



# **In Process: "Macecha" installation as a case study**

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## ABSTRACT

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In this written part of my Bachelor's Thesis, I present a report of my artistic part of the Thesis; the working process, experiments and continuous development of my latest art piece, "Macecha", an installation that I developed for a year starting on my student exchange in Holland in the spring 2018. In "Macecha" (stepmother in Czech) I reflect on stepparenting and honest feelings in discussions of the life in a new family. When telling about the working process I share the details of expanding a traditional oil painting into an installation made of recycled materials with a video projection and a sculpture of a spider.

In order to tell about the starting points of the work I also elaborate my roots and my inspirations, which are Slavic tales, ballads, horror and stop-motion animation. I introduce the traditional Czech collection of ballads by Karel Jaromír Erben "Kytice" (Wild Flowers) and the film with the same title by director F.A. Brabec and produced by Jakobisko film. I also discuss the artworks of the artists: Louise Bourgeois, Benjamin Von Wong, Pekka & Teija Isorättyä and Kaisa Salmi as well as the animations by Katariina Lillqvist and Jan Švankmajer who use similar methods and materials as I do.

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Key words: Environment, Recycled materials, Stepparents, Horror, Ballads, Fairytales, Czech, Stop-motion animation, Sculpture, Painting, Installation

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

In this written part of my Bachelor's Thesis, I present a report of my artistic part of the Thesis; the working process, experiments and continuous development of my latest art piece, "Macecha", an installation that I have been developing for a year starting on my student exchange in Holland in the spring 2018.

The way we can change the world is to take all the issues personally, whatever they are. Recycling is a personal choice, or it is supposed to be for everyone, that is why I decided to work mostly with trash as a material to reflect on environmental issues, using my own household waste. With that, I can become aware of my own trash and actually see, how much trash is produced just by a small family. With my pieces, I want to show the importance of the recycling, the possibilities to get crafty with the waste and show the fact that we all need to start from ourselves to save the planet, our home. This is true today and also in the future and it is not the only one act we need to take.

My way of working and my inspirations of the contents go far back to my childhood. I grew up in an art environment, with my mother and stepfather working on the classical stop-motion and drawn animations. Czech tales and ballads I grew up on have dark themes with a black humor twist and I was always inspired by horror, fantasy and surrealistic movies, for example movies like "Clash of the Titans" from the year 1981 by the director Desmond Davis, that include some of the artist and stop-motion animation pioneer Ray Harryhausen's creatures were one of my favorites (Harryhausen, Davis 1981). I feel that the tales I grew up on were true life stories even when including paranormal events, making me more prepared for the future to come.

The themes I work with are my personal stories. They are the issues, that all of us know. My pieces are like self-portraits, I work with the themes that are really close to me personally since in my opinion making art about something that is not that close to my life doesn't make sense. I put myself wholly into my pieces and show the issue in the most honest way possible, with black humor twists. For the "Macecha" art piece I present character of a female spider who is a tired stepparent, someone who tries to fit in with the new family, creates a home with all her love, takes care of someone else's child as her own and committing to the situation.

I use spiders quite often in my artworks. I used the character of a spider for this piece because the spiders are misunderstood creatures just like stepparents. Spider in this piece is a motherly figure, a protector. "Macecha" (stepmother in Czech) is an installation work that has an oil painting in three parts and a sculpture of a spider as the focal points. In addition to those there is a video projection. The installation is made mostly out of used materials and household waste, collected at home, reflecting on environmental issues. The "Macecha" installation was presented in spring 2019 at Gallery Himmelblau, Tampere in the Blind Spot degree show.

I also discuss the artworks of the artists: Louise Bourgeois, Benjamin Von Wong, Pekka & Teija Isorättyä and Kaisa Salmi as well as the animations by

Katariina Lillqvist and Jan Švankmajer who use the similar methods and materials as I do.

## 2 TRASH AS AN MATERIAL

Since my childhood, it was normal in our family to recycle, use less plastic and other packaging. I continue doing that as an adult in my own home and I realize, that there are many people who don't recycle and even countries, where recycling is not that common. Sometimes, it can be hard while so many things as food in supermarkets are packed in plastic etc., even a single vegetable and people really need to pay attention to what they buy. Some individuals don't see the importance of recycling and don't give the effort. Not in every building is a can just for plastic etc. which seem to be a big problem and people throw everything into the same bin. Less than 10% of plastic gets recycled every year.

While I studied in Holland, I lived in a student building and we did not have an opportunity to recycle. It literally hurts me to throw everything to just one bin and it is something I'm not used to. Recycling is though not enough. In my family we pay attention to recycling, carry fabric bag for shopping, buy less plastic packed things and while doing all that we still have piles of trash. Using trash as a material for my works is a way to ease the pain. How much trash others who do not pay attention have? That question made me to take the recycling to the next level. For the artists using trash and used materials is a really important subject at this time. Reasons of using trash and used materials are many, not just to raise the awareness and make the world a better place, the artists who recycle their own works and use recycled or found materials get more materials and use less money.

