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Academe
Education/Research

Life at NYULMC
People, Places & Things

Shared Goals
Shaping our future

Sharing a Cancer Journey through Art

11/10/11 - Life at NYULMC



Nicki Muller, right, with her physician, Dr. Linda Granowetter, director of the Hassenfeld Children's Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders, at the opening reception of the exhibition. [See more photos from the reception>>](#)

the ephemeral facets of human life. Often working rapidly to create imagery, I focus on the ideals of impulse and improvisation. Upon completion of my work, I analyze the psychological ties realized in a variety of ways by alternate viewers. This variation in interpretation is exactly what I find most interesting about creating works of art: the viewer's response to visuals created by another mind. Where do the thoughts amongst the two minds connect? Where do they disconnect? This is my exploration of the human experience.

"There are strong connections between the work I have produced in the past year and the situation in which I now find myself. My work has become about the connections between my first battle with bone cancer at age 13 and my current battle with brain cancer at age 20. I have assembled this collection of work to unfold a telling time in my life.

"Prior to my diagnosis of brain cancer in April 2011, I was creating artwork with strong, psychological references. My work involves issues of sickness, reality, psychology and the lines drawn amongst happenstance and truth. I began my research on the brain in November 2010, when conjuring up ideas for an art piece. A psychological, cerebral exploration would begin in the winter of 2010 and continue into 2011. Unknown at the time, I would soon acquire brain scans of my own.

"*Rorschach Constants (Weeks Before)* was created the two weeks prior to the discovery of my stage 4, brain tumor. I felt the urge to create in particular ways and at the time could not pinpoint reason for these impulses. All of my work drawing connections to my diagnosis was completed prior to diagnosis.

"I began creating psychological work and work dealing with the brain in fall of 2010. I was diagnosed with a high-grade glioma in April of 2011. Perhaps it was the past subconscious impulses to create that led me to predict my current illness through art.

"This journey from *Bone to Brain*, medically and artistically, has been one of the most revealing times in my life and in my work."

The newest on-campus art exhibition is a powerful collection of pieces by Nicki Muller, a 20-year-old woman who first battled bone cancer at age 13 and is now battling brain cancer. Her exhibition, "Bone to Brain: 90.13.20," will be on display in the MSB Gallery near Smilow through the month of November. Nicki is currently a student at Parsons The New School for Design, is a working artist, and a patient at NYU Langone Medical Center's Cancer Institute. The exhibition opened last week with an artist's reception.

Artist Statement

"Interested in the lines between human conscious and subconscious thought, I rely heavily on my instincts to produce works of art. By tapping into the various states of being, experience and perception, I aim to capture

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Archive

Life at NYULMC
People, Places & Things

- November (2011)
- October (2011)
- September (2011)
- August (2011)
- July (2011)
- June (2011)
- May (2011)
- April (2011)
- March (2011)
- February (2011)
- January (2011)
- December (2010)
- November (2010)
- October (2010)
- September (2010)
- August (2010)
- July (2010)
- June (2010)
- May (2010)
- April (2010)
- March (2010)



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