

Sarah Kathleen Page suffers from congenital anosmia. In other words, Sarah was born with an inability to perceive odours. Never experiencing the most basic and cherished scents of everyday life is a burden she has learned to cope with: "It is a sense that I have been longing to experience for my whole life; the scent of my early morning coffee, my grandad's garden flowers in summertime, the memories of fresh sea air from childhood holidays, but most importantly, the scent of people I love: my partner's skin, my grandma's distinctive perfume and my mother's comforting scent. Daily communication, intimacy and attraction are affected. I can see, hear and touch, but I can't experience life in full."

Affected from birth, Sarah only discovered a community of others with a similar condition when she found Fifth Sense. It was the first time she had heard of any kind of support to benefit sufferers of the condition. Fifth Sense is the first charity working in the area of smell and taste disorders, raising awareness of the importance of something most of us take for granted, our sense of smell. The organisation was founded in 2012 by Duncan Boak, who lost his sense of smell as the result of a head injury. Fifth Sense exists to provide support and advice to smell and taste disorder sufferers, to raise awareness of such conditions, and to play a leading role in educating society on the huge part that the sense of smell plays in our lives.

According to epidemiological studies, smell loss, or anosmia, affects around 5% of the population. It can be congenital or caused by a wide variety of problems such as traumatic head injury or sino-nasal diseases. A decline in our sense of smell can also be an early marker of serious neurological conditions such as dementia and Parkinson's disease. However, it is clear that many people who have lost their sense of smell continue for years without proper treatment, as many doctors are either unaware that treatment options exist or do not take the disorder seriously.

Anosmia has been shown to affect people emotionally and socially, as well as physiologically. A recent survey of Fifth Sense members revealed that 60% of respondents

feel isolated by their condition; 45% suffer from depression and 85% are afraid of being exposed to dangers such as rotten food or gas leaks. The emotional importance of the sense of smell was also highlighted, with 55% saying that their condition had affected their relationship with their partners, family or friends.

Though she lacks one of her five senses, Sarah relies on sight in her career as a photographer, editor and videographer, work she has discovered to be a vital means of communicating about her anosmia disorder. She quickly became a member of the Fifth Sense community, and through her involvement, she produced a series of portraits of people close to her (her mother, boyfriend, and grandparents) and a self-portrait. These images show Sarah at the centre of those who care for her, but each of their faces is pressed against a transparent barrier. Although Sarah is surrounded by love, she is disconnected by her anosmia from those closest to her.

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Fifth Sense aims to support and facilitate research into smell and taste disorders and their treatment to help combat these disorders.