There is many artists that use trash as a material and successfully raise the awareness on how much waste we produce, and trough art reflecting on environmental issues. One of them is a contemporary artist, social media personality and hyper-realistic photographer Benjamin Von Wong, who use used materials and trash as a material. He uses social media as his main tool and his photographs get viral. He uses his hyper-realistic, colorful photographs and the help of social media as a way to make a positive social impact. With his good resources, he is getting hands on a lot of materials, has assistants and people, that are willing to help. (Von Wong 2019)

"Strawpocalypse" installation that he made in collaboration with Zero Waste Saigon, Starbucks Vietnam, and hundreds of volunteers, the team worked together and managed to gather 168,0000 plastic straws in six months. Wong used the straws, along with plastic bags gathered and LED lights to create a three meters tall wave that he later photographed with models and settings with an effort to draw the attention to plastic pollution. (Stewart 2019.)

Wong has many collaborators when he works with groups of people including Mermaid Hates Plastic project where a model, "mermaid", lays surrounded by 10,000 plastic bottles, "Plastikophobia" project using over 11,000 plastic cups or

photographs where he used E-Waste (old computers and electronics) to create Post-Apocalyptic landscapes. (Von Wong 2019.)



PICTURE 1. Benjamin Von Wong, Strawpocalypse, 2019



PICTURE 2. Benjamin Von Wong, Mermaid Hate Plastic, 2016

The plastic seems to be the main trash that artists are going for, which makes sense since plastic is here forever and is a big problem for our environment. Some parts of the ocean are basically made out of plastic. Especially plastic bottles or plastic bags are chosen as the main material, as for a contemporary artist Kaisa Salmi made an installation "Pullomeri" (Plastic Bottlesea) out of 300 000 plastic bottles, that were presented at Art Museum Poikilo, Kouvola Finland in the year 2015 to draw the attention to plastic pollution. With the piece, she is pointing out that eight million tons of plastic are dumped in the ocean every year. (Salmi 2015.)

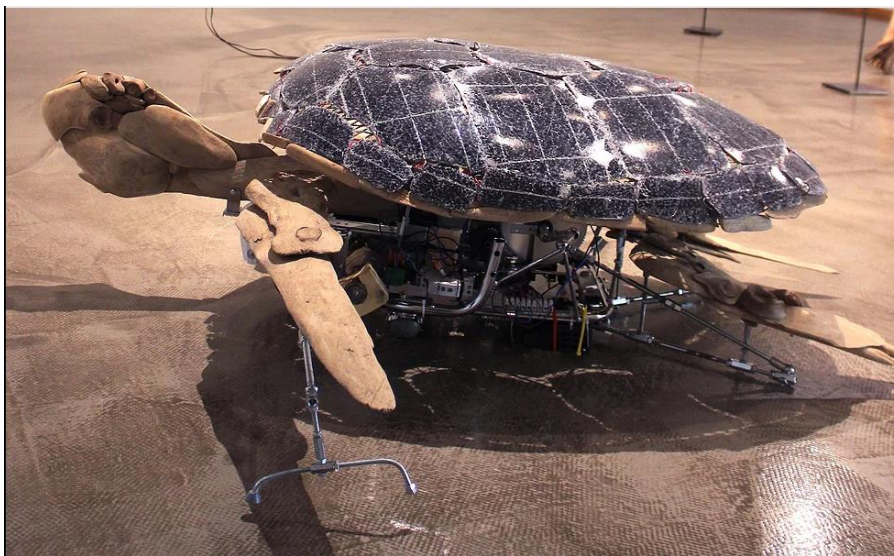
In addition to plastic, for example, bio waste "bio art" is coming to use and giving the work mortality. I use any material I can get my hands on, mixing the plastic with the bio waste and by recycling the work again. When bio waste is gone I can take the plastic parts apart and create a new work in the future. In some cases I gather certain trash that works as a symbol to the theme of the

work, giving the piece a certain meaning and to tell a story through the material. As for the "Macecha", I gathered eggshells to create a spider and use them also for the installation, eggshells in the installation are a symbol of femininity and fertility.

Pekka and Teija Isorättyä are a good example of the artistic team that uses all kind of waste, gathered on their trips. Their "Mermaid" is an electromechanical sculpture made out of tuna skin, wood, water pumps, electronics, tubes, and plastic bottles. (Isorättyä 2015.)



PICTURE 3. Pekka & Teija Isorättyä, "Mermaid", 2015



PICTURE 4. Pekka & Teija Isorättyä, "Solar sea turtle", 2014



PICTURE 5. Kaisa Salmi, "Pullomeri", 2015

Using trash as a material is really common in contemporary art today. Environmental issues, plastic pollution, and trash problems are an important subject, artists pay attention to. In my opinion, as an artist to change the world we need to start with ourselves. My work is personal and I use my own trash in order to bring the viewer closer to the issues and get them in touch with the trash.

Individuals need to change their habits to make a difference, not by screaming that we need to change the world and by looking at others. Individuals can be heard saying while buying one coffee cup that it is only a one-time thing and won't hurt. The same sentence says million people around the world.

The way we can change the world is to take all the issues personally and teach our children ways how to act responsibly to our environment. Then, little by little there will be a change and we have the possibility of saving the planet.

