PHOTOTHERAPY – FROM CONCEPTS TO PRACTICES
PHOTOThERAPY

From concepts to practices

Editor:
Matej Peljhan
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**FOREWORD**

Today, we can hear almost on every corner how we live in faster and faster times of increasing changes. Globalisation, the internet, technological development and other characteristics of the modern time keep introducing new and new material and immaterial products into our everyday lives. The changes are reflected in numerous fields that mark the quality of our lives – in families, interpersonal relations, professional lives, education, politics, culture and we could go on and on.

One of the changes is definitely that we live more and more surrounded by images. Photography is no longer what it used to be, alive only in home albums, newspapers and magazines, for which only rare individuals take pictures, for they are skilled enough to master the mysteries of a photo camera. It is truly becoming a part of the life of an entirely ordinary individual. As viewers, we run into it on every corner, and almost everyone can be an active photographer now.

Even though photography has quite of a long history, relatively a lot of time had to pass before it got rid of the conviction of many individuals that taking photographs was merely about pressing the button of a device that objectively and realistically projects reality such that it truly is. We must be aware that photography is much more than that. The photographer creating the photograph, as well as the viewer reliving it are deeply subjectively involved. With the aid of visual language, which they began to develop inside in their earliest period, even before they had learned their first worlds, they can accept and express even the very complex contents: rational, emotional, conscious or unconscious.

With the popularisation of photography, ideas and practices started to develop, trying to use the characteristic and advantages of this
medium to help people with problems. The so called phototherapeutic possibilities were recognised and introduced into work with clients by the psychotherapists, art professors enriched their work with them, while other professional profiles used different methods and forms to use and develop them to their advantages. With the expansion of digitalisation, the internet and new media, new possibilities for such use are offering themselves without precedence.

In spite of the ever expanding phototherapeutic practices, we must find that theory and systematic expert treatment of the field are lagging behind what is already happening. An overview of the available expert literature shows that publications from this field are relatively scarce. The contributions collected in these proceedings are trying to offer at least some material to fill the void.

In Slovenia, we have been very active in the field of phototherapy in the past years, and in line with our assessments, a comparison of the world’s situation places us entirely up to date, and in not a few cases, even in the foreground of development. We have founded the Institute of Photographic Therapy to monitor the latest world activities in this field and develop its own doctrine of phototherapeutic theory and practice. We prepare educational events for professional workers, who in turn lead different phototherapeutic projects in their respective institutions. We try to harmonise them to systematically introduce them into preventive, educational, therapeutic and rehabilitative programmes.

One of the leading institutions from the aforementioned field is the Centre for Education and Rehabilitation of Physically Handicapped Children and Adolescents Kamnik, among other activities very supportive of this type of work method with vulnerable groups. Within the framework of the project programme of supplementary training for young adults, phototherapy has been assigned an especially important role. With its help, the persons with special needs are offered different possibilities of rehabilitation, training, personal affirmation and social inclusion.

One of the results of this project are the proceedings before you. This collection includes articles by experts of diverse profiles, who all realise the importance of therapy through photography and who theoretically, as well as practically come across as experts in the field, in theory as well as in practice. We have divided the book in three parts. In the first part, one can read professional articles that try to shed light on the field from diverse perspectives. In the second part, one can find contributions from the treatment practice implemented in different institutions in Slovenia. The third part is very illustrative, giving a voice to the users, so they could most plastically and emphatically describe how very positively photographic activity is able to influence an individual’s life.

The collection of articles has been published in Slovenian as well as English language. Even though the known saying goes: “Think globally, act locally,” we are on the one hand modest in this area, while on the other hand, we are very much ambitious. Because we are aware of our own smallness and inadequacy, we try to contribute to networking and unifying strengths in wider space, as well. All of this is due to the purpose of paving the way for phototherapy, which is to offer simple and efficient methods to improve the individuals’ quality of life, as well as the quality of life in the entire society.

Matej Peljhan, urednik
First Part

Scientific Articles
PHOTOTHERAPY –
OVERVIEW AND NEW PERSPECTIVES

Matej Peljhan, Anita Zelić

**Matej Peljhan** has a degree in psychology and he is a clinical psychology specialist. For over twenty years, during the course of his career, he has worked with people with special needs. He knows handicap first hand, because he suffered multiple injuries, including the loss of his arm and his eye, at the age of ten, when he had an accident with a military bomb while playing near his home. He has had many independent photographic exhibitions in Slovenia and abroad, and has received over a hundred prizes for his photographs. With the photographic series entitled The Little Prince, which is about a boy with muscular dystrophy, he accomplished extraordinary response from the general public worldwide. He is one of the pioneers of phototherapy in Slovenia and cofounder of the Institute for phototherapy. He carries out different phototherapy workshops and projects, both with children and adults.

**Anita Zelić** is one of the beginners of phototherapy in Slovenia. She graduated at the Faculty of social work with a thesis entitled Phototherapy: photography as an artistic expressive means in the context of psychosocial help. She is a cofounder of the Institute for phototherapy. She carries out different phototherapy workshops and projects, both with children and adults.
Phototherapy is quite new, but given the contemporary guidelines and technological development, a very promising method of using photography as an artistic means of expression in the field of psychological and social aid, as well as work with the vulnerable groups. In addition to the term phototherapy, elsewhere in the world, people use different expressions, such as photographic therapy and therapeutic photography. The use of these terms is quite random, which, of course, triggers a certain degree of confusion. Above all due to the fact that some authors use different expressions for the same or similar activity, while others use different expressions because they wish to make a more precise differentiation and to define specific forms and purposes of this activity. The content of this article will, accordingly, focus on the overview of the notion of phototherapy in the world, and even more on the definition and use of phototherapy in our country.

Phototherapy is suitable for children, youth, adults as well as the elderly. It can be implemented individually as well as within a group. It even encompasses very diverse forms and practices, which include or focus on the photo camera, photography, taking photographs and other creative endeavours, connected to photography with a view to positively affect psycho-physical health and social functioning of an individual. It can be meant for therapy and can reduce an individual's problems, or it can be only a preventive activity to help strengthen one's mental health and promote personal growth. In spite of the fact that the beginnings of the use of certain techniques of phototherapy originate from psychotherapeutic principles and methods, the techniques of phototherapy today are disseminating and are used in different expert fields, in different contexts and through different theoretical tackles.

Even though the history of phototherapy, as we shall see later on, is not that short, we could hardly say in reference to the overview of the past, as well as to the present time, that it has had or has a clearly formed and unified doctrine. Different authors have developed and implemented their phototherapeutic practices quite independently. Even today, there is but little literature that would provide a systematic overview of the field. Consequently, this activity has mostly not yet gotten its true recognition and the implementation of such practices is left to the individuals within the framework of a private initiative or several different 'ad hoc' projects.

Phototherapy can be categorised in the field of art therapy, however, it is important that we do not categorize it together with fine arts therapy. Namely, hereinafter, we will see that despite the common ground of phototherapy and fine arts therapy, which both use the methodology of image projection, they each tackle its own aspects of personal symbolism, due to which the very nature and flexibility of the photographic medium and creative process of taking photographs demand that photography gets its own theoretical and practical acknowledgement and is thus considered an independent branch of art therapy.

**From Art Therapy to Phototherapy**

“Art is above time and uses its symbols to point at timelessness; psychology refers to consciousness, while art touches the unconscious, delving into the depths of the spiritual world.”

(Trstenjak, 1994, pp. 11)

**Short History of Art Therapy Development**

Art therapy or help through art is a young discipline that begun to systematically develop in the mid-20th century, while its primary basis originates from connecting concepts and ideas from the fields of art and psychology. However, we can say that connecting art and healing is not a new phenomenon, since it can be traced deep in human history, in all spaces and times. Art that has manifested through music,
pictures, drama, dance, poetry etc. has been said to have “healing powers” for humans since ancient times. This is evident from the spiritual rituals of African shamans and American Indians, as well as Buddhist mandalas or the phenomenon of catharsis in Greek tragedies.

From that viewpoint, we can understand the development of art therapy as connecting the long existing human tradition with the impacts of intellectual and social currents of the 20th century. Art, education and medicine are supposed to provide common effects to that end and thus, the idea of art working as a medical accessory had sprung up already in mid-19th century, simultaneously with the rise of psychiatry. Consequently, other movements had begun to develop, taking a stance for more humane treatment of people with mental diseases, among others the movement promoting inclusion of the patients into artistic activities. However, the interest of psychiatry for the artistic expression of patients was first directed into diagnostic and not therapeutic purposes (Malchiodi, 2005).

The first documented origins of the use of arts therapies can be traced at the beginning of the 20th century, namely in the WWI period. The origins in question are the so-called miraculous music therapies with patients who were utterly unresponsive, however, they began to have reactions to the music played to them. Soon afterwards, Joseph Moreno (1923), the pioneer of psychodrama, began to use in his work with the mental patients the elements of theatre play and described positive impacts of creative performance, role playing and monodrama, which helped the patients establish contact with all parts of their personality. At the same time, Florence Goodenough (1926) began to study children’s drawings as indicators of the level of cognitive development, while Hans Prinzhorn began to take an interest in the art work of people with different mental diseases (Malchiodi 2005).

Art therapy or expressive therapy gained its recognisability and value in the years between 1930 to 1940, after the psychotherapists and artists had realised that self-expression through non-verbal methods, such as painting, music expression and movement, is extremely efficient in people with very diverse mental disorders. With them, therapy through talking or verbal expression was namely often impossible and also inefficient. In almost entire human history, a conviction was held that mental disease is either a manifestation of divine or demonic forces. It was only after the development of psychoanalysis that the imaginative and artistic expressions of an individual were beginning to get used as key information on the person’s inner world. Thus, art became a tool within psychotherapy, a tool that helped better understand the world of mental patients.

Carl Jung, who drew, painted and wrote poems himself, as well, ascribed a lot of importance to the artistic expression of his patients, creating an attractive theoretical model and foundation for art therapy. He believed that creativity is a basic human instinct, essential for the person’s mental health, and he once wrote that during the process of giving form to archetypal images, we find a way to our deepest, most true self, and that through manifesting what is inside us, transforming the spirit and ideas into forms and language, we experience the revelation of creativity, of creation. By giving form to the spirit, we are held by it and thus healed. By expressing divinity through art, we also experience divinity inside ourselves (Phillips, 2000).

He saw the aim of the therapy in setting free the creative sources which are hidden or latent in the patient and then become the catalyst of change. The process of painting was for him an exploratory process through which images and symbols are formed, to be ‘animated’ through conversation. He saw art as a way of regression in the service of the ego, in which the individual comes into contact with the unconscious on a conscious level. Thus, contrary to psychosis, which he saw as uncontrolled regression and getting lost in the unconscious, art therapy encompasses a controlled regression. He therefore saw way to integrate the unconscious and the conscious through two interlinked ways: the ‘way of creative formulation’, in which there are the fantasy world, imagination, symbols and art, and the ‘way of understanding’, in which there are intellectual concepts, verbal formulations, consciousness and abstraction (Ivanović et al., 2014).

The term Art Therapy itself was first used in 1942 by the British artist Adrian Hill, who has found that fine arts have a soothing effect on patients with tuberculosis at King Edward VII’s sanatorium in Sussex. He wrote about his discoveries and achieved for fine arts therapy to be disseminated into other sanatoriums. He saw the value of art therapy
in setting free the creative energy, which provided the patient with defense mechanisms against negative emotions. His work was expanded by the artist Edward Adamson, British as well, who designed an open studio in a psychiatric hospital Netherne near London, where the patients could freely come and paint. His strategy was 'non-interventional' and only included very little conversation or interpretation.

At the same time, a simultaneous, but independent development of art therapy happened in the United States with the pioneers Margaret Naumburg and Edith Kramer. In the year 1940, psychologist M. Naumburg defined art therapy as a psychoanalytic tackle in which free artistic expression becomes a form of symbolic language, which helps the patient during the process of psychotherapy to word what had been created and set the conflicts and trouble in the foreground. Edith Kramer was born in Vienna, where she studied art, painting and sculpturing, and in 1944, she moved to the United States, where she designed an undergraduate study of art therapy at an university in New York. She dedicated the biggest part of her career to children and youth with trouble in verbal description of their own problems, and in doing so, she accentuated the importance of the creative process (Malchiodi, 2005).

With ever larger use and expansion of the methods and tackles of art therapy, the British Association of Art Therapists was founded in 1964, and four years later, the American Association of Art Therapists, as well. After 1970 in Great Britain, postgraduate studies in art therapy were also developed, and with the year 1997, the profession of art therapist became officially acknowledged and registered there. Even though the largest number of art therapists is still employed in psychiatry, the profession is also spreading to other institutions in the field of psycho-social aid, as well as to schools.

**History and the Development of Photography**

The first published articles on the use of photography in work with persons with mental disorders, and along with them, probably the first early formal use of photography in therapeutic purposes, can be traced back to the 19th century – Hugh Diamond, 1856, and Thomas Barnardo, 1870.

The first documented use of photography in psychotherapy occurred with the English psychiatrist and amateur photographer Hugh Diamond. He was an employee at the women's ward of a psychiatric hospital in Surrey and he photographed his patients in order to recognise different types and phases of mental disease and consequently to demonstrate the changes in the female patient's looks. He thought these photographs were useful, for he was convinced that it is important for mental patients that they see the changes in their outer image, so that they can more easily identify themselves during the later phases of the disease. He saw positive therapeutic effects in monitoring the changes, for the patients as well as the staff of the hospital, for the photographs have helped him learn about the development of mental disease and how to understand it. In the year 1856, he presented his findings to the London Chamber of Medicine, however, in spite of his efforts to use photography in psychotherapy, his work remained unnoticed (Gilman 1976, in: Krauss, 1983).

In the year 1870, a doctor named Thomas Barnardo used the method of photographing children in an orphanage, in order to monitor the changes in body development in a new environment. Ten years later, Charles Hood took photographs of patients in the psychiatric institution Bethlem Royal Hospital, reporting that taking portrait shots has become one of the activities in which the patients love to participate, for it makes them happier and enlivens their days in the institution. In addition, he saw the effectiveness of such artistic creativity in helping the patients delve deeper into their own self-image through their pose, clothes and posture. In this orientation towards oneself, Hood perceived healing therapeutic effects (ibid.).

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Despite these documented and promising beginnings, the use of photography in therapeutic purposes begun to systematically develop only after the year 1970. In Canada and America, the pioneers of the field, such as Judy Weiser and David Krauss, have developed a method called phototherapy (Craig, 2009). Weiser, otherwise a psychologist, used psychotherapy as a medium in her advisory work with deaf-mute children. In 1975, she published her first article from the field,
entitled PhotoTherapy Techniques, which was the first time for the term to appear in any printed medium. Two years later, the magazine Psychology Today published an article in which the author Zakem issued an appeal for all persons who use photography in their advisory work to contact him. More than two hundred people responded to that article and thus, the newspaper PhotoTherapy Quarterly Newsletter was formed. The interest for this field led to the first international symposium on phototherapy in 1979. The event attracted listeners from five countries, who were also early pioneers in the field, such as Entin, Fryrear, Gassan, Hogan, Krauss, Stewart, Walker, Weiser, Wolf and Zakem, and many others whose articles and published work have created a foundation for forming literature in the field of phototherapy (http://www.phototherapy-centre.com/history.htm).

However, simultaneous development, also dubbed phototherapy, happened in Great Britain with Jo Spence and Rosy Martin at its head (Craig, 2009). Jo Spence was a documentary photographer who tried to present the topics of social and political change and feminism through her works. When she found out that she has breast cancer, she began to document her disease, because she did not wish to become the object of medical examinations, but instead an individual exploring herself. Through her photographs, she explained her own feeling of weakness as a patient, and her infirmity in relation to the doctors and nurses in a public institution. Thereby, she wanted to show the battle fought by an individual against those in the state that hold the positions of power. She named her actions in this emotional crisis phototherapy – healing with the aid of photography. In the year 1983, together with Rosy Martin, she developed phototherapy into a practice to aid individuals who wish to explore themselves with the help of performing and photographing different segments of their personality (http://www.portfolio.mvm.ed.ac.uk/studentwebs/session1/group54/Jospence.htm).

In Slovenia, the first documented use of photography for therapeutic purposes took place in 2010, when Anita Zelić, at the time a student of the Faculty of Social Work and of the Higher Vocational College of Photography, began to explore and collect foreign expert literature on the use of photography within the context of psycho-social aid, and used her findings to design and implement the project of phototherapy with persons who experience mental health problems. The users included in the project first got acquainted with the technical skills in the use of a photo camera and then started to explore their values, sources of power and also desires and hopes about the future through the creation of photographs. Simultaneously, they listened to the stories of other participants and tried to develop a notion of different perspectives and different thinking. The use of techniques of phototherapy has consequently proved to be a method with a wide spectre of uses and effects in the field of psycho-social help. Among others it encourages communication, self-exploration, reflection, achieving and monitoring changes, visualisation of desired outcomes, development of interpersonal relations, strengthening self-esteem, improvement of self-image, constructive reframing of the problem situation and last, but not least, encourages creativity through visual symbolic language.

All the theoretical and empirical findings were assessed by Zelić in 2012 in her BA thesis entitled Phototherapy: Photography as an Artistic Means of Expression within the Context of Social Relief, with which she graduated at the Faculty of Social Work, but simultaneously, she began to implement phototherapy at the primary school Kozara in Nova Gorica on children with different developmental impairments. Pedagogue, sociologist and photographer Jure Kravanja was parallel in his beginnings of using photography in his work with the patients of the Psychiatric Hospital in Ljubljana. Later, Kravanja and clinical psychologist and photographer Matej Peljhan designed – and started to implement – phototherapeutic activities at the Kamnik-based CIRIUS Institute, namely with youth with a high level of movement impairment. By doing so, they have expanded the impact of phototherapy techniques from the cognitive, emotional and social fields to the development of motoric skills. In 2012, they founded the Institute of Photographic Therapy together, to be joined by Zelić in 2013. Today, all three of them implement diverse phototherapeutic projects and together, they lead and develop the Institute of Photographic Therapy. Their vision is for phototherapy to gain theoretical and practical acknowledgement and could, with the help of new professional co-workers, enable a wide spectre of vulnerable groups a chance and help to relieve problems, compensate for lacks, develop potentials and constructive
creativity, and consequently gain a life of a better quality. In 2014, they presented themselves within the framework of the event Perugia Social Photo Fest at the world phototherapy conference, along with Judy Weiser and a few other acknowledged pioneers in the field.

The Role of Photography in Phototherapy

The invention of photography in 1839 and its development in the years that followed brought a revolution in the manner of depicting persons. The invention triggered widespread enthusiasm and wonder regarding the possibilities of the photo camera to create a mirror image. The privilege was first only available to a handful of rich individuals, however, the middle class got ever stronger in industrialised places, where photo studios were opened on a mass scale and cameras were developed with better lenses, so this ‘magic of photography’ was brought closer to ordinary people, which in a few years enabled most of ‘everyday’ people to save their own personal history in visual form. Along with the enthusiasm about photography being able to depict an objective and real image of the object of the portrait, though, a certain disease began to appear, as well, for photography brought with it the dismantlement of the illusions of youth and beauty, easily created by the painted portraits (Gernsheim, 1965; in: Krauss, 1983).

In addition to personal depictions of people, photography also became an indispensable part of newspapers, books, magazines, newsletters and announcements, so the cultural influence of photography at the beginning of the 20th century became so strong, all-encompassing and self-evident that it was almost invisible. The ever more illusory new medium, namely photography, caused the old ways of critical understanding of graphic and image content to become insufficient, and new ones had to be developed. The ability of a photo camera to record everything in one hundredth of a second set an impression on people that the photographic image was a replica of reality. For that reason, photography became the symbol of ‘true’ and, as an entirely new manner of creating images and symbols, it did not undergo traditional criticism used with other visual media. The biggest challenge was the apparent equality between the object and its photographic depiction, since their similarity was much bigger than with paintings, drawings or any other graphic medium, which created the illusion of ‘sameness, mirror-image, reality’. It was not until a lot of years have passed that a conceptual breaking point happened and led to the conviction that photography was reality, to the realisation that the objects and subjects on the photograph were a sort of an extension of the photographer (Krauss, 1983).

With technological achievements, the development of roll film and the small, but price-wise available Kodak photo camera, the age of formal studio visits transformed into a ‘DIY’ age and the form of photography that had developed in parallel to Kodak got to be named ‘snapshot’. These snapshots began to depict families through their interactions and enable every family member to get his own identity and relationship towards others. In addition to the ‘posed’ pictures, the recordings of ephemeral expressions were also taken, as well as of sincere looks and of real family life. This radical and informal photographic style began to record the visual and cultural truths far from the stereotypical depictions of the formal Victorian portraits of the past (Krauss, 1983).

Within the professional development of photography, the ‘snapshot’ got criticised as well as respected as a form of medium. Because it represented photography in its purest form and the purpose of photography was clear, this kind of photograph held the most value for the one who took it. From this viewpoint, a snapshot can be understood as primarily a psychological document that can be perceived aesthetically, anthropologically and historically and played an important role in the sociological development of culture at that time (Krauss, 1983).

Amateur snapshots have revolutionarily changed the way people saw each other and the world around them, and have also transformed the concept of what is real and what is important. As Berger says, photography was thus liberated from the limits of art and became a people’s medium available for democratic use (Berger, 1999).

With an ever more available and applicable photographic medium, the interaction with photography began to take place on a daily basis. Thus, we experience the contemporary world above all through images we are faced with on every single turn. The fact that we live in a visual culture and the rise of digital photography have, however, brought us closer to photography than ever before.
The development of digital photography, computer science, mobile telephony and internet media that we have been witnessing in the past decades has substantially marked our entire culture. It has changed our lives and had an important influence on the social segments, including science, art and culture. It also influenced the development of new phototherapeutic methods and practices, so we can find that it was only the changes in modern times that have enabled true applicability and expansion of phototherapy.

The meaning of photography, video and other visual media is augmenting significantly. The number of photographs made by people all over the world is rapidly increasing each year. If in line with some assessments, humanity recorded 1 billion photographs in the year 1930, the number had by 1960 risen to 3 billion, by 1980 to 25 billion, by 2000 to 86 billion and in 2012, the staggering 380 billion photographs (http://www.buzzfeed.com/hunterschwarz/how-many-photos-have-been-taken-ever-6zgv#.niNvWrmr5).

Meanwhile, motivation to take photographs and the role of photography in one’s life are also changing. Decades ago, humans took photographs mostly in order to document something, to preserve memories of important events from his life and then archive them in the family album. Today, more than that, photography is becoming a tool to form personal identity and interpersonal communication (http://vcj.sagepub.com/content/7/1/57.short).

The development of the internet is accelerating the processes of globalisation, it enables availability of incredible quantities of the most diverse data and offers new and new media, unknown to us in the past. The first web site was published in 1990, while in 2015, it is realistic to expect over 1,000,000,000 registered web adresses (https://www.youtube.com/yt/press/statistics.html). Today, over 3 billion people use the internet, and in the world’s developed countries, 9 to 10 inhabitants are connected to the internet. The internet enables us to post, disseminate and archive photographs (http://mobiforge.com/research-analysis/global-mobile-statistics-2014-part-a-mobile-subscribers-handset-market-share-mobile-operators#subscribers). The quantity and meaning of visual material on the internet in general are more and more superseding the written word. On social network Facebook, the largest web photo-gallery, over 350 million photographs are posted every day (http://hyperallergic.com/48765/how-many-photos-do-americans-take-a-year/), while on YouTube, the largest web site for video exchange, as many as 300 hours of video shots are posted by the minute (https://www.youtube.com/yt/press/statistics.html).

Computer programmes for processing photographs and manipulating them, which are becoming more and more accessible and simple to use, enable us to continue and upgrade the creative process that used to finish with the press of the trigger button with the aid of a computer.

Lastly, the most important thing: the development of digital photo cameras. In 1969, Willard S. Boyle and George E. Smith invented the most important composite part of every digital photo camera, namely the CCD sensor (charge-coupled device), transforming light into an electrical charge and using a processor to recreate an image. Then, some more time had to pass for the digital photo cameras to become as perfected at the turn of the century as to gain advantage over the analogue devices. (http://www.digicamhistory.com/1990.html).

In the analogue age, the photo cameras were incomparably less wide-spread, and handling them demanded quite some knowledge and skill. Today, the wide-spread presence of photo cameras, especially if we take into account those built into numerous mobile telephones (in 2014, there were as many users as 95,5% of all adults (http://mobiforge.com/research-analysis/global-mobile-statistics-2014-part-a-mobile-subscribers-handset-market-share-mobile-operators#subscribers), is so intense that we can say photography because one of the most democratic, universally accessible and understandable media we know.

The characteristic of digital photo cameras is that directly after the push of the trigger, we can check the effect of our action on the screen, and we are able to select, process, archive and post our photographs the very same day. This is a huge step from the period when we were taking pictures on photographic film and then waited days and weeks to get an insight into the results of our work. Of course then, we could not influence our work in any way then. Photo cameras became quite accessible price-wise, so even the financially weaker can afford them. Handling them is relatively simple and even intellectually less able can learn it quickly. Managing them does not demand a lot of physical power and...
skill, so it does not exclude the physically handicapped. Even for persons with the most severe level of physical disability, managing a photo camera can be adapted with the aid of special tripods and switches.

All these changes and novelties give an exceptional and new potential to photography and photographic creation, unlike to some of the other creative activities. The different applicable values of photography can easily be brought closer to almost any individual, but even more importantly, even those who for some reason do not have the same possibilities as everyone else in other areas can take up photography in an entirely equal and independent fashion. Digital photography facilitates the development of new methods and practices that we are able to use in healing and rehabilitation for people with different disorders, disabilities or types of handicap.

**Phototherapy and Art Therapy**

It seems that in some sense, phototherapy could with no special trouble be compared to art therapy or even categorised as such, however, it is important to realise why the specifics of this field demands us to define phototherapy as an independent type within art therapy, not as part of fine arts therapy.

Art therapy today, in spite of the ever present academic debates, in practice remains established as a complementary method suitable in diagnostics as well as with therapy of diverse disorders, disabilities or handicaps, such as psychiatric illnesses, emotional and behavioural disorders, different kinds of addiction, posttraumatic brain injuries, diverse types of neurological disorders, etc.

Within art therapy, different mediums of expression help us recognise fine arts therapy, music therapy, dance movement therapy and drama therapy. Art therapy is built on the findings that an individual often expresses himself more easily than through verbal language by using drawing, music, movement, play and other non-verbal expressions. With their help, he is more efficient in transforming diverse memories, needs, desires, fears, conflicts and other contents. The ego does not control non-verbal expression so much as it does verbal, for the creative challenge the individual is placed before is unstructured and ambiguous. There is no fear of being unsuccessful, for the expressions are not assessed as right or wrong. All this decreases the possibility of suppression, denial, overly controlled and dishonest expression and providing socially desired answers. Artistic creativity creates a sort of bridge between the unconscious and the conscious, enables an insight and opens the paths to new realisations and solutions. In such fashion, suitable conditions form to help an individual overcome emotional trouble, change inappropriate thought patterns and learn efficient behavioural strategies.

The development of new strategies has triggered expansion and use of new creative media within art therapy, so some art therapists also use artistic means of expression within the framework of their practice, such as photography and video, mostly in the scope of fine arts therapy. In this, it needs to be distinct and it has to be acknowledged that the use of photography in fine arts therapy is not equal to phototherapy. As we shall see, photographic activities, from the viewpoint of the creative process, as well as of phototherapeutic methods and techniques, are so diverse and specific that we cannot simply define them as one of the subtypes of fine arts creativity. If we want to be precise and systematic, we need to definitely treat phototherapy as an independent type within art therapy.

The common aspect of fine arts therapy and phototherapy is that the exploration of symbolic or visual images enables an individual to explore his or her own worries and meanings. Both processes represent symbolically getting closer to the reality that enables individuals to create by painting, experience and explore symbols in order to learn about themselves. However, in spite the fact that fine arts therapy and phototherapy use the methodology of image projection, they do that each in its own way.

Fine arts therapy is based on an individual’s inner cares stuck in his subconscious, which spontaneously express through the process of drawing or painting. Outer stimuli, such as light or a certain background at the time when an individual is drawing these images are not absolutely necessary. One can, for instance, draw a house which is, of course, not present in the room where the individual is creating.
Contrary to this, the photographs are made where physical content actually exists. A photograph of a house will, in its context, have elements of a physical representation of a house. Since fine arts therapy depends on the expressed inner subject, while photography depends on the internalised outer subject, we can understand that they tackle different aspects of personal symbolism, fine arts therapy with externalisation of inner symbols and phototherapy with internalisation of outer symbols (Krauss, 1983).

Fine arts therapy focuses on the final product, while in phototherapy, the latter is often the least important and the process is the one that is relevant; the criterion for the selection of a shot, the decision what and how to capture on a photograph, the choice of a context of who, when, where and for whom are all elements that enable exploration. From a therapeutic point of view, the final photograph is an important component, however, its value is often in that it enables us to ask questions and explore outside of our frameworks (Weiser, 1999).

The freedom of manipulating time and space gives the person who takes the photograph a chance to create individual responses to his or her environment and round it up in a form of personal expression. Berger (2008) says that each time we look at a photograph, we must be aware that the photographer chose this scene out of a number of other scenes. The choice of motive indicates his manner of looking.

Taking photographs literally symbolises ourselves. Every decision for a photograph is based on inner measures; we ascribe meaning to what we see, because the visual information that had attracted us has a certain meaning for us. Every photograph is also a manner of communication, because the camera literally codes the message which is important for us and had attracted us in the first place. The layers of the possible meanings are always embedded in every photograph and every layer is therapeutically important. Every personal decision to freeze a certain moment in a certain way is important. In the photographs someone has created, we do not only see what that person saw, but also who that person was at the moment of taking the photographs.

The use of a photo camera in this process gives us the feeling that the projection is more accurate and real than with painting. The biggest difference between fine arts therapy and phototherapy lies in the possibility of use of personal and family photographs that represent an individual and his family on diverse events or activities through time. These biographic photographs are an important source of projective and physical information that we could not have acquired in any other way. They depict information on the individual’s relationship towards the world outside of therapy, which is very important for the therapist, since it gives him a more objective image of reality, with which an individual is struggling outside of therapy, and not only of a reflection of his inner world. With the use of photographs, we can also see an approximation to what we are like in the eyes of the others, not only the mirror image. We can see ourselves as part of a larger group, family or friends.

These are the reasons that phototherapy is not a closed, fixed model of rules about how to do it ‘right’, but a flexible tool to adapt the process to each individual and his individual needs and goals. While we look at or create photographs, a lot of processes are in place, and through them, an individual can look at himself either from the inside out or from the outside in.

Consequently, even the definitions of phototherapy in different states across the world differ from each other, above all because the profession of a psychotherapist is not formally arranged everywhere, so, depending on the expert worker with or without therapeutic knowledge, the way of using these techniques is in some countries divided into phototherapy and therapeutic photography.

In line with the terminological inconsistency and methodological partiality and unestablished status within the already accepted methods of work with vulnerable groups, the professional profile of a phototherapist is, as of yet, unfinished and unestablished. In practice, phototherapy is thus implemented by psychotherapists, as well as marriage counsellors, social workers, art therapists, leaders of youth workshops, photographs, teachers, in short, some type of leaders who, together with the individual, explore his personal reality through the photographic medium.

The purpose of the phototherapist is to encourage and direct creative activity, but simultaneously combine classic psychotherapeutic, advisory, pedagogic and other techniques depending on the characteristics and needs of an individual. However, to lead a phototherapeutic
group, one also needs knowledge from the photographic field. Especially with the forms in which the use of a photo camera and active photographic creativity are set in the foreground, the phototherapeutic techniques partially intertwine with the usual content of classic photographic courses. This means that the users, in line with their abilities and possibilities, first get acquainted with the principles of handling a photo camera, get to know different genres, express themselves in them and perfect their skills, as well as learn how to use different composition and other fine arts elements. All of that in order to develop their own visual speeches, through which they can then explore and express themselves and their relationship towards the world.

**Division of Phototherapeutic Methods and Practices**

*Coming together is a beginning;*
*keeping together is progress;*
*working together is success.*

(Henry Ford)

In defining the use of photography as a therapeutic medium, Canadian psychotherapist and one of the pioneers in the field Judy Weiser is the one who has, according to her known activity in the field of phototherapy so far, reached the farthest. Her division of methods is the following (2014):

- **Phototherapy** is a therapeutic method (under the guidance of an educated therapist) representing the use of photography within the psychotherapeutic or advisory context as a medium to promote communication, emotions, memories, and association. This is meant to help an individual acquire a deeper insight or understanding of himself, one he is unable to achieve by mere words or verbalisation.

- **Therapeutic photography** is a photographic method representing the use of photography as a medium for self-exploration and can be implemented in an individual or group form.

- **Socially engaged (oriented) photographic activities or projects** are those photographic activities that can be held individually or as a group, and their purpose is to diminish or do away with the stereotypes or achieving positive change in the viewers of the photographs and consequently in society or community.

Despite the abovementioned division, the borderline between phototherapy and therapeutic photography in the world within phototherapeutic practices is not very clear, because the techniques intertwine and complement each other. In Slovenia, the term phototherapy encompasses both methods, as well. The institute for photographic therapy defines phototherapy, or rather, in practice uses it as:

- **Stimulation** within the psychotherapeutic process, in which the client uses family albums and other autobiographic photographs to explore himself (his values, convictions, personality, patterns), his role within the family and the relations between family members. The psychotherapist in this process sometimes even uses photographs prepared in advance with diverse ‘archetypal’ motives, working as a means of projection to help the client more easily get aware of the suppressed content.

- **Therapeutic and rehabilitation method to improve the disabled functions**, in which the specially formed phototherapeutic activities and tasks are part of the cognitive training. Meanwhile, this is a true system of especially determined exercises and tasks stimulating individual cognitive operations or functions. By the person doing phototherapeutic exercises in line with the learning principles, the disabled mental functions are repaired as much as possible and can help rehabilitate persons with perception disorders, persons with diverse thinking disorders, persons with emotional and behavioural disorders, ADHD children, and others.

- **Rehabilitation compensatory method**, in which the photo camera or photographic activities help the individual extend his mental and physical abilities, with which he can more or less compensate for the impaired organ or the disabled physical or psychical function (visual, movement dysfunction, persons with dementia ...).
• Creative activity to strengthen mental health and promote personal growth, in which the techniques of phototherapy are used in line with the principles of positive psychology, with a purpose to prevent individuals to overly identify with their flaws, but would instead, within the framework of their possibilities, feel competent and completely equal to others. In this context, photography is a very mighty medium, for it offers visual language to help individuals facilitate their expression, connect their emotions and speak either about the process of how the photograph was taken, the story behind the photograph or the meaning the photograph holds for them. In the therapeutic process, the individuals learn to perceive diverse perspectives and different thinking, looking for sources of personal power and strengthen their independence, self-esteem and control over their own life.

• A form of education and training to increase professional abilities, in which the photographic skills that the persons with special needs acquire in phototherapy, and the products they create, increase their possibilities for gaining money or become competitive at the work market.

If we try to make an analysis or the tackles and methods we know, we can divide these phototherapeutic practices in line with the different criteria.

According to the number of participants

• Group: It is held in organised groups of different sizes, in which the number of members is adapted to the purpose and nature of the work (the most appropriate number is said to be from 6 to 12 members). Group work is usually organised under the guidance of a leader or phototherapist. The advantages of group work are sharing photographs, exchanging reflections, group dynamics, the possibility of self-affirmation, development of group belonging and other characteristics that individual treatment is unable to afford.

• Individual: An individual himself or with the help of a therapist uses his camera to create photographs, looks at or experience his own photographs or those of other authors and tries, through other photography-related activities, to achieve the set goals, dedicated to the improvement or maintenance of psycho-physical and social functioning. Sharing photographs with others is not that common in this form of therapy.

