



# ActiveBase Art and Spectrum Painting: Technical Manifesto

  @ActiveBaseArt

## Painting Activated

I started to perceive what became the ActiveBase Art Spectrum at an early age, and from the beginning the goals of my practice and research in different arts was to understand the Spectrum better, with greater consciousness and a fuller insight. Each piece of my training, such as learning to play the violin, undertaking education in art, mathematics, kung fu, physics, and philosophy, all added essential elements to the final result. I did all of this because every piece of an ActiveBase Art painting contains the duality of both the created object and perception of the ActiveBase Art Spectrum which was utilised to make the artwork itself.

I "activated" (my terminology for the approach I take towards creating my paintings) my work to physicalise my perception of the Spectrum within the artwork itself; to use the more sensual and cognitive parts of the brain to portray information and my perception of the Spectrum onto the canvas.

I activated the canvas, its edges and the frame, the technique of using colours, the style and aesthetics. I also worked on several projects which were geared to particular levels of the Spectrum, developing from the lower, more personal levels, to more global perspectives as I increased my position in the Spectrum. I made the paintings bigger than a frame in order to give space to an observer to resonate their version of the Spectrum with energy sources from the universal archetype.

## Activating the Canvas

Through my violin and Kung Fu practice, I have developed a feeling for precise and delicate movements, shapes and depths. Perception of the Spectrum is like surfing, which should be fast with the intense feeling of the wave. In my perception, classic canvases, which are primed and stretched on bars, feel heavy and passive; I needed the opposite - a high level of absorption and the particular structure which would make the canvas itself an active participant of the process. I also tend to see, the completed painting lightweight to fulfil modern dynamic feeling of life.

I spent years experimenting with different canvases from European and Asian manufactures. Eventually, I found the right one from Syria and bought a stockpile.

The canvas has more similarities with untreated rice paper than with typical canvases. The liquid paints are able to penetrate the canvas and polymerize inside its capillary. Due to the high level of absorption, colours penetrate to the rear of the painting. I feel it the same as a unique pattern on samurai's blades or fingerprints.



**Figure 1: Escape. 2011. 60x80cm. Front view.**

## The Edges

It is as part of the holistic ActiveBase Art approach that I cut the pieces of canvas from the roll by myself. I sing the top and bottom edges and keep the sharp bordered edges of the sides of the roll. I do this to highlight all of my ActiveBase Arts paintings are smaller and individual parts of a larger unity.

I sing the top and bottom edges in waves, rolled with flared drops and signs of a fire to deliver the essential feeling of a natural process. I do everything in my own hands. Eventually, an ActiveBase Art appears between fire and water.



**Figure 2: Fotina. 2020. 805x305 cm. The beginning stage: burning edges.**

Each canvas is a recognizable organic creature: you are sure to identify each piece of ActiveBase Arts by looking at the back of the canvas. You can see the sequence how liquid colours went through the canvas forming a sort of vague reflection of the painting on the front side.



**Figure 3: Escape. 2011. 60x80cm. Back view with organic burned edges.**

## The Frame

By the initial vision of the Spectrum, ActiveBase paintings are designed to be windows in living reality and welcome an observer to participate three levels of the dialogue: between the painter and the subject; the painter and the viewer; the viewer and the subject. Ideally it should be an active process of diving into the collective subconsciousness and gaining information from it.

I always want to look at what is beyond the horizon. In my Physics practice in the neural network, I carried out studies in the way that the brain processes visual information of the specific points like sharp shapes and edges. Leading by both knowledge and perception, I decided to stretch ActiveBase Art painting on simple bars with their edges being left open and untucked, to represent the idea that perception is more significant than a frame, and that the empire of the mind could never be limited. With proper lighting, the canvas will shine from layers of colours inside at the centre, and gradually mute at the borders pushing an observer to explore their vision. All ActiveBase Arts comes unstretched, in rolls.