### **3 ABOUT THE INSPIRATION OF THE CONTENTS**

I search for the inspiration around me and I tell my life story through my works. My works are personal self-portraits, depending on the life situation I go through at a time. I deal with the situations honestly, the themes are everyday situations and questions we all have at some point in our lives. I intend to not polish things and show them how they are, adding the black humor twist with that I can get closer to the viewer who went through something similar. I feel that life would be really hard to bear if we wouldn't be able to laugh sometimes about the hard situations, personally, I would get crazy.

The reason why I make works about my own experiences is that I believe that it makes sense for the artist to make art about things that are really close to them. In that way, I am able to produce good works because I know what I am talking about. On the other hand, not everyone wants to show themselves that much to others, but in my case, I am not necessarily afraid to put everything on the table. My inspiration comes from my childhood. I grew up on the Czech stories and



books in which the style of telling the story is quite dark, mystical, in some cases humoristic horror stories. The stories are true, they tell about life in general in its true light. In the same time, I was always interested in the horror and fantasy genre, I found these genres inspiring since I was a kid. I grew up in the artistic environment, with all members of the family being professionals in the field of arts. Mostly my stepfather and my mother worked on the animation films and most of the time they worked from home on the puppets for the movies, or my stepfathers oil paintings and I had the access to my stepfathers studio so I grew up with the smell of the oil paints and the latex parts of the puppets in our home oven.

The spiders appear in my work quite often with many different reasons depending on the work I'm processing at the time. Spiders are creatures that many people fear and we know they have been presented often in the horror genre. That is not necessarily why I use them, but I do fear spiders a lot. I think that it is a really silly phobia that I have been trying to get rid of for many years now and I do believe that using the spiders in my art has helped me to deal with the fear. It is not totally gone but I see the progress. Spiders are also in my opinion really interesting creatures, they are like from different world. In the case of "Macecha" installation, I present the character of a spider as a motherly figure, misunderstood spider that tries to fit in, embracing life and the situation that she is in. This surrealistic installation with a horror atmosphere presents the story the way it is, getting closer to its viewer with honesty.

### **3.1 Black humor, horror and Czech ballads and fairytales**

In my works, Macecha included, I deal with the difficult life situations and serious subjects by using black humor and horror themes. My way of working is close to how I deal with life itself. As I realized during the years, roots in central Europe and having been forced to grow up fast, there are very little life situations that are happy, seconds of happiness are here to enjoy until there is another obstacle on the way. I learned to laugh at the hard situations and believe that there is a reason for everything and go further. If we stay in happiness, there is nothing challenging us.

Life situations I deal with, even personal, everybody knows them and went through something similar. World and life are dark as horror, the themes of the works are so true that they become scary. I show the subjects in the way they are, adding the humor that we all need in life. I find horror in general inspiring, it is my favorite genre since when I was very young. Horror including black humor is popular in media. In slasher movies and heavy metal music for example, the style is so over the top that it becomes humoristic, making people laugh about the worst possible things.

I grew up in central Europe, the Czech Republic, where the style of the storytelling and fairytales is quite dark. The stories even sometimes include creatures and paranormal events, are true and talk about everyday life situations. The

ways how stories are told and made go hand in hand with my style of making art. My works have always somewhat horror, mystical and dark atmosphere with black humor twists honestly depicting hard everyday life situations.

One of the most famous Czech series of ballads which is a big inspiration to me is "Kytice" (Wild Flowers) by Karel Jaromír Erben first published in the year 1853, I grew up on this book that was later, in the year 2000, made into a movie by director F.A. Brabec and produced by Jakubisko film. Kytice story is still very much alive and loved by Czechs and the book is included in schools' compulsory reading. The book consists of thirteen ballads from which seven most famous are included in the movie.



PICTURE 6. F.A. Brabec, "Kytice" (Wild Flowers), still from ballad "Vodník" (The Waterman, or The Water Goblin) 2000

The ballads start living in this surrealistic drama movie, including dramatic stories of life in seven parts that are connected. The ballads tell about love and passion, jealousy, murder, and obsession. Even though the ballads are horror fantasy including creatures and paranormal, the stories are still really human, honest and the visuality is very beautiful.

One of the most famous ballads from Kytice that gives me goosebumps until this day is a poem "Vodník" (The Waterman). The dark story tells about the Waterman that fell in love with a country girl who lives with her overprotective mother. He drowns the girl and makes her his wife and they get a baby together. The girl is missing her own mother, continuously asking the Waterman to let her go and see her. Finally, he agrees but gives her an ultimatum to come back on time. The mother doesn't want to let her daughter leave back, which makes the girl late and the Waterman mad. At the end the Waterman murders the baby leaving the body on the mothers' doorstep. This chilling story tells honestly about love, horrible aspects of motherhood and selfishness.



