y ni a los más desalmados  
 Les da arrebo los pedí.



No quiero que me insulten,  
 Chistitasas con venas,  
 Que yo no soy hablador  
 Solo sabroso de veras.

A cualquiera lo destripo;  
 No me tiemo el coraón;  
 Y si alguno me haga meros,  
 Que lo despacho al pastón.

De nadie me sé dejar.  
 El mundo pá mí no sé líteo,  
 Y a todos meto de golpes  
 Y al levio con compromiso.

Todos me levantan páis,  
 Comigo nadie se mete,  
 Y si alguien los que quieran  
 Y vamon chuché al papate.

En mi tierra no hay corones;  
 Ni se rinden ni se rajan,  
 Y a todos los habladores  
 Es el hoyo los encojan.

Si allí se fueran un poco  
 Se querían lo molesto  
 Con el mecerl de perongo  
 Y el mudo presto sabroso.



Allí cobrado valer,  
 Con un vino de megal  
 Y con simpáticos chinos  
 De bromosa, sin rival.



A mi negocio me figuro,  
 Y yo de tocos me figo,  
 La guerra es que le he bricazó,  
 Al bricador tapata.

Illustration 1. J. G. Posada, *La Calavera Oaxaqueña*, 1900, <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/la-calavera-oaxaqueña/DAHrgckiqN7RXA?hl=es-419>



Illustration 2. F.Kahlo, *Two Fridas*, S. Barbezat, *Frida Kahlo Privately*, Warsaw, Marginesy Publishing House, 2017, p.121



*Catrina's theme* is one of the most popular motifs repeated annually in the rites of the Feast of the Dead and in the *Santa Muerte movement*. This motif was also liked by Kahlo, as evidenced by the fact that *the calavera* figure was used as an element of interior design. The way she treated the interior of her house is very close to me, it seems as if she filled it with love and what stimulated her work: "On chairs and beds throughout the house she put pillows with embroidered nice words, for example *Despierta corazon dormido* ("Wake up sunshine"). In clay vases stood fresh flowers brought from the garden, enriching the space with colors and smells. They stored their belongings in boxes of *Olinala* – decorative lacquered containers from the state of Guerrero. (...) Kitchen was the heart of the house. (...) The joyous room had a bright yellow floor and white walls decorated with blue paneling. In the middle stood a wooden table and chairs of the same bright yellow color as the floor and shelves on which the dishes stood. (...) Although gas stoves were popular at the time, in the Blue House was cooked on the hearth. The traditional stove was covered with blue and yellow *Talaver tiles*, which reached all the way to the wall, creating a decorative pattern. (...) Large ceramic vases stood in the corners. (...) The great garden next to the house was a green oasis thanks to lush vegetation, a sheer fountain and numerous inhabitants."<sup>4</sup> This excerpt is a description of Kahlo's surroundings. It is astonishing to me how much it has to do with my own. Frida Kahlo was not afraid to combine motifs and colors. She surrounded herself with kindness and warmth, not afraid to combine together everything that inspired her. I am sure this environment influenced the formation of her paintings. There are many paintings that I admire, one of which is the *painting Two Frida* from 1939 (il.2). This double self-portrait is a representation of two emotional states, two faces of the same person. One character is the Frida, whom Diego Rivera loved, the other is the one he didn't. Diego Rivera was the artist's husband, also a painter, whom Kahlo showed great devotion. In the image, both characters hold hands while sitting on a bench, with stormy skies in the back. The left character is wearing a white Victorian shirt, the woman on the right is dressed in traditional *tehuantepec* dress. The right character holds a medallion with a miniature photo of her husband. The medallion is ended with a vein which links with the heart of the left woman. At the end of the vein coming out of Frida's left heart are surgical pliers, which like a drip dose blood directly on white clothing. Blood stains on a white skirt look like a floral ornament. This surreal image is for me a touching story of a woman lost in love, strong but wounded, seeking support in herself. What once seemed ugly and brutal to me, today reveals its sad beauty.

The image that influenced me most is the *Self-Portrait with a thorn hummingbird necklace* from the 1940 (il.3). Despite the fact that at first glance the work seems to be a joyful image, there is sadness and a sense of enslavement. On the painting we see Frida, whose neck is braided by spiky creepers. On one of her shoulders sits a monkey that pulls the creepers while on the other shoulder sits a black cat. The thorns are sticking into her neck all the way to the blood, in the background we see a thicket of lush leaves. The painting is full of allegory and symbols from Christian iconography and Mesoamerican cultures, which makes it difficult to interpret. The white dress and blood flowing from her neck makes Kahlo look a bit like a martyr. The thorn necklace can refer to both Jesus Christ and the ancient Aztec rites of blood-dropping. Butterflies are probably a reference to rebirth, but they were also a symbol of the ghosts of dead warriors. The element that captivated me most in the is the thorn hummingbird necklace. According to Mexican folk tradition, amulets made from dead hummingbirds were supposed to restore lost love. The monkey on Frida's shoulder plays with thorns, the position of the cat sitting on the other side makes it look prepared for a jump or attack. All this information chaos is accompanied by the woman's unpassionate gaze. The collision of tropical, sunny, lush vegetation with an empty eye of the woman is touching. Also, the way of painting and diversifying qualities is very inspiring to me. I highly

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<sup>4</sup> S. Barbezat, *Frida Kahlo Privately*, Warsaw, Marginesy Publishing House, 2017, p.139-140

value the visible differentiation of matter on this work, e.g. the contrast between the smoothness of the skin, the monkey's fur and the way flora are captured. <sup>5</sup>



Illustration 3. F.Kahlo, *Self-Portrait with Hummingbird*, Suzanne Barbezat, Frida Kahlo Privately, Warsaw, Marginesy Publishing House, 2017, p.156

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<sup>5</sup> Frida Kahlo's work is and always will be present in my life. The moment when I write this chapter and mention the essence of the painter's influence on my work coincided with an event that was funny, unexpected and flattering to me at the same time. In 2020, a Polish clothing company bought a license from me to use my graphics to create a clothing line, signed with my name. The very fact of the offer was not a small honor for me, because this company is my favorite brand, not only because it sews and designs in Poland, but also because the materials are always created in cooperation with Polish artists. At the time of writing about Frida, my clothing line was put on sale, almost in parallel with a line inspired by Frida Kahlo's work. In addition, both lines are presented in a single exposure as those, that can fit together. This is the simplest example of our intentions and inspirations actually reflect in everyday life.

## Jean – Michel Basquiat

Another artist's whose work is a source of inspiration for me is Jean Michel Basquiat. His artistic achievements are a mystery I do not want to solve. Self-ed, genius, drug addict, star – Basquiat was born to create. The energy flowing from his paintings is fascinating. Jean Michele Basquiat was undoubtedly a very riveting person, full of passion and desire to create, however, his propensity for drugs definitely did not bode well for the brilliant painter of a long, happy life, which he was probably aware of. After 1986, skulls, in different forms and colors, become a common motif in his paintings. It's quite a direct reference to the fact that he sensed the possibility of early death. Years later, Madonna, a former partner of the painter, now a great pop star, mentioned that Basquiat got up every day at four o'clock in the morning to finish the previously started work, as if he felt the breath of running time on his back. What I like most about his painting is the caption of everyday emotions. These emotions are very universal, and everyone can associate with them at some point: rebellion, rage, loneliness, doubt, but also passion and love. His paintings are filled with life. In his work I see references to Picasso, Jean Dubuffet or Matisse and passion for African art. All contemporary, direct or indirect references to Jean Michael's work are also extremely valuable to me. An example is the work of Gian Galanga (il.4), a New York artist. Although his illustrative works do not directly refer to style of Jean Michael Basquiat, a common denominator for both artists is the dynamics and lightness of the composition. Basquiat was taking inspiration from boxing, Galang also takes inspiration from the world of sport, not only from boxing, but also from other martial arts.



Illustration 4. Gian Galang, *JIANSHU 1*, 5ft X 6ft, Acrylic on Canvas, 2019, <https://giangalang.com>

Henri Rousseau and his works delight me every time I come into contact with them. I definitely prefer to see Rousseau's work than read about them. I must admit that it is his work, straight after the work of Frida Kahlo, that had the greatest impact on the development of my style. Thanks to works such as *Exotic Landscape* and *The Battle between a Tiger and a Buffalo* (il.6) I realized what I look for in painting and in which formula best fits myself. What moves me most about Rousseau's work is the details, dynamic composition, colors, choice of subject and the apparent simplicity of the stories told. All this makes me want to constantly look at the painting, absorb it piece by piece, one by one. The simplicity of the details is astonishing, and their multitude only intensifies the effect. I remember that the reason I first drew attention to Rousseau's painting was because it was green. Green was my least favorite color at the time. The moment I saw them for the first time, my perception of art changed, I understood what I'm seeking for in painting, what values I'm looking for. The first image that was created in the spirit of Rousseau's inspiration is *the Wild Frontier* (il.5), an image that may give an infantile impression. With this painting I decided to use botanical forms taken from Rousseau's paintings for the first time. I decided to put an illustrative twist into the work. The combination of green and rose in the background seemed to me the perfect combination, albeit a bit risky. This painting, presented at the ZENITHS<sup>6</sup> exhibition in June 2019, although may seem childish, is a metaphor for what we encounter every day – the chaos of everyday life. Below I present my catalogue description of *the Wild Frontier*. „One day, a few months ago - probably around "Valentine's Day" (there were heart-shaped chocolates in the shops, and every voice on TV said "tell someone you love him"). It was Saturday I guess; fridge was empty after a whole week; the pile of dishes grew in the sink; dishwasher couldn't keep up; bathroom – a travesty, it was hard to see the toilet among all the dirty clothes on the floor. In the bedroom, dusty pets were crawling from under the bed; there was even a moment when I thought one of them was alive, because I forgot to put on the lenses in the morning. I turn the computer on - twenty-seven unread emails. All important, I do not know where to start, which is the priority and which to ignore. My head is about to explode. Reminder: Antivirus is waiting for an update. I turn the computer off. I put a dress on, doesn't matter which one, there's no point to dress up. I get in the car. The fuel reserve light starts flashing. Another stab in the back. I open the door to the studio; the musty smell of paint and turpentine strikes me – I open the window. It's gonna be all fine. There are six

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<sup>6</sup>Zeniths was a project that I implemented during my first year of doctoral studies. I've always liked to challenge myself, the harder and more challenging the task is, the more willing I am to pursue it. The Zeniths project aimed to integrate the international PhD environment, introducing foreign doctoral students into the world of the Wrocław art scene. I also wanted them to have the opportunity to face the "Polish art realities". Zeniths are a metaphor for culminating points. We have many of them throughout our lives. Although not everyone pays due attention to them and they are often overlooked by us, it is worth being aware of their existence and keeping a close eye on them, because they are the ones who decide who we become. The inspiration for the unification of the concept was the astrological events, equinox and solstice, which have been happening periodically for hundreds, thousands, maybe even millions of years. Just as the rotation of heavenly bodies is cyclical, so cyclical is existence, something dies so that something can last, something arises so that something can end. Harmony and chaos are two sides of the same coin. Number 12 was crucial here. In many cultures, this number has a special rank, there is even some desire to achieve it, for the maintenance of balance and perfection: twelve Zodiac signs, twelve months, twelve Olympic gods, twelve apostles, twelve imams, a twelve-hour time-measuring system. Finally - twelve artists presented at the exhibition. I wanted them to be guided by the essence of order when choosing works despite of the fact that the opening day of the exhibition was 21 of June, the summer solstice – a symbol of disharmony. It's kind of a game, between what's certain and not. Each of the presented artists represented one of twelve numbers, one of twelve months. The idea was that going through the exhibition was like a short journey through the year, seen through the eyes of others. The exhibition took place in the Contemporary Museum of Wrocław and lasted 3 months. This was my first curatorial experience. I wanted the concept to be interesting, flexible and symbolic. I wanted the event to be professionally prepared, with creation of a catalogue. Everything was realized according to the assumption, and the experience and skills that I acquired at that time certainly affect my further development. However, I must honestly admit that I prefer to be an artist much more. I'm better at creating than standing on front of an audience, I prefer to paint than speak. However, I believe that moving beyond the "comfort zone" is very important in personal development.

brand new canvases next to the wall. I don't plan too much; is a waste of time. Dinosaur is always the right choice.”<sup>7</sup>



Illustration 5. M. Parfieniuk, *Wild Frontier*, oil on canvas, 110x130cm, private collection, 2019

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<sup>7</sup> M. Parfieniuk, *Zeniths catalogue*, Wrocław, The Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław, 2019, p. 8



Illustration 6. H. Rousseau, *Battle between a Tiger and a Buffalo*, 1908, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland

## Selected Aspects from the History of Vision Theory

Inspiration from other artists allows you to notice direct dependencies and similarities. In the introduction, I also mentioned 'indirect inspirations', i.e., those that do not have a source in the images, but, for example, in scientific research. In the next part of this chapter, I would like to elaborate on some of the scientific approaches to color perception. As I mentioned earlier, I do not consider myself a specialist in this field, I try to simply develop, search and draw from various sources.

