

DISSERTATION REVIEW

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Institution to which it belongs: Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Barcelona Professional

category: Full Professor

-Details of the doctoral student

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Doctoral School

Name and surnames of the supervisor: Małgorzata Kaczmarśka

Title of the thesis: BLOOM. Art Therapy Research in an Artistic Approach to the Creativity of Art Through Sensory Touch

Language(s) of writing the thesis: English and Polish

Language(s) of defending the thesis: English

a) Artistic work

The different pieces and artistic installations presented demonstrate great quality in terms of the adequacy between concept and materialization. The relationship with the materials is careful, studied and experienced. The content shows the ability of building a story in which personal memory and cultural tradition are perfectly related to the capacity to generate synergies with new contexts. The doctoral student generates a process of personal creation with a clear and coherent objective to be applied in therapies through art (Art-therapy). This entire process of involvement with the eminently practical and therapeutic purpose of her proposal is perfectly justified and elaborated in the thesis. However, her artistic proposal has an entity added to this functionality, its artistic and aesthetic dimension excels beyond the practical application and the somatic interrelation with the viewer/user for therapeutic and healing purposes.

With Nocturnal Urban the author demonstrates a great mastery of the use of the material and its metaphorical capacity, creating a piece of great beauty. Likewise in Escape Playground, Flux Esfèric I-IV, The Transparency of Joyfulness, the book with ancient Greek patterns of ceramics and its entire exhibition installation, and Yam.

I must highlight the beautiful relationship of coherence that occurs between all these works. The mastery that the author has achieved in terms of the relationship with the exhibition space and the assembly of the work is evident in The Transparency of Joyfulness. In the book with ancient Greek patterns of ceramics the author shows us a more intimate and synthetic capacity, fleeing the spectacularity of other pieces. The transformation of the work into a book does not take away from the fact that in its exhibition quality. The author expands the work by showing the parts of the process such as the woodcut matrices, which turns it into a broader work. Thus, a discreet piece like the book ends up being a strong and very well-told exhibition where the entire work process makes sense. It is in works like this that the author demonstrates the mastery of their own exhibition and the construction of the artistic story. I believe that the work deserves a title, just as she has done with the other pieces.

The work is shown to us in a process of growth, where the author searches, tests, reflects, through workshops. Where she involves various users to give meaning and content to a way of doing and relating to the materials. The construction of meaning is done through a coherent research journey. The author wants to understand her artistic production as a collective fact, where interaction helps build and define the final presence.

b) description of the work (written part)

The thesis is very well structured. It perfectly defines objectives and intentions. The order of the index follows a temporal process, describing the different workshops and parts of the research process, ending with the specific works produced and exhibited.

The author's proposal, as indicated in the subtitle Research in Art Therapy, is an artistic approach to the creativity of art through sensory touch, placing the emphasis on Art Therapy.

The author insists on her unwavering adherence to the proposals of Positive Psychology and the Perma method as the only way of research and application in Art Therapy. Her commitment is based on the curative purpose she pursues. However, I miss an alternative and critical vision with this positivism, especially considering that there are authors who have clearly expressed a critical attitude towards Positive Psychology and the Perma method.

This positivist approach clearly contrasts with artists who have developed their research from trauma and pain. Examples that the author cites are how pioneers Frida Kahlo and Louise Bourgeois built their work on their own pain, investigated it and talked about it, often through metaphors and analogies, to accept it and channel it through art. They believed in the need to face "negative" emotions such as wounding, pain and trauma. I believe that the author could better develop the choice of positive psychology from its values and also criticisms.

The works that make up Bloom are much more interesting and relevant in all the research work than to mention them only as the main objective of its immersive and interactive character.

In the first chapter it defines, situates and contextualizes what is understood by Art Therapy through the reference authors. The analysis is fair and sufficient. The research on the sense of touch, its importance and implications as well as the authors cited is very interesting.

The second chapter situates the relationship between Art Therapy and the artists who practice it. As for the pioneering artists in the treatment of trauma and pain, the treatment they provide is excessively superficial and stereotyped. Despite being very well known, the authors cited deserve a more contextualized treatment in the research using some of their works. I miss Asian artists among the pioneers and delving into specific works, as well as images of the works. Chapter 2.2 is very interesting due to the contextualization it makes with the present moment of art and for the artists it cites and all the research it does on a very current option that bets on a more collective sense of art. There could also be images of some works. Throughout the third chapter the author describes the work carried out in the various workshops. A necessary chapter for the development of the research and the verification of the work process that has led her to the final pieces. I also miss better images of different moments of the workshops.

Chapter 4 is where the author talks to us about her works and their installation and exhibition. Here the thesis excels. All the previous research makes sense, everything comes together and is concentrated in the different pieces she has developed.

The author demonstrates a very good ability to relate the artistic process to the materials, techniques and concepts used, as well as to her personal experiences and memory. Each of the works presented is perfectly contextualized in the whole of the thesis and the well-described work process. I miss the reference to a specific artist and work. The photographic images of pieces like Nocturnal Urban could be improved. We are aware that the physical presence of these works is much better than their images. In Escape Playground, the author talks about escaping emotional pain and creating a welcoming space of peace. I raise my concern about this idea of escaping instead of channeling, recognizing and welcoming pain, in line with the reflection on pain of a series of artists mentioned initially.

With The Transparency of Joyfulness, the relationship she makes with architecture, especially with Luis Barragan and the quotes from J. Pallasmaa, is very accurate.

Chapter 4.3 is especially interesting. Wood engraving in relief. The entire work process and the relationships that have been created from the book Architectures of Healing: Cure through Sleep, Touch, and Travel, are very well described.

In their conclusion, the author is very aware of the research developed and the possibilities of future paths: "Looking ahead, this research opens several avenues for future explorations. The integration of sensory art in therapeutic contexts such as community care, trauma recovery, and education could be expanded through interdisciplinary collaboration." "BLOOM reflects not only my own transformation, but also the broader potential of sensory art to support healing, awareness, and meaningful human connection."

The bibliography is extensive and up-to-date. I recommend Clare Hunter's study, Threads of Life. A History of the World Through the Eye of a Needle, 2020, because despite focusing on textiles, it talks about several cases where collective creation has exerted powerful healing effects.

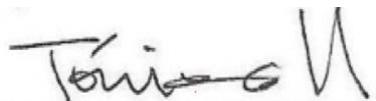
c) previous artistic, didactic and organizational achievements

The doctoral student demonstrates that she has a sufficiently relevant CV in terms of artistic achievements such as collective and individual exhibitions, as well as didactic achievements such as the diverse workshops developed over several years.

Conclusion

Taking into account the excellence of the artistic production and theoretical research developed at BLOOM. Research in Art Therapy in an artistic approach to the creativity of art through sensory touch by Saitip Majewska, and after my analysis of the doctoral thesis and creative production, as well as professional practice in the field of art, **I strongly recommend that the academic degree of doctor in the field of art, in the discipline of fine arts and art conservation, be awarded to Saitip Majewska. I request the honorary distinction**

January 14, 2026



Antonia Coll Florit