According to therapeutic use

• Support to other methods: Within the framework of several different kinds of psychotherapy and other treatments, photography is used occasionally, as a type of support and catalyst in the therapeutic process.

• Independent therapy: The entire therapeutic activity is based on methods connected to photography and photographic creativity. A composite part of phototherapy are the photographic tasks, assigned in order to help us achieve therapeutic objectives.

According to therapeutic guidance

• Under the therapist’s guidance: Phototherapy is organised under the leadership of a trained phototherapist, who must necessarily possess all the relevant therapeutic, photographic and other knowledge connected to the characteristics of the users’ population and the nature of their problems.

• Without the therapist’s presence: Usually individual and sometimes in group self-organisation, the photographic creativity is used as a form of self-help. The purposes of this activity are the development of visual expression, self-reflection, deepening of the awareness of the relationship towards oneself and the outer world, creativity, managing stress, improving one’s mood, releasing negative emotions, achieving positive life changes and others.
According to the focus of treatment

- Focused on a disorder: With phototherapeutic techniques, we try to orient the client into a psychological insight through training, through looking for more efficient adaptive mechanisms and other therapeutic means to overcome or diminish a dysfunction, disorder or handicap.
- Focused on the abilities left: In line with the principles of positive psychology, therapeutic attention redirects from the disorder to creativity, which is based on the individual’s other abilities. We encourage creativity, positive self-respect, the quality of life and other positive values.

According to the scope of influence

- Directed to the individual or group: The purpose of the activity is to positively influence an individual or group as a whole.
- Socially and societally active: Through exhibiting, publishing and posting photographic projects with the aid of diverse media, we try to achieve a better level of awareness in society, to point at rights and equal treatment, to do away with stigmatisation and to improve the position of vulnerable groups.

According to the medium and creative process

- Directed at the photo camera: Phototherapy is based on learning and training for the practical use of a photo camera as a compensatory accessory, with which the person with a functional disorder decreases his or her impairment.
- Directed at photography: Therapeutic means are not directed at creation of photographs, but simply at photography as preserved writing of light on paper, on the computer screen or any other medium. The authorship of the photograph does not play any important part in this. Photography is meant to encourage feelings and a therapeutic conversation.
- Directed at taking photographs: The techniques include an active process of taking photographs and creating photographs of different genres.
- Directed at postproduction: The creative process does not finish by pressing the trigger button of a photo camera, but continues with creative digital processing, photograph manipulation, creation of series, presentations with music, designing photo books and similar.

**Phototherapy as a Form of Psychotherapy Tackle**

*They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself.*

(Andy Warhol)

The field of psychotherapy has undergone a rise in the last half of the 20th century, definitely in connection with the inevitable pressures and problems regarding how to be a human being in an ever changing world and how to face the fact that we do not have an answer on the big questions, such as what awaits us after death and how to live the ‘right’ way. Without traditional values and social and cultural norms to lead and guide us, our life would be very confused. And this confusion, this psychological uncertainty is what brings most people to psychotherapy, which is supposed to help them establish a structure, order and meaning in their lives. They wish to expand self-awareness, ease the pain in the uncertain periods and change their knowing. (Krauss, 1983)

Within the context of psychotherapy, phototherapy is a tackle or a method that uses symbolism and projection as the main aid techniques. It encourages the clients to explore their lives, as well as discover their personal history through family albums, as well as communicate visually through the help of photographs, through which they express their own manner of looking at the world in the part and here and now. In this way, they read the personal symbols that they use to express their experiences (the meaning of persons, places, things and
Symbolisation and Projection

The procedures of art therapy are based precisely in the understanding that the person's basic thoughts and his or her basic emotions are formed in the subconscious and often expressed through symbolic expressions. All forms of art therapy are based on the idea that visually symbolic representation is a lot less 'deformed' and 'modified' as the expressing of sensory experience through language.

Berger (2008) says that visual perception is what places us into the world, what surrounds us, but what we see is conditioned with what we know or believe in. “Visual perception precedes words. A child looks and recognises, before he is able to speak.” (Berger, 2008: 21) Therefore, looking is what places us into the world, and we use words to explain and describe the world. Through this process, we create knowledge and experience, which form a system that influences our manner of looking and is consequently dependent on what we believe in.

The process of symbolisation thus takes an object out of the world, sets it in a context and surrounds it with a wider or deeper meaning. Krauss describes such a process of creating meaning, which can also be applied to the creation of meaning of a certain photography, through the example of a tree. Our eyes perceive a form growing form the ground: a tree in the middle of a grass surface. The light reflecting from the silhouette has been accepted into the eye through the retina and has been transferred to the brain with the help of the optical nerve. The brain takes in the nerve impulses in a certain area, where they reunite and transform into the image of a tree, to which we, in combination with other information, assign meaning. How we actually see a tree depends on our culture and on what kind of meaning we ascribe to the tree ourselves. The meaning of a tree is the result of our learned 'framework' and is an example of the process of symbolisation, for the tree for us is much more than its physical characteristics, e.g. a source of food due to its fruits, a source of wood for building or a hiding place, a sanctum, an asylum...

In 1963, Freud had accomplished a pioneer job in the field of personal symbols as a manifestation of subconscious activities, and later on used it in his works about dreams. He wrote: “Dreams are mainly perceived through visual images. Despite the presence of emotions, thoughts and other emotions, the visual images are dominant. Thus, the problem with the interpretation of dreams lies in translating these visual images into words, a lot of people namely say that they could sketch their dreams, but they are unable to put them into words.” (Freud, 1963). Freud retained a conviction that all personal symbols are negative and regressive. He thought they work as defence mechanisms, transforming unconscious desires into something that the ego could accept without undergoing a trauma.

Contrary to Freud, Jung let his patients draw their dreams and felt that this exercise was very useful. He found that personal symbols can be used for regressive purposes, as Freud suggested, but he used them for positive purposes, as a tool enabling an extra insight and structure through which a new mentality, understanding and communication can develop.
Through the exploration of personal symbols that come up in dreams, on sketches, pictures or photographs, we possess a handy tool to create inner pathways leading towards the understanding of personal worries and help us achieve changes. A lot of our experience namely cannot be described with words, because the learned verbal symbols are limited. Through words, we try to bring our experience closer to a perfect understanding, however, even though we choose our words, this is impossible, for all the words come to be through the transfer of inner experience into personal symbols and then through the transfer of these personal symbols into the symbols of verbal communication, which makes them translations of a translation. In every translation or reproduction, though, distortion can make us loose some information, the value or meaning of the message can be modified. Words are the product of an artificial system of symbols, while the latter are part of a conscious and explicit system of symbols shared by a certain culture. These arranged symbols can thus be understood by someone who lives inside that culture, while they do not exist for someone who is outside of that culture, because they are outside of his reality and therefore not present on his ‘reality map’. People who speak several languages know that it is necessary to learn how to think (create symbols) in a new way, if we wish to master a new language. Likewise, some experience or concepts cannot be translated, because they are not part of the system of symbols of the target language. The target language might not even have words of phrases that would represent certain aspects of reality.

Phototherapy deals with personal symbols, projected through the visually represented system and manifested in the form of a photographic image. Photographs are representations of the user’s reality. This is applicable to photographs that the user creates or is depicted in, as well as for photographs that the user collects and saves. Phototherapy helps to overcome the initial troubles set up by the limits and censorship of verbal language, because it focuses on symbols as messages. Therefore, it is not necessary for an individual to be skilful in his verbal expression in order to describe or explain his reality. In this context, that which we are focusing on when we look at or create a photograph, represents the topic of our personal symbols. Through the exploration and interpretation of photographs, we are able to be more aware of our personal symbols and understand them better. In this way, we expand our horizons and our view of our own being in this world, as well as get a clearer image of what is going on in our consciousness and unconsciousness.

Among the conscious and unconscious personal symbols, there is no limit, for their influences are reciprocal. The unconscious symbols are formed through the same process of formulation as the unconscious, however, their consequences are outside of our consciousness or our outreach, yet we can find the examples of the workings of these symbols in our dreams, sketches, art, literature, photographs… Dreams, for instance, are an exceptional source of data on symbols. They represent a process in which the ongoing things, worries, express themselves through a story or a play of unconscious symbols. These personal unconscious symbols that appear in dreams form and express themselves with the aid of our life experience, while their meaning lies in the personal history of an individual and his relationship towards the world. Every dream object/symbol can represent a number of things, depending on the context of certain dreams and the dreamer’s life. The same goes for photographs.

The conscious and the unconscious personal symbols try to represent our needs and our relationship towards the world, however, the unconscious symbols are a lot more spontaneous and also less censored through the process of socialisation. Socialisation and culture have great influence on the system of symbols created in our conscious and unconscious, because the knowing we have learned through the process of socialisation and through the influence of the culture we grew up in influence our perception in relation with objects, concepts and places (Krauss, 1982).

However, certain personal and cultural symbols overlap. These symbols can be named universal or archetypal, because they do not depend on none of the determined patterns of socialisation. They develop spontaneously from human psyche, as a response to life. Jung studied this type of symbols and held them to be a part of collective consciousness of humanity. Among them, we can categorise very similar convictions about Creation and the religious myths of different cultures.
Use of Phototherapeutic Practices in Psychotherapy

The early definitions and the use of phototherapy had connected closely to psychotherapy, because the pioneers in the field originated from the principles of advisory work and psychotherapy. Stewart’s definition from 1978 describes phototherapy as the use of photographs or photographic material under the guidance of a trained therapist with a view to decrease or abolish painful psychological symptoms and encourage psychological growth and therapeutic changes (Hallkola et al., 2011). Walker (1982) described the concept of phototherapy as a projection technique in which we use photography as a ‘catalyst’ (means of orientation, of initiative) within psychotherapy. He felt that photography enables the patient to word his or her thoughts, recognise his feelings and fantasies, as well as strengthen his imagination and creative abilities. He saw the value of this method in the patient’s discovery and awareness of his own unique perception in relation to the world and recognition that the patient and the therapist alike have different ways of perception, which can either be more analytical, verbal and rational, or more imaginative, visual and emotional.

Among the most known pioneers from the field of phototherapy, we find Judy Weiser, Canadian psychotherapist and founder of the Phototherapy Centre in Vancouver. She is also the author of so far the biggest bestseller, a book on phototherapy entitled Phototherapy Techniques – Exploring the Secrets of Personal Snapshots and Family Albums (1999). In the book, she presents five techniques she had developed through her experience with the use of photography in psychotherapy. In this context, she uses photography as a tool with which the therapist can help an individual call forth and explore his inner reality, such as hidden feelings, thoughts, memories, personal values, convictions and other things. Most of her techniques are based on the therapist’s and the individual’s common viewing of photographs and conversations about them, and with certain techniques, the persons themselves create photographs on chosen themes. Often, these are auto-portraits offering the possibility of literal and figurative expression of oneself. These five techniques are inter-related and inter-dependent. Like the fingers of one hand, these techniques work best when they are combined by synergy. Every therapist uses them slightly differently, depending on his expert training and theoretical preferences, as well as the client’s situation and objectives. Thus, there is no one single manner of use today. Phototherapy is not interpretation of the client’s photographs instead of the client himself, for the work must be done by the client – with the encouragement of the therapist’s questions. Each perception and each emotion triggered in the client by the photograph are unique (Kustec, 2007).

Five Techniques of Phototherapy According to Judy Weiser

Projection Technique

Use of Photographs as a Medium for Exploring an Individual’s Perception, Values and Expectations

The projection technique of phototherapy includes the active and passive aspects of projecting, decoding and reconstruction of the emotional contents of a photograph, used by the client in constructing the meaning and feelings for which he feels that the certain photography reflects. These aspects enable the technique to be used in viewing one’s own photographs, auto-portraits, as well as the photographs appearing in the different media or taken by other people. They do not have to be photographs of people, but can be photographs of nature, animals and other things that the individual identifies with on a symbolic level.

Every time we step into interaction with a photograph, look at it or talk about it with others, we create its meaning. The meanings we find and the emotions that flow over us when we look at a certain photograph are our unique perception and are not necessarily harmonised with what the person who took the photograph wanted to say. The meaning we find in a photograph springs from ourselves, therefore every photograph bears an infinite number of meanings.

Since there is, therefore, no wrong way to interpret a photograph and since every answer is correct, the projection technique is an efficient tool to strengthen us and develop sources of self-awareness and self-esteem. An individual can explore what kind of feelings, memories
and thoughts are raised by a certain association. This kind of awareness enables him to learn about himself and the aspects we usually disregard or at least do not explore. This gives us the possibility of integration and gaining awareness of these feelings.

**Auto-portraits**

*Use of an Auto-portrait as a Medium for Understanding One’s Own Image*

The notion of an auto-portrait encompasses any photographic representation of one’s perception of oneself, be it literally or metaphorically. Auto-portraits differ from other photographs, for no one else except us influences the creation of an auto-portrait. These are representations of ourselves, of our body or of something we believe represents us. In that, we hold control of all the aspects of creating photographs, from the initial idea to the final product. Because these are images of ourselves and because we have created them ourselves, they offer us a lot of possibilities to confront ourselves, which, for a lot of people, constitutes the main goal of therapy.

The use of auto-portraits enables an individual to explore his image of himself, and consequently the process of self-exploration. An auto-portrait is a way to symbolise ourselves in a unique and personally coded language, as well as a way to see ourselves from the standpoint of a beholder. Auto-portraits are a representation of our personal symbolic that we are able to visually explore and connect to the images others hold about us. Despite that, what matters for therapy with portraits is what a person wants to present as a creator, the subject and beholder of a photograph, and how that person wants to present himself through the photograph, regardless of how that influences others. By the individuals better knowing themselves, they become more assertive and confident in decision-making and less sensitive to the opinions and expectations of other people. They no longer need other people’s assessments in order to be what they want to be, which makes it easier for them to better explore life.

Auto-portraits help to set objectives, achievements, help establish assertiveness, self-respect, etc. they are an important aid to persons who have to realise and accept that they can actually achieve something that they had believed they can do. If they depict something before a photo camera, something they are usually unable to, they thus create a moment of reality in which they have overcome a certain situation, and that moment actually exists. They are but a step away from actually being able to do it, so for the achievement to actually take place, all that is needed is a slight reframing of perception. In a similar way, therapy can be used with persons who claim not to feel anything and have trouble expressing their emotions, One of the constructive tackles is to ask them to pose in such a way as to present one of their emotions (sadness, anger, joy, etc.).

**The Photographs We Are On, but Photographed by Someone Else**

*Use of Photographs as a Medium for Looking Through Another’s Perspective*

Our photographs taken by others give us a chance to see the numerous ways in which the environment sees us. Our opinion of how others see us often differs very much from the truth. Such photographs include shots of our close relations, friends or strangers: the photographs taken by others with a certain purpose of their own. And though we are on those photographs, we are seen through the eyes of someone else and through his perceptive filters. They enable us to explore what is interesting about us for others, what is important to them, and then compare it to what the others are supposed to know about us and what is supposed to interest them. Such photographs offer an insight into the diverse dynamics of our interpersonal relationships with people who have taken our photographs, and enable us to explore whose ‘photographic truth’ is closest to us and why.

People have different identities, images and gestures that we use depending on the situations, social environment and expectations we face. This public identity often does not allow an insight into who is hiding inside, because people often modify their physical appearance and emotional relationships along with the person we are interacting with. There is no one single truth about who we are, because the photographs we are on can vary very much and none of them are more real than others. They all show a lot of different ‘truths’ of our identity.

The photographs someone else took of us can, in time, become a visual proof of the actual physical changes of the body or the things that surround us. The individuals can see progress or degradation in
Everything that he shares with others about the content of the photograph, about the circumstances in which it was taken, or reasons why he had kept it, has a certain meaning for that person. This is one of the reasons why such therapy works: the individual takes his time to share his story with the others in a safe environment, which makes others and him understand that story better.

With the help of creating photographs, individuals in phototherapy can explore and open a number of themes, explore themselves and their hidden self no one knows, visualise the change they want to achieve, modify their way of perceiving the world around them… An individual can depict all these themes through metaphors, which makes him feel safer in disclosing his views, instead of feeling threatened.

From this viewpoint, taking photographs can improve one’s self-image, help people set goals, future desired outcomes, and is at the same time a way to introduce changes into a relationship, explore fantasies and test different forms of communication and the consequences that this brings along. Meanwhile, photography also enables us to overcome generational, race, cultural, sexual and even political differences.

### Family Albums and Autobiographic Collections

### Use of Photography as a Medium for Exploration of Photographic Collections

The photographs collected in family albums and other biographical photographs are a special field of phototherapy. The technique that includes family photographs has to do with an individual’s self, which is constructed through the individual’s family, his roots, background, surroundings and social environment and patterns, messages and convictions that have been passed on through generations. Because such a technique includes autobiographic photographs and entire albums, it enables us to explore an individual’s role within the complex system that has been accompanying him since birth. Family albums build a pattern we can explore through non-verbal expression of family ties, interpersonal dynamics and sources of power.

Family albums are usually meant to provide a timeline, documentation, and are a sort of talisman defying time and proving the existence of an individual and his connection to the other people, important to him. In the family albums, we can also find the so called posed...
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but remain temporarily or permanently less able to be active on different fields of body, mental and also social activities. Numerous among them need the help of other people for a long time or even forever. We also need to be aware that more severe diseases and injuries do not only hurt an individual, but also interfere with the quality of life of family members and everyone connected with the patient.

The needs for rehabilitation programmes to help individuals repair or compensate for the lost abilities, avoid trouble or otherwise adapt to a body or mental disorder are increasing all the time. Thus, the patients, their families, as well as the wider community need new and new contemporary programmes to motivate the individual and help him to restore his connection to his environment, reclaim and implement his usual social roles in the largest extent possible.

Above all in the field of rehabilitation, we more than ever understand and expose the meaning of the patient’s mentality for successful disease management and achieving a quality life despite the aftermath of disease or injury.

Mentality is what makes us who we are, it is the most important source of our powers and abilities. Since forever, we have wanted to understand it, however, due to its exceptional intricacy, diversity and liveliness, it is mysterious even today, in spite of great progress made in getting to know it. Already a quick overview of psychological guidebooks shows us that this field is not unified. However, all the mental processes and functions can roughly be divided into three expansive groups: motivation (the forces and movements of our action: needs, instincts, desires, motives, objectives, values, ideals, interests, will), emotions (soul processes and states through which we experience a characteristic value relationship towards things, persons and events) and cognition (it is shown in the development of mental judgment, reality, planning the future, forming one’s self-image, interests, viewpoints, etc.). (Musek, Pečjak, 2001.; Kompare, et al., 2001)

It is understandable that impairments and dysfunctions of the brain, which represents the ‘seat’ of our mentality, affect the entire working of an individual. Brain impairments are divided into non-degenerative and degenerative. Non-degenerative are those that occur at birth. Among them are different kinds of brain injuries that appear


Phototherapy in Rehabilitation

The journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.

(Chinese Proverb)

Since the beginning of its existence, humanity has been fighting diseases. With the exceptional progress of medicine, however, we have achieved that today, numerous once fatal diseases are already conquered, while survival rates are getting higher and higher even after severe injuries. On the other hand, this is precisely what contributes to the increase of the number of people who, even after the finished treatment process, cannot achieve the former level of quality of life,
Perception

Perception is the human being’s sensory impression of the world. Through the process of perception, we are able to accept information from the environment, organise them into a whole, integrate with memory impressions, interpret and create a subjective experience. It is composed of five different modalities, connected with the senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste. The basis of the feelings are sensory organs, which respond by arousing, when they are affected by energy processes in the form of stimuli. Through nerve fibres, the arousal spreads to brain centres and the results are our feelings. When they combine in a whole, we call them perceptions. Perceptions include proprioception, as in the senses that enable us to perceive body movements, positions, gestures and cognitive processing. The organisation of stimuli is to a large extent done on the basis of universal and innate principles, such as the principle of geometric form and background and the principle of categorisation, with the help of which a person groups and decreases the number of perceived units in order to more easily orient himself in a complex environment and act efficiently in it.

Like other higher cognitive functions, perception is also very sensitive to injuries, perceptive disorders can show indirectly in the loss of primary sensory input or directly through the impairment of specific integrative processes (Lobe, 1994; Musek, Pečjak, 2001).

Memory

Memory is a higher cognitive function that looks after the acceptance, short-term and long-term saving of information and calling them forth. We separate between declarative memory, with which we remember facts or events, and procedural memory, with which we remember motoric or mental skills and habits. We can further separate declarative memory between short-term, with which we can save information up to 1 minute and with which the capacity is limited to 7 units of information at the most, and long-term memory (Lobe, 1994).
Learning

We can define learning as modifying activity under the influence of experience with a relatively permanent effect. The result of learning can be habits, skills or knowledge. Learning is an important psychological process, for it affects numerous fields of human action, such as perception, thinking, emotions and knowing. Our reactions, behavioural patterns, viewpoints and everything else that forms human personality are learned. We know several kinds of learning. In view of the complexity of the learning process, we differ between learning by conditioning, associating and mechanical remembering, learning through trial and error, imitating and learning by understanding and providing an insight. In view of the material, we differ between verbal and non-verbal learning (Musek, Pečjak, 2001).

Thinking

It is often hard to set a barrier between learning and thinking, for the processes are closely linked. Thinking is a mental process that enables man to perceive and solve problems by discovering new relationships between experience or information. The tools of thinking are perceptions, imaginations, notions or symbols. We separate between realistic and imaginative thinking. Realistic thinking is more linked to reality, while imaginative thinking is more under the influence of subjective factors. Original ideas, important for the development of science and artistic creativity, are mostly the figment of very constructive imagination. We also separate between inductive and deductive thinking. The former makes us draw conclusions from an individual case in general, and the latter makes us use general judgements to indicate special cases. If we use concrete notions in thinking, we speak of concrete, and if we use abstract, we speak of abstract thinking. In convergent thinking, we direct ourselves to one right solution, while divergent thinking is characterised by looking for all sorts of solutions. Creativity is most often linked precisely to divergent thinking. The characteristics of divergent thinking are fluency, flexibility and originality.

Creative thinking often happens in several phases. They are the following:

- **PREPARATION** – the act of preparing, exploring the problem, e.g. the study of literature.
- **INCUBATION** – the creative solution often appears only after the phase of incubation, after some ‘empty time’, in which we do not appear to deal with the problem, the material is not focused on, we do not think about it. Appear to, because the thinking in question is supposed to be subconscious (latent), the maturing of a solution.
- **ILLUMINATION** – (inspiration, aha-moment, insight): sudden and unexpected solution to the problem. It is based on restructuring of the problem – we see it in a different light, from another point of view.
- **VERIFICATION** – checking the adequacy of the decision, convergent thinking is dominant (Musek, Pečjak, 2001).

Expression

These are cognitive functions that reflect through speech, drawing or writing, manipulation, body movements, face expressions and behaviour we can watch. Of course, even photography can be a form of repression. With brain damage, there are often typical disorders in the field, such as: apraxia (affected learned, deliberate actions, with no impairment od motoric innervation of muscles or inappropriate sensorimotoric coordination); construction disorders (disorders in setting up, building, drawing, composition); aphasia (disorder in forming language symbols) (Lobe, 1994).

Attention

Attention could hardly be defined as a cognitive function, but it is necessary, for it takes part in all cognitive processes. It can be described as spontaneous or willing directing of psychic or psycho-motoric activity to certain contents. Attention is not a unified function: selectivity enables us to ignore the non-essential and respond only to target stimuli. The scope limits us and determines the maximal number of stimuli which we can be attentive to. Concentration means ability to direct attention to a single element, while control means ability for lasting and
Flexible directing of attention. Our attention can be very changing, for it is influenced by numerous factors. Outer factors depend on the characteristics of stimuli, such as intensity, size, frequency, changing, contrast, etc., while inner factors depend on experience, knowledge, motivation, needs and emotions. In brain damage and numerous other illnesses, such or other attention disorders are very frequent. In order to plan the rehabilitation of a person with attention disorders qualitatively, it is important to make an accurate assessment of the level where the attention disorder occurred (Starovasnik Žagavec, Čuš, 2013).

Executive Functions

The expression executive functions is used for a group of self-regulatory behavioural competences, including goal formation, wanting, planning, harmonising simultaneous activities, maintaining attention, use of information from the environment, cognitive flexibility and ability to manage novelties. It is to manage oneself – one’s behaviour, emotions and motivation. The executive functions, in addition to the cognitive, encompass meta-cognitive processes, as well. This is why disorders in the area of executive abilities show themselves in a much more complex fashion than with cognitive impairments. If the latter usually mean a loss of specific abilities, the former often impairs every single area of an individual’s behaviour. (Jakopec, 2010)

Cognitive Rehabilitation and Phototherapy

In impairment of cognitive communication, which is the result of brain damage or dysfunction, it is important to know that this is not always an irreversible process, but instead, the state can improve or renew in the process of rehabilitation. How and to what extent this will happen depends on diverse factors, connected with nature, scope and localisation of the injury, but to the personality traits of an individual and his environment, as well.

After brain injuries, there is spontaneous improvement, however, it is unpredictable and limited in scope.

The possibility of renewing decreased functions and the speed of recovery are the biggest in early stages after the injury, then decrease more and more. In moderate to severe injuries, recovery is the quickest in the first six months, followed by less intensive, yet important two-year recovery period. After this period, recovery is the slowest (Čuš, Vodušek, Repovž, 2010).

In order to achieve perfect recovery, often the key measures are part of directed cognitive rehabilitation. Cognitive rehabilitation includes systematic use of therapeutic measures and procedures to improve cognitive activity of an individual and achieve his new inclusion into activities, which is hard due to trouble in one or several cognitive areas. In the processes of cognitive rehabilitation, we can set two possible objectives. The first tackles of cognitive rehabilitation are directed at maintenance and strengthening of specific cognitive functions and old behavioural patterns, while the second ones teach an individual new skills and adaptation to deficits. In the first case, we are discussing renewal or restitution procedures of cognitive rehabilitation, which are process-specific, as in directed to a certain cognitive area or ability, and spring from the assumption that the impaired functions can be renewed by repeating an exercise. In the second case, we are discussing compensatory procedures, with the help of which we decrease impairment in implementing a certain activity by learning new skills and using outer accessories (Čižman, 2010; Starovasnik Žagavec, Čuš 2013). When we plan (cognitive) rehabilitation and choose between different ways, it is important to know whether the brain is capable of renewing the lost functions after the injury or will it have to grasp new ones. In practice, multimodal or holistic approach is most often used, because it combines the two objectives, in addition to stressing the meaning of non-cognitive factors, such as emotional state, concept of self-awareness, metacognition and social and cultural position (Čuš, Vodušek, Repovž, 2010; Brejc, 2004). We have already mentioned that the results of brain damage can be very complex and can in different scopes hurt different brain functions. If we wish to use cognitive training to help restore the functions and direct to the restitution tackle, we need a wide array of appropriate exercises and tasks for an individual to implement and repeat for a longer time with
the expert help of a therapist. The exercises and tasks must be chosen on the basis of a precise psycho-diagnostic assessment and profile of mental functioning according to individual areas. It is key that their implementation and solving requires the activation of precisely those mental operations or functions that are impaired and that we wish to improve through training. The exercises must be done systematically, regularly, progressively demanding in view of the progress, and mental efforts must be followed by rest. Positive effects of learning and progress must be generalised and transferred to out-of-therapy life situations. We know exercises and tasks of various types, such as pen-and-paper, composition, construction and other manipulating with objects, thought, word, memory games, etc.

In practice, different phototherapeutic techniques and methods may as well be used as cognitive training for persons with cognitive disorders.

Therapeutic potentials of phototherapy are hiding in three areas. First, in the photo camera as a technical accessory, with the help of which the handicapped person is overcoming his or her functional lack. Then, in photography as a medium to write captured light on paper or screen. In this case, we are less interested in the process of photograph creation, but we set the photographs in advance for the therapeutic session and guidance as exercises or stimulus to encourage perceptive, speech and language related, memory and other functions. The third potential is hiding in taking photographs themselves – a creative activity with a view to produce a photograph or a digitally processed or manipulated product. Photography is namely not simply pressing the button of a camera, but a lot more: it is movement of body in space, it is watching and sharpening senses in the quest for motives, it is planning a fine art and light composition, it is judging and deciding on the technical settings of the photo camera and the moment of pressing the button, it is thinking about the meaning and story of the motive, it is emotional engagement and pleasure at a successful take, it is collecting and arranging photographs, it is creative processing with the help of programme tools, it is a starting point for thinking and debate, it is reminiscing, it is a possibility to present oneself, it is social networking and hanging out, it is printing out photographs on paper, it is organising exhibitions, and we could go on. We therefore see that the process is extremely complex and includes a very diverse scope of creative activities that include and activate different brain functions, from controlling motoric features, perception, attention, memory, thinking, speech, learning, executive functions, to metacognitive functions. Through precisely planned photographic tasks, we can encourage and control a narrow or wide range of mental operations and through regular and right implementation, we can positively influence the recovery. The use of phototherapeutic techniques in rehabilitation has certain advantages in rehabilitation against other practices, for the exercises are quite simple, diverse, adaptable, and the nature of cooperation is such that it encourages an individual and keeps him motivated for a longer span of time. In implementing phototherapeutic exercises, we can use tasks set in advance, or we can be resourceful and plan them or adapt them in line with the current situation.

Rehabilitation is a long process, demanding persistence and motivation from the rehabilitant. Recovery mostly progresses slowly, and if the changes are not obvious from day to day, this can negatively affect motivation. With photographs, we can define the starting state and then monitor and promote changes. An occasional overview of photographs showing the travelled path strengthens the will and positively affects motivation. With visual presentation, the objectives set in rehabilitation become more tangible, and the trouble on the way to them more solvable. This type of motivation means is especially efficient in group work.

Rehabilitative Compensatory Method

In addition to the ways of renewal in cognitive rehabilitation, we have already mentioned another possibility to plan an improvement of an individual’s functioning. These are the so called compensatory approaches, in which the learning of new skills and the use of outer accessories helps decrease impairment in the implementation of a certain activity (Čižman, 2010; Starovasnik Žagavec, Čuš, 2013). Within
the context of psychotherapy, this directs our work primarily into teaching an individual with an impairment or disorder how to practically and sensibly tackle a photo camera. The photo camera should work as a type of crutch to help him reach the desired goal despite problems.

In essence, a photo camera is, of course, a technical accessory. Humans have always helped themselves widen their sensory and motoric abilities with different technical innovations. With their help, he can do more, does his tasks more quickly, faster and more efficiently. Even though the technical novelties have not necessarily been invented for that reason, handicapped persons, of course, use them beneficially, especially if they can more or less use them to compensate for an impaired organ or an injured physical or psychological function. It is no different with a camera, which can be used to different ends. Especially given that we know how today the photo cameras are handy and efficient and how fast the users learn to handle them.

Persons with memory disabilities can use the photo camera as a sort of ‘visual notebook’, in which they write down places, objects, information, events and other things from everyday life, otherwise hard to remember. Or, they can recall important old memory data through it, otherwise unavailable to them due to memory disorders.

Those with visual impairments can use optical or digital close-ups enabled by a photo camera with a lens to see even the more distant things and can read the small print that they otherwise could not read without glasses or a magnifying glass.

Those with movement disabilities can use tele-lenses to overcome distances. In this way, without moving, they can bring a distant object closer to look at it. By looking at photographs, they can ’visit’ the places they otherwise could not visit.

In aphasia, weakened or lost ability of speech, which is sometimes the result of different brain injuries, the photo camera can be used as a compensatory communication tool. With the help of photographs, a person can express his thoughts, needs, feelings. If the photographs in the computer are arranged and saved in different representative categories, they can also be used in more complex communication. Series of reportage photographs that a handicapped person takes at different events he or she witnesses can be a very rich and understandable communication possibility.

In disorders in space orientation, a person can walk through a city or other environment and photograph special objects that can later help with orientation and returning to the starting point.

**Phototherapy as a Creative Activity to Strengthen Mental Health and Promote Personal Growth**

“I am not a disability, I’m me. I have dyslexia and I’ve had polio but I’m not ’a dyslexic’ or ’a cripple’ I’m me.”

(John Swan, 14 in: Reiser and Mason (1991))

In line with the traditional medicine model, not long ago the dominant model in the Western states, not only in medicine, but other social spheres, as well, health is defined as the normal state of man, determined by the absence of disease, pain, disorders and other kinds of impairments. The medicinal tackle is entirely directed at biological trouble and incompetence, but it disregards the impact of psychological, economic and cultural factors. The main goal set in the process of healing and rehabilitation is the human being’s recovery or at least diminishment of the results of an illness to the point where man as ’normal’ can return to his own natural social environment. If this cannot be achieved, society segregates such a person and, within various institutions, looks after his further existence and his survival in one way or another. The characteristic of this model is that diagnostics are always directed only at what a person cannot do – it considers a human being with problems as a problem. Of course, exclusion of people from their usual environment means that they cannot give anything to society anymore, but at the same time, this relationship starts to reflect on them, as well. They often develop numerous negative responses, such as: numbness, infantilism, loss of initiative, depression, fears, aggressiveness, self-destruction, alcoholism, etc. (Alfirev, 2000).

In 1977, the necessity to overcome the medicine model was first described by George L. Engel, who was the first to use the term
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contrary to mental health, but are their own continuum, as is mental health. The consequence of this discovery is an awareness that the absence of psychological disorder does not make us mentally healthy, and the absence of mental health can be as harmful as the presence of psychological illnesses. Psychological health therefore cannot be defined simply with the absence of psychological disorders, but also with the presence of different positive individual variables (Javornik, 2008).

Positive psychology does not simply deal with positive thinking and positive emotions. It also tries to find out what factors enable individuals and groups to thrive and progress in life. The criteria of success and progress are defined above all with the presence of positive mental health, when a person grows and thrives, filled with emotional vitality and without any mental diseases, so that he or she successfully functions in the social environment, as well as by himself (Hefferon, Boniwell, 2011).

Photography unites the process with the product, so it has additional power as a medium of self-exploration, expression and personal growth. Likewise, photography enables us to travel, with the end image being the goal or a starting point. Self-exploration can appear at any point of this process. For instance at the beginning, when an individual decides and thinks what to photograph, during the search or find of a motive of the photograph, during the reflection of the content of a photograph, during the sharing of it with others or during the debate on the circumstances in which it was taken. And the possibilities do not end there, for a photograph provides us with a different view every time we see it, review it, ‘read’ it. All of this in spite of the fact that its content does not change – what changes is namely the beholder. The meaning of photography is therefore not fixed or absolute, but formed through experience and perspective of the person looking at it and interacting with it.

With the person choosing himself what to photograph or erase, that person gets control over the process itself. This control encourages self-assessment and enables individuals to develop values in the

‘biopsychosocial’ in order to stress the intricate interrelation of biological, psychological and social factors in chronic diseases (Nassir Ghaemi, 2011). This change of thinking caused great social turmoil. First in the processes of so-called integration that has brought an end to the segregation of children and adults with special needs, compared to their ordinary pals. Integration meant a big step forward, even though it turned out that it can be simply a transition to the next stage. Persons with special needs namely only got a space within the ordinary environment, however, they had to prove themselves worthy of it by adapting to the existing norms. Only in the next period of so-called inclusion, the mottos such as ‘including, belonging, unity’ at least in principle brought everyone an equal position in society, in which they could take part and contribute to it, regardless of their different features.

However, the medicine model was not only characteristic in medicine, but in other areas, as well. Even psychology during most of its development was oriented mostly into pathology of psychological workings of an individual and groups, and less into successful activities of people. This is why we are justified in saying today that psychology had been ‘misery biased’. Of course, one cannot deny that the negative phenomena and characteristics must be researched due to their severe consequence to an individual and society, but on the other hand, psychology’s misery bias also bears problematic results. Let us mention two of the most important ones: forming an inadequate image of a personality and inadequate knowledge of positive aspects of a personality and its psychological reality in general.

