

A WOMAN OF THIRTY. TO BE CONTINUED.

I begin my doctoral dissertation by justifying the choice of the subject matter of “A Woman of Thirty...” and by discussing the topic of the so-called midlife crisis. My deliberations are founded on the literature on the subject and my own experiences and reflections. In them, I explain the meaning of the phrase “to be continued” featured in the title. I then proceed to discuss the aspects I have chosen in two chapters, which are:

CHAPTER I:

A WOMAN — FORM, SUBSTANCE AND CONTENT

1. Aristotle’s theory of form, matter and substance
2. Freud’s personality structure
3. A woman as the result of my reflections

CHAPTER II:

ME — A WOMAN

1. A non-obvious self-portrait
2. My personal colour code
3. The importance of the sketchbook in my personal artistic work

The first chapter contains the thoughts and scientific theories that became my starting point for creating an ideological and artistic representation of a contemporary woman of thirty. Drawing on the literature and subjective perceptions of reality, I construct an image of this woman and explain the ways in which the philosophical and psychological thought has influenced the form of the series of graphic works entitled “A Woman of Thirty. To be Continued.” I also discuss the origin of their titles, as each artwork begins with the words “When...”. I define the moment of creating that idea and my personal manner of reinterpreting the meaning of the word “When” in the titles. I close the chapter by discussing the technological aspects of bringing to life the works forming part of my doctoral thesis.

Chapter two has the character of a personal journey. It identifies my influences and my creative fascinations. I use literature and my own perception of the world to explain the concept of a non-obvious self-portrait and the role of colour in my graphic works and my creative work in general. I bring the chapter to a close by discussing the importance of the sketchbook in my work and describing the manner in which quick sketches allowed me to create the works presented.

As a woman of thirty, I ask myself questions and seek answers. Therefore, the subject matter takes on the form of a personal journey into the past, evaluations of the present and deliberations about the future. In the subjective approach to an age boundary, I look for broader social entrenchment. My approach, however, is personal. I look back on past events, recreate the emotions and thoughts that once accompanied me and express them through art from a present-day perspective. I engage in the process of reinterpretation. To me, a thirty-year-old woman is a reflection of a certain invisible boundary between what she dreams of, what she desires and what she will achieve and the awareness of her possibilities. The age of thirty is enough to look back and draw conclusions but, at the same time, not enough to consciously build a future. I perceive these lines as a summing-up moment. "The midlife crisis is associated with a sense of unfulfillment linked to the recognition of a failure to bring to life certain aspects of oneself. Often, it is a time of taking stock of what has been achieved so far and confronting these accomplishments with our earlier plans. Concurrently, we are also required to set ourselves goals for the second half of our lives."¹ It is a process of intense and difficult transitions. It relates to notions we have of ourselves, values we believe in and tasks we challenge ourselves with. The concept of the "midlife crisis" is general in nature. I refer to it in my artistic work because it has touched me personally. Therefore, it is a presentation of this sociocultural phenomenon as seen through my eyes and from my personal viewpoint.

"A Woman of Thirty. To be Continued" is a series of thirty graphic works completed as part of my doctoral project. I created them in two sizes, i.e. 140 cm by 90 cm and 118 cm by 78 cm (irregular shape). In some cases, I place them in groups to reinforce their statement – their overall dimension then grows to 280 cm by 90 cm. The starting point for their creation were

1 A. Kałużna-Wielobób, *Kryzys połowy życia u kobiet – specyfika, problematyka i formy pomocy*, Kraków, 2014, s. 52-53, https://rep.up.krakow.pl/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11716/839/Kryzys_polowy_zycia_kobiety.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y, (tryb dostępu 2022).

the quick sketches I made. This resulted in a sketchbook with a format of 15.5 cm by 19.5 cm, which contains around 70 drawings and forms an integral part of the series created as part of my doctoral thesis. I supplemented the entirety with proofs enclosed within an artistic book, with a format of 15.5 cm by 19.5 cm.

I chose a larger size for my artwork so that it draws the viewer inside. In my work, I used planographic, intaglio and relief printing processes. As the plates themselves are interesting objects of a sculptural nature, some of them have been included in the final presentation. I find their value equivalent to that of the graphic print they created. No traditional materials were used. The most important criterion in their choice was the type of mark left on the surface of the paper. Relief plates are often examples of collagraphy as well as surfaces of varying textures shaped into the form of my choosing. When preparing my future artworks, I was relying on both previously tried-and-tested methods and chance, treating it as a natural phenomenon in the creative process. Intaglio plates were made of paper prepared according to my intentions. Often, the plate was torn out in order to achieve an irregular and jittery edge, blending naturally with the background. Planographic plates mostly consist of paper and foil. My work also often features a diverse use of stencils. Stencils can serve both as plates for printing flat surfaces with solid colours and shapes that are filled with ink. The structure, like the colour, correlates with my notion of the topic I refer to. Colour plays a crucial role in my work. I derive joy from mixing colours, juxtaposing and layering them. Therefore, my work is multicoloured. An interesting challenge for me as an artist was the search for a suitable graphic equivalent to illustrate and transfer my sketches to a larger format. This process entailed a series of explorations of a technological nature.

The form of my graphic representations is non-obvious and, therefore, ambiguous. My work is endowed with multiple meanings so that it can offer the option of subjective perception and have a general nature – albeit filtered through my unique experiences and imaginings. I am a narrator and a guide whose outlook is subjective. This is my personal path to self-discovery and self-awareness. I accept that I, as a woman – a woman of thirty and a creator – have the right to look at this aspect in a personal way that is inherent only to me.