## The Technique

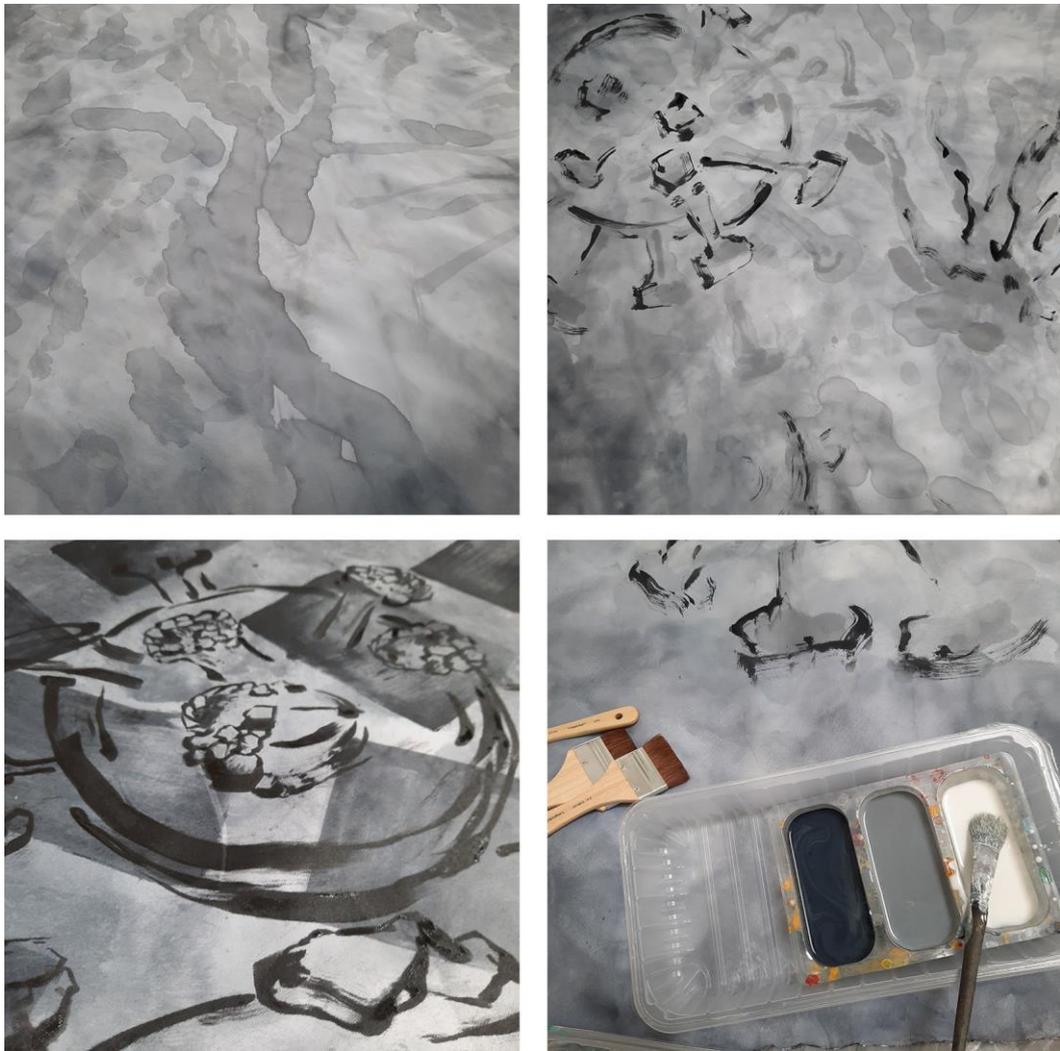
To keep the perception of the Spectrum, I need the feeling of movement inside the canvas, which should retain a high level of absorption through all of the stages of the painting's creation. As acrylics tend to block the capillaries of canvases, I have to control more parameters than in the case of more classic canvases. It is the consistency of the liquids, the heaviness of pigments, the sizes of their particles and the way that they are polymerized inside capillary of the canvas. During

the work, the canvas should not be overstretched in order to maintain its depth. This leads to many layers of thin colours laid on top of one another, gaining a higher intensity. Each layer changes the absorption of the canvas and make it irregular, which affects the image being created.