PICTURE 7. F.A. Brabec, "Kytice" (Wild Flowers), still from ballad "Polednice" (The Noon Witch) 2000

Another famous ballad from the series is "Polednice" (The Noon Witch). The myth about the Noon Witch, in general, is popular in Slavic countries, all children are aware of her. In fact, a similar story appears in many cultures. For example in Mexican folklore there is a tale about La Llorona (Weeping Woman), a ghost of a woman who drowned her children, now crying and searching for her little ones in a river and if real children hear or are near her, they might get in trouble. The story of La Llorona was told through a song and adapted into movies and tv series.

"Polednice" is based on the noon demon from Slavic mythology named "Lady Midday". She comes on hot summer days appearing as an old hag, beautiful woman or a little girl. She would stop people and ask them questions, if they answer wrong she will cut off their head or strike them with sickness.

Polednice is used to scare children if they don't behave, just like in Erben's ballad. Mother is busy with cooking when her little son is behaving bad, she warns the boy that if he won't behave she will call on the Noon Witch to take him away. The boy still not behaving, mother calls on the Noon Witch and to her surprise, she actually comes and demands the child. Mother in fear holds the boy in her arms so firmly while trying to protect him, that she accidentally smothers him. The death of the boy made the Noon Witch go away. (Brabec 2000, Jakubisko 2000.)

In my opinion, Czech tales, even though they include in some cases paranormal are honest and tell the story as it is in real life. In this way I think that a little kid get a much better picture of what life is about, learn maybe in a hard way but it is the way life will be. When we think about fairytales produced in America, the world of princesses, where the prince charming comes to save them from trouble, it gives kids the false idea of what to expect of life. Growing up on Czech stories I feel like nobody promised me that life is going to be easy and I grew up stronger.

### 3.2 Stop-motion animation and puppets

I grew up with the arts and music, the inspiration has been all around me my whole life. My stepfather along with my mother were working on the animations in Prague. My stepfather made puppets for stop-motion animations with directors like Finnish artist and director Katariina Lillqvist. Lillqvist's animation films are surrealistic serious dramas, often political, where she deals with the difficult subjects, by using black humor. Her films are visually pleasing, including hand-made puppets. As a materials to the puppets body and skeleton materials she uses used clothes, everyday objects, old toys, photographs and jewellery. Lillqvist's visits and working in Prague has many reasons, the animation culture in Czech Republic is really broad and many of artists know the craft are based in Prague. I would say that Czech Republic is a home for animation, in sense of basics, drawn or stop-motion animation. (Lillqvist 2019.)

Jan Švankmajer is one of the Czech artists and film directors' worth of mentioning. His surrealistic horror style animation films that include stop-motion, have made an impact on many people. Interesting fact about materials in his films used is that in some cases, Švankmajer uses food and everyday objects that are animated creating surreal feeling and again it is also humoristic. Some films are acted, but still the stop-motion animation is included in the making of the special effects, in the world of 3D animation and computer effects Švankmajer's films are very special.



PICTURE 8. Jan Švankmajer, "Otesánek", 2000

His honest movies and short films tell about love, sex, relationships and life itself. The movie *Otesánek* (Little Otik) from the year 2000, is a modern adaptation of old Czech fairytale by Karel Jaromír Erben, it tells about difficult situation of a couple wishing for a child unsuccessfully, where the mother becomes almost mad because of the fact. The father finds a root in the shape of the baby, for which the mother starts to take care of, thinking it is her real son and names him Otik. The movie reflects on the unconditional love of the mother, where she takes care of the root as her own. In the movie, as in the fairytale Otik comes alive, with unstoppable appetite eating everybody that crosses his way. (Gross 2014, Švankmajer 2000.)



PICTURE 9. Jan Švankmajer, "Otesánek", 2000

Animation and stop-motion effects are most of the time replaced with computer effects today. Stop-motion is an old craft and in my eyes, it is important that some artists still practice it. Tim Burton for example, is a film director that still uses the stop-motion animation in his films, for example in his short movie "Vincent" from the year 1982 (Burton 1982). Hopefully more artists will look back and the stop-motion will make a comeback.

### 3.3 About Louise Bourgeois and sculpture of the spider

Spiders are misunderstood creatures often seen like something ugly and are feared, but in the reality they are kind, strong, beneficial, interesting creatures and in some cultures people believe that spiders bring luck.

I present the spider as a stepmother. I tell about my life and reflect on how step-parents are portrayed in media and in fairytales in which "evil stepmother" is presented. These stories create the stigma on stepparents. I present the character of a female spider, coming out of the painting, dragging the whole installation behind her and creating a nest out of her veins. There is a commitment to the situation, love, taking care of a home and the power of the character.

I share the opinion with Louise Bourgeois who sees the spider as a motherly figure and protector. Bourgeois portrays in her many sculptures and ink drawings the spider as her own mother who died when Bourgeois was very young, strong character that is the most important person in the artist's life, someone, that she loves most and was taking care of her, hugging and protecting her. The artist's huge sculpture "Maman" 1999 among many other works represents her mother, sensitive artwork even though the sculpture had some arachnophobic responses from the viewers. Bourgeois said that spiders are helpful, protective creatures just like her mother. They are clever and friendly, eating mosquitos that are spreading diseases. (Womensartblog 2018.)