## Today's Knowledge about an Eye Anatomy

The sense of sight is the most crucial tool of cognition. To immerse myself in visual perception, I wanted to understand how vision was perceived by others and how perception theory evolved over time. Getting acquainted with the scientific approach is a good way to complement knowledge and arouse curiosity. I would like to start with a brief description of what today's medicine looks like in the structure and functioning of the eye, starting from the outer part of an eyeball, which consists of three layers of membranes. Conjunctiva, the first layer, is a thin mucous membrane, which covers the outer surface of the entire eyeball and the back surface of eyelids. It is strongly vascularized and innervated. It is responsible for constant eye moisture. Another membrane is sclera, which is designed to protect the eyeball from injuries and gives it a spherical shape. At the back of the eye, the sclera is thick and non-transparent, in the front part, where it is called the cornea, it is thin and transmits light rays. The third layer is the choroid, where the blood vessels are located. Its task is to nourish the eye, supplying it with oxygen and discharge of waste products. In the front of the eye, the choroid connects to the iris, which color is individual, unique and directly dependent on the content of melanin – dye. It contains smooth muscles, so that it can change the width of the pupil – hole in the iris ring. The phenomenon of adapting the eye to the intensity of light is an unconditional reflex. The inner membrane of the eyeball is the retina, and, on its surface, we can distinguish between two types of sensory cells sensitive to light: suppositories and stamens. Stamens are cells sensitive to light intensity, so that the brain distinguishes between gray shades, but not colors. Suppositories are responsible for color vision and activate only in sufficient lighting: this is why it is so difficult to distinguish colors in the dark. Individual suppositories catch light of a certain wavelength. There are about 6 million suppositories and about 125million stamens on the retina. Stamens occur in the outer part of the retina, while suppositories centrally, in the back of the eyeball. The highest density of suppositories is the so-called macula. This is an area which allows the eye to have the sharpest vision. On the retina there is also an area, completely devoid of sensory cells, the so-called blind spot. The optic nerve leaves the blind spot, which transmits nerve impulses to the brain. After passing through the cornea, the light goes to the pupil behind which the lens is located. The lens is transparent, and its shape may change. The rays of light penetrate the lens, then run through the vitreous behind it, which is 98% composed of water. Then, the rays of light hit the retina, along the way, however, they collapse both through the cornea and through the lens, so that a sharp image is created on the retina. Light rays stimulate receptor cells in the retina. Each of these cells contains a photosensitive dye, which, under the influence of light energy, breaks down and causes a nerve impulse. This then goes into the optic nerve, and further to the visual centers in the cerebral cortex, where impulses are identified and interpreted. Improper curvature of the cornea or lens impairs the focus of light rays, focusing them at different points on the retina or before and outside. The defect that makes the resulting image blurred is called astigmatism.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>A.Zausznica, *Color Science*, Warsaw, PWN Scientific Publishing House, 2013, p.201-209

The mechanism of vision and the structure of the eye have always been of great interest. It was clear how important the sense of vision was. Already in ancient times, the first attempts to solve the mystery of visual perception could have been observed. Firstly, it was thought the lens was mainly responsible for the vision process, the importance of the retina remained unnoticed. A theory which, might sound absurd in the light of today's knowledge and pushed me to continue the research, is *the emission theory of vision*. It assumed that vision was possible through some kind of rays sent by the eye. This hypothesis had many followers in antiquity. According to the emission theory created by Galen, the process of vision takes place through an intangible substance, he called *Pneuma or the spirit of sight*. Claudius Galenus was a Roman physician of Greek descent. He was an anatomist, philosopher, a talented researcher, one of the greatest ancient doctors. His work had a huge impact on the development of medieval and Renaissance medicine. The substance he described, *Pneuma*, was supposed to start in the brain and run along the optical nerve, up to the eyeball and lens, which was considered to be the main organ of vision. This is how *the Spirit of sight was to give the eye the ability to see*. From the *lens*, *the pneuma* stream was supposed to spread in recelinear rays that touch visible things.<sup>9</sup> This theory, captivating and quite abstract, inspired me to create a painting called *Pneuma or The Black Eye*. (il.8). The work presents a head with a left eye falling out. Black hand catches the falling eye. The creation of the painting was a consequence of the drawing, I spontaneously made immediately after reading this theory (il.7). The work is also a slight reference to my own perception experience. Astigmatism makes my left eye much worse, which makes it necessary to have a fairly strong correction of vision. *The black eye* is kind of a tribute to my eternal distress with contact lenses.

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<sup>9</sup> A.Zausznica, *Color Science*, Warsaw, PWN Scientific Publishing House, 2013, p.268





Illustration 7. M.Parfieniuk, *The Black Eye/ Pneuma*, promarker on paper, 20x30cm, 2019



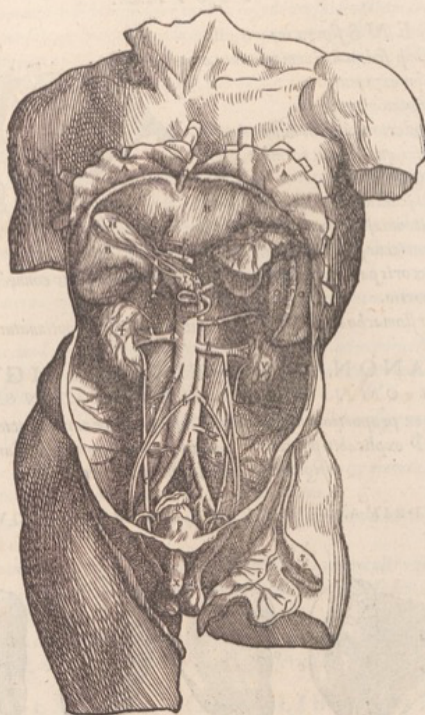
Illustration 8. M. Parfieniuk, *The Black Eye/ Pneuma*, oil on canvas, 110x130cm, 2019

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Medieval scholars drew abundantly on the views of ancient thinkers. They almost indiscriminately adopted Greek views dominated the medieval development of optics. In those days, research centers largely moved to countries under Arab influence. Arab scholars enriched their knowledge of the anatomy of the eye, but their main merit for the later development of science was the categorical rejection of the Emission theory of vision. It was them who built the foundations by which the retina could have been discovered. After the Arab discoveries for a very long time, history does not record significant breakthroughs in the field of optics. We will not be surprised that Leonardo da Vinci also worked on solving the puzzle of the eye's anatomy. His descriptions were very accurate, but did not significantly affect the development of medicine, because his work remained unknown for a long time. The description of the eye structure *that we can find in De corporis humani fabrica* from 1543 by Vesalius is complete and much more accurate than all of the descriptions previously known. This work is based on one's own insightful observations and research and is a starting point for the further development of science. Andreas Vesalius, a Flemish scholar, is considered the creator of modern anatomy. *De corporis humani fabrica* is a more than five-hundred-page study of observations on the human body.<sup>10</sup> The illustrations of this book also inspire me to design new compositions. One of the illustrations *from De corporis humani fabrica* (il.9) was the prototype of my work entitled *Body*(il.10), 2019. In the first place, this work was to be a colorful linocut. A rather detailed sketch was created, difficult to make in the technique of linocut. The main idea was to combine 3 elements: a *body from De corporis humani fabrica*, purples and sea shades. The linocut project has turned into a painting, because it is paint, I feel best working with. I also wanted the interior of the body to be a kind of abstraction, painting medium to visualize the "chaos" of human body.

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<sup>10</sup> A.Zausznica, *Color Science*, Warsaw, PWN Scientific Publishing House, 2013, p. 269-270

VIGESIMAE FIGVRAE EIVSDEM QVE CHA-  
racterum Index.

*P R A E S E N S* figura sectionis serie duodecimae succedit. ab hac enim omnia intestina excuimus, relicta duntaxat uentriculi portione superioris orificij uentriculi sedem commostrate. atq; ita hac figura pleraq; indicat, quae nunc opportunius cum characterum indicibus seriatim insinuabuntur.

- A, A* Septi transuersi portio peritoneo succincta, atq; una cum costis aliquot sursum reflexa.  
*B, B* Cavae iecoris sedes.  
*C* Iecoris ligamentum, quo ipsius sinistra pars septo alligatur.  
*D* Venae per umbilicum iecori ex porrectae portio, ubi et sinus ille indicatur primum banc admit- tens uenam, quae per priuatum ipsi in iecore humano incisum foramen ad iecoris usque sedem per- reptat, ubi hic *G* non procul a *K* adhibitum conspicis, ubiq; uena haec in iecoris substantiam pri- mum uere digeritur.  
*E* Hac sede iecur sinum obtinet, quo cedit stomacho per septum transuersum ad elatius uentriculi orificium contendenti.  
*F* Superius uentriculi orificium, uentriculiq; portio.  
*G, G* Lineae impressiones ue tuberaq; in iecoris cauo ubi partem uenam promit conspicua.  
*H* Biliis uesicula.

I Portae

Illustration 9. Andreae Vesalii Bruxellensis, scholae medicorum Patavinae professoris, de Humani corporis fabrica Libri septem Vesalius, Andreas, Basileae, [Anno salutis reparatae 1543], Universitätsbibliothek Basel, Shelf Mark: UBH AN I 15

