



Collecting Life
A photo essay by
Kirsten Alderson



Women's &
Children's Hospital
Foundation
Arts in Health

SALA

“Like a shipwreck or a jetty, almost anything that forms a structure in the ocean, whether it is natural or artificial over time, collects life.”— Sylvia A. Earle

Kirsten Alderson, an emerging visual artist, finds solace and purpose behind the lens. For many years, photography has been her constant companion, capturing moments and emotions that words often fail to express.

Recently, Kirsten uncovered the true essence of her art: visual storytelling. She chooses not to confine herself to a single category of photography and rejects labels in favour of a broader vision.

Kirsten explains *‘Thousands of steps walked along the jetty, countless hours sitting, standing, and simply observing, has confirmed for me that that the jetty really does collect all life – and it’s a place where all people come together – rain or shine.*

And in these interactions, I’ve had the pleasure of witnessing the purest moments of the human spirit... and collect these memories on camera. So, what started simply as a series of photos for a photographic assignment, has now, for sure resulted in perhaps a year long quest to capture the jetty from Winter to Spring to Summer and Autumn.’

Kirsten sees herself as a witness to life's experiences, a storyteller through the visual medium.

Over the last 15 years, her work in the not-for-profit sector, especially working with children in palliative care, has profoundly influenced her storytelling. This unique perspective allows her to convey stories authentically and meaningfully. Kirsten documents life (and death) as she sees it, often capturing moments that many overlook.

Kirsten's photographic process is as varied and dynamic as her subjects. She navigates both digital and film mediums. While she appreciates the immediacy and flexibility digital photography offers, she values the tactile nature of film, and the organic quality it imparts to her images. Through her storytelling, Kirsten invites viewers to delve into the intricacies of the human experience, urging them to discover beauty and meaning in even the most ordinary moments, ultimately encouraging pause, reflection, and appreciation.



Image top: *Collecting Life 6*
Image left: *Collecting Life 7*



Kirsten is a valued member of the Women's & Children's Hospital Foundation Fundraising team and has partnered with many patients and families, taking incredible photos to capture their health story. The Arts in Health team is thrilled to exhibit this solo exhibition as part of the South Australian Living Artist Festival.

Learn more about Kirsten's practice: www.kirsten.net.au and Instagram [@kirsten.alderson](https://www.instagram.com/kirsten.alderson)

The Women's and Children's Hospital Foundation (WCH Foundation) improves the health and wellbeing outcomes for children and families under the care of the Women's and Children's Hospital and the broader Health Network.

The WCH Foundation Arts in Health program creates an interactive and vibrant hospital environment that improves the health and wellbeing of the hospital patients, their families and staff. Through art, play and music, we encourage curiosity and creativity and reduce the stress of being in hospital.

The Arts in Health Exhibition program provides a space away from the stresses of treatment to distract, entertain and inspire by improving the hospital environment. The artworks displayed in the exhibition spaces come from a range of sources – internally from hospital staff, patients (women & children) and their families, through specific Arts in Health activities and externally from local artists and art collectives.

This exhibition was planned and exhibited on the lands of the Kaurna People, we pay our respects to the Kaurna Elders past and present and to the Elders of the lands this brochure reaches.

To see our other exciting exhibitions within the Women's and Children's Hospital visit: wchfoundation.org.au/arts-in-health/gallery-exhibition-program/

Cover Image: detail of *Collecting Life 4*



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