PICTURE 10. Louise Bourgeois, "Maman", steel and marble sculpture, 1999

Louise Bourgeois, "Maman" ,1999, steel and marble sculpture of a giant arachnid. One of the biggest sculptures in the world was made for Tate Modern opening in May the 2000. Several versions of the sculpture cast in bronze are presented in galleries around the world. (Womenartblog 2018.)

Bourgeois presented her spiders as single pieces but in some cases with the objects that have their own purpose in the work as a symbol in the installations. The "Maman" has one object under it which is a huge basket with giant eggs. Bourgeois' installation Spider 1997, made out of steel and mixed media, includes many objects. The Spider is on the top of the antique architecture, decorated detailed cage with various little objects inside, protecting the cage. Right under the spider, on the top of the cage is again a basket with eggs, as in the Maman sculpture and in addition various little details including a chair, tiny locket, grandfathers watch, perfume bottle, brooches and medals as well as three glass jars and many other symbols. (Bal 2001, 1-30.)



PICTURE 11. Louise Bourgeois, Spider, Structure of existence – The Cells, Guggenheim Bilbao, 1997

#### 4 PROTOTYPES OF “MACECHA” INSTALLATION

“Macecha” (stepmother in Czech) is an installation work that has an oil painting in three parts and a sculpture of a spider as the focal points. In addition to those there is a video projection. It is made mostly out of used materials and household waste collected at home, reflecting on environmental issues.

The project started during my student exchange in the spring 2018 at the Minerva academy in Groningen, Holland where I used my time experimenting with materials. As a painter, I wanted to expand my skills and to look more into world of sculpture and installation, developing the idea of connecting and expanding oil painting into the sculpture and installation, searching for my own style and new techniques.

While experimenting, I looked more into material possibilities and in addition to oil painting I use recycled material and my own trash. I worked on paintings and sculptures simultaneously in my studio, bringing them later to exhibition space where I worked on the installation influenced by the place that I have been building it at.

The installations change every time depending on the space they become part of. Working with household waste is something that really interests me. I wanted to challenge myself, use less money and focus on the environment issues. I saved my trash for three months in Holland and I repeated it in Finland during the whole process and the sculptures started to grow.

I decided to challenge myself and work just with trash and try to buy as little material as possible. I mostly worked with the used materials, materials I found for free or recycled my old works buying just additional materials like glue, strings, tapes, oil paint and mediums for the painting and some materials for the installation later. In the case of buying the material, I saved what I purchased and after taking the installation down I shall use the material again for the future work. Nothing gets wasted. Recycling is personal, that is one of the reasons why I chose to use my own trash for my works. The way we can change the world, is to take all the issues personally. During the whole process I have been making notes and sketches, writing down ideas and paying attention to what work well in my method. While experimenting with the materials in Holland, eight different sculptures were made, I chose one of them, a sculpture of the spider titled “She, spider” to be the centerpiece of the installation and made the sculpture again with some changes as “Macecha” in Finland.

All in all I made three different installation works in different exhibition spaces in Holland, when working there for five months. Exhibitions were experimental and sketches for my artistic part of the Thesis, the “Macecha” installation that I continued in Finland for the degree show.

In Finland, I developed the project further. After experimenting in Holland I know where I was going with the piece. As I started this project as an experiment and worked for about a year, the work and concept developed from the first time I installed it.

The piece got more personal and is reflecting on my personal experiences from both sides as being a stepparent in my adult life and having had a stepfather as a child. I tell about the life that comes with being a stepparent, issue of not being the biological parent to the child and the question, what makes one a parent? I reflect on how stepparents are represented in media, and in fairytales in which "evil stepmother" is a bad character, giving the ideas about stepparents and on how the stepparent or the new person in the family is received by adults.

I use the character of a spider, as for spider is for some people an ugly misunderstood creature from the outside and something that we should be automatically scared of. "Macecha" the spider is a stepparent, someone, that creates home with all her love, takes care of someone else's child as their own and is committed to the situation in the family. The installation "Macecha" was presented in the spring 2019 at Gallery Himmelblau, Tampere.



PICTURE 12. Tereza Holubová, "Trashy Fish, sculpture, 2018

The Trashy Fish is one of the first experimental sculptures and was made all out of trash. The bottom is a plastic plate from the markets take away fried fish stand, the inside is a Coca Cola can and on the top is a cut out cardboard from muesli that is covered in used plastic wrap. On top of that are glued dried tulips, egg shells for the eyes and cap from the beer on top. Fins on the sides and on the top are lids from jars and then there are dry tulips for the tail. From the fish's mouth comes a dried grape stem out.



PICTURE 13. Tereza Holubová, "Poor Medusa", sculpture, 2018



The Poor Medusa is one of the experimental sculptures. The skeleton of the seashells are glued on a box with a used plastic foil from chocolate and chopsticks inside. On the top are glued seashells that my friend collected while mud-flat hiking on Wadden sea and some random trash as beer caps, plastic hair ties and receipts from supermarkets. The legs of the medusa are all made out of plastic and paper bags.