**Figure 4: Fotina. 2020. 805x305cm. Right part. From first layers of semi-transparent colours to the middle stage.**

There is almost no sketching on the canvas before the painting begins, instead the whole image is formed from transparent and semi-transparent layers. At the last stage, I make some elements with more thick paints to express the dynamics of the image.



**Figure 5: Fotina. 2020. 805x305cm. Left part. From first layers of semi-transparent colours to the middle stage.**

## The Style

My style originated from the perception of complex beauty in maths and physics, in polyphonic music, Chinese brushwork and landscapes, and kung fu practice. I studied these because each of them fulfilled some aspects of my perception of the Spectrum, which in turn became the reason for ActiveBase Art.

In painting, I started from black bone lines of fast brushwork and vibrant colours similar to electromagnetic fields visualization, vectors of force and motion in Physics. To develop my brushwork, I studied Chinese painting styles, Xieyi and Gong bi, including 18 types of contour lines, landscape as well as the philosophy which is behind these techniques. The Chinese doctrine of nature perception in painting led me towards the Genuine Profiles technique.

I feel a connection with the philosophy of constant growth and completeness in Chinese philosophy. For me these ideas perfectly represent the Spectrum, especially the call of the upper levels. It is the unity of many arts, including the traditional tea ceremony, martial arts, painting, poetry, calligraphy, and meditation. The movements of brush in calligraphy or painting and movements of the sword in King Fu are the same.



**Figure 6: Fotina. 2020. 805x305cm. Left part. The middle stage reveal early and the last bone brush strokes.**

In addition, in kung fu practice you can physically experience how the perfect application of consciousness and power can raise human possibilities to another levels. I studied and practiced the range of Chinese arts mentioned above, plus satin stitch embroidery, because of its divine beauty and the possibility to polish my spirit and train patience. I practiced several martial arts; the last and longest study was a Vietnamese version of Wing Chun Kung Fu lead by authentic teacher Vietnamese Patriarch Huynh Ngoc An. My studies included kung fu, Chi gung and some medical aspects of massage. In painting I especially enjoy Chinese landscapes, which is especially complex, multi-levelled and condensed, and is the happy marriage of Gongbi and Xieyi. The best examples of my favourite artists are Wang Ximeng and Tang Yin. I practice the tea ceremony on daily basis and plan to be back to my Guzheng and Flute study in future.

I can also highlight many strong influences in the Western tradition. The majority came from science-fiction books which I swallowed at once and then reread many times. I am still rereading them from time to time. My perception of what authors like Frank Herbert, David Zindell, Roger Zelazny, Dan Simmons, J.R.R. Tolkien described was so deep and breath-taking that it worked better on paper than if they were movies full of CGI. This is the reason I admire the incredible work of Peter Jackson, the director of "Lord of the Rings" and "Hobbit".

I can name several artists who nourished me the same way. I do love Leonardo da Vinci's works, because of his diverse interests beyond his actual environment and his burning thirst to know more. I do love M C Escher for his visualization of the beauty of multi-dimensional mathematical thinking in times when nobody could even imagine it. I am going through Escher's works as Alice in Wonderland, which actually was written by mathematician.

I met Anish Kapoor in Moscow and found how an artist's personality is shining through the ideas of works, and how he moved through his life experience. For me, he and Dashi Namdakov are excellent examples of the synthesis of East and West nourishing both and inspire me to continue my own attempts doing it. I spent hours browsing over their works, hearing the bells of the national culture I studied sounding through the solid forms.

