

FREE THEME - Dominique Wildermann

NOBODY KNOWS

(started in 2017 – ongoing project)

« In France, the psychological troubles are the first cause of incapacity and of long-term unemployment. They damage the persons' quality of life with important economic and social repercussions : precariousness, exclusion, risky behaviors, addictions ... » (from « la Semaine d'Information sur la Santé Mentale » march 2017)

These disorders are invisible and often people either hide them or don't even know that they are suffering from these troubles.

For years, almost everyday I saw a woman in her sixties when she was walking her dog. I never saw her doing anything else. She intrigued me with her incredible clothes, and little by little we sympathized. It took her more than 5 years to invite me for a coffee at HER home. As I entered I understood that she had waited all this time to be sure to trust me. She lives alone in a place she calls her « little paradise » and that she hides from the rest of the world. She goes further in the confidences.

What I initially took for a stylish eccentricity turned out to be much more than that :

at the age of 25, Fred is diagnosed maniac-depressive, with psychotic and schizophrenic episodes. She has never been able to keep any longterm job, and has been recognized officially invalde fo 30 years now.. Because of her disorders Fred is not capable to throw anything away. She piles up everything. She has no sense of time or organisation : she is unable to accomplish tasks along the day. Often the psychotic people have a strange sense of reality and do not feel the consistency of their body: they put a lot of make up to recreate a skin and put layers of bright clothes. During the depressive episodes they do not have any courage anymore to get out of their house, or to take care of their home. Fred can remain several days in the same room always sitting on her bed/sofa. The fact of having to take out her dog allows her not to be totally cut from the rest of world.

This selection of 10 photographs is an extract of an ongoing project that started in April 2017.

The selection alternates between 5 pictures taken in her hidden home and 5 pictures of her public appearances when she walks her dog.

The whole corpus of work is completed by Fred's texts/poems, her drawings of herself and the voice messages she left on my answering machine. The project is followed by a psychiatric nurse who explained and helped me to name the different symptoms Fred was going through while I was taking pictures of her*

With this series of photographs I want to pay tribute to Fred's will to empower herself and her courage to show to the world a reality that is still a taboo often kept secret. what so many people keep secret !

*

01. Lack of interest in the world

« It's my little cocoon. I can stay in here for days » (Fred's living room=dining room=bedroom)

02. Social withdrawal

« I was on the phone with my son, there is progress : he didn't hang up on me !!! »

03. Suicidal

« It would be so much easier if I didn't exist anymore. I thought about it so many times »

04. Paranoïa

« I am sure that someone enters into my home and moves my stuff around. I always loose things »

05. Euphoria

« I had a missed call from that 28-year-old guy !! I am sure he is the man of my life ! »

06. Insomnia

« I am totally shifted. I stayed up all night and slept all afternoon until 6 P.M. Let's have breakfast ! »

07. Megalomania

« I would be the best as a fashion model. Look, I strike a pose for you ! »

08. Disorganized speech

"I'm a free spirit, open mind for roads and galaxies to invent my own life"

09. Avolition (incurie)

« I bought a tea cup for you, it's easier than washing the dishes. »

10. Feeling of persecution

« I swear I am gonna call the police ! I can feel it that my neighbour wants to kill me ! »

11. Memory loss

« I don't remember when my brother died. Anyway, I forget so many things since then. »

12. Diogenes syndrome (syndrome de Diogène)

« Of course I keep everything ! »

13. Depressive disorder

« My mother never understood my psychic troubles : she couldn't handle my depressive phases and threw me out of her house when I was young. Now she is 83 and we still don't talk to each other. »

14. Hallucinations

« Look look ! here they are the moving shadows ! »