

Period Piece

Margaret Kalms has used her education in photography and applied sciences in a number of areas, including as a Geographic Information Systems Officer making computer based maps; she has photographed public art for the ACT Government's arts data base, and people enjoying ACT parks for its *Get Out There brochure*. She has also worked as a baby photographer in hospitals around Canberra and Queanbeyan.

Kalms has shown in many group exhibitions over the past few years. Most of her work is informed by issues confronting women, including body image and health issues. She has a website where she shares her work and thoughts, providing information and commentary aiming to give women a positive image of their bodies. Special concerns are menstruation and helping women to know more about their bodies and sexuality. *Period Piece* is her first solo exhibition.

Blood is used by artists to shock and disturb. Performance artists use blood in work centred on violent ritual, including self-mutilation. Visual artists use the force and colour of blood to draw the eye to tragic or murderous events. A group of American women make art from their own blood and share the results and their thoughts on the web.

There is no plan to shock or disturb in Margaret Kalms' work. The images in *Period Piece* are a quietly reflective, somewhat wry and considered essay on the many aspects of menstruation, in particular the pain and indignity experienced by women. The motivating force for Kalms' work is her humanist and religious principles. As she says on her website:

Because I am a Christian, I am motivated by the conviction that we are "Fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14) created by God in a beautiful and intricate way. When God made each part of creation he said "It was good" (Genesis chapters 1 & 2).

Kalms refers to her models as naked, but because they are clothed with meaning they are far removed from our usual understanding of nudity. As she says:

The subtle eroticism and sexuality are used to express what being a woman means and feels like, with a focus on what menstruation means and feels like in emotional and philosophically symbolic terms.

PhotoAccess is very pleased to show Margaret Kalms' *Period Piece* in the HUW DAVIES GALLERY at the Manuka Arts Centre.

David Chalker

Supported by the ACT and Commonwealth Governments

Margaret Kalms



Roundabout



Dance of Life



Artist statement

Margaret Kalms' photographs explore an intimate part of what it is to be a woman. These images are a statement of respect for women's bodies, not a response to men's fantasies. The subtle eroticism and sexuality are used to express what being a woman means and feels like, with a focus on what menstruation means and feels like in emotional and philosophically symbolic terms.

Many of the women in *Period Piece* are naked. These women represent all women. Clothing is a product of a particular culture and time in history. Nude bodies reduce the distracting issues of a particular time or culture and are therefore timeless. Margaret uses black and white to show the women as any woman, without race or colour.

In many cultures and in the past women have been taught to feel shame about their bleeding. There are many rituals and exclusions that frame the menstruating woman as dirty, polluting and someone to avoid. Margaret's photographs challenge these prejudices and tabos and express a deep respect for women's bodies. Her images can be confronting, dramatic and surprising, but they are also beautiful and designed to enhance women's perception of themselves.

Secrecy and lack of knowledge can have health implications for vulnerable women. It is hard for some women to candidly discuss their menstrual problems, even with doctors. This body of work helps to open that dialogue. To support women's health Margaret will donate 10 per cent of sales from this show towards endometriosis research.

This exhibition compliments and expands upon the work published on her website www.artofwoman.com.au



Womb



Waves

Education

Bachelor of Applied Science, University of Canberra (2002); Certificate II in Electronic Publishing, Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) (1997); Certificate in Photography, CIT (1990)

Selected exhibitions

Solo exhibitions

2010 *Period Piece*, HUW DAVIES GALLERY, PhotoAccess, Manuka Arts Centre, Canberra, ACT

Group exhibitions

2010 *Access all areas 2010*, HUW DAVIES GALLERY, PhotoAccess, Manuka Arts Centre, Canberra, ACT; *Shed Nudes*, and *Abstract and Contemporary*, The Artists Shed, Queanbeyan, NSW; *A Show of Hands*, BeAN (Belconnen Artist's Network), Belconnen Community Centre, Belconnen, ACT

2009 *Hang it yourself 2009*, HUW DAVIES GALLERY, PhotoAccess; *PlanEx10*, Plan art and craft show, Weston Creek Community Centre, Weston Creek, ACT; *Naked Flames*, Escape ArtFest, Hibiscus Gallery, Burrill Lake, NSW; *Exotic*, BeAN, The Church Gallery, Gold Creek, ACT; *Hope*, Karinya House Art Show, Belconnen Community Centre, Belconnen, ACT

2008 *Heavenly Bodies*, Escape ArtFest, Hibiscus Gallery, Burrill Lake, NSW; *Plan 8th Art and Craft Show*, Weston Creek Community Centre, Weston Creek, ACT

2007 *Body Language* at Escape ArtFest, Hibiscus Gallery, Burrill Lake, NSW; *Calendar Girls*, a Women's Centre for Health Matters travelling exhibition Tuggeranong Arts Centre, ACT Legislative Assembly, The Sheeps Back Gallery, Yass, NSW, Collector Gallery, Collector, NSW

2006 *Polychromatica*, M16 Gallery, Canberra; *Plan 7th Art and Craft Show*, Weston Creek Community Centre; *Living in Canberra*, Senior Citizens' Centre, Turner, ACT



Burning Pain



Curled in Pain



Balancing Act



Seat of Desire



Sipping Bloody Mary



Veiled

List of works

All images are 420 x 275 mm or 275 x 420
inkjet prints on Canson Archival Rag; artists
proofs from an edition of 25; \$310 each
(print only)

- 1 ***Gagged***
- 2 ***Dance of Life***
- 3 ***Veiled***
- 4 ***Womb***
- 5 ***Seat of Desire***
- 6 ***Rose-bud Buttocks***
- 7 ***Balancing Act***
- 8 ***Waves***
- 9 ***Sipping Bloody Mary***
- 10 ***Bloody Mary***
- 11 ***Burning Pain***
- 12 ***Curled in Pain***
- 13 ***Endometriosis***
- 14 ***Roundabout***



Bloody Mary



Gagged



Endometriosis



Rose-bud Buttocks