My love of the sea is one of the pillars of my strength, and it was wonderful to know William Turner with his feeling of moving colours and power of human adventurous will. Ivan Aivasovsky is my another favourite artist who felt the sea as the water element so deeply.

Among the artists who made my mind deeply satisfied I can name David Hockney with his BBC film "David Hockney's Secret Knowledge". It shows the way that curiosity can drive to reveal secrets of the past without fear of touching idols, and how to make a collaboration between art and science. I wish him to continue this work, revealing truth beyond traditional views and stereotypes. I also do love the way of Grayson Perry works in BBC series "All in The Best Possible Taste". His careful researches exploring the reality of each class, participating it to feel in depth and transforming it to the piece of art for me looks similar to the ActiveBase Art process I call prizming. Prizming is the process to move between levels on the ActiveBase Art Spectrum. Here, it is seen in researches combined with deep perception of the subject which results into pieces of Art reflecting

their information. I admire Banksy for his intelligent and skillful influence on the environment, and for his principles.

Although you might not find those examples of the Western culture in lines and shapes of ActiveBase Art, but the power of minds and hearts of those artists is the flame which is driving me forward. I feel this energy and information coming from the upper levels of the Spectrum which I always take as the priority.

## Aesthetics

ActiveBase Arts represent visually enriched aesthetics of LCD screens with gradients of bright colours and sharp black lines. I use many shades of vibrant colours to deliver a feeling of the continuum, illuminating light, movement, power, and energy flow.



**Figure 7: She Taking Off. 2011. 60x80cm. Left part of the diptych 'Couples'.**

The painting runs from the centre out to the edges of the canvas and is mostly more detailed in the middle area. This is the opposite of focusing on one spot at the centre of the painting. Sometimes I keep the central part of the painting less detailed in order to encourage the observer to engage with the image and to even encounter themselves in the context of the painting. I do this because of the natural ability of the brain to detect peripheral areas while looking straight ahead and to understand the whole puzzle of the painting from one's own perception of the information. This is an effect which is used in various forms of meditation. You can also see it in the simplified faces of toys which allow a child to complete the image using their own creativity, and in education programs for similar reasons. This method was designed to initiate an active process of integration details from the side areas of the canvas, changed by human perception, into the central part which is associated with personal will. In terms of the art it provokes interaction a person with the painting.

## The Spectrum and Genuine Profiles

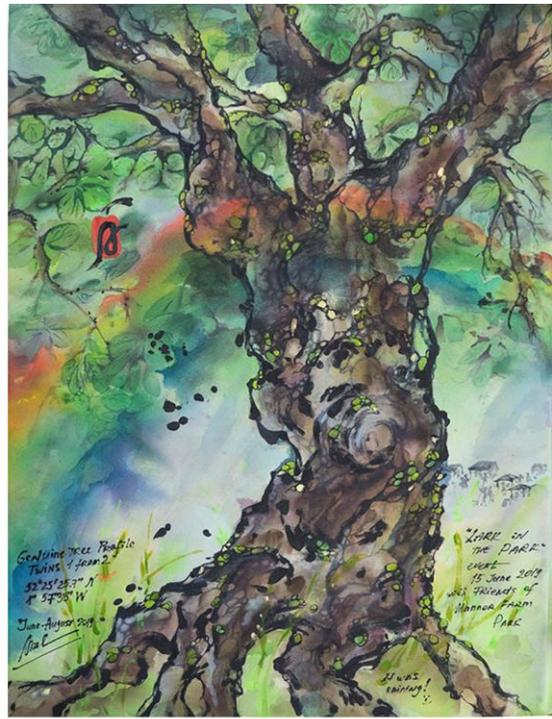
In the original Chinese approach, Xieyi, the artist should stay alone in a remote place and meditate to develop the perception of a particular object, such as bamboo, in its completeness. Ideally, the aim is to become a bamboo yourself, to experience what bamboo experiences. After this period of reflection and meditation, the artist can paint the bamboo as an essence, not simply as an object. I invented a Genuine Profiles approach as a way to use this idea of meditation on place in a more modern setting, to gain an in-depth perception of the nature of a place, and also some aspects of its development in time. The perception comes from my trained instinctive feeling (for natural objects) and my ability to absorb information around it (for artificial objects).

