



## **COLOURFUL PERSPECTIVES OF HOSPITAL LIFE**

**Rebecca Verrall**

### **Oil Paintings of Nelly**

Rebecca Verrall was born in Surrey, England in 1988 and moved to Co. Wexford at the age of six with her family. She completed her art portfolio course in Waterford College of Further Education in 2009 and is currently studying in the Hungarian University of Fine Art in exchange with Crawford College of Art and Design in Cork, where she has been a student for the past three years.

***In 2006, while studying for my Leaving Cert, I became very ill. I was diagnosed with Crohn's disease and have since spent many weeks in AMNCH under the care of Dr. Breslin and Mr. Neary, both of which I wish to acknowledge and thank. I am very grateful for this experience in my life as it has caused me to grow into who I currently am. While being an inpatient you meet many colourful characters and from them you learn a little more about life. Every experience in life (if you allow it) creates a new measuring stick, so with every flare up, every cut of the blade, every new mutation and disappointing result my handling of life changes. At the end of last year I had a colostomy reversed, which has given me great joy and excitement in life.***

***The works I present to you are oil paintings of Nelly, a soft toy I have had since birth. She has always been there to comfort me in low times. I have one particular memory when in 2006 lying in the hospital bed being surrounded by my doctor and his interns, surgeon and his interns and a nurse, knowing it was not good news, I held her up to my face so she could face the music. By painting her not only do I honour her for what she has given me, but I offer her to you, in hope you feel some level of love and comfort in her presence.***



**For more information on any artwork in this exhibition please contact: Hilary Moss or Esther Nyambura, National Centre for Arts and Health, Tallaght Hospital, Dublin 24 Tel: 01 414 2076 Email: [hilary.moss@amnch.ie](mailto:hilary.moss@amnch.ie). or [esther.nyambura@amnch.ie](mailto:esther.nyambura@amnch.ie).**

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## **COLOURFUL PERSPECTIVES OF HOSPITAL LIFE**

### **Artwork by patients in the Renal Dialysis Unit**

One of the main aims of the weekly art sessions in the Renal Dialysis unit is to provide an enjoyable creative experience and an opportunity to develop a new skill for patients while undergoing their dialysis treatment. They also offer a distraction and help relieve some of the long hours spent in the Unit. Generally, dialysis takes between three and four hours, three days a week.

Despite being faced with this chronic condition and the treatment and challenges it brings, the positive attitude and camaraderie displayed by many of the dialysis patients is inspiring and there is a strong sense of community and caring that exudes amongst the staff and patients in the unit.

For this exhibition, dialysis patients wished to look at colourful ways that would reflect their experiences while undergoing dialysis treatment. Some focused on the vista that surrounds them in the dialysis unit, picking particular objects and paraphernalia used during dialysis and depicting them with a colourful articulation. Others looked at the dietary and fluid restrictions associated with dialysis, highlighting the absence of some much loved food from the diet, and also emphasizing the importance of the specific allowed fluid measure. A collage of favourite drinking cups and mugs was also included.

One patient wished to represent some of the more positive aspects of passing time while on dialysis, such as, knitting for a first grandchild, while others painted their dreams of that special place they wish to be other than attached to a machine.

Another patient, through his drawing, wished to bring the audience inside that enclave that is the dialysis unit with all its hustle and bustle, high technology, calm and quiet.

#### The patients whose art work appears here are:

Fiona Kilduff

Lily Esmonde

Robert Howard

Ann Rountree

John Molloy

Sean O Dalaigh

Anthony Molloy

John Holland

Bernard Broderick

Justin Jordan

Bridie Roy

Simon Malley

This work was facilitated by Lucia Barnes, Artist in Residence



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## **COLOURFUL PERSPECTIVES OF HOSPITAL LIFE**

### **Lucia Barnes - Portraits of Pain no 1, 2007**

Lucia Barnes is a visual artist based in Dublin, whose art practice centres around Arts and Health. She has a background in nursing and completed a B.A. and M.F.A. at the National College of Art & Design. Her work explores themes surrounding aspects of human physiology, perceptions of pain, food analysis, and abstract concepts of cellular growth.

Lucia works in mixed media, but predominantly in video and photography. She has collaborated with diverse groups of patients, carers and healthcare professionals in numerous arts and health related projects. She has exhibited widely in Ireland, in group and solo exhibitions, and received a number of commissions, residencies and awards. She has held different artists residencies, most recently, with the Irish Prisons Education Service. She is currently artist in residence at the Renal Dialysis Unit of Tallaght Hospital.

This photographic print formed part of a series of works from The Portraits of Pain Project, 2007, sponsored by The National College of Art & Design and Pfisher. Over a period of months, six artists collaborated with six patients suffering from Chronic Neuropathic Pain, to create a series of artworks. This work which incorporated painting, drawing, photography, video and performance, was exhibited at Filmbase Temple Bar, Dublin at the culmination of the project.

As well as giving an insight into this particular type of pain, one of the aims of the project was to visually articulate this pain so that a series of images could be created. Selected images were intended to be used, as a flash card system, to help patients describe the degree of pain they were suffering, to their medical practitioners.

Over a 3 month period Lucia worked with Sandra and this image was created using her MRI scan and digital manipulation.



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## **COLOURFUL PERSPECTIVES OF HOSPITAL LIFE**

**Lucia Barnes**

**CARE, 2005**

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*'Everyone needs privacy to heal'. This work considers what role private space plays in hospital. There is a curiosity there.*

*This image shows a scene I witnessed while visiting a relative in hospital. At a later stage, with permission, I staged a reconstruction and created this image.*

*CARE was exhibited at The Ballina Arts Centre in 2009 and Royal Hibernian Academy Annual Exhibition in 2008.*



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## **COLOURFUL PERSPECTIVES OF HOSPITAL LIFE**

### **Julie Cahill - The Instability of Hope**

Julie Cahill is a 28 year old Irish based photographer. She graduated with an honours degree in photographic art from the University of Wales, Newport in 2008. She primarily works within the area of art and health care.

For Julie's degree project she worked on the emotional experience of undergoing a bone marrow transplant that she underwent in January 2005. Julie found the positive psychological effect of photographing this particular work profound and now takes a very personal approach to her work. This project, titled 'The Instability of Hope' is based around the idea of hope, a lake of hope of past, present and future events in her life. In these two images presented, titled 'Waiting' and 'Memories', Julie focuses on the life that she had to leave behind for the prospect of a future, and the wait for the future that she never expected.

Having experienced both the patient and artist perspective, Julie deeply understands the positive effect that art can have on a patient's recovery process. By sharing her fears she hopes to break down some of the barriers of art in health care settings and to articulate what so many others have endured in silence. It is Julie's belief that healing the physical self is by no means the only part of achieving full health and more attention should be paid to the psychological welfare of patients.

In these images Cahill looks at her own desperate desire to believe in hope - a hope that she has clung to through-out her transplant and her life. By using self portraiture within the images she is portraying her sense of loss and struggle to find hope even when all hope seems to have left her. She is never fully in focus within the images themselves, displaying her own uncertainty of the future. Cahill is representing her own fears through her own body and the stillness she lives in through her surroundings.

*How does one hope when all hope seems lost? Do we all just stumble through life and hope that it all works out the way we want or is hope a naive and desperate belief, owing to the fact that we are all in essence lost?*

*This project, through the medium of photography, will look at the human spirit. How do we come to breaking point, through desperate situations, and yet still put faith in hope?*