



**“MIND GAMES”
WHAT DO YOU SEE?**

by

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BACHELOR OF VISUAL ARTS

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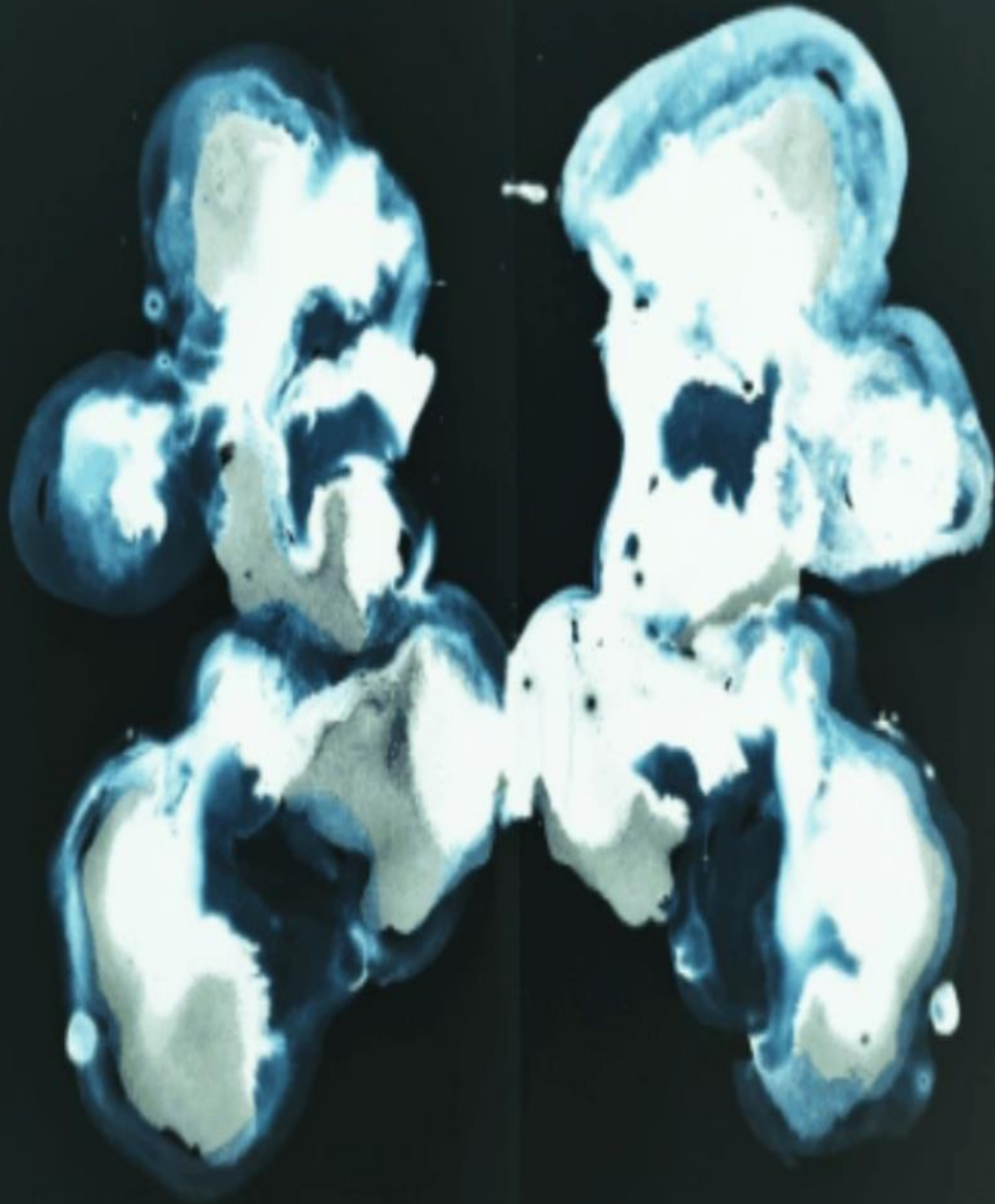


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Artist's Statement

“This is it...what do you see?”

by Rolaine Roetz

Introduction

Art has always helped me to reduce my anxiety and I have often immersed myself in drawing when I feel overwhelmed. Perhaps often to calm the inner conflict, I seem to have anxiety as a result of uncontrollable situations and or inability to take control when needed. Drawing is one of the most accessible art forms because it requires little in materials and can be portable. Drawing is commonly used in art therapy. It is a form of expressive therapy that entails the use of varying types of materials including Jik and ink respectively.

Anxiety is a growing problem in terms of its symptoms often being invisible. As for some individuals with anxiety, they tend to struggle in communicating their needs accordingly. Thus the arts can allow alternative methods of communication to better express themselves. However, on the other hand, it is important to note that in some cases, according to Elizabeth Burns (2009), art-making can induce anxiety in people due to the misconception of the need to have specialized skills to engage in or with art. Thus, naturally, I sought out methods that could decrease my anxiety levels immensely and I even tried to understand what could be the possible cause. I started to “doodle” and before I knew it, I created different patterns, my own unique patterns simultaneously without direct copying of images. This made me realize that I was actually “seeing” patterns without direct links up until I was doing research for a prospective theme, I came across images of Klecksographs that were not only aesthetically intriguing but for some reason I was drawn to these works, as if seeking for patterns or rather seeing connective patterns.

According to Daniel Bryant, human pattern seeking is intrinsic. Bryant (2018:1), explains that our temperament is a necessity of determining the way we respond and react to our environment and with genetics as far as understanding the point is concerned - we form perspectives based on our own desires and needs. Thus, this explains why we as humans seek cause in everything or certain situations such as war, illness and perhaps religion.

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As I continued with my research on Klecksographs, it felt like I was finally confronting unresolved inner or rather personal conflicts whilst facing certain fears, fears I thought were buried deep. This then led me to ask the question: “this is it...what do I see?”, and soon enough this question changed to: “what do I want to see?” These questions had immense power that encouraged the creation of my own Klecksographs, which I was then faced to examine on a much closer dynamic rather than only being the observer as with a psychological analysis session.