#### 4.1 The sculpture “She, spider” and materials

I experimented with different sculptures in Holland, making around eight sculptures out of trash in total. Sculpture of a spider called “She, spider” was the closest to an idea that I had in mind for the “Macecha” sculpture and I chose her to be the central piece for the installation. “She, Spider” is slightly different from the final piece “Macecha”, I used different materials, changed position and the “She, spider” was presented without the paintings of the “Macecha” installation.



PICTURE 14. Tereza Holubová, detail of the process, 2018



PICTURE 15. Tereza Holubová, the “She, spider” sculpture, Academy Minerva, Groningen, Netherlands, 2018

"She, spider" was made mostly out of trash, only tapes, glue and glue gun were purchased. The making of the spider was very experimental, following the trash gathered. Spiders skeleton material is a big glass bottle from juice that are packed in gathered used plastic (plastic bags and bubble-wrap) forming the right shape for her body. Spider has the package from cottage cheese for mouth with used plastic forks from the supermarket for the teeth. The mouth and back of the spider is wrapped with strings that were found and used plastic spoon as her rear. The hair of a spider on her body are glued dried tulips that were bought earlier for the Easter holiday and later I decided to dry them and recycle the tulips by making the spiders hair of them. I continued with gluing caps from beer bottles on the top of her head for eyes and with legs that are made from used cardboard boxes with egg shells in her joints.

Even the sculpture was a prototype for "Macecha", "She, spider" was a completed art piece and a step for my future work to come. This giant spider made a big impression on the viewers, surprising them with the fact that she is made totally out of waste. The sculpture stayed at Academy Minerva's hallway.

#### 4.2 Installations made in Groningen, Netherlands

I made three different installations and presentations during my stay in Holland. The installations are created on the spot, inspired by place of the exhibition. With the new places always come challenges, compromises and working on it has its own process that needs time. The place of the installation is important part of the piece, it creates installations "mood", gives the opportunity and space for creativity. The installations were presented without the paintings in Holland. First installation where "She, spider" was included along with eight other sculptures made out of trash, was made for "Wait a little longer, You'll never regret it" exhibition at the old Groningen railway station basement in the staircase space. I created a huge laboratory like installation for the sculptures, reflecting on waste issues, which was a main theme of the installation. I used my own trash as well as others' that I collected. The exhibition visitors were able to go inside of the installation and get aware of the trash, raising the awareness in them. Some visitors remained for long time in the place, thinking. Lights and projections were used in the installation, giving the work "life".



PICTURE 16. Tereza Holubová, "She, spider" at Groningen Noord railway station exhibition "Wait a little longer, you'll never regret it", May 2018

I recycled the installation from Groningen Noord railway station and created the second installation at the Minerva Art Academy building, Groningen. The installation was part of the exhibition for the course "Art for the Better World" I took during the semester, in which we focused on making art in the theme of environmental issues. The installation is my personal favorite, the work was more personal at this point and is the closest to the final piece. I used just one sculpture in the installation, "She, spider". I called the installation "Äiti" (mother in Finnish), it is the sketch for the "Macecha" installation. I recycled and used the same materials from the Groningen station, using plastic sheets, strings, eggshells and "She, spider" sculpture. First installation in Groningen Noord got really good reactions from the public, but "Äiti" made more sense, it was personal and felt like a finished piece. I had gotten experience from the first exhibition and I could see the progress while making "Äiti" so the installation got better.

While making "Äiti" I was again inspired but the place of the exhibition, which was really different from the previous one. With the first place being dusty old station basement, the place for "Äiti" was a clean gallery space. The mood changed in a minute. I created the installation during one day.

The installation in the Minerva Art Academy was a big centerpiece of the whole exhibition. In the middle of the room I started by hanging recycled plastic sheets, I had saved from the previous installation, from the ceiling to the floor, modeling them into a big nest for the spider with egg shells inside. I used strings from the previous installation and connected them to the plastic, making a web using the red color presenting veins that the spider is dragging the whole plastic installation behind with. As an addition to the installation one of the students from the course projected her own work on the piece, that in the end fitted into the mood. The installation was presented without the paintings at this time.



PICTURE 17. Tereza Holubová, installation "Äiti" at Academy Minerva, 2018

## 5 THE COMPLETED “MACECHA” SCULPTURE AND MATERIALS

After creating and installing the sculptures and “She, spider” in Holland, I continue with a new and final version of the spider in Finland “Macecha” for the Degree show. The making was still experimental and I worked with the whole installation in my mind. The testing and sketching helped me to make decisions and plan beforehand. Workflow was much faster and I made changes in the final spider by changing the position, size and material.

The spider is in attack position standing on her back on the top of a wooden pedestal at the front of the painting that she is dragging behind her with strings representing spider’s veins that are connected to all her legs. The dragging and strings create an illusion of spider coming out of the painting.



PICTURE 18. Tereza Holubová, the first sketch of the installation, 2019

I decided on the material beforehand, while making sketches, used some familiar materials and added new ones. I worked with the eggshells I collected as a main material. The eggshells are symbol of femininity and maternity in the work.



