

May 2000

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Recommended Citation

Colombo, Barbara (2000). Over 30: Portraits of Unmarried Women. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 1(2), 56-60.

Available at: <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol1/iss2/11>

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Over 30: Portraits of Unmarried Women

By Barbara Colombo

Nineteen million adult women remain unmarried in the United States alone. This represents a significant trend and an anomaly of our time. The touring photograph-text exhibit, *Over 30: Portraits of Unmarried Women*, created by Colorado Artist, Barbara Colombo, addresses this issue with a collection of black and white photographic portraits of heterosexual women over thirty years of age who remain unattached, some unwillingly, some by design. Several newly published books on the topic and over fifty magazine articles, from Newsweek to Essence, focus on the unmarried woman. The unmarried women featured in *Over 30* are between the ages of thirty and eighty-six with personal statements by each subject. *Over 30* travels to communities in the United States. *Over 30* is the brainchild of the photographer's own personal experience. In a young culture devoid of common ritual, marriage seems to be a hallmark of adulthood. Upon reaching and passing the 30 year milestone in life, Barbara Colombo found herself questioning her circumstances. "Where were all the things that a woman should have by her thirties? Where was the husband? What about children and career?" This photo-essay presents women rising above this sea of culturally imposed "shoulds" and gender based stereotypes to find personal contentment and focus. It explores the contemporary question of how women approach adult life in the absence of marriage. One subject, 39 year-old vapor operator, Theresa, admits: "It's not the life I wanted this late in the game. I always wanted to get married and have 12 kids when I was young and crazy." Another subject, Sonya, 32, reflects: "I'm married to Life, to Love, to Spirituality... In my heart, though, I've married a few men Enough to know that's all that really counts."

For information on bringing the Over 30 exhibit to your community, contact:

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Sonya, 32, with Maya. Vocalist, Composer, Artist “I’m married to Life, to Love, to Spirituality.... I’m not sure how long it will take for someone else to want to wear all those rings! In my heart, though, I’ve married a few men ... Enough to know that’s all that really counts.”



Self-portrait, 31. Photographer, Video artist, Gardener.
“Through this work, I have gained tremendous inspiration
from these women and even if I never marry, I am certainly
not alone.”



Theresa, 39. Vapor polish operator. “It’s not the life I wanted this late in the game. I always wanted to get married and have 12 kids when I was young and crazy.”



Michelle, 32, with Caterina & Tiger Lily. Mother, Artist, Astrologer.

“I was always fearful about being a single mother and now that I am, it’s not as scary as I thought. My daughter has empowered me to be OK with that. She and my pets have taken the role of being with a partner.”