

under  
crystal  
skin

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to all those who are borderline

Inspired by the body and the emotions hidden from the public for the sake of recognised "social normality" and the ways of accepting oneself.

A borderline personality disorder is a mental health disorder that impacts the way human thinks and feels about themselves and others. It causes problems in everyday life functioning. It includes self-image issues, difficulty managing emotions and behaviour, and a pattern of unstable relationships.

Through embroidery and textile, I reveal my own self-therapeutic experience of coping with the episodes of BPD through experiments with self-portraits, photography, cyanotype printing, fibre and textile manipulations and embroidery.

I introduce the techniques of BPD psychotherapy based on the dialectic approach, realised through textile and accessories design, to raise the importance of being aware of the mental diversity of humans.

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Be the one who can hear you when you are quite

## **Under Crystal Skin**

Like a bit of glass spreads light into many shades - the mind and sense spread our impressions about an individual, considering possible psychological particularities, which many try to hide due to the fear of public stigmatisation.

Some perceive life as a dual phenomenon: black and white, true or false - as if binary code directs them. But living is full of shades - errors and achievements, experience and trauma. The latter may subconsciously influence many aspects of life until we accept them, "recycle" and outlive them, to leave their dust in the "backyard" of our public image.

My BPD has been painfully devastating till I formed a way of altering "affective hurricanes" - investing them into the creation.

During the recent episodes (as self-therapy), I mailed to nowhere, telling about my disturbia, took self-portraits, focused on fibre manipulation and fabric cyanotypes. All these activities eased my emotional pain and anxiety.

I put my sensitiveness into the envelope, "sealing" it between the transparent "walls". One wall is "mute" as a digital screen; another - is sore like burned skin, stitched to the true "essence". Together, both sides make a translucent "casket" through which the insiders read my alter ego.

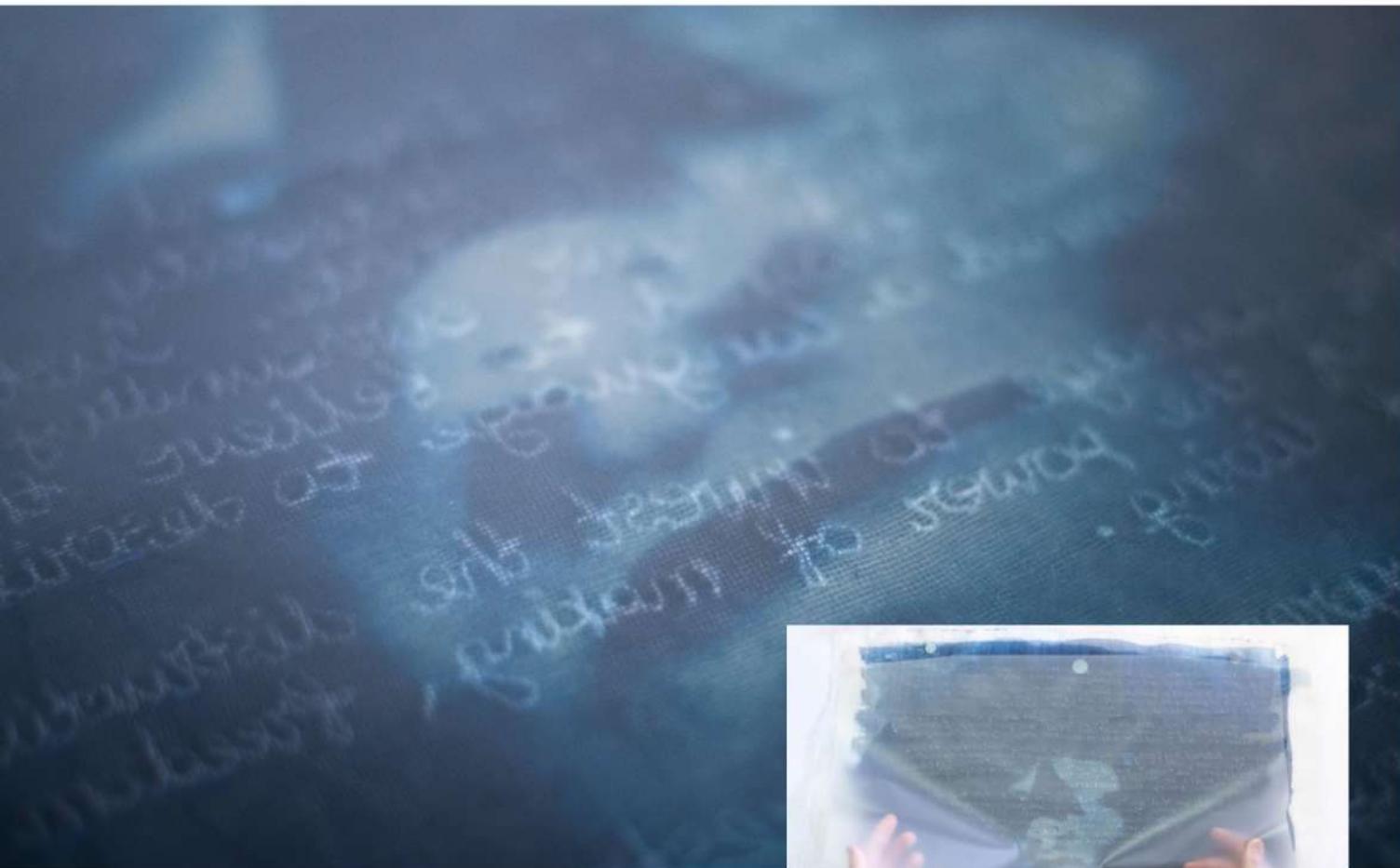


Embroidery, textile, analogue processes of printing and digital photography, psychotherapy (self-therapy) are united in one by an artistic expression which is an act of Art by itself. It is the art of self-acceptance (of the main principles of post-traumatic disorder therapy is acceptance and commitment therapy) and the act of supporting others through the creation of the symbolic matter.

"Envelope" is a physical and thinking exercise in many aspects. It is diffusion and expansion, acceptance, observation and the analysis of various contexts of present and past of my "Self".

This is a real reminder that I am not just the result of my thoughts, but the result of many commitments and actions. It is a symbolic expression, an image of a supporting "hand" for those who are experiencing the same.

That brings the point where visual aesthetics materialised in a piece meet the unseen - the psychological and philosophical matter, which breathes a certain sense and life to the object and sustains the humanity in each of us.



If it is an evil twin, or darker part, or alter ego or a broken child?

There is a way of exploring your demons, through the work which uncovers every part of you that has been disowned, repressed, rejected. Shadow work is one of the most authentic paths to enlightenment, suggested by the Jungian plaid of psychiatrists, who adopted the approach to analytical psychology coined by Carl Jung.

All of us carry demons inside. Sometimes we catch fleeting glimpses of them, sometimes we witness them in full frontal chaos, but for the most part, we ignore and bury their existence either out of fear, guilt or pure shame. However, discovering and owning our demons is a vital part of our life journey.

A social mask that we wear every day has a hidden shadow side: an impulsive, wounded, sad, or isolated part that we generally try to ignore.