PICTURE 19. Tereza Holubová, detail of the process. Plastic skeleton (plastic can from modeling paste, bubble wrap & plastic bags, plastic oil bottle, cottage cheese can, tapes) 2019

The plastic inside the skeleton is a empty modeling medium plastic jar with bottle from oil for her neck and cottage cheese can for her head. All is wrapped in used plastic(plastic bags, bubble wrap) and later I wrap the plastic body in old

bed sheets. On the ready base I tied the strings around the spiders body and head, making an pattern on the top. Later the eggshells are added, making the spider's body shape. The legs made from old pizza boxes I attached to bottom in front so that spider is in an attack position and later I cover the legs with strings. To the front bottom I add part of the box from eggs so that spider is able to stand in the position. After the legs are on place I continue gluing the eggshells, adding some to her joints. I finished the spider by adding the beer caps for her eyes and colored her eggshell joints red.



PICTURE 20. Tereza Holubová, detail of the process, adding the eggshells, 2019

The spider is made with many different materials, including the bio waste which is mortal. The interesting fact since the sculpture because of its materials won't last forever, but the plastic insides will. There is an opportunity to recycle the work, follow the life of the sculpture and see, how long it can stay in shape.

### 5.1 The painting and materials

As a painter, I wanted to move forward with my painting skills and techniques, I got an idea of the puzzle painting that I would later expand into the sculpture. I painted few boards of different sizes that I later connected together with strings in the installation. I made more pieces in Holland, later I decided to make less but bigger pieces for the final installation. The painting is experimental and mixed media, in addition to oil paint I used modeling mediums, strings and used sheets. The spider is coming out of the painting, with connected red strings that represents the spiders veins. The painting presents the insides, spiders reproductive system, cells and veins. The bloody sheets and strings presents the skins and veins of the spider.

The painting in Holland is from five different pieces connected together. This painting was only made with oils and pumic fine modeling mediums. I later added the strings that connected the ready painting together.

The final painting for "Macecha" installation has more detail and materials. I wanted to move forward and experiment. I used old sheets that makes the painting along with the modeling mediums come out of the board and is plastic. For the base I used three old wooden painting boards of different sizes. Some of them were old acrylic paintings that I painted over.

I applied modeling and pumic mediums on the base in shapes, making the painting plastic. It is much better and cheaper to use the mediums first under the paint because the medium dries faster, I could make big layers that dry fast. While mediums were still wet, I applied pieces of sheets on the painting. For mediums to get dry, it is good to wait until the next day to be sure the painting is dry before continuing with the oil paints.

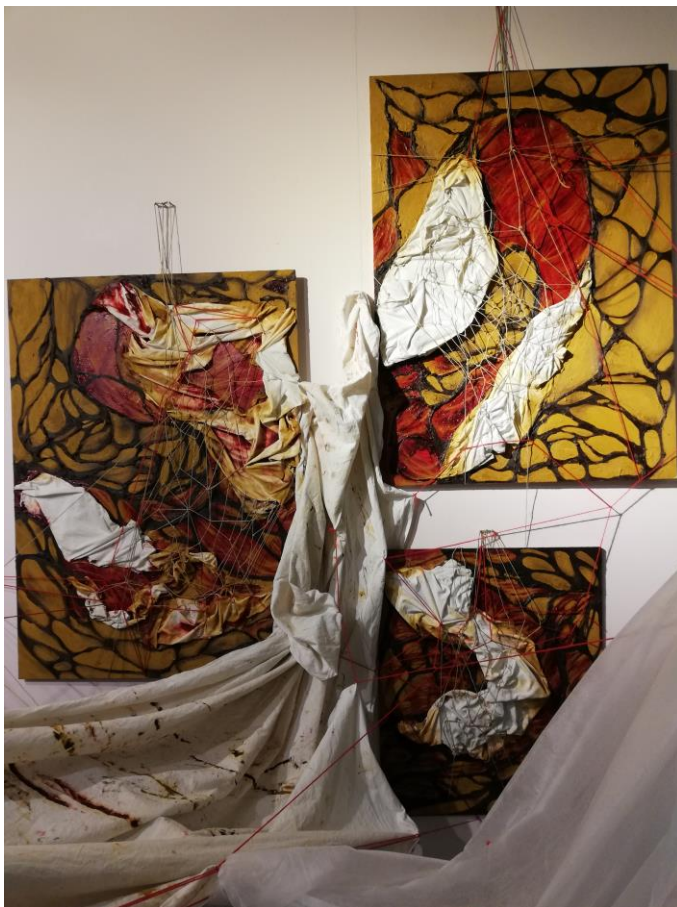


PICTURE 21. Tereza Holubová, one of the boards in process with wet medium and sheets, 2019

When mediums are dry, I apply the oil paint that is a long process itself. Oil paint dry slow and working with all boards at the same time is advised. When one layer of the paint is finished on one painting, I move to the other one and then come back for the next layers. I made around four layers for each painting with some additional, until I feel satisfied with the look of the painting. After some layers of the oil paint, I started to apply strings and making a patterns on the top of the sheets. The strings were expended into the sculpture during the work on the installation.