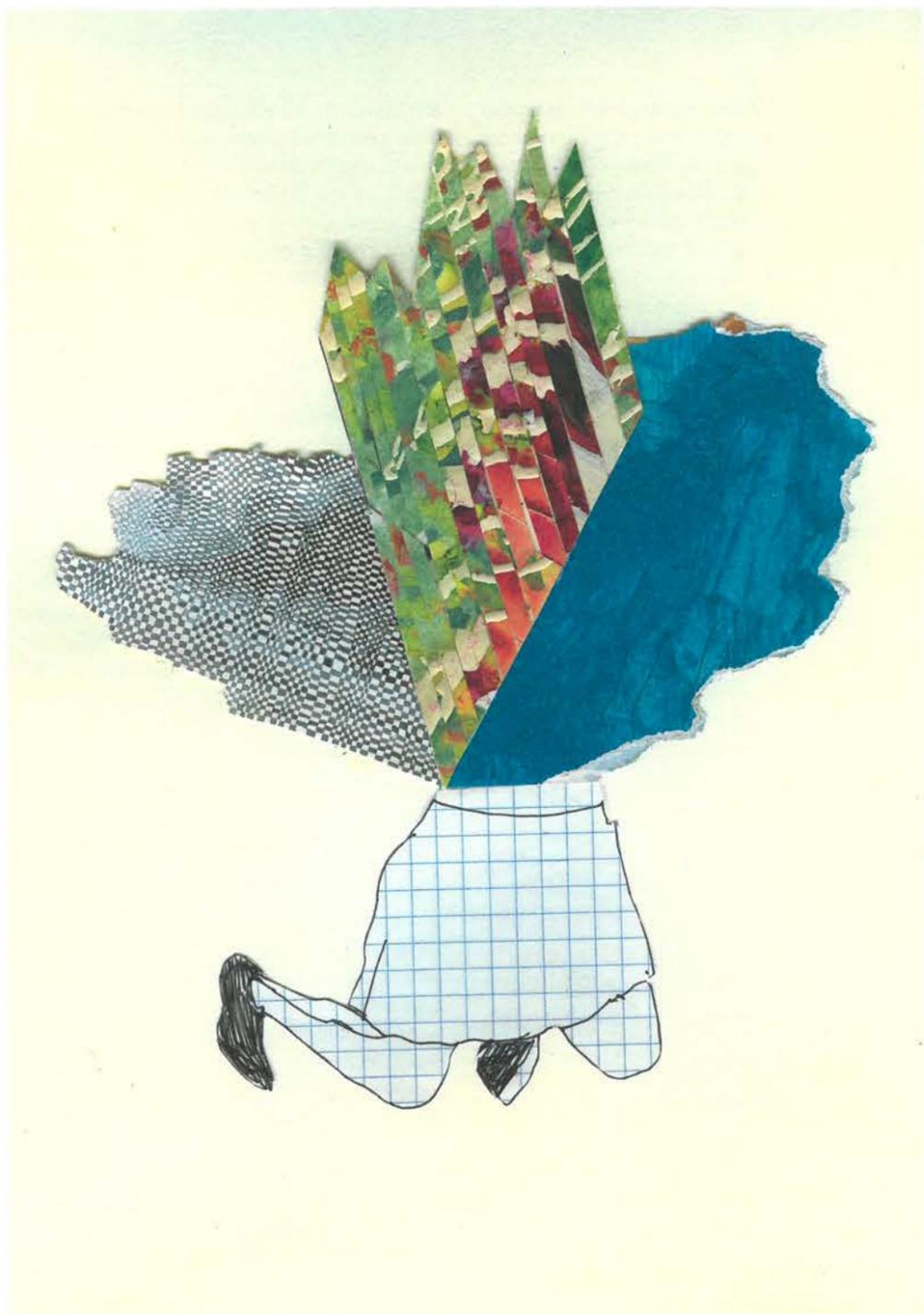
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Info@FifthSense.org.uk

THE SEMI-DIVINE

by
COOPER GAGE



Unknown Quantities commissioned New York-based artist Cooper Gage to create a series of artworks illustrating the balance between rationality and emotion.



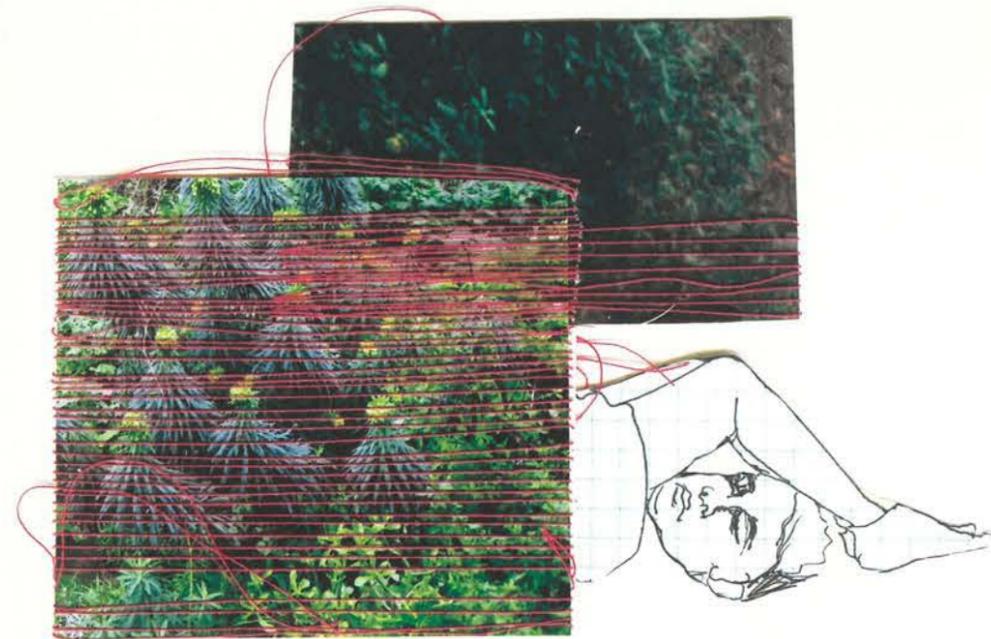
Cooper Cage. *How I wake up*. 2013.
Paper, Oil Paint, Watercolour, Acrylic