The Shadow can be a source of emotional richness and vitality and be acknowledging it can be a pathway to healing and authentic life.



strength isn't about how much  
you can handle before you  
break

it is about how much you can endure after  
you've been broken



Mood Board



Materials Board



**Margelan Natural Silk Gauze White Fabric /  
Uzbek Margelan Silk Gauze**

Material: 100% Silk, 100% silk  
Density: 40x36(n/cm)  
Color: white  
Weight: 3.5m/m (15gsm)  
Yarn Count: 2022  
Width: 140cm  
Technics: woven

**TPU Film**

Material: thermoplastic polyurethane  
Thickness: 0.05-2mm  
Color: transparent, matt  
Weight: 6.0m/m (30gsm)  
Technics: hot melt TPU

**Standard Zipper**

Material: plastic/polyester  
Teeth Width: 5.5mm  
Type of slider: reversible, auto lock  
Length: 35cm  
Color: white

**Grosgrain Ribbon**

Material: polyester  
Width: 5mm  
Color: white  
Technics: woven

**DMC Stranded Cotton Embroidery Floss**

Material: cotton  
Color: white (B5200)

**Madeira Machine/Embroidery Thread**

Material: 100% natural rayon viscose  
Stitch density: 0.4mm  
Color: white (1222), blue (1366)

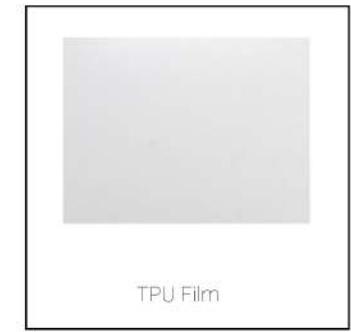
**Nylon Monofilament Thread**

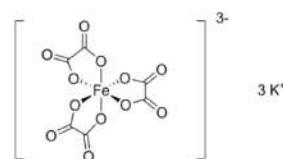
Material: Nylon  
Diameter: 0.25mm  
Color: transparent

**Invisible Sew In Magnetic Clasps**

Material: Iron  
Diameter: 11mm, 14mm  
Thickness: 1mm  
Color: silver

## Materials Swatches





Tripotassium-tris(oxalato)ferrate(III)

### Cyanotype Process

Solution A: 6.5 grams ferric ammonium citrate (green) in distilled water to make 25ml total  
Solution B: 2.3 grams potassium ferricyanide in distilled water to make 25ml total

Note: Store separately in brown glass bottles, away from light. Filter before use, and mix in equal proportions A to B.

### Printing the Negative

Print an image (inverted) on PET Film for laser printers, transparent.

### Printing and Developing

The piece is printed by contact (in a printing frame with a full-sized negative) in sunlight or by a mercury vapour lamp until the shadows look bronze. Exposure should be at least one stop more than required.

To develop the piece, it should be immersed in running water until the chartreuse stain of the ferric ammonium citrate completely disappeared. Overwashing will erode the image.

A 3% bath of hydrogen peroxide will speed up oxidation. A few drops of bichromate added to wash water will increase contrast and can appear to intensify the printed image.

Note: avoid hydrochloric acid 'intensifier'—the acid can combine with the cyanotype solution to produce cyanide gas.

Method of Printing



## Manipulations

The tailor basting/pad stitch is a series of parallel, horizontal stitches that produce diagonal floats of thread on the top layer of fabric.

This stitch is commonly used in tailoring to hold fabric layers together (not along a stitching line but connecting the fabric, the interfacing and the padding).

The stitches control the shifting of fabric during pressing, fitting and construction.

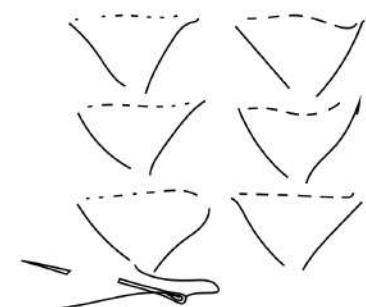
Apart from a practical matter - gathering the layers of silk mesh, the use of tailoring basting stitch has a symbolic artistic expression.

As you know, the inside of a hand-tailored garment is quite different from what many of us have accustomed to. To give a coat a perfect fit, a tailor makes hundreds of hand-stitches, which together make a perfect shaping, leaving a very special "trace" on the inside.

Some of us have the same "trace" inside. The events, people, impressions and revelations leave their "traces" and form our individuality, cause transformation or simply become scars or wrinkles.

All these stitches spread on fabric, are like the "coordinates" on the map of life, referring to the events of existence.

**tailor basting/pad stitch**



underneath  
on top

Every letter keeps some secret - the identity and the story of its writer. It might end up mysteriously or unroll a true sense of the narration, drama or pure joy. A scrawled fast or carefully written piece might open the puzzles, which grip the eye and make you realise the idea by capturing hints, symbols and allegories.

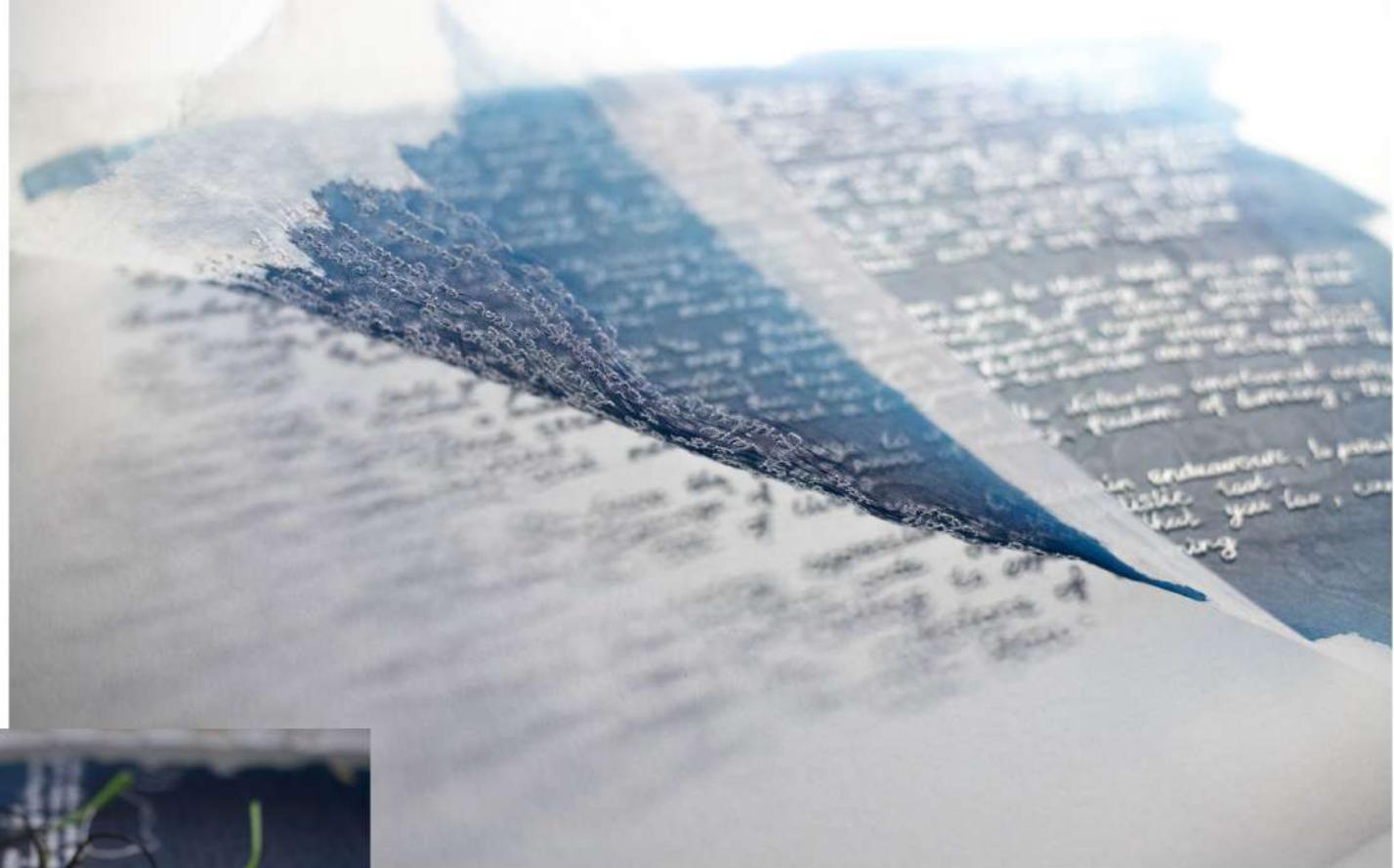
A reflection of an expressive, whimsical, flexible, sociable and at the same time scattered, a moody, inconsistent, fragile human with a broken identity, hidden behind the crystal "wall" of a public image. Like a two-faced Janus or Gemini.