I choose the place because of this feeling. A tree or a rock means something important; it seems as if it became more focused from the background, and I feel a call to go to perceive it in depth. Most of the Genuine Rock Profiles belongs to the perception of the mountains. Mostly they are a bit distant.



**Figure 8: Exploring Corfu: The Beauty of Chaos. Certified Genuine Rock Profile N2-Corfu/2018. 60x80cm.  
Geographical location of the rock: 39°40'23.7"N 19°43'22.8"E.**

Most Genuine Tree Profiles are in more sociable places, so the ActiveBase Arts became more with the essence of human activities around (for example, when I participated in events). Genuine Profiles from buildings are based on my feeling of the importance of a place because it concentrates some essential meanings, whether general or personal.



**Figure 9: Manor Field Park. Genuine Tree Profile 1/2. 2019. 60x80cm. 52°25'25.7"N 1°57'33.4"W**

The standard approach to all types of Genuine Profiles is that they belong to a particular place, have their coordinates of origin and nothing similar will ever repeated in the studio. All of the black bone lines and the vision must be from the place.

Technically, to keep the 3D object's shape, I stretch wet parts of the canvas over selected forms and fix the relief with thicker acrylic strokes. I make them with care to prevent paints come through the cloth and damage the object. In this way, the canvas maintains a physical imprint of the physical object which is being represented in the artwork. It is minimum strokes to keep the vision of the place. I take photographs of the canvas at this stage of the process to attach them to the Certificates of Authenticity for the complete Genuine Profile. In the case of Genuine Rock Profiles, I mostly choose remote places and swim to the area with my equipment. I spend as much time in each place as I can be, while making the profile and after it, in order to keep the perception stable.

When I feel something more complicated, I make several Genuine Profiles at once. My perception recognizes different spots of about 1-2 m, so the canvases applied close to each other; I call these paintings Twins, for example when multiple canvases are taken from the same tree at once. In 2019 I extended the concept of Genuine Profiles to industrial places such as the example of my office balcony where I dream about the future development of ActiveBase Art. You can see the specific structure of the balcony repeated on each Genuine Profile in silver.



**Figure 10: First Year Flagship: Born from possibilities tide (Genuine Profile 1/4) and First Year Flagship: First waves (Genuine Profile 2/4). 2019. 60x80 cm. 52°28'31.0"N 1°53'01.1"W.**

The colouring stage I can proceed only in my studio due to the number of liquids which are used. Before and during painting, I keep the memory of the place of origin. I ensure that the canvas is stretched loosely to make sure that the relief is still part of the canvas and then apply paints in the technique of ActiveBase Arts. In the last two years, I write the description of the Genuine Profile, and it coordinates on the painting, close to my signature.

Every ActiveBase Art painting has my logo on it. The ActiveBase Art logo is attributed to the genuine Chinese style to add a special stamp of the artist, it is also the first letter of my name from my official signature and the first letter of Active. Black lines and red background of the logo represents the concept of first characters from classic Chinese book One Thousand Character Classic with meaning all between heaven and earth.