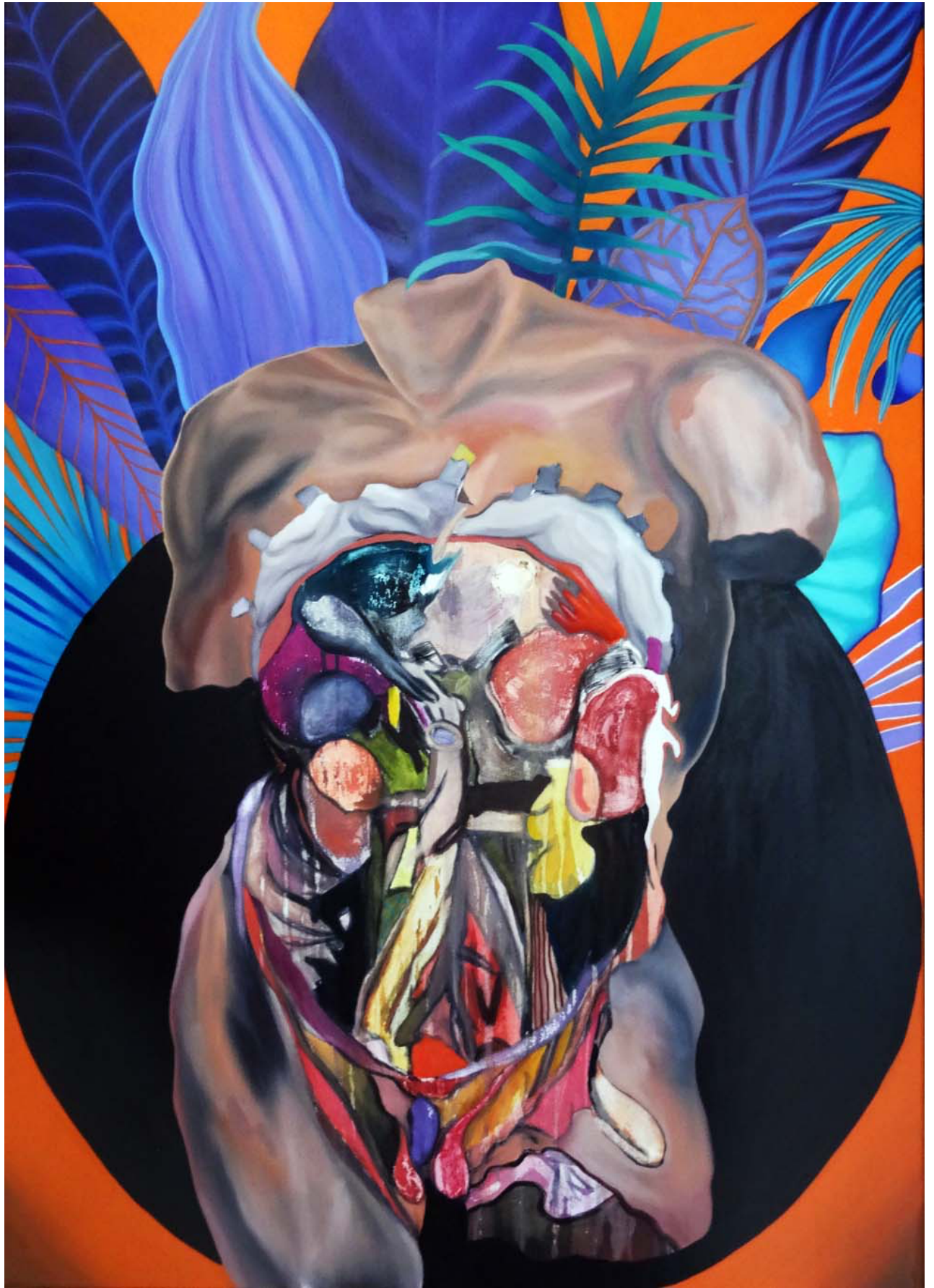


Illustration 10. M.Parfieniuk, *Body*, oil on canvas ,100x140cm, 2019

A full understanding of the mechanisms of chromatic perception is difficult, it is necessary to describe complex processes that provide the ability to see. Adam Zausznica is the author of one of the best studies on color perception. *Color Science*, almost legendary book, contains all the existing knowledge of color and vision. „The only book published in Poland that analyses the in-depth concept of color– from properties, through colorimetry, analysis in the light of biological sciences, perception, systematisms to problems in practical life. 620 pages of vast, years-old knowledge; bibliography alone has 472 entries, issued in several languages! It is difficult to summarize the content of this book in few words. With no exaggeration, it can be said, it contains briefly described all of humanity's knowledge of colors. This book should be a must-read for anyone who deals with color problems – photographer or artist.”<sup>11</sup> Zausznica himself admits that he professionally deals with something completely different and wrote the book hobbyist.<sup>12</sup> The author extracts four processes, which he calls senses or effects. The first is the *sense of light*, which is nothing else than perception of light. This sense allows the power of the light stimulus to be distinguished without simultaneously recognizing its quality, such as temperature. Another is *the sense of color*, which allows "the correct response of the visual apparatus to light stimuli of different wavelengths"<sup>13</sup>, in short, the colors. *The sense of space, the sense of shape, the sense of distribution*, in turn, allows for a proper assessment of the location in the surroundings of the sources of light stimulus. This sense helps to determine spatial dimensions. The last, fourth sense, is the ability of merging all the senses; „this is a set of phenomena that we used to attribute to the activities of "higher", "mental" centers of the organ of vision.”<sup>14</sup>

Aside from being a compendium of knowledge about the color, captured from every possible side, this book impressed me a lot, and I often come back to it to break the information I'm interested in down, in parts, step by step. Thanks to this book, I first came across a lot of information and theories. In the following part, I will introduce theories that impressed me and pushed me further. This knowledge does not have a direct impact on my painting but is important because it has led me to many conclusions. Each of the following theories is inspiring in a different way. Some forced me to think about how the environment affects our perception of color, others are the source of new image concepts and a stimulus for the design of new compositions.

### Modern Color Theories

Although, in the perspective of today's knowledge, the theories I want to bring closer below seem naive, they are very interesting, absorbing and enthralling. They proof how problematic the issue of color perception is and how creative the old scholars were.

A theory that for many years allowed sufficient explanation of the basic phenomena of color vision is *the Three-component theory of color vision*. It assumes that there are three color-sensitive receptors in the organ of vision. This theory was formulated in 1802 by Thomas Young, an English physicist, physician and physiologist. It is directly related to the works of Michal Lomonosov, a Russian scholar, who was the first to come up with the theory of the three-component nature of vision. In his study, Lomonosov writes that seeing light is the result of the twitching motion of ether particles, of which there are three types. Ether particles can also interact with other particles of matter by introducing them into vibration. According to his assumptions, there were three types of matter at the bottom of the eye, each of them was to connect only with one sort of the ether particles. "The first type of ether is red,

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<sup>11</sup> <http://nic.dybowski.pl/?p=429> (accessed 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2021)

<sup>12</sup> <http://nic.dybowski.pl/?p=429> (accessed 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2021)

<sup>13</sup> A.Zausznica, *Color Science*, Warsaw, PWN Scientific Publishing House, 2013, p. 271

<sup>14</sup> A.Zausznica, *Color Science*, Warsaw, PWN Scientific Publishing House, 2013, p. 271

the second is yellow, and the third type of ether is blue. Other colors are formed by mixing the first".<sup>15</sup> Black vision is translated as absorbing all types of ether by the surfaces of a given body, white as a result of the reflection of all particles from a given body, which introduces all three receptors into vibration.<sup>16</sup> Despite its abstraction, this theory seems logic. As I mentioned above, almost fifty years after the publication of Lomonosov's work, a new description was created by Young, based on materials previously available. Young's concept was supplemented in 1867 by Hermann Ludwig Ferdinand von Helmholtz, a German physician, physiologist, physicist and philosopher, therefore the study is known as *the Young-Helmholtz Theory*. It assumes the existence of three different types of nerve fibers, or three, acting independently of each other, processes occurring in neural tissue. Although each fiber, or process, reacts to the radiation of the entire spectrum, it mainly reacts to one specific wavelength (red, yellow and blue). White vision is caused by the simultaneous stimulation of all fibers (or processes), and black vision is the result of a complete lack of stimulation of photosensitive elements. *Young's Helmholtz hypothesis has dominated the scientific world for many years, giving other scientists the basis to try to extract three or more types of suppositories for specific tasks.*<sup>17</sup> In opposition stood Stephen Lucian Polyak, a Croatian American neurologist and neuroanatomist, who rejected the concept of specialized suppositories enabled to see a particular color. He assumed that in each suppositum there is the same mixture of three pigments, sensitive to photochemistry. He described exactly the types of cells, their structure and correlations with suppositions.<sup>18</sup> Another theory that strikes out among the modifications of the three-component theory of vision is *the Receptor Tetrad* published in 1945 by Henri Louis Charles Piéron, a French psychologist and physiologist. This theory presupposes the existence of three suppositories, each containing one pigment and a fourth, containing a mixture of all three pigments.<sup>19</sup> There were many theories about color vision, above I brought the ones that aroused my greatest curiosity closer. In the following section, I will describe how the variability of color perception is dependent on the given stimulus. This part, which I got acquainted with *thanks to the Color Science*, is especially important to me. The research I will describe below has led me to reflect on how our surrounding affects chromatic perception. What's riveting to me is that so many of the factors we face every day can affect our perception of color. I started to pay attention to my surroundings and look more at correlations. The world we live in is overloaded with stimuli, so it's hard to say unequivocally how this research translates into reality.

The phenomenon of adaptation of the organ of the eye to environmental variables is called the *process of adaptation*. Visual impression subject to development, it is not immediately as we perceive it. At first it undergoes a strong reinforcement to reach its maximum value in a very short time, then gradually expires to achieve a constant, stabilized value. This process leads to such changes in the body that allow it the optimal proper functioning. The phenomenon of chromatic adaptation occurs as a result of the constant adaptation of the body to restore its imbalance, the speed varies, depending on the individual characteristics of the perceptual apparatus concerned. Changing lighting conditions, such as a sudden increase in light intensity (blindness), or rapid disappearance of the light source, cause changes in pupil size and changes in the photosensitive cells of the eye lying in the retinal field.<sup>20</sup>

#### Dependence of Color Vision on *Other Stimuli*

The dependence of color on so-called *inappropriate stimuli* has impressed me enormously, mainly because most of these stimuli are present around on a daily basis. I was intriguing that the research described below could be used in today's marketing or social

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<sup>15</sup> A.Zausznica, *Color Science*, Warsaw, PWN Scientific Publishing House, 2013, p. 272-273

<sup>16</sup> A.Zausznica, *Color Science*, Warsaw, PWN Scientific Publishing House, 2013, p. 273

<sup>17</sup> A.Zausznica, *Color Science*, Warsaw, PWN Scientific Publishing House, 2013, p. 273 – 274

<sup>18</sup> A.Zausznica, *Color Science*, Warsaw, PWN Scientific Publishing House, 2013, p. 274 – 275

<sup>19</sup> A.Zausznica, *Color Science*, Warsaw, PWN Scientific Publishing House, 2013, p. 277

<sup>20</sup> A.Zausznica, *Color Science*, Warsaw, PWN Scientific Publishing House, 2013, p. 252 – 253

manipulation. This is a subject which, from a sociological point of view, deserves, in my view, to be thoroughly investigated and properly described. Victor Urbantschitsch, an Austrian doctor otolaryngologist, was the first person to notice and describe changes in color vision under the influence of certain stimuli, later called inappropriate ones. In 1888, he published the results of a study in which he described the effect of auditory, taste and smell stimuli and tactile-thermal (empirical) on the shape and range of color vision. His observations on the effect of auditory stimuli are easy to repeat. Urbantschitsch placed the observer in front of a screen with small color spots. The distance between the observer and the screen should be such that color distinction is difficult or impossible to. The proximity to the ear of the person being studied of a certain source of sound stimuli causes previously unseen stains to become clearly visible in relation to certain colors.<sup>21</sup>

Many scientists have studied the effects of different stimuli on color vision. In 1940, Sergey Vasilyevich Kravkov, a Russian psychologist who also described the process of chromatic adaptation, conducted a meticulous study on the effect of olfactory stimuli on color vision. In his experiments Kravkov used pear essence, jasmine and geranium extract. The result of the research was that under the influence of olfactory stimuli, the spectrum disintegrates into two halves: orange - red and blue - green. It was interesting that with the action of most of the olfactory occurs tendency to increase the sensitivity to blue - green part of the spectrum, while in the red part of the spectrum to its decrease. Under the influence of further research, in 1946 it was noticed that under the influence of the smell of rosemary, the field of view of green color expands and red narrows. On the other hand, the smell of jasmine narrows the color sensitivity of the green spectrum and does not visibly affect the red color.<sup>22</sup> In 1944, Dobriakova conducted a study of the effect of taste and empirical stimuli (sensory temperature receptor) on the sensitivity of color vision. The taste stimulus was sugar, and the experiential heat of the electric stove directed at the hands of the subject. The results of the Dobriakova studies were analogous to previous research. The effect of other stimuli on chromatic vision is a very interesting issue, we come into contact with these substances almost every day. Caffeine increases the overall sensitivity of color vision by about 40% for about 40 minutes. However, the feeling is stronger in green than red. Adrenaline, ephedrine, cardiamide make the sensitivity of the view of the colored green part of the spectrum greater and lowered in the red part. The conclusion that can be induced from the above studies is that all inappropriate stimuli break the spectrum in two parts. For the most part, inappropriate stimuli have a beneficial effect on seeing the green-blue part of the spectrum and limit the vision of the red field. General conditions within the body and their changes remain not insignificant. Knowledge of this subject has a wide practical application, because each of us, every day, has to deal with temporary or sudden physiological changes. In many experiments, in the case of hypoxemia (lack of oxygen with a sudden drop in atmospheric pressure), color vision is significantly changed towards a decrease in chromatic vision sensitivity, but it has been noted that this decrease is uneven in both the red and green spectrum areas. Conversely, when a large amount of oxygen is delivered to the body, the sensitivity to the red part of the spectrum increases.<sup>23</sup> "Some researchers (Szwarc, 1948) found a clear effect of a person's emotional states on the sensitivity of color vision. The diversity of eye color is also opposing in the area of green and red. It should be assumed that the interaction of emotional states is an indirect cause of changes in the sensitivity of color vision through changes in the state of excitation of the vegetative nervous system. The same is true with periodic cyclical changes in the sensitivity of color vision depending on the season, lunar quadrant, time of the day, etc."<sup>24</sup>