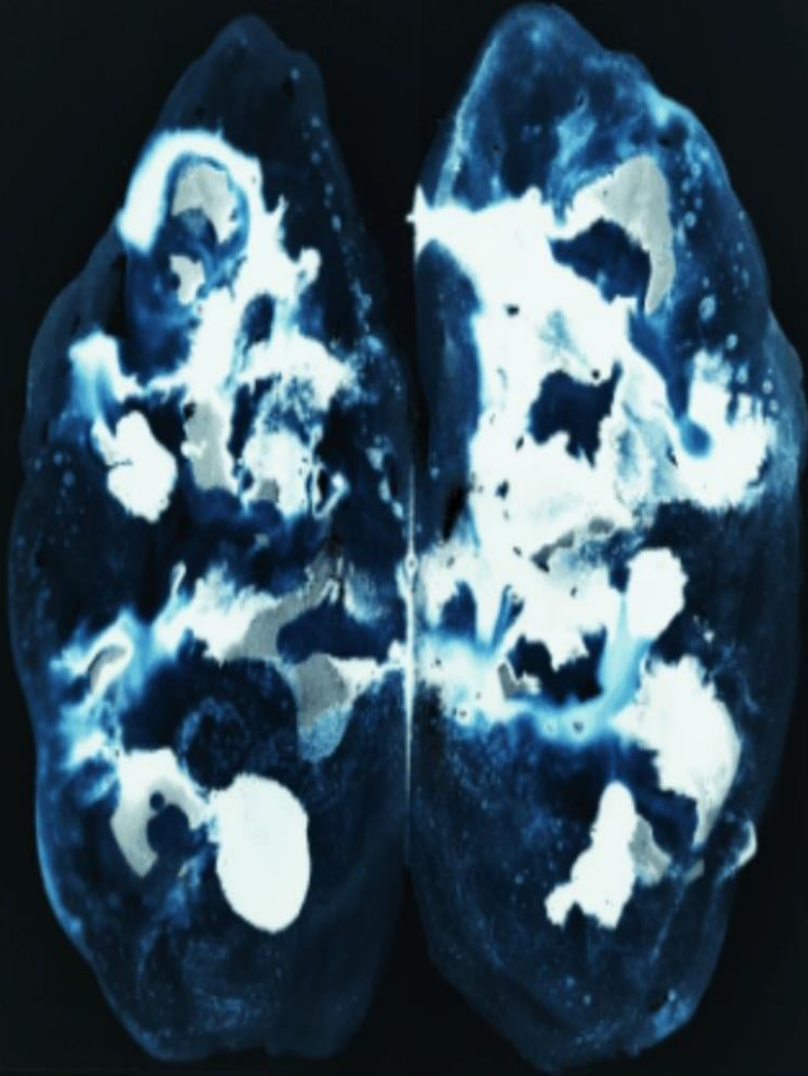
Klecksography is the art of making images from inkblots. The work was pioneered by Justinus Kerner, who included Klecksographs in his books of poetry. Since the 1890’s, Psychologists have used Klecksographs as a tool for studying the subconscious, most famously, Herman Rorschach by implementation of the Rorschach test. The Rorschach test is a psychological test in which subjects’ perceptions of inkblots are recorded and then analysed. It has been employed specifically to detect underlying thought disorder in cases where patients are reluctant to describe their thinking processes openly, or mental disorders.

Mental disorders or mental illness is a general term for a group of illnesses that may have impact on a person’s thoughts, perceptions, feelings and behaviours. Mental illness can affect working and personal relationships. Medication, counselling and or therapy, or both can help manage it accordingly. The following is considered as mental health disorders; Anxiety, Behavioural and Emotional disorders in children, bipolar affective disorder, Depression, Dissociation and Dissociative disorders, Eating Disorders, Obsessive Compulsive disorder, Paranoia, Post-Trauma Stress disorder, Psychosis and Schizophrenia.

Mental health conditions affect many people across the world. According to Medscape, more than one percent of adults live with Schizophrenia and around two point six percent live with Bipolar disorder. Mental disorders like these are relative well-understood, with clinicians and other health or mental professionals utilizing a set of common diagnoses’ to come up with a differential diagnosis and treatment plan. However, some conditions are so rare that mental health professionals may never encounter them in their careers. These conditions include; Stendhal Syndrome, Apotemnophilia, Alien-hand Syndrome, Capgras Syndrome and Alice-in-wonderland Syndrome.

Klecksography

Process / Materials / Content



Taking into account the psychological aspect and or characteristic that Klecksography possess, are there also certain social dynamics involved in viewing and then interpreting these works? Heide Skowranek (2007:4), states that if a piece of work is viewed as an object possessing certain psychological characteristics and also very diverse meanings, then an aspect such as its social content could lead the viewer to draw a parallel between perception and self-reflection. Thus, this becomes a somewhat personal, a temporary emphatic connection among the viewers for feeling more close as human beings on a much deeper level.

Perception is the sensory experience of the world, of recognizing environmental stimuli and actions in response to these stimuli.

Klecksography becomes very diverse when considering the possible and multiple perspectives evident in each work. Because the work is being viewed by different people, each reaction, response and interpretation becomes a gateway to an even much deeper level of context and complexity of the work. These works merely consist of simple inkblots on a piece of paper which is then folded to create the symmetric effect. Thus, for some subjects it may seem two-dimensional due to its surface being “flat” of nature. On the other hand, for others, these works have become complex due to the fact that on some level they are three-dimensional when taking the colour, form and movement into consideration. This resembling of images, according to the Rorschach test, is called Apophenia. It is the human tendency to see patterns and or a resemblance of the inkblot print to other objects and to perceive meaningful connections between seemingly unrelated things. The term Apophenia was coined by Psychiatrist; Klaus Conrad in 1958 in his publication on the beginning stages of Schizophrenia. He described the early stages of delusional thought as over-interpretations of actual sensory perceptions as opposed to hallucinations. On the other hand, the Rorschach test can also be thought of as a psychometric examination of Pareidolia, the active pattern of perceiving objects, shapes, or scenery as meaningful things to the observer’s experience.

The most common perceived images are faces or patterns of forms that are not present at the time of the observation. However, in some cases, optical illusions are perceived in forms of animal hides, bats, shellfish (Lobsters), and rabbit heads. According to Physicist Richard Taylor (Barlow 2017:1), these perceptions are triggered by fractal characteristics of varying dimensions that trick our visual system. Fractals are objects with irregular curves and shapes such as trees, clouds, galaxies, lungs, and neurons. These optical illusions, seen in inkblots and sometimes even in art, are important for understanding the human visual system, and that fractal patterns in the inkblots are “confusing” the visual system.

