

## **Where the Red Flowers Bloom Statement (Statement still in progress)**

Where the Red Flowers Bloom was created out of a desperate need for reconnection to bodily autonomy and selfhood. The images take the viewer in close to an acute experience of unmanageable endometriosis pain and provide an unflinching look at the life disrupting nature of the disease. Self portraits and documentation of the ways pain and symptoms manifest narrate a personal experience of chronic illness beyond a description of a diagnosis.

I experienced a health crisis in 2019 following a medical treatment that I took under misguided medical advice after being diagnosed with endometriosis via laparoscopy. During and following that crisis, I rediscovered self portraiture as a way to cope with multiple hospitalizations and surgeries over the course of a year. As I photographed myself through the emotional distance a camera can provide, I slowly began to come out of a several year long period of dissociation from my body.

When I first began Where the Red Flowers Bloom, I turned to other artists making work about chronic illness. Georgie Wileman's project, This is Endometriosis, struck a chord in a way that reverberated through the images that I found myself creating, and encouraged me to share the few images that I had accumulated in the weeks after surgery. Sharing the images led to conversations with countless other people with endometriosis. These conversations brought me down a long reading list that educated me about the disease itself.

Research about endometriosis became embedded in the process of making the work. The photographs were still spontaneous self portraits, but I began to recognize a broader shared experience between many endometriosis patients. Learning precisely how little information I had been told before consenting to treatment without a specialist impressed upon me the importance of making the work with an understanding of the disease spreading throughout my pelvis and abdomen.

Where the Red Flowers Bloom is a narrative how I experienced the process of being diagnosed with and treated for endometriosis, a disease that affects 1 in 10 people with a uterus where tissue similar to, yet distinct from, the lining of the uterus is found outside of the uterus. It has been found on every organ and in every gender.