## The Purkinje Effect

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<sup>21</sup> A.Zausznica, *Color Science*, Warsaw, PWN Scientific Publishing House, 2013, p. 258 - 260

<sup>22</sup> A.Zausznica, *Color Science*, Warsaw, PWN Scientific Publishing House, 2013, p. 260 - 261

<sup>23</sup> A.Zausznica, *Color Science*, Warsaw, PWN Scientific Publishing House, 2013, p. 261

<sup>24</sup> A.Zausznica, *Color Science*, Warsaw, PWN Scientific Publishing House, 2013, p. 263



The existence and impact of inappropriate stimuli on color perception is for me the greatest curiosity I have discovered in recent years. Another scholar who has observed changes in chromatic perception of the changing environment is Jan Evangelista Purkinje, patron of the street where the Academy of Fine Arts in Wroclaw is located. What he has observed is extremely valuable and interesting because we can make such observations on a daily basis, and we do not need specialist research for this. In 1825, this famous Czech biologist was the first to describe a phenomenon in which observed colors dramatically change their brightness after dark. This phenomenon can easily be seen in examples taken from everyday life. According to Purkinje's observations, the blue and red stripes painted on the road poles have a relatively similar brightness during the day, but they become uneasy in reception after dusk: the red stripe becomes darker (almost black) and the blue one appears brighter (gray). This phenomenon can be observed both on flowers such as cornflowers and poppies, as well as on fabrics, paintings, etc. Purkinje's phenomenon refers not only to pure colors, but also to complex colors, containing even minimal components of these areas of the spectrum (e.g., orange colors on the red side of the spectrum or green on the blue side of the spectrum). Subsequent research on the Purkinje Effect has yielded important insights into the development of eye property science and vision theory.<sup>25</sup>

#### Selected artists color theories

By preparing to become a PhD, I was very keen to understand how color was theorized. I hoped that even if I didn't become a better painter, I would discover new sources of creativity. I must admit that while most of these considerations do not introduce anything new to my mindset, I find them worth knowing.

#### Phillipp Otto von Runge

*Runge's* color ball caught my attention primarily because of its great aesthetics. Phillipp Otto von Runge, a German romantic painter, was both a committed painter and a theorist. He was a fan of Newton's progress in chromatic research and believed that they should be the basis for the development of painting. He was very interested in the rainbow spectrum, both technically and philosophically. He willingly divided the spectrum of light into seven parts or three basic colors, used symbolism in his works, but had a dualistic approach. In his 1810 *book Farben-Kugel*, Runge describes, on the one hand, the mystical approach to the essence of color as force majeure and the division of colors into blue – Father, red – Son, yellow – Holy Spirit, on the other hand a clean, dry approach to the system of color as a mathematical calculation.<sup>26</sup> The color sphere he designed is, in my opinion, a very accurate visualization of the color system, which in a simple, accessible way illustrates how colors are darkened or lightened. The symbolism of this procedure, I mean two poles represented by white and black, twin, but reproaching each other, is interesting. As I mentioned above, color models generally did not appeal to me. I was very amused by how Ludwig Wittgenstein spoke of both Runge and Goethe: "I doubt that Goethe's remarks about the characteristics of colors would be useful to a painter. Maybe, hardly, for a decorator."<sup>27</sup>

#### Wassily Kandinsky

The author of the color theory, which raises the phenomenon of perception from both the emotional and expressive side, is Wassily Kandinsky, one of the brightest stars of pre-war art. The main idea of his theory is that the artist should be guided only by an internal necessity. It was Kandinsky who argued that color is not only a retinal irritation but covers the entire biopsychic sphere of the individual. Kandinsky's thesis has become the basis of absolute creative freedom, a gateway to breaking conventions, though often also an excuse

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<sup>25</sup> A.Zausznica, *Color Science*, Warsaw, PWN Scientific Publishing House, 2013, p. 235-236

<sup>26</sup> J. Gage, *Color and Culture – Theory and Meaning of Color from Antiquity to Abstraction*, Cracow, TAIWPN UNIVERSITAS Publishing House, 2008, p. 110-111

<sup>27</sup> L.Wittgenstein, *Color Notes*, Warsaw, Aletheia Publishing House, 2015, p.57

for ignorance. What really captivated me about Kandinsky's approach to color is the way he describes his physicality: as if color was a tangible being. This is how he describes his memory of having his first oil paintings of his own: „What I felt then, or rather the feeling I experienced seeing paint coming out of the tube - I still live today. One stroke of a finger and here's the dazzling and tasty, thoughtful and dreamy, focused and serious, majestically mournful, playfully shiny, with a sigh of liberation, with sweet dedication, with proud self-confidence, with subtle hesitation, these peculiar beings, which we call colors, appear one by one, endowed with their own lives, at any moment autonomous, ready to arrange themselves into new combinations, mix with each other, create an infinite number of new worlds ... Some paints have already dried up, worn and weakened, exhausted energies, memories of unfulfilled possibilities, would-be destiny. As you fight, as you fight, fresh, young forces come out of the pipes to replace the old ones. And in the middle of the palette a strange world: the remains of paints already used, those that have already passed their necessary incarnation on canvas, far from their origins."<sup>28</sup>

Kandinsky considered color to be an absolute value. Color in the form of pigment is an artistic medium depending on the choice of the painter. The artist distinguished two divisions, a very simple scheme in which we distinguish the coolness or warmth of a shade of color from luminous or dark. Wassily Kandinsky was undoubtedly one of the leading representatives of abstraction and was also an important theorist. Kandinsky divided the essence of color into two parts: absolute, that is, the ideal and color in the form of pigment, that is, a specific, visual, physical value, subject to the will of the painter. He is the author of the assumption about the Four Great Contrasts. The first great contrast is the movement of colors, which can escape to the warm or cool side, moving towards the yellow - warm or blue - cool. According to him, warm colors approach the viewer and tend to draw attention to each other when the same color fleeing to the cool color moves away from the viewer, giving the impression of remoteness. This movement is dynamic and vivid. The second high contrast is analogous to the first, but in this case the colors can resort to white or black. In this case, the colors tilt in the direction of light or dark, zooming in or out from the viewer. This movement is static, much easier to determine. Another contrast is green with red, colors opposing each other both on the physical and emotional level. Competing colors - calm green with red, which always captivates. Kandinsky's last contrast is orange and violet, which is supposed to be the greatest contrast, also psychological, contrast of internal resonance.<sup>29</sup>

#### Johannes Itten

Johannes Itten was primarily a painter, a colorist. It is easy to notice that color was his main inspiration and meant a lot to him. He is said to have been the first to associate four types of people with a color palette. He designed these palettes by naming them as a four-season pattern, creating seasonal color analysis. Shortly after his death in 1967, this patent gained popularity in the fashion and cosmetics industry. Itten believed that art is only possible if it is guided by the feeling. He was a vegetarian and meditated a lot to maintain his inner balance. He was also a follower of Mazdanan, a cult of fire, a religion centered in the dualistic cosmology of good and evil. This religion proclaims that the Earth should be restored to a garden where humanity could cooperate with one another and talk to God. Much of his work was done by didactics, and from 1919 to 1923 he was a teacher at the Weimar Bauhaus. The course he led was his author's teaching program, a preparatory course that was supposed to lead young art students to become fully conscious artists. His strong belief in "mind over matter" led to a conflict with Walter Gropius, the head of the Bauhaus. Gropius wanted to direct the school in a direction that would include mass production rather than individual artistic expression. This led to Itten's resignation. Itten has devoted many years of his life to the development of color theory. He created seven color contrasts, with which he made the contrast more than just a visible difference between the two effects. He described

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<sup>28</sup> M.Rzepińska, *History of Color in the History of European Painting, New Edition Supplemented*, Cracow, Literackie Publishing House, 1983, p 542

<sup>29</sup> M.Rzepińska, *History of Color in the History of European Painting, New Edition Supplemented*, Cracow, Literary Publishing House, 1983, p. 542-548

seven contrasts: tonal contrast, brightness, temperature, complementary contrast, simultaneous contrast, quantitative contrast, and contrast by saturation. He believed that knowledge and the ability to describe them were the basis for all artists, especially painters. Johannes Itten is the author of *The Constructive Color Theory*, as he says in his book: "The theory of constructive color includes the principles of color effects, as long as they can be empirically edified."<sup>30</sup>

Itten is also the author of a twelve-step color circle. It consists of process colors that are mixed together to produce derived colors, visualized as triangles. All form a geometric shape that can be typed into a circle. Each derived color mixed with the underlying color next to it gives the third-order color. Itten meticulously described this project and gave guidance on how to properly reproduce it. According to him, every colorist should perform this type of task and should be aware of these rules. However, he also acknowledges that not everything constructively calculated is a leading factor in art.<sup>31</sup> I am surprised that one person can make such different judgments. I strongly disagree with the view that every colorist should perform some specific tasks in order to be credible. A color is a value that flows from the depth. I believe that colorists are a unique group that entrusts artistic choices of intuition, regardless of conventions. In my opinion, attempts to systematize colors in relation to the profession of painter are pointless. Color is a subjective value, the intensity of which should depend on the sensitivity of the artist. Color is like the subconscious language of the soul. The more intense the color combinations the artist uses, the more visible his temperament is.

### III. HUMDRUM

When I started the drawing series called *Humdrum*, I didn't expect it to be the longest cycle I've ever created. It consists of 16 works, and this number continues to grow... it may never be completed. Works are created with an artistic marker and a thin pen on paper. The dimensions of the works range between 100x70cm and 50x70cm. The history of the *series begins the work of Humdrum I* (2019), which was created as an attempt to take on the theme of *Weltschmerz*, which was the theme of the *Wroclaw Triennale of Drawing 2019*. The priority for me was to start working in a new technique for me that would contain color. Since I used to make hobbyist small illustrations, I made the quick decision to modify the format and transfer a small illustration to a large format. The sketch I designed was quite general, and when moving it to full format, I was tempted to add a lot of details to get the most out of the format. It quickly became apparent that making such a large drawing would be quite expensive. It took quite a long time to complete my first work, but because of the accuracy required, it was like meditation for me. I was delighted with the result, which resulted in the immediate creation of another work. Immediately after *Humdrum II*, more works were created, followed by more and more. At the moment (as of 16.02.2021) I am in the process of working on drawings numbered XIII-XVI and have a collection of 210 markers, from which I exchange my favorite colors on an ongoing basis. I tested all the companies producing artistic markers to find the ones that suit me best. I have found and used them faithfully. It looks like that during the day, until 4 pm, I paint in the studio, and in the evenings, I draw at home. It is a fairly good system, allowing me to calm down and rest. Many of the works showed the potential to move to a larger format and change of the medium. When it comes to painting, I draw a lot from drawings, they allow me to think about certain issues and to raise problems that I do not want or cannot raise in painting. Saying "I can't" I mean a graphic approach to certain topics. I really appreciate the fact that I can treat the same subject artistically on canvas, and completely different on paper. Finally, I found a drawing medium that is natural to me. Looking at the cycle from a technical point of view, finding the right tools

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<sup>30</sup> J. Itten, *Art of Color Subjective Experience and Objective Understanding as Paths Leading to Art*, studio edition, Cracow, D2d.pl Publishing House, 2015, p. 34

<sup>31</sup> J. Itten, *Art of Color Subjective Experience and Objective Understanding as Paths Leading to Art*, studio edition, Cracow, D2d.pl Publishing House, 2015, p. 30

in the form of a marker was not a big problem. At first, I worked with *Promarker* pens produced by *Winsor&Newton*, but they are not ideal. What bothered me the most was the lack of the right number of shades, the brightness of colors and the low performance. Their definite advantage is that the color from the label is very similar, almost identical to the true color of the marker. Currently, *Winsor&Newton* has made modifications to the production of Promarkers, more shades are available. It is not inconceivable that I will not reach for it yet. The markers I am currently working with are artistic alcohol markers from the French company *OZ International* called *Graph'it*. Among the available shades I found the ones that by far the most hit my aesthetic taste. The available shades are not obvious, next to the basic colors we find cleverly pacified colors which in combination with others give amazing juxtapositions. As for the substrate, the definite problem is the spilling of ink from the marker on most papers, which makes it impossible to achieve precision. The first works were created on a traditional studio paper, but I wanted to achieve an ultimate better quality. The best was the *Fabriano* 200g paper. I do not want to change the type of paper, I want it to be permanent for all current and future works, but I do not exclude the possibility that I will one day make a drawing in a larger format. The series of works are framed in simple aluminum frames and in wide black pass-partou. The way of presentation is very important to me: with so much color, detail and movement on the drawing, I want *the black breath in the form of pass-partou* to calm down and separate the work from the surrounding.

