

MONALISA STORY

DIRECTOR'S VISION

About ten years ago, I met MonaLisa, the main character of my film. At that time, she was heavily into heroin; struggling daily to survive, to make enough money to buy drugs. I was curious—who was she? Why did her life turn out the way it did?

That was the seed of the film project “MONALISA STORY”. Years of filming, building confidence and doing research gave me access to a world that is difficult to enter and I documented MonaLisa’s life for eight years.

I sincerely hope this film will contribute to insights and to a deeper understanding of people in similar situations. That it will show how difficult it is to break destructive habits and also depict the impact of biological bonds and social ties. Every world has several dimensions, its own “normal”. There is a human being behind every addict, with emotions, dreams and loved ones.

MonaLisa’s brave account tells a bigger story, bringing several societal problems to the forefront as well. Living with substance abuse, or with individuals with addiction issues is, unfortunately, not uncommon. Though people rarely talk about it.

I would like this film to help break these taboos and to open up a dialogue. What can be done to help all parties in this situation? How can we increase their odds of attaining a healthier lifestyle? Could treatment and assistance be more tailored to suit that particular individual? Allocating more resources to those who have made it through rehab and are adjusting to life outside an institution, could that result in sustainable benefits? What does research say about babies born with an addiction? And how can society best approach and help children with parents struggling with addiction?

Jessica Nettelbladt
Documentary filmmaker