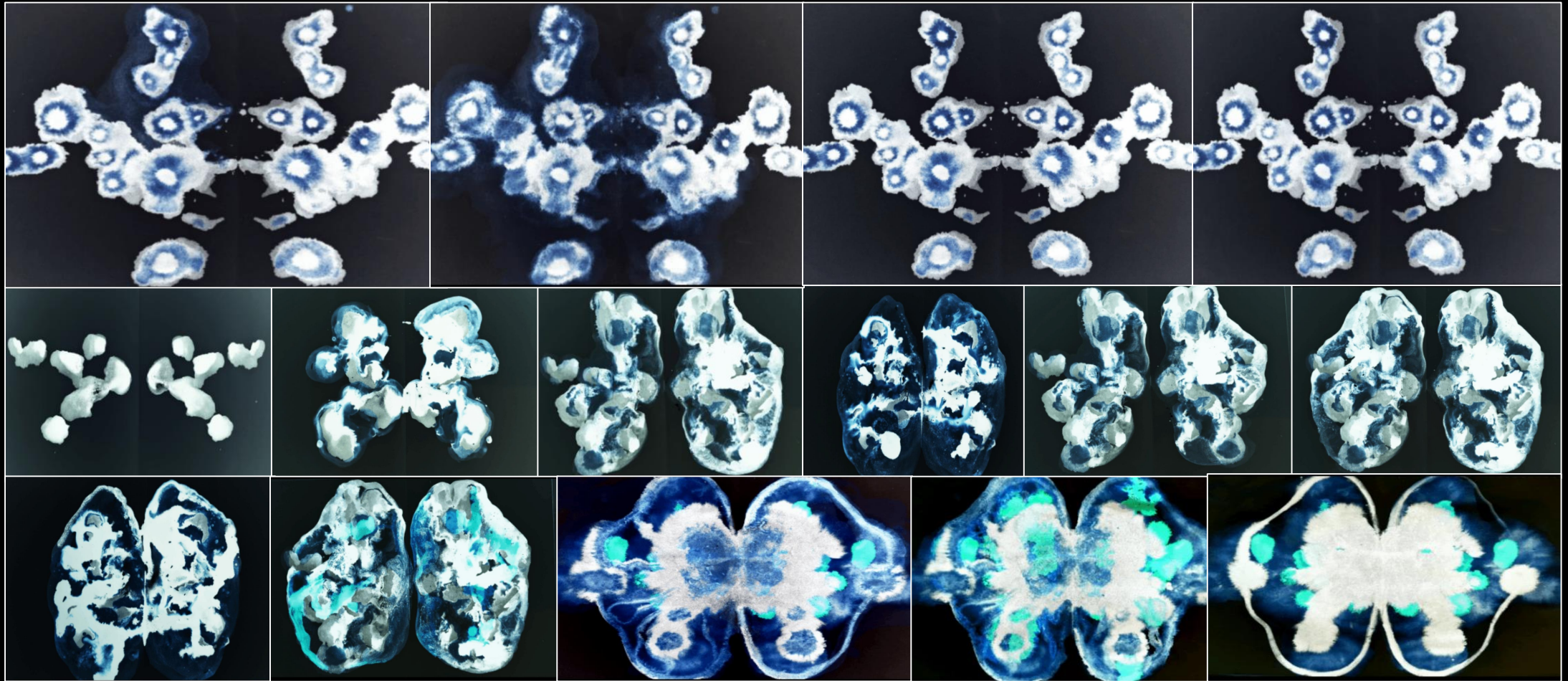
Methodology

Process / Materials / Content

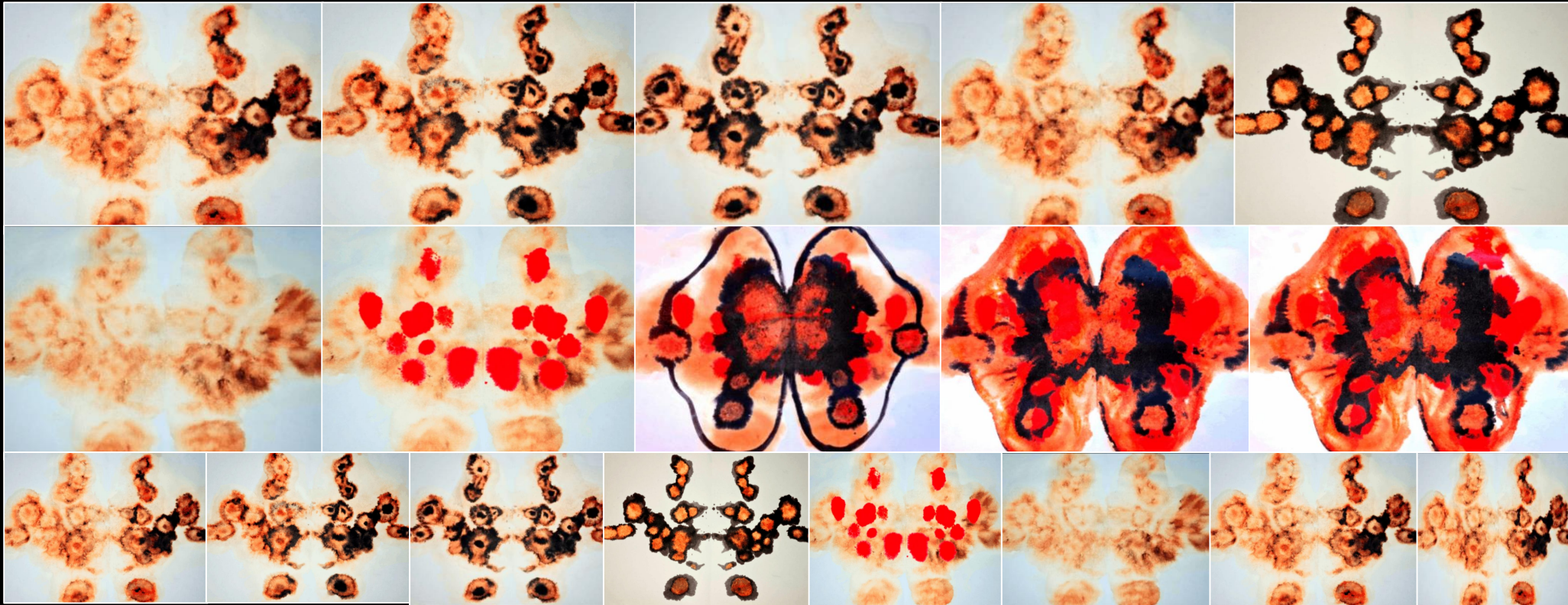
The foundation of my study is mostly based on secondary research which I have included literature reviews and field research. The field research will include actual interpretations of my own Klecksographs. The art-making process is mainly based on experiments I have conducted creating and applying the mediums to the surface. Some of these I would consider to be “failures”, however, after my initial mark-making or “ink-blotting”, I have observed attentively on how the mediums are dissolved, have evolved, reacted, changed and disappeared when applied to the paper surface. This process becomes the centre of the project as with my interaction with the mediums as well as my observations. This enables me to “let-go”, to let me give up control in order to see what the outcome is when not constraint.

I have made use of the Rorschach test’s methodology by recreating the official inkblots, each of the inkblots has near perfect symmetry. I then photographed every instance when medium was applied to the same surface in order to portray progression. After close consideration, I have decided to apply a second medium to the inkblots, that being Jik. When the jik is applied to the ink, it creates these unique shapes, almost three-dimensional and because of its contrasting nature, it then tends to change in form as well consistency when it is close to the drying process. This makes for more intriguing and yet aesthetic pieces. Thus this paved the way for the Klecksograph to become a grotesque image of the brain as if projected as an X-ray or Brain scan.

