

## **Exhibition sheds light on hidden world of sex industry**

14 June 2017

An exhibition which shines a light into the hidden world of sex workers in Scotland opens at the Collins Gallery at the University of Strathclyde on Thursday 22 June.

The Inside Outside exhibition features art, photography, video and audio installations by women currently or previously involved in sex work and focuses on street prostitution, escorting, brothels and saunas.

The project was co-ordinated by Linda Thompson from the Women's Support Project on behalf of the Encompass Network. Photographer Kathryn Rattray supported the women to take their own which chronicled their background, journey in sex work and their struggle to break free from it.

Encompass, a network of Scottish agencies which works directly with those involved in the sex industry, initiated the exhibition in partnership with the University of Strathclyde and the Equally Safe in Higher Education project.

Linda Thompson said: "This has been an incredible piece of work which highlights the reality of inside the sex industry, which many people don't get the chance to hear about. The women were honest in telling their stories and we are privileged as outsiders to be allowed into their lives. These women have been and still are incredibly brave, having experienced violence and abuse. They are also one of the most creative, insightful and warm groups of women I have ever been lucky enough to work with."

Anni Donaldson, Equally Safe in Higher Education project lead, said: "Equally Safe in Higher Education at the University of Strathclyde is delighted to be co-hosting Inside Outside. The debates about prostitution are often polarised and we think it is vital that all voices are heard.

"The women who have created this powerful exhibition have some very important things to say. They have found artistic and creative ways to share with us the lived reality and personal consequences of being involved in prostitution."

Katie, one of the Inside Outside participants has been very positive about her involvement in this piece of work, said: "I have learnt quite a lot about myself throughout the course of this project so far, which I didn't expect to.

"I actually like taking pictures and editing, that I'm arty. That I'm stronger than I thought I was, after going over my story realising how much I have dealt with and overcome and to the fact I'm still here, I'm still standing, still doing something positive.

"I think the idea of getting women to tell their stories in such an individual way and using our minds to create something so beautiful that is going to reach so many people is amazing, and shows why we shouldn't be ashamed of our stories- they're our stories. They have made us who we are."

The Inside Outside exhibition, which is free and open to the public, will be at the Collins Building at 22 Richmond Street, Glasgow on 22 June from 3pm to 8.30pm and 23 June from 10am to 1pm.

ENDS

**Further information:**

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**Notes to Editors**

Journalists and photographers are welcome to attend the launch of the exhibition at 1:30pm on Thursday 22 June, and photographs are available on request.

Interviews will be available with Linda Thompson and Anni Donaldson.