Among the first to be justified in criticising this ‘negative’ bias in psychology in the middle of the previous century were humanist and existential psychologists headed by Maslow, Rogers and Frankl, but only in the 1990s, the accentuation of the concepts of happiness, psychological well-being, personal growth, personality strength, optimism, wisdom, creativity and similar things began to form a special field within psychology, called positive psychology (Musek, Avsec, 2002)

Keyes, one of the most important researchers of positive psychology, found that mental health and mental diseases are not two poles of the same continuum. Therefore, psychological disorders are not simply
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Photography as a Medium of Strengthening One’s Self-Esteem

Just like other creative activities that make us feel we can achieve something, photography as well strengthens our self-esteem and improves our self-image. This is visible on several levels. The feeling that we can do something can be linked to the quality of the end product or with learning a new skill. An improved self-image can be the result of mastering the technique or exploring the past, past achievements and recording present achievements that mark a development in the direction of the desired goals.

Photography as a Medium to Achieve and Record Changes

Photographs can simultaneously reflect and support the process of change. They offer a starting point with identification and representation of desires and goals, directed towards the desired changes. Even the barriers that occur on this path can be visually depicted and they can help us plan and measure the path to the goal. Photography has the advantage of recording change and this reminder serves as a source of motivation and overview of the road travelled. From this viewpoint, photography is an excellent medium in groups, in which the individuals wish to achieve a positive change in their life.

Photography as a Medium of Group Cohesion and Development of Interpersonal Relationships

Sharing our photographs with others is sharing who we are and what matters to us, and is at the same time a way to accept others in our life. Inside a group, this establishing of a relationship is all the more intense, because the participants learn from each other through looking at photographs they took and discussing them. The recordings provide a new look at different fields of personality, establish common ground, interests, weave connections among the group members and enable the recording of common voyage through reciprocity, trust and process of decision-making. Thus, the newly found self-esteem transfers to other areas in their life. This element of decision-making is strengthened by the multi-layered photographic process and its flexibility, for an individual can choose by himself and upgrade the level of involvement in the process. It can be a fun, social activity, or a manner of introspection and reflection.

Craig (2009) assesses the multi-layered character of the photographic process and the power of photography as a medium of self-expression and self-exploration through these categories.

Photography as a Medium for Communication

Photography offers a visual language that can be a support for people who have trouble communicating. These can be the result of physical and cognitive handicaps, but also emotional trouble, due to which an individual can hardly express his emotions through verbal language. Photography in this context has the role of a surrogate of verbal language, enables virtual language and way to connect with unexpressed emotions. It can be used in a metaphorical sense and can thus enable an individual to express through images, or enables him to structure what has been told about a certain photograph. Thus, the photograph becomes a frame and focus of conversation. A person can decide to talk about the content of the photograph, the circumstances of its take, its story or its meaning.

Photography as a Medium for Expressing Values

On the most basic level, the photograph ‘tells’ about what is important for the person who took it – who and what is important to him, which places have certain value and what someone likes or does not like. These values can be expressed through one’s existing photographic collection or with new photographs, exploring what it important here and now and thus taking control over the process of self-exploration.
Photography as a Medium of Reflection

Photography enables us to move further away from the situation and look at it from another angle. The multi-layered character of the process of how a photograph is created offers a deeper understanding often unachievable through traditional ways of reflection. The imaginative process going on between the search for motive and photographing it enables us to watch a situation from different angles, and the deeper processes of reflection to help us plan and look for alternative solutions and learn different ways of knowing and responding to certain circumstances. Each time we see the photograph, we have the chance to look at it through a more mature, more adult perspective, and see ourselves differently, when we give ourselves a chance to learn and grow up.

Photography as a Medium of Strengthening Memory

Taking photographs is often used as help for the restoration and preservation of memory with people who experience memory trouble. Photography can trigger memories and enable the person to set them in a visual context and thus construct or reconstruct a story. In this way, photography is most often used with dementia sufferers, for it enables them to take a walk through the past, encourages conversation and strengthens self-awareness.

Photography as a Hobby

Value the limits of group help. After the group activities are finished, the participants can keep on developing their interest for photography, connect with another community with the same interests and thus expand their social network and keep on expressing themselves creatively.
Professionals as well as experience say that the actual legislative arrangements are imperfect and inadequate in a lot of places, especially with help for individuals with new types of impairments and illnesses, characteristic of the modern age (http://www.disabled-world.com/disability/statistics/). Perhaps we could add that some new activities and some new promising professions have not yet found the right way to become desirable for people with special needs.

**Photography as a Profitable Activity**

More and more economic branches and social activities are more and more aware of the meaning of visual media, gives them attention and builds their activities along with them. For that, of course, they need the services of photographers. Given that photography, at least in all of its genres, does not take a lot of physical strength and skill, it can become a suitable choice of education and profession for the disabled, since they can do it in spite of their handicap. This type of activity can be organised and done within the framework of the so called social enterprises, with which creating profits is not in the foreground, but instead, their main purposes are to provide life stability and improvement of the quality of being. One should realise that positive discrimination in employing vulnerable groups does not only mean an additional cost allocated by the government from the funds for solidarity and humanitarity, but is also an investment with several long-term positive social effects.

Even if an individual has already acquired education to perform his chosen profession, the knowledge and skills from the field of photography can only do him good, for they lift and expand the level of his professional competences and make him more competitive in the work market, in the same way as with a driver’s licence, computer knowledge or knowledge of foreign languages.

With the gathered photographic knowledge, individuals can help themselves with self-employment by, for instance, promote their activities or present their products effectively on their web site or elsewhere. They can take part in an environment dubbed ‘coworking’, where they cooperate with others to develop ideas and enter the market.

For numerous individuals, photography can be a supplementary activity to be performed occasionally as author’s work. Even for those who have their social status covered by the government and therefore have the possibilities for basic survival, the feeling matters that they can bring in some money with their own work. For them, even occasional small projects and actions are priceless, enabling them to use formal and personal agreements to, for instance, cover a report of an event, which is in turn published by the site of their local association, or they can help document a family celebration and then prepare a photo book on the topic.

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Dr. Breda Krofič has a degree in psychology and is an associate professor of methodology of dance education and pedagogical psychology. From 1991 to 2012 she was a coordinator-operator of the postgraduate specialist study programme entitled Arts therapy-artistic therapy at Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana. Since 2012 she has been a voluntary consultant for postgraduate students in the programme Arts therapy. In her research work she studies the psychological questions of human movement in relation to the fields of creativity, learning, communication and arts therapy. She is interested in holistic methods and techniques of developing creative thinking with kids who have special needs.
Definition of Arts Therapies

Creative art therapy or shorter art therapy (in Slovenia, the study programme is literally called Help through Art), is a type of therapy or form of social help through the processes of experiencing, expressing and creating by artistic means of expression. In developmental and therapeutic part, the encouragement to the process of self-actualisation is gaining ground, and the process is effective precisely in artistic creative activities. Art therapy is a recent applicable and scientific discipline. Contemporary science is exploring and verifying the achievements and findings of art therapy in practice up to today and is collecting evidence of its effectiveness. Education in the field of art therapy is taking place on numerous universities throughout the world and in Slovenia, as well, mostly on a postgraduate level, given that the studies and the profession require adequate personal maturity. European universities habilitating professional workers are connected in the European Consortium for Arts Therapies in Education (ECArTE), with the University of Ljubljana as a full member. Art therapy, in Slovenia also called Help through Art, is implemented by a professionally qualified therapist from the field of drama, movement and dance, music or fine arts, after he acquires the adequate specialization or MA. In Slovenia, the profession of an art therapist has already been listed in the standard profession classification of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, however, the working positions for art therapists are not yet self-evidently provided and reserved at home, as well as in a lot of places abroad. Slovenian art therapists are united within the Slovenian Art Therapists Association, founded in 2004.

The process of creative art therapy – help through art – is taking place in the mutual effect between the client or user and the art therapist, with the mediation of an artistic medium. The art therapist’s task is to provide a safe environment to enable and encourage the client to express himself through an artistic medium (movement, voice, fine arts, sound, words, etc.). Depending on the artistic media facilitating therapy, fine arts, music, drama and dance therapies are being developed, leading to the newer fields with newer types of artistic media, such as photography, video, film, digital animation.

“Art is the highest form of human consciousness, transcending it as an expression itself, as well as in its effects on consciousness, and affecting the unconscious. Thus, it enables the structuring of the subject, for it organises consciousness in such a way that it represents a new framework, in which the unconscious is structured. Art is the most complex image of consciousness and a mechanism through which the objects from reality create consciousness itself in the process of catharsis in human consciousness. Catharsis is a complex transformation of feelings and differs from the usual release of psychological emotional energy, since it is a delayed reaction enabled by a work of art. This form of release differs from the usual feelings by triggering a process of intense imagination in addition to the feeling.” (Vygotsky, 1971, and Kompan, 1996, Krofič, 1999)

Creative artistic activity is a general human feature, not only a characteristic of some individuals, some social classes and some historic periods. However, our current notions separate art from everyday life. We define artistic creation as a special profession of a handful of talented individuals – professional artists. For most people, art is said to be above all accepted passively, as an enjoyment. But art is significant in exploring emotions, feelings, relationships, spiritual dimensions, thoughts and ideas. Artistic creativity engages one’s emotions, frees the spirit in order for an individual to do something he or she wants without taking orders about what is good for him or her. By creating his own personal special signs, a human being expresses his personality. No outstanding talent is required in order to achieve this, only joy in expressing oneself in numerous possible and available ways. An individual expresses and processes his feelings and experiences through an art process. Numerous, mostly negative emotions can more easily be expressed through artistic means than directly in realistic life circumstances. A bad experience maintains itself as an unfinished act which is hard to accept. Expressing oneself through means of art enables or facilitates the distance from the experience itself, enables a look from beyond, which sees the experience as a closed, finished act, and therefore triggers acceptance. Artistic expression can help an individual find socially accepted ways to express negative emotions otherwise hard or even impossible to express. Thus, creative artistic expression represents a precious arranging mechanism for an individual.
Diverse artistic means enable the individual to express his feelings, emotions and thoughts, and to transfer them to others. The objective to be achieved is not a perfect work of art, but personal integration and self-confirmation. Creative expression through artistic means can help individuals solve diverse personal problems and anyone exploring his or her inner world with the help of art. Art therapy is meant to lessen the problems and disorders, to prevent them and promote personal growth and development. It is meant for individuals with the most diverse types of problems or disorders, from injuries and senso-motoric problems and disabilities to mental disorders, emotional and behavioural disorders, addictions, trouble in communication, disorders in relationships, abuse, developmental mental and physical disorders, learning disorders and age-related problems. Creative artistic activity as therapy has begun in the previous century and has so far mostly developed in psychiatric institutions, where it is also most connected to treatment. Today, this activity is also organised in other areas where solutions to the individuals’ personal problems are at stake. There are different currents of art therapy, connected to different psychological theories and practices. Practical implementation depends on the art therapist developing his own work method. Experts from diverse fields, connecting their knowledge and experience by means of art therapy, can use their expert work to develop a new, more quality-based way of working with an individual and groups.

**Reasons for Therapeutic Effects of Creative Artistic Activity:**

- Anyone, regardless of talent and level of mastering the art medium, can enter this activity;
- Artistic means are an important way of expression and communication;
- Artistic activities promote creativity;
- Artistic activities promote imagination at work;
- Artistic activities unite the personal potential of an individual;
- Artistic activities relax and make one happier, especially when being held in a group;
- Works of art are permanent or can be recorded and researched later.

**Levels of Art Therapy of Help Through Art**

Art therapy can be a primary or a supporting way of help, depending on the needs of the client-user and other circumstances. It can be held on three levels of art therapy practice:

- Supporting level: all kinds of functional use of artistic media for non-therapeutic, but therapy-connected purposes;
- Heightened level: when art therapy is used to enhance the effects of other treatments;
- Intense level: when art therapy holds a central and independent role;
- Primary level: when art therapy is the only therapy in view of the needs of the client-user, catalysing important changes in his life.

**Individual and Groups Work in Art Therapy or Help through Art**

In principle, the purpose of art therapy is to solve the individual's personal problems. The process of therapy can be held individually or and in a group, depending on the needs of the client-user.

Among the reasons for group art therapy are the following:

- People with similar needs can help each other to solve problems;
- Group work can encourage individual and group creativity;
- Group work enables relaxation and facilitates communication;
- Individuals can test new ways of behaviour by checking the responses of other group members;
- Group work facilitates the individual's insight into his own problem, enables personal growth and the acquirement of a positive self-image;
Artistic expression and creativity within a group facilitate the individual's acceptance in the group;
A group is suitable for individuals who are resistant to individual work with a therapist;
In a democratic group, the members are in charge of group management and are responsible for it;
Expert help is provided to several people at once.

Some of the main forms and methods of group artistic activity:

- Work in a larger group, work in smaller groups and individual work intertwine and complement each other;
- Activities are mostly held non-verbally through a silent experience and in a relaxed and playful atmosphere, which provides a feeling of safety and freedom;
- Activities have a firm structure, so they guarantee the feeling of safety and simultaneously allow one to choose and feel free;
- Non-direct relationship between the leader and the attending clients;
- No assessing and judgement; group members are equal and they respect individual needs and special features of the other individuals;
- No force is used; everyone have a say when it comes to choosing the topic, means and manner of work, as well as express their desires and comments; and everyone takes into account the comments of others;
- Relaxed activity and kind communication among group members.

Different Types of Art Therapy

Depending on the art medium, art therapy encompasses drama, music, fine arts and dance. Each of the art media is an independent therapeutic means of one of the types of art therapy – drama, music, fine arts and dance therapies. Each type has its own specific development history, methods, terminology, artistic expression medium and clientele who need a certain form of art therapy. Art therapy is a relatively new therapeutic activity, for it began to systematically develop as late as in the second half of the 20th century. Fine arts therapy is the type with the most long-standing tradition, while dance therapy is the youngest of the types. In the meanwhile, creative drama therapy was separated from psychodrama and connected to video and film therapy. Music therapy transitioned from listening to active creation of music. Fine arts therapy has spread to the field of phototherapy, audiovisual means and contemporary media.

Drama Therapy

Drama therapy is art therapy through theatre means of expression, which accentuates integral and profound group cooperation. In its most extensive form, drama therapy encompasses all means of creative expression and is not simply a formal performing art in the sense of theatre. Performance is part of the entire scope of drama expression. In creative arts therapy, the notion of drama signifies a way of acting, a flexible framework for action. The latter can draw from the already acquired experience, the present, or future experience to be foreseen. Thus, the meaning of drama therapy lies in exploring and experiencing new emotions, dimensions and ideas, as well as in the expression of the known, the close and the safe.

The task of drama therapy as a therapeutic and also preventive activity is to help improve communication between individuals and groups. Precisely in this characteristic, great emphasis is placed on non-verbal ways of communication. This is of great importance to the individuals whose communication channels are inhibited or seriously injured, as well as to the ability to form relationships within the group, which enables individuals to express common emotions and experience common identity.

Drama therapy does not differ from other types of theatre art, neither by content nor by its techniques. However, it therapeutic work,
one must choose and use different techniques very carefully. In drama therapy, movement, dance and mimics are very important means of expression, in addition to speech. They enable a child or an adult to more easily gain awareness of his entire body and body parts, as well as their possibilities. Awareness of his own body and body identity through movement enables an individual to make his own body a means of communication.

As is characteristic of other types of creative arts therapy, drama therapy also harbours the method of improvisation, be it dance, movement, verbal expression, sound or silence. It is spontaneous happening ‘here and now’, which answers to different visual, auditory and tactile impulses. Project work can be drawn from improvisation. In the process, specific ideas can be developed by intertwining imagination and facts in connection to other artistic media. Given that creative means of expression complement each other, drama as speech cannot be separated from fine arts, music, movement, space, storytelling.

**Dance Movement Therapy**

Dance movement therapy or in short, dance therapy is an independent form of creative arts therapy. As goes for other types of creative arts therapies, dance therapy as a rule does not rely on psychotherapy as a form of psychiatric therapy. Dance therapy is a process in which body movement, expression and creativity through movement, is a main therapeutic means. In creative arts therapy, dance is an art means of expression suitable for anyone. Through it, an individual expresses his life along with all the obstacles and complex intrigues. Dance therapy is based on the analysis of the client-user’s movement and on the promotion of change through that movement. Every change in the manner of moving is namely “extended” to the entire personality. An individual can express his emotions with the help of the exciting, invigorating or calming power of dance. The dance therapist studies the connections between the client-user’s body activity, his emotions and reflections, thus helping him to gain awareness and a feeling of better control over his own life. The therapist’s assignment is to help the client find an acceptable identity and a satisfying form of behaviour for himself and his environment. Dance offers stabilising structures encouraging and connecting the flow between human interior and exterior realms. When the client uses body movement to project his emotions into space, they become directly communicative. Images and metaphors trigger imagination without the intermediation of words. Movement and emotions have a lot of common ground: emotions are shown through expressive movement, body language – also called symptomatic movement –; while movement constitutes a sign, a symptom for a certain emotion, such as fear, joy, sadness, anger. Movement and dance experiences can help to integrate the physical and the emotional, thus giving a child or an adult the proper competences to more suitably react to his environment. When one experiences the building/formation of one’s own organic structure in space, it triggers self-confidence. In cooperation with others, the feeling of common effort and creation, of mutual help and dependency is created. Dance movement therapy uses the body to leave an impact on the psyche, which is contrary to verbal therapies, which try to influence the body and behaviour through psyche. In dance, the body acts as a receiver, mediator and implementer, when it accepts kinaesthetic, rhythmical and social stimuli.

The meaning of dance movement therapy can be defined with the following characteristics: it helps to achieve self-awareness, because it enables one to form a suitable body image, it gives one the feeling of an inner structure, it reduces impulsiveness, it enables one to discover oneself, it encourages contentment with oneself, self-confidence, sensitivity to non-verbal signs; it develops social skills, namely social awareness, because it encourages contacts with others, trust, sensitivity, adaptable structure, cooperation, group problem-solving, following the rules, dividing attention, empathy, leading and submission, attention span, accepting contacts through touch, self-initiative and cooperation in activities; it gives one possibilities to express emotions and imagination through body form; it enables one to feel success and contentment; it provides integration of inner and outer stimuli; it provides capability of flexible answers to emotional and physical life issues, which can be generalised to several situations; it improves functional
Music or music therapy works as an aid to self-actualisation or self-confirmation, encourages developmental growth, accelerates and improves learning, as well as facilitates relaxation and stress-release, pain control, help with the process of giving birth, monitoring body activities, dance, movement, drama and fine arts activities, etc.

The difference between music therapy and other therapies is that music therapy uses music as a fundamental therapeutic means. The focus is placed on some kind of an experience of music. In view of the client’s specific needs, the music therapist draws the client into different musical experiences, such as: singing, improvisation, recreation, composition, listening to music. Each of the experiences can also involve speech, expression through images, expression through movement or dance, roleplaying, poems, storytelling and drama expression. Thus, music meets other artistic means of expression and connect to them. Therefore, therapeutic body movement can work in relation to the expression use of the voice when it triggers certain emotional, psychosomatic and psychological responses. Singing and voice expression facilitate therapy and promote social interaction, as well as boost one’s self-confidence. Creating melody, connected to storytelling within a song, awakens certain emotional, psychosomatic and psychological responses. Creating sounds through one’s own voice through song enables one to express and reveal oneself. Improvisation in music therapy also has therapeutic effects, for it is closely connected with emotions. The musical and non-musical, as well as the verbal and non-verbal, create a unified nature of the therapeutic relationship.

In planning music therapy, we need to take into account the musical abilities and knowledge of music. Since most of the client-users do not have any previous musical education, music therapy is based above all on the innate human tendency to create music. Music therapy is founded on the supposition that every person, regardless of their age or musical education, has the basic ability to create and appreciate music. This basic or normal musical capability includes the ability and dynamic elements of neuro-muscular skills, such as walk coordination, balance and orientation in space; it helps one to sensibly and suitably organise, interpret and act in the objective world; it instils the patterns of emotional and physical responses in a positive and acceptable manner, it gives a child or an adult the competences to creatively enter society and it prevents conformism.

Dance therapy often connects diverse techniques and disciplines, even the elements of Eastern psychological and physiological disciplines. In his work, a dance therapist uses different dance styles and types, from free creative movement to formal dance movement, depending on the needs of an individual client or group. Dance therapy can be connected to music and fine arts therapy, given that it shares the time, rhythm and dynamics components with music therapy, while having common spatial and formal components with fine arts therapy. All three forms of therapy complement each other and work psychotherapeutically through the action of the subject in an artistic manner, at the same time integral and diverse. Of course, dance movement therapy can connect to drama therapy, as well as to roleplaying games and play therapy, to achieve a flexible, active and creative happening within the group.

**Music Therapy**

Music therapy is an interpersonal, artistically oriented process, in which the therapist uses music in all of its dimensions – bodily, emotional, mental, social, aesthetic and spiritual ones – in order to help the client-user improve, renew or stay in good health in the widest sense of the word. Sometimes, the client expresses his needs directly through musical elements, and sometimes in an interpersonal relationship developing between the client and therapist or group. Music used in therapy can be created by the therapist and the client or chosen from the existent musical culture from different periods and in different styles.

Music therapy is aimed at individuals in the most diverse states: those with body diseases, traumas, injuries, senso-motoric difficulties, mental disorders, emotional or behavioural disorders, addictions, communication problems, problems in relationships, to abuse survivors, those with development disabilities, of the mind or body, those with learning disabilities, persons with ageing problems or dying persons.

Music or music therapy works as an aid to self-actualisation or self-confirmation, encourages developmental growth, accelerates and improves learning, as well as facilitates relaxation and stress-release, pain control, help with the process of giving birth, monitoring body activities, dance, movement, drama and fine arts activities, etc.
to learn how to sing, play simple instruments, move to the music, respond to the musical elements, comprehend the relations between sounds, remember musical elements, get an insight into music and ascribe meaning to musical experiences.

**Fine Arts Therapy**

Creative fine arts therapy is a process of expressing through visual form using fine art materials for ‘healing’ in the widest sense of the word. The possibilities of expressing one’s own inner world through fine arts are innumerable, including for instance dots, lines, colours, forms, rhythmic configurations, flat surfaces, objects and figures within the assigned space, materials encouraging fine arts designs in the most diverse techniques, as well as harmonised movement in space and other means, dependent on the tendencies, wishes and feelings of the client-user. Creative fine arts activity encompasses creative work with the use of fine arts materials: pencil and paper, ink, colours, crayons, coal, paper collages, wood, metal, clay, etc. – in short, anything that enables us to express ourselves through flat or three-dimensional surfaces. The newer means of expression used in fine arts therapy include photography, video, film and digital animation.

For some clients, expression through fine arts is more accessible than other forms of expression (dance, drama or music), because communication through fine arts is indirect, given that the client’s artistic work is a mediator between the client and the therapist. During artistic creation, a person is alone. But when his creation in the form of an artistic message is viewed by another person, the creator is either not present or has become a viewer. Therefore it is especially characteristic of people who are having trouble with direct communication that the visual form of expression seems to come easier to them. Instead of narrating his past experience, the client uses an art process to relive his problems and traumas. If he, for instance, narrates his experience in verbal psychotherapy, the memories keep his experience in the past as unfinished, impossible to assimilate and to integrate. But when the experience gains an image in a work of art, he is able to create a distance to it, see it as a finished act and also accept it as such.

In group fine arts work, art is a means of transferring personal feelings, thoughts and emotions to other people. Its meaning is not to create perfect artistic products to be assessed in line with expert aesthetic standards. Artistic expression often leads to verbal communication, when the client-users discuss their creations. And their own interpretation of their work is more important than the therapist’s. Artistic expression enables one to express thoughts and emotions that bother or disquiet the client, even though he does not realise it. Sometimes, he expresses it with special colours and shapes, so it is obvious to the viewers, while he does not even notice this particularity during his own interpretation. Perhaps he is as of yet unable to face the burdening emotions and thoughts, but has already been able to unconsciously transfer them into artistic form.

Within the process of fine arts therapy, visual expression plays an inclusive, connective and relaxing role. Artistic expression and creation enable people to develop a feeling for a socially acceptable form of expressing numerous findings, emotions and feelings. In this way, the client-users increase their capability to manage their circumstances and achieve better orientation in life.

**Bibliography**


HERMENEUTICS OF A PHOTOGRAPHIC STORY

Robi Kroflič

Dr. Robi Kroflič is a university professor of Theory of education and General pedagogics at the Department of pedagogy and andragogy of the Faculty of arts, University of Ljubljana. He studies fundamental pedagogical phenomena, promotion of development of identity and moral development, the concept of pre-school pedagogics, education with the help of the artistic experience. He is the author of holistic inductive educational concept and the pedagogic use of art as an inductive educational practice, which have been applied over the past ten years in cooperation with Vodmat kindergarten.
Photography as a young medium is placed among the tools to facilitate human observation and man’s depiction and reflection of his own life in this world. Although today, numerous theoreticians draw our attention to the problematic overabundance of images and lack of words, which create a spectacle-oriented cultural environment explicitly inhibiting critical reflection, this criticism is not to be aimed at the new tools mediating reality (such as photography, film, multimedia), but only at their usage. The reality of spectacle according to Debord (1994) is a reflection of capitalism, turning everything into specific images establishing a reality that is separate from existential human needs and which promises personal fulfilment through consumption of capital goods. According to Kearney (1988), postmodern art also bears witness to the increasing distance between images and the signifies reality, while their rational deconstruction aimed at understanding reality is becoming increasingly complicated. Therefore, Ranciere’s warning on the necessity of art to trigger action in the form of reflective confrontation with the real existential problems and to redirect its view from behind the simulacrum appearance of images by providing them with ‘visibility’ and ‘audibility of speech discussing the collective’ (Ranciere 2010).

As Barthes says, photography must also be understood as one of the media for story transfer, starting with storytelling, epic, tragedy, fairy-tale, novel, etc. Namely, narrative is present “... in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very history of mankind and there nowhere is nor has been a people without narrative. ... narrative is international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself.” (Barthes 1977, p. 79)

Even though photography is supposedly a medium for story-transferring, it “... does not tell stories itself, it does, however, render them possible by asking questions.” (Peljhan, Kravanja and Rutar 2011, p. 65)

In doing this, its role is not essentially different from historically privileged story-transferring media: storytelling, epic, tragedy, fairy-tale. However, in order to comprehend the significance of the phenomenon of artistic narration for human existence, we must at least raise the question of the narrator and the target audience of the story. An excellent movie *Dans la maison*, depicting a relationship between a secondary school pupil Claud and his creative writing tutor, F. Ozon (2012) sets forth exactly the following question: To whom is Claud actually writing? – and ascribes the answer to Claud when he addresses his teacher: You are my master, I am your Scheherazade. As I am about to show, every plot needs a narrator, as well as a listener/viewer, but the liveliness of the depicted story depends mostly on the latter. If he uses his interpretation to answer the set questions, the artistic image will get a new life, no less significant than the one it was created in.

Therefore, despite the fact that ‘photography does not tell stories’, the title is very much justified in raising the question on the hermeneutics of the photographic story, given the argument of D. Rutar that when faced with a photograph, “... we certainly feel that we can tell a lot to ourselves just by looking at it.” (ibid., p. 63.)

The issue of understanding the pedagogical and therapeutic significance of photography, when set in such context, thus raises two questions which I am about to address hereinafter:

- What is the significance of narration/story to human life?
- What are the tools to ensure critical reflection of recording human experience through photographic stories?

**Short Summary on the Significance of Narrative**

“Selfhood is a cloth, woven of stories told.”

(Kearney 2004, pp. 109)

The first theoretic light shed upon the meaning of narration can be traced back to Aristotle’s Poetics, where he states that a man, his virtues and vices can most easily be known by observing the relationships
and actions in the story of his life. The plot of the tragedy is therefore the one reflecting concrete examples of the moral and/or immoral human characters. Simultaneously, participation in a theatre play enables us to compassionately walk in the shoes of a tragic hero, go through the gameplay of our own existential dilemmas and fears while experiencing an unusual feeling of catharsis/relief/illumination, which diminishes inner tension and equips us to better deal with our own existential problems. This mysterious cathartic effect of participation in an artistic event was later on theoretically discussed in reference to other art media, as well. However, the question of why human confrontation with the symbolic depiction of fictional fate of the depicted hero has such a large educational or even therapeutic effect, was most profoundly answered by Ricoeur with his thesis that the human Self and therefore self-identity consist of a narrative structure.

The famous Ricoeur’s thought on how the shortest way to the self leads through another must, in the spirit of understanding narrative self, be understood in a way that a person establishing self-awareness and therefore its self-identity by entering other people's stories and at the same time uses responsible choices to create his or her own life story. The ‘Other’, through which we find our way to our self, is the Other of personal or historical memory, the imaginary Other of the stories past and present, and of course the real another person with whom we are entering into a direct relationship; therefore, the mysterious ‘Other’ resides in ourselves – within our unconscious, in the witnessing and depictions of the past and present moment, in the fictional projections of a future (un)wanted, as well as, of course, in concrete persons and communities we interact and connect with.

Stories are illustrations of diverse life events depicting a connection between human desires, decisions and actions, with consequences tragic or fulfilling, evil or good. Thus, narrations serve a practical wisdom connecting the awareness of the context of individual events with consequences valued in view of the ethical concepts of good and evil, which we have gained through tradition or past experience. If traditional views on good and evil are passed on to us by our important others or institutions such as kindergarten or school, the key prosocial experience stem from our desire to attune our own wishes to the expectations and reactions of important others (Benjamin, 2000). This attunement fortifies the compassionate contentment with actions that make close relations happy into a certain type of scripts of fulfilling decisions. Somewhere between the transfer of tradition and one’s own experience lies the deep-felt processing of an artistic depiction of a concrete event, because, as we have realised with Aristotle, on the one hand, a work of art constitutes a depiction of a virtuous or vicious act, while on the other hand, our compassion towards the agent and the event creates a prototype of an imaginary experience. Thus, this connects the ethical to the aesthetic dimension – moral judgment to the poetic creation of a new reaction to an existential situation.

Reflection of the self and quest for meaning are therefore necessarily connected to imagination, which enables us to enter another’s stories (compassionate imagination) as well as create our own stories (poetic imagination). Meanwhile, developing imaginative skills through listening and telling stories creates the most powerful pedagogic or therapeutic tool to trigger self-awareness and a responsible relationship towards others.

Kearney wrote in his study on Ricoeur:

“The most fitting response to the question ‘Who is the author or agent?’ is to tell the story of a life. Why? Because the enduring identity of a person /.../ is provided by the narrative conviction that it is in the same subject who perdures through its diverse acts and words between birth and death. The story told tells about the action of the ‘who’: and the identity of this ‘who’ is a narrative identity...

The narrative self involves an ongoing process of self-constancy and self-rectification that requires imagination to synthesize the different horizons of part, present, and future. The narrative concept of self thus offers a dynamic notion of identity (ipse) that includes mutability and change within the cohesion of one lifetime... This means, for instance, that the identity of human subjects is deemed a constant task of reinterpretation in the light new and old stories we tell about ourselves.” (Kearney 2004, p. 108)
By using such notion of the narrative self, Ricoeur tried to by-pass reductionist views of man as simply an effect of several signifiers or desire, but at the same time, he tried not to deny the meaning of psychoanalysis in deeper understanding of human beings. It is not a coincidence that it was psychoanalysis that set up a model of ‘healing’ through storytelling. However, if Freud was still influenced by the substantial notion of the self, which considers the methods of the self-reflection of suppressed content to be a means for diminishing the neur-rotic pressures of cultural traditions and generating healthy personality development, Ricoeur sees an equally important tool for diminishing frustration and developing the self in the hermeneutic reflection of the stories of ‘significant others’, because a reflection on the otherness of a person close to us enables us to productively confront otherness in the core of our own person (Ricoeur 1992). Kerney convincingly illustrated how such productive confrontation with another as a different, but nevertheless worthy being, is unfortunately a rare virtue, namely by setting an example in the form of analysis of a scape-goat metaphor in the European tradition (Kearney 2003) and wrote that the metaphor bears witness to the human feature of projecting our own discomfort and fears onto another person, thus blaming, labelling and eliminating that person from our own environment.

“Rather than acknowledge that we are deep down answerable to an alterity which unsettles us, we devise all kinds of evasion strategies. Primary amongst these is the attempt to simplify our existence by scapegoating others as ‘aliens’. So doing we contrive to transmute the sacrificial alien into a monster, or into a fetish-god. But either way, we refuse to recognize the stranger before us as a singular other who responds, in turn, to the singular otherness in each of us. We refuse to acknowledge ourselves-as others.” (Ibid., p. 5.)

Antigone, Medea, Don Quixote, the hunchback of Notre-Dame, the Elephant Man are all artistic images bearing witness to the discomfort brought on by the existential otherness of the agent of a social act, whether the feature in question is (female) gender, national and civilizational identity, quirkiness or physical disability. The ambivalent depiction of the aforementioned characters, depicted as ‘undomesticated’, yet as bearers of moral deeds, shows how we as human beings hang on to the norms of ‘sameness’ in order to protect the changelessness and semantic value of our own fixed idem identity; and how our encounter with the artistic depiction of the otherness of a close person can trigger our sympathetic orientation towards otherwise socially marginalised characters, and in that respect, the development of a more open narrative identity dubbed ipse (Ricoeur 1992, Krofič 2006).

**Narrative Hermeneutics**

“The final scope of a (literary) work of art is achieved when the experience of the artwork user enters into the horizon of expectations of their life practice, reforms their understanding of the world, thus forming a reverse effect on their social behaviour”’

(Jauss, *Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory*; summarised in line with M. Pezdirc Bartol 2010, p. 33).

Hermeneutics was formed as a reaction to the positivistic scientific study of reality, aimed at unveiling the objective, changeless laws of an observed phenomenon. The objective stand of a scientist – beholder of reality – is, according to Gadamer (2001), an illusion of the age of Enlightenment that the world can be observed without participation, without pre-judgements, prejudice, solely from the tradition of transferred constructs of meaning. If we wish to ensure human access to the meaning of an event, we can do so only with the help of a hermeneutic circular reflection on the concreteness of an individual event within wider historic context and general awareness of the meaning of past events. But when we establish the meaning of narration, we must link the message of the story to the insight into the narrator’s intention, as well as to the state and needs of the listener. The objective and subjective views of hermeneutic understanding are intertwined, according to Heidegger and Gadamer, since we as interpreters of the ‘message and tradition’ are always already connected to the tradition, but at the same time, the fact that the tradition was materialised in the artwork,
enables a historic breakaway and thus, discrimination between ‘true and false prejudice’. (ibid., p. 248), whether it is ideological blindness or the suppressed personal trauma that narrows the ability to see the meaning of the event or the historic horizon of the artwork.

Since this text is mainly concerned with the reaction of the artist and user on the depicted event, which is brought forward by reception aesthetics (Jauss, Gadamer, Ingarten; cf. Pezdirc Bartol 2010), our issue of narrative hermeneutics must be directed at the narrator and listener of the story as the dialogue protagonists whose questions and answers widen the horizon of meaning. Or, as Jauss argues in his programme text Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory – the final scope of a (literary) work of art is achieved when the experience of the artwork user ‘enters into the horizon of expectations of his life practice, reforms his understanding of the world, thus forming a reverse effect on their social behaviour’ (ibid., p. 33).