The subject that I am most interested in in the works, both painting and drawing, is mysticism, occultism, *danse macabre* and *Santa Muerte* supplemented by my passion for botany. I don't consider myself a specialist in these areas; I'm rather fascinated by the way those subjects touch the topic of life. Further, I will describe in detail some of the presented works. The very name of *the series* – *Humdrum*, may seem enigmatic, but it is a direct expression of feelings about my own art. The word *Humdrum* means banality, monotony, prosaic, in short, nothing special in direct translation. I decided that it would be an appropriate name for the cycle. Just as the surgeon saves lives, the baker bakes the bread he needs, the cleaner makes life easier, the engineer builds houses, so I – the artist, I do not do anything useful, I am a slave to my own thoughts, which I cannot express other than the painting, hoping that my artistic work will please someone or prompt some thoughts. Secondly, *Humdrum* refers to how the artist is perceived by others. Very often I encounter a dismissive approach to the profession of artist. Third, the name refers to the vanishing. It may seem trivial but the fragility of life, the ways in which each of us wastes it to some extent, the injustice and brutality of karma lead me to the conclusion that life itself is nothing special, most people take it for granted without appreciating the beauty, pleasure, daily joys and happiness that we have living, for example, free from war or cataclysms. Aware of all this, I want to experience as much as possible, I want to be able to use drawing as a daily joy, I use it as a form of meditation, a kind of catharsis. It is difficult for me to describe in words what art is for me, because on the one hand it is all life, passion, pleasure, everyday life, but on the other hand it is an eternal worry, eternal torment. It is what allows me to breathe and at the same time a ball at the foot, which often makes normal functioning hard. Often, people ask questions about unfinished paintings or other works – my answer is - nothing, it's nothing special. So *Humdrum*, has become my favorite cycle, which will continue as long as catharsis is needed and the topics will not become time-barred.

## Iconography

To describe the drawing cycle entitled *Humdrum* an introduction is necessary. It will give a little closer look to the characteristics of inspiration, their historical outline and genesis. In this section I will describe the inspirations in detail. The motives I am discussing, although well known, deserve, in my opinion, a few words.



Illustration 11. Hokusai, *The Spectre of Haunting Your Murderer*, private collections, London

### *Danse Macabre*

The spectre of death taking people into the afterlife has always been one of the most terrifying human visions, the most sinister of unexpected guests. The form of the skeleton is an expression of the fact that bones and remains have always been synonymous with destruction for man, a symbol of fragility of life. It is difficult to determine at what time and place the idea of presenting death in this way arose. According to some sources, this motif was probably originally used in the East to soon become a common symbol also in the West. This thread has been popularized by the horror effect, but the way it is presented often is <sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> O.S.Rachleff, *Occultism in Art*, Warsaw, Penta Publishing House, 1993, p.215

counterproductive, at least in my opinion. An artfully craftsman's painting made on silk at the end of the 18th century by Japanese artist Hokusai (il.11) depicts a bone-up from a grave that, in an attempt to find its tormentor, looks ominously from behind the curtain. The Tibetan book of the dead, which is a collection of mystical treaties and beliefs, presents a slightly more elaborate picture of death. It depicts two skeletons, one of which is probably death, joined together in a strange embrace, as if they were dancing together. I see a skeleton sitting on the other's back, as if they were having a great time. According to the Buddhist beliefs described in this book, death is a kind of gate, a path to higher reincarnation, at the end of which is Nirvana, the paradise state of non-existence. Death is therefore an opportunity to celebrate. This book reads: "Oh noble, do not be afraid of anything. Menacing demons and good gods are just creations of your mind".<sup>33</sup> Western artists tended to be ironic, to look at death in a crooked mirror, often unceremoniously making fun of their fear. James Ensor, who lived at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, is one of the painters whose paintings very often touched the theme of vanishing. This artist, with neurotic tendencies, lived alone, and was appreciated only after his death. His colorful paintings show vivid bones adorned with feathers, masks, colorful robes, seem once to mourn the dead, and once enjoy the triumph of death. According to Ensor, strange habits and characteristics of our characters pass with us to the other side, because death is the end only of our physical existence. But let's go back to the Middle Ages, because there, death began to be depicted as a dancing skeleton, giving rise to *the allegory of Danse Macabre*. In short, it is a depiction of a skeleton dancing among representatives of various social groups: clergy, army, peasants, power. This image was intended to remind the audience that death does not choose and comes after all. This allegorical motif, appeared for the first time in the Middle Ages as a consequence of the plague epidemic, or black death. The father of this motif, however, I would definitely call Hans Holbein, a 16th century German artist, illustrator of the Luther Bible. Holbein is the author of a series of woodcuts entitled *Dance of Death*, *Totentanz* and *Danse Macabre*. These woodcuts are a kind of satire, elevating the fragility and misery of human life. On one of the woodcuts entitled *The Miser* (il.12), Holbein depicts a skeleton, strangely coated in the skin, who comes to the skimpier to take him into the afterlife. To the displeasure of the miser, he also wants to take all his gold, clumsily collecting handfuls of coins.

This motif, over the years, began to be used in various types of texts and in the form of paintings, frescoes, graphics. In contemporary culture it is still used on various occasions, e.g., in the creation of performances, in cinematography or in music. Examples of works inspired by *Danse Macabre* include *The Tim Burton's Nightmare before Christmas* and *The Corpse Bride* or Michael Jackson's *Thriller*.

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<sup>33</sup> O.S.Rachleff, *Occultism in Art*, Warsaw, Penta Publishing House, 1993, p.216

# Der Rych man.



Illustration 12. H.Holbein, *The Miser, The Dance of Death*, United Kingdom, Penguin Books, 2016, p. 57



*Santa Muerte*, or Holy Death, is another topic that inspires me. Most of us associate *Santa Muerte* as the Mexican equivalent of All Saints' Day. In fact, *Santa Muerte* is a belief of meaning far beyond the November month, and worship itself is an explosive mixture of beauty, devotion, horror and human drama. *Santa Muerte*, or *Holy Death*, *White Lady*, *Holy Lady*, is depicted as a female skeleton dressed in a cape with a hood. In her hand she often holds weights, as a symbol of the balance of good and evil, or a scythe in the right and a globe in her left, to emphasize the fact that she has the fate of the whole world in her hands. Some of her followers consider her the eighth archangel, while others consider her an angel of the fallen, who tries to regain her lost grace by doing miracles. The attractiveness of worship is due to the fact *that the White Lady* quickly works wonders and welcomes everyone to the circle of followers, regardless of social status and profession. *The White Lady*, just like death itself, does not choose, answers all prayers and requests, regardless of whether they serve the good or not. The cult is derived from the combination of Christian and pagan elements, and the figure of the White Lady has a close connection *with Mictecacihuatl*, the Aztec goddess of death.<sup>34</sup> The genesis of worship is firmly rooted in Mexico's criminal underworld, in neighborhoods of misery. The cult of The Holy Death spread for good throughout Mexico at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. Daniel Arizmendi Lopez's story, also known as *El Mochaorejas* or "Ear Cutter", contributed to this. This long-sought criminal enjoyed grim fame as a notorious kidnapper for ransom. When the ransom did not come on time, he had a habit of depriving his victims of their ears and sending them to the families of the kidnapped. In the criminal's hideout, an altar dedicated to Santa Muerte was found, of which Lopez turned out to be a zealous follower, often asking for elusiveness and remission of sins, which he probably considered a necessity. When it came out that he was a follower of the Holy Death, other criminals followed him.<sup>35</sup> Of course, it is not that every follower is a criminal, but those who are not on the way with the rule of law are particularly keen to reach out to the White Lady for *help*. There is another analogy of *Santa Muerte* with Aztec culture. Criminals, like former Aztec priests, often make death sacrifices from people. When the request to Death is large, it requires a sufficiently high tribute, e.g., in the case of a robbery of a jeweler, the victim of flowers or a bag of white powder seems disproportionate. This is the darkest aspect of *Santa Muerte*. Followers of the cult are called *Santeros*, there are 5-10million of them in Mexico. They can be found among every social group, but the largest proportion are the working class, the poor and those who somehow feel left out by power or society. Although Catholicism is the dominant religion in Mexico, there has been a significant decline in followers in recent years, largely in favour of Santa Muerte. It is suspected that this is due to people's mistrust of state power and institutions, one of which is the church. It turns out that *Santa Muerte* is much better suited to human spiritual needs. It is no secret that Mexico faces countless problems such as unemployment, corruption, drugs, violence, pollution. Mexico is at the forefront of the most dangerous countries in the world; dealing with cruelty and death is the order of the day, so taming Death seems much simpler and more affordable than Catholicism offers. The cult of *Santa Muerte* is partly related to the criminal world, narco business and prostitution. It is a rescue for those who seek spiritual comfort but cannot find it in the traditional Catholic Church, because they are not part of a "legal" society and are already deleted as sinners at the start. The first law of La Santa Muerte is that it is neutral in every sense of the word. Most deities somehow judge their followers. The practice of *Santa Muerte* is accompanied by the construction of chapels, altars, the laying of flowers, liturgical robes, paintings, processions. It is often said that it is also accompanied by magic, Satanism and public acquiescence to doing evil. This cult is soured by an aura of mystery and darkness. Death is fully neutral; prayers, spells and requests made with the intention of deliberately and deliberately doing evil, sent to it, are heard by Death in the same way as those spoken with good intention. Cases where evil is done under the guise of worship, however, are extreme and are not welcomed by the rest of the followers. This does not change the fact that followers with extreme moral insecurity quite often ask their patron to

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<sup>34</sup> T. Prower, *La Santa Muerte Magic and Mysticism of Death*, Illuminatio Publishing House, 2015, p. 53

<sup>35</sup> T. Prower, *La Santa Muerte Magic and Mysticism of Death*, Illuminatio Publishing House, 2015, p. 56

help with crimes, as if they were not, made <sup>36</sup>of necessity resulting from a difficult social and economic situation. In every religion there will be exceptions that are able to do evil in the name of what they believe. The way I have expressed these beliefs may seem crazy and brutal, but for the most part *Santeros* are good people who do not do evil, because they believe that all people are connected to each other by a network of life, which can also be called the law of *karma*. *This* law says that everything we do comes back to us sooner or later. It is logical, however, that it is better to do good. <sup>37</sup>My interest in this movement before was not very in-depth. I associated *Santa Muerte* with the celebration of All Saints' Day, or *Día de los Muertos*. I was fascinated by the fact that a day that is celebrated in Poland in an atmosphere of mourning can be treated in such a completely different way. Especially inspiring for me was the aesthetics of the day, decorating everything with flowers, multicolored make-up and clothing, ubiquitous color and celebration. It was on the occasion of writing this work that I allowed myself to get acquainted in depth with the topic that drew me in and discovered unknown cards in front of me. I will use the acquired knowledge in the design of further works, because this theme is very present for me. I will definitely also expand my knowledge on this subject, because it is an amazing world full of contrasts. This does not mean that I sign the cult of Death. I think we can witness the birth of something new. Just as 2,000 years ago people at the time witnessed the birth of Christianity, now we can witness the beginning of something that will gradually develop to larger sizes. The Cult of *Santa Muerte* is accessible, easy to use and accessible to everyone.

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<sup>36</sup> T. Prower, *La Santa Muerte Magic and Mysticism of Death*, Illuminatio Publishing House, 2015, p. 28

<sup>37</sup> T. Prower, *La Santa Muerte Magic and Mysticism of Death*, Illuminatio Publishing House, 2015, p. 21



Illustration 13. M. Parfieniuk, *HUMDRUM VI*, promarker on paper, 100x70cm, 2020

Figurines depicting a dead woman in colorful robes, decorated with flowers, in Mexico are present everywhere. They are a kind of common good, and the motif itself is common in the clothing and jewelry industry. The followers of Death sacrifice her various goods, such as money, jewelry, *sweets and flowers*, they know that *Holy Death does not act gratuitously, asking for something, something should be donated or lit on the altar* of the so-called motivated candle. Candles come in seven colors that are responsible for specific intentions. Colors in this belief play an important role, because they are like streams of energy that concentrate Santa Muerte's attention in a particular direction. I would like to describe these colors and what they symbolize.