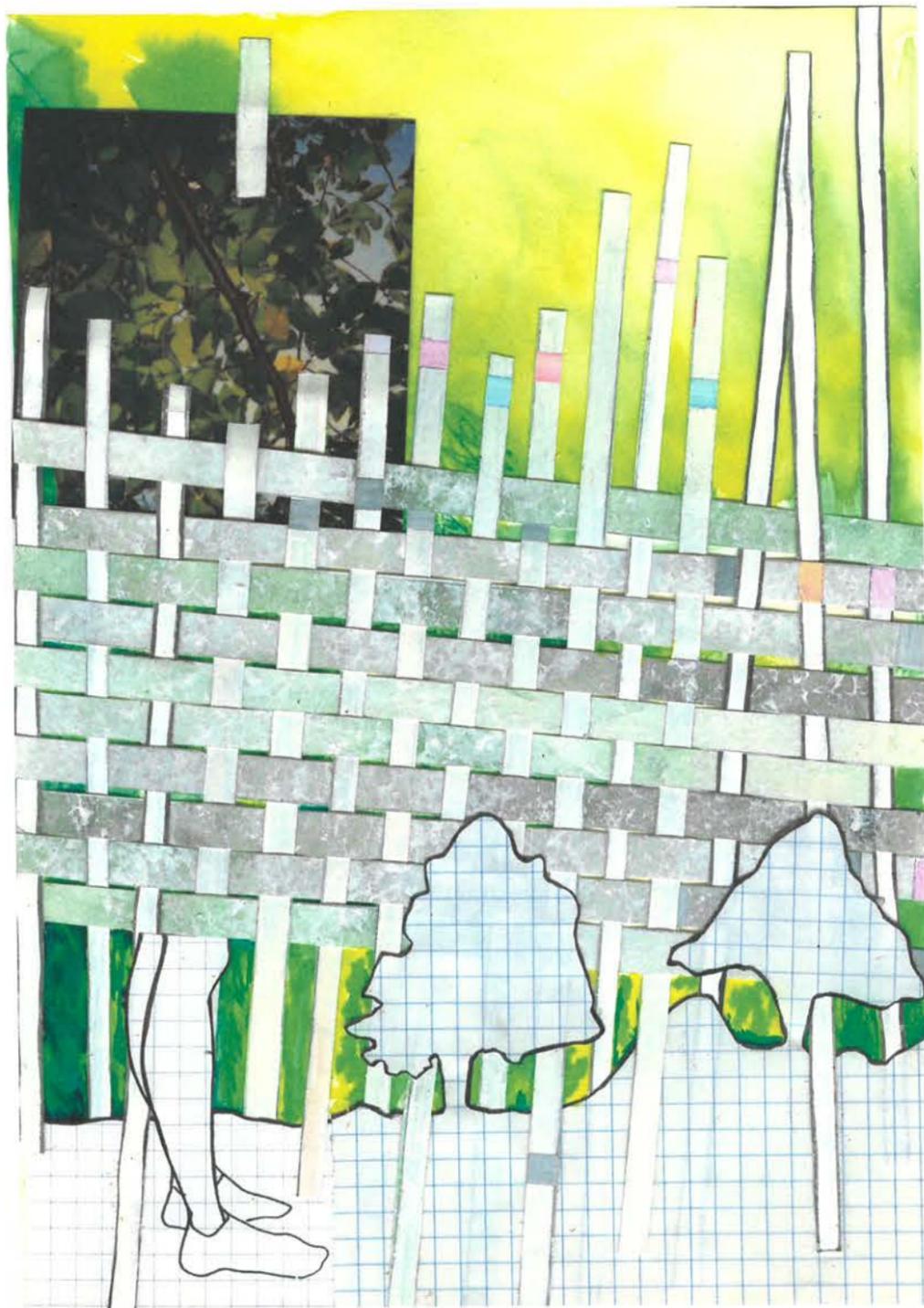
Cooper Cage. *Leaping and thinking*. 2013.
Paper, Watercolour, Photo Collage



Cooper CAGE, *How I think clearly*, 2013.
Watercolour, Paper



Cooper CAGE, *Magic box*, 2013.
Thread, Paper, Photo Collage, Watercolour



Cooper Gage, *Navigation*, 2013,
Watercolour, Paper, Photo Collage

I think of the ongoing conversations and scenes in my head as mythical adventures, mythical adventures that are a fantastic reflection of my life in the world. Some of these better combinations of thought and feeling are like my own band of semi-divine creatures. If every moment is a step toward something, these are the ones hanging around my shoulders. They express reactions I think and feel but cannot say or act out in everyday life.

Cooper Gage