If the carrier of the potential story is to be photography, then it can be described as a medium materialising silent knowledge and silent feelings in a photographic image, thus enabling metacognitive awareness (cf. Kroflič 2010). A photographic image, whether recorded or chosen for observation, enables a reflection of a ‘captured look’ from the standpoint of a story it is narrating, from a standpoint of the question about who the narrator is and what he wants to communicate to us/himself, and of course from the standpoint of a question about which overlooked story in us as viewers the given image has touched and what that tells us about our self. Communication through photography thus enables us to ‘lose oneself in the other’ in order to ‘find oneself and return to oneself as to the other’ (Gadamer 1989, p. 110), which in line with Dallmayre constitutes the basic way of the spirit searching for meaning in the other’s message (in our case in the message of a photographic image) in order to return to itself, enriched with a new experience (Dallmayre 1989, p. 92).

Hermeneutics has developed useful tools to understand the depicted story and face the ethic issue of how to productively ‘confront’ evil or a traumatic personal experience. If the former dimension is important for education in general, the latter opens the possibility of understanding how to confront traumatic experience in a therapeutic sense.

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**Educational Value of Hermeneutic Unveiling of an Artistic Image**

“... the subject becomes both reader and writer of its own life.”

(Proust; summarised in line with Kearney 1999, p. 99)

As Kearney wrote in his work On stories, humans are the subjects of narration, as well as the product of the narration subjectivity. We are made of stories even before we are born and start to create new stories. This makes every human existence a patchwork of stories, heard and told (Kearney 2002, p. 153–154). Meanwhile, telling our own story as well as listening to the stories of others are closely linked to imagination as the ability to meaningfully connect past events within our concepts of good life, as well as to our readiness for dialogical openness in finding different meanings of the narrated stories. The so-called narrative imagination, according to Ricoeur, encompasses three tasks: to be aware of one’s duty to the past, to cultivate one’s own self-identity and to verify the meaning of one’s own actions by assessing the motives and the expected results (Kearney 1999, p. 92).

If we accept one of the fundamental claims of Ricoeur’s philosophical anthropology, namely that humans are historic creatures composed of stories even before we start to compose our own stories, the central pedagogic claim for forming open self and responsible morals is established in the demand to preserve historic memory. Aristotle rationalised this role with his thesis that virtues are most easily transferred through remembering and re-narrating the actions of heroes (Kearney 2002, p. 106), while Ricoeur rationalised it through Primo Levy’s ethical imperative that people should never forget historic tragedies so that they would not reoccur, which is most properly achieved by listening to the witnesses of historic events and preserving the presence of the deceased through stories preserving the memory of the past in line with the utopian idea of justice and reverence (Kearney 1999, p. 96).

Our obligation to listen and tell stories as the foundation for cultivating self-identity is closely linked to Proust’s formula that the ‘subject becomes both reader and writer of its own life’ (ibid., p. 99). In his
work Life in Quest of Narrative, Ricoeur argues that in Aristotle’s view, a story well told always teaches us something, because it unveils the universal aspects of conditions of humaneness, which makes artistic narration more philosophical than historicism. The artistic story develops a narrative understanding closer to practical than to theoretical assessment of a moral judgement (ibid., p. 103), and it is practical assessment that constitutes the tool to help humans solve moral dilemmas in accounting for the hermeneutic conditions for understanding a life situation, which is simultaneously a condition for self-development. Therefore, Ricoeur’s conviction that without the narrative powers of hermeneutic imagination to ensure an ethical vision, initiative or motivation for ethical treatment and empathy for identification with the other’s perspective, ethical judgements remain empty and blind, is no coincidence. Narrative imagination awakens in us a living feeling of self-identity and attention towards others (whether present or past others), motivating us to strive for good life (ibid., p. 208).

An ethical vision therefore enables us to see the connection between our deeds and the foreseen results in view of the measures of good and evil, while the story (fiction) is an ‘endless laboratory’ to study the imaginative possibilities of action, expanding the horizon of ethical thinking beyond the borders of conventional morals. When we see ourselves-in-the-world, it motivates us and empowers us to act, since we better understand the connections between goals and motives. Because the story enables us to better see the connection between the agent, action and goal in compact form, it prepares us to be better readers and agents in our own lives. When we foresee the action, assess the motives and anticipate the effects, narration enables us to identify with others (objects of our action). “There is neither love nor hate, care nor concern, without an imaginary transfer of my ‘here’ into your ‘there’.” (Ricoeur, Imagination and Discourse in Action; summarised in line with Kearney 1999, pp. 104)

Hermeneutic Confrontation with Painful Experience and the Therapeutic Meaning of Art

“To give people back a memory is also to give them back a future, to put them back in time…”

(Ricoeur, The Creativity of Language; in Kearney 2004, p. 137)

Ricoeur linked the most direct answers to the question of how the hermeneutic method can help us gain an insight into the meaning of the story and thus to the (auto)therapeutic effect of confronting a painful experience with the possibility of facing the painful experience and the three-fold way of studying: practical understanding, working through the evil experience, which leads to catharsis, and ability to forgive (Kearney 2004, p. 94).

Similarly to Gadamer (2001), Ricoeur believed that Aristotle with his concept of phronesis established a sort of prototype of a hermeneutic experience, able to take into account the singularity of situations as well as the presupposed universality of values, which can safeguard us from many (post)modern discomforts of the sublime, monstrous, extreme, unspeakable, unimaginable evil (Kearney 2003, p. 88). Confrontation with evil namely calls for the hermeneutics of differentiating between good and evil (Kearney 2004, p. 95), and practical understanding is not only ‘phronetic’, but also ‘narrative’. “While morality often speaks abstractly of the relation between virtue and the pursuit of happiness, it is the task of narrative imagination to propose various fictional figures that comprise so many thought experiments which may help us see connections between the ethical aspects of human conduct and fortune/misfortune.” (Kearney 2003, str. 101)

Meanwhile, the story does not only lead us to the depiction of an evil experience, but also causes us to relive evil or achieve a cathartic mourning, turning passive sorrow into the possibility of an active complaint, protest (Kearney 2004, p. 96). Catharsis warns us that new action is possible, that we can avoid obsessive repetition and repression, belief in an evil fate, all of which leads us to experience the unavoidable strangeness of evil (ibid.). Mourning is therefore
a key way to prohibit the inhuman nature of suffering to lead us into complete loss of the self, which was described by Freud with the concept of melancholy. A certain kind of catharsis is necessary to save us from sliding into fatalism and need for revenge, both of which are common in the state of despair. Our mission is to turn paralysis into protest (Kearney 2003, p. 103–104).

That which enables a cathartic view of an evil experience through reliving the story is narrative imagination, which on the one hand enables us to emphatically view the story characters, and on the other hand, ensures a certain aesthetic distance that can unveil meanings. A mysterious fusion of empathy and distance creates within us a double vision, necessary for the journey from the closed ego to other possibilities of life (Kearney 2002, p. 12–13). Similarly to Gadamer, who, for a hermeneutic insight into the essence of a phenomenon, envisioned an existentialist closeness of the phenomenon and the interpreter (Gadamer 2001, p. 245–246), as well as a historic digression from the interpreted events (ibid., p. 248), cathartic relief is, according to Kearney, also enabled by a sufficient level of participation in the event and compassion on one side, and the fact that mimesis achieves a certain offset from the act before us, which enables us to take a suitable distance in reference to the act itself. Drama as an artistic, fictional depiction of the story can raise more sympathy than a real event, because it, on the one hand, diminishes ‘suspense’ as a normal defence mechanism (when we are faced with suffering in reality), and on the other hand, ensures a wide variety of characters for us to identify with (Kearney 2002, p. 137–138). However, it does not hurt to reinstate that cathartic effect can be triggered by artistic depictions in any medium, among others photography.

Cathartic narration is only one of the tools to rationally confront evil. The same role is played by Levinas’s face-to-face phenomenology, Habermas’s ethics of discourse and some other theories. In all cases, those are forms of action through the experience of evil (Kearney 2003, p. 104–105), an essential element of the hermeneutics of action/act for a just rebellion and thus for forgiveness (Kearney 2004, p. 96).

Forgiving enables us to merge practical understanding with catharsis, letting us know that we can protect ourselves from evil in the future – by forgiving as well as by protest (ibid., p. 97). Although Ricoeur sees forgiveness as a sort of miracle transcending the abilities of rational calculation and explanation, it is nevertheless not blind. To enable it, we must again collect our memories of the past, relive them in imagination, reflect again so we could identify what it is we are forgiving. “Cathartic narration can /…/ help to make the impossible task of pardon that bit more possible. That is why amnesty is never amnesia ...” (Kearney 2003, pp. 105–106)

Meanwhile, the final effect of narrative hermeneutics was explained by Ricoeur in an interview with Kearney in 1981 with an assessment of where life without narration is leading, as well as an assessment of what hermeneutic denial of ‘absolute knowledge’ offers to man.

“A society where narrative is dead is one where we are no longer capable of exchanging their experiences, of sharing a common experience... To give people back a memory is also to give them back a future, to put them back in time... The past is not passe, for our future is guaranteed precisely by our ability to possess a narrative identity, to recollect the past in historical or fictive form.” (Ricoeur, The Creativity of Language; in Kearney 2004, p. 137)

“For me the philosophical task is not to close the circle, to centralize or totalize knowledge, but to keep open the irreducible plurality of discourse. /.../ It was in fact Karl Barth who first taught me that the subject is not a centralizing master but rather a disciple or auditor of language larger than itself. /.../ If there is an ultimate unity, it resides elsewhere, in a sort of eschatological hope. But this is my ‘secret’, if you wish, my personal wager, and not something that can be translated into a centralizing philosophical discourse.” (Ibid, p. 136)
On Educational and Therapeutic Meaning of a Photographic Story

“...every snapshot has stories to tell, secrets to share and memories to bring forth, if only it is asked the right kinds of ‘opener’ questions.”
(Weiser 2010, p. 8)

The 20th century bears witness to an expansion of diverse art therapies, mostly linked to the psychoanalytic theories of the unconscious by Freud and Jung, while some authors, such as Bettelheim, also use psychoanalysis to find a basis for ‘educational’ inhibition of harmful frustrations that the child suffers from the conflict-oriented nature of developmental processes. On the one hand there is contemporary understanding of the educational meaning of artistic activity, while on the other, we have a reflection on diverse art media that can be of help in (auto)therapeutic processes.

In his abovementioned work On Stories, Kearney, in addition to diverse forms of stories, uses an interesting analysis of a psychoanalytic method of healing through telling a story (talking cure). In doing that, he sets an interesting hypothesis on the three ways of understanding represented by a life story in one’s psychological life. Apparently, young Freud had a “scientific hypothesis” seeing analysis as a way of neutral observation of hidden “facts” causing a state of disease. In his late period, Freud allegedly slightly changed his view of therapy through story-telling, setting a ‘relativistic hypothesis’ that therapy has less to do with reconstructing the past as it really was and more with loosening the unconscious into a free game of pure linguistic denominators and fantasies. Meanwhile, Kerney’s idea states that the healing power of a story could be significantly completed with Ricoeur’s ‘hermeneutic hypothesis’ stating that retelling the past is to merge the past with the present reading of those events within the context of a continued existential story (Kearney 2002, p. 45–46).

As is evident from most of the reflections of the therapeutic value of a photographic story, the key element of phototherapy is an encouragement, when we use suitable questions to encourage the photographer or the viewer of a photograph to connect the depicted ‘frozen moment’ to stories.

Pedagogical Meaning of a Photographic Story

In his essay entitled Narrative: An Introduction, Paul Hazel (2007) wrote that we can identify the meaning of a narrative in the core of every learning process. Narrating a story is, according to him, a creative and imaginative act to help us select, arrange, decode and re-configure memories and plan how to solve problems. Judy Weiser finds similar traces in dealing with photography, which can “…increase their own self-knowledge and awareness, activate positive social change, strengthen communities, improve intercultural relations, reduce conflict, bring attention to issues of social justice, deepen visual literacy, enhance education, expand qualitative research methodologies and produce other kinds of photo-based healing or learning.” (Weiser 2010, p. 12)
The pedagogical value of photography is especially recognised by the creators of new educational practices in pre-school period, when a child is less able to express himself verbally and form logical conclusions, because photography enables him to communicate to the adults how he sees reality around him, what gives him pleasure and pain. As Susan Sontag states in her famous monograph *On Photography*, “… photographs are evidences of not only what’s there but of what an individual sees, not just a record but an evaluation of the world.” (Sontag 1979, p. 88)

One of the most known projects linked to the use of photography in kindergarten practice is *Mosaic Approach* (Clark 2010), in which the researchers and pedagogues tried to deepen their awareness of how children see the world by offering them a series of narrative tools, among which one of the central was a photo camera, with which the children could tell the story of life in a kindergarten from their own perspective. The study especially focused on the way children experience kindergarten as a space to live and learn. Their key finding was that when we enable the child to create a story, we help him build a feeling of belonging to a space, while the child experiences the spaces where there are no children’s stories arising as foreign, as has been confirmed by numerous ethnographic studies by Vivian Paley (1990, 1992, etc.).

Meanwhile, Cristina Nunez (2009) ascribes special pedagogical value to the photographic self-portraits. In her article *The Self-portrait, a Powerful Tool for Psychotherapy*, she compares self-portrait to a mirror phase at the passage from a symbiotic relationship between a child and a mother, when the child recognises the first outlines of his own self-identity in the mirror. Compared to the views of adults, in which the child recognises himself in an image desired by the adults (Miller 1992), self-portrait is an image for the child to play with and find out what he is like or what he wants to be like (Weiser 2010, p. 9).

**Therapeutic Meaning of a Photographic Story**

Even more than in pedagogical practice, photography is used as a complementary tool in psychotherapy. According to Judy Weiser (2010, p. 4–5), its key advantage is that it helps to unveil our unconscious, which is more than verbally encoded in ‘visually symbolic representations of experience’, and establish communication with it. In the author’s opinion, snapshots are a sort of “catalyst to deepen insight and enhance communication during their therapy sessions” (ibid., p. 11).

Most frequently used phototherapy techniques – self-portraits (understanding of our own image), portraits (looking from the other’s perspective), photographs taken or collected by the individual (self-exploration through metaphor), family albums and autobiographic collections, as well as photoprojections (artistic photographs chosen by the client to help him discover his feelings, notions, desires, projections, etc.) – bear witness to the fact that the key mission of phototherapy is to unveil the memory of unfulfilled frustrations regarding the present feelings and the future objectives. Or, as Judy Weiser explains the same idea:

“Photographs are footprints of our minds, mirrors of our lives, reflections from our hearts, frozen memories that we can hold in silent stillness in our hands – forever if we wish. They document not only where we have been, but also point the way to where we might perhaps be going, whether we realize this yet or not...” (ibid, p. 1)

The described ideas draw the meaning of photography closer to Kearney’s idea of hermeneutic interpretation claiming that avowing the past is to entangle the past with the present reading of those events within the context of a continued existential story. I therefore believe we should take into account, in a pedagogical as well as therapeutic context, the fundamental starting points of Ricoeur’s narrative hermeneutics, namely that by re-confronting the past, if we use practical wisdom and relive a painful past experience to encourage cathartic mourning and enable resistance to the negative feeling of helplessness, it is possible to step out of the zone of pre-determined painful destiny. Surely, this is one of the key objectives of education as a process of gaining independence, as well as psychotherapy as a process using ‘the return of memory’ of previous painful experience to gain an insight and motivation for an ‘open future’. The historic character of human being and along with it, an openness of narrative identity demand
of us to see ourselves within a time dimension, to transcend the state of historic amnesia – in which pain had forced us to erase fragments of the past from our memory.

A photographic story thus simultaneously enables a preservation of the memory of past losses, cathartic mourning and forgiveness, and opens our possibilities for a brighter future.

Bibliography

Dr. Dušan Rutar graduated in psychology at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. There he also obtained his PhD with a dissertation on Freud’s concept of Id. He was a coordinator of postgraduate programme of theories and politics of body, carried out by Institutum studiorum humanitatis (ISH). He participated in the postgraduate education of the Faculty of postgraduate humanistic studies in Ljubljana. He was a lecturer at the Faculty of social work and taught an elective course Psychoanalysis and Epistemology at the Faculty of Arts as an external collaborator. He founded the film school Educating the View and has been lecturing at libraries, high schools and institutes in Slovenia over the past years. He has published over 800 pieces—books, scientific and professional articles, columns, lectures, book and film reviews, and theoretical discussions.
Foreword

We need an emancipated spectator. It is on him that the future of image depends. He will need to learn to understand the meaning of distributing the sensitive, the borderline between what can be said and what can be seen, according to Jacques Rancière. But above all, he will need to realise the meaning of vital capacity or ability to reinvent, which is immanent to every art-form, including photography.

Once he understands that, he will also be able to understand that art is therefore uncontrollably democratic in the sense that its ideal is for people to live in an egalitarian community in which no man is inferior and nobody is left out. He will also realise the classic character of this idea. And finally, he will clearly know that photography needs philosophy.

Handicap and the Sociology of Photography

The fundamental epistemological realisation that reality does not exist out there somewhere, where it is set, complete and accomplished, just waiting for people to objectively know it and thoroughly describe it or register it, is simultaneously a starting-point for serious reflection on the sociology of photography and handicap, as suggested by the title of this article. We could likewise discuss the sociology of handicap and photography; we could even attempt a debate on the handicap of sociology, however, space is scarce, so we will refrain from doing that.

We will stick to the initial idea that a photographer cannot be a human being walking the earth, camera in hand, in order to take pictures of beautiful or interesting objects, since the latter do not exist independently of him and his social background. Therefore, we will hereinafter dedicate a lot of time to the concept of aesthetics, which is not synonymous to beauty.

The sociological idea relating to the basic epistemological realisation from the beginning constitutes the following question: What is the interest of the explorer as a social being? The question also raises new issues: What is the interest of a photographer as a social being? Is a photographer an explorer? What does he explore, if we agree on him being an explorer? And what is he, should we assume that he is not an explorer?

We have already taken only a short while to make a lot of steps and we have come far, so we can concur: a photographer is a person who must know in order to see. This is the axiom. So, what must he know?

Firstly, he must know that there exist in the community which he inhabits, since he is a social being, certain hierarchies setting what is and is not important, what to explore and what rather not to explore, what exists and what does not. The groups that the photographer is part of use several ways to set up, organize and change the daily practices of individuals, their lives, their manner of thinking, knowing and acting – thus, they also change the photographer.

The abovementioned also goes for the photographer and his photographic activity, which is never his alone. He is therefore not a being simply opening its eyes to observe the surrounding objective reality and then taking pictures of it. His work is one of transferring, which he might realise or perhaps not. Either way, he is able to learn how to recognise it. What is he therefore supposed to learn in order to become a good photographer always working within a social field? This is the key research question of this article.

First of all, he should learn that there are socially transferred clichés on photographing, which are spontaneously imparted on every amateur photographer already by education. Thus, he learns implicitly that photography is: protection from time, since photographs are frozen moments to be returned to long after they have empirically disappeared in the past; communication with other people who look at photographs; an expression of emotions, feelings, ideas and other things; an actualisation of one’s own potential, abilities, capabilities, know-how and artistry; a starting-point to enjoy social prestige or prominence; an escape to another reality created by the photographs.

When we speak of learning, we of course have in mind the transcending of the familiarity and naiveté of immediate understanding that a person simply opens his or her eyes and already comprehends what is going on around him or her. When one opens one’s eyes, he or she actually does not understand anything. Thus, all of it is yet to be learned.
Bourdieu therefore accentuates: people always know less than objectively goes on inside them and around them, therefore they make poor interpreters of the world and human interactions in it. The knowledge of an amateur photographer is very much determined, even though he might spontaneously believe otherwise for lack of awareness of the scope of his own community life.

There are socially regulated functions of daily life that people are not (sufficiently) aware of. Thus, photography is necessarily a social activity, not only an intimate individual one. Moreover: it was precisely Bourdieu and his colleagues who have proven photography to be perhaps more than anything else a structurally and systemically determined activity of individuals who otherwise spontaneously believe it to be merely their private, even intimate one.

This realisation is especially important within the light of the reflection on handicap, perhaps the most distinct example of the system determining individual identities and life destinies.

Spontaneously, people perceive handicap as a deficiency, illness or problem resulting in the so-called vulnerable social groups of people. Thus, handicap is an outer sign facilitating the differentiation of people among themselves, so that they recognise themselves as members of one or another social group. Or, in line with Bourdieu: individuals recognize each other as members of the community, not realising that they simultaneously unconsciously believe in the objective probabilities of one’s lifestyle, behaviour and actions.

Most photographers are thus subordinate to social functions, as Bourdieu stresses. This is why photographic practices are mostly subjected to social rules and functions and therefore spontaneously perceived as necessary and desirable. In the eyes of everyday people, photography thus becomes something universal and natural. What appears to be psychological and inner, intimate, is often simply a continuation of social facts, as Durkheim once stated.

What is therefore photography as such, asked Roland Barthes years ago. And his answer: photography is most certainly a sovereign contingency. In its sovereignty, it bears witness to existence. Barthes stated it was existence itself posing. If in reference to photography, we are unable to say it is existence posing, then we are simply uninterested.

We are interested in photography which animates us, as Barthes states. When it does animate us, meaning that it triggers a certain movement in us, we are justified in calling it an adventure.

It is precisely at this spot that we are able to think photography and handicap. Namely, Barthes literally states the following: I wish to explore photography, not as an issue, but as a wound.

I therefore see, feel photography, and since I feel it, I reflect upon it. Handicap is another name for a wound that is universal and in view of which, the objective reality is open. Exploring reality is made possible precisely due to handicap, due to its openness, which then implies that every explorer must be open, otherwise he is unable to explore.

To engage in photography is thus to explore reality and create it. It is to explore the truth of reality, given that truth interests us more than anything else – more than, for instance, the photographer’s intimate feeling of the world.

In addition, we must therefore attempt at grasping the theory of truth, for without it, we cannot know what the photographer is exploring, what he is interested in, what constitutes the objective of his research. And the photographer does not necessarily know what he is photographing, given that he might not have been concerned about the theory of truth.

An ancient thought is still dominant in people’s minds, namely that the truth of the world is an exact connection between a reflection of the world and the world itself, or concordance of both. If a statement about reality matches objective reality itself, we call it true. People certainly believe that the truth springs from an order of sentences or statements about reality.

Therefore, truth is supposed to be a correct connection between language and reality, according to Alan Badiou. He continues to say: however, truth is not limited to the form of a judgement, sentence or proposition. In other words: truth does not belong to the order of language, is not an equation, sentence or realization.

Truth demands an event, as Badiou states, and an event demands a special decision to be either taken or not taken by people; this is very important.

In reference to an event, people can respond by calling it an event, however, they can call it something other. Their action in both cases
depends on how they designate it. The difference is very significant, because an event is not simply an objective empirical fact, but his status entirely depends on the designation.

In short: an event only exists when people decide so, when they decide it has happened. If they do not decide so, it has not happened. 24 We can only speak of truth and of an event once people decide so – then, we speak of their engagement. It is therefore clear that truth and an event are not objective and neutral facts able to be stated in the form of an equation or anything similar.

An event opens a new field within the existent social field. It creates conditions for new ways of living and thinking. The new field yields new criteria for understanding truth and human existence. There is no way back anymore.

A new field, of course, demands new learning.

There is no way back only for the ones who have decided that the creative moment they are facing is truly creative and that it is an event. For the ones who have decided otherwise, the future is different, as well. For them, the moment is not creative, but something pertaining to either the trivial part of everyday life or a disturbance to be eliminated immediately, so that life can get back on the old track.

We can therefore see that there is no singular and linear way towards truth in the social field. It is precisely in this perspective that art, such as photography, truly asserts itself.

It is now even clearer that photography does not mean concordance of objective facts or moments that deserve to be registered by the photographer and to be set in an archive. 25

A photographer is subjectively engaged in the procedure of truth, which is necessarily truth within a social field and truth of social life. This is our definition of the art of photography.

Photographer’s engagement is loyalty within the social field, so he does not refrain from what he has set out to do. Certainly, his approach is not calculative or self-serving. Once a photographer decides for an approach in which he is about to persist, this denotes his entire life, his entire lifestyle; it denotes and overdetermines his existence.

The photographer therefore takes risks, because loyalty to truth is not something all people would always welcome. The realisation might be startling, but it is true and confirmed by history that the people who wish to reorganise life are not always welcome, even though the reorganisation might be implemented in the light of truth, not illusion. This again brings us to the realisation that people love their illusions very much, as Freud once noted.

The decision we are currently discussing is therefore very concrete and always bears very concrete social consequence. The decision is not abstract, as Alan Badiou accentuates. 26

We are thus discussing loyalty to the event, we are discussing active organising of life or existence, we are discussing work that is hard and time-consuming, because loyalty does not last only a week or two.

Photography is therefore not simply the photographer’s hobby or entertainment, if he is serious about his decision as a social and moral being that he most certainly is, in any event.

Handicap implies concrete representation of the truth of the world or of concrete social reality. It represents a symbolic fact that reality cannot be complete and closed. It therefore represents its openness, so people sometimes intuitively believe it to be not only a problem, but simultaneously a privilege.

Photography as art and handicap as a representation of symbolic not-wholeness of the world are privileged practices used by an individual such as a handicapped photographer to preserve loyalty to what Badiou calls an event. The most important fact in all this is that the decision for loyalty is irreducible, which implies an absolutely free decision of an individual, not to be regulated by any rule.

A human being is necessarily a free one, although he is not necessarily aware of that and does not necessarily understand it.

The decision for freedom implies perseverance, a process in which the individual suggests to other individuals a new logic, a new way of organizing life or existence. He therefore proposes new human interactions, new ways of reflecting himself and the world, new forms of cohabitation. The consequences of the initial photographer’s decision are therefore concrete and long-lasting.

When we are discussing the decision for faithfulness, we are, in a strict sense, discussing the subject. We are not discussing the self or ego, we are not discussing personality, we are not discussing the psychological human.
The subject proposes what is new and is always already a part of the new; the subject persists in the new. This is precisely how it represents the infinite truth in the finite world. Its representation creates what Badiou calls generic set.27

What is therefore created by the representation of truth or loyalty to the event? This creates new concrete circumstances in the world, making up a new suggestion on the nature of the world and life in it. Generic set is open and infinite, which is logical, given that truth is infinite, as well. Persisting in one’s fidelity to the events is therefore infinite.

Generic set cannot be totalized, closed and transformed into finite. Attempts to do precisely that are nevertheless always present, because people do not necessarily welcome new suggestions or suggestions of a new way of life.

The difference between people representing the generic set and people not representing it is important, since generic set is universal.28 This means that the generic set is part of the world or reality, it is however a special part. It is not merely a part to be counted in with the world, but a special part somehow protruding out of it, since it is universal – which is logical, for it is formed in faithfulness to the truth, which is also universal.

To represent generic set is to construct a new world. It means perseverance and it means fidelity not to be compared with other types of behaviour and actions of people who are adapting to the given circumstances. We are discussing two entirely different ways of living, knowing and acting.

Should truth already be written into the world, should everything connected to it already be inscribed, human beings would not be left with anything but repetition, Badiou states.29

The world is open, therefore the construction of truth as universal is possible. It never is and cannot be repetition. The logic of the construction of the world is universal, however, it is different every time.

We are discussing an exception. Within the world, truth is always present in the abovementioned manner, but simultaneously, it is always an exception not belonging to the world. The new is an exception.

This is precisely true for the nature of handicap, as well. There are people who represent handicap in very concrete ways, but it is universal and an exception in every world. There are particular forms of handicap, but likewise, there are particular worlds in which universal truth appears again and again as the new.

Truth is infinite, so we will never grasp it in finite form, because it is logically impossible to do that. In a finite world, we will never be able to grasp the infinite truth.

Photography as an art will be understood within the frame of the context described.

Social Engagement of Art

One could hardly claim that art has not been socially engaged so far; in fact, we cannot be justified in claiming this. The realisation, of course, does not apply for every work of art in every period, however, the very definition of art, which is a truth procedure according to Alain Badiou,30 enables us to say that we must look upon art as a socially engaged activity.

We can continue with a classic reflection on art, which is relatively simple: there is a concrete work of art and an art practice is forming, enabling an abstract reflection. However, instead of the term abstract, we can safely apply two other terms: political, philosophic. And when I discuss art philosophically and politically, I am firstly thinking of what Alain Badiou calls an immanent break with the existing.31

The immanent break with the existing sometimes constructs an event, continues Badiou; sometimes, not always however. An event marks a beginning of something entirely new. The break with the existing signifies a cessation of the existing, which in turn is not possible anymore. An artist breaking with the existing does not address this (anymore); even if he ever did address it, he is not addressing it anymore. A new sequence is commencing, as Badiou calls it.

However, this does not mean the old is gone. It goes on existing, therefore reality always gives space to simultaneously co-existing worlds, which in turn of course means that different people literally do not inhabit the same worlds.
An artist potentially able for an event thus finds himself in a new world, where new possibilities are formed for action and reflection. They arise and are available to anyone who finds himself in this world.

When we are discussing new possibilities, we are thinking of new forms of what people have among each other, we are thinking of new contents, new relations, new ways of living, new existences. The new is not possible within the existing. It is only possible if there is a break from it. For a lot of people, this realization is a problem, since they would like to preserve the old and at the same time, address the new. However, it is simply impossible to have both options available.

It is obvious that an event signifies something radical, drastic. The break with the existing is, quite simply, a revolution. Usually, this word makes people think of bloody events, shooting and eliminating the opponents of the revolution, but upon thorough reflection, most of the revolutions in the history of mankind have signified precisely the calm and very non-bloody break with the existing, whether they included works of art, scientific discoveries, political decisions or love between two people making history (for instance Romeo and Juliet).

The break with the existing thus mostly starts with a free decision of individuals to simply not so something anymore, to start addressing something new.

A work of art as an event is necessarily critical; not every work of art is critical, but it is also not an event. There is a great portion of artwork that only complete the existing collection of works of art. The critical character of a work of art means that the work is distancing itself from the existing social reality, which is entirely logical. A work of art as an event creates a field for the creation of a new reality, so the artist as its creator is not very or not at all interested in the existing reality.

Is it still possible within the described perspective to think the old idea of truth as adequacy, which was discussed for instance by Aristotle? Can truth be the concordance of what goes on in a human mind and of what goes on outside it? Does our reflection on reality refer to it or is it immanent to it? Does language play a significant or even key role in this?

Badiou’s answer is negative. Truth is not adequacy and it is not expressed through language as this or other statement, judgment or anything else.

Truth is a process that can never be completed or finished. Those are Badiou’s words. We can also understand it as a form of freedom, as Sartre suggested.

If we attempt to understand the idea that truth is a process, it is immediately clear to us that it must be something new. A process means action and not repetition or renewal that is characteristic of knowledge expansion, which is, as we know, always written in the form of sentences, equations or otherwise.

Truth as a process must signify arising, coming, apparition; truth comes, arises, therefore we can recognise it, perceive it, understand it, grasp it. However, it does not arise as a realisation, an inscription or an equation, but as a process, as something lasting and triggering effects.

It arises as a process within the real, stresses Badiou. This is a very important realisation. A process within the real is creative and it necessarily represents the new. It is logically affirmative, since it is a suggestion of something new, different from what we are otherwise used to. What does it affirm or acknowledge? Life itself.

In order for the truth to arise as a process within the real, something must, of course, happen. It is indispensable that something happens, otherwise we cannot speak of truth, we cannot speak of the arising of the new.

While only knowledge is available to us, we have two possibilities at our disposal: we can transfer it to other people; we can wait for the supplement to the existing. In the first event, we are repeating, in the latter, we are waiting.

An event breaks the repetition and a new field opens up, in which we understand truth in a new way, as a process within the real. In this field, we decide for it; but of course, we can opt not to decide, since we are free beings.

We are aware that something has been broken, that something has happened. We are clear that the new is offering itself and we can decide for it as free beings. Once we freely decide for an event, we name it. If we do not name it, it objectively has not happened. Human decision for an event is therefore very important; actually, it is key.

So we should not engage in quick complacency about shallow findings that art is art of the beautiful or that artists imitate subjective
realogy, making beautiful or at least interesting artefacts that more or less sell. Neither one nor the other definition of art is suitable and in fact, they are both far from the truth, so they will not raise our interest.

We should especially refrain from jumping to a conclusion that art as a truth procedure depends on the definition of truth as adequacy. Modern philosophy, Badiou says, is sharp criticism of the truth as adequacy. Art and philosophy therefore have a lot in common.

An artist is, to put it very simply, a human being capable of metaphysics and metacognitive activities, so it cannot be a surprise for him to imitate imitators, as in other artists supposedly imitating nature, or other people who also believe to be imitating reality, of which they supposedly know what it is like.

It has never been possible to seriously and convincingly discuss direct nature or objective reality, since every man has always inhabited a metaphysical reality, so the idea of imitating the imitators can be an extremely productive and challenging, even revolutionary social practice, which art certainly is, since it is a truth procedure.

It is safe to say that imitating the imitators opens up what is allegedly closed; such as the social field. It also opens the objective reality that people believe to be out there. Imitating the imitators opens the open, opens openness itself and opens opening. However, this is entirely different from the effort of an artist to be like a scientist knowing how to discuss the nature of the objective world, because his task consists of opening it, not explaining it. If art would explain anything, it would quickly fall into the field of science and become science itself.

Thus, we are leaving the objective world to the scientists, while we surrender ourselves to art as metaphysical beings or beings capable of metaphysics, different views and different uses of language. Precisely in this light, everybody needs another reality as the one with applicable mathematical algorithms that make it necessarily sterile. It is impossible to live or exist within a mathematical reality.

This is why art does not pull us into objective reality, but on the contrary, away from it or away from presumptions of it, into another reality it is creating. Art is necessarily creative in this objective world, but only with a view to create new worlds. It is not in the world, it is the other in it.

Therefore, an artist says to himself: I want to reflect on the world in my own way, I want to be in it or to persist as a singularity, as something new. In a strict sense, other people do not even matter to him, even though he needs them as listeners, spectators or readers.

Do not therefore bore me with the details from objective reality, do not bore me with banalities. This is the message of the artist, which we should welcome with open arms. I am talking about a kind of naivety, about the subversive power of naivety hidden in the opening. Acceptance is, of course, unsurprisingly scarce.

Opening namely lies precisely in the relation towards truth and is therefore always shocking. In the opening, there are no illusions, no fictions, no deceits, no feigning. Opening is precisely what it is: opening. It is nothing else.

Opening is a state in which a person does not expect anything anymore. In fact, it is lasting, pure lasting, in which nothing is expected apart from more of the same. In this state, an artist is truly and finally creative.

Hereinafter, I will discuss photography. I will discuss art, I will discuss what art can do within the social field, what it must do, in short, I will discuss its duty. I will not simply discuss what it is, but especially what it can do, make, create, what it must do.

Or, as David Levi Strauss wrote in his book, reflecting on the future of photography: if art could make us see each other more clearly, then perhaps we could recognise each other anew and bring a little more kindness back to this world; that sound not be too much to expect. Art is capable of doing that.

**Handicap as Otherness of the World and of Art**

However, I will also discuss the nature and function of handicap, which always appears to people as otherness. Let me explain myself.

Adorno writes in his *Aesthetic Theory*, in the chapter on art, society and aesthetics, that in art, every social field necessarily contains an element of otherness. His statement is complex and multi-layered, for
a work of art in a social field should not be simply some kind of rational and emotionally backed mirror of objective happening, which is, in any case, a myth, therefore the statement is hard to understand.

Namely, otherness signifies radical otherness, unnameability, it means something that a human as a symbolic being cannot process into a symbolic story, concept, notion or idea. One can try, but the process is infinite.

The element of otherness is therefore inherent to art, Adorno continues, which implies that art itself is always an excess in the social field, otherness itself that cannot be diminished to the artist’s genius and his perceiving of the world in a special way, allegedly characteristic of artistic souls.

