**Get the Full Picture**

**Artists Statement**

As socially engaged artists our intention for the exhibition is for it to be authentic to the women who are co-creators of this exhibition and who have experienced human trafficking and sexual exploitation in all its horrors. Our intention is to give voice to their experiences.

The full picture cannot be told in a single image or short film and words cannot be fully found or represented as each participant still lives in the trauma of their lived experience. Each experience is complex to that individual. Yet what is powerful is that they can now speak to their experience and through this exhibition are empowered to have their voices now heard.

We want people to take notice and ask questions of what is actually happening underneath the surface of the images shown. As artists its about finding the balance, so what’s produced is not too hard or explicit so that people turn away from it, or not too soft that the message is dismissed. There are also many ethical considerations about how to authentically interpret and represent another human being’s experience and show that in photographs and film.

This exhibition is as a result of a deeply engaging process with participants who now have the courage and support from Ruhama to come forward and speak out. That is truly powerful and we have the utmost respect for them in doing so.

No one could prepare you for what these participants experienced repeatedly over many years. How they survived it, how they had all their dignity and basic human rights taken from them. How they lived a frightened, heightened, traumatised, brutal, abusive and sexually exploited existence at the hands of those who profited hugely from them. They were brought here under the false pretences of a new life, one that would help them support their families. In truth, they were trafficked.

Many of the participants described that they lost themselves and were broken, all suffered trauma for enduring periods of time. And yet despite that, have shared their vulnerability so that as artists and equal partners in this project, co-create this work so that awareness is raised and those people who experience this, have the courage to speak out and seek help.

**Sinéad Dowling and Colm Mullen**

 