CROSSING-Interview with Stefan Blom
Illustrator and Clinical psychologist and Author, Cape Town

What comes to mind when you hear the expression "Crossing the Threshold"?

It speaks of crossing the space of awareness, of consciousness. In my work it would be about connection of yourself, connection of/with others, connection of your work and so for me it's a moment where you... where your senses come together and you see things. It's about seeing really. It's a moment when you see each other. For me that's human connection or when you see a work with intuition or clarity or when you see yourself... when you get a moment of awareness.

Do you share the opinion, that many people today are insecure due to strong cultural and social changes in the world?

I think fear comes probably from a place of not feeling safe, not feeling secure either in yourself or in your environment, in your relationships, I think that creates a lot of fear. We all have fears that comes from our past which is about rejection, abandonment not being chosen, being pushed aside. I think that creates, (the experience of) not being good enough, (it) is I think for me some very common universal fears.
So I think fear is a loss of perspective. I think it is constructed. You know if you experience stuff that you find fearful than you work through, you will realize you will always work through fear; that we maybe get some energy from anxiety created by fear and that could be sometimes even useful or it's part of life. That you can't live a life without it, because life always will bring you fear ... and it's not always by your own choice, you can either create something, you can create the fear or the fear can come to you.

What kind of relation exist between your inner human structure and the so-called "Digital World"?

I think if I was 25 we could probably have a different conversation… I would have a different answer to this question, I suspect because, I speak to young people about their relationship with technology and the digital world. In my experience, my work is about encouraging people to get away from their phones and their televisions and computers to spend less (time there and), to enhance their possibility of human connection. I don't think the digital world is a tool designed for human connection but I don't think it is actually getting us the experience of human connection. I think in fact it creates more separateness. I definitely think it is also addictive because you don't really get the satisfaction you are looking for and so you spend more and more time on it. It becomes a new habit. I think if you spend time away from technology you come back to

yourself and people close to you. I find a lot of couples I see in therapy are trying to get away from technology. I am inviting them to put their cell phone down to not take it to their bedrooms. Because technology and intimacy does not go very well together. I think we would like to believe it does and but I think we spend hours and hours searching for something that's not satisfying. I don't think human connection, human intimacy we can really get through the digital world. I don't think so. Like I can go to Instagram and see that my best friend is in Spain and I am feel like I am part of their holiday, so I feel connected.

So it's really an Illusion.

But I am just paging through their photo album, if I phone her and I speak to her in Spain, she is crying on the phone because she is lonely and she is struggling and she just has been divorced and she has a very different experience. So I find the pictures of our life are not the experience of our life. The digital world is a lot about what you would like to show and we become picture magicians. We are very good creating very good pictures and it's easy to create beautiful pictures. In this experience there is a huge discrepancy and I think we think we know the people because of the pictures and we do not.

Can a creative art practice help to create methods for a healthy and positive life?

The now... when you are in the now... that is a practice that I like, that I think is very valuable. It takes me away from the voices in my head into the present. I think as a process even if you call this a creative process I think this process could be valuable in many other contexts. It's about for example sitting in a dinner with your family and feeling present.