The letter flows into a private conversation to oneself, giving a chance to piece together own "broken" parts and making an effort to heal the emotional "wounds".

One of the main principles of post-traumatic disorder therapy is acceptance and commitment therapy. Though, the most crucial part of it (apart from the cognitive defusion) is observing-Self exercise.

Observation is the core process of diffusion, inspecting a story about "the Self", analysing thoughts by not just having them, but stepping aside for watching them, perceiving as distant "objects", commitments or ideas, separating oneself from their content, supporting "the thinking Self".

## Embroidery



To challenge the traditional preconception of embroidery, the combination of tambour stitching in the series of technical stitches, which are usually hidden from the eyes, is used.

Tambour hook embroidery is aimed to construct the "written" side.



One piece of the silk mesh (cyanotype, dyed solid) is used as the base for the embroidery. The text can be written with a soluble marker straight on the fabric or on the water-soluble film stabilizer. Subsequently, the film can be dissolved/washed away in water when the embroidery is ready.

The embroidery is done by a "chain-stitch", using a tambour hook, however, an embroidery needle may be used.

For embroidery one strand of white cotton embroidery floss is used (white, optically bleached). The ends of threads are tied up and glued.

Note: Using water-soluble film, wash it away in lukewarm water. Afterwards, iron the embroidery through the piece of cotton cloth in medium warmth.

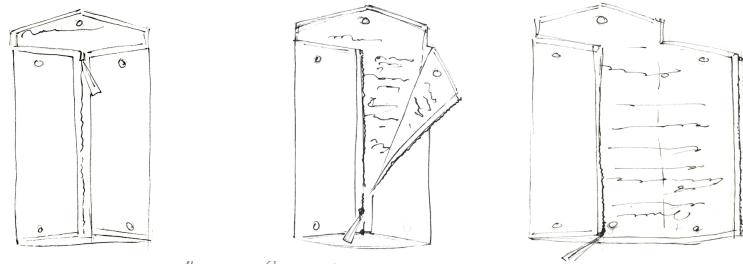
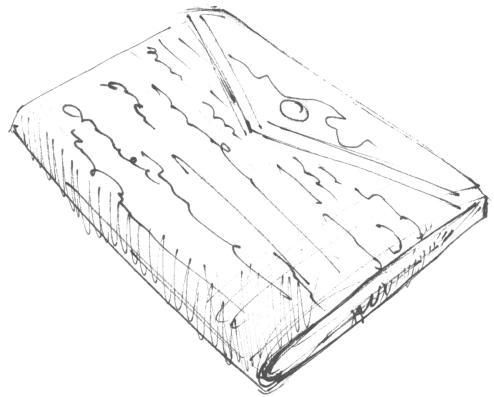


TPU film

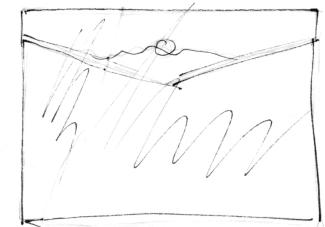
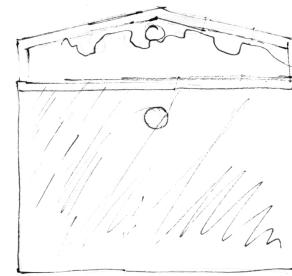


Cyanotype silk mesh

Irregularities are just the  
marks of authenticity and  
that is a sort of beauty.



Remember, that  
consistency is more important than perfection



## Construction

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The shape of the purse reminds the shape of an envelope consisting of transparent layers. The layers are stitched together (in various methods).

The "face" side is TPU transparent matt. The inside layer is 100% silk mesh (cyanotype, printed solid blue) hand-embroidered with white thread (tambour embroidery).

The "envelope" is a double face, transformable piece. It can be turned out (unzipped) and folded on the other side. There are metal clasps sewed in the envelope "body", which provide fastening and folding two pockets inside the envelope.

Between the TPU layer and the embroidered layer, there is a layer of the silk mesh cyanotype with a portrait, which makes an illusion of a face clinched inside the envelope "body".



**1 SSA seam**  
(1cm)

**2 Magnetic clasp**  
d: 1cm, 1,5cm

**3 Topstitch**  
encircle the magnet clasp  
(0,2mm)

**4 Zip lock**  
is placed between one layer  
of TPU and two layers of  
assembled silk mesh.  
Stitched with topstitch (edge  
0,3cm)

- a) Zip lock specifications
- tape reinforcement
  - top stop
  - retainer box
  - length is 30 cm
  - plastic tooth

- b) Reversible slider  
specification
- body and bridge are  
metal
  - puller is TPU film  
(folded, size: 1cm x  
5cm) with blue silk  
mesh in between
  - topstitched

