

It Is Real

Many people experience full body pain without any knowledge of what is wrong—and this pain lasts for years. Doctors and Psychologist are baffled—could it really be all in the person's head, or is there a legitimate reason to the pain? Fibromyalgia is a widespread, chronic pain disease that affects the musculoskeletal system and is often described as a dull ache. It has been labeled as an invisible disease and is often dismissed by those who have not experienced the pain and is even dismissed by doctors. However, it can be very debilitating and makes everyday tasks challenging. For sufferers, the symptoms may be lessened, intensified, constant, or reoccurring based on their individual circumstances. Aside from the widespread pain, some of the other common symptoms of fibromyalgia include; moderate to severe fatigue, sleep disorders, stiff muscles and joints, problems with cognitive functioning, headaches and migraines, irritable bowel syndrome, anxiety and depression, and environmental sensitivities. Fibromyalgia pain is centered around eighteen—or pairs of nine—pressure points. When pressure is applied to these points, pain spreads to other parts of the body. Studies show that fibromyalgia sufferers experience pain in about eleven of the eighteen pressure points. Unfortunately, Fibromyalgia contains symptoms of other muscular, immune, and joint disorders, making the diagnosis a long, arduous process.

As someone diagnosed with fibromyalgia and suffering from the disease, I want to bring awareness to those who don't understand. To create these images, I painted on the model's body, with stage makeup, to portray what living with this invisible disease feels like. The model was placed in vulnerable positions in front of a black background to emphasize the loneliness and misunderstandings of pain associated with fibromyalgia. Light was used to evenly coat the body providing my viewers with the minute detail of the bruises and stressed veins. It is real.