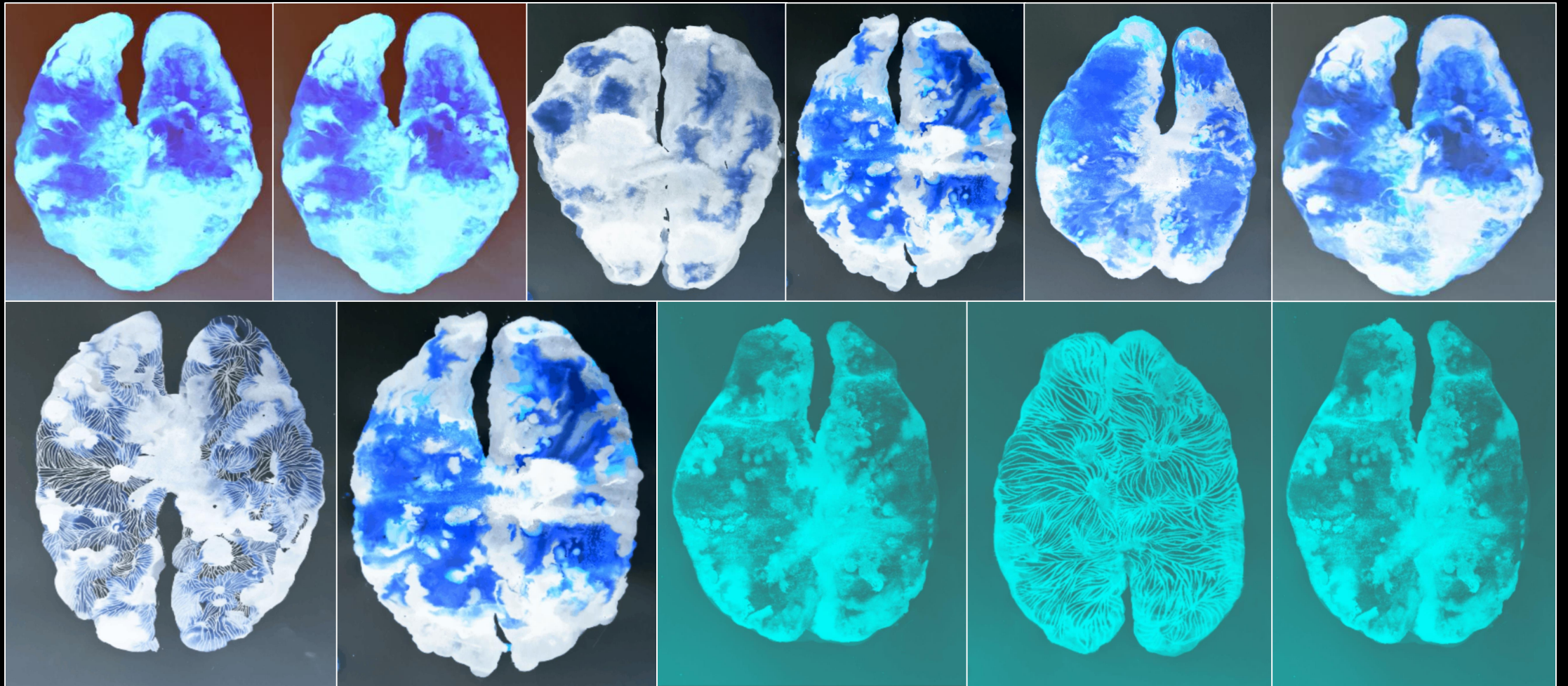
Still Photographs from Video 1: Figures 1 - 15




Still Photographs from Video 3: Figures 16 - 33



Still Photographs from Video 6: Figures 34 - 44



Reflection on Contemporary and Critical Sensibility Theme Engagement



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My theme engages with both the psychological and social context of Klecksography as an art form and therapy method in terms of my own experience I tend to bring to the table. By using Klecksography as means of coping with my anxiety, as it persists being a growing problem, it is evident in some cases or rather situations that communication becomes troublesome in terms of needs not being met nor fulfilled. Thus, the arts, or in this case, Klecksography, can allow and facilitate alternative methods of communication to better express myself.

This exhibition is an exploration of art as a therapeutic experiment in terms of creating and experimenting with inkblots as a form of my own therapy. Initially, I think I was yearning for an expressive way to connect to a much deeper part of myself. It was a way to calm my mind and to reduce my stress significantly. This particular process gave me a sense of accomplishment which I felt to be meditative and introspective. Each of my experiments are created uniquely upon a personal level of experience. Each of these artworks / Videos has its own unique pattern, but in some these are repetitive to emphasize the destructive effects of untreated anxiety. However, the repetitiveness can also be a link to reinforcement of treatments, which is a therapeutic process based on co-operant conditioning and the use of positive reinforcement to initiate and maintain behavioural change.

DEFENITION OF TERMS

Apophenia: Apophenia has come to imply a human propensity to seek patterns in random information such as their environment or nature itself.

Pareidolia: The active pattern of perceiving objects, shapes, or scenery as meaningful things to the observers' experience.

Bilateral Symmetry: Symmetry makes conditions the same for right and left handed subjects, furthermore it facilitates interpretation for certain "blocked" subjects.

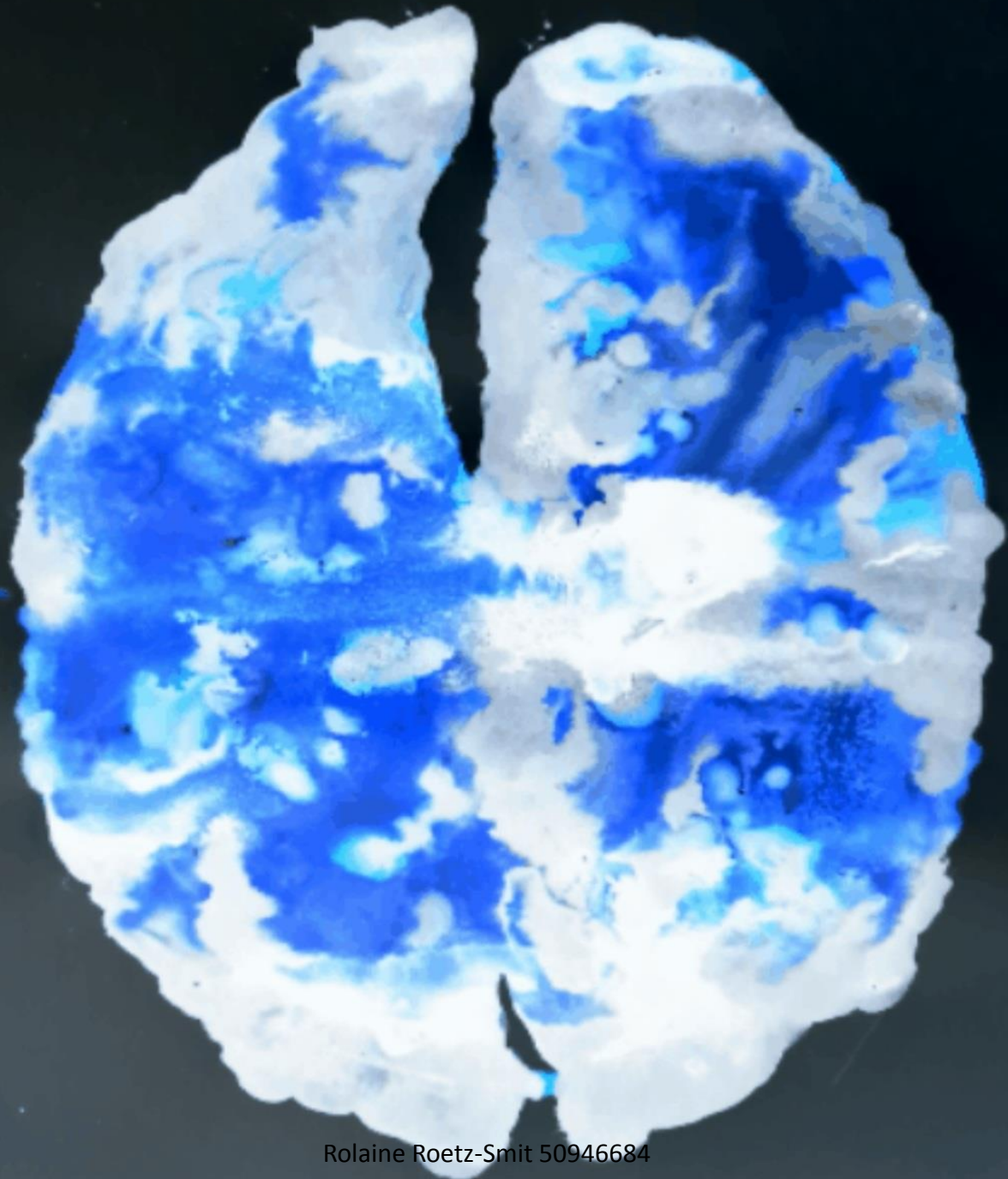
Asymmetry: Asymmetric Klecksographs are rejected by many subjects. It has a disadvantage in that it tends to make answers somewhat stereotyped. Why are humans drawn to symmetry? According to Alan Lightman (2017:1), the human brain actually strives to see all things symmetrical. The reason for being is partly psychological as symmetry represents order, and we as humans are known to crave order in this somewhat chaotic and strange universe we find ourselves in. [It] helps us make sense of the world around us.

