

# Sobia

I have loved art in all its form all my life and hiding in the shadows admiring my many friends who were great artists I was the last person in the world I thought would pick up a pencil or a paint brush.

However, in 2012 I was diagnosed with kidney disease and within a few months told I had kidney failure and would have to have dialysis for the rest of my life. Almost overnight my world was catapulted into what felt like an abyss, I had gone from a high flying executive, the CEO of one of a handful of leading BME women's voluntary organisations in the country to a complete non entity, I had no energy and could not even get out of bed, I was constantly vomiting severe migraines and had a permanent metal taste in my mouth. I could not eat three quarters of the food I was eating before, my peritoneal dialysis operation had to take place twice as the first one did not work and I contracted peritonitis and that was just the start.

I spent eight month of the first year in bed staying with friends in the country to help me recover from the

operation and without friends and family I would not have made it through. It was here that I first started to colour, doodle and draw, very badly I may add, but it really helped me to get through some of those really traumatic days and nights.

In 2016 to my amazement I was offered a transplant which happened as quickly as my diagnosis, again I felt plunged into an alternate reality, my operation took place the very same night as the phone call I received from the hospital, that they had a match for me. However although the kidney operation went ok, when they had taken my bowels out to put the kidney in, they cut 10cm if it due to scaring I had received when doing my dialysis. When putting my bowels back in they had been twisted. I was very ill indeed, in intensive care!!!

They (the surgeons) had to cut me back open seven days later to take out my guts, put them the right way round and sew me back up ☹️ My belly looked like a pin cushion, although I could not look at myself for a whole year. My body completely shut down, so now, I had a kidney that had not kicked in and a digestive tract that was completely to pot, during my time in hospital I had around twelve operations/invasive procedures because

every procedure went wrong and they had to do it again.

Once out of hospital I was very ill and had to be re admitted twice. It was late in 2018 when I could walk again with just the aid of walking sticks. As time went by I gradually got my life back together but things were never going to be as they were and I knew I had to carve out a new life for myself. It was about this time that I came across an advert in my local paper which was so well written (something I remind the course organiser to this day, who has become a close friend) that it enticed even the most shy and introverted person.

My kidneys had started working although they still do not function at 100% and many areas are still a challenge such as energy levels and high blood pressure but here was something that might help me keep my anxiety and hypertension in check and so followed it up and started my first art course.... and I haven't looked back since.

Throughout my kidney failure journey I have always had faith and hope and used all kinds of healing techniques to aid my recovery and my art has been one of them.

Using a variety of media I have found solace in nature, drawing landscapes and the flowers in my garden as well as places of spiritual worship and meditation, hence I have titled my work – 'Places, Spaces and Images for Healing and Hope'. To be honest I don't think of my donor every day, I do not know who she was, but when I do, I still get emotional, it was because she died that I could live, I send her love and light and she is always in my prayers may she dwell in paradise for eternity.

It has been a pleasure to create these art pieces I have really enjoyed doing them and I hope they give some joy to those who come to view this exhibition. Thank you for taking the time to read my story and view my work