

# TED MEYER



**What inspires you curatorial? artistically? (Other artists, poetry literature, places, feelings etc.)**

I like all forms of visual art. I am always impressed by people's creativity and even more so by work that I would not have conceived of, or that I might not be technically able to reproduce. When it comes to curation I seem to have found my niche in work by patient-artists. I love this work because of the story telling aspect. People going through the worst of life yet still finding beauty. I love to give these people and their stories wall space. Most galleries don't want to show work about cancer or Parkinson's because it isn't commercial. I am able to exhibit this very important work to people who can enjoy it and learn from it.

**Has your curatorial focus always been work by patient-artists, if not briefly explain your journey?**

My curatorial process has been on art/medical cross over for the last 20 years. When I was younger, I was sick and did work about my illness. In my early 40's, new treatments were developed and my symptoms went away and with it my desire to do work about my illness. It seemed like a good time to switch it up and help other patient-artists get some exposure for their work. I developed programs at UCLA and now at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, where I am the Artist-in-Residence, to exhibit patient art and incorporate it into the core curriculum. This in turn lead to TED Talks, a speaking career, helping other medical schools bring humanities into



their classrooms and shows around the world of both my artwork and shows I have curated.

### **Please briefly explain your curatorial process? And artistically?**



At USC I tie my curation to the body systems being studied at the time. We do five shows a year. If we are in the middle of neurology I will exhibit an artist with MS or Parkinson's. If we are in the middle of the respiratory system I might show an artist with Cystic Fibrosis. I also run a lecture series where I pair each artist with a medical specialist. The artists talk about their medical care while the doctor talks about the art and what they can pick up about the patient-artist's day-to-day experience with illness.

People from all over the world contact me in hopes of showing their work at the gallery. I never know what I'll see each morning when I check my email.

### **How has your relationship with your body shape your practice?**

I have sort of a comfort around people with illness. Having spent a good portion of my childhood in the hospital I know what these artists have been through so I can really understand their visual storytelling.

### **What do you want medical professionals to come away with after viewing your curatorial projects? The general public?**

I want medical workers to understand that patients are more than their lab results. I want everyone to look at this exhibit and contemplate the work. Every piece in this show had its seed in pain and illness yet is all beautiful and powerful work that would never have happened had the artist been typically healthy. They might have been making art but it would not be this art. I think we are all better off because of this work.

**What do you think the role of the artist/patient is in our modern world?**

Patient-artists are story tellers in the same manor that Steinbeck and Kerouac are. No one is surprised when they writing about pain and suffering in the world yet people are not so eager to see the same emotions on display on their wall. That is what patient art is for. To talk about the human condition.



Images:

1. Structural Abnormalities 2.3
2. Structural Abnormalities 2.2
3. Structural Abnormalities
6. Portrait of Ted Meyer

Images Courtesy of the Artist

<http://www.tedmeyer.com/artandmed.html>

<https://www.torranceartmuseum.com/art-and-med>