Colour: Colour-responses often provides direct insight into one's emotional life. This is due to the colour associations subjects make with their feelings.

Form: Form is the most common determinant in the Klecksography, and is related to the intellectual processes.

Movement / "Shading": Movement and shading have been considered more ambiguously, both in definition and interpretation, Rorschach has considered movement to only be as the "experiencing" of actual motion, while others have widened the scope of this determinant taking it to mean that the subject sees something going on.

Schizophrenia: This is a complex psychotic disorder characterised by disruptions to thinking and emotions, and a distorted perception of reality.



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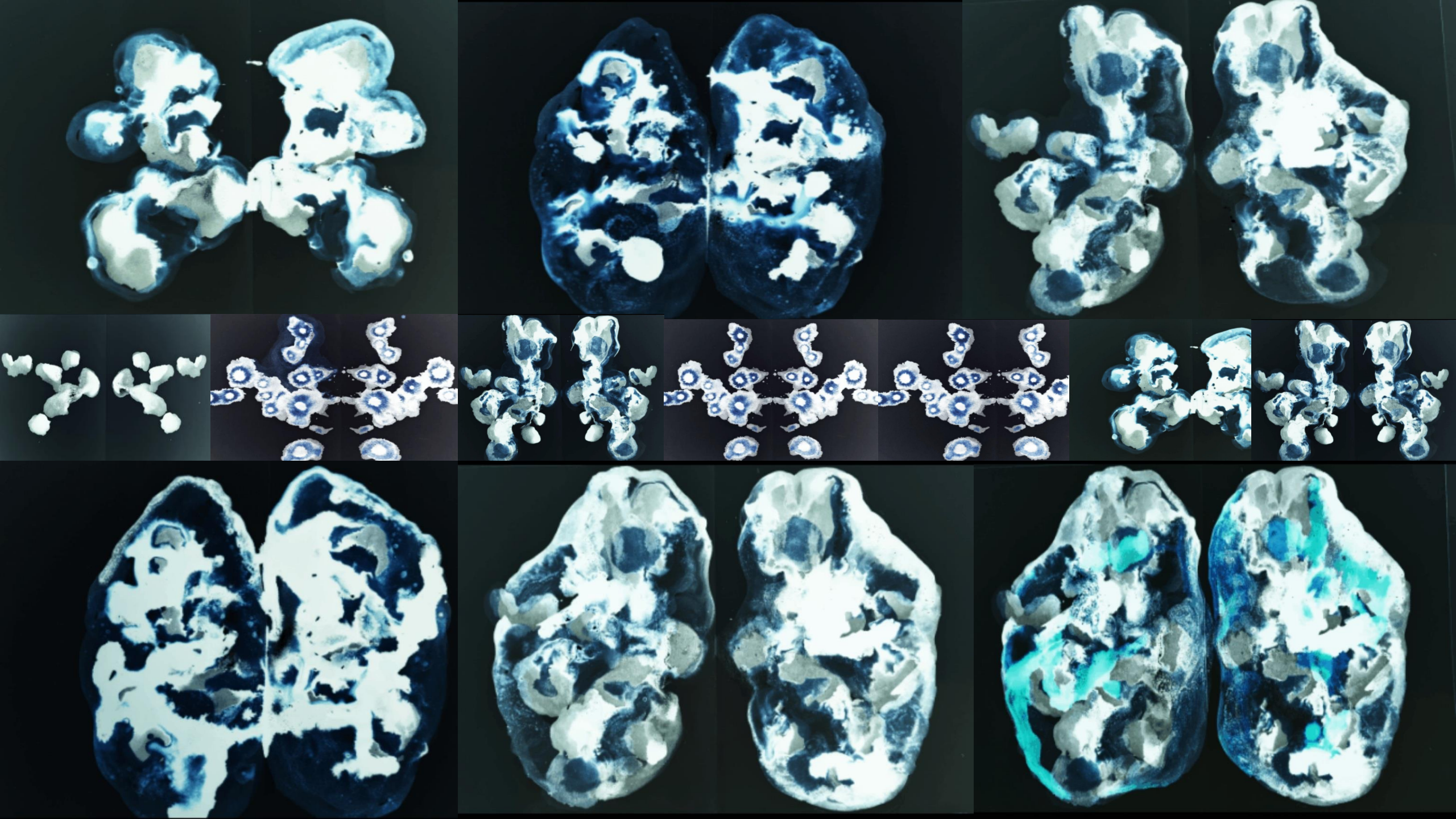
Brain Diagnostics