**5 Catch stitch/grosgrain  
edging**

to sew in grosgrain ribbon  
along the edges a hand-sewn  
catchstitch is used

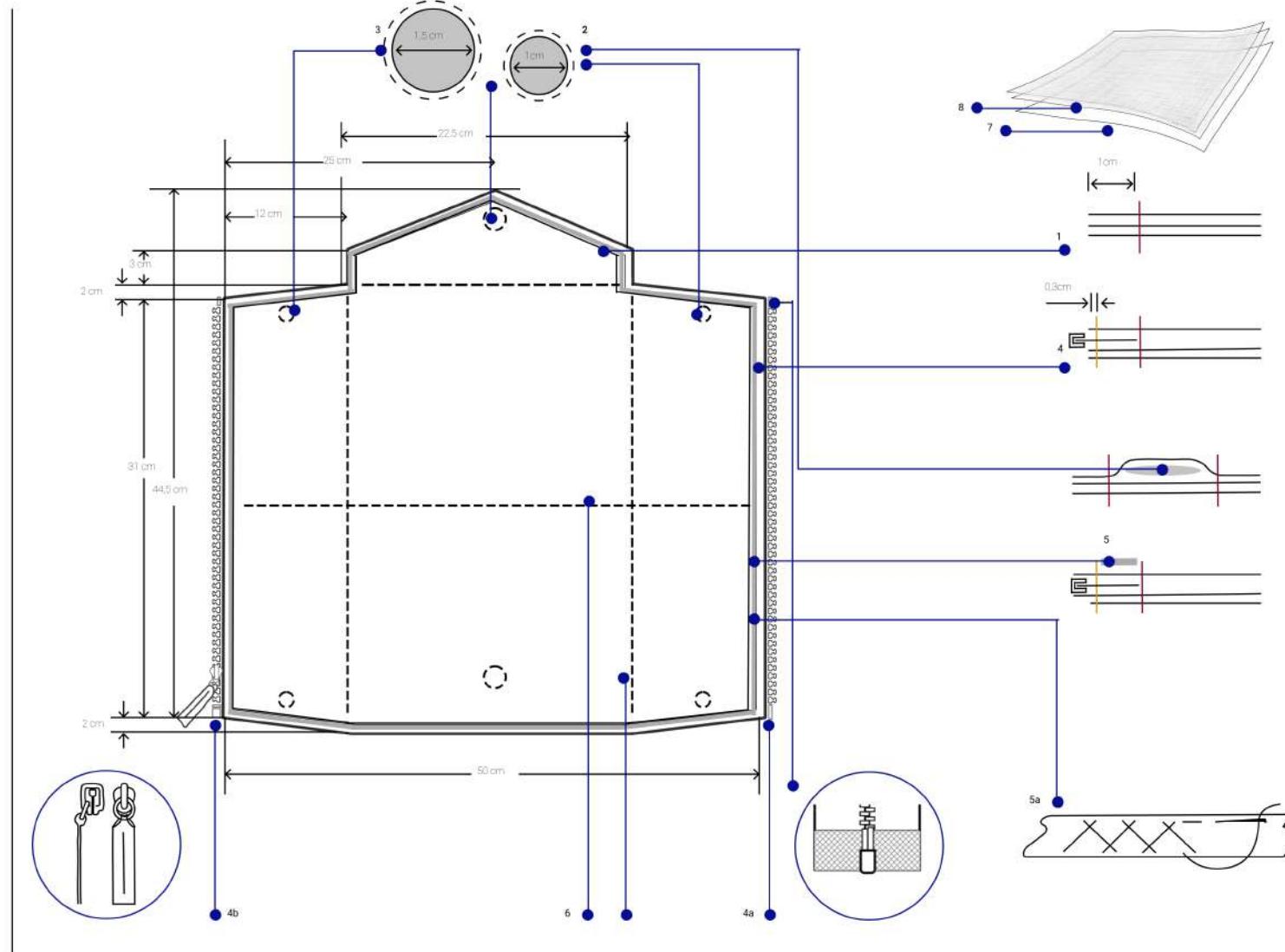
**6 Folding lines**

**7 TPU Film**

**8 Two layers of silk  
mesh** (assembled  
by catch stitch)

- a) cyanotype(solid) &  
embroidered layer

- b) cyanotype  
photograph





Processing the Assembling



Construction and representation, imagery and materials, symbols and allegories are the keys that reflect the main idea I wish to highlight by this work, unveiling a sort of awareness that there are some individuals around us whose life perception is a bit different from the ordinary one. They are more emotionally vulnerable and due to the "pause" in their emotional development, they are less protected from the outside anger, criticism, misunderstanding that burn holes in their "sensitive skin" and misbalances their psyche.

They are weak listeners of themselves, they are inattentive to their own needs and feelings and the only way to master this vital skill is to prioritize themselves, wrapping with self-parenting.

This project is a sort of personal revelation, confession and, self-therapy. Here there are no techniques that I use accidentally, as there are no accidental feelings or emotions, people or "lessons" that happen in life.

Even trauma breaks and misery we get within our living are aimed not to make us suffer, but to make us "durable" after we have been broken.

As scars on our skin, they stay for the whole living as a vital reminder of pain. But even a scar may turn into a blossoming. A wrecked chaotic soul has more beauty than pure perfection.

My dear friend,

I need to tell you something and hug you across the miles. On reading, you will revise much of your past feelings and, on finishing, your mind won't remain the same. You will change. It may not be immediately obvious, but over time you will gain some insights. You will find a different part of yourself and, perhaps, open up resources to support someone else who goes through the same emotional catastrophe. I give you my hand, and by this, I support myself too.

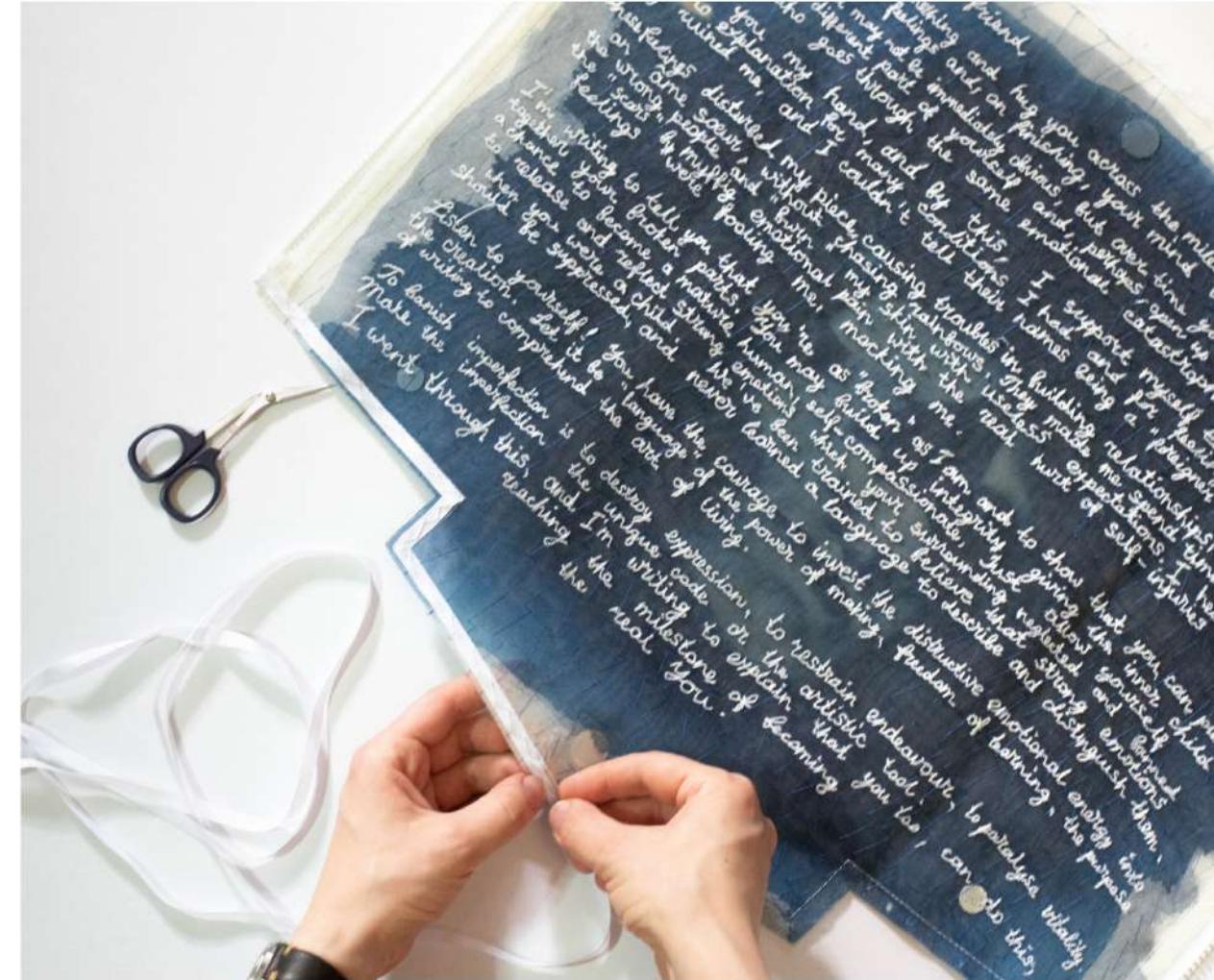
For a long time, I had no explanation for many conditions I had and for the feelings I experienced. They were ruining me, and I couldn't tell their names being a "foreigner" among them. The feelings disturbed me from actual life - building relationships, trusting people, finding âme soeur, without chasing rainbows. They mislead me to spend time with the wrong ones, to "burn" my skin with wasteful expectations, and to heal the "scars", muffling emotional pain by real pain of self-injuries.