The truth is essentially different. An artist is a human being capable of using his work to create tension in the social field, a contrast – which is the same principle, according to Adorno, as the one that the mind uses to organise the world itself. We can therefore say that the world itself is made in such a way that it, as a synthesis, contains the element of otherness. Art is thus part of the world itself – as is its otherness.

The conclusion offers itself: without the mind, there is no world, and without art, there is no otherness through which we realize how the mind organizes the world. I can therefore conclude: art is a cognitive practice.

An artist recognizes and understands the written element. He knows it is always already there, that no one made it up, it is therefore objective and independent of people. With this insight, a work of art as a mirror of reality acquires a new and radical meaning: perhaps it is a mirror, but in it, the otherness of reality itself is reflected in a new way.

This is why reality is never out there. It is not given, but is always a particular and temporary human synthesis, which is not possible without otherness. Adorno is not wrong: the world itself contains otherness, meaning that it is other than itself. The world is never what spontaneous everyday consciousness takes it to be, therefore it cannot mirror it, as long as it believes in that.

Spontaneous everyday consciousness needs art in order to understand the world as it constructs it.

Realization gives another realization, which Adorno writes down as follows: art is the social antithesis of society. It is not an individual’s antithesis, even though an individual, like the subject, is a lever of art; there is, of course, no art without the subject. Everyday consciousness cannot be artistic unless it transforms to seriously dedicate itself to art itself.

As long as art is a commercial practice, everyday consciousness cannot become artistic. Art is possible only if the human being is a subject.

Every human being can grasp what a subject is. But not without a thorough transformation, which is simultaneously the objective of art as truth procedure, and not easily, but only with a special effort of the mind.

The artist as subject does not affirm objective reality and does not affirm social reality; the subject wants a different reality, other reality, since he is obligated to the logic of transformation. He always wants one and is already creating it. The connections between psychoanalysis and art are thus obvious: in a human being, psychoanalysis recognizes a subject, a possibility of a singular gesture, the artist embodies what the psychoanalyst recognizes. Both act in the spirit of enlightenment; art has meaning and significance only if it is productive, and it is such if it belongs to enlightenment, if it refers to the history of the mind, to the predecessors who were capable of a gesture in relation to what Freud dubbed unsymbolisable.

And only dilettantes, Adorno added, connect art with the subconscious; only ignoramuses believe art is a process drawing from the subconscious of an individual and expressing some sort of archetypes, as Jung would have put it.

Art is possible only in relation to otherness, to the unnameable and unsymbolisable. And only a subject is capable of singularity.

We can without doubt already state: without singularity, there is no art as truth procedure. Subconscious has no serious connection to it, so it is best to leave it aside.

The most productive approach of a human being to reality, which is always social, is therefore alienation, not organic unity with it. Whoever is too close, cannot be able to understand that which he is trying to get close to.
Only an appropriate alienation from the social reality brings about the prospect of a better reality, a better society. Adorno is an exceptional thinker of such alienation, especially important in the contemporary global world in which an impression is forming that the only purpose of an individual, male or female, is to leisurely go with the capitalist flow and let it pull them anywhere.

Adorno recognizes the possibility of a better world from the age of enlightenment precisely in art. An artist is namely a human being simply unable to satisfy himself with the given states; in fact, he does not even believe that given states exist, that they are at all possible, and is therefore unable to imitate them.

He believes much more in what Adorno calls subjective pleasure. It is not, however, a pleasure of a human consumer over the goods available to him in capitalism, or over illusions, but is instead a pleasure of a subject who understands why he is not interested in social totality of heteronomous elements in which most of his co-sufferers believe themselves or believe that someone believes.

An artist does not believe in totalities, does not believe in wholes. If he does believe, then he believes in what Lacan calls not-all.

In a period of hyper-production of goods, in our period, Adorno’s realisation on the arbitrariness of consumers and their taste, as he calls it, comes to be even more expressive, but what especially comes to light, is the realisation on the nature of standardizing people and their taste or behaviour, which is always different at first glance, but is actually different in mass and predictable ways.

Art identifies human suffering in the world, identifies the nature and culture of handicap, therefore it embodies it. Simultaneously, it reflects upon it and communicated to people that suffering is always redundant and the knowledge of it always scarce.

Only an artist, philosopher and psychoanalyst can show people that the sources of fiction, illusion and misconceptions are always empirical. There are always empirical interests of social groups of people in the majority believing fiction, contenting itself with illusion.

Such people often persecute art as useless, disdain philosophy and psychoanalysis and do not realise how desperately drowned they are in illusions; the more they cling to apparent empiricism, the more they live in illusions. Hegel is right precisely in this sense, when he says that daily life is abstract.

An artist, philosopher or psychoanalyst are therefore always dangerous, for their action by definition does not stand any of the above. The opposite is true: every activity is an enlightened one, otherwise it simply dies out, which means that the only empirical activity is in fact metaphysics, the ability of human beings to raise above what is only apparently real and empirical, objective and tangible.

An artist undoubtedly wants the new. He wants non-identity, non-wholeness of the world, he wants the world to be what it is: non-entire. His desire is radical, revolutionary and enlightened. It is not his caprice, not his peculiarity, because it is universal, eternal and unchangeable singularity, the ability of human individuals, subjects, to be universal.

A work of art is like an analysis discourse: it recognises people’s wounds, reflects on them and opens up to the open, recognises suffering. An artist wants openness, he wants to persist in openness, for he realises it is all over when the world closes, when people give up, when there are no more rebels, when they believe that empiricism is simply what they believe in, and when they believe this is most right in the world, as well. An artist wants to resist against evil.

He addresses the universal, for he knows that he as a subject is universality. He recognises the universal duties of human beings, understands the meaning and sense of their finite existences, which are always within the infinite.

An artist understands that he can only be a human being in relation to the universal and infinite, since everything else cripples him, pushes him into depression and states of helplessness, which means that it is finally destroying him and destroys him – and this is the evil. The relationship towards the infinite calls for experimenting, however, it cannot be and must not be arbitrary. Therefore, there is nothing approximate about art; what happens, happens out of necessity.

Perhaps one of the most convincing Adorno’s insights into the nature of a work of art is the one that arises due to his bold descent into the world of the absurd and the dark. Together with Hegel, he therefore gets to know the real state of the subject who cannot do anything but interpret one and the other, but does not make any effort to fill the world with meaning, sense and the ideals of enlightenment.
The opposite is true: the subject persists in explaining what cannot be explained. He persists in his relationship towards the truth, not in the relationship towards his own desires, needs or interests; the subject has no interests. The subject protests and rebels. He protests against death, against everything that humiliates life, captures it into moulds, standardises and shrinks it. All of this is in his nature as an ability.44

A work of art is beyond death. It is an expression of life, it is its embodiment, it is its expression, an expression of its power, of its infinity, of its resilience. An artist is not a rebel because he would not have anything else to do, but because he cannot be otherwise, because life itself is a rebellion against death. He is not a rebel without a cause, but a rebel with a very good cause.45

Both Adorno and Rancière46 state that art is persistence, lasting in its relation to the infinite. Both authors agree that it is because of that that the artist protests, resisting evil. Rebell ing against evil is opening up; evil is closing into the finite and persisting in the finite. Evil does not acknowledge infinity, it does not understand it or stand it.

Opening in infinity, opening to opening itself in infinity and only in infinity is good. It is in the good of the people, in the good of their well-being.

Therefore, art cannot exist without drama and danger. When it is closing, it is avoiding danger and stops being dangerous. The worst that can happen to art, says Adorno, is an absence of danger, is submersion into everyday comfort. When this happens, art becomes kitsch, a mass of worthless clichés. The true danger lurking behind every artist is comfort, which makes him believe that art is something psychological, subjective, emotional and subconscious, irrational and even mystical.

The submersion of the artist into the subjective pleasure signifies the end of art, and the end of art is accompanied by what Adorno calls implosion of the social.

Implosion of the social is accompanied by death of the subject, a decline of subjectivity that is capable of a universal gesture. Diminishing art to what is useful, beneficial and commercial is therefore the death of the universal and at the same time rise of the insignificant, uninteresting and boring, trivial, but most of all ideological and despotic.

The artist therefore communicates: do not burden me with the ba nalities of everyday life, for I am not interested in them. Administer ing the world, another concept used by Adorno in order to understand the difference between art and the implosion of the social, helps individuals to navigate through the mazes of everyday life, however, they are empty, sterile and in time, totally uninteresting, because they are committed to the principle of hoarding more of the same, a principle so very characteristic of capitalism in which we are forced to live.

In an ever more administratively arranged world, a jargon of auth enticity, genuine or appropriate character is becoming increasingly exuberant, which means that a work of art is also more and more a cluster of messages, signs and valueless symbols, or that its value is expressed by the market price for those goods.

Art therefore cannot be the language of pure feelings, Adorno stresses, it cannot be the expression of emotions and subconscious content of a few talented individuals or geniuses, it cannot mean the affirmation of the soul and its hidden contents, otherwise scarce in everyday life, it can only be the longing for the new and can only be the new itself.47

Art as the new contains a longing for the new, it contains the excess, which is otherness. Therefore, we do not speak of gathering the new, but of new sequences, as Alain Badiou would have put it.48 New sequences are also necessary because of what capitalism is achieving by herding immense quantities of goods and turning them into utilities. This is a severe threat to art, however, it does not mean that all artists will give up and let themselves be bribed; there will always be at least one artists who persists.

Therefore, a critical attitude towards art and artwork is necessary each time an artist does not go far enough, when he does not make any progress anymore, because in that case, he is surely on a good way towards giving up, on the way to stop persisting and on the way to lay down his weapons in the face of capitalism, if I may paraphrase Lacan. He who gives up shall suffer even more.
It is precisely in this light that art is welcome, for it is being born out of suffering, as Adorno states, and diminishes it. There is something paradoxical in it, because an artist does not offer people his own suffering, but frees them of their suffering, offering them the truth and something new. He is offering them a new reflection, a new gesture with which they can distance themselves from their own suffering and recognise what Freud always accentuated: that the individual’s suffering is never simply his alone, but always contains a trace of the general, social suffering of all people.49

An artist is therefore a social agent and not simply an unusual individual, creating in a cold room on the attic. An artist as a social agent does not, another paradox, submit himself to the consciousness of everyday life and does not share the general consciousness with others. Instead, it is the latter that he questions and persists in that questioning.

This is precisely why art is rational, not irrational or subjective. It is mindful and critical of the ways in which people as mindful creatures build the realities within which they believe in rationality. We can by no means diminish art to emotions, feelings and beautiful of kind subconscious content of the artists. That would mean catastrophe for art itself.

Art is metaphysical, so it above all does not take part in everyday social and ideological repression of people’s existences. The other way around: it rebels against it and reveals it. It can never do that without historical memory, therefore art is an activity exactly opposite to what is characteristic of everyday life: social amnesia, as Russell Jacoby would have said.50

There is an idea of art. We cannot simply say that an artist has ideas, since this kind of reflection is too short. The idea of art, as Adorno says, is the following: to enact the language of that which is not human.51 It is thus not about authentic, suppressed, forsaken human impulses, instincts, feelings, memories, experience or ideas, but precisely about that which is not strictly human, not from the world of interpersonal relations.

Art delves into what is mindful, into what by far exceeds any human being, because it is infinite. An artist is but a lever for the infinite, simply a device to manifest what is not yet known by any human being.

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**On Truth and New Drama**

Truth is something new and a beginning, states Badiou. It has to be subjected to thought, but not judgement, for it cannot be written down; truth is a process within the real.52 When I speak of the real, I have in mind the dimension of reality that Lacan dubbed the real. The real is impossible, but it is possible to think it, it is possible to surround it and think in the process.

A man who thinks, definitely lives for the Idea and the truth, which is infinite.

The realisation that truth is a process within the real has a dramatic continuance, not entirely disconnected from what I call new drama – I shall reflect upon that later on.

Namely, a process only starts in case something happens. The truth is therefore no out there, waiting to be known and written down. First, something must happen, something new must happen, only then can we reflect upon the truth. And this something, an event, can always start only within a social field, which means that the truth is always dangerous to the social conditions, for thinking about it creates new relations, offers new opportunities for social life of the people.

When we discuss truth, we always necessarily discuss the new.

Until the process I am currently describing starts, we are dealing with what supposedly exists. That which supposedly exists only repeats itself and renews itself. As far as this is all that is happening, we are discussing knowingness and knowledge; this is always committed to repetition, which does not lead to the new. Repetition only leads to repetition.

In this text, I am interested in the truth of art within a social field, but I am especially interested in the connectedness or intertwining of art, of the social life of handicapped people and art. I wish to reflect upon the nature of handicap in the light of the realisation that the truth is a process within the real and that art, including photography, is a truth procedure.

I shall therefore understand art as a truth procedure.53 And since truth can only happen in this or other social field, I shall understand it as a socially engaged activity, since truth is always the truth of social
The relations between an artist, a work of art and the audience change significantly due to what is written here. The artists do not make beautiful art products anymore and the audience is not composed of people who enjoy (or do not enjoy) their beauty. Namely, a work of art is part of social life, and thus, we are justified in saying that at least some of those works create situations that change social fields.\textsuperscript{54}

The key concept of this text is the concept of a situation. Situations are social places, they are artificially anew created places in which something special happens, something out of the ordinary. Art is namely out of the ordinary, otherwise it could not be a truth procedure. Ordinariness is by definition committed to repeating one and the same.

When discussing the non-ordinary, we are in the final instance thinking of what philosophy calls an ethical turn. An ethical turn is another key concept of this text, and it signifies an effect produced by people when they decide in favour of what we call out of the ordinary. This is the starting definition.

An ethical turn is first possible due to people’s ability to start reflecting on themselves and the world in a new, different manner. This ability is \textit{a priori}, it is universal and eternal. Every human being has it.

The situation is therefore a chance for an ethical turn, which means the clearing of a distance between authority and truth, as Badiou says.\textsuperscript{55}

The next concept that is directly intertwined with the concept of an ethical turn is ethical action. It is an action, an intervention of artists into the social space, into the field of forces, since the social space is always a field of forces and contradictions between the different social agents; there is not non-contradictory social field.

We can speak of an ethical turn precisely because we are discussing the ability of a human being for ethics and truth, for creativity and for loyalty, persistence in a process called truth. All of the terms are intrinsically intertwined and not a single one can be separated from the rest.

The most important is precisely the realisation of the terms being intertwined, along with the abilities of human beings. The process can never be completed, concluded. Truth is generic, human ability for it is generic. The ability for ethics and the ethical turn is generic. It will always exist.

**Ethical Action and Intervention in the Social Field**

Ethical action is therefore not merely an intervention by the artists, but a common work effort of the artists and other people either directly involved in the action or merely observers. Our reflection therefore leads us to conclude: art as a procedure of truth is committed to ethics, an imperative as understood by Kant,\textsuperscript{56} which means persistence and loyalty. I understand a work of art as an effect of the artist’s loyalty persisting in the truth of the social. Persisting in the reflection of the truth of social happening is not and cannot be a subjective ego trip of a lonely and somewhat eccentric artist who does not know how to do anything else, while society kindly supports and tolerates him.

Art as a truth procedure is paradoxically socially engaged, which means that it can intervene in the social field in order to change it only in case it is independent of it, if it is therefore not subordinated to the established ways of understanding art and aesthetics.

This brings to light the exquisite work done so far by the French philosopher Jacques Rancière. His basic idea is that art can by no means be separated from aesthetics, which has otherwise been well known, and from politics. How does the philosopher understand these connections?

The basis for understanding the connections between art, aesthetics and politics is actually epistemological or, even better put, ontological. This simply means that the artist is not an imitator of nature, not a creative being making an effort to present in most accurate terms what he wants to present to the audience. Neither is it his duty to offer to the audience something that they will like, something he will easily sell, something for them to admire. It is not about the desire of the artist and not about the desire of the audience. What is it therefore about?

An artist is a human being creating something which stands in itself. It creates something with no need, desire or intention. In a radical
We are therefore discussing different demands of works of art towards the viewers. When they find themselves in front of a good work of art, suspense happens. All of the existing interpretations of the world and of artwork find themselves between brackets, and the viewer or social agent finds himself in an empty space.

The very perception of the world, the most elementary form of human relation towards himself and the world, is therefore either reactionary or revolutionary. This simply means that it opens the door to new ideas or closes that same door.

If it opens the door to new ideas, art is progressive. This means that the artist is aware of the structural mechanisms and laws that exclude from the world: they exclude people, practices, ways of life. We therefore see that art is not only a truth procedure of societal life, but an effect of an ethic gesture by which the artist is aware that the world is not a sort of entirety of what is going on, but an apparent whole of what is left when the rest is excluded or has no other option to arise and emerge within the social field.

Reality, not only societal, is therefore always a result of exclusion, not only sometimes or out there in non-democratic societies. It is not true that there are vulnerable social groups of people that must be included in social life. Sociologically, this kind of statement misses the point entirely. It is not true that there once was a society which included all people, and then some of them were left out. This is entirely non-historical and impertinent thinking about the ways of existence of human societies.

Societies are always formed in such a way as to include all people. There are namely always available mechanisms that make even the excluded people included – precisely as the excluded ones. It is because of this unusual mechanism, which simultaneously includes the excluded people, that we need theory and art as an ability of a meta-political view of social happening, as suggests Rancière. It is only this view that works as emancipatory and is itself emancipatory.57

Why and what for do we need an emancipatory meta-political view of societal life?58 We need it because of the need to gain an insight into the mechanisms of inclusion/exclusion of people, because of the need

sense, a work of art is literally independent, which means that it demands something of the people.

The turn I am talking about is already closely connected to the aforementioned ethical turn. A work of art namely addresses the viewer or listener in such a way that it demands something of him. So it is not the viewer of listener who demands something of the artist or a work of art (to be beautiful, nice, aesthetic etc.), it is rather the artist who demands. To be even more precise: the work of art, his product, is the one that demands. The thing itself demands. What does it demand?

The idea is productive, for the work of art becomes a pillar, a cone around which forms – a new community. In this, there is the radicalness of art and there is a new drama.

Rancière thus states that a work of art is political, because it offers people a new idea of a different, better community than the one in which they currently live. A work of art is therefore not an ornament within the existing community, it is not a supplement to make it more beautiful, but a suggestion of a new community, a new way of life, new relationships between people, which are egalitarian. Art is therefore egalitarian.

This is precisely why we must understand it as a truth procedure, for if an artist does not realise the truth of social life, he cannot offer a new idea, cannot offer a new suggestion. And why would he offer something new?

Because social life is never democratic enough, never egalitarian enough, because it always contains a lot of injustice, evil and exclusion of people.

An artist therefore asks how the world is organised and how a community exists, how people live in it. First, we therefore have asking and then the thinking. An artist thinks through artistic means; a picture thinks, a film thinks, a composition thinks, a photograph thinks, a sculpture thinks … An artist reflects the world, its organization, its truth. He is interested in the truth, so he thinks.

And when he realises how the world is organised in its denial and forswearing of its own truth, he articulates it, because he realises it is his ethical duty. He provides people with a new experience of the world, a new experience of the truth of the world. It is an experience that people must think about. An artist demands that they think.
for what Rancière calls *dissensus*, and because of the need to understand what Balibar calls *égaliberté*.

For a start, *dissensus* can first be understood as a process in which there is no force to work on people in such a way as to make them agree, as to reach consensus. It is therefore about a special gap, discord, being off-tune, disagreement. The process is important precisely because it enables people to open up, which makes them discover anew what can be said, what can be thought, what can be felt, experienced.

In everyday life, people are overly used to having to agree with one another, to accept the affirmations of others, to affirm actions, even though there is no necessity for them to agree. The pressures are truly great.

We can say art is a protector of democracy. In this view, an excellent book has been written by Jim Cullen, bearing the title *The Art of Democracy*. Cullen’s fundamental idea is that the so-called marginal groups of people can overcome passivity and distaste also by means of art and cultural activities, thus gaining respect within social fields.

They overcome it, of course, only in certain cases, not always. They overcome it by articulating through them new ways of societal life, in which they appear as different social agents. This is the point.

Due to what has been said, we are justified in talking about the formation of new media, information and visual cultures that have spread in the 20th century. In them constantly arise new media objects, as Manovich calls them, towards which people cannot remain uninterested, since they are attractive, interesting, unusual. Also, new standards are being born, new criteria for their use, manipulation and processing. People constantly learn new methods and procedures with which to process new objects and take part in the formation or reformation of media and visual cultures.

However, all of this is still an introduction, a foreword to the contemporary digital media. These are namely the media creating media objects, which mostly bear two characteristics.

Firstly. New media directly depend on the mathematical algorithms that enable algorithmic manipulation with objects.

Secondly. New media can be programmed and reprogrammed. New media have a fractal structure, which means that they adapt more and more to the physical realisations that the world itself has the same structure.

New media therefore create new media objects, with which it is possible to randomly manipulate and change them in the process, adapt them to the demands of the buyers or clients objectively living in fractal worlds, but mostly without knowing it. Media objects can be processed and changed in most diverse ways and people can be acquainted with the nature of the worlds they inhabit.

Therefore, it is not only about the media and media content, but also about people and their positions in the worlds they lack understanding of.
Ways of understanding and processing new media objects are thus directly intertwined with new forms of understanding the world, its interpretation, but also with the ways in which people understand themselves, the world and interpersonal relations with other people.

Media and media objects are therefore not simply more or less well made objects within a dingle static world, but have also changed the world and have generated the change of everything else in it. These changes are dramatic.

The emphasis is placed on individuality. Media objects can be adapted to the needs of every individual client or buyer. Anyone can have their own version of the same media object, which thus connects with the personality of the buyer, his social position, the relationships he enters in with other people.

The new media are therefore directly the dimension of new worlds, of new social relations. Media objects are coded, but they can also be transcoded or coded in entirely new ways. They consist of discrete units that can be processed with the help of computer programmes and changed at one’s will.

Even the individuals, people, are changing into units that society consists of, or rather, there is a compound conglomerate named society, which is definitely an exceptional realisation for every critical attitude towards media content and along with them, the mediated world.

The changes are truly dramatic, for the contemporary individuals are not part of the crowd observing a single world and trying to understand it, but are instead units of the world which can be manipulated with the same randomness as media objects or data. This of course draws the new media story closer to another story about the creation of simulacra and simulation of worlds, however, we are too limited by space and time to even attempt at it.

Objects can therefore be transferred from one world to another and simultaneously, new worlds can be created. The language of new media is like the language of old media, so we can easily understand it, however, we must also be aware of the backside of the story, informing us of manipulation, propaganda and the creation of new forms of social oppression.

Subject of handicap, photography and handicap

The logic of handicap is directly intertwined with what philosophy calls the ethics of truth. Truth is namely generic and infinite, so we cannot totalise it, which in turn means that there is no truth about truth, no truth to encompass the whole truth.

The ethics of truth thus means rebellion towards every attempt, every imposition, every fiction, every belief that it can be done. Alain Badiou is therefore right in his claim that in every situation, there will always be at least one such element that cannot be subjected to the imposition to encompass the whole truth. In psychoanalysis, such an element is termed the subject.

There exists therefore at least one place where a rebellion is underway towards totalising the truth. The subject is thus a line that cannot be crossed, or rather, it is something that cannot be subjected to any process of totalising the truth. Handicap is another name for it.

When I talk about handicap, I mean the borderline or the pure singularity of the world, which means that handicap is the inner intimacy of the world, its most inner point, which means it cannot be totalised. Handicap is therefore a universal place of rebellion against any attempt to totalise the world and determine its truth. Handicap is thus unsymbolisable, if I may borrow Freud’s term. Meanwhile, Lacan would have said that handicap is the real of the truth.

Handicap is a lack that is in the core of all there is. Because of it, there is always space for something new to happen, therefore we can speak of truth. Due to handicap, a new, different beginning is possible. The subject of handicap is therefore the subject of truth. It is not a patient or a human being with a disability. It is not a human being with special needs who needs to be taken care of. Handicap is a subject submissive to that process. He persists in it because he has promised himself to persist. Such is his duty within the social field. In view
of that and in view of his persistence, the reflection on the truth as a beginning of something new spreads throughout the community.

When something new arises, when a process is born called the truth, the subject of truth or handicap embarks on a never ending journey. No idea can summarize it and no reflection can thoroughly explain it.

Art, photography for instance, is a process in which the artist takes on what is written. He takes on what David Levi Strauss calls the trial.59

Art is testing. At first, it is the testing of the artist himself, then it is testing any man that comes across his product. What kind of trial are we discussing?

We are discussing a trial that means an intelligence test, but also a trial that means a test of dedication, of taking on responsibility and commitment or duty. David Levi Strauss also talks about a trial of will and skill, even craftiness.

He starts his outstanding book70 by writing down a most productive realisation: words and images polemicize among themselves. This does not mean that they explain or interpret themselves or the world. And if they polemicize, we can ask ourselves what they polemicize about.

The starting question is a good starting point for our discussion on the role and function of art within the social field, but most of all on the meaning of handicap. The connections between concepts will become even clearer.

Images must be decoded or deciphered, not only looked at. This is the axiomatic claim, which Levi Strauss would most probably have signed, as well. But why would he?

He would have signed it because he is certain himself that images, such as photographs, should not be diminished to information; images should not only have informative value. When there is such a reduction, it is possible to randomly arrange images and manipulate them. And to view such a picture, the viewer only needs a couple of seconds.

He needs a lot more time to decipher and decode images, but mostly, he must have ideas or concepts available, since without them, the decoding and deciphering are not possible. Therefore, images are intrinsically connected to words. In a polemic manner, as has been said.

What is the subject of the polemic and what does it all have to do with handicap?

If the polemic is productive, it cannot be controlled as it is possible to control information with which we manipulate. Within the social field, such loss of control can be dramatic for everyday ideological practices. The very same can be said for the nature of handicap.

Decoding images firstly means asking good questions. The images worth decoding, and not every image is like that, ask good questions. What kind of questions?

When we look at images, for instance photographs, we first assume, foresee, believe. Every man carries luggage that encompasses all that. A similar thing happens when we meet a handicapped person. We face obscurity, confusion, perhaps even mystery that needs decoding.

It also needs time.

A good photograph is made to be remembered. In this way, we can always try to decode it anew.

Decoding images within the social field in the contemporary capitalist world is thoroughly intertwined exactly with the understanding of the nature of handicap.

In another book he wrote in 2012,71 Levi Strauss talks about the contemporary life of people in the world of visual pandemonium understood as chaos, utter confusion, disorder, a flood and wild crossing of every imaginable thing. In such a world, people are necessarily confused and uncertain, therefore it is exceptionally important and even indispensable to talk about the nature of the visual, about images, about photographs present everywhere, and about – politics or everyday ideological practices.

Photographers such as Francesca Woodman, Ania Bien, Miguel Rio Branco, Alfredo Jaar, Joel-Peter Witkin and others tell us special stories, worthy of reflection.

We can immediately spot the parallel offered by the theory and culture of handicap. Handicap is also a challenge and trial for every person facing it. A challenge requires a turn in the way of thinking about oneself, other people and the world. In the long-term, it necessarily means an ethical turn which I have already discussed.

When we think of ethics, we mean the rational ethics that is possible due to the human ability for inner blockage, an inhibition of one’s own behaviour. A man can always find himself tempted to cross the
invisible boundary and follow the desire for the world in which he lives and works to be consistent and inwardly non-contradictory.

Such a world is not possible, which is why ethics are so very important, since they enable man to not cross that particular border, to resist the temptation to do it. If he does not resist, he is on the path of evil and destruction.

There is always a possibility for the man to subject to the desire for the omnipotence of truth, as Badiou says. This is exactly where the roots of evil lie.

Evil means will, human will to name the truth at any price, to introduce it into the world he inhabits. Enforcing such denomination is to follow an indefinable goal, so on such path, one is capable of destroying everything around him, including himself.

The nature of handicap is directly intertwined with the written, for handicap represents the lack of the world, it represents its unnameability, indefinable character, its inability to be totalised, completed and determined. A man who would want to determine the world must therefore be stopped immediately, for he would represent evil or destruction and annihilation.

Evil is therefore immanent to the truth, as Badiou says, and not something outside of it or independent of it. I also understand handicap as an inner obstacle blocking evil and rendering it incapable. When I talk about photography and handicap, I mean exactly that.

The connection between photography as an artistic practice and handicap is simultaneously a connection between ethics and truth, therefore I agree with Badiou, who says that the ethics of truth are a direct expression of the destructive power of truth, blocking every fiction about the complete truth of the objective world. This means a subjection of a subject to the truth and an ability for ethic action, which is a direct expression of handicap itself.

Four negative categories Badiou discusses, namely undecidable, indiscernible, generic and unnameable, are also concepts to help us understand the intricate connections between handicap and an event.

The latter is unpredictable and undecidable, the subject is indiscernible, truth is generic and cannot be totalised. Photography, connected with handicap, bears witness to all of that.

It bears witness in such a way as to offer people new ideas on the generic character of life, subject and democracy, or life in communities. When it offers them, it creates new places, new symbolic situations in which everyone can recognise the logic of egalitarianism and its nature.

Photography is namely not *mimesis*, which is now quite obvious, but the production of new situations, of new symbolic places. The photographer thus faces a difficult task, for he does not invent the shot, but finds it in reality, while a painter could invent it himself.

Both create a language with which to think the relations between images and words. Language does not exist independently of this production, however, its production does not mean it is possible to use it to unambiguously determine the relation between images and words. There is actually no need to do anything like that, since no language is inwardly non-contradictory.

Language changes along with the relations between images and words. The final objective or purpose of language is not to unambiguously explain reality, but rather to be generic. Language is generic, which means we create reality with it.

The generic character of language has its ethical objective or purpose, namely to create common places for egalitarian life of people. Handicap is a condition of generality, it is therefore not an obstacle or even disorder or a disease to be cured.

The generality I am discussing is the best lever and source of what we call freedom of the people, so art, such as photography, is truly worthy of its name only when it vouches for the freedom of the people, when it embodies it and persists in it. The bare existence of generic humanity that Badiou talks about means precisely that: freedom and equality or egalitarianism.

Art can vouch for the freedom and egalitarianism of people, since it is a special empirical practice within a concrete social field. This is exactly why it necessarily means a study of the truth of a concrete social field, it means the study of mechanisms and processes triggering evil.

A photographer explores the unnameable, tries to think the unthinkable and creates new language to understand the relations between images and words. His task consists of exploring the social constructs of truth and what Badiou calls potency, the power of truth.
What is important is therefore the exploration of the power of truth, for its power can be diminished through growth of processes to unambiguously determine it and name it. Art is always on the side of the good, and it resists the expansion of evil within the social field.

Art embodies the freedom and egalitarianism of people. This realisation can directly be compared to the realisation that art demands a brave person, because freedom is neither a self-evident nor a simple social practice that people would welcome with joy. It is often exactly the opposite.

The task of the artist is to create a situation in which people are not exactly where they should be according to historical assumptions. If art were mimesis, they would have been exactly there, where they presumably should be: kings in court, farmers in fields, city dwellers in the streets etc. In art, people become autonomous, independent of historical circumstances in which they live. Art is therefore metaphysical by definition.

A photographer can make visible something which is not visible. The same thing can be done by a painter or a sculptor. This is the essence of art. The truth of people’s social life is not transparent, not obvious or clear to everyone. Far from it.

Art is the realisation of freedom of spirit, says Rancière. It is therefore not simply finding or claiming that it exists, because it never exists by itself alone. Someone must embody it, realise it, manifest it. Art manifests freedom, which is, of course, beyond the caprices of an artist, since it is a truth procedure.

An artist therefore manifests freedom in relation to the truth, which means that he is only free when he persists in what is urgent, for truth always exists and is always urgent. An artist who stops persisting is but a craftsman.

Once a human being seriously tackles reflecting the world, he first finds, and in this, I completely agree with what Jacques Rancière says, that thinking is necessarily thinking about what is thinkable, therefore, what can at all be thought. But this is only half a story about the nature of thinking, for if we were to ponder it, we would be forever left with repetition of one and the same.

Thinking means a continuation, which is necessarily new. It means transformation, the transformation of what is thinkable, and in a way that is suggested by Rancière: by opening up, by welcoming what is otherwise unthinkable.

When we discuss opening up, we therefore do not have in mind the skills, craftsmanship or qualifications of an individual, but above all art as a world in which a man can find himself. The reflection on genes and talent is therefore much too short to think art and the human ability for creativity, without which, art, of course, does not exist.

Art is therefore a world, a symbolic place, space, in which a human being learns everything that can at all be learned, which also means that he changes and transforms himself.

When he is changing and transforming, he changes and transforms the world of art, as well, art itself. This is the essence of art: opening up to the infinite and unthinkable. The artist is the one opening up, art is the one opening up, any human being who enters it is opening up.

Art is most definitely a world of egalitarianism and freedom of human beings capable of thinking. The French revolution plays an important role in understanding what is written here. Today, the same can be said of any politics of emancipation, which cannot even be spoken of unless handicap exists.

These are not individual fantasies or lucky coincidences, but instead a systematic change in perceiving the world, emotions and feelings regarding it, the thought itself. However, this will become more and more scarce, because Capital demands of countries, as well, to subject and settle for Capital-oriented mentality.

The beauty of the world will thus increasingly begin to disappear, because what is beautiful is only that which is pleasing without any concepts, as Kant has shown. However, that which is pleasing without any concepts is pleasing precisely because of its openness to the unthinkable. The concepts only follow if people think.

In relation to Capital, one needs not think. To put it simply: in relation to Capital, people turn into animals, perceiving reality as a unified, monotonous, complete whole without layers. This is not open reality, but in best case a golden cage for those with enough money, and merely an iron or perhaps plastic cage for all the rest.
Art, Handicap and Emancipation

When we are discussing emancipation, we are thinking of an endless process encompassing an entire life. It is not a one-time event and it does not mean that an individual can do something another individual can do. A man does not emancipate in relation to another individual, but in relation to one’s one existence, to life itself, to what is universal, to the truth, which is infinite and eternal.

Jean-Luc Nancy even talks about an unusual event lasting a lifetime, about an event, the consequences of which are borne by a human being for an entire lifetime. When he talks about such an event, he talks about existence, he talks about what is characteristic of poetry: writing on the edge, walking the line, creating the borderline, thinking the borderline and thinking about it, setting the borderline, establishing the borderline, moving and changing the borderline. A poet writes on the borderline, always but on the borderline. For it is there that existence is formed, is getting born, and it is there that a person is most alive, it is there that he resists death.

Where a man is most alive, as in at the borderline, he is always already emancipated. Emancipation is therefore not a confrontation with other people and is not an illustration of everything that a man can do. Whoever is alive, has nothing to prove to anyone. He does not feel the need to prove anything. He is always already emancipated and therefore cannot be subdued. A man who is alive is emancipated, which simultaneously means he is exposed, ex-posed. Since he is exposed, he represents the difference, creates the difference and is the difference. He is therefore singularity.

A man who is singularity is the difference and creates the difference, a difference. Precisely because of that, he is not indifferent, not careless, which is logical. Whoever is careless, cannot create and represent the difference; whoever is careless, is not alive.

A man who is alive, is at the borderline. He exists and is ex-posed. He is not passive; whoever is passive, is an individuality without identity, says Nancy. A man with an identity is therefore not passive, but reflects. A reflection of a man who is not passive is a decision in favour of understanding the being. Thinking is therefore a gesture. It is not a consequence of a gesture, but a gesture of existence itself to understand itself. A man who exists thus necessarily thinks and is ex-posed. He thinks about existence itself, he thinks existence. At the borderline, always at the borderline.

Thought at the borderline of existence affirms, confirms the very existence. The latter decides – in favour of the thought. When a man thinks, he decides in favour of the thought, of existence, of deciding as a thought which is always in favour of the thought, of freedom and egalitarianism. Existence can thus only decide in favour of existence, therefore itself. Opening up is therefore persistence in the openness. It is persistence at the borderline and it is opening up to the existence or thought.

