



Bringing in the Light: See Me

A photo-documentary aimed at confronting and reducing discrimination against people living with mental issues, encouraging respect, and building social inclusion.

This project is associated with two tax-exempt supporters of socially responsible documentary photography that makes a difference.

In Canada <http://www.onttheground.ca>

In the U.S. <http://www.blueearth.org/projects/current.cfm?projectID=33>

We are visual people committed to right ideas, and idealists with realist perspectives and practical experience. Our photographers produce projects that result in widespread publication in all medias, and presentations and exhibitions at schools, universities, libraries, galleries, conferences, and other public venues.

Project Background:

Robert Semeniuk is a veteran photojournalist. Much of his career has been devoted to *War Affected Children*, *The Global Landmine Crisis*, and *Environmental and Aboriginal Cultural integrity*. His current long-term project is entitled: "*Personalizing the World Health Crisis*."

By living and forming intimate friendships with people living with diseases, this project aims to humanize the global health crisis by personalizing and putting faces on overwhelming statistics. The completed project legs include: "*The San: Aids and Dislocation in the Kalahari, Botswana*," "*Trachoma in Ethiopia*," and "*Malaria and Human Rights on the Thai/Burma Border*."

<http://www.robertsemeniuk.com/reportage.html?gallery=12>

<http://www.robertsemeniuk.com/reportage.html?gallery=13>

<http://www.robertsemeniuk.com/reportage.html?gallery=14>

Robert Semeniuk Bio:

www.robertsemeniuk.com/bio.pdf

Seattle Times cover story on Semeniuk's world health work.

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/pacificnw08122007/2003825596_pacificpsemeniuk12.html

Project Description

“Bringing in the Light: See Me” is a photo-documentary that focuses on what so called “mental illness” really means, as seen through the eyes of people living with mental health problems, and not defined by them. Problems that have historically been demonized, and that are as pervasive as they are hidden and deepened by shame, guilt, fear, discrimination, bad beliefs and language, stereotyping, and superstition, - all of which cripple possibilities for prevention, intervention, and healing.

The images will graphically separate the person from the problem. We don't call people with cancer “Cancerous.” Mental problems, like cancer, have many causes and contributing factors, aside from treatment after the fact, that can be embraced without fear, judgment, or rejection, and where identification, prevention and reduction of risk are critical to improving the quality of life.

Life is stressful, and we are all in the same soup. This project aims to personalize and help normalize mental health problems as part of our shared humanity. The images and stories will speak to individual journeys, triumphs and trials, precious connections to community, family, and friends, and the belief that recovery is always possible. Broken minds are hard to heal without help, courage, love, compassion, and hope.

The process will invite and engage participants to penetrate and dispel past common misperceptions and stereotypes through endearing respect, and inclusion. Telling your story is healing and the act of photographing is empowering because it is about discovering, choosing, new insights and ways of seeing, looking, and paying attention, to the world and ourselves, inside and out. Good photographs help us see ourselves.

The writer Simone de Beauvoir said: "It is in the genuine conditions of our lives that we must find our strength and our reasons for living." “There is no room in recovery for pride. Acknowledging illness is not the same as being dispirited; it's more about allowing for soul. In our own campaign for real beauty, as we learn to accept our limitations with grace, it follows naturally that we begin to heal. Those around us also begin to heal, and to learn. Authenticity emerges, we see the good reasons we live, and stigma dissipates.” (By Claire Carle, Globe and Mail July/08)

The Field Work will span 18 months. Cameras and continual workshops will be given to a group of individuals interested in “photography as storytelling,” and inspired to visually tell their stories about living with mental problems. In a past project Semeniuk gave cameras and workshops to “street kids” associated with Vancouver’s Needle Exchange.

This project will produce a traveling photo-documentary exhibition of 75-100 profoundly moving prints, and a state-of-the-art multi-media DVD presentation of personal and passionate stories.

We are seeking support, financial and otherwise, for this project in including letters of endorsement, identifying venues, and maximizing the projects intention. We welcome suggestions and questions about the details of this project, On the Ground, or Blue Earth Alliance.

Thank you for having a look.

Sincerely

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world health project details at:

<http://www.blueearth.org/projects/current.cfm?projectID=33>
www.ontheground.ca/worldhealth.html
www.robertsemeniuk.com/worldhealth.html

Emergency on Burma/Thai border (human rights & malaria)

http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/democracy_power/politics_protest/burma_malaria?1