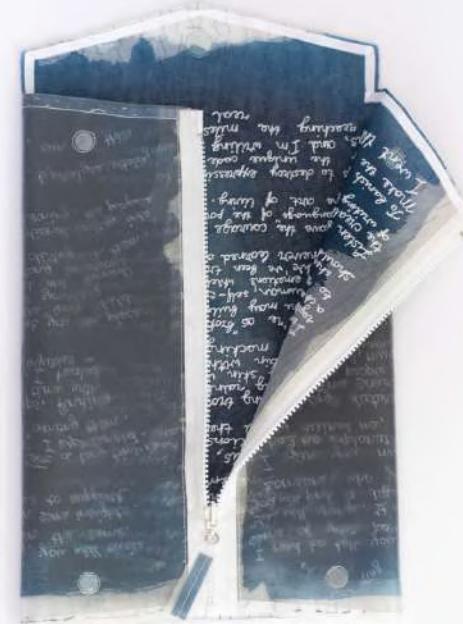
Emotions and feelings were fooling me, mocking me. I am writing to tell you that you are as broken as I am. But, you can piece together your broken parts. You may build up integrity, giving the inner child a chance to become a mature human, self-compassionate. Just allow yourself to release and reflect strong emotions which your surrounding neglected and banned while you were a child. We've been trained to believe that some intense feelings should be suppressed and never learned any language to describe and distinguish them.

Listen to yourself! You have the courage to invest the destructive emotional energy into the creation. Let it be "language" or the power of making, freedom of learning, the purpose of writing to comprehend the art of living.

To banish imperfection is to destroy expression, to restrain endeavour, to paralyse vitality.

Make the imperfection the unique code or artistic tool. I went through this, and I am writing to explain that you, too, can do this, reaching the milestone of becoming the real YOU.





An imaginary "casket" which hides the essence:  
"He who has eyes to see, let him see.  
He who has ears to hear, let him hear".

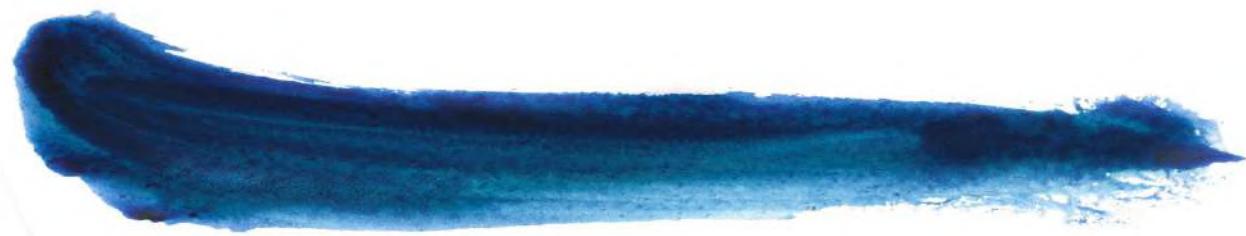


It is fake transparency.  
An illusion of clearness.  
A sort of "screen" which  
separates a true hero of the  
scene from the rest of the  
world.  
A "window" to look through. At  
some angle, it may seem a  
"tape" over the mouth, very  
sticky and hard to get off and  
easy to suffocate with.  
It is translucent "skin" that keeps  
scars, trauma and the whole  
distorted soul underneath.



The dialogue hidden in the envelope is physical and thinking exercises in many aspects. It is diffusion and expansion, acceptance, observation and the analysis of various contexts of present and past of my "Self".





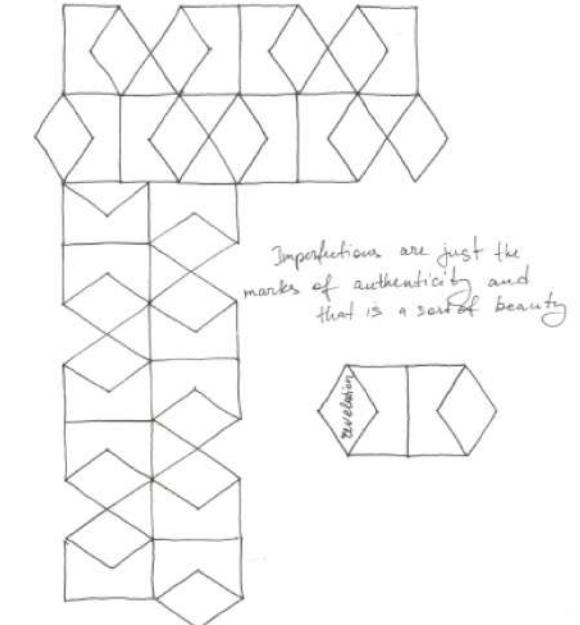
There is no charm in perfection

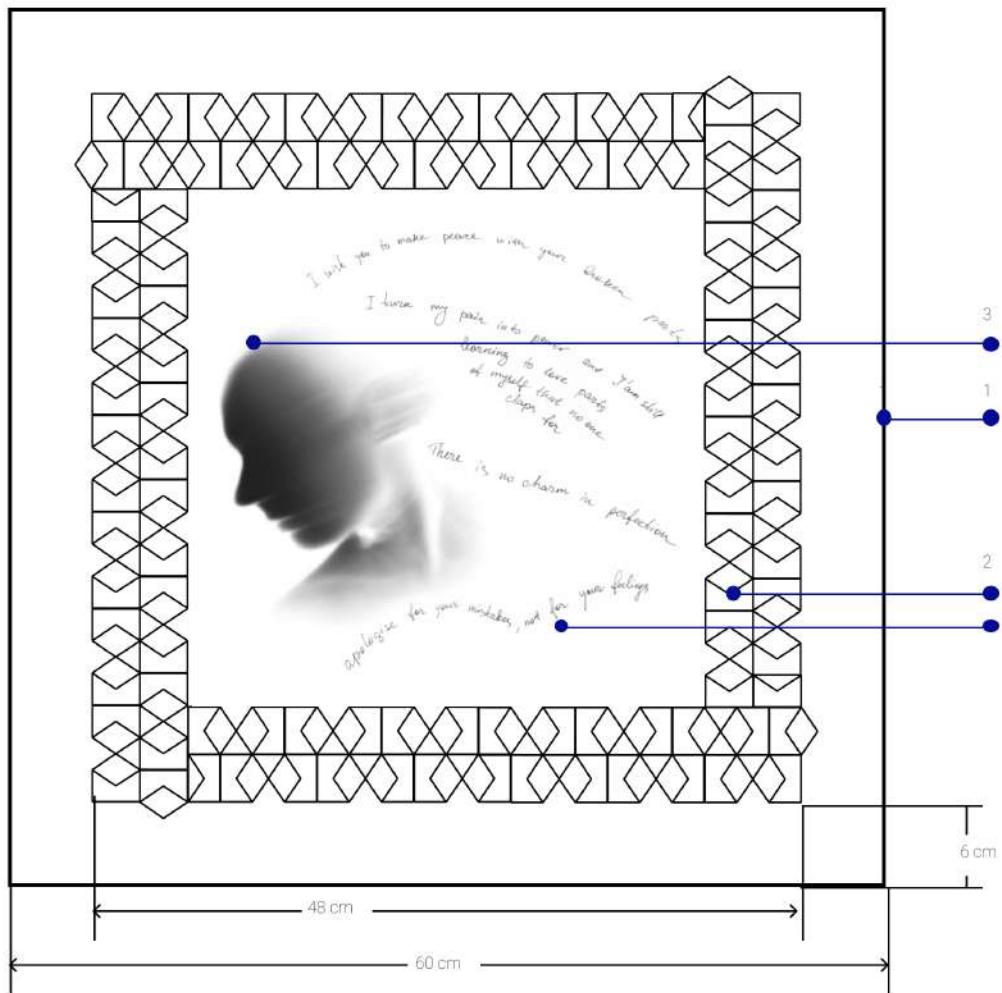


The negative resembles a hand-drawn piece mixed with a blurred portrait and hand-written memos - the psychotherapeutic revelations. The border pattern is assembled of the drawn shapes of the opened envelopes - the allegory to the key element of psychotherapeutic practice based on writing to own-Self, that pierces the whole story. The practice lets to reveal the hidden traumatic experience, causing the series of small personal disclosures, efforts and acuities which may give an impulse to overcome the trauma, finding the way of becoming free, over living one's traumatic experience.