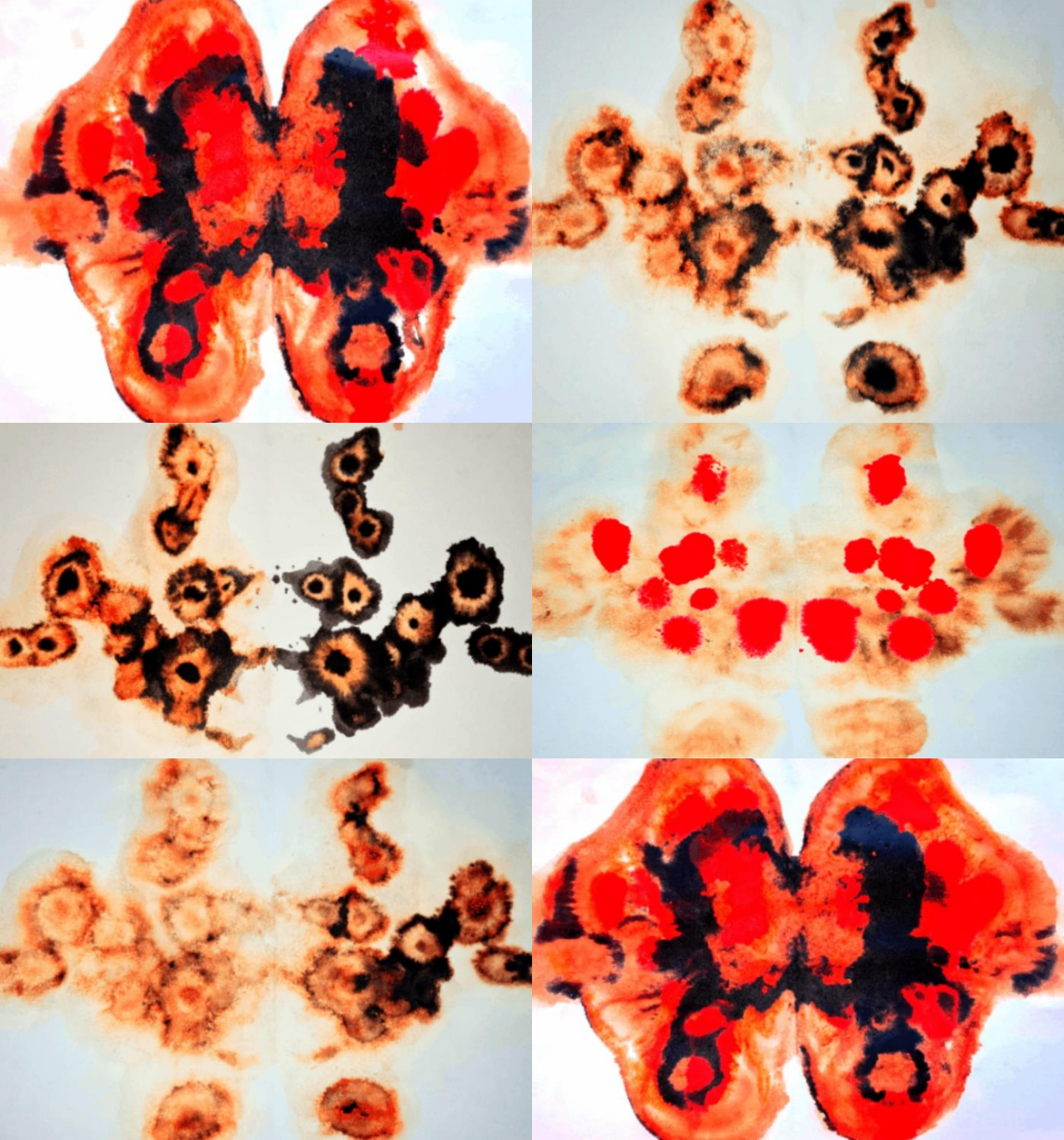
Neurological Diagnostic tests and procedures

Diagnostic tests and procedures are vital tools that help physicians confirm or rule out a neurological disorder or other medical condition. A century ago, the only way to make a definite diagnosis for many neurological disorders was to perform an autopsy after someone has died. Today, new instruments and techniques allow scientists to assess the living brain and monitor nervous system activity as it occurs. Doctors now have powerful and accurate tools to better diagnose disease and to test how well a particular therapy may be working.

Researchers and physicians use a variety of diagnostic imaging techniques and metabolic tests to detect, manage, and treat neurological disease. Many tests can be performed in a physician's practice or at an outpatient facility, with little if any risk to the patient.

Neurological examination assesses motor and sensory skills, hearing and speech, vision, coordination, and balance. It may also test the mental status, mood and behavior. The results of the examination and the patient's history are used to determine a list of possibilities, known as the differential diagnosis, that help determine which additional diagnostic tests and procedures are needed.





FORMAL CONSIDERATIONS

Media / Medium: Jik and ink are the mediums of choice combined which have certain translucency quality that is most suitable in terms of the process for when a three-dimensional effect is required. It gives somewhat depth to the work as needed.

Techniques: Painting and drawing with mixed media gives way to the properties required for the process as the work tends to “change” in colour, form and movement when it is close to the phase of complete absorption.

Format / Form of Presentation: The exhibition consists of a series of videos representing X-ray imaging as used in neurological testing in Mental disorders.









