





## **Depression**

Why me? What now? These are some of the questions that beg to be answered once a person has suffered through rape. Feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness rise up from every angle and it is often difficult to see the light.

The brunt branch represent the death of vitality (feeling like one wants to live and be alive) and the black chairs symbolise the strong desire to do nothing.

These feelings are extremely dangerous and it is necessary to understand that they are not controllable, the person cannot simply decide to feel differently and any feelings of this nature need serious attention.

## **Broken**

The broken vase, encased in glass and mounted on a pillar make up of broken pieces represents the feeling of being broken. This piece is representative of all religions, all ages, all people: when violated in this manner, feelings of brokenness are unavoidable.

Note, however, that the vase, however broken, can be mended to some extent. It will never be what it once was, the cracks will show, lines of glue are visible but it can be put together again.

As a victim of rape, the feeling of being broken can be replaced with a feeling of being healed; transformation is possible.

### **Self-destruction**

Feelings kept inside can quickly turn on the person harbouring them. The chest represents the hidden, dark side of feelings that are not dealt with properly. Inside we see habits of self-destruction: drug and alcohol abuse, promiscuity and possibly suicide.

The downward spiral that is created by keeping it all inside is a road that we want to avoid at all costs. Being open and honest about what is going on inside is a positive step towards healing.

### **Fear**

The structure is a walkway in the shape of the foetal position. This is a common way to express the desire for safety, when we are afraid we often curl up in this position because it is as close as we can get to the safe feeling we experience inside the womb before we are born.

Rape victims are often afraid long after the threat has gone. Inside remains a broken, hurt feeling that reminds of the fear felt during the crime.

The door represents healing that is possible through faith – regardless of religious persuasion, the belief of healing can take place and the act of surrendering to this faith is often a saving grace.

### **Woede**

Hier sien ons dat die rooi gebruik word om woede uit te beeld. In die klippies is daar 'n mens, vasgevang met die rooi woede sterk gevestig as deel van die mens. Die rooi klippies wys ons dat die gevoel moeilik is om van ontslae te raak.

Rooi plante, rooi verf: net woede is rooi ook die kleur wat dui op gevaar. Ons moet daarop let dat hierdie gevoel ongelooflik kragtig is. Dit is dan ook hierdie gevoel wat die meeste vir ons kan beteken as ons beheer daarvan kry en dit sodoende omdraai na begrip en vergifnis.

Dan ook, dis belangrik om te verstaan dat slagoffers van verkragting tot 'n mate geregtig is tot woede en dat hierdie gevoelens verdien om uiting te kry.

### **Shame**

The doll represents the feeling of being ashamed. She is emotionally naked and unable to escape exposure. This often goes hand in hand with strong feelings of guilt: 'I dressed too enticingly; I drank too much; it is my fault that this happened to me.'

Although these feelings are to be expected, it is important to understand that they are not true to the point – it is never, ever the victim's fault.

Rape victims often experience this feeling of shame.

### **Flashbacks**

'My worst enemy is my memory'. It is very difficult for a person who has suffered through such a traumatic experience to get rid of the recurring memories of what happened. Mirrors represent the notion that 'everywhere I look I see what happened' while the birds draw our attention to the way that thoughts and flashes come without prediction or a sense of control.

The circle on the pillar represents the 'loop' in which the victim often gets caught, unable to forget what happened, unable to draw their own attention away from remembering and/or thinking about it.

It is not easy to get up and move on, to leave the incident in the past where it belongs.

### **Corrective Rape**

South Africa is often seen as the rape capital of the world. This is, in part, due to the heavy nature of the practice of 'corrective rape' as a means of 'rehabilitating' lesbians, in other words: rape in an attempt to foster heterosexuality.

For victims of corrective rape it is often very difficult to re-establish a sense of self, a sense of identity and a feeling of belonging.