### Carre Cyanotype

A square piece of 100% habotai silk, being stretched in a frame is soaked in the cyanotype liquid, got dry for 7-8 hours in a dark space to become light-sensitive. The dry piece of light-sensitive fabric with a secured film negative on top is being exposed in the ultraviolet (lamp/open sunlight) for 45-60 minutes, till the image in the fabric becomes sharp and intense blue-green. After the piece of fabric gets washed in cold water and soaked in the liquid of hydroperoxide to develop the intense blue hues. Then become washed again and after-dried.





#### **1 Hand-rolled hem**

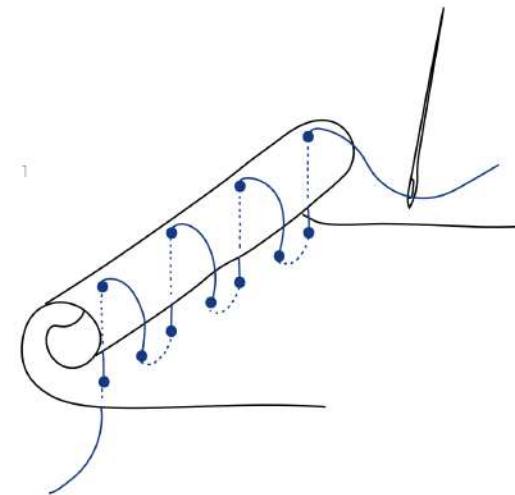
done with fine white silk thread

#### **2 Running stitch**

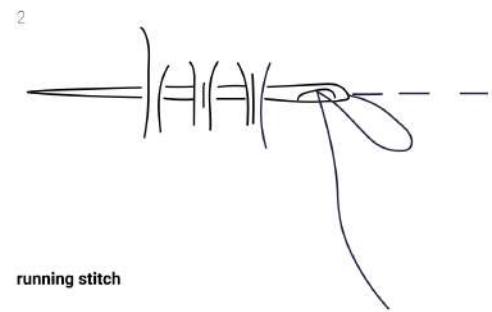
traces the hand-written lines (envelopes and wordings)

#### **3 A photograph**

the area left without stitching



**hand-rolled hem**



**running stitch**



## Embroidery

The truest of you is in the line between  
the physical and the spiritual



The carre scarf is embroidered with fine white silk thread by hand.

The embroidery is made with a "running stitch" and traces the text lines and the "envelope" pattern lines which form the border.

This method intensifies the whiteness of lines in the design and supports the idea which allocates a "stitch" as an allusion to the "emotional scars" we get in life.

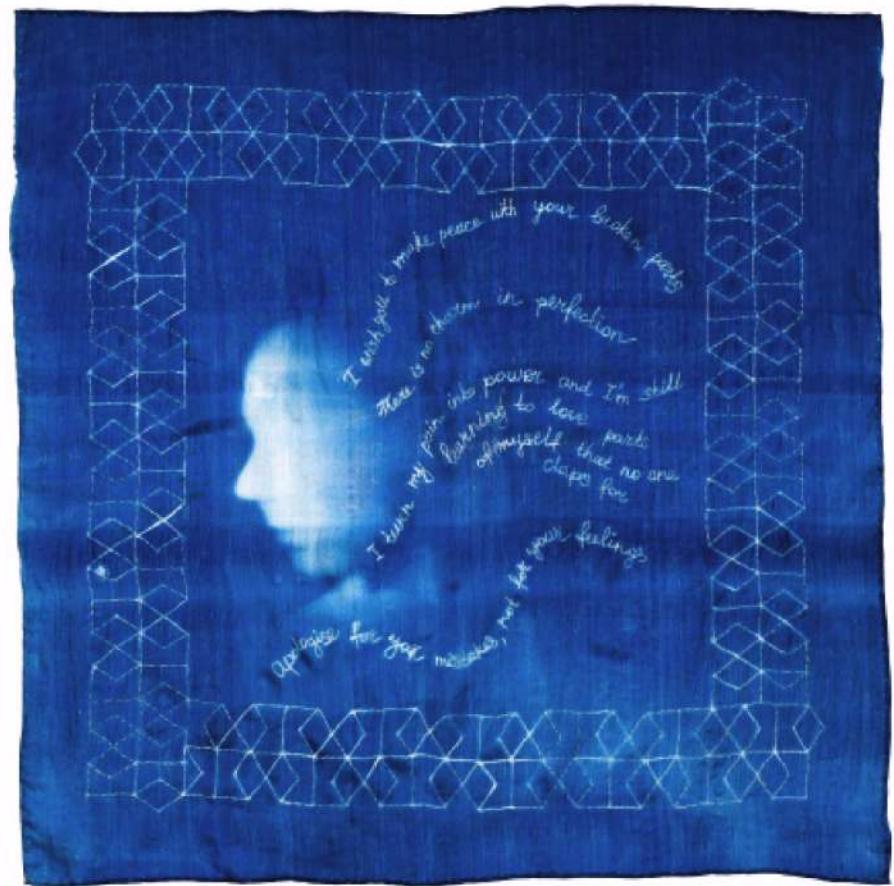


The scars are the map road of life and the armour





"Listen" & "Silent" are spelt with the same letters





From the chaos of our souls there flowers beauty

**floral envelope**

in British English

**NOUN**

the part of a flower that surrounds the stamens and pistil: the calyx and corolla (considered together) or the perianth



Silk Flower Making

In botany, small parts of a flower being gathered together make a part called - a "floral envelope". It consists of petals wrapped around the perianth like a paper envelope harbours the letter carrying revelations.

I find this allusive to the psychotherapeutic approach based on the self-oriented writing method. It allows having a dialogue to oneself through writing, managing the chaos of the emotionally unstable periods and provides the possibility of reaching the inner psychological blossoming.



The traditional technology of silk flowers making is used for processing and assembling the accessorize.

The piece of fabric (silk mesh) is treated with a solution of gelatin (concentration: 1 teaspoon per 200 ml of water, preheat till the consistency becomes even).

The fabric is soaked in the solution and dried in a straightened state (hang).

The prepared fabric should have a crunchy texture reminding paper.