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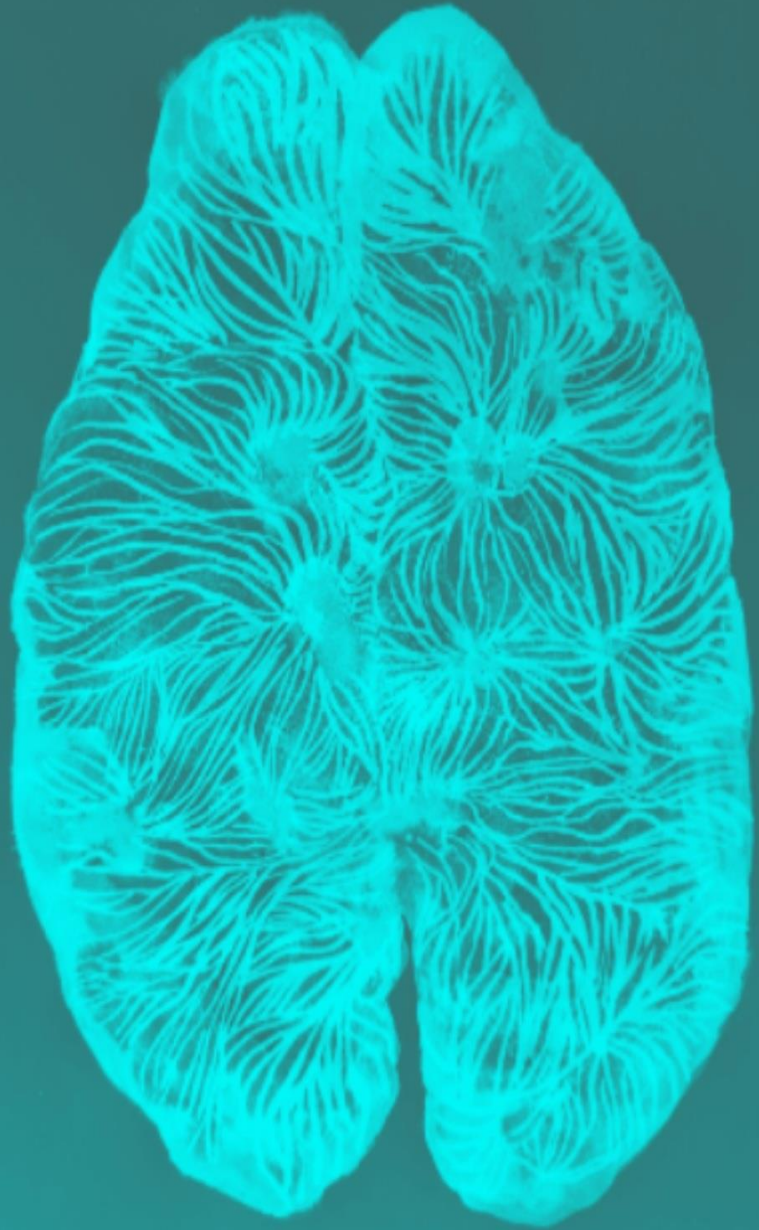
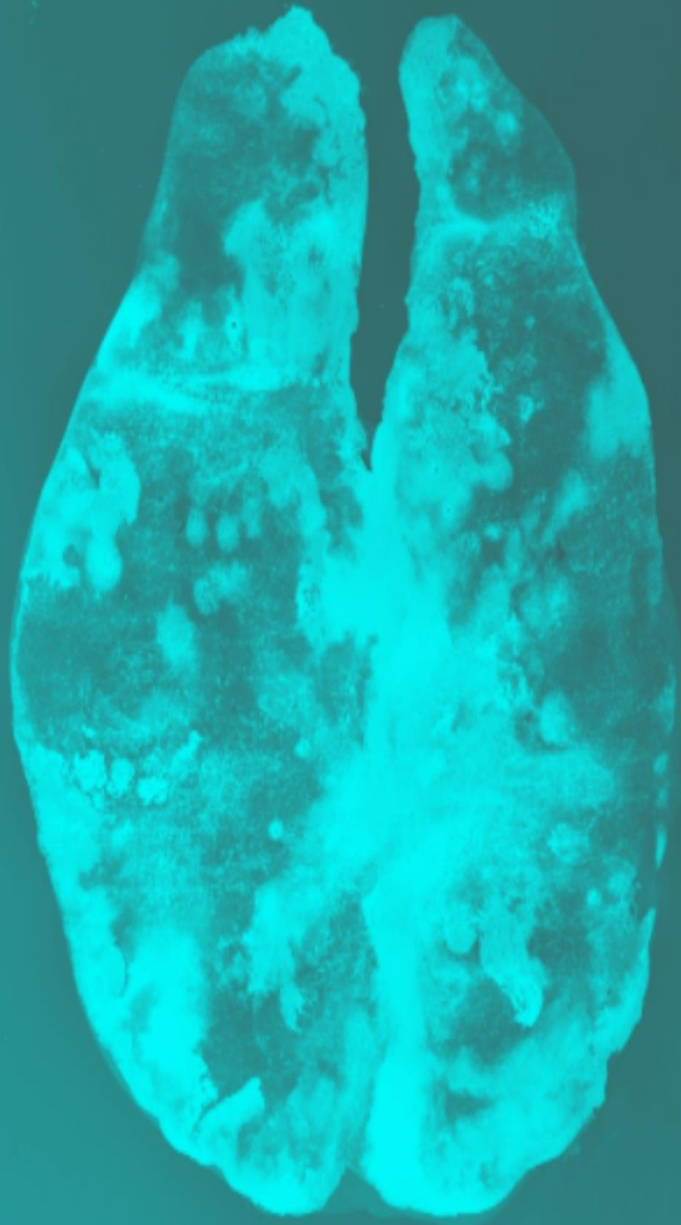
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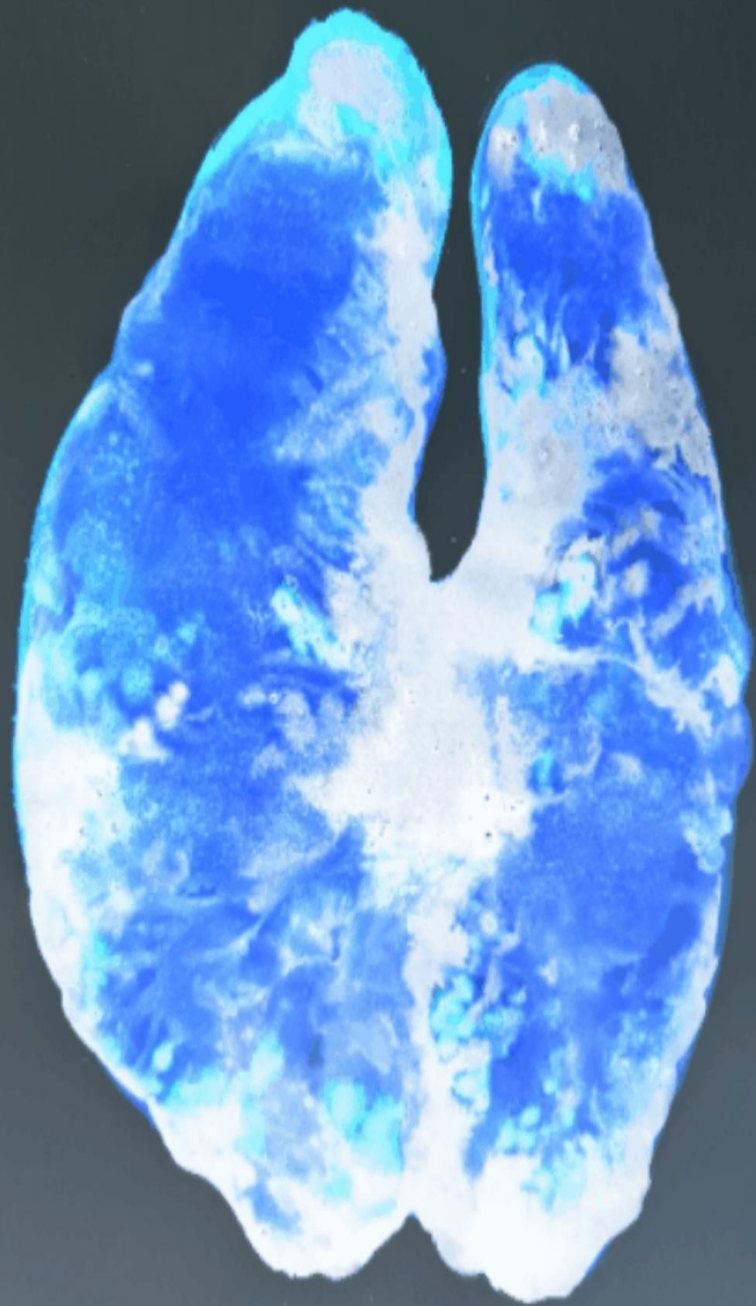
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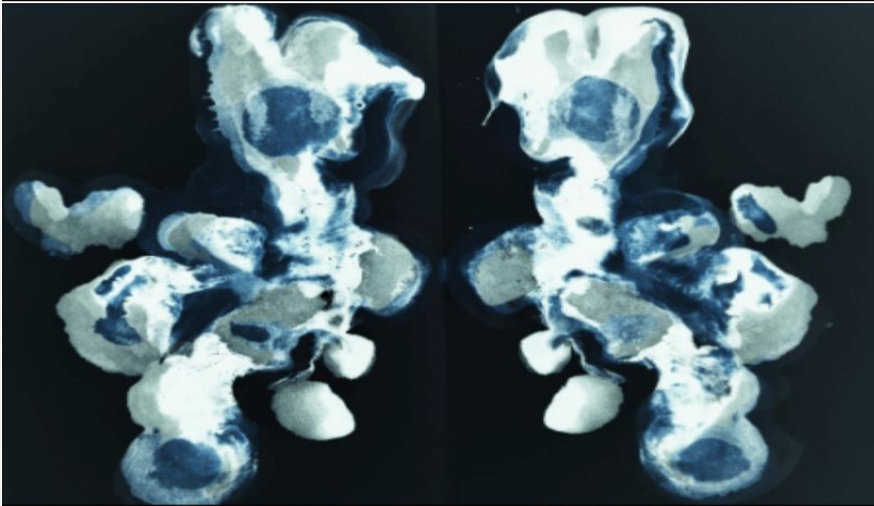
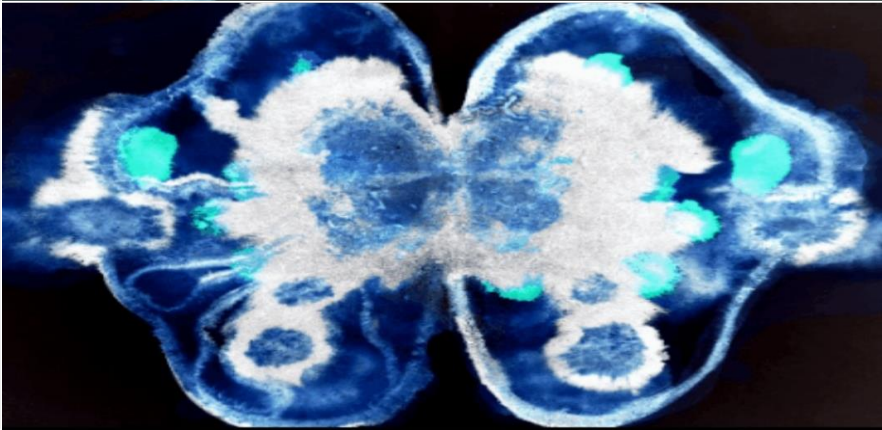
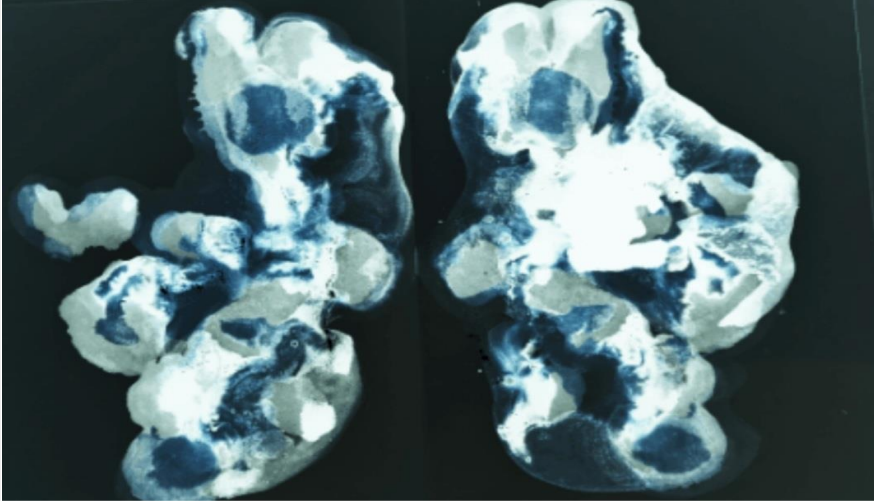
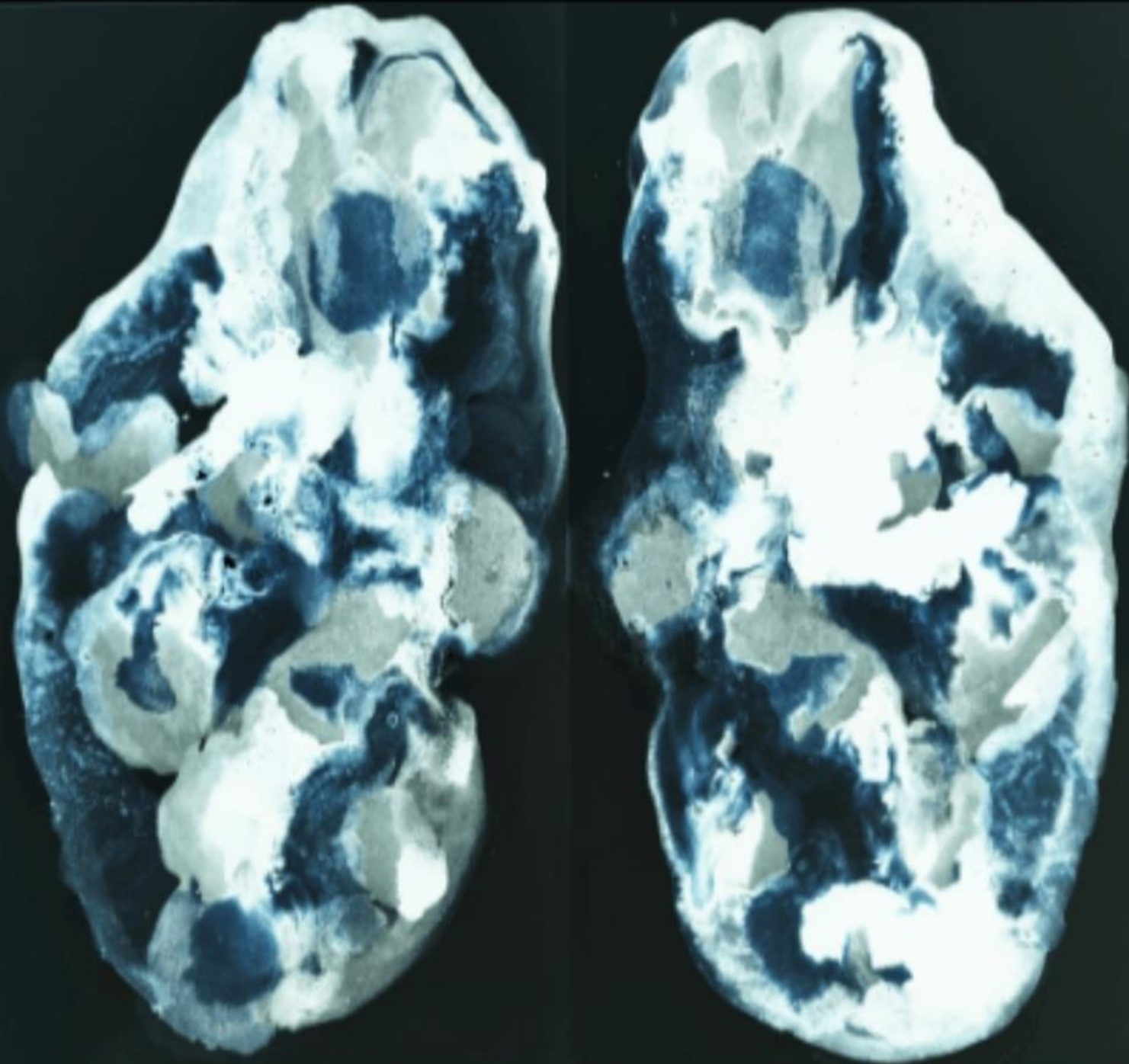
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Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae: Rolaine C. Roetz-Smit

Trained initially as a Pharmacist Assistant, and Graphic Designer, both careers that impacts on my work as an artist.

2007 - SENIOR CERTIFICATE

2011 - GRAPHIC DESIGN CERTIFICATE, INTEC COLLEGE.

2020 - PHARMACIST ASSISTANT QUALIFIED POST BASIC DIPLOMA,
S-BUYS ACADEMY

2021 - BACHELOR OF VISUAL ARTS DEGREE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH
AFRICA (UNISA)

No previous exhibitions, except for group examination exhibitions
with fellow UNISA students:

2013 - First year Student Examination Exhibition

2018 - Second year Student Examination Exhibition

2020 - Third year Student Examination Exhibition

2021 - Fourth year Student Examination Exhibition

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