#### Black

Black is the basic color that we can meet on the cape of La Santa Muerte. The energy of blackness is associated with night, intuition, femininity, tenderness, coolness and submission. It is primarily used in protective magic and curse throwing. The same color is used for many different purposes as protection or attack. It is believed that black has the power to sense and neutralize evil factors, and at the same time can help perform harmful magical actions on the victim of the curse. Here too, the most important driver is intention and commitment.

#### White

White is the second color, straight after black, which is most often found on the cape of the Death. It is a universal color, used in rituals, in which it is not entirely known what color should be used. White is associated with purity in almost every culture, including Santa Muerte, it is the basic color of purifying rituals. The energy of white is a symbol of logic, masculinity, hardness, giving and warmth.

#### Red

Red is a very strong color. This is the third most common color of the *White Lady's robe*. It is most widely associated with sexual energy and passion. It is also a symbol of all basic instincts, needs and desires. It is interesting in this case that the effectiveness of the ritual depends on the shade that will be used. Deep, dark red is a symbol of aggressiveness, sex, determination, when less aggressive colors such as shades going more toward pink are associated with tenderness, dating, a state in which sex is not the main purpose of a relationship. It is also interesting that it is red that *Santeros* reaches the most, and accessories in red tones are the most popular ones.

#### Gold

The golden color is used in all aspects related to money and wealth. It is not surprising, therefore, that together with red it is the most used color. Entrepreneurs in their businesses often put death's statuette dressed in gold robes. This color has always been associated with wealth and abundance. It is very interesting that golden (or yellow) is associated with the solar tang weave chakra, which is considered the center of accumulation of personal power. When we feel threatened or in an uncomfortable situation, we subconsciously cross our hands on the cage protecting the solar tang weave.

#### Green

Green is a color that is used in aspects related to law and court hearings. It is a color that is also associated with nature and the natural course of things. *Santeros*, who have a legal problem, are eager to reach for the green, hoping for a good course of the case, finding and winning the truth. Those who are guilty reach for black in rituals, hoping to avoid punishment. Greenery is also a symbol of self-love, used for such an intention, promotes self-acceptance and self-love. It is interesting that green is also used for the treatment of autoimmune diseases, such as AIDS.

#### Blue

As blue is associated with clear sky and ocean depth, it is a symbol of clarity of mind and in-depth knowledge. This is why the blue aspect of La Santa Muerte is associated with wisdom and knowledge. Blue is also a color associated with the throat chakra, which is the energy center for communication.

#### Violet

Violet is used in healing rituals and transformative magic. In a sense, each color has some healing power, but violet is a color that can be used universally to treat all kinds of ailments. In some groups it is believed that diseases are generally psychosomatic, that the source of bodily ailments are primarily mental patterns. For people who put their feet strongly on the ground, this pattern can be very controversial, but I think there is a grain of truth in it. Violet is also associated with the third eye chakra, which is located on the forehead and is responsible for enlightenment and imagination. It is interesting that this chakra is often associated with the brain and pineal gland – the body that produces melatonin and dimethyltryptamine, which is the only known hallucinogen produced by the human body. In different groups, purple is the color of hallucinations and hallucinogens, so I was very intrigued by this fact.

The primary colors are seven, but two more colors occur in the form of rainbow and bronze, and they are commonly used. Bronze is mainly associated with necromantic. It is used in rituals that aim to build a bridge between the world of the living and the dead. Bronze is also associated with autumn; I really like how it explains why autumn is the best time to contact the afterlife. In autumn we are dealing with a large amount of brown in the natural environment: the leaves die and take on brown shades, the veil that separates the worlds becomes the thinnest, so it is easiest to effectively contact another dimension. The final color form used is the rainbow, which is used in universal rituals. Use of specific colors produce a clear, concentrated effect when you use rainbow it causes general effects. The rainbow is often mistakenly replaced with white, due to the fact that in theory white also contains the components of each color. White, however, can be used as a replacement for some color, while the rainbow as a power that affects all aspects simultaneously.<sup>38</sup>

There are many aspects and beliefs of Santa Muerte, all very interesting and worth discussing. In addition to the symbolism of colors, I would like to bring two more symbols, which in this belief can be classified as magic tools. These symbols are orange and rose. These are symbols that I put in my work quite often, so I would like to develop a little bit of their meaning.

#### An Orange

An orange is a fruit with a high content of vitamin C, therefore is associated with mind cleansing from negative and harmful thoughts. By its bright orange color and spherical shape, it is combined with the abdominal chakra, which is responsible for intuition and instinct. It is interesting that oranges are used in rituals that help in the fight against depression and sadness.<sup>39</sup> I used this symbol in an image entitled *Tiger among Oranges* (il.14), which was also partly inspired by the fact that Rousseau painted this fruit. The eponymous tiger, captured in a thickening of leaves and oranges, seems to be upset, maybe even infuriated. In fact, the tiger unloads anger and disperses the negative thoughts that snooze in it.

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<sup>38</sup>T. Prower, *La Santa Muerte Magic and Mysticism of Death*, Illuminatio Publishing House, 2015, p.111-118

<sup>39</sup>T. Prower, *La Santa Muerte magic and Mysticism of Death*, Illuminatio Publishing House, 2015, p.166



Illustration 14. M.Parfieniuk, *Tiger among Oranges*, 120x160cm, oil on canvas, 2020

## A Rose

The symbol of the rose in the Catholic tradition is mainly associated with the Virgin Of Guadeloupe. It is said that it was because of her that a species of rose appeared in Mexico, which is naturally not found in this part of the world. When it comes to the energy power of roses, in Santa Muerte culture, they mainly have love-related properties, and their color is closely related to the energy we want to convey. Red roses are associated with erotic love, pink with romantic, white represent platonic love, and yellow ones symbolize love for life.<sup>40</sup> The painting, which was partly inspired by this story, is a painting of *Two Roses* or *Santa I* (il.15), which definitely strikes against the background of the rest of the painting presented by me and thematically more closely fits into the Humdrum series. The image shows a skeleton holding daggers in both hands. On two sides at the bottom there are red roses. The image at first glance may seem terrifying, but it is a metaphor for love up to the grave, one that is able to survive every attempt, even an attempt to die. It's quite pathetic for me, I prefer when a painting that makes people smile and embrace a thickening of colors comes from under my brush, but being in the period of working on *Humdrum*, I go beyond the "comfort zone" by making different painting attempts than before.

My ambivalent attitude towards the worship of Santa Muerte leads me to spread it out into the first parts, because I am not able to say unequivocally whether I am in favour or against believing in an agreement with death. The advanced eclecticism of Santa Muerte aesthetics is what I value very much - flowers, skeletons, colors, a multitude of textures, lights, these are the inspirations I have been drawing from for a very long time. Following the trail of truth – keep *your friends close and your enemies closer* – I am also of the opinion that the idea of taming Death as a kind of being makes some sense and performs a certain function. What I cannot agree with, or support is evil, cruelty and often consent to it. I am also concerned about the fact that the younger generation has been raised in a spirit of friendship with death, a sensitive subject that can be guide into trouble. However, I firmly believe that *Santeros* know what they are doing and use their growing belief in good intentions.

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<sup>40</sup>T. Prower, *La Santa Muerte Magic and Mysticism of Death*, Illuminatio Publishing House, 2015, p. 171



Illustration 15. M.Parfieniuk, *Two Roses/Santa I*, oil on canvas, 120x140cm, 2020





Illustration 16. M.Parfieniuk, *Santa II*, oil on canvas, 170x200cm, 2021



Illustration 17. M.Parfieniuk, *Santa III*, oil on canvas, 210x240cm, 2021

## Occult

It is very important for me to discuss comprehensively all the occult threads that inspire me. I realize that the issue of occultism in art is a subject that can be compared to a river, with endless references. It is important for me to discuss at least a few stories and images that have interested me, absorbed me, inspired me. I believe that this topic is worth an in-depth study, the development is a material for separate scientific work. I will introduce threads that have uniquely worked on my imagination, inspiring and pushing towards creation. I will also present the silhouettes of artists who captured occult motifs.



Illustration 18. J. MacNair, *Weeping Daemon*, <http://www.jonmacnair.com/gallery>

The term *occultism*, often synonymous with esoteria, is associated pejoratively with devils, Satans, spirits, and charlatans. It is often marginalized as blasphemy. Looking at occultism from a scientific point of view, it is a set of views and beliefs about the existence of unobservable beings, powers and possibilities hidden in the universe and man, with the potential to go beyond the limits of human, bodily possibilities. This is associated with beliefs, magical rituals and meditation practices. Inspiration with occultism is evident in the works of many artists, both centuries ago and today. Jon MacNair is my latest discovery. His works are filled with symbolism and occult meaning, but also made with incredible, admirable

precision. Jon MacNair very often uses symbolism, depicting figures of dogs, cats, devils. He also often portrays a one-eyed face or a character with multiple heads. *Weeping Deamon (il. 18)* is a work that shows a demon with three heads with his face on his chest. Why does the devil have three faces? First of all, the devil was the murderer and father of lies, from the very beginning.

You are of your father, the devil, and you want to fulfil your father's lusts. He was a murderer from the beginning and was not in truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks from himself because he is a liar and the father of lies.

John 8:44

Everyone knows the phrase that someone has two faces. For Dante, the devil was much worse than someone just two-faced. He imagined that the devil had three faces. In Christian beliefs, Lucifer's desire was to match God, to be revered as he was. The God of Catholics is known as the Holy Trinity composed of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, or "one God in the three Divine Persons." It seems that it is for this reason that Satan is often portrayed as having three faces, as if he wanted to mock God in every possible field. The Devil in Fra Angelico (*il. 19*), where we see pits in which sinners are crowded and subjected to all sorts of tortures, is particularly captivating. They are waiting to be devoured by Satan himself. The perspective here is stretched upwards so that each of the levels of hell is presented abstractly, like separate parts. I also really like the vision, some kind of playful depiction of the tormentors – devils – guardians of hell. I really like the illustrative quality of this performance, the way in which flames that heat the great gar are captured, in which sinners are cooked, the way Satan himself is portrayed, and the multiple interpretations of sinners' faces. I know that this picture is a terrifying vision of what awaits there at the bottom, yet I really find it likeable.



Illustration 19. Fra Angelico, *Satan, passage from the Final Judgment*, San Marco Museum, Florence

Iamblicus Chalcoïdēnsis



Illustration 20. Anonymous, *Magician Jamblich of De Mysteriis*, approx. 300. Ad

People have always been interested in phenomena that are not easy to explain. Astrology and magic have been present in everyday life since ancient times; magic has been used every day and helped to maintain life balance and predict the future. The magician, often in the form of a priest, was once a real profession and this was no problem. The typical magician has always stood out for his looks, outfits and attributes. I was very interested in the story of Jamblich, who was a magician and a priest at the same time. He lived around the 2nd century. In this illustration (il.20) he was captured by an unknown author from the XVIII century. The man is dressed in a voluminous robe like an ancient prophet. In the Middle Ages, witch costumes mimicked the costumes of biblical priests to emphasize their divine and magical character. Jamblich, suspected of practicing black magic, observes a rooster pecking a grain. In the right hand – the hand of wisdom – he holds the scroll, and the left hand – the hand of tenderness – rises to the heart. Here we witness a magical ritual - alectromancia (from Greek: magic). The ritual was that the temple rooster ate grains arranged in the form of letters in alphabetical order - just like on the *Ouija board*. From the grains remaining on the earth, a message, a keyword is read. In this case, it was *Theod*, which means that the rooster predicted that Theodor would become roman emperor in the 3rd century.<sup>41</sup> This story inspired the creation of *the painting Lost* (il.21) and *Humdrum IV* (il.22). *Humdrum IV* is the story of a rooster from the story of Jamblich, who somehow acts as a prophet in this story. The rooster in *Humdrum* drawing stands at the foot of the stairs that lead to the heavenly chicken coop. *Lost work*, on the other hand, depicts a rooster standing among exotic vegetation, as if he got lost in an alien environment for himself. As I mentioned, the inspiration for the painting was Jamblich's story; it is not very popular but happily came across it while reading the book *Occult in Art* by Owen S.Rachleff. This book is a collection of stories and images that treat occultism and mystical themes from different angles. One of the paintings that immediately caught my eye and interested me is the *Devil and St. Wolfgang* (il.23) by Michael Pacher, an Austrian painter and sculptor who also made the whole altar from the church of St. Wolfgang in the Austrian town of St. Wolfgang im Salzkammergut. This painting is actually a visualization of pure evil, the sale of the soul. The painting tells the story of a legend who proclaimed that a bishop wanted to build a church, but no one wanted to help him. One day on the street he passed Urian, as it later turned out, the devil in his own person. St. Wolfgang asked Urian if he wanted to help him build the church. Urian was unable to understand why anyone would ask the Devil for help, especially in constructing a sacred place. However, St. Wolfgang insisted and finally Urian agreed under one condition. The bishop was obliged to allow Urian to take the soul of the first person who entered the church. St. Wolfgang agreed, and the devil helped to build the church. When the temple was completed, the first pilgrim entered the church, and Uriel took his soul to hell. To his surprise, it turned out that Bishop Wolfgang dressed a wolf into pilgrims' costume. The devil was deceived. Legend has it that this is why wolves howl at night: they yearn for a soul they no longer have.<sup>42</sup> I find this legend very unique because I have the impression that each legend comes from some truth. From the original text of the legend, I did not find out why the devil's buttocks have their own face. I found the answer in the book *Compendium Maleficarum*, written by the Italian priest *Francesco Guazzo*. He claims that the ritual activities of Satanists, in addition to placing a secret mark on his forehead, included kissing devil's buttocks.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> O.S.Rachleff, *Occult in Art*, Warsaw, Penta Publishing House, 1993, p.21

