

Photo diary debuts at Ryerson

Former Kodak Lecture Series speaker returns to Ryerson with award-winning exhibit exploring testimonials of AIDS and Tuberculosis sufferers.

Josh Wingrove

Associate News Editor

Ryerson will play host this month to an award-winning photo series exploring the stories of Tuberculosis and AIDS sufferers.

Photographer Linda Troeller's TB-AIDS Diary series features 19 pieces composed with collages of models, original Polaroids and written work of people suffering from Tuberculosis and AIDS.

Image Arts chair Don Snyder said the award-winning series would demonstrate the versatility of collage to Ryerson students. It's a positive thing when a university can host such a well-regarded series, he said.

"I knew about Linda Troeller. I knew who she was. I'd seen her book. It took about a nano-second to say 'yes, we want to do this,'" Snyder said.

Troeller, a New York-based photographer, produced the series in reaction to a personal diary of her mother, who suffered from Tuberculosis in the 1930s. The TB-AIDS Diary series expanded to include AIDS sufferers at the urging of Troeller's friend, author Eric Markus. The final product embraced the relationship between the two diseases, as three quarters of AIDS sufferers today contract Tuberculosis, Troeller said.

The series has been translated into 14 languages and exhibited around the world, winning Troeller a Woman of Achievement award from New Jersey's Rutgers University.

Jean Mason, a professor of communications at Ryerson, came across Troeller's work while studying the narratives of Tuberculosis sufferers. The two arranged to meet in New York, where Mason read Troeller's mother's diary — cover to cover.

"I just thought that we should try and bring this (exhibit) in Canada, and why not Ryerson?" Mason said.



Photo courtesy: Linda Troeller

Entitled "Infected With," this image is one of 19 images in photographer Linda Troeller's TB-AIDS Diary, on display at Ryerson beginning Nov. 7.

"(The pieces) are just so much more powerful in the flesh, so to speak," she added.

Troeller will be at Ryerson Tuesday, Nov. 7, to launch the series. Ryerson will then host a five-member "Realities and Representations" multi-disciplinary panel discussion on Thursday, Nov.

"They are just so much more powerful in the flesh, so to speak,"

**— Jean Mason,
Ryerson professor**

9. Speakers will include a nurse, doctor, photographer, filmmaker and an organizer of last summer's World AIDS conference, each exploring perceptions of disease and suffering and its expression in art.

Snyder said Troeller's career — ar-

tistically creative and experimental while remaining financially solvent — is an example that many Ryerson students hoping to pursue the creative arts could learn from.

"She's a good model for the students here who think, 'well, how am I going to make this work?'" Snyder said.

Troeller said her business model is simple: pick artistic projects that have a market and stick with them. She pitched her TB-AIDS Diary to health editors to raise awareness, and continues to lecture across the country — she was in Nebraska last week, New York this week, Toronto and California next.

"You have to have an art product that people have a demand for, a need for... It was in that situation that I learned how to fund being a living, working artist," Troeller said.

Troeller had previously visited Ryerson in 1999 as a guest of the Kodak Lecture Series, where she discussed her book *Erotic Lives of Women*.

The exhibit runs in IMA 307 until Nov. 17.