Probably by far the most important experience for a man is the one of being present in the world, when he exists, when he is ex-posed, when he feels existence in his bones and muscles and everywhere, when he feels that through him, existence is opening up to itself; it is opening up through him and to him, his consciousness. He can therefore think about it. And when he does, he finds that in a radical sense, existence is more important than him; due to such thinking, he can (no longer) be egocentric.

Of course, he freely decides in favour of thinking; and he decides again and again. This can last a lifetime. There is no reason for it not to last. Thinking about existence opens up a space, it spaces the space and times the time. It opens an existence that is always open. Such opening is in sharp contrast to life, which does not open and is static, caught in one and the same space, closed and blocked.

When a man is deciding in favour of thinking, he is deciding in favour of opening towards what is open. He opens up to existence, although he does not necessarily realise it at the time. He opens up at the borderline; always opens up at the borderline. A poet writes at the borderline, always but on the borderline. For it is there that existence is formed, is getting born, and it is there that he resists death.
Thinking is not so much thinking about something, as it IS that something, since it is the opening up of opening up. Thinking as opening up is therefore creative.

When a man thinks, he creates a difference. He creates a difference in existence and in being. The fundamental question he faces is therefore one of freedom, which does not stand any oppression. Without freedom, man could not open up to opening up, since there would be no opening up. All there would be is what always already is. There would be a closed world in which man would only focus on what already exists. His desire in that case would be dead and entirely helpless.

Due to indefinability and openness of being, due to indefinability and openness of any existence, human beings are free. This means that they are open to the openness of being.

Free people can remain in the common; they can always remain in the common. They can be with each other as free beings, who are open and decide in favour of openness. Namely, man is truly free only when he decides in favour of openness, in favour of opening up to the opening up itself.

In this sense, any man can be with any other man. In such a community, no one is threatening no one, for everyman decides in favour of openness. This can last a lifetime.

A man can be ex-posed to existence his entire life, which means that he is free. Nancy is therefore right in his claim that freedom is in opening up and that it opens up. The opening up of existence and opening up to existence is also opening up to time and opening up to eternity, opening up to the universal. Each time, we are talking about a human being as the subject, who is singularity.

Let me draw a parallel.

The substance Spinoza is talking about is necessarily open. A man is within the substance, in which there is necessarily opening up. He is free to resist opening up, which is necessary. The necessity is the condition for man’s freedom, so a man is not free to accept or reject it, as Nancy says. A man has but one possibility: he must accept freely what is necessary, and what is necessary is to open up to the opening up within an infinite substance.

A man as a free being repeats his own birth; he is being born again and again. It is therefore not true that he progresses from the end to the beginning. The movement of a free human being is not like a lazy river flowing towards the sea, but like an unpredictable emergence of the new.

In the constant emergence of the new, we recognise repetition: a man is constantly being reborn. He is not born once and for all, but is constantly being reborn. His births are intrinsically connected to thinking and reading. Every new birth is therefore a chance for the new, different reading of what supposedly exists. A different reading does not mean accumulating knowledge, but means what Nancy describes as penetrating ignorance, perpetuating ignorance, disseminating ignorance. There is surely something paradoxical and hard to grasp in all that.

Art is recognition. It is recognition of openness and recognition of what comes to being when a subject as a singularity creates the new at the borderline. Recognition means affirmation of singularity, existence and life in their indefinability.

The photographic look is handicap. This is the basic thesis of this article, and simultaneously an axiom.

A look is a wound, states David Levi Strauss, and photography is a scar. What, then, does the photographer do? He reproduces the presence of singularity, of one-time, unrepeatable presence, and faces the handicap for which he attests. He reproduces the unrepeatable, as Nancy says. He reproduces what cannot be reproduced, repeated, renewed; he reproduces singularity.

A photographer therefore, similarly to a painter, does not depict things, but draws with light, writes with light, depicts the light of things. Photography is therefore a poem. Photographing is writing poems at the borderline.

Handicap is a borderline. Photography and handicap are therefore two expressions of the same thing.

When I talk about handicap, I therefore do not think about a space with straight lines. I have in mind curved lines, the human body without proportions such as imagined by the classic artist. I have in mind a dance of light.
I have in mind a handicapped body, any body that creates its own space, a space in which it exists and is ex-posed to infinity.

There is a body for a poem. It exists as an empty space where we write a poem in, a space created by writing a poem. There is a poetic of the body. A body writes a poem through movement and the poet writes the body. Also writes on it.

A poem is an entelechy of the body, if I may paraphrase Aristotle. It is an opening up of the body, it is its reformation, it is its metamorphosis.

Within the described perspective, we could once again advocate the idea of nature.

Nature is not a given quality to which we refer when we need hard ground to stand on. Then we say something is natural. We say this as if we wanted to claim that it is also definite. Perhaps that is precisely why we use the term supernatural.

The ancients had understood nature in much more suitable terms.

Nature is potentiality. To refer to one’s own nature, for instance, means to refer to the possibility for a human being to follow his potentials that make him productive and creative. When a man follows his nature, he is productive, therefore he creates and simultaneously disappears in one’s own products.

Therefore, nature is not given in advance; it is only given as a possibility to create, so nature is always only created.

Within the described perspective, a photographer is an artist who accepts and accepts the new economy of speech, as dubbed by Rancière. He accepts it, realising that it needs new visibility, new form, new visual presence.

The presence that the photographer is capable of is at the same time the presence of words and lines, the presence of light, for photography is writing with light. So, in a new way, the thought itself is present.

### Conclusion

Socrates had once said that philosophising encompasses awakening. And for a man to awaken, he must interrupt his sleep. Without sleep interruption, there is no awakening. Art as a truth procedure is awakening. Art is affirmative. It is therefore an interruption. This is the essence of dialectics. Handicap is interruption, truth is interruption. The global world needs it more than ever. Art, handicap and truth are intrinsically connected.

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7. One of the best books on the nature of aesthetics and politics was written in the period before 1950, when the most prominent marxist thinkers of that time discussed art within the social field, politics and aesthetics. Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch, Bertolt Brecht, Georg Lukacs. Aesthetics and Politics (London: Verso, 2007).
8. Through literacy processes, he will not only learn to understand the world, but also to see it and perceive it. Cf. James Albright, Allan Luke (ured.). Pierre Bourdieu and Literacy Education (London: Routledge, 2008).
Aesthetics are not politics by coincidence, says Rancière, they are politics in its essence. However, there is a form of politics attempting to transform art into daily collective life, and a form of politics trying to preserve the autonomy of art, along with its emancipatory potential. Both forms cannot but contradict each other. Jacques Rancière. Aesthetics and Its Discontents (London: Polity Press, 2009).


Ibid., pp. 176.


Ibid., pp. 4.

Ibid., pp. 19.

Ibid., pp. 20.

Ibid., pp. 21.


Alain Badiou (2013). Event and Truth. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQ8XadTKa1c

Susan Sontag. The author in her work explores the impact of photographs or images on social life of the people; so we are not merely talking about society influencing the photographer, but also about his impacts on social life, which means that his social responsibility is extremely significant and that he cannot simply refer to his psychology, stating he takes pictures only for himself or for his own needs.

Alain Badiou (2013). Event and Truth. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQ8XadTKa1c

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Alain Badiou. Conditions (Éditions du Seuil, 1992). Badiou in this book discusses the truth which is not an entity and not something one could point a finger at, even though this does not mean it does not exist and that there are no conditions under which we could reflect upon it. O procsu resnice cf. On the Truth-Process: An open lecture by Alain Badiou, avgust 2002. http://www.egs.edu/faculty/alain-badiou/articles/on-the-truth-process/

Alain Badiou, Judith Balso (2014). Contemporary art: considered philosophically and poetologically. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g83Qni9aLYM

Ariella Azoulay. Civil Imagination: A Political Ontology of Photography (London: Verso, 2014). Photography is merely an event in a sequence, requiring a spectator and the relations of cooperation, partnership, solidarity, egalitarianism, sharing. Therefore, photography is essentially a civil practice, a social practice with an objective that the people take hold of more civil and political power than they now have.

Alain Badiou, avgust 2002.

In this text, I will keep telling several stories at once, given that they intertwine. At this point, I thus suggest the parallel between photography and film. Cf. Jacques Rancière. The Intervals of Cinema (London: Verso, 2014). Film, as well as language, is a system of differences, states the author. It is an art drawing from other arts; from literature, for instance, it learns how to narrate stories. Usually, people remember a film by its narration. But a film is a lot of other things, as well. It is most closely related to music, photography and philosophy. It creates spaces of reality, material spaces within which it effects the spectators. It also creates a language of images, committed to expectations. These are not simply expectations of the spectators, but especially expectations of the film itself.


Theodor W. Adorno. Ästhetische Theorie (F/M: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970).


Changes in human behaviour today are reflected in such a way that the weaknesses of individuals are more and more taking over common power, collective wishes are overtaken by individual passions, and the mobilising will is overtaken by passive indecisiveness. So writes Jodi Dean in
her book entitled *The Communist Horizon*, published in 2012 at Verso. She also adds: when an illusion that capitalism is the only reality possible is falling apart, anything is possible. Collective desires of people are therefore more and more contrary to life formed and controlled by the corporate and financial elites. A different world is possible.

40 We could add that he believes in the power of philosophy, that within the social field in which philosophy is conditioned by politics, he helps to clear out the very truth of the field in which such conditioning takes place. Cf. **Alain Badiou**. *Philosophy for Militants* (London: Verso, 2012).


44 Even Karl Marx leaned his work on the concept of human nature, even though numerous interpreters of his heritage claim otherwise. Marx did not think that the social determinants influencing the formation of human beings were natural; far from it. Cf. **Norman Geras**. *Marx and Human Nature: Refutation of a Legend* (London: Verso, 1983).


49 Cf. **Daniel Miles, Karl Gruber**. *Evil at the Heart of Capitalism* (Lulu.com, 2014).


51 **Adorno (1970), passim.**

52 **Alain Badiou**. *Logiques des mondes* (Editions de Seuil, 2006). The French philosopher is the key author I am relying upon in my reflection on the role and function of art in the real world, given that he is the one who exceptionally showed in the work I am quoting here the essence of materialistic dialectic: the relations between the subject and the truth. I therefore thoroughly agree that his appeal to *live for the idea* is the very core of every human existence and its key purpose, as well.


56 **Immanuel Kant**. *Kritika praktičnega uma* (Ljubljana: Društvo za teoretisko psihoanalizo, 2003).

57 **Jacques Rancière**. *Le spectateur émancipé* (Éditions La Fabrique, 2008).


60 **Etienne Balibar**. *La Proposition d’Égaliberté* (Presses Universitaires de France, 2010).


64 Cf. **Brigitte Lacombe**. *Stern Fotographie No 73 – Cinema* (Kempen, teNeues Verlag GmbH, 2004).


66 Ibid., pp. 27.

67 Ibid., pp. 30.

68 Ibid., pp. 32.

69 David Levi Strauss (2014), pp. 27.

70 Ibid.


73 Ibid.

74 Ibid.

75 From here, it is not far to the realisation that art resists death, as Deleuze once remarked (quot. along with Alain Badiou. *Polemics*, pp. 7).

76 **Alain Badiou**, avgust 2002.

77 Ibid.


79 Ibid., pp. 32.

80 Cf. **Peter Osborne**. *Anywhere or Not at All: Philosophy of Contemporary Art* (London: Verso, 2013).
Matej Peljhan has a degree in psychology and he is a clinical psychology specialist. For over twenty years, during the course of his career, he has worked with people with special needs. He knows handicap first hand, because he suffered multiple injuries, including the loss of his arm and his eye, at the age of ten, when he had an accident with a military bomb while playing near his home. He has had many independent photographic exhibitions in Slovenia and abroad, and has received over a hundred prizes for his photographs. With the photographic series entitled The Little Prince, which is about a boy with muscular dystrophy, he accomplished extraordinary response from the general public worldwide. He is one of the pioneers of phototherapy in Slovenia and co-founder of the Institute for phototherapy. He carries out different phototherapy workshops and projects, both with children and adults.

Silvo Vidergar is an electrical engineer. He started his professional path working in the economy, but has been teaching professional theoretical subjects at CIRIUS high school in Kamnik for over ten years now. He has dealt with electronics ever since primary school. He has taken part in the development of different microcomputer interfaces, with the help of which the handicapped people can manage the computer, electric wheelchair, different home appliances and the camera as well.
Photography is a creative activity which is considered to take only little physical strength and skill to be done. We just press the button and we have created something new and unique – a photograph. However, if we are a little more attentive, we realize fast that it is not so simple. A photographer carries the equipment while looking for a motif, moves across the terrain and can walk significantly large distances. He/She keeps changing the position of the body, turns around and bends to catch the right angle to take a picture. While operating the camera with both hands, he/she coordinately rotates and presses the buttons to select the appropriate technical settings. He/She lifts the camera with his/her hands in front of the eyes and by looking through the viewfinder or at the screen checks the framed art composition. Just before deciding to take a photo, he/she maximally stabilises the camera, and then as controlled and calm as possible he/she presses the shutter button with his/her finger. Therefore, we can see, he/she needs to be capable of complex motor activities, which are done without any difficulties by someone who is psychophysically fit. If he/she is psychophysically disabled – having difficulty walking, having reduced strength or dexterity of one or both hands, tremor etc. - taking pictures can be a difficult or even an impossible activity.

The rate of physically disabled people in the population is not insignificant. The 2012 American survey for example shows there are 15% of adults who have difficulties in physical functioning (Blackwell, Lucas and Clarke, 2014). Although the majority of them are not likely to have such difficulties to be significantly impeded in taking photos. On the other hand there are people who would like to take pictures, but are frustrated because of their disability. People, who have various medical diagnoses, such as cerebral palsy, muscular distrophy, multiple sclerosis, traumatic spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury, stroke, limb amputation, minor and major amputations, and other disorders or defects, often have objective difficulties when taking photographs. The problems can be genetic or they can appear later in life. They can appear suddenly or develop gradually. Becoming older is after all a process during which the person’s physical skills are slowly diminishing.

People have always been improving their limited sensory and motor abilities by various technical devices. They help them be more productive, perform activities safer, faster and more efficiently. These devices are even more important for the disabled because they allow them to become involved in different segments of social activities more equally. Taking pictures is a widespread and popular activity, so it is actually unusual that there are so few technical devices available on the market adapted to use on cameras that cater to the disabled people and are designed specifically for them. For that reason they most times depend on their own resourcefulness and ability to adjust to the existing options or products they can buy in a shop. One must realize that many technical solutions are unreasonably priced, impractical or too complex for an average user. Both the price and practicality are the main principles we have to take into consideration when planning the adjustments if we want to make taking pictures possible for the vulnerable groups.

The article aims to introduce different options and devices that are available for disabled people. The adaptations we discuss are a result of years’ experience of running photographic workshops for physically disabled. Some of them are simple and obvious, whereas some demanded quite a lot of inovativeness.

Adaptations for Photographers With Decreased Mobility

Lower extremity defects are not a very big obstacle when someone wants to take a photograph because you need mainly manual skills to use a camera. However, people who are not capable of walking long, moving across a rugged terrain, or overcoming architectural barriers, have problems taking photographs when more mobility is needed. For example, taking pictures of nature, landscape and street photography. Photographers, who are less mobile, have to be careful when planning and selecting photography locations; they need to check car and wheelchair accessibility. But they can find help for carrying the equipment. People who use a wheelchair can use different mounts to attach
a camera on a wheelchair frame, which is very handy. In such a way it is possible to take pictures by setting longer shutter speed without the usual tripods when the light is not very good. Many adjust to their disability by the choice of genres. They intentionally select – and specialize in – such photographic genres which do not demand much movement (e.g. studio photography).

Adaptations for Photographers With Functional Limitations of Upper Limbs

Using a camera takes a considerable amount of gross and fine motor skills, so people who have functional limitations of upper limbs are objectively more hampered than those who have other defects or disorders. In spite of this, there are a few options and adaptations available.

People who have functional limitations of hand and finger coordination intuitively use other body extremities or functions to hold a camera differently, rotate and press buttons with the help of the so called trick movements. It is important to attach the camera with different strips around the hand or neck in order to be more practical and to prevent falls of the equipment over the floor. The use of various mounts can be helpful, too.

All cameras have shutter buttons at the upper right, which is a problem for those who have limitation of right hand function. They can also use a mount. However, it is more elegant and practical to rotate the camera 180 degrees and then press the shutter button with their left hand. They rotate the photos which are upside down later when they are stored in the computer.

People with hand tremor also need to use mounts. It would be very difficult for them to take a sharp picture because they cannot stop the tremor when pressing the shutter button.

Different tripods and mounts are vital for people with severe motor disabilities, whose strength, flexibility and hand dexterity are moderately or severely impaired. People who use wheelchairs need a mount, which ensures the best camera position, attached to the frame. However, the mount must not hinder or even threaten the disabled person when performing a wheelchair transfer. It must be practical enough to be attached or removed fast. There are various photographic ‘hands’ available on the market, which can be attached and used for this purpose. Sometimes it is even better and cheaper if such a mount is made by a metal professional.

Severely disabled people, who do not have enough physical strength, hand and finger dexterity or range motion, need both a mount to attach plus stabilize a camera and the adapted use of camera. There are a few standard systems of different brands on the market which allow remote controlling, which were not developed specifically for the physically disabled. But they can be used by the disabled to operate the functions of camera, photographic processes and to press the buttons. However, these products have quite a few disadvantages – they are not available for all camera types, some are too heavy, impractical, also expensive. Specially, the so called compact cameras, which are most widespread, do not have many useful camera accessories available.

If we do not find any standard operating adaptation, suitable for a disabled photographer, it is possible that an electronics professional transfers certain functions from the inside of the camera body that is
from photographic switches and buttons to special external switches, which can be reached by a user. The disadvantage of this solution is, of course, a physically changed structure of a camera, which is for many unacceptable. It can be avoided by a method which was developed and has already been tested.

The advantage of such adaptation is that it does not change the camera structure and it allows many settings adjusted to individual needs. The disadvantage is that it can only be made on Canon cameras. Only this camera brand has free and flexible special software, which allows operating a camera with electric signals. The software is called CHDK (Canon Hack Development Kit), which is loaded to an SD card and it starts automatically when we turn on the camera. In such a way the usual camera use is prevented and operating a camera through electric signals, which are transmitted from the USB connector, is made possible. The CHDK program is used in all the examples, which will be described. There are only differences among specific programs (scripts) written and added by us.

We have developed and carried out several ways to adapt a camera use. Using an IR code to operate different devices, such as TV, DVD, or radio is an elegant and easy way. It can be used for wheelchairs which have this function. A user can operate a wheelchair, computer or remote controlled devices with a joystick or keys.

Commands for zooming, photographing, and photo overview were added to the user menu of a wheelchair to operate a camera, and then a certain IR code was inserted for each command. We developed an electronic interface which decodes IR signals and converts them into suitable electric signals which operate a camera through a USB connector. A user finds the right command in the wheelchair menu and by clicking on it a certain operation is carried out.

A camera is attached to the wheelchair with a mount. The majority of wheelchairs are tilt wheelchairs, therefore a camera tilts at the same time. Special revolving heads which rotate the camera are not necessary for this reason. By adding an extra battery charger a camera can recharge from a wheelchair, which allows a constant use of camera without worrying about having low batteries. The use of camera battery is low enough so that it has no effect on the wheelchair performance.

People, whose motor functions of hands are so weak they cannot operate an electric wheelchair, can use an electric revolving head adapter to tilt and pan a camera. In this way a photographer chooses a desired motif. Both the revolving head and camera are operated with a microprocessor which was designed for this purpose. A user selects the desired commands by a touch sensor, which means that it works
The sensor is placed between the user’s lips who carries out the desired command by touching the sensor with lips. The interface allows the camera to rotate in four different directions: left, right, up and down as well as operating the camera: zoom in, zoom out, shooting and taking photos. LEDs are used to signal the command which will be carried out by touching the sensor. The commands change alternately, the sequence is continuous and they repeat again and again. A new version is being developed, which will replace a touch sensor with a highly sensitive joystick.

The use of several touch sensors is another option. The size, location and number of sensors are adjusted to each user. The number of sensors depends on the person’s physical abilities – someone can operate more sensors, the other one only one. If there is a greater number of sensors, a person can operate the camera faster. Sensor diameter can be 3 centimetres or more for people with cerebral palsy, and 1 centimetre for people with muscular distrophy. Both options have been used in practice, we have used to six sensors. The microprocessing device reads the information in the sensors and in such a way operates the revolving head and camera. It is not necessary to signal the command here because each sensor is linked to one operation: revolving head moving up and down, zoom in, zoom out, shooting, and taking pictures. We have been thinking of an alternative too – the use of joystick instead of touch sensors.

A person, who can operate the wheelchair and computer only by keys, is installed an extra key which can be pressed by foot. This key turns on the electric power of a camera USB connector. Electronic circuit is necessary only when we want to charge the camera battery through the electric wheelchair battery. Otherwise, we need only power to operate the camera. The source can be a battery due to low power consumption. Here the CHDK software is loaded in the camera too, only the program is different. The commands, which circulate, are constantly displayed on the camera screen. The following commands can be seen: photo view, zoom in, zoom out, photographing. Both the speed of command change and zooming can be set. The commands can be written or can be icons. Those who do not see well can recognize a command in such a way. The command, which is displayed on the screen, is carried out by pressing the key. It is carried out until the key is pressed. When the key is released, the commands start to circulate alternatively again.

This article describes the methods which have been tested in practice. The process of development has, of course, not been finished. We keep looking for new and new methods, so any suggestions and remarks are welcome.

**Bibliography**

Second part

Articles From Practise
PHOTOTHERAPY IN CIRIUS KAMNIK

Jure Kravanja, Matej Peljhan

Jure Kravanja graduated in sociology and pedagogy at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. He is an internationally recognized photographer and one of the pioneers of phototherapy in Slovenia. He is a cofounder of the Institute for phototherapy. He carries out different phototherapy workshops and projects, both with children and adults.

Matej Peljhan has a degree in psychology and he is a clinical psychology specialist. For over twenty years, during the course of his career, he has worked with people with special needs. He knows handicap first hand, because he suffered multiple injuries, including the loss of his arm and his eye, at the age of ten, when he had an accident with a military bomb while playing near his home. He has had many independent photographic exhibitions in Slovenia and abroad, and has received over a hundred prizes for his photographs. With the photographic series entitled The Little Prince, which is about a boy with muscular dystrophy, he accomplished extraordinary response from the general public worldwide. He is one of the pioneers of phototherapy in Slovenia and cofounder of the Institute for phototherapy. He carries out different phototherapy workshops and projects, both with children and adults.
CIRIUS Kamnik (Centre for education and rehabilitation of physically handicapped children and adolescents) has a very long tradition, as it has existed since 1947. It is the central institution in Slovenia for education and rehabilitation of children and adolescents with physical disabilities and other dysfunctions or deficits. According to Slovenian standards, the centre is quite big, since more than 220 children and adolescents under the age of 26 are enrolled in our programmes and almost 200 people are employed in the centre.

What are the most appropriate environment and circumstances for educating children with special needs is an eternal question. In accordance with the inclusive model most children with special needs are educated in their home environment, in close connection with their family and peers. In our centre, we aim to support such efforts, which is why we offer counselling, education, additional professional help and therapeutic treatments to children, parents and people working in schools all over the country. Despite everything, sometimes, due to very difficult health or social status of the children, it is more reasonable to educate such children in our centre, where our specialists provide healthcare and all the necessary treatments in one place.

By paying attention to the so-called holistic treatment we strive to achieve appropriate education for each child, according to their objective abilities. We make sure their medical needs are met, but most of all we aim to reach the highest possible level of the children's independence and efficiency in their physical, mental and social functioning. With the help of the parents, we compose an individual programme for each child, and this helps us to adjust the methods of work and monitor the child's improvement. An extensive interdisciplinary team of professionals, called “the operative team” carries out different assignments. The people who form the team are: a teacher, a pedagogue, a doctor, a nurse, a physiotherapist, an occupational therapist, a speech therapist, a psychologist, a social worker and assistants-caregivers.

We have noticed a vast increase in the number of children and adolescents with the highest stage of physical impairment and severe medical problems in our centre over the last decade. Even though these children can be very intelligent, we find it very difficult to determine and organize practical activities, which would enable them to act independently and thus evolve, socialize and achieve self-realization. Similar problems apply to vocational education—adolescents only have a limited number of programmes to choose from and they are usually less promising in terms of finding work. The sad truth is that many of those who successfully complete their vocational education have no real possibilities in the work field. Many of them stay at home, away from social contacts and immersed into the sea of passiveness and idleness.

Taking photos—photography, not without a reason, is one of the most democratic media of today. The cameras are simple, handy and affordable. Photography with its visual language doesn't know linguistic obstacles and together with the information and communication technologies and the media it opens new possibilities for communicating and connecting people. As such it is even more appropriate for people with special needs, who are forced into an underprivileged position because of their specific disabilities or their special life circumstances. Their disabilities are apparent in various areas of everyday life—communication, movement and mobility, educational or vocational field, interpersonal relationships, social skills, extracurricular activities etc. Photography can enrich everybody’s life. For those who have expressive language disorder, it offers an opportunity to express themselves and communicate in a different way. For physically handicapped people it is appropriate, because it doesn’t require a lot of physical strength and skill. Those who have difficulties with their memory can use photography for documenting. Children who find it hard to socialize and don’t easily adapt to different situations can make new contacts with the help of this activity. The ones who have a negative self-image and low self-esteem can confirm and develop a sense of self-worth through their own creativity. To those who feel depressed or bored, photography can become a hobby that motivates them and fills their free time. And for the ones who have a financial problem, it can be an opportunity to improve their position with the help of photography.

In CIRIUS Kamnik we started the phototherapy workshops for children, adolescents and adults with physical handicap and other special needs in 2012. We organized work for individuals as well as for groups.
The group workshops were organized once a week for four hours at a time, but the whole time frame of the programme was adjusted to the needs and possibilities of individuals as well as the group as a whole. We most often included students who didn’t have many more duties in school and who, according to our opinion of their shortcomings and social circumstances, also had limited employment possibilities, limited chances for an independent life and integration into the social environment. In such cases their participation in phototherapy lessons lasted at least a year, or even more with some individuals. Namely, the work is organized in such a way it can be extended without any bigger problems or even made permanent.

We didn’t only have phototherapy lessons for the adolescents in our centre. We paid a lot of our attention to other physically handicapped people who weren’t part of the programmes in CIRIUS Kamnik. We opened and organized many group workshops in cooperation with various disabled people’s associations, which were carried out in their environment. Such programmes lasted 40 hours, we had meetings once a week and each workshop lasted 4 hours.

The group phototherapy lessons were carried out by two phototherapists with adequate knowledge and experience in psychological, pedagogical and photographic field. In the whole project of phototherapy, more professionals were included and they contributed to specific activities and actions with their knowledge and work.

During these three years we included approximately 60 people in the phototherapy activities, and we tried to introduce photography to many others in the form of shorter one-day presentations and workshops.

The content and goals which we aimed to achieve varied from one individual to another, as well as from one group to another, because of the diversity of the participants. Despite this fact we can say that, within the limits of our phototherapy concepts, we tried to build our programme on these areas:

**Training for Independent Photo Shooting and Other Creative Activities Connected to Photography**

Because individuals with the highest degree of physical handicap need the help of another person in most or all their activities, photography offers everyone a unique opportunity for independent activity. Even though taking photos in its physical sense is an easy task, this is not so for many of our members. Some participants in our workshops had such weak motoric functions, it was impossible for them to press the shutter release button, let alone use any other functions that a camera has. So we had to develop the adjustments and technical accessories in order to overcome the physical handicap. With the help of the programme equipment, electronic interfaces and special switches we offered all the participants a chance to take photos independently. The people with the highest degree of handicap were able to control the camera and take a photo while lying down, using a mouth-controlled switch.
Our goal was for everyone to become an owner of functional photographic equipment, so we provided guidance and counselling for the purchase of the cameras within the financial possibilities of each participant. If they were still unable to obtain a camera, we organized donor actions or temporarily gave them our own personal equipment.

Since having a camera isn’t enough to carry out photographic activities, each individual had to acquire photographic skills, which are usually taught in photography classes. They learned about technical aspects of how the camera works, how to handle a camera, art composition and rules that apply in different photographic genres. They transferred photographs from the camera to the computer, sorted them, made a selection and systematically archived them. They processed the photos with the help of the computer programme Photoshop, which they studied as a part of a special educational module. They prepared photographic presentations, accompanied by musical background, designed photo books and prepared photos for printing and exhibitions.

They tested themselves in different photographic genres. They searched for motifs in enclosed spaces, set off to nearby urban and rural landscape many times, and went on longer photo trips a few times.
Developing a Visual Language, With Which a Person Can Express Their Feelings, Their Emotions and Their Thoughts

Meetings revolved around photography and discussions connected to photography. From time to time we prepared photos or series of photos on a specific chosen topic from other authors, observed them, commented on them and discussed them from a technical or artistic point of view. On one hand, we learned about the basic rules of artistic language, and on the other hand we discovered what determines them and how big the subjective differences in our experience of the visual images were. The participants received a new title for their photographic assignment every week and this assignment was meant to encourage their expressiveness, self-reflexion and originality. One such assignment was “I am…”, where each individual had to continue the sentence with a photograph that best described him/her.

They conducted their photographic assignments independently, and at the next meeting we looked at all the photos and discussed them. We tried to motivate them into taking as many photos as possible in their free time and make the camera their constant life companion.

I am... A CLOCK, because I am always late

I am... FALLEN LEAVES, because I lost touch with my friends

I am... A RAMP, because it's the only way I can reach a destination
Training of Cognitive Functions or Learning the Compensatory Strategies

Some individuals had affected or less efficient cognitive functions, such as perception, speech, memory, executive functions and other problems due to cerebral palsy, traumatic brain injury or other reasons. We devised different photographic assignments for them. These activated the affected functions, and we individually, systematically and constantly repeated them. For example, a person with perceptive difficulties in the visual field had to find and take photos of various motifs with certain artistic characteristics (dominant colour, lines, curves, shapes, size proportions...). A person with memory dysfunction made the game “Memory”, using their own photos, and then we played this game in the group. A person with less efficient executive functions learned the sequence of photographic steps and the self-control, which is important for a successful photo. When they acquired this knowledge, they tried to transfer and use the same principles in other practical life situations.

We taught compensatory strategies to individuals who had little hope of improving their functions. For instance, a person with aphasia, who lost the ability of speech completely, learned how to make coverage photographs, with which they could inform others about the past events he/she witnessed.

Organizing and Executing Photographic Projects With Characteristics of Business Practice

Because we know that chances of employment are very slim for handicapped people and that they remain at home after concluding their vocational education, we carried out various projects in this field at our phototherapy workshops. Even if they didn’t receive any payment, we always discussed their business plan seriously and learned a lot while doing so.

We managed to carry out many projects:

- Four members designed and printed their own annual calendars (100 copies each), which they then successfully sold.
- They made greeting cards that CIRIUS ordered and sent out at Christmas.
- The medical unit of CIRIUS Kamnik needed photographs of tools for physically handicapped people, used in their daily activities, for a catalogue. The members made an appropriate photographic collection in their improvised studio.
- They covered various sports and cultural events as photo reporters and then offered their photos to different smaller web pages and media.
- One member developed and idea- he would offer taking portraits of people at famous tourist sites and then print their photos or send them pictures via e-mail. He presented this idea at the tender of public innovations organized by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia and he became one of the top ten innovators.
Articles From Practise

Sports competition coverage

Designing a New Year’s card

Catalogue of tools for physically handicapped people

Cultural event coverage
Publishing Photos Online, Organizing Exhibitions and Participating in Photography Competitions

Even though we tried to build photographic creativity mainly on inner personal motivation that isn’t closely connected to the praise you receive from other people, we wanted to present our activities to the general public. This way, our members could present their work, get feedback, compare themselves to others, make new friends etc. This area of our activities turned out to be very important, since it brought a special excitement, satisfaction and confidence into the lives of the members.

Here are only a few activities and accomplished achievements:

- We registered a few Facebook pages, where the members could post their work regularly. In general, the photos were very positively received and had an average of thousand viewers and likes.
- Their works were exhibited at 6 group and 5 individual exhibitions.
- They participated in 4 photography competitions and received 10 awards in absolute category.
Integration Into the Photo Clubs

Our wish was for the young photographers to remain active in photography even after they finish their programmes in CIRIUS Kamnik. What is more, our wish was to make photography the connecting element that helps them get actively involved in their social environment. That is why we searched for photo clubs and similar organizations throughout Slovenia that would be willing to accept new members with special needs and support them appropriately. We encouraged the associations and tried to make them aware of their social responsibility. We offered our help when it came to transferring the data about medical and other characteristics of our members, counselling, supervision, helping looking for volunteers, organizing transportations, removing architectonic obstacles etc. Even though we weren’t entirely successful in our efforts, some members did get actively involved in different clubs.

The Presentations of Our Work to the General and Professional Public

The public presentations of our work, performances and successes did not only have a very positive effect on the members and their psyche. We are convinced that the society as a whole can be influenced by a public presentation of the work and the lives of people with special needs. There are still too many stereotypes, prejudices, discrimination, segregation and other negative phenomena that make individuals miserable and deter our collective development. It is safe to say that this project aroused a lot of interest of the general and professional public. And it wasn’t just the project; the interest in phototherapy as a new, useful and efficient method for working with vulnerable groups has increased immensely.

Let’s take a look at some of the indicators that are probably a reflection of the increased interest:

- The phototherapy group received a visit from Borut Pahor, the president of Slovenia.
- Tina Maze, the skiing champion, visited our centre- she was invited by one of our members.
- Many TV stations (SLO1, POP TV, VTV), radio stations (SLO 1, VAL 202, local radio stations), newspapers (Delo, Dnevnik, Slovenske novice, Nedelo, Digitalna kamera, more local newspapers) and many web portals reported on the project and phototherapy in general.
- We received invitations to various lectures (the world festival of phototherapy in Perugia in Italy, University rehabilitation institute of republic of Slovenia- Soča, Faculty of Arts- department of Pedagogy, Faculty of Arts- department of Psychology, Faculty of Education and many more).
- Many students of different study programmes visited our workshops and some chose phototherapy as the theme of their thesis.
- And last but not the least- this publication, issued in the Slovene as well as the English language, is also a result of this project.
President of Slovenia’s visit

Tina Maze’s visit

Interview

Newspaper article
EXPLORATION OF THE WORLD AND CREATING A STORY THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY

Darja Štirn, Tadej Bernik, Robi Kroflič

Darja Štirn, BA (Education and History), Educationalist and Art Project Manager at Vodmat Kindergarten. She has been cooperating with Robi Kroflič and Petra Štirn Janota, who developed the inductive educational approach, for 10 years and is now testing and monitoring the approach in practice. She was the Manager of the Cultural Enrichment of the Youngest, project which received the national award of the Republic of Slovenia for extraordinary achievements in preschool education. She is involved in museum pedagogy, cultural and art education, and various projects related to education through art.

Tadej Bernik has a degree in pedagogy and philosophy. He is an educational mentor for children with autism. As a photographer he exhibited his works in Den Bosch and Ljubljana.

