



Life with Endometriosis – an art photo project raising awareness of endometriosis

Margaret Kalms

Independent artist living in Canberra Australia.

Abstract:

Margaret Kalms' major art photography project 'Life with Endometriosis' depicts the impacts of living with endometriosis.

Margaret's images make endometriosis visible.

Endometriosis can have serious health impacts on women's lives, but it is not well known. Most symptoms are hidden and there is still reluctance to take women's menstrual pain and symptoms seriously. It can be difficult communicating to family, friends and work colleagues. Art images make it much easier to discuss intimate problems.

Margaret's photos are artistic and allegorical, but also shocking and confronting; they represent the personal truth and experiences of people living with endometriosis, as they are the only people who truly know what endometriosis feels like.

For several years, Margaret photographed 17 women with endometriosis. She chose not to use paid commercial models because she wanted the authenticity of the lived human experience.

The participants in 'Life with Endometriosis' felt heard and validated because Margaret spent time listening to their concerns. She collaborated on which ideas or symptoms would be imaged and the woman chose her pose to reflect how she felt during an endometriosis episode. Each image is inspired by what the women said to Margaret and is accompanied by a quote from her.

Although 'Life with Endometriosis' is not intended to be art therapy, many participants felt that having their experiences and feelings imaged was healing for them.

"Healing takes place when people re-visit life experiences and play them out in new ways"²

Margaret has published a collection of her photos in an A5 book. Sufferers can use the book to communicate and



to educate people around them. There are many different ways that endometriosis impacts on life. Margaret has included 17 women in her book, each showing a different symptom or life experience.

Biography

Margaret Kalms studied photography at Canberra Institute of Technology, Australia, gaining CertIV in photography. Margaret loves exploring new techniques, especially Photoshop editing, to express her innermost thoughts and feelings. Her photoart has been used in articles, posts, function presentations and regularly published in "Artists Down Under" magazine, <https://artistsdownunder.com.au/magazine-issues/>.

Margaret explores general art themes by participating in group exhibitions with Marsden Art Group, Belconnen Artist's Network and Belconnen Arts Centre in Canberra, Australia and international online exhibitions (between 5-10 times a year). These are usually themed and challenge Margaret to stretch her skills and explore diverse art subjects.

Publication of speakers:

1. Saun McNiff, Art Heals, Shambhala Publications Inc, 2004, ISBN 978-1-59030-166-1, page 236 ebook version.
2. Saun McNiff, Art Heals, Shambhala Publications Inc, 2004, ISBN 978-1-59030-166-1, page 269 ebook version

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