

A Special Occasion

Category: visuals

written by Erin O'Branski | November 28, 2014



Erin O'Branski

About the artist:

Erin O'Branski is a physician assistant practicing in hematology-oncology at the Duke Cancer Institute in Durham, NC. She is also a continuing-education student at the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke. She is currently documenting instances of art and beauty in everyday life in the hospital, a project which began as a way to process the pain and sadness associated with life-threatening diseases. Her recent short documentary *Cancer Warriors* can be seen at DocumentingMedicine.com/cancer-warriors.

About the artwork:

"As a PA hospitalist on a leukemia lymphoma service, I became interested in how, during their extended admissions, seriously ill patients transform a sterile hospital room into a temporary sanctuary—and what that says about the human spirit and resilience. Decorated rooms are rarely found in the hospital outside of the pediatric floors and are mostly seen in areas in which there is a long road to recovery, where health and survival are tenuous and where it is imperative to have a place of your own in which to gather strength. This photo was taken in the room of a patient who would soon be discharged home under hospice care. The contents of her bed tray were, to me, an accurate reflection of her passion for life in the face of her daily reality."

Visuals editor:

Justin Sanders