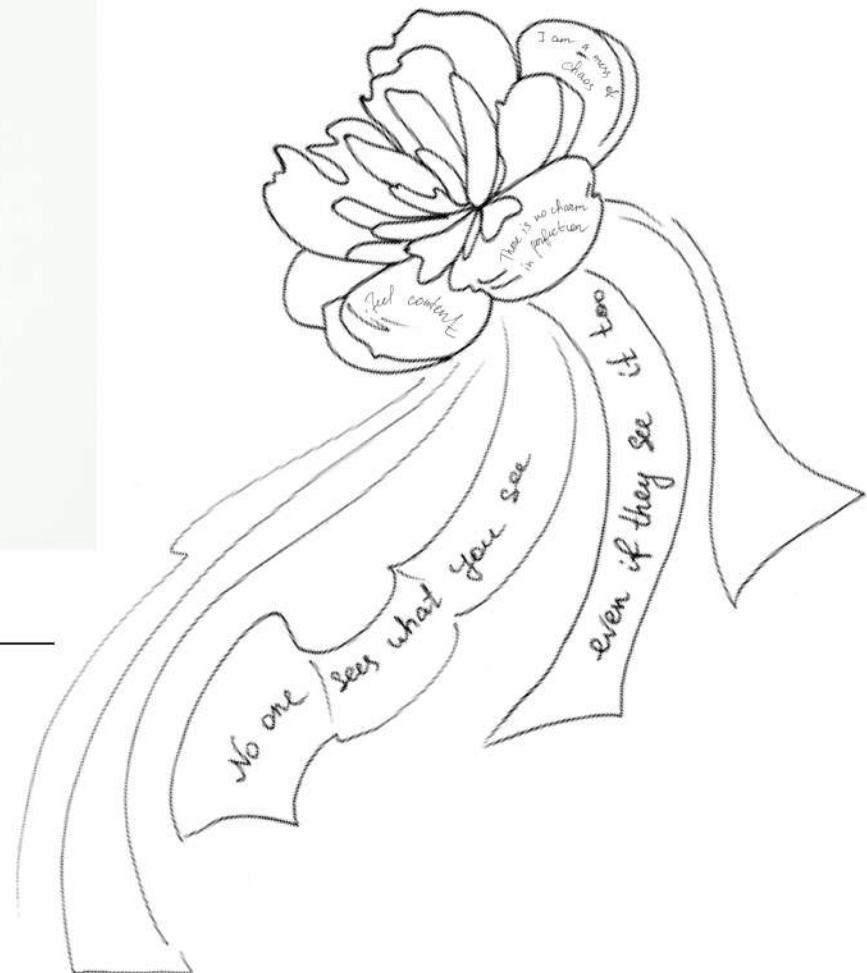
The petals are formed with (preheated) metal flower tools (tools are chosen according to the sizes of the petals) on a thick rubber pad.

Round petals are shaped with ball-like tools. The prolonged ones are stretched and pressed by hands or might be shaped by the hook tool (preheated).

The flower consists of a cascade of petals of different forms and sizes. Three big petals contain "messages" embroidered on the mesh. Together they construct a volumized spheric flower bud with a long ribbon-like stem.

The ribbons are made of embroidered cyanotype mesh as well as the plain stripes cut from TPU film.

A metal "cup-like" pin on the reverse side allows fixing the accessorise.



**1 Large size petal**  
(6pcs)

**2 Medium size petal**  
(8pcs, two of them are  
embroidered)

**3 Small size petal**  
(10pcs, one of them is  
embroidered)

**4 Extra small size petal**  
(10pcs)

**5 Large size petal (curled  
edge)**  
(6pcs)

**6 Medium size petal  
(curled edge)**  
(6pcs)

**7 Small size petal  
(curled edge)**  
(5pcs)

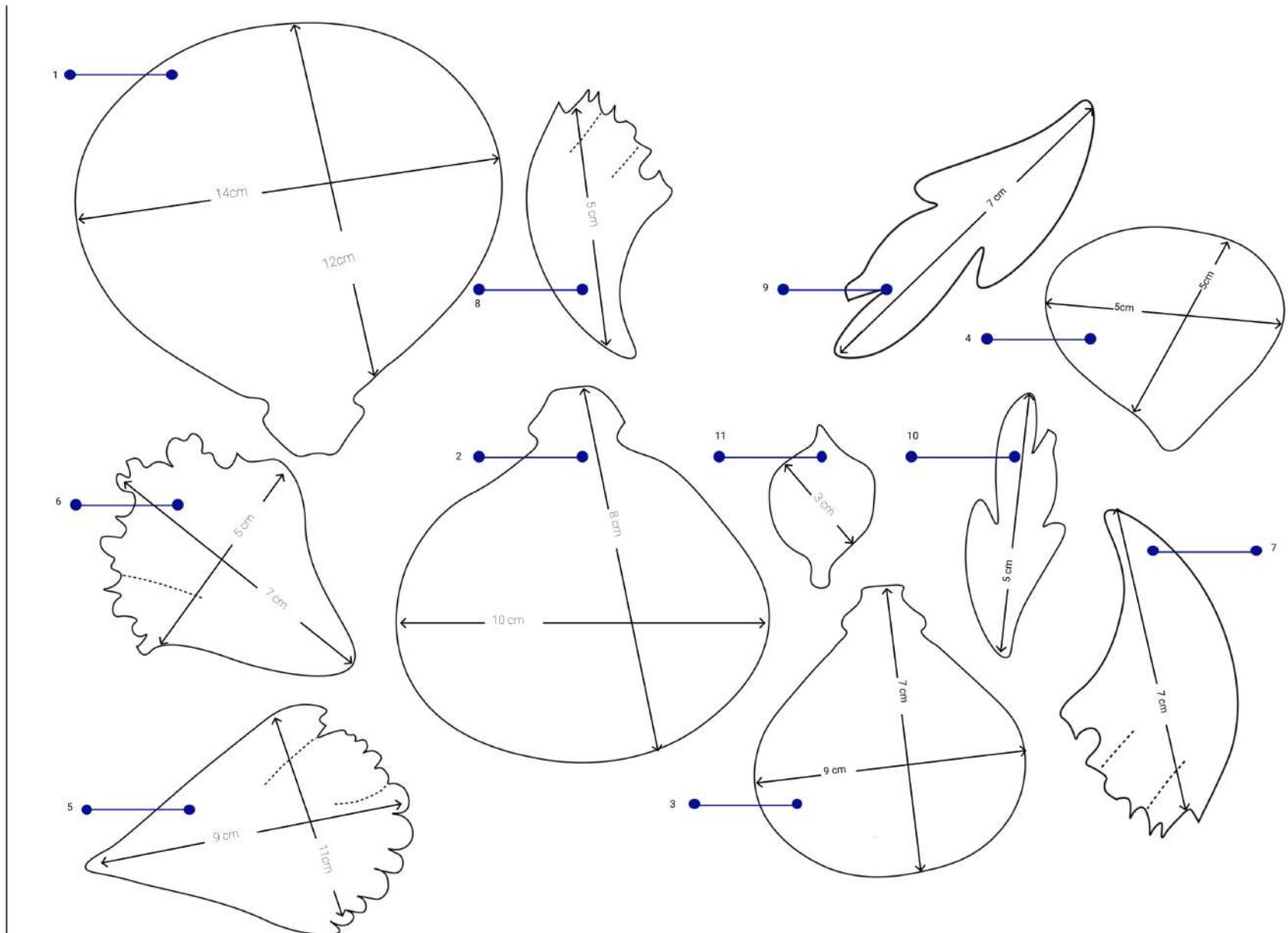
**8 Extra small size petal  
(curled edge)**  
(5pcs)