<sup>42</sup> O.S.Rachleff, *Occult in Art*, Warsaw, Penta Publishing House, 1993, p.72

<sup>43</sup> F.M.Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, Dover, Dover Publications, 2021, p.136



Illustration 21. M. Parfieniuk, *Lost*, oil on canvas, 110x130cm, 2019



Illustration 22. M.Parfieniuk, *Humdrum IV*, promarker on paper, 100x70cm, 2019





Illustration 23. M. Pacher, *The Devil and St. Wolfgang*, from the Altar of St. Wolfgang, Alte Pinakothek, Munich

The aforementioned book *Occult in Art* also gave me the opportunity to look at artists I knew before from a different angle. One of them is *Francisco de Goya*, who abundantly used inspiration from a broadly understood occultism. I must admit that I was not interested in his paintings before, I got acquainted with his work by reading Rachleff's book. The image that impressed me, both in the symbolic and visual layer, is the *Great Goat (Sabbath)* - it comes from a series of works devoted to magic and the cult of Satan. The goat is, in this case, none other than Satan himself, at least when it comes to the meaning. The artist probably intended to show a man dressed as a goat. In the Basque country - Goya's homeland, an occult ritual during which one of the participants put on the skin of a goat, was typical. In Christianity, the goat symbolizes the condemned in the final judgment. In the case of the goat symbol as the epitome of the devil, it is very much like Satan with three faces. If the sheep is a symbol of Christ, the goat, in spite, will be a symbol of Satan. Goya's late paintings are the darkest and most mysterious of his achievements. A series of 14 paintings were made on his farm, called "Quinta del sordo" (The House of the Deaf), referring to his own deafness. It was here that he began to decorate the walls

of the living and dining room with dark colors disturbing themes that look like his worst nightmares. These works, made in oil directly on the plaster, were titled *Pinturas Negras* or *The Black Paintings*. In *Black Paintings*, Goya used a grotesque to illustrate his subjects. Witches, demons and goblins are metaphors of violence, ignorance, blind superstition, violence, despair, evil and desire. It is a pessimistic statement of an artist who is deaf, disillusioned with society and struggling with himself. Goya did not practice magic or occult rituals. Black images seem to be a pure product of his extraordinary imagination, but the viewer cannot resist the impression that there is something mysterious hidden in those images.

In the next part of this chapter, I would like to describe more broadly some of the most important drawings from the series especially close to my heart.

### *HUMDRUM I*

The drawing of *HUMDRUM I* (il.24) is obvious. Many viewers describe it as brutal. At first, this was supposed to be the nature of the work. I wanted to address the aforementioned *Weltschmerz* topic directly, illustrating what affects me most – the prevalence of harm. *Danse Macabre's* aforementioned thread is also depicted here as the *Black Reaper*, carelessly seated on a headless cow, throwing red sun like a basketball. There are no hidden contexts here – the pure, colorful brutality of life. I have been thinking about the color of the sky for a very long time, knowing that it will be the guiding color stimulus. Orange is generally associated with energy, vitality, and is considered one of the most joyful colors. The reasons why I chose orange in this case are two. Orange is considered to match any color– this is a subjective feeling of the recipient, but I personally agree with this statement. At the beginning of the creation of the cycle, I chose colors very carefully, over time I gained confidence in my own color intuition. The second reason is that orange is often a warning color. It is used wherever we want to distinguish an item, often on work vests, labels. In this case, I wanted the orange to conquer other colors, without taking their own character away. I also wanted the viewer to have the impression of apparent joy when they first interact with the drawing, which, upon closer inspection of the subject, turns into a feeling of unrest.



Illustration 24. M. Parfieniuk, *Humdrum I*, promarker on paper, 100x70cm, 2019

## HUMDRUM II

*Humdrum II* (il.25) is a work that is of particular importance to me, mainly because it was the beginning of my love for the new technique. The composition, arrangement and layout of the characters was directly inspired by the 18th century *memento mori* graphic by an anonymous artist. Below I present a reproduction of the aforementioned graphic. What captivated me in this graphic was the interaction of two skeletons, chit-chatting over a tangle of human bodies. It seems as if the skeletons are taking their daily toll and packing the corpses into a hellish sack, the depth of which is the abyss of hell. This graphic is a clear representation of the vanity of human being in the face of higher force. In this case, the skeletons are like employees, joking about their daily duties. *Memento Mori* work is not a picture of horror for me, but a playful comment. *Humdrum II* is therefore the pastiche of an eighteenth-century work. I did not want to include in my works the image of a dead body or illness; hence my "hell's bag" is not so hellish, it is empty, that day death took a day off.



Illustration 25. M.Parfieniuk, *Humdrum II*, promarker on paper, 100x70cm, 2019

### HUMDRUM III

*Humdrum III* (il.26) is a drawing inspired directly from the belief that the cosmos has power over us, guides our fate and gives us guidance. *Vitae* - life and *arte* - art, are inseparable currents for me, which guide the existence of the artist. *Superius*, which literally means the *highest*, is for me a metaphor for what my driving force is, what makes daily functioning possible. For me, *Superius* is a metaphor for creativity, but it can have a different meaning for everyone. The words *Tangle* and *Crap* are a direct expression of the fact that to some extent our world is ruled by chaos. In my chaos, however, there is order; this chaos I try to turn into something positive. Throughout the *Humdrum series* there is a similar color scheme, which is characterized by extinguished and at the same time vivid shades: geranium, mustard, lichen, rosewood, bamboo, Indian ocean.



Illustration 26. M.Parfieniuk, *Humdrum III*, promarker on paper, 100x70cm, 2019

Drawing *Humdrum VII* (il.27) occupies a high place on the podium in my favorite drawings. It is a kind of travesty (if you can say so about an artwork) of a tattoo made by my good acquaintance Eugene Shen. I am a happy owner of this tattoo. I like it so much that I could not resist the temptation to present this project on my own. The red cat carefreely plays with an eye, which in this edition is a symbolic eye of providence. The symbolism of the eye is very interesting and has long been a source of inspiration for me. The eye is often portrayed in art as a majestic, all-seeing eye. The eye on *Humdrum VII* is surrounded by rays to symbolize its power. No matter what religion we are, we can match symbolism to our own beliefs. In my opinion, it is the all-seeing Eye of Destiny that closely follows us, making sure that we complete what is written to us. The cat carelessly plays with it and, regardless of the majesty, treats it like a cluster of yarn. It's aimed at all those who take life too seriously. I would also like to mention on this occasion the Cat itself, whose figure hides a very extensive symbolism. A cat can symbolize anything. Studies on the symbolism of the cat meet many different paths, this symbolism is so extensive and so unspecified that I decided to stick to my own definition of a cat, as a largely mysterious, vigilant, fun-like. Three things speak directly to me about cats, as I myself own a cat and consider many of these things to be true. The first thing that is said about cats is that they are the owners of nine lives. For this reason, cats are also a symbol of rebirth and resurrection. Cats are supped and clever, often coming out of strange oppressions as if they were spineless. Cats are said to be able to see more than humans, seeing movements in other parallel dimensions. You often see cats staring at the darkness with curiosity, as if they saw something there. The last thing that is often said about cats is the ability to sense diseases and cure them with the warmth of their body. All this makes the figure of a cat incredibly enigmatic.





Illustration 27. M.Parfieniuk, *Humdrum VII / Cat of Destiny*, 50x70cm, promarker on paper, 2020

## Color Dictionary

In the short section below, I would like to list the colors I use most often, describe their history, meaning, how they affect me and how, in my opinion, they work best. When it comes to oil painting, my palette is stable, I use the most common colors of selected manufacturers. The path to a conscious selection of optimal mating quality and color products has been a long process of trials and errors.

### Chromium Yellow

Chromium yellow in my palette occupies a special place. It is a color with a warm temperature, it blends perfectly with almost any other color, giving non-obvious combinations. I also really like it because it works well as an addition to other colors. Its admixture makes the colors break for a gorgeous, sunny look. Chromium yellow naturally occurs as crocoite, a mineral mined at the Beresof gold mine in Siberia. This yellow tends to brown over time, which can be seen in Van Gogh sunflowers, for example.<sup>44</sup> Depending on what kind of yellow we use, dark or light, the results will, of course, be different. However, in both cases, the diluted color will acquire a new, amazing quality. After many attempts, I consider Cadmium *yellow pale hue* and Cadmium *yellow hue of the English company Winsor&Newton* to be the best. These paints, although are a studio product, work very well. Medium covering, but very efficient, they give a color satisfactory especially in the shade cadmium *yellow hue*. This color gives great shades in the following combinations:

$\frac{1}{4}$  Magenta +  $\frac{2}{4}$  Cadmium yellow hue +  $\frac{1}{4}$  Cadmium red

It is a beautiful shade of red, which balances on the border between orange, red and pink. The addition of Magenta makes this color non-obvious, slightly extinguished; it has a violet element in it, which prevails towards pink.

$\frac{8}{10}$  Turquoise blue +  $\frac{1}{10}$  Cadmium yellow hue +  $\frac{1}{10}$  Zinc White

From such combination comes a gently falling into the green shade of turquoise. The addition of a little white makes this color not strictly green but reflects the color of pure Caribbean water.

As an oil paint, chromium yellow has a similar quality in most manufacturers when it comes to other media, such as markers, there is no such color. To get a similar color I use shades (Graph'it): 1190 Canary, 1250 Honey. (Promarker): Sunflower, Canary, Gold.

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<sup>44</sup> K.St Clair, *Secret Lives of Color*, London, John Murray Publishers, 2016, p.78-79



Illustration 28. M.Parfieniuk, *Yellow Parrot*, oil on canvas, 100x140cm, 2019

## Verdigris

Turquoise is usually taken as green, but in my opinion, it deserves to be treated like blue. Assuming that the greens are a mixture of blues and yellows, the turquoise color contains an overwhelming amount of blue. *Verdigris* is a color that can be classified as turquoise, and best of all, its most beautiful shades occur naturally. Verdigris is the colloquial name of a pigment which is formed by exposure to air or seawater of copper, brass or bronze. An effective product of such a reaction is *patina*, or alkaline copper carbonate. An example that shows how beautiful Verdigris is the Statue of Liberty in New York. In oil paints, I liked the <sup>45</sup>*Turquoise blue shade from Talens* in the artistic version. Beautiful shade, heavily transparent, we will get diluting *Phtalo turquoise blue* of the same company. These shades are also very good in quality in the studio version. Turquoise tones are some of my favorite shades when it comes to artistic markers, because they are saturated and varied, which gives a wide range of possibilities, both temperature and brightness. Favorite shades are (Graph'it): 8120 Bamboo, 7240 Turquoise, 7280 Peacock, 7290 Petroleum, 7250 Mint and 8125 Jade. (Promarker): Turquoise, Verdigris, Petrol blue, Duck Egg, Marine.