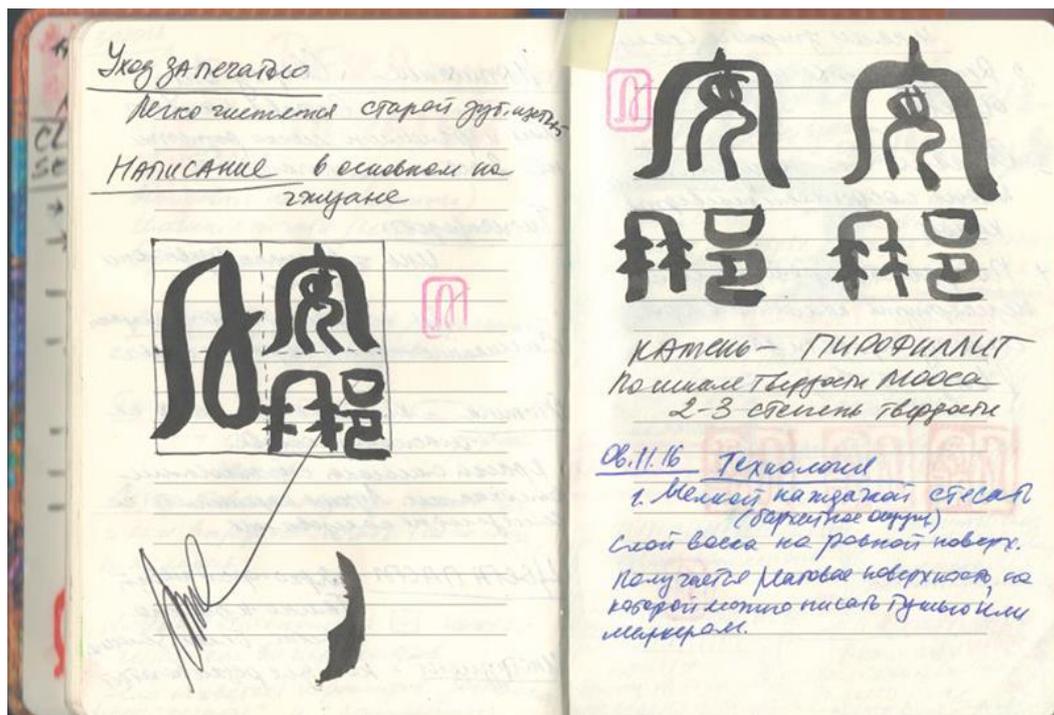
I designed the logo as easy as if it were already with me. I felt that the red stamp with black brush work was necessary at the corner of a painting to make it fell like it was moving beyond the frame. The first letter A in my signature, and the whole signature as well, is the dynamic movement higher and higher.



**Figure 11: One of my work books with my home-made stamp.**

My Kung fu Master observed my first signature and suggested to shorten it to be a one movement of sword, because Golden Sword is my birth sign in Feng Shui. I shortened the signature to just my

name and it worked perfectly as it is simple and has an analogy in many languages. For example, in Chinese it means double Calmness, and calmness is the beginning of everything constructive. It was very natural to put the first A inside a red rectangle and make my works complete.



**Figure 12: Trying to combine my logo with traditional Chinese zhuànshū seal script. A page from one of my workbooks written on Chinese stone stamp curving course. Was trying to curve a stone stamp by myself.**

Speaking about stamps, two of my friends in China made me a traditional stone stamp with my name in Chinese and "Dr. Anna" in English above it. They probably tried to make a bit fun, but I accepted the favour and use this stamp for my Gongbi works. All of this make me feel the link between my today actions, my heritage and the line of artists who influenced me.



**Figure 13: Tried to copy a famous ancient Chinese artwork by Chen Hongshou (1598-1652) during my Gongbi education. Was unable to resist of seduction to add something. Due to the fact it was not a copy anymore, I put my stamps over it. I don't stamp the proper copies made during my education.**