PICTURE 22. Tereza Holubová, detail, making the patterns, 2019



PICTURE 23. Tereza Holubová, completed painting, detail from "Macecha" installation, Gallery Himmelblau, Tampere, 2019

## 5.2 The “Macecha” installation at the Gallery Himmelblau, Tampere

The Macecha installation was installed in the Blind Spot Degree show at the Galleria Himmelblau. After I brought the sculpture and painting to the place of the installation, I worked on the piece actively for a week.

I changed a material for the spider's nest, with the first idea for the material was plastic sheets, I replaced the plastic with gauze that is normally used for protecting the flowers. I found the material to be more fitting into the idea. I have made sketches and worked with ideas in my mind but the working was still experimental, inspired by the place of the installation.

I hanged the gauze from the ceiling in ways that I was able at a spot I was given. Again, I need to make compromises and find ways that worked the best for the place. I connected the gauze with the old sheets and plastic bags between spider and painting, so that it formed the nest. The paintings were placed behind the whole installation so that it looks like the spider can come out. From there I hanged paintings with strings that I later expanded into the installation. The spider is on the pedestal in front of the installation connected with strings from its joints. I glued some strings into the legs, glue made an effect of joints being wet and bloody since the glue shines on the red base. I added some glue into the spider's mouth so that it looks like the spider drools. I added more eggshells into the installation, I put the shells inside of the nest and around the spider.

I took an effort and used the time we were given and made the installation carefully in detail. Videos for the installation were made by Julia Räsänen, I projected videos directly on the nest. Videos are in red color, they moved through the whole nest, making an illusion of blood pumping.



PICTURE 24. Tereza Holubová, detail of the “Macecha” installation at the Gallery Himmelblau, Tampere, 2019



The installation's atmosphere was dark on purpose. I managed to show the feeling of the spider dragging many things with her and managing though tired, getting things done with all her legs. I feel there can be seen the power in the character, full of emotions. The reactions at the installation were mixed, but most of the reactions were positive, especially from women. The possibility to crawl inside and under the installation helped the viewers to experience the installation.



PICTURE 25. Tereza Holubová, detail from "Macecha" installation at the Gallery Himmelblau, Tampere, 2019

I succeeded in the surprise effect with the installation because the materials were mostly trash, showing what actually can be made out of everyday waste. People first saw the eggshells and sheets, then after watching it a while and reading the descriptions some trash started to appear. For them I explained from what the spider is actually made of since some pieces you cannot see since they are covered.

Even though the work is positive and sympathetic in my eyes, the horror theme and dark atmosphere including spider, made some people fear the work. But that is something that the artist needs to deal with while working with horror themes that people might be scared. In some cases, it is part of the fun. My work is taken seriously, which is really important. The story behind the work is so strong and with the materials being trash, reflecting on such a big issue today, it is important that the piece makes people think and take the issue, not just the work, seriously. I do feel that I succeeded with that and if in some cases not, there is nothing more left than just try again.



PICTURE 26. Tereza Holubová, detail from "Macecha" installation at Gallery Himmelblau, Tampere, 2019

## 6 CONCLUSION

During and after the whole process, I know I succeeded in making something different and new. The experimenting with materials and using the trash, recycling my own work is something I want to continue with. The themes of my works and styles stay the same, I enjoy the horror themes and surrealism with a humorous twist, but I keep on developing and progressing, adding the things I get to know about life in future. I want to stay honest to myself, my work and show the issues as they are.

Most of the time, my works are a self-portraits. Frida Kahlo once said that she paints just self-portraits, because she knows herself best (Kahlo n.d.). My work is a way to deal with personal things and I want to do art about issues I know. In my opinion, it doesn't make sense to make art about things that are not that close to the artist's personally.

To pay attention to the environmental issue is a personal choice for everyone. In order to save the planet, we need to start with ourselves. It means not just recycling, but buying less, using less animal based products, walk or take a bike instead of using a car for short distance trips and so on. There is so many things that we need to change. The biggest problem is that most of the people do not take the issues personally, they don't believe and can't see that the climate change is happening.

In the case of working with trash, I want to take the idea further and work with other people. I want to introduce people to what we can actually do with the trash and be creative, act responsibly, raise the awareness and take care of our planet better. In the future, I would like to work with a community and projects, where people can work together and teach kids to be responsible for our nature. Teaching kids the ways of being responsible is one of the most important

things, they are our future and the environmental issues might be closer to them than they are to us. The issue is and will get worse, sometimes it feels that now it is already late to save the planet, but we should still try and have hope.

In the future, I intend to continue to make large scale and decadent surrealistic paintings and sculptures. I want to look more into my roots that are in the puppet making and sculpture. I also shall dig deep into my fantasy and continue to tell stories.

Painting in the "Macecha" installation is abstract, I will take a step back to the figurative styles and research once again new ways of working and growing. I am interested in new materials I haven't worked with before, for example, human hair and animal bones. I also intend to include more bio-waste in my works and play with the mortality of the pieces.

I am serious about developing not just my skills as a visual artist but also in writing and critical thinking. I shall continue my studies after my Bachelor degree at TAMK, on the Master's degree in Curating at the Aalto University.

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