

Teresa Sumerfield Photography – swimmingly good photos

From the worst of motivations – the grief at losing her husband, Daniel – the best of results has emerged. South Queensferry based photographer, Teresa Sumerfield, created a series of photos as a project after her husband had died.

Already drawn to rainbows, and having used the colours of the rainbow in previous photo shoots, she knew what she wanted to create, but just needed a little help to do it.

During lockdown she did much the same as “every other photographer did” and took photos of families on doorsteps. She said: “I took photos of 273 families at their front doors. My daughter and I would go out every day. We had a list and tried to manage it so that we did five families a day.

“During lockdown my husband was poorly but he was working from home. He was auto immune and the doctors were trying to work out what it was at the time, so he was in isolation.

“Daniel died about two and a half years ago now. He was 46, he was very young, and he had been very fit until then. He had cycled from Vienna to Prague with his work. He was diagnosed with cancer first, and had recovered from that – he ran a half marathon for Maggie’s to raise money for them. And then about a year after that things started going wrong again, but we didn’t know why.”

Eventually Daniel was diagnosed with Adult Onset Still's Disease which is a rare rheumatological condition, and despite treatment he was very ill in intensive care when lockdown began.

Teresa explained that she was able to be with him when he died, which she "will be forever grateful for".

As a former mental health occupational therapist, you get the sense that this is someone who knows herself very well. She studied in Edinburgh and moved to London where she worked in a medium secure unit for criminal offenders before working in the Gorbals for a while. After that she went to Bermuda working there for seven years, during which time she met Daniel who had travelled from England. She also thinks that is where she developed a love of colour. She is already very well known for her own rainbow tattoos.

She said: "I was running art groups – there was such a huge amount of talent there. I created an exhibition called "Can you hear me now?" for people who used mental health services. The exhibition moved to City Hall – and it is still running. I also started a photography course with digital cameras donated by local Rotary clubs. Daniel bought me my first digital camera in Bermuda and when we came back I went to work as a second camera for a friend who took wedding photos. I did weddings with her for years."

After Daniel died in October, (which crushingly happened just a year after her own mother had died of cancer), Teresa said she was chatting to a "very, very positive" friend around Christmas time who had been gifted a book about Victorian swimming pools. She suggested that Teresa would love it, but the photographer in her resisted seeing the book as she said it had always been on her bucket list. She takes up the story: "My friend said – 'Well do it then. What's the point in a bucket list?' And if I have learned anything it is that life is way too short and we are not guaranteed anything."

“At that point I went onto [egg](#) and asked if anyone could help me achieve this. I didn't really know what I was doing – I just knew I wanted to take photos. Wendy Avinou sent me a private message telling me that I had done her lockdown photos and that she is the manager of two Victorian pools at Dalry and Glenogle, and could make it happen for me. Edinburgh Leisure gave me access to the pools and a lot of encouragement. Most of the people in the photos are members of **egg** who volunteered.”

The theme of rainbow colours was again an obvious choice when she began taking the photos in the Victorian pools, and you can see how well that has worked by looking at Teresa's photos below.

All the photos are now for sale either framed or unframed and any profits raised will be donated to Richmond's Hope, “an organisation which has worked with my daughter Ruby who was just seven when her Daddy died. They are amazing. All of them are so lovely and so welcoming”.

Contact Teresa through her Facebook page – <https://www.facebook.com/TeresaSumerfieldPhotography>

[Richmond's Hope](#) is a charity based in Craigmillar. It is a body which helps bereaved families, but particularly children and young people between the ages of 4 and 18.

Teresa also took the official photos of the Big Hare Trail which raised money for Leuchie House in East Lothian, and more often than not is found at the occasional wedding taking photos of the lovely brides and grooms.

Teresa exhibited her series of photographs at Dovecot supported by the Scottish online and offline community for women, **egg**, and would love to stage another exhibition. So if you have a suitable space then please do get in touch with her. TSPhotography@outlook.com



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