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# N e i g h b o u r s o f FOREST HILL

Lindsi Hollend  
*and* The Power of  
Perspective



capturing movement and colour, 'Dancer' by Lindsai Hollend

# Lindsai Hollend and The Power of Perspective

By Mollie Wilkins

It's amazing what a shift in focus can do. A change of perspective. A different way of looking at things. When you make that shift, a light bulb goes off; it's an 'Aha' moment, and it's a new beginning. A new journey. This is what happened to Lindsai Hollend when she took her first photograph.

Up until five years ago, Lindsai was silently struggling. She looked perfectly fine on the outside but on the inside things were falling apart. An untreated trauma at the age of 17 coupled with a series of concussions had a serious impact on her mental health. "I was having trouble coping with very insignificant parts of my life – being frustrated with myself and everyone around me, and blaming everyone. It was a really bad place to be," she says. The turning point came when a friend found her in the middle of a panic attack at school pick up. "I couldn't move, couldn't breathe," she remembers. Her friend referred her to the postpartum clinic at Mt Sinai and even though she was five years postpartum she still went...and was diagnosed right away. It was a relief. "I never thought that medication would be for me," she says. "I would never have thought to say that I had depression, even though I was always feeling irritable, and overwhelmed. I didn't understand that there was another way to be. I was functioning – just not happily."

Six weeks after starting the medication, Lindsai took a photograph of what she called a 'dandelion wishy' and everything opened up. "I was literally seeing things that I'd never ever seen before," she says, "and I suspect a lot of people don't see them – the lights on the leaves, the reflections in the puddles. I can't not see them." And so she began capturing them through a camera's lens and that was a way to heal. "My art has been my toolbox," she states. "It's given me this freedom to express myself."



Lindsai Hollend

Photo by Justine Apple



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Prior to going on medication, Lindsy is quick to admit that nothing worked. She tried everything: EFT, Reiki, vitamin supplements, therapy and a million self-help books. “I was trying so hard to find something to release that brain fog. The medication just kind of jump-started that process. So now I do all the same things but now it works. It connects.”

Unfortunately people don’t understand enough about mental health and depression. It’s not as simple as just taking medication – it’s not a free ticket to wellness. “I still need to do the work,” she says. “I still see a therapist. I still have a lot of days where I’m struggling. But now it’s manageable, because I’ve got so many tools in my toolbox to use.”

Lindsy grew up in Forest Hill and lives in a lovely home with her husband, Michael, her two children, Zoe (12) and Ted (10) and their dog, Casey (14). Her parents live around the corner and her grandmother lives three streets over. In fact you could say that Lindsy’s kids are fifth generation Forest Hill residents! “I have an amazing family,” she beams. “And I am so grateful.” In keeping with that gratefulness, Lindsy makes a point to help others as much as possible. She does a lot of volunteering and has worked with many different organizations including Ve’ahavta (she and her daughter spent a night delivering food to the homeless) and Meals on Wheels. Before she became a full-time artist, she worked in women’s shelters, where she facilitated workshops on discovering one’s self-esteem, by recognizing their personal skills and values. “It’s hugely important to me to give back,” she states.

Lindsy’s art is another way she tries to connect with people. As she puts it, “If I can make someone feel good, that’s one more person that felt positive about one more thing in the world. The more people that are feeling positive about their life, about themselves, about the world – that’s what’s going to change it.” Her work is not about controversy and it’s not about making a statement. It’s easy and accessible – evocative not provocative. She loves experimenting with lights, water, reflections and movement – zooming and panning with different exposures and shutter speeds. Her work finds a perspective of something that is otherwise ordinary, and makes it extraordinary. “There’s just something inside of me that needs to create,” she says. Lindsy’s work can be seen at the Artist Project in February 2019 for the third year in a row, and she was a part of the Toronto Art Fair this past summer. But most of her work comes from word of mouth. She loves consulting with her customers in their home, to find them the perfect piece.

So what’s next? Where does she see herself in five years? “I would like to expand my portfolio and my audience,” Lindsy says. “I love being in people’s homes but the reality is that most people spend so



Lindsy at the Toronto Art Project

Photo by Ian McIntosh

much of their days in their office so I’d love to help brighten that space too.” She is thankful to continue to have the chance to nurture her talents and hopes to continue doing the same thing – capturing and creating. “I believe in the fact that we can tell ourselves any story. It doesn’t matter where you’re from, what your situation is. Your thoughts control your life and the only person who can control your thoughts is you. And it’s hard. It starts with appreciating little things. I remind myself every day that everything’s ok. Every day is a journey.” And it’s all about perspective.

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