



Scar power

I P.E.I. photographer Alanna Jankov's latest documentary series, Scar, explores an often hidden or overlooked aspect of contemporary life

BY MARY MACKAY
THE GUARDIAN

AT A GLANCE

Fast facts:

- ▶ **What:** Scar opens today, Saturday, Jan 8, 7 p.m.
- ▶ **Where:** Confederation Centre Art Gallery in Charlottetown.
- ▶ **Details:** In addition to the photographs, each of the images in the exhibit features accompanying text that details some of each subject's story.
- ▶ **If you go:** This event is open to the public. There will be refreshments, snacks and live music.

Behind every scar there is a story of how it became permanently etched in skin.

Now the stories of 21 people — some tragic, some triumphant — have been captured by Charlottetown photographer Alanna Jankov.

Her latest documentary series, Scar, which opens at the Confederation Centre Art Gallery tonight and runs until March 13, brings into the open what people for many reasons often choose to ignore.

"It's sort of like the elephant in the room. We all know it's there so why not just ask?" says Jankov.

"I have a scar on the top of my foot which brings back a very interesting memory, so I just started exploring that idea — how many other people have scars that take them back to a specific spot in their life, whether it be good or bad. I don't think there was anybody that shied away."

This exhibit, which was curated by gallery curator Pan Wendt, features 21 people, most of whom are from P.E.I., who have scars resulting from

accidents or surgeries to deliberate skin alterations such as tattoos or self-branding.

"A lot of these pictures kind of have two things going on. More than half of them have this quality where there's one part

that's the scar and that is often disturbing, and then one part is the person posing in an attractive (way), a little bit done up, a little bit of presenting a different face . . .," Wendt says.

"(So) this is both like personal portrait photography in a way and documentary (photography), and often in the same picture . . ."

Scar was three years in the making, and Jankov truly never knew where her next subject would come from, especially since not all who were photographed have outwardly visible marks.

A case in point would be Kelly, (all are identified by first name only) who through extreme perseverance lost nearly 140 pounds and subsequently had to have plastic surgery to remove her excess skin.

"I met her at the gym, but I talk to everybody. That's how I

work because I'm so interested in people. Therefore, I might mention what I might be doing and then all of a sudden they tell me something about themselves or somebody else," Jankov says. "There were a few instances where I just met

ABOVE: The circumstances under which Jacques lost his pinkie finger in Quebec, in some way, led him to 35 years of living on P.E.I. SUBMITTED PHOTO

people on the street, went up and had a little chitchat and just asked about their scar. People were really responsive and really inter-

ested in sharing their stories."

A casual acquaintance with Bill, who was a

See Scar, C2



TOP: Marlene refers to her marks from breast cancer surgery as her "road tracks of a life lived and battles fought." SUBMITTED PHOTO

MIDDLE: Striking a model-like pose, Kelly is one of 21 people in the documentary series, Scar, in which they share their stories of tragedy and triumph. SUBMITTED PHOTO

BOTTOM: A happenstance meeting on the street led photographer Alanna Jankov to include Clary and his scar story in her exhibit. SUBMITTED PHOTO



Charlottetown photographer Alanna Jankov took three years to compile an array of fascinating subjects, such as 15-year-old Richard, for her documentary series, Scar, on at the Confederation Centre Art Gallery from Jan. 8 to March 13. GUARDIAN PHOTO BY MARY MACKAY