Dr. Robi Kroflič is a university professor of Theory of education and General pedagogics at the Department of pedagogy and andragogy of the Faculty of arts, University of Ljubljana. He studies fundamental pedagogical phenomena, promotion of development of identity and moral development, the concept of pre-school pedagogics, education with the help of the artistic experience. He is the author of holistic inductive educational concept and the pedagogic use of art as an inductive educational practice, which have been applied over the past ten years in cooperation with Vodmat kindergarten.
“Aristotle’s Poetics is full of astonishing insights even for a contemporary reader. Why isn’t his concept of peripety taught at school just like the Phytagorean theorem?”
(Bruner 2002, pp. 4–5)

The Importance of Art in Education and Training

Art has always been considered as one of the essential tools to keep the memory of the past alive and to create the cultural tradition; at the same time stories of the past have been the principal medium in education and training. Oral tradition, recorded myths, staged ritual stories, paintings and ritual music have through a long period of history presented the core of culture, education has been regarded as the child’s / youngester’s process of accessing the symbolic human world of culture.

One of the consequences of the Enlightenment at the end of the 18th and at the beginning of the 19th century wasn’t only the institutionalisation of education and training (public schooling system), but also a greater emphasis on the scientific understanding of the world and consequently a withdrawal of artistic languages from the core of school education and social life (Krofič 2007). Spencer’s famous statement saying that art is only a leisure activity, and all arts should play a similar role within the framework of educational activities (ibid), shows that despite the criticism of scientific rationalism in this period education along with art in school practice started to play a minor role. Although the emergence of new (artistic) media could be noticed at the turn of the 19th and 20th century, education and training were increasingly based on transfer of scientific-paradigmatic, one could say pragmatic value (Bruner 2002).

Over the last fifty years there has been an increased interest in artistic languages as educational media. There are two arguments supporting this statement: the awareness of the significance of the so-called narrative value, which is impossible to be replaced by scientific discourses (ibid) and the discovery of multiple intelligences (Gardner 1995) and consequently the awareness that artistic languages form diverse media to confront reality and oneself and sharing knowledge with the world through various means of communication or languages (Malaguzzi 1998).

These findings are particularly significant in the preschool period, as Malaguzzi (ibid) shows that artistic languages are more appropriate tools to discover the world and to communicate than formal logical reasoning, which is mainly stimulated at school. Reggio Emilia nursery school has given us staggering results of child’s search for meaning and sense (Rinaldi 2006, Krofič 2010) when instead of classical knowledge an artistic medium is offered (Večhi 2010, Krofič 2011).

Due to easy handling of digital camera photos become a very suitable tool to explore and express the child’s experiences of the world. The Mosaic approach is one of the first projects to have explored the possibilities of using the child’s photos to study his experiences. At the same time we can deepen the child’s attention towards the observed object through encouragement and give him a chance to think over ‘the frozen images’ and thus deepen his metacognitive abilities (Clark and Moss 2001).

Kindergarten Vodmat has been introducing artistic practices in the curriculum for many years and has been inviting artists and cultural institutions to perform and thus enables the children to interact with the world and with themselves and to report on what they have experienced and seen, on their new perceptions through diverse languages and art media (drawing, movement, narration, music, graphic design, urban art, land art etc.) The theoretical background of these practices is formed by comprehensive inductive approach towards the support of prosocial moral development and educational concept through artistic experiences as a form of inductive educational practice (Krofič 2007a; Krofič etc. 2010, Krofič 2011 a etc.).

The content of the projects is carefully planned and circumstances for education through artistic experiences are provided by using expressing techniques and listening to the others, linking art as a means of communication and everyday life. In one of our projects in 2014 and 2015 photography was included as a tool of the child’s expression, communication, experiences and evaluation of the world.
Principal Ideas on Characteristics of Pedagogical Use of Photographic Medium

Regardless of underrepresentation of photographic medium in educational theories and practices the project was designed on three key principles:

- To offer the children out of a hundred languages one more to tell a story.
  Beside fine arts, dramatisation and music photography is by all means a part of artistic media that a child can handle easily, which helps him observe the world more closely, discover the principles in ‘frozen moments’, raise awareness of his position as the observer or as the object in the photo and share his experiences with peers and/or adults. As stated by John Berger in the introductory chapter to his classical work *Ways of Seeing*. “Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak.” (Berger 1972, pp.7)

- To enable the adults a better insight into the child’s view of the world through their photos (Clark in Moss 2001).
  Since pedagogic practices created through centuries were based on how adults perceive the child’s development, there have been recently distinct requirements for the child’s participation in the process of decision making, along with initiatives to try and see the world through the authentic child’s perspective. Child’s photos displaying important details of self-perception and of the world can be helpful, as stated by Susan Sontag, “...photos don’t prove only what they show, they also show what every individual sees, they aren’t only a record, they are also an evaluation of the world.” (Sontag 1979, pp. 88)

- To use similar photography techniques as in photo therapy, and thus offer children the tools for an improved perception of themselves and of people who are close to them and consequently a suitable support to develop their narrative identity (see Chapter Hermeneutics of a Photo Story).

The introduction in Judy Weiser’s essay on the usage of personal snapshots and family albums as therapeutic tools demonstrates that in a broad sense photos are neither meant to solve personal frustrations nor to repress traumatic experiences, but a broader process of self-perception, revealing their general pedagogical value. She wrote as follows: “Every snapshot a person takes or keeps is also a type of self-portrait, acting like a “mirror with memory” reflecting back those moments, people and places that were special enough to be frozen in time forever. Collectively, these photos make the ongoing stories of that person’s life visible, serving as visual footprints marking where they have been and also perhaps signaling where they might next be heading (Weiser 2010, pp. 1).

Participants in the Project

The project leaders were Darja Štirn, a pedagogue in kindergarten Vodmat, responsible for all artistic projects in the nursery and therefore supports the implementation of the comprehensive inductive educational approach in the practice, and Robi Krofič, a full professor at The Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, professionally supporting the kindergarten. The content was performed by six nursery teachers (Jana Pevec, Ana Grad Rožman, Sanja Nenadić, Maruša Pogačar, Andreja Lorber in Vanja Kep) and nursery assistants (Ula Mlakar, Petra Faris, Žaklina Zahirovič, Manica Stvarnik, Urša Luznar in Vesna Košir). Two photographers (Jure Kranja and Tadej Bernik) and an amateur photographer, a student of pedagogy (Anja Manja Segulin), were also invited to participate.

Pedagogical Methods Used in the Project

Pedagogical methods used were the same as when planning previous educational projects through artistic practices at kindergarten Vodmat:
The principle of synchronisation of didactics, where the teacher has to internalize the content and values he strives to achieve with his children (Štirn Janota and Štirn Koren 2012, pp. 24).

First nursery teachers themselves tried out photography as a tool to tell their own stories and experiences. They were doing ‘poses’ and portraits, they were focusing on how they experience their day at work and on self-presentation through photography. Later on it was important for the teachers to recognize photography as one of the narrative tools of child’s communication (see Chapter Hermeneutics of a Photo Story), whereby the child reveals the way he sees the world, what causes pleasure and pain, how he experiences the kindergarten and its facilities, his friends ...


Each theme starts with activities provoking the individual’s sensitivity to a particular theme and encouraging personal experience / empathy in order to cultivate sensitivity to particular themes, beginning with the feeling opened to every individual in the mutual world of differences (Kroflič 2007).

In a first step art itself could be the most efficient medium to help us ‘open up’ and increase the sensitivity of every individual to a particular theme.

The first step is followed by focusing on acquisition of knowledge and skills related to the selected theme – introduction and meaning. The children search for information in books, pictures, music, internet, etc., visit various institutions, invite experts – in our case photographers. Through various possibilities of knowledge acquisition we attempt to surpass the use of linguistic and logical mathematical intelligence (Gardner 1995), which is the most widely used in contemporary education.

The third step is marked by dialogism. The children use the acquired knowledge, exchange experiences and ideas, acquire feedback on themselves, on their research and their views of the world. The main objectives of this step are to develop a relationship level and a positive recognition of different individual views, standpoints and to experience the content.

In a process of dialogue with his peers, artists and other guests in the educational group the child examines the relevance of his points of view and creates the overall value. Through dialogue he develops his own theories, surpasses stereotypes, changes his points of view and his values (Rinaldi 2006). In this project the principal medium to exchange ideas, experiences and stories was photography.

Consequently, there is the fourth step, we talk about creativity, when children express their knowledge and experiences in a chosen artistic medium and present them in this form to their peers and adults (nursery teachers and parents).

The fifth step means social engagement. It is essential to establish the relationship with the wider environment. The children present the content they immersed in and gave meaning to, so that ‘their voice is heard’ in the wider social environment outside the family and the kindergarten.

In this step the activities are carried out outside the educational institutions. The most prominent event by far of passing on the children’s ideas publicly were graffiti virtual gardens in the outskirts of Metelkova City (Kroflič 2013). At the end of our project an exhibition of children’s photographs was held in the art gallery Photo Gallery in the centre of Ljubljana.

The Development of Introducing Photography as a Medium of Storytelling

The following section deals with the development of the project photography and the themes the children selected and dealt with through digital photography.

Each theme starts with activities provoking the individual’s sensitivity to a particular theme and encouraging personal experience /
empathy. In the kindergarten we touched the theme of photography by asking the children to bring snapshots from their family photo albums and to tell and relive the stories they experienced. The aim of the activity was to arouse their senses and interest in photography prompting them to reflect on their experiences.

Then the nursery teachers and the children visited photo exhibitions in the town. When visiting one in Tivoli Garden and looking at ‘frozen moments’ on photos they were exploring and recognizing their feelings, transforming them into artistic languages they were familiar with. Thus, for example, after having looked at the photo showing a mighty bridge they built a bridge with their own bodies. They relived the children’s joy in the meadow by playing excitedly with autumn leaves. A photo showing a love couple on the pier of Lake Bohinj was transformed into a theatre play. At the same time they documented the events with a camera.
In the second step, the aim being the acquisition of knowledge of a particular theme and its meaning, the children were dealing with the question of how a photo appears, how it gets in and out of the camera, what exactly it is... They were looking for answers in books and visited a photo atelier, photographers came to see them in the kindergarten and demonstrated how a camera works, sharing with them their experiences with cameras and photography. The children illustrated their ideas of how a photo is made with drawings and narratives.

Photographers visited the children in the kindergarten to encourage them to start taking photos themselves and in this way guide them into the world of photography. It all started with the exploration of possibilities of how to depict different stories.
**Portrait and selfportraits**

The children upgraded the theme ‘poses’ by taking photos of each other or of themselves and thus created their first photographic (self)portraits and complemented them with drawings. They compared the photos and the drawings against each other and according to the perception of the self-image or the image of the peer portrait they were figuring out how they see themselves and how they are seen by their peers.

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**Poses**

At the beginning the children mainly playfully enjoyed in taking photos. They were posing and taking photos of each other. Consequently, there were some good examples of ‘poses’, which were exhibited in the playrooms.
Expressing joy and sadness

The next theme was a logical consequence of the previous one dealing with the self-image and the image of the others. While meticulously watching the expressions on happy and sad faces, the nursery teacher asked the children to tell what makes them happy or sad. This activity was followed by photographing a facial detail expressing sadness or joy (eyes and mouth). After having developed the photos they made a photo collage and added comments on when they were feeling sad or happy were added. The photo collage was posted on the wall and the parents were invited to find the facial detail and the comment of their own child. The children were anxious to see their parents’ results and were surprised when the parents recognized the child’s image.

Confrontation with traumatic experience

While making the collage one of the girls refused to take a look at her sad face, because it reminded her of an event she wanted to forget. Obviously the expression on the image of her face reminded her of an event causing her feel uneasy. The nursery teacher described the unpleasant event and its unravelling in a form of an ethnographic account.
During the directed activity in the kindergarten the children were looking at the photos (the collage of happiness and sadness). Each child had a chance to add his own comment. They were talking about happy and sad events they remembered. The girl was looking at the collage of faces for a while and covered her sad photo with her hand. “I don’t like this photo. Whenever I look at it, it always reminds me of something sad. But I don’t want to recall ever. I’d rather have a poster with happy faces only.”

The nursery teacher took the girl in her arms and said: “Each of us is sad from time to time. Usually we feel much better, when we confide in someone, why we are in a bad mood.”

Girl: “But I don’t want to tell.”

Nursery teacher: “Do you still remember the story of the tree that wanted to keep its sad story to itself in order not to make everyone else sad?”

Girl: “Yes, I do. But in the end the tree told the story to its friends.”

Nursery teacher: “Would you like to tell it to anyone or would you rather draw?”

Girl: “I’d rather draw.”

The nursery teacher described the drawing: The angry daddy is at the front of the car, the sad mommy and the kids are sitting at the back. She drew herself out of the car and coloured her image with the same colour as her sad mommy.

The girl finished the drawing and showed it to the nursery teacher and to a friend of hers. She was looking at the drawing and telling about the event that happened during the holiday, when she and her family were going to visit their aunt. Because the girl was too noisy in the car, her daddy got angry and told her to stay at home. Mommy asked him to give their daughter another chance, but he refused. So they left without her.

I didn’t interrupt her, while she was telling the story. She was talking quietly, looking at the drawing all the time. She gave the reason for her daddy’s behaviour on that occasion – he was always reluctant to visit their aunt, while the others were laughing happily.

Afterwards the girl was looking at the photos on the collage of happiness and sadness for many times, but she never covered the photo showing her sad eyes.

The nursery teacher wrote in her reflection that the girl’s father wasn’t very attentive to other family members and that he according to the girl often expresses his emotions with outbursts of anger. The nursery teacher was willing to listen to her and support her by telling the story of a tree experiencing distress in a similar way as the girl. Thus she made it possible for the girl to start confronting the traumatic experience when looking at the ‘sad photo’ by reliving the unpleasant event and externalizing her feelings she caused the cathartic release, and the girl was able to look at sad images on the collage without any stress.

I and my friend are like …

The theme regarding how we experience ourselves and how a friend continued at the nursery playground with the search for details the children would use to describe themselves and their friends with. After being split into pairs, the children were at first searching with their cameras for a suitable motif to represent themselves and later also their friend. They looked at the photos and added comments on them.

Tea:

I’M LIKE A FLOWER, BECAUSE I’M SO SOFT.
I’M LIKE A SPRUCE, BECAUSE I’VE GOT HAIRY ARMS.
ERIN IS LIKE LIME BLOSSOMS, BECAUSE HER HAIR IS SO GENTLE.
ERIN IS LIKE A WILLOW, BECAUSE SHE’S ALWAYS SO CUNNING, BECAUSE SHE’S ALWAYS NAUGHTY.
ERIN IS LIKE QUARTZ, BECAUSE HER FACE IS GLOWING. SHE’S USED THE HAND CREAM.
In January the playground was finally covered with snow; the dwarf found winter and the children caught it on camera.

When looking at the photos taken in the kindergarten and at the playground the children found out that some of the photos had very beautiful and intense colours that could be classified into a colour chart. They printed the photos, created a collage colour chart, which was exhibited in the kindergarten.

Erin:
I’M LIKE A DAISY, BECAUSE I’M GROWING.
I’M LIKE A SANDBOX, BECAUSE I LIKE PLAYING.
TEA IS LIKE A BIRCH, BECAUSE SHE’S SOMETIMES OFFENDED AND THEN SHE DROOPS HER HEAD.
TEA IS LIKE A SPRUCE, BECAUSE SHE PRICKS. SHE’S GOT HAIRY LEGS.

My life in the kindergarten

The children were telling photo stories about their lives in the kindergarten. They were looking for their favourite nooks on the playground and collected them in a photo book.

They were also telling the story of how the playground changes through the seasons. They were looking for autumn and captured it in the photos. By the time the landscape should be covered with snow, they were searching for signs of winter in vain. The search changed into a tale of a dwarf who is looking for winter, but fails to find it, because there is no snow.
My day in the kindergarten

One group of the children photographed the moments and experiences every day and at the end of the day they and their nursery teacher looked carefully at the photos, made comments on them and selected the best ones. The photos were exhibited in the nursery room as captured experiences and each child was talking about his own experiences on a particular day in the kindergarten. In December the activity was repeated, only this time they were capturing the experience of Christmas time on camera.

As the playground was covered with snow and ‘the world changed overnight’ (this is how the children called the activity they were busy with on the day when it was snowing), they counterbalanced the colour chart with the search for white details on the playground.

The photos they made were named according to their experience of the detail in the photo story.

Cold footprints                 The sea                                            Icicles

1. I PHOTOGRAPHED RED CURRANT, BECAUSE I LIKE ITS RED COLOUR.
2. IT’S A BROOM. I LIKE ITS SHAPE, IT’S BEAUTIFUL AND IT’S GOT GLOVES TO SWEEP.
3. A STRING. I LIKE IT, BECAUSE IT’S WHITE AND HAS GOT A BEAUTIFUL SHAPE.
4. SARA WAS NAUGHTY. I WANTED TO PHOTOGRAPH THE SLIDE. ONLY AFTER SHE HAD GONE DOWN THE SLIDE, I WAS ABLE TO MAKE A PHOTO.
5. A SLIDE. I FOUND IT NICE, BECAUSE THERE WAS A SMALL ROOF AND A SMALL HOLE. THIS IS HOW IT LOOKED LIKE ON THE CAMERA.
6. ŽAKLINA (NURSERY TEACHER) AND AN APPLE AND OUR KINDERGARTEN.
outside the kindergarten (on Pokljuka). The camera became an obligatory part of the equipment no matter where they went.

While they were watching tree images on large projector canvas in the nursery, one of the groups came up with the idea to make a photo story from tree images.

**A story about the tree in the playground**

A TREE WAS GROWING IN THE PLAYGROUND.
EVERY DAY IT WAS WATCHING THE CHILDREN PLAYING, LAUGHING, CRYING ...

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**Timotej:**

1. FUNNY. LOVRENČ IS STICKING HIS TONGUE OUT.
2. A BIRD’S HEAD. I DON’T KNOW WHY I CHOSE IT. IT WAS ON OUR PLAYGROUND. I THINKS IT’S A STARLING.
3. FUNNY. ŽAKLINA’S (NURSERY TEACHER) BUTTOCKS.
4. I LIKE THIS ONE. LOVRENČ ON THE BIKE.
5. I LIKE THIS ONE. THIS IS NIKA, BECAUSE SHE’S VERY BEAUTIFUL.
6. THIS ONE IS BEAUTIFUL, TOO.

**Trees**

The children were enthusiastic about interesting tree shapes they photographed at their playground, in the parks, on their trips and stays ...
One day the children peeled off some of the tree bark. Although the tree thought it was screaming loudly telling them to stop, nobody heard it at all.

So the tree was hurt and sad. It didn’t want to tell its story to anyone, because it didn’t want to see anyone else suffer.

One day the children noticed its injury.

Before winter the leaves fell off. It became bare.

The tree was telling its sad story to all the children who were playing under the tree.

Since that day it wasn’t sad anymore. It admired wonderful colours and knew exactly who gave every single scarf to it.

In spring it will rejoice the children with green leaves and red cherries. We can hardly wait as well.
Camera and photography have become one of the ways of evaluation, communication, dimension and documentation of various themes explored by children in the kindergarten. And this was also the case with the celebration of the 2000th anniversary of Emona. The children were looking for traces of ancient Emona in Ljubljana; for instance, they were scrutinizing the details in the Roman wall with photographer’s help and thus made it eternal in their photos. Then the details were collected and examined. They used them to make collages and created a story. They made a photo collage, a contemporary derivative of ancient Roman collages. The photo story collage was presented to a specialist for creative movement and together they reproduced it in movement as well.

**Exploration of the ancient city of Emona**
Photograph as a part of pedagogical routine

“To collect photos means to collect the world,” wrote photographer Susan Sontag (1979) in her book OnPhotography. The children in the kindergarten have definitely accomplished this goal by carrying out various activities that have been completed (or are still going on):

- finding nooks in their environment, confronting their ways of seeing a person / an event and comparing them with the views of their friends,
- realizing that photography is a medium of learning, a way to tell a story and report on events,
- realising that photography can be a hide-and-seek game,
- realising that photography is a tool of imaginative creations,
- … and confronting one’s own traumatic experiences.

While taking photographs, the children were having a good time - they were playing, exploring, capturing on camera their own experiences they were reliving all over again later, when looking at the photos; they captured ‘frozen moments’ and used them to create stories. Photographs were used as material to document a process, a reflection,
Phototherapy – from concepts to practices

Articles From Practise


Bibliography


a tale about one day or a past event. And, last but not least, they used cameras and photos as a medium to tell our own story or the story of how we perceive other people.
THE PHOTO CAMERA GIVES ME NEW EYES TO SEE

Mojca Cvirn

Mojca Cvirn has a degree in Preschool education and works as an assistant headmistress in the kindergarten Tezno in Maribor. She has over 25 years of experience in working with children. Because she has continuously looked for creative teaching environments in her career, she has accepted photography as a challenge that offers kindergarten teachers new possibilities for the active integration of the children into the process of learning as well as encouraging the children's thinking and expressing emotions.
Out of the contemporary pedagogic concepts of kindergartens springs an opinion that a child best learns when he or she actively participates in the process of learning. The principle of active learning is also written in our national curriculum (Kindergarten Curriculum, 1999: 16), which tackles ways to provide an encouraging learning environment and take into account the child’s initiatives. A child is supposed to build his or her understanding and knowledge himself. The principle of active learning can already be found in the theory of M. Montessori, as well as in the description of the development of thinking by Piaget and Vygotsky. A child transforms information from the environment and adapts them to his own way of thinking, which is simultaneously transformed or developed under their influence (Batistič Zorec, 2003). Bruner says that learning is most successful if the child is active in the process, if he takes part in it, participates in the formation of common goals and gets the chance to build the meaning of learning instead of simply gathering knowledge (Bruner, 1996: 15).

In the field of education of preschool children, there is a lot of talk about participation of children or their taking part in decision-making and choosing. As a child-carer with 25-year practice, I think that in our kindergartens, education is still directed by adults, and there is a lack of education that would lend an ear to the children, an education that would encourage the child’s own ways of perception, experiencing, expressing (verbal, non-verbal) and thinking, so characteristic of him in an individual development period.

In the Tezno Maribor Kindergarten, we have been deliberately introducing different learning strategies for a few years now in line with the principle of developmental process tackle, so we realise the meaning of encouragement to the child’s thinking and reflection. Actually, this gives a chance to acquaint ourselves with the child’s ways of perception, experiencing, expression (verbal as well as non-verbal) and thinking, characteristic of children in a particular development period.

The main purposes of strategies to encourage the child’s thinking and reflection are: the introduction of different child concepts of thinking, argumentation by proof, connecting, creativity, leadership, decision-making, discovering intricacy, getting to know different views, forming conclusions and documenting. The children realise that thoughts and ideas forming in their minds become visible by them writing them down, drawing them, create them, test them and analyse them (Ritchhart, Church in Morrison, 2011; Salman, 2010).

In the past years, one of the ways to encourage the child’s thinking and reflection at the Tezno Maribor Kindergarten was the project The Photo Camera Gives Me New Eyes to See. In my spare time, I do quite a lot of photography, so I introduced a photo camera into my work, as well. At first, I only used it as a means of documenting and monitoring the child’s development. The children became aware quickly that a photo camera was at the playhouse all the time. In the beginning, they only wanted me to show them what I had taken pictures of, but later, they began to express a wish to take photographs themselves. Of course, I provided them with an opportunity to do that, and through this experience, I saw that they can explore and get to know the world, which is for them an endless source of inspiration and motivation, so that they can manifest their creative abilities.

In our kindergarten, we have been exploring with the aid of photography for the fourth year now. At first, we organised Photography Hours, however, in the past two years, this has become a true research project. We have been collaborating with Jure Kravanja from the Institute of Photographic Therapy, who has a BA in pedagogics and sociology and comes once a week. In this school year however, the project also includes four care-givers: Jadranka Zajec, Polona Vollmeier, Martina Jaunik and Sabina Hütler, who wanted to include the photo camera in their work with children in a more profound manner. Together with them, we have been looking for ways towards creative and efficient learning environments this year. We have included five children with development deficiencies into the project, as well.

The Purpose of the Project The Photo Camera Gives Me New Eyes to See:

- To master the technique of taking photographs, to be able to photograph independently (to hold the camera in one’s hands correctly, to get acquainted with the basic buttons on a photo camera – how to turn it on and off, how to review photographs)
- To prepare a creative learning environment with the aid of photography
- To develop and use visual thinking
Photography as a Means of Documenting and Cognition

Jadranka Zajec implemented the activity entitled Watching the Forest through a Photo Camera. In planning the activities in the forest, she offered the children a challenge composed of watching, experiencing and perceiving the forest through photography. Thematic content followed, in which the children were looking for forest fruits, animals, autumn colours ... The excursion to the forest was always followed by watching photographs through projections and a reflection by the children. The children have recognised the photographs that they took. They were amazed at what they managed to capture in the lens. Then they explored what they did not know in the photographs, such as ivy, certain fungi, a blindworm, fern, etc.

Together with the children, the staff prepared a photographic exhibition dedicated to reliving everything they have experienced in the forest and to introducing themselves to their parents and kindergarten visitors.

The photographs were a learning accessory for the children, they have learned a lot through them, from each other as well as from literature (in books, they looked for answers to what they had not recognised on the photographs).

We are setting diverse challenges to the children, e. g. to use the photo camera and find the following:

- To develop and strengthen one’s self-esteem, one’s own competences
- To form group cohesion and interpersonal relations
- To include children with development deficiencies in activities and research the impact of photography on their development
- To encourage creativity.

The project The Photo Camera Gives Me New Eyes to See is a part of the Annual Working Plan of the kindergarten. For it, we have designed a whole-year action plan, encompassing objectives, contents, timeframes, monitoring implementation and evaluation. Photography Hours are part of the project and are organised as an enrichment of the kindergarten’s activities once a week for children who are especially interested in this field.

Mastering the technique of taking photographs is the main activity that children meet once they start taking pictures. There are no problems mastering the photography technique. All children who have been and still are included in this activity know how to handle a photo camera, they know the on and off buttons on the camera, they know how to check the photographs, how to focus a photograph and independently take one. Through the process, they get acquainted with other functions, such as macro settings, flash off and close-up. Knowing all of these settings facilitates the children to focus on taking pictures, express themselves and think through photography. Children with development issues do not fall behind one bit in this area. They quickly master the technique and are able to take entirely independent photographs.

It also needs to be mentioned that our kindergarten has 23 photo cameras, so that every group has their own, while there are extra 6 photo cameras for Photography Hours, which, of course, provides us with a quality work situation.

Looking for creative learning environments is, of course, the main purpose of our project.

In view of our work so far, I can definitely claim that photography can be included in the planning, implementation and evaluation of work with children, as well as all areas of the curriculum. I shall hereinafter present some cases of how to include photography into everyday activities or different areas of the curriculum.
Photography as a Possibility to Develop Important Life Values

We are aware of the importance of the development of life values – strengthening friendship, mutual help, support, accepting differences, increasing tolerance, knowing each other and oneself and interpersonal relations. Polona Vollmeier in her activities dedicated attention to friendship, perceiving oneself and others within a group. She used children's photographs that were created while they photographed each other. She put them in a bag and chose one of the children to draw one photograph from the bag. The other children had to ask questions and find out which friend is hiding in the photograph, while the chosen child could only answer questions with a 'yes' or a 'no'. The children quickly recognized and mastered the rules and the game itself. The chosen child (who is watching the photograph and answering questions) was looking for the information on a colour photograph of his friend, to be able to answer the questions. The next day, the care-giver secretly filled the bag with black and white photographs. At first, the children were surprised over the photograph they drew out, because the rules of the game remained the same. In spite of the initial problems, they looked for answers themselves when the questions were asked, without the adults leading them in any way. Everyone looked at a photograph, looked for the friend within the circle, and answered the question. In this way, the children introduced each his or her own way of thinking on how to find an answer to the question asked.

With the help of a didactic conversation, the children then compared colour and black and white photography, commenting on the differences between them, e.g. what we can learn from one or the other, what one or the other offers us.

Photography as Background for Developing Language Skills

In developing language competences, we use photography as a means of watching, comparing, narrating, explaining, renewing and describing.

Martina Jaunik selected photographs made by children to make up stories. They photographed everything that seemed special and important to them in the woods. Photographs from the forest were viewed on the big screen, through a projector. They have found that they have a lot of interesting photographs, and while viewing them, they used a lot of imagination to explain what the objects could be... They have agreed to make a book entitled The Secrets of Our Forest. They have processed the photographs through the programme called Painter, added their own drawings to them and set them in the book as illustrations to accompany the stories.


Photography as a Means of Encouraging the Child’s Own Strategy of Perception, Experiencing, Expressing (Verbally, Non-verbally) and Thinking Characteristic to Him in a Certain Development Period

Žana found a photograph that seemed interesting to her in a catalogue of photographs. In line with the matrix method, she told us about it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you see in the photograph?</th>
<th>Why do you think that? What do you think is going on in the photograph?</th>
<th>What would you like to know? What interests you?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A lock</td>
<td>I see a ‘stuck’ face. The gentleman drew a kiss and a brain, and I think he is a painter, because he drew a lock on his shirt.</td>
<td>How could he draw all this in one day? Why is his head ‘stuck’? (This gave rise to a debate of how his face became so out of focus. Žana knew how to tell by herself that this kind of face comes out when you move it. We tried to do that. I set the camera without flash and told Žana I did it. I was the model, Žana took pictures and told me how to move my head. The photograph worked, and Žana was very proud. The next day, she showed this technique of photographing to her care-giver, as well. It was interesting how she remembered to set the camera just right. That day, Žana took a lot of interesting ‘stuck’ photographs. Her model was her friend from the group.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A brain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A gentleman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The photographs she took are the following:

We have also invented a lot of different didactic games that encourage children to think:

- Puzzles from photographs made by children themselves
- How to find a positive to match the negative
- Looking for details from the photograph in our surroundings (we photograph objects from up close and next time, we find them inside or outside)
- Arranging photographs in line with the motive, the colour, etc.
- Taking pictures in line with the photographic templates (the children choose their photograph, draw it, then we play a game of pairs)
- Watching, recognising, commenting on photographs and details
- The children ‘read’ the photograph and invent a story to go with it.

Of course, these are only a few cases of encouraging the child’s own way of perceiving, experiencing, expressing (verbally, non-verbally) and thinking. In kindergarten, we deliberately tackle different learning strategies and set a research question: Which learning strategies do we use to promote solving thought challenges and problems in different areas? The foundation, of course, is made up of pre-knowledge and experiences of children, on which we are building. During the process, we monitor the initiatives of children and document them in order to use them for further planning.
Children with Development Issues

Inclusion of children with development issues is, of course, an additional challenge. To what degree can treatment with the aid of photography and taking photographs encourage progress in their development? In this field, a lot of work and research will surely be necessary, however, positive influence has already begun to show. We have felt it in our work with children who have speech impairments, concentration problems and social integration issues.

- Children with short-term attention spans and persistence issues have been behaving the other way around when photographing. Taking pictures calmed them down, relaxed them, but was simultaneously for them like a fun game. They dedicated it a lot of time and were not disturbing.
- Photography helps children achieve better self-esteem, and when the pictures were created, they felt like it was their personal success. They expressed it with joy, pleasure, verbally as well as non-verbally.
- A boy with speech issues used the photo camera to communicate with others (when he wanted to say something, he showed it through photography).
- A care-giver offered a photo camera to a child who had been crying upon arrival, for she sensed his interest in photography. With each day that passed, his crying was shorter, and the boy keeps using the photo camera every day.

Work with Care-givers

The creative activities that are designed to lead the child to his or her own ways of perceiving, experiencing, expressing (verbally, non-verbally) and thinking, are to a great extent dependent upon the care-givers and their wish for new knowledge. To this end, we have prepared an education class for the care-givers on the basics of photography (beginners’ and advanced class), while we have been working on individual active scopes using different strategies to provide solutions to thought challenges, by which a child can take part in his or her own manner of thinking. In our kindergarten, photography has thus become part of everyday life.

Bibliography

Anita Zelić is one of the beginners of phototherapy in Slovenia. She graduated at the Faculty of social work with a thesis entitled Phototherapy: photography as an artistic expressive means in the context of psychosocial help. She is a cofounder of the Institute for phototherapy. She carries out different phototherapy workshops and projects, both with children and adults.
The fact that each of us can see and interpret the same photograph in a different way can be transferred into the realization that we perceive the world differently and therefore respond to the same information in different ways, thus creating our personal reality. How do the children with special needs then perceive the world? The children who so often get labelled with ‘different’, which makes their perception of the world different? With the help of diagnoses and analyses we try to explain and understand their perception of the world and their responses to it, but we hardly ever realize that we are the ones who construct or interpret their reality through their actions and behaviour. Namely, the majority of these children have difficulties expressing and describing their experience through verbal language. The use of phototherapeutic techniques in working with children with special needs stimulates symbolic and metaphorical communication, which means that the child doesn’t have to be skilful in verbal expression in order to be able to describe his/her reality.

It facilitates the visual and symbolic representation, which is much less ‘distorted’ and ‘altered’ than the linguistic expression of sensorial experience. With this we find a way of getting to know the world of the child with special needs through their eyes, their perspective and the story, which is told by the child directly.

Phototherapy, which I carry out at OŠ Kozara in Nova Gorica, where children are educated at two levels- Less demanding educational standard and the Special educational programme, was first introduced in the school year 2012/2013. The primary purpose of phototherapy was giving the children an opportunity to show their emotions, thoughts and nevertheless their view of the world through the visual and symbolic language of photography. The group that attends phototherapy this year is the third in the row. The structures of the groups, including the one this year, are very diverse and include children with intellectual disabilities, children with emotional and behavioural disabilities, children with autism and children with physical impairments.

The techniques of phototherapy are mostly directed into the active process of taking photos, but also include the observation of the photos. The activities always follow a chosen topic that is important in that particular moment. For example, activities can be oriented towards creative areas, encouraging communication or the development of cognitive abilities and are connected to the environment that surrounds us, like nature, seasons, colours... They can, on the other hand, be oriented towards developing emotional and social skills, when we pay attention to interpersonal relations in groups, stereotypes... The activities are also designed according to the structure or the dynamic of the group and the interest the children show when dealing with a particular theme. For instance, last year the emphasis of phototherapy was on recognizing and evaluating different emotional states through personal experience and the environment, the adequacy of emotional responses, expressing and exploring the diversity and complexity of feelings through taking photos of people and nature, expressing emotional states through colours and thus developing emotional maturity.

Beside their weekly activities children also participate in designing different products with their photographs, prepare photographic exhibitions (I am, 2013- OŠ Kozara, Tree as a symbol of life, 2014- Museum of carpentry Solkan) and take part in various competitions and exhibitions, which help them appreciate their self-worth and make them realize they are capable of achieving many things. Their photographs have brought them much success, among other things cooperating at exhibitions of all Slovene primary schools and even the state competition in digital photography, where they won a silver medal. Their works adorn various gift card and calendars. This year’s calendar with the theme of roses was issued by the Municipality of Nova Gorica as a protocol gift.
The exhibition of photographs on the topic I am

In the year 2013 the children of OŠ Kozara introduced themselves to the general public with a photographic exhibition. The exhibition was designed in a special way, since it didn’t focus mainly on the aesthetic perfection of the photographs, but more on the personal expressiveness and the stories hidden behind the photographs. The theme of the exhibition was I am, because the children themselves chose their own photos, with which they identified most and which represented themselves in a metaphorical way. They accompanied the photos with their thoughts and in this way illustrated the stories that made them take the photos in the first place. The exhibition evoked many emotional responses among the adults who came to see it, because it was their first insight into the thinking and experiencing of children with special needs.

Urska R.: I am a tunnel, because I search for a way out of difficult times.

Valentina K.: I am a tree, because I grow.

Martina J.: I am Sadness, because I miss my sister.
AS THE SAYING GOES: A PHOTOGRAPH IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

Jure Kravanja

Jure Kravanja graduated in sociology and pedagogy at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. He is an internationally recognized photographer and one of the pioneers of phototherapy in Slovenia. He is a cofounder of the Institute for phototherapy. He carries out different phototherapy workshops and projects, both with children and adults.

