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TB-AIDS Diary makes Canadian premiere

By Andy Lee

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Dr. Jean Mason (above) worked with the School of Image Arts to bring Linda Troeller's *TB-AIDS Diary* photography exhibit to Ryerson for its Canadian debut.

Jean Mason finds tuberculosis fascinating.

Since 2001, the Professional Communication professor has been researching illness narratives by TB patients who were treated in northern New York sanatoria prior to the advent of modern medicine.

Through her research, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Dr. Mason met photographer [Linda Troeller](#), whose *TB-AIDS Diary* photomontages explore her mother's experience as a TB sanatorium patient in the 1930s and a Los Angeles man's experience as a 1980s AIDS sufferer. After seeing the images, Dr. Mason worked with Don Snyder, Chair of Image Arts, to bring the award-winning exhibit to Ryerson for its Canadian premiere.

"This collaboration between the medical and scientific communities and the visual arts communities focuses on the way visual work can express social and medical problems in a very powerful way, with a great economy of means," says Snyder.

Originally shown around the world from the late 1980s to 1990s, Troeller agreed to the current exhibit to illustrate the parallels between TB and AIDS in contemporary society.

"It pains me that AIDS wasn't brought to an end," says Troeller. "On the other hand, I want to do it and the work still has something to say."

Ironically, many AIDS patients today die of TB.

"TB is not a conquered disease. It's still a threat right here in North America, in Toronto," says Dr. Mason. "I hope people gain a greater awareness of TB and AIDS and the relationship between them."

An article by Dr. Mason, entitled "The Discourse of Disease: Patient Writing at the University of Tuberculosis," appears in *Psychoanalysis and Narrative Medicine*, currently in press.

"With the help of Ryerson, we've got to show that we can do better – we have to do better," says Troeller. "The cycle of life is tough, but we always have to have hope."

TB-AIDS Diary is on view from October 30 to November 17 in the third floor gallery of the Image Arts building at 122 Bond St. The exhibition includes a [public lecture](#) by Linda Troeller on November 7 and a [panel discussion](#) on the realities and representations of TB and AIDS on November 9.

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