



## ARTIST STATEMENT

JENNY NICHOLLS

It has only been in the last year or so that I have dared to call myself an artist or write artist on forms where I am asked my occupation - yet I always have been and always will be an artist at heart. My kindergarten report reads "Jennifer shows an outstanding talent for drawing and painting".

Although my talent was recognised at an early age my own extreme lack of confidence, anxiety and perfectionism held me back. I felt I would never be good enough. I wasn't afraid of failure, I was afraid of success.

When I was at school I was discouraged from pursuing art as a career as it was not seen as a worthwhile or useful occupation. Later, having a young family also gave me a practical excuse not to paint.

About eight years ago I was diagnosed with Depression, Anxiety and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) which has helped me understand why my thinking gets so distorted and irrational. Although it hasn't stopped my skewed thinking at least I can now fight it and try to push through the emotional and psychological barriers. The support and understanding of family and friends has also been invaluable.

I was diagnosed with lymphoma about fifteen years ago. Since then I have intermittent doses of chemo when needed and it seems to be keeping it under control. This was actually the motivation I needed: it made me realise putting off painting until tomorrow was a bad idea. What if tomorrow never came? And, so I began art classes. Partly to learn but mostly because having to turn up and spend allocated time painting forced me to produce something.

I realised I loved painting pictures that portrayed emotion. I also like to use art to explain the unexplainable.

For example, mental illness is not as obvious as seeing someone with a broken arm in a sling: if I can show it in picture form, I hope to bring greater understanding.

I still struggle with allowing time to paint but at least now, I can sign myself as: Jenny Nicholls - Artist

*Jenny Nicholls - Artist, September 26, 2011*

## END THE CYCLE

FRANCIS KENNEDY

My name is Francis Kennedy. I'm from this village. I did my school here in primary, then for my secondary level I went to Dom Bosco school, from there I did my training centre studies. But in form 2, I started feeling the problem beginning. I couldn't really concentrate and after that, during my three or four years I started to get sick. I didn't really have good concentration for my studies and during my Form 6, I think it was too big - I didn't complete my studies that year - so I finished at the school. Then I came back here at home, and I didn't complete my studies.

I really can't explain - I don't really know what the problem is but it is something to do with my brain. And that has affected me with my education and I really can't concentrate, even if I read I really don't understand so it's really affecting me, it's something that comes from my brain.

I still have treatment from the Doctors. They told me not to concentrate much - too much thinking about many things - that makes your mind not good with too much thinking. They still give me the treatment and I still continue with the treatment for now. When the treatment is finished then I will go have a check up.

My aim for when I completed my school was that I wanted to work for the church as a Priest. I still want to be a Priest - I'm still interested but because of this disability of mine I have no hope for becoming a Priest.

My parents and my people still support me though with this problem, they send me to the hospital and they still feel good towards me. Many people didn't know about my problem and they still don't see the problem. Only my family know about the problem.

My normal day is to just stay with my family and do what my family want to do, I will just go and help them. Doing particular work in the family like brushing gardens in the bush and doing the work like that. My family earn an income from the copra and selling at the market. I work a lot with the copra.

I know that it's my right to be married or to go to school, but it all depends on my problem the sickness that I have. I will see if it is okay then I'm going to get married, it all depends on the sickness that I have.

