

Q+A with Brooke Pelczynski: Art + MS



An exclusive video and interview with Momentum about how she created the Spring 2019 cover illustration showing how depression affects people living with MS.

Brooke Pelczynski, diagnosed with MS in 2012, captures how MS impacts her life through her artwork. In this web exclusive video and interview, Pelczynski shares with Momentum her story and how she created the Spring issue's cover illustration showing how depression strikes people living with MS.

How did you come up with the concept for the cover?

The idea started off with two variations: one with the girl's head in the ground, hiding from the world around her, and the other with her head above the beauty of the world, but in a dark space. Neither of these women are able to see the beauty of the world around them.

What was your thought process while creating it?

I was hoping it would be relatable and not too abstract.

What were you hoping to convey with the concept?

To me, depression is missing all the small, beautiful details of everyday life. This is what I am capturing in this cover.

What materials did you use?

I used felt, ripped and cut paper, and my sewing machine.

Can you describe how you went about creating the design and piecing everything together?

First, I ripped up a bunch of green paper. Then, I made each individual piece—the woman, the flowers and the leaves. Then, I sewed these pieces on to the felt backing. There was a lot of moving the parts around to see if they looked better in one place or the other, like a puzzle. I took a photo every time I moved an element of the art like a leaf or a flower. I had at least five different flower layouts before I settled on this final version.

Why did you decide to use fabric? What does it signify for you?

I chose to work with tangible materials because as an artist with MS, sometimes my hands really do not hold a brush or pencil too well. I thought that perhaps other people with MS could relate to that. Although I am an artist and I do draw and paint, sometimes the act of cutting simple shapes and ripping paper is easier for me and, in the end, a more beautiful result.

Do you have experience with depression? If so, what has your experience been like?

I have felt extreme sadness before, but I am lucky and have not experienced depression. But I do have people in my life that I love who have been depressed, and I understand it's a terrible situation.

What was the experience like to have your work commissioned for and to be featured in Momentum?

I was beyond thrilled when I got asked to do the cover of Momentum. I feel like something that started off pretty small became a big deal, and I couldn't be happier with the results of the whole project! Getting to create a visual for something that has a lot of effect on people with MS was challenging. I hope everyone who sees it is inspired to live bolder.

Web Exclusive

Learn more about how [depression affects people living with MS](#).