## Violet

Maria Rzepińska writes that "while red, as it comes closer to the viewer, the violet has inclinations to dismiss, violet is red absorbed by blue. Violet does not accept compromises, the red contained in violet must be cool, otherwise under no circumstances will it come to terms with the cold blue. Violet is therefore dormant red, sick, extinguished, sad. It can be a color of mourning. Orange and violet are, contrary to appearances, very close to each other, they arise from the mixing of red with yellows or blue."<sup>46</sup> Violet is an amazing color, effectively extinguishes colors without taking them into luminousness. Just a minimum amount of it to suppress each color properly. The violets I appreciate most are magenta and Tyrolean purple, which was once one of the most expensive pigments, and purple was reserved for the most powerful.<sup>47</sup> Magenta, on the other hand, is a rather young color, artificially obtained from aniline in 1859.<sup>48</sup> Magenta is a determined violet, which character often escapes towards pink. It is often possible to meet with the attention that magenta is not violet, but very dark pink. I really like the use of magenta in oil painting, because it reacts differently with each paint. Even if we think that mixing orange with a little magenta will produce a certain result, we are never sure how the combination will work with paints from different manufacturers. For example, the magenta of the cheaper Phoenix company is darker than magenta by Winsor&Newton. We have a lot of room for manoeuvre when it comes to marker violets: (Graph'it): 6160 Plum, 6170 Bougainvillea, 5180 Margaux, 6180 Iris and 6175 Amethyst. In the case of this company and this series, the color of Magenta would be included in the roses, although it shows a hint of purple. (Promarker): Maroon, Mulberry, Plum, Aubergine, Violet, Bluebell and Prussian. In this case, Magenta also appears to me as a shade of pink.

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<sup>45</sup> K.St Clair, *Secret Lives of Color*, London, John Murray Publishers, 2016, p.214-216

<sup>46</sup> M.Rzepińska, *History of Color in the History of European Painting*, Cracow, Literary Publishing House, 1983, p.48

<sup>47</sup> O.S.Rachleff, *Occult in Art*, Warsaw, Penta Publishing House, 1993, p.72

<sup>48</sup> K.St Clair, *Secret Lives of Color*, London, John Murray Publishers, 2016, p. 167-168

## Indigo and Ultramarine

"In 1882, the British Museum bought an item that took 11 decades to understand. This artefact is a tiny clay plaque, a square with a side of about 7 cm and about 2 cm thick, covered with fine text written in Babylon between 600 and 500 BC. In the early 1990s, when scientists finally completed the translation, they discovered that what had been inscribed in still moist clay thousands of years earlier was a collection of instructions for dyeing wool a dark blue. Although this was not mentioned, the description of the process - with all its repetition - indicates that the dye was indigo."<sup>49</sup> Indigo is a fascinating color. Although it is not my favorite, I appreciate its royal color very much. This color is synonymous of wisdom, justice and honesty. Surrounding yourself with this color stimulates thought and creative processes. It is often said about the existence of indigo personality, which is characterized by order, lack of acceptance of chaos. This color is also intriguing because it speaks of the existence of indigo children, beings who are born under a human form and are chosen to make the world a better place. They are to be endowed with above-average empathy and exceptional skills. When it comes to using indigo, it reminds me very strongly of Prussian blue, it is ideal for diluting and building black. I do not use this color in oil technique, I use mainly Prussian blue and ultramarine. However, I cannot walk past this color without noticing it, it always attracts my attention. Very often, I reach for this shade using markers: indigo blue in promarker and slightly brighter in Graph'it 7080 Denim. Ultramarine, in turn, is a color that is widely used in painting. This is, in my opinion, the most beautiful shade of blue. Ultramarine discovers its beauty after mixing with white, then we see in it the parts of purple. The distinction between these three colors, Prussian blue, ultramarine and indigo is often possible only when trying to blend with white. The blend I really like is ultramarine with magenta and white. The dissentiants and combination of these two enigmatic colors is always breathtaking, because the final product is different depending on the paints used and their pigmentation. My recipe for the perfect mixture, thanks to which we get a beautiful violet, approaching towards blue:

2/4 Magenta + 1/4 Ultramarine + 1/4 Zinc white

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<sup>49</sup> K.St Clair, *Secret Lives of Color*, London, John Murray Publishers, 2016, p.189

## IV. PAINTING

In previous parts, I described in detail the genesis of my inspirations, iconography and the themes that drive my work, as well as the means I use. I am a fairly productive and hardworking artist; I live according to the principle of *nulla dies sine linea*.<sup>50</sup> I try to use every moment productively using available techniques and media. For this reason, I liked the drawing with a marker as it is easy to transport, light and not demanding a studio space. However, it is the canvas and the oil medium that are the best form of expression for me, every possible moment I use for painting and spend in the painting studio. I would like to bring closer in and describe some of the images that I feel are crucial. Some of them directly refer to the themes and inspirations that I described in previous chapters. Some also present other aesthetic values, which are the result of the continuous process of searching. I constantly try to look for new inspirations, observe other artists and discuss non-obvious topics.

### *Cover the Mirrors*

*Cover the mirrors* (il.29) is a painting that was made in oil technique on canvas. It was directly inspired by the aesthetics of *Ouija board*. *The Ouija Board* is a plaque that is intended to enable contact with the world of the dead. The board has the alphabet and numbers 0 to 9 printed on. Using the attached indicator, ghosts are supposed to indicate consecutive numbers or letters by answering questions asked by the players. Currently, board can be purchased as a game, but its use is controversial because, according to people who believe in afterlife, the use of the game by inappropriate people can bring the threat of unwanted demons. I do not question the authenticity or effectiveness of that board. Nor am I claiming that the use of such items can have a real effect. I was inspired by the aesthetic side of the object and the stories associated with it, especially one I heard from some person. This person told me about the superstition that has prevailed in her family for generations, and it concerns an object that each of us has in his house – mirrors. According to this message, mirrors are a mysterious object that provide a transition to another parallel world. When a human die and his body is in the house, all mirrors within the household must be covered. This treatment is intended to prevent the soul from moving to another dimension and getting stuck in there. The second point that has been passed to me is that by putting a lit candle in front of the mirror, we call creatures that can enter the world of the living using a mirror as a kind of portal. In this case, the lit candle acts as a kind of *lighthouse* that lures beings from the world of the dead. These two heard stories and the aesthetics of *the Ouija board* led to the creation of the image *Cover the Mirrors* – a kind of advice, a warning to people practicing playing with the board. Because the story freezes the blood in my veins, I wanted the demon depicted in the painting not to be frightening and to lead to a distanced view of the subject of the after-life.

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<sup>50</sup> Lac. Not a day without a dash



Illustration 29. M.Parfieniuk, *Cover the Mirrors*, oil on canvas, 110x130cm, 2020

### *Monkey Waiting to be Devoured by a Tiger*

*A monkey waiting to be devoured by a tiger* (il.30) is a painting that made me face a great format for the first time. The work measures 1.7x2m and is made in oil technique on canvas. The first thing that catches the eye when we look at the image is the multitude of details and warm coloring. I wanted it to bring the audience into a mood that evokes exoticism and the warmth of the hot days of summer. The scene depicted is like from *National Geographic*. Natural selection of merciless nature. The scene is accompanied by birds, watchful observers, who, because of having wings, do not have to fear of being devoured. The whole drama is enclosed in a colorful jungle scenery. The multitude of details and the large format allow for an endless journey of interpretation and reflection. The first impression is the impact of a color typhoon, the image expresses life, dynamics and joy, despite the fact that the image depicts a monkey waiting to be devoured. But we can never be sure how the story will end.





Illustration 30. M.Parfieniuk, *Monkey Waiting to be Devoured by a Tiger*, oil on canvas, 170x200cm, 2020

## *Red & Lonesome*

The figure of a tiger is often present in my work. The fascination with this theme began when I first saw Henri Rousseau's painting *The Dream*, in which an enigmatic tiger character emerge from the thick of the jungle. I used to be very afraid of making animal subjects, I painted only animals that had a certain structure. I was afraid of painting animals with fur, thinking that the texture must be made perfectly, hair by hair. The image of *The Dream* put the animal's character in a new light for me. I saw that the animal figure could be captured differently, that the limitation in interpretation is only imagination, and the lack of realistic devotion can give a positive effect. Since then, I've become braver about themes, starting with parrots, monkeys and tigers. One of the last paintings I painted in 2020 was *Red & Lonesome* (il.31), a two-meter painting depicting a great red tiger. The title of the image was taken from the title of the studio album *The Rolling Stones, Blue & Lonesome*. The title was given spontaneously because at the time of completion of my painting, the aforementioned album of The Rolling Stones was on the speakers. It refers to the fact that sometimes we all feel lonely. The presented tiger reacts to loneliness with a menacing face. Aggression is a common reaction to stressful situations. The image is a kind of representation of how I perceive people who respond with aggression to trivial difficulties at times.



Illustration 31. M. Parfieniuk, *Red & Lonesome*, oil on canvas, 170x200cm, 2020

## V. SUMMARY

"All colors smell of turpentine and oily linseed oil embossed from pale blue flax fields. Local color from colored fields. Cricket bat painted with a brush. Death revolves around a brush – pig bristles, squirrel, sobole – and a canvas prepared with rabbit skin glue. I learned to use color. But I never understood it. I collected small boxes of watercolors in sticky silver packaging, but never opened them. Scarlet lake. Bone black. Winsor blue. New gumigutta. I used professional oil paints. On holidays, I travelled to London, to Brodie and Middleton, paint sellers from Covent Garden who made cheap canned oil paints. "Green from Brunswick" was my favorite of the cheapest. Cynober, *tres cher mes amis, tres cher*. Yes, these reds cost us a lot. The colors of my paintings depended on the cost. On the glass palette I mixed colors that went beyond the Winsor table or Isaac Newton's circle – nameless colors... We've given some of them their own names... Goose turd green or vomit. What is pure color?"<sup>51</sup>This is a quote from *chroma. The Book of Color* by Derek Jarman, one of Britain's most outstanding filmmakers. This book is a collection of thoughts about colors, feelings, full of quotes that probably inspired the author. There we find quotes from Wittgenstein, Goethe, Vasari, Dante, Kandinsky; all authors whose works I also have in my private library. This passage touched me because I can, to some extent, equate with it. I perfectly understand the desire to collect watercolors, I also like to collect them. why? I do not know. I don't use watercolors in my work, although I would love to start. I see beauty in small colored watercolor cubes. Small cubes in which the power of color is enclosed. Both the passion for art accessories and the smell of art can be understood only by people who have spent a sufficient amount of time over easel. The smell of art is unique, it is the smell of raw wood, turpentine and paint, although slightly suffocating, the smell is one of those that I mention with exceptional affection and tenderness. Often, when I enter the studio, I am struck by a musty cloud of studio air – I love it, it is the smell of art and work, which is life at the same time. The three-year PhD period was the most productive period of my artistic life. This dissertation is a summary of those three years and the work that was born during this period. For me, doctoral studies were also an indispensable opportunity to meet inspiring people, deepen topics that are important to me and broaden my horizons, both artistic and thought. Looking at the development of my interests from a distance, I can say that I am constantly developing what I was interested in years ago – the issue of color. During the matura exam at the age of 19 I took up the topic of color inspiration in literature and art. From the beginning by going to the University I put on the color and variety of topics discussed. My Master thesis was titled *Color as the driving force behind creative thinking. Chroma Haze – subjective perception of color* is therefore a continuation of my search for color inspiration. *Chroma Haze* is a vision that gives rise to new, that pushes me to the act of creation. I also mention an excerpt from Jarman's book because it refers to my thoughts on my work. I definitely prefer to paint and speak with a picture rather than words. Writing this work was a challenge for me, I didn't know how I could tell all my inspirations and interests in a coherent and clear way. Every day, my life and artistic choices are governed by chaos. I'm trying to sort this chaos out. Although I appreciate the intuitiveness of creation, I notice dependencies, draw conclusions and make plans for the next works.

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<sup>51</sup> D. Jarman, *Chroma Book of Color*, Silesia Film Institution, Katowice, 2017, p. 22

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