

Jane Paradise

P. O. Box 632 Provincetown MA 02657-0632
+1 415 321 0382 jane@janeParadise.com www.janeParadise.com

This is Your Future: Women and Aging

My work has always revolved around the exploration of boundaries: the act of examining how one is part of—or excluded by—different communities.

The title “This is your Future” comes from my aunt who, when looking at the photographs, said to me. “You know, this is your future.” *This is Your Future* depicts four women in particular: my friend and mentor Norma Holt, my mother and aunt, and my mother-in-law. Since starting this project three of the women have died. My aunt is alive and still living alone and is sharp as a tack at 100 years old.

In *This Is Your Future* my photographs are a lens through which the viewer can catch glimpses of the lives of elder women, a community largely invisible in modern western culture. A meaningful life can and often does exist even within a deteriorating body. Our culture renders these women invisible at its own loss and peril.

Consider what is seen on television: elder women appear in advertisements for medicines and medical services, food products, or financial and legal services. They are excluded from prime time ads of any sort—rendering them even more invisible to younger viewers—and never appear in “glamorous” contexts advertising fashion, travel, or cosmetics. When older women *are* represented, it is in stereotypical ways, as though their interests were confined to incontinence, vitamins, wheelchairs, and Medicare supplements.

It was a privilege and an honor to be part of these women’s lives, and inviting the public eye into their space took tremendous courage on their part, for which I am truly grateful. My hope is that the beauty and dignity I see permeating their lives will become visible and important to viewers as well, and that we can share, together, in the gift these women have given through allowing me to capture their lives—however fleeting the individual moments—in photographs.

Concerned about this invisibility and the accompanying stereotypes, and aware of the many and varied interests of older people as well as the challenges they face, I’ve been spending time inside this community and exploring the boundaries imposed upon it.

And, my aunt IS right, this IS our future, all of ours.