

## Exhibition explores mental health

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Reporter

Social media has made it easier than ever for our society to connect with one another.

Space has all but been eliminated, as it is just as simple to send a message to your friend a few blocks away, or your grandmother in Australia.

While we are able to get in contact with a wider variety of people, are we losing our ability to have traditional social interactions? Is social media making us less social? What effect does this have on our mental health? What about the elderly? Will they be left behind? These questions are creatively explored in Margie Kelks' "Nowhereness" exhibit.

Kelks' exhibits consists of fine sculpture and wall pieces. The wall pieces include ink and nail drawing on wax, which also supports ceramic heads.

"The whole show is about people who are alienated and separated from the rest of society," said Kelk. "The irony is that today, when society is so connected by a virtual media like Facebook, these people are even more isolated because they are left alone in rooms."

She has found that this happens frequently with the elderly in nursing homes. They are left alone and un-stimulated, with little contact to the outside world and so they recede into their minds, only knowing what is right in front of them.

Her ceramic heads are distorted; some faces are filled with hope, but the rest are filled with despair. These sculptures are placed alongside pieces of computer parts, which shows how they are either victimized or empowered by the new technology.

"A certain amount of dementia may set in as you get older, and you're still alienated from everything so no stimulus comes and you go more and more into your dementia," said Kelk.

There is a strong connection with Kelks' work and mental health. Jordynne Ropat, the president of the Mental Health Awareness Association at the University of Windsor, comments on how the use of social media affects us.

"Social media leads to a focus [of] online life, leading to [a] possibly decreased interest in real life," said Ropat.

Based in Toronto, Kelk will be coming to Windsor next week to set up her exhibit at Artcite. The reception is on Mar. 7 at 7:30 p.m. and will run until April 19.

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