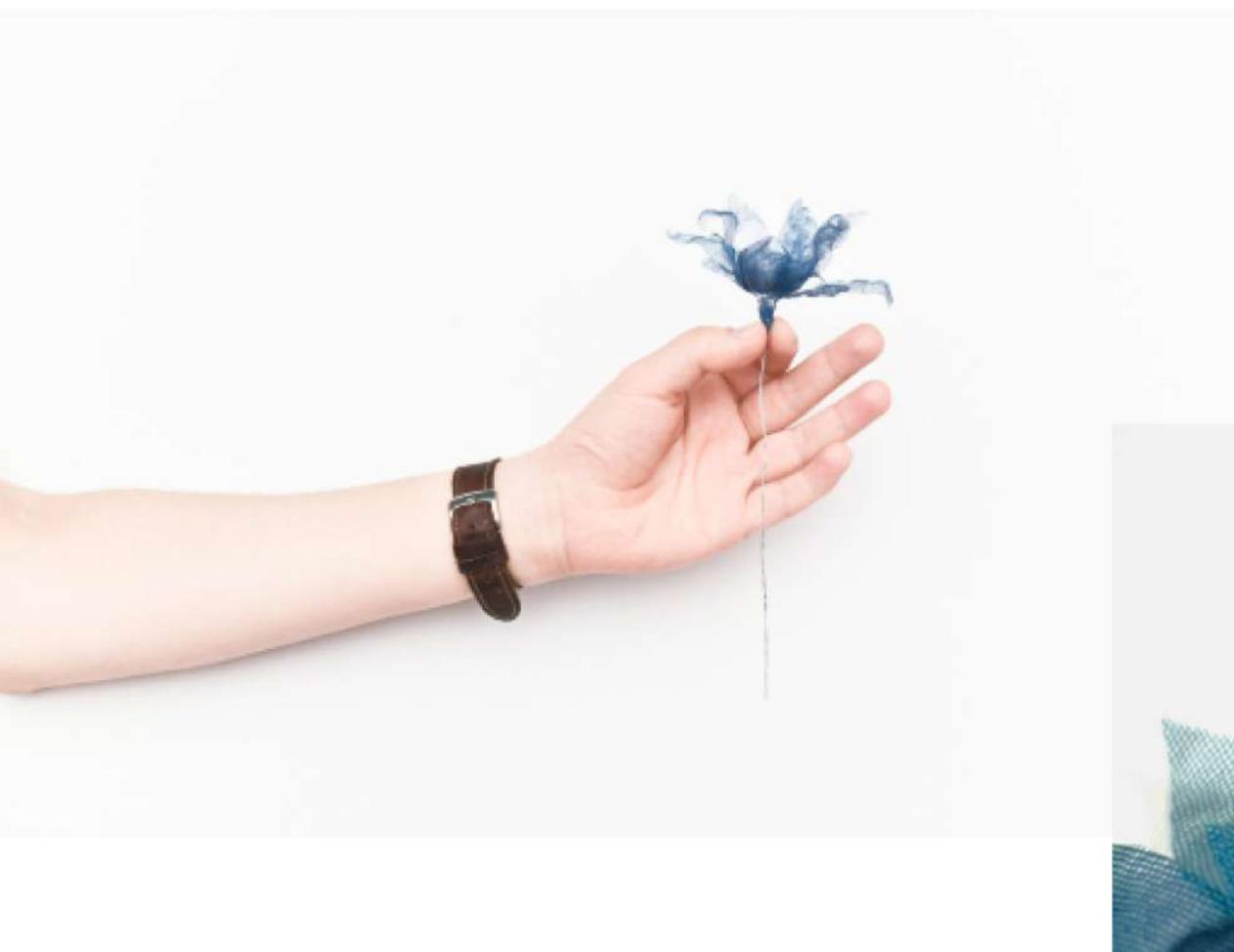
**9 Extra long petal  
(curled edge)**  
(8pcs)

**10 Medium length petal  
(curled edge)**  
(8pcs)

**11 Round "heart"covering  
petal**  
(4pcs)

Petal Pattern





The assembling of a flower starts from forming the central element - the bud. It is made of a tuft of silk or cotton fibre, attached to the wire base (the stem) with sewing thread.

The bud needs to have a spherical shape to provide the natural arrangement of the petals.

The centre of the bud should be round. A set of petals N 11 is secured around. Petals should be secured with PVA glue or hand stitches.

A set of petals N 10 are secured the same way, being stitched/glued around the bud on top of the recently stitched petals, one by one.

Next, are arranged the petals N 9 to make the central part of the flower 'fluffy'. The set of petals N 8, 7, 6 is being stitched next.

To give the construction more firmness, a sewing thread is wrapped around the stem while each petal is attached.

The rest of the petals: N 5, 4, 3, 2 is set right after. The petals are arranged in ascending order of their size.





The embroidery on the petals is done the same way as it was made in the "envelope". The ribbons and petals first get embroidered after - get cut out.

Firstly, with a water-soluble marker straight on the fabric or on the water-soluble (film) stabilizer, there should be marked text.

Subsequently, the film can be dissolved/washed away in water when the embroidery is ready.

For embroidery one strand of white cotton embroidery floss, an embroidery hook or needle is used. The colour is white, optically bleached. The ends of threads are tied up and glued. When the embroidery is ready, the silk mesh is being soaked in a gelatine mixture and got dry.

No one sees what you see

even if they see it too



Three embroidered petals is being glued in between other petals that form the flower bud.

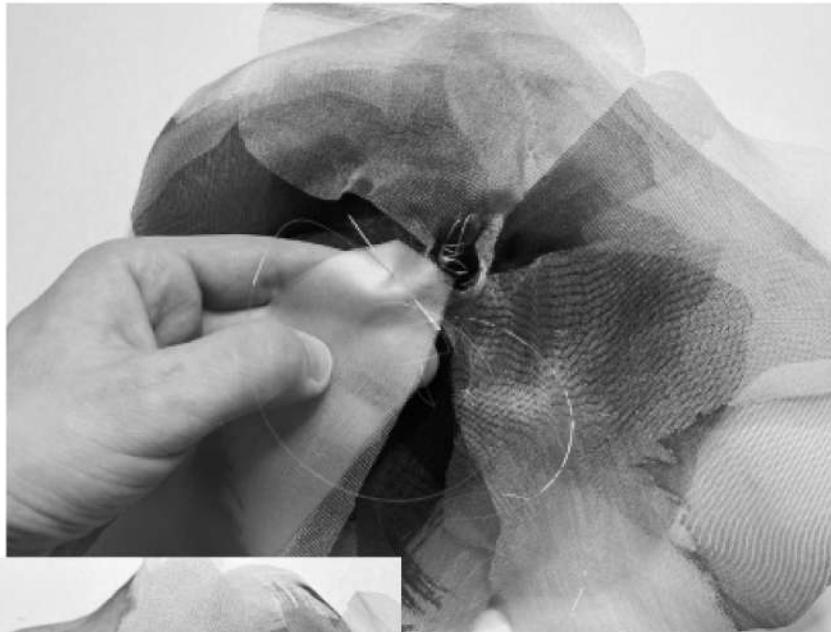


You do not have to change your thoughts  
you just need to change how you engage with them

When the flower has assembled the ribbons of mesh and TPU film need to be stitched together.

The length and width of the ribbons is 3cm x 50cm. The ends are angle-cut. The ends at one side end are stitched together and attached to the backside of the flower.

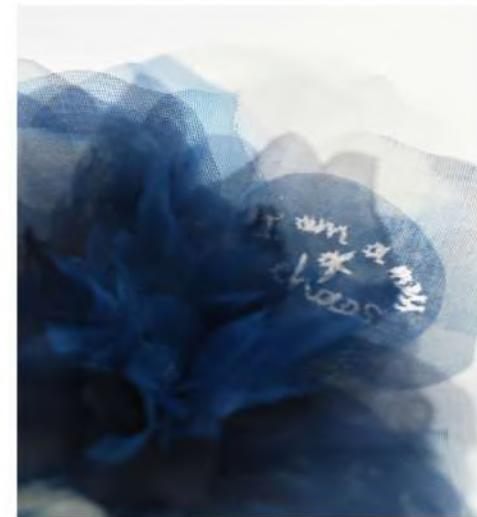
A piece of silk mesh is stitched on top with a set of stitches. After the cup-shaped pin is glued onto it.





I am bad with words  
I hope you are good at reading feelings.





The wound is the place where the Light enters you