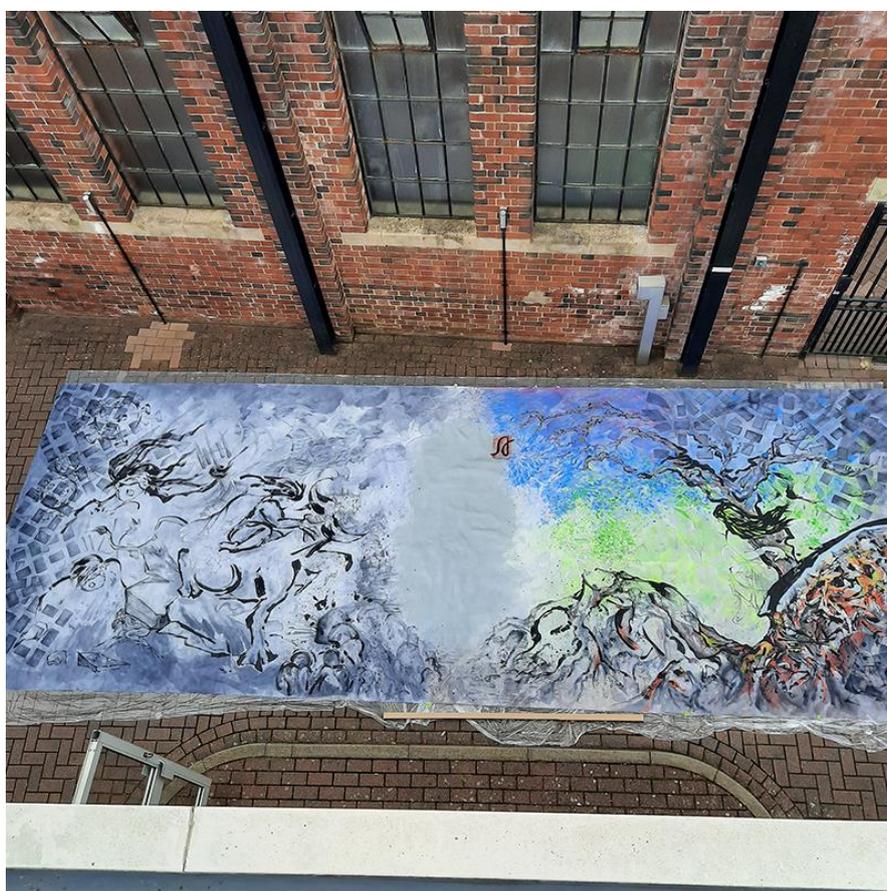
*P.S. My kind teacher didn't punish me to the sin, but probably the classic artist already made a complaint to my ancestors and I should be prepared to explain it when face them. I will tell that this is the fault of the cat, I just was not able to prevent the invasion.*

## The Road Ahead

I started to write this document to explain how my ActiveBase Art paintings are built and what they are. By answering my own questions about the details and thinking behind them, the document has gradually grown and grown. Attempting to explain my thoughts in English, I realized how important it is to learn about different perceptions of information, and how difficult this can sometimes be. The amazing thing is that, at the end when the puzzle that is this document came together, it became clear to me how closely everything is connected, and how important every small detail can be.

What I intend to do in art, and how I see ActiveBase Art, is a breathing continuum like water or air, with all of the different elements interacting. Even sensitivity to a space for work could make a difference. To this effect, I tend to follow paths which add something essential to this living environment and which nourish it with something new. I would like to provide the fresh example of it.

I am writing at the moment when *Fotina*, a painting I affectionately call "The Big Girl", has been completed and I am adding the last lines of varnish over it. This eight by three metre painting was created at home during my self isolation in lockdown, in June-July 2020. The most essential thing was it came alive from more close perception of the Spectrum. I painted it having a working area just 160cm in length, and the first time I saw her all at once was the day when I dragged the roll of canvas outside my building, unrolled it and climbed to the roof to photograph her.



**Figure 14: Fotina. 2020. 805x305cm. The first view from the roof. I do apologise to the quality of the photograph caused by attempts to stay in place instead of flying over the painting with my zero-gravity chair.**

That was when I realized that there was nothing to add or to change, that the information is clearly presented, and the place of observer is ready for people to fill. I got the feeling as if I reached the top of Everest, observing all around, silent and fulfilled. I hope it is the beginning of my next journey.

**Written by Anna Chudnovskaya, 2020**  
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