*Kris K.* I am a merry-go-round, because I travel quickly through my world.
Photography, the small, ephemeral moment stopped in eternity, carries within it a lot more than simply the image of a face, a look from the mountaintop, a smiling holiday afternoon. It is a quiet, silent, but inexplicably loud and talkative witness. An invisible witness, revealing, witnessing, whisperingly spreading out the reason why of all moments, of all looks, this one and not some other was chosen. The exact moment that has its negative safely tucked in our feelings.

That photography can be more than simply an image and taking photographs more than simply concatenation of these images, is felt years ago, when I was in the psychiatric hospital in Vojnik to take photographs for their monograph. It was a true joy to watch an eager therapist, who was witty, warm and open in acquainting the patients with the wide array of possibilities of fine arts expression, which at one point stop being simply purposeful creativity and become pure pleasure, become healing. The thought occurred to me that taking photographs also carries within it such a charge, such material that is never wasted and never annihilated, but instead growing, extending and strengthening.

I received an understanding response from the management: in spite of financially dry times, they decided to allow the patients to spend quite a few hours associating with photo-material, although we did not have a lot of cameras. Even though our meetings were soon over due to the aforementioned lack of finances, it was immediately clear that the path was the right one, all we had to do was pave it.

An accord of coincidences soon threw me off my feet. At the Ljubljana-based Polje Psychiatric Hospital, I could start to introduce photography with patients as an independent part of art therapy with a soothing effect and as support to classic therapy. It is very pleasant to recall the understanding management of the hospital – when they assigned us a space designed for that, got us new photo cameras and all the necessary gear, they provided an immediate, very pleasant and incredibly optimistic beginning.

This great encouragement had a boiling response: the patients were thrilled even though some were quite foreign to photography and all of the processing that comes after it. I was also thrilled. The enthusiastic, dedicated responses and the perceived soothing effect of the entire process of our meetings, composed of taking photographs and later on their correction and supplementing the recorded material were immediately visible. Searching for attractive motives and taking pictures of hospital spaces soon opened up into the well-kept green space in the immediate environment, and into the nearby castle and the path towards it. The thrill was forceful, and every single, however mundane scene or a butterfly seen many times before, or a coloured leaf on the ground, were a true source of wonder. And it was visible with each person who took part that this was no longer about photography, that the essence was a heart-felt connection with people who had the same desires, people who could speak without words – through photography.

We proudly hanged our photographs in the halls and, surprised over ourselves, we filled the entire gallery hall with curious people who came to admire our collected images, shown on the projection canvas.

We could accept among us my colleague Petra, as well, and together, we could transfer even more knowledge, so there were quite a few patients who stayed after hours to join the new group with us. Quite a few of them skipped meals in order not to spoil the pleasure of creativity and group gatherings.

And the fact that some people came back even after their hospital treatment was over, just to keep on visiting phototherapy classes, and also that very numerous of them decided to buy their own photo camera – these were only further confirmations that our common endeavour was successful.

We have extended the activity of phototherapy to the Centre of Clinical Psychiatry, the Centre of Mental Health, and also the Centre for Healing Addictions to Illegal Drugs.

The following year, we were active together with the boys from the Forensic Department. The path to the surroundings of the Ljubljana-based quarter Fužine and through them started with the welcoming ‘little cup of coffee’, a pleasant introduction into taking photographs.

A good experience was always affirmed: photography had occupied all senses and focused thoughts, redirected thought currants, erased borders between the outer and inner space and annihilated anxious states. The group worked as an emotional connection and accentuated
Mrs Andreja, who had then been a hospitalised patient, was discovering the enchanting unrepeatability of everyday life and the magic of tiny moments along with several others who took photographs. We kept in touch even after the phototherapy project at the Polje hospital. The latest piece of news: Mrs Andreja was invited to the Workers’ University in order to become a lecturer and pass on her knowledge of photography.

After two years – that much time was allocated to the project at the Polje Psychiatric Hospital –, our official association was truly over, however, some of us kept in touch even after that. Modern possibilities have a way to facilitate communication and erase the kilometres between us.

A lot of times, I joyfully think of this wonderful time of our association. In my thoughts, I awaken the events of those days, such tiny moments, but such full events. I think of the people who were so grateful to absorb the whole world around them, especially special and especially precious through the lens of a photo camera. And then I think of an older madam, over seventy years old, who had never taken a single photograph until our meetings took place. But when she first held a photo camera, it became her ally and comforter. She fulfilled her own great wish: to paste the taken photographs neatly on paper, make postcards and send them out to her loved ones.

When I think of Mr Ivo, it reminds me of playing an especially dear film. Mr Ivo, in addition to all of his heart-felt love to people, kept giving his noble love away to the tiny cat creatures, as well. When he used up the savings meant for truly hard times to buy himself a photo camera, cats became those creatures which charmed him most as a photographer. Since the Polje Psychiatric Hospital kindly offers a home to many stray cats, we suggested to him to at least photograph all these saved animals. He created warm, charming, mysterious and playful images, exactly like the cats he took photos of, and this was why we appreciated them so much.

One day, we wanted to visit the nearby castle and the museum in it. However, our wallets were empty. Then Mrs Joži simply said: “Ah, we shall just say to them that we are their nearby neighbours from Polje, and we might get a neighbours’ discount.” The museum director liked the idea so much that he let us in for free and even invited us to free follow-up visits anytime we would want to come.

These thoughts are like birds of passage. They fly to the times past, however, they do come back, carrying my memories. In two years, there is enough of them to form a memory book holding a dear memory of meeting Matej Peljhan, a proclaimed photographer and dedicated clinical psychologist at the Centre for Education and Rehabilitation CIRIUS in Kamnik. It was to his initiative that I lectured there and revealed my own vision of phototherapy, while Matej had started this programme at the CIRIUS even before that with a few young people. At the CIRIUS, we began together as phototherapists, and later on founded our Institute of Photographic Therapy. In time, a female colleague Anita Zelić joined us as an esteemed therapist from Nova Gorica. We were invited to Perugia to the phototherapist’s congress, where Judy Weiser, the pioneer of phototherapy, joyfully told us: “Bravo! You are already enacting what I am writing about!”

That which is granted to us, the healthy – and at the same time, this precious gift is taken for granted –, is forever unreachable to many people: walking on the grass, sitting on a bench in a park, taking a refreshing bicycle ride. For many people, to dress without any outside help, or to take one’s own hand to the mouth constitutes an impossible task. These young people have taught me without knowing that will not only provides a way, but even crushes the rocks on that way. The young know that a step may have its limitations, but a thought does not. When I was living with the population of the Institute, I have realised that lightness of thought, force of one’s will and power of one’s desire are the invincible three.
of composition and form, and several genres. Our ‘photo-sessions’ became more and more meetings of people who are joyous about the boundless crowd of images living around us and allowing us to appropriate them in order to keep them beside us forever.

Talks, readings of photographs, new ideas and their realisation have seamlessly united expert teachings and the soothing effect dubbed phototherapy.

Perhaps in the past months, you have come across a newspaper describing a young boy named Jasmin, who had been robbed of any possibility of movement by a severe muscular illness called muscular dystrophy. However, it could not take away the flight of his thoughts and desires. As a long-term fan of success and uniqueness of skier Tina Maze, he loved to post her photographs on his Facebook profile, but of course the photographs were taken by other people. When Mr Silvo, a professor at the CIRIUS, made some improvements and adaptations to help those with movement impairments trigger photo cameras in several new ways, even by using their lips, Jasmin’s wish to photograph Tina himself, after all, became more realistic and realisable. His heart-felt invitation for her to come visit him was answered by Tina as well as her trainer Andrea Massi. This was a joyful day not only for Jasmin, but for everyone. She approached Jasmin and said: “I am here now. I am pleased to have met you, and if you want, you can, of course, photograph me.” Jasmin finally lived the moments he had dreamed about so often: he finally met Tina, a great sports champion, a great personality, but at the same time, he also met Tina, the entirely simple girl. He created his own photographs of her! Everyone kept taking photographs of her, while Tina was moved and simply smiled, surprised at such an amount of attention. The recorded photographs amounted to a small exhibition, and the memories in our minds were just as numerous.

In addition, the heart-felt stories attracted the journalists, who told their listeners and readers about life and prowess of these young people who defy grave illnesses with pure will of their spirit.

The visit of the president of the republic, Mr Borut Pahor, then put a golden ribbon on all of these precious memories and all these wonderful adventures, to form a beautiful bouquet.

My thoughts stop at Nino. Cerebral paralysis set his body in a wheelchair, that is true, but his thoughts have light wings and are quick and joyful as the birds. Since he can hardly speak, we have all together enthusiastically realised that he would be able to project his thoughts through photographs. Now, Nino is not simply projecting his unspoken words, but also the spaces and expansive panoramas of his soul world, and without even knowing it, he is revealing a rich artistic fountainhead for him and for others, quite like Jasmin. Their independent exhibitions and awarded works have infused their self-esteem with ever so needed feeling that they can finally be equal to anyone, and even out of reach for some people.

It is precious to use the process of photography to bear witness to the flow of invisible emotional material and to the activation of impulses made silent. The warmth of social ties, the joy of creativity and strengthening of self-value are the most impressive virtues and essential units that trigger themselves as relaxing reactions through the soothing therapy of photography. If at first, I wrote a sentence on the victorious and meaningful transparency of photography, in which a single picture is worth a thousand words, I can now in the exact same way conclude: where words fall silent, photography speaks.
Matej Peljhan has a degree in psychology and he is a clinical psychology specialist. For over twenty years, during the course of his career, he has worked with people with special needs. He knows handicap first hand, because he suffered multiple injuries, including the loss of his arm and his eye, at the age of ten, when he had an accident with a military bomb while playing near his home. He has had many independent photographic exhibitions in Slovenia and abroad, and has received over a hundred prizes for his photographs. With the photographic series entitled The Little Prince, which is about a boy with muscular dystrophy, he accomplished extraordinary response from the general public worldwide. He is one of the pioneers of phototherapy in Slovenia and cofounder of the Institute for phototherapy. He carries out different phototherapy workshops and projects, both with children and adults.
Once, in one of our conversations, he expressed a wish to see himself in the photographs, walking, swimming, dancing and doing several other things he is unable to do in life. Somehow, I did not expect that. I tried to imagine whether this type of look could at all make him happy, or would it be the other way around – that he would be emotionally depressed about being faced with his problematic state again. I was also wondering whether such a wish does not actually mean that he is denying reality, which we psychotherapists know is not the most mature and constructive defence mechanism.

At first, I understood the wish that he expressed in our conversation as a psychotherapeutic challenge. Through our conversations, we slowly discovered what kind of meaning and sense these images would have for him. I got to know his rational and emotional concept of self-image, I strengthened adaptive mechanisms and directed the psychological processes of acceptance. When he once said to me completely calmly that the last photograph in the series should be taken so as to depict him next to his return to the wheel-chair, the last of my doubts were dispersed. And again, I found in my mind that the imaginative world and imagination do not necessarily mean you run from reality, but must be actually be understood and seized as part of one’s reality. If we know how to enter and exit them in a proper way, they can not only

The photographic series entitled The Little Prince, created in 2013, is based on a true story of a 12-year old boy named Luka. Luka is a child with special needs – soon after birth, the doctors diagnosed him with spinal muscular atrophy. That is a very rare genetic disorder, on average affecting one child in 6,000 births. The effects are very severe – due to gradual and inevitable decay of motoric nerve cells and muscle fibres, the muscles become paralysed, and the results are increasingly grave problems in movement, stabilisation of the trunk, swallowing and breathing. Because the disease is not linked to the working of the brain and does not directly affect intellectual development, a lot of these children have above average intelligence, general knowledge and social skills.

Luka attends primary school at the Centre for Education and Rehabilitation of Physically Handicapped Children and Adolescents in Kamnik, where I have been working for 16 years as a clinical psychologist. He is very successful in school and very popular with his class-mates as well as the staff. The signs of his illness have shown very early on, so he could never walk. Until today, his body has weakened so much that he can only do some movements and has but little strength. Already with the basic life activities, such as washing, dressing and feeding, and others, usually done self-evidently and by the way, he needs someone to help him all the time. The only thing, so to speak, that he is still physically capable of, are small, but very weak finger movements. With them, he manages the ‘joystick’ of an electric wheel-chair, presses the computer mouse and holds a pencil.

In spite of the physical handicap, Luka is an exceptionally creative boy. Ideas keep on boiling from his rich world of imagination, without acknowledging any limits. On paper, he draws different motives, on his computer, he designs logotypes, writes texts, records hip hop music, edits videos… He is acquainted with his disease and knows what it means for him and for his future, however, he does not talk about it a lot. From other people, he expects neither pity nor sympathy. He stays positive, witty, focused on the present and on what he can do in life. He knows how to get close to the activities that he is unable to experience due to his weak body, in one way or another. Sometimes even through virtual worlds, in which his creativity especially flourishes.
provide a possibility to clench our desires, but above all be an endless source of inspiration for our creativity and our self-realisation. Since I am not only a psychologist, but have among other things become a photographer, as well, I accepted Luka’s challenge. However, the task at hand was not an easy one. Namely, a conclusion offers itself self-evidently that it is impossible to take a photograph of something that does not exist, that is not real. I had thought about using computer editing and Photoshop, but I thought this was too cheap and artificial. I think such a way would not satisfy me or Luka. And it could not accomplish other goals, slowly starting to form in my head. I thought that a photographic series would, with a proper presentation, interest a wider circle of people. If Luka’s story could touch me so much, it could perhaps reach other people, as well.

I keep striving for the role and relationship towards the handicapped in society to change for the better at least slightly. I wish that people would know their needs better, so that they would refrain from judging them stereotypically, so that they would accept them equally and give them a chance to participate and contribute to society, as well. In short,
Actually, the change of perspective enabled me in the first place to start taking up photography. In spite of my wish, I was convinced for years that my handicap disables me in managing the photo camera. After persistent checking with different producers, it was clear that all models of photo cameras have a button on the right side, the side where my arm is missing. Just when I had almost set the thought of taking photographs aside, I remembered a simple trick: if I flip the photo camera upside down, the buttons from upside on the right will be on the left side, down, where I can easily reach them with my finger. The photos rotated by 180 degrees can then be flipped back with a simple computer click. And it actually did work – photography became one of the most important parts of my life.

I tried to think similarly about the planning of this photographic series. I wanted a simple and witty photographic tackle to touch the viewer emotionally, but not be pathetic at the same time. I thought about how to solve the problem for a long time, then thought of a solution. I took the camera, climbed a few metres above ground, then looked down. As so many times before, the change of perspective offered a solution to the problem at hand. I only had to think of an adequate that they would not be perceived as ‘special’, but instead as ‘normal’. Because I believe in the expressive power of visual images, I believe that a socially active photograph that can tell a thousand words and can be understood by the entire world can play a very important part.

My own life experience most probably contributed to this kind of social participation. When I was a 10-year old child, I played with a military bomb and had a bad accident. I lost my right arm, became blind on one eye and suffered other injuries. In any case, it was a very severe life experience. If I could choose, I would rather not have experienced it. But since, of course, I cannot make that happen, I can only say that I have managed to get out of it with a lot of positive conclusions. I have faced innumerable small and big problems ordinary people do not face, and have learned a lot in the process. Firstly, that I must not feel like a victim and mourn my fate. Secondly, that in solving problems, one must get a proper distance and change the perspective of looking at them. From another angle, excellent solutions sometimes offer themselves on their own. Such solutions are most often very simple, but on the other hand, this is what makes them very original. As if they were in front of our nose since forever, but we could not see them due to the limited reach of our gaze.
scenography and see to it, get the requisites and ask for a physiotherapist who helped set Luka in the proper positions for help. This series of eight photographs came about, and after a long reflection, I’ve decided to name it The Little Prince.

When Luka first saw the photographs, he was surprised and uttered a few excited exclamations. He viewed them meticulously several times and again and again, he commented on his image wittily, as well as on the depicted actions and several details. When the idea was realised in practice, I could see only pleasure in his eyes, without any regret for what we have done.

In a while, I mentioned to him the possibility of showing the photographic series to someone else, and he was immediately for it. I talked to his parents and presented to them what this type of presentation meant and what it can bring along. They agreed instantly, as well.

Already in a few days after I have posted them on my web site, up to then viewed around ten times a day only, something unimaginable happened. It was as if a mighty avalanche had fallen. The photographic content became viral and people started sharing it on the internet with no end to it. Numerous accomplished TV, print and internet
media wrote about it and reported on it. On the web portal BuzzFeed, these photographs were even placed on the list of 35 most touching photographs of all times. It was possible to read a ton of positive comments, the number of views increased daily and reached millions. Luka became a true star. He got interview requests from everywhere and got invited to many places in the world. Every day, a lot of e-mails of support and personal stories of different people got to him, describing their experience and expressing their feelings.

It was obvious that the story honestly touched many people. Perhaps because Luka’s story is depicted positively and wittily despite his difficult life circumstances. Perhaps it was because the photographs address us all so non-violently, that we think about different perspectives and true values in our own lives. That we realise we do not live in a single dimension, the dimension of banality, superficiality and materiality. And that we see how the shackles that bind us and do not let us breathe can only be overcome by our own activity and creativity. Every single one of us holds his or her own pen and paper, therefore he or she has all the possibilities to draw and create a balloon to lift him or her above the clouds.
My name is Nino. Due to cerebral paralysis, I have been in a wheel-chair since my early age. My muscles contract uncontrollably, so my movements are jerkily dis-coordinated and lack precision. Beside the fact that I am unable to walk, I cannot talk, so I use a computer to be able to communicate. With my head and foot, I press the switches built into my wheel-chair to regulate the functions of the programme. This type of communication is fairly limited and above all very slow – people rarely have enough time on their hands to be able to listen to me.

I underwent schooling at the CIRIUS Institute in Kamnik, a centre offering education and rehabilitation for people like me. I was successful in passing elementary school programmes, however, I do not believe I shall ever have a job or a profession. I live at home with my mother. My dad died two years ago.

I undertook photography four years ago. At the CIRIUS Institute, the staff helped to equip my wheel-chair with a photo camera and adapted it so that I can regulate the functions using a large switch,
which I can press with my right foot. I am very happy that I got the chance to take photographs. A whole other world opened up for me and my life got new meaning. Through photography, it is easier and quicker for me to transfer my thoughts and emotions. Taking photographs provides me with a feeling that there is at least something that I can do entirely by myself, without anybody's help. I think every disabled person should try it. Of course, it cannot always be done without trouble, however, life has taught me to put every possible effort into every single thing. Where there is will, nothing is too hard.

Mostly, I post my photographs on Facebook. I am glad when there are positive comments, but I am even happier when I am able to use this way to acquire new contacts and acquaintances. I also take part in photography competitions and have even gotten several awards. I am proud of the fact that this year, I presented my photographs publicly for the first time as part of an independent exhibition entitled Selfie. I have taken 20 shots of myself in diverse reflections revealing quite a lot about who I am. I think other people have realised this as well, since numerous individuals presented me with their sincere congratulations. Me and my achievements were even featured in the newspapers and on television.

When I had finally managed to arrange everything and squeeze all my obligations and other activities into a 24-hour working day, I suddenly collapsed like an avalanche of mud crashes into the profound abyss of depression. At first, I still mustered the strength to find a touchstone from time to time, until finally that stone rambled into the black mire along with me. Then came the episodes of treatment in Slovenian hospitals, therapeutic centres, group therapies, psychiatric treatments ... until I ended up in the most “infamous” institution of all, the Ljubljana–Polje psychiatric hospital. Given that I first could not even perceive my environment, I only later found out that these old-fashioned premises have to offer the best possible doctors, therapists and other staff. Thus, my physician sent me to several excellent types of therapy and finally, to a photographic workshop. And when I rediscovered my passion towards finding motives in my immediate environment through a photographic lens, I knew this was the best way to take me out of depression. I therefore hid behind the photo
camera, looking for balances, opposites, symbols and reflections of my own inner world. My mentor Jure was beside me all the time, encouraging me, counselling me, praising me and found beauty, uniqueness and unrepeatable character in every shot, however ‘ordinary’ it seemed. Thus, my health was improving each week, until I could finally walk out of the safe shelter of the Polje hospital and find my own, redefined path. Meanwhile, in line with Jure’s advice, I bought myself a Canon PS photo camera and continued to take a photograph a day, sending it to him. Thus, a photobook entitled MY 111 SHOTS came about and is still my favourite. Because I have admired sunsets, shadows, reflections etc., my next book bore the title PATH FOR LIGHT, and I have created around 40 such books to this day. I am also a passionate traveller, so quite a few photobooks are dedicated to travels, while my grand-daughters each their own photobook of memories from their respective childhood every year.

After Jure left the Polje hospital and started to hold photo-workshops, mentorships, trips and travels together with Izidor, I also attended his activities to perfect my skills, get to know new people, landscapes and above all photography. I have also purchased a more state-of-the-art DSLR photo camera, diverse objective lenses, a tripod ...

In view of my enthusiasm about photobooks, I applied for a course at the Krško-based People’s University, which held a course in designing photobooks. Wanting to learn new things, I attended the course, however, everyone there knew significantly less than myself. They quickly discovered I was able to teach them something, so it happened that at our first workshop, I told them all about quality photography and presented my own photobooks. They agreed that my most beautiful shots were the ones I took when I was in therapy. They wanted to learn this “technique”, as well. Of course, I told them it cannot be taught. One bears it inside, one gets it through curiosity, by way of relaxed approach and by occasionally looking at things in a different way.

Because I know that a camera can be an excellent therapist, I also bought one for my grand-daughter, who was three years old at the time. She enjoyed taking photographs, until her younger sister got her hands on the camera, dropped it to the floor and accidentally destroyed it. In agreement with their parents, I have decided to wait a year longer, so that the younger sister becomes more mature, until I buy them both a new one.
TRUE LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

Jakob Škantelj

My name is Jakob, I am 23 years of age. Since the car crash when I was only 16 months old, I am in a wheelchair, however, this has never stopped me from doing exactly what I wanted to do. In school, I played football and basketball with my schoolmates, whereas now, I am practising boccia and hockey. I am truly addicted to sports, so I attend most matches in person or at least see watch them on television. At the moment, I am still a student, however, I plan to graduate this year and get my BA. Even though I seem to be quite active as it is, I have recently enrolled in a photography course, as well. It gave me a lot of new knowledge, pleasure and above all special feelings. Those feelings gave rise to my thoughts described hereinafter.

“Love at first sight. Incredibly powerful and lasting emotions between two human beings. Sometimes even among three human beings, but let us not split hairs here. Inseparable, positive human beings sharing mutual emotions and overcoming any obstacles that life may place before them. A notion representing an ideal from cheesy Hollywood films. The romantic comedies from the country across the Atlantic are mostly based on the story of two protagonists who accidentally meet and instantly fall in love with each other. Afterwards, they are unable to think about anything else than each other, they keep overcoming obstacles, finally manage to overcome them and then live happily ever after. Of course, in the eyes of naive spectators, ‘contaminated’ by utopian desires, everything starts with love at first sight. Thus, looks seem to be everything and attraction seems to play the key part in love. Meeting the human being, getting to know his habits, good and bad sides, his principles, all this is suddenly completely irrelevant, even though five minutes before, it seemed the most important. Well, in spite of the movies, I still believe you can only love your best friend. Someone you know, whose good and bad sides you are aware of, but love that person in spite of the latter. In my opinion, love at first sight does not even exist. Of course I mean that only in case we understand this phrase literally. What follows, is namely something completely different. Something I have gotten to know better at the very beginning of this year. The feeling of nurturing love somewhere inside from long ago, of knowing it for a long time, but neglecting it instead of respecting it. There had been love, but it only lasted a night or a moment. I have not seen its beauty, until I enrolled in the course I started to attend in January. But once there, I saw it already during the first lecture and quite soon, it convinced me that that it was true. Love. And it was truly at first sight, for I have fallen in love at the sight of its might. It was not a person, even though we did have quite a few very nice girls in our class. I fell in love with the thing I came to look for on the premises of the Dystrophy Patients Association. I came to look for photography and fell in love with it. I did not fall for a single shot, of course. No, the partnership was polygamous, undoubtedly. Photograph after photograph, I felt myself being drawn to its embrace. Without any jealousy and ill intentions. Every photograph got as much of my time as it was demanding of me. A look sufficed, and I already felt warmth, true contentment and joy. A look sufficed, and love was within all of us in that space. Perhaps some might say I am over-reacting, but I can only answer by saying that person has not truly come to love photography. He or she has not gotten the right view of it. The view which makes you anticipate the following day, surely to be a good one. The anxiousness before every photograph, even though the former one did not come out completely right. The conviction that the next one will surely be excellent and will fill you with joy. In good or bad, but with the good definitely dominating the bad. Since the first time I lay my eyes on it. I am happy to re-state that it only takes a first sight. If the look is right,
The dancers were beginning their passage along the third side of the rectangle. The decorated hall was eyeing us sternly, because we have only dressed in jeans and loose T-shirts for such an important occasion. I leaned forward. My eye was resting behind a photo camera. Everything fell into perfect focus – in my mind and on the digital screen. Everything else had to wait for at least a moment.

An older gentleman who stood almost a meter away from me slowly dropped his photography case from his shoulder. A deep sigh followed, providing an assessment of human suffering on the scale from 1 to 10 and deciding for 11. Slowly, he bent his knee and kneeled down beside me. When he reached “my altitude”, he looked in my direction. “This looks a lot more comfortable!” he said and gestured towards my wheelchair. I had to smile. The commentary was perfectly to the point. “Yes, sometimes it does come in handy. And besides, no one is mad, because everyone can work ‘above me’…” Our focus returned to our cameras and the conversation was finished. The dancers were passing by and the cameras were “clicking” madly.
Those who know me in my three-dimensional, unprinted and slightly less profound version, know very well that I never leave the 10-km radio of the Kodeljevo neighbourhood without my photo camera. Photography has become my hobby and later my obsession. I shoot everything that draws my attention, and “look for a picture” in every single moment. My dear Nina, who does not like to stand before the camera, is slowly getting used to my constant terrorizing of my photographic subjects and testing new methods of photography. From the beginning, she prohibited me from taking pictures of her, then she became reserved at each shot, until she finally completely gave in and accepted her fate. She now knows I am beyond any help. She complains less, so we finish early and are both happy.

When I was going through my shots in my home country, on my home couch a few days later, choosing between almost 1.500 photographs, I recalled the words of the gentleman who surprised me days ago with his remark on my wheel-chair. Actually, his sentence really gave food to my thoughts. I had always thought that I have picked up photography because of my father, who had spent his childhood doing what I do now. That I have developed love towards two-dimensional paper, on which one easily captures the third dimension. That my own camera had been a safe place for me, because it had been hiding me from other people’s cameras. Perhaps I felt drawn to photography, because I had been looking for perfection, all too familiar to me from my first obsession, namely the career of an alpine skier. That perhaps in photography, I felt for the first time an area where fast feet are irrelevant. All that matters are a sharp eye and “brain strain”.

However, the remark on my wheel-chair finally managed to reveal to me the secret of my photographic obsessions. Photography was the only field where my movement disability was not an obstacle, but an advantage! I have been on a wheel-chair almost longer than I had been without it, and my brain has gotten used to the new situation. Not only has it adapted, but it has learned to see things differently, from a lower perspective! If other photographers wish to capture the perspective of my life, they must put in a significant effort. They must get on their knees, squat or sit down. And even then, they are at a disadvantage compared to me, for they are not familiar with my perspective. They do not live it every day for 8 or more hours. Week after week and year after year.

Perhaps, my dear readers, perhaps flaws do not even exist! Perhaps our seeming flaws are merely the advantages we have not (yet) taken advantage of.
One of the best decisions I've made in the past years was my first photo-trip to Tuscany. A step, which changed the way I view the world, because photography enchanted me. It became a way of living, thinking and perceiving. Even though I'm photographically well-equipped today, I would like to stress that to achieve such a life change, it doesn't matter what type of a camera you hold in your hand. What matters are a good eye and a 'joie de vivre'.

Writing about something you love doing shouldn’t be too difficult. By using simple words, I will try to describe what photography means to me and what I get from it. I'm most certainly not referring to material things, since the person who would be willing to pay a bag of gold for my “art” probably hasn’t even been born yet. I can only say that, when I overcame the fear of managing technical settings, new horizons were opened for me. And the camera in my hands turned from a toy to a paintbrush overnight. And this paintbrush enables me to capture and take home all the indescribable beauty of this world.

I view photography as a form of non-verbal communication. With the help of photography you can easily show someone where you were and many hobby photographers are more than satisfied with that. For me, the so-called postcard photography offers no more challenges; my drawers are filled with such photos from before. What is more, all the tourist sites' photos and descriptions can be found on the internet, in books and tourist guides. When I look at a photo now, it has to move my soul, just like it is moved when I listen to music or observe a good painting, sculpture or a wonderful building. These can either be the ruins of a castle, a church with its stained glass windows or the most modern architecture in the middle of a city. Nevertheless, it can be a sole blue violet bloom on a windowsill. What matters is the chemistry—the people who don’t feel it live in a pretty miserable world.

When I wander the world, laden with mountains of equipment, I get many strange looks. Even more so from friends, who have known me for a long time and know that a simple camera with three rolls of film used to be enough for a whole vacation. They keep convincing me there is no point in carrying around all the equipment, since I don’t see half of the things I pass. But it depends on who you ask. I believe I see more and in more detail when I have a camera in my hand. What is more, I see the world with different eyes.
PHOTOTHERAPY THROUGH THE EYES OF THE CHILDREN

Kris - What I like about phototherapy is that I can use different cameras, I enjoy taking pictures. I have learned many new things, my favourite motif is nature.

Ajla - I enjoy phototherapy lessons, because this is something that makes me happy. In the future I would like to make portraits of people, just like many other photographers, who I have learned a lot about, do.

Jaka – It was interesting, when we were taking pictures in winter, and a cat came and we all took pictures of it. I know the shutter button, the on and off button, I know how to look at photos. I look at the photos by pressing the arrow button.

Nuša - I like taking pictures of flowers and trees, because they are tall and have leaves that fall off in Autumn. I like taking pictures of my friends and with them. I take photos of my friend and she takes photos of me. Sometimes I make selfies as well.

Andrej - I have a lot of fun at phototherapy, I’m learning about new ways of taking photos.

Primož – I took photos of lines, the colour red. I found a red boat steering wheel and a red roof. We also played the Memory game, which we made ourselves. One half of the pair was a photo and the other half the picture I drew.

Vanja – I want to be a photographer, I want to take photos of everything in the world in many different countries. I realised I can take photos of different things: leaves, autumn, snow, cones, my leg, lines, clouds, potions, walls, trees...

Patrick – I like to take photos and that is why I attended photography lessons. I enjoy them because we always get nice photographs - very sharp ones. And I like to take photos of myself.

Have you ever thought about how lucky we are to be living in a country which lies at such a latitude and longitude that enable us to experience the changes in nature through all the four seasons? At this exact moment we can witness the explosion of colours, as the bare trees begin to turn green and wear blossoms of all possible colours. Add the hormones into the mix (it suffices if you listen to the birds chirping in the treetops above) and voilà - life becomes more beautiful with each passing moment! It seems appropriate to say that life is like a box of coloured pencils.

We live in a society in which the visual is slowly substituting the written word. Sometimes I get the feeling we are like a pack of hyenas, gloating over bloody footage of even bloodier events, veneration is turning into an unimportant feeling. All the media - the TV, newspapers and the world wide web - are full of images that are hard to stomach even if you are used to such imagery. The yellow journalism is growing in importance, because we never seem to have enough. Enough rich coated chocolate cakes on one side or the horrors on the other side. Bearing in mind that all this is happening in another part of the world, not reaching our homes... We are becoming numb, oblivious to others, self-sufficient...

But everything can be so simple! The words of a great dreamer and storyteller Hans C. Andersen can guide us: “Just living is not enough, said the butterfly. One must have sunshine, freedom, and a little flower!”

Let us leave behind all the troubles, worries and yellow journalism and go out, to nature, with a camera in hand and search for this flower! And the world around us will become more beautiful in an instant!
Matjaž - I like phototherapy because you can capture the beauty of nature, learn something new and because girls like it when we take pictures of them.

Matija – I enjoyed taking photos and watching a film, I liked it when they recorded us for the TV. We also played the Memory game and the game Positive and negative. My mum has a camera at home and she lends it to me, so I can take photos of the landscape, which you can see well from our home. By landscape I mean a hill, a house, and also some cars.

Žana – Photography is a book that a whole world can see. It contains photos taken by photographers who take photos of everything they see in the world. In a photo I can show funkiness, but also normality, either winter or autumn. It was nice when we took photos of a flag, leaves, elves, our legs, shadows. I have my own new camera, which I got for my birthday. I took photos of the Madagascar penguins, my brother Lukec, sister Ajda and ceiling with lights.

Larisa – I enjoy attending photography lessons, because Nuša and Evelina also go there. I take photos with Nuša and with Evelina as well. I take photos of both of them, too. I take photos of many interesting things, lines for example. I found lines in the playground and me and Nuša drew straight lines in the sand and then took pictures of them.

Evelina – I’ve learned how to hold a camera in my hand and how to take photos. I took some beautiful photos. It’s nice when you can take a picture of yourself. You turn the camera around and take a picture of yourself. I have fun when I take pictures. I also like it that Jure is with us and I can show him my photos. Then he tells me I took a good photo.

Niko – I liked it when I took a picture of the kindergarten, a spruce tree, friends. When I get a camera, first I have to put the string around my hand so that the camera doesn’t get broken if it falls on the ground. Then I press the big button and take pictures.

Daniel – I had a nice time when I was taking photos. If you take a photo from far away, it’s very small, if you take a photo very close, it’s big.

Matej - I like taking photos, because I enjoy it. By taking photos we prove that we can be on TV and we want the people to know that there are true photographers in Nova Gorica.

Jan - I like that we learn so much at phototherapy. We learn how to use a camera, how to take photos of others and we have fun.

Lana – At first I took photos and then I saw photos on the computer. I saw Jure, Mojca, myself, Tino and Neža. We took photos together, I took three. I enjoyed watching myself and my friends on TV.

Tino – I learned how to take pictures. If I hadn’t learned, I wouldn’t know how to do it. I took pictures of lines and many other things.

Anika – Taking pictures is a lot of fun, you can press buttons and get a picture that is not painted, but comes from the camera. I also like that I can take pictures together with my friends.

Neža – I enjoyed photography lessons, because we could take pictures, play Memory, I could take pictures of the kindergarten teacher- her eye. At phototherapy lessons I had friends and we took pictures together and had a good time.

Taj – A photograph is a picture you take with a camera. The pictures swim to the computer, get mixed, set and then we watch them. With a camera you can see better- from close up. With a photograph I can show what a nice picture I took.
Kris: *Flying* – I took this photo, because I liked the flying ducks in the air. I had to pay attention to the speed and precision in order to take a good photo. The photograph has a sad tone, because the sky in the background is dark.

Jan: *Sun shining into the dark pine trees* – The photograph presents the sun, which glows in the dark pine tree. I like that the sun was shining. To me, the sun is a symbol of joy. Another symbol of joy is the colour yellow.

Matjaž: *Duck love* – In spring, when ducks meet, the first glance is love. And I like this photo because it depicts love.

Matej: *Garfield miaow miaow* – I like this photograph because I think Garfield is very cute. He is a beautiful house cat. What I like most about him is his fur. And his eyes make him the most beautiful.
Andrej: Miracle – This photo represents a miracle because I took it at Christmas. I like the colours in this photo.

Ajla: What is essential is invisible to the eye, but visible to the heart – I created this photo for the competition entitled ‘What is essential is invisible to the eye, but visible to the heart’. I like that it represents love and friendship.