

Changing Perceptions on Homelessness #Mycommunityismyhome

CLAIRE LETITIA REYNOLDS

These portraits of homelessness are about strength and resilience, community, and hope.

This project is a result from a group of people and organisations meeting once a month for two years to make a plan to assist people experiencing homelessness on the Sunshine Coast and Hinterland, Queensland, Australia.

I submitted a proposal to 'My local Community Centre', it was successful and I received a grant for this project, this being contracted to photograph homeless people with the outcome as an exhibition. The project's aim is to challenge and change current perceptions and associated stigma surrounding homelessness.

I began the project in early June 2020, when we were coming out of the pandemic lockdown. Many community services were still closed, but I was able to connect with 'The Shack', an organisation in my local area that offers a free hot breakfast for those who are in need. It was here that my journey began, I would turn up to The Shack every morning at 6.30am, leaving my baby and partner who had lost his job due to COVID at home.

I met all kinds of people, listening to their stories. Many people were wary of my camera however, I was mindful in my approach and was very clear about what the portraits were for, and why. A large proportion of people I asked to photograph said no, they didn't want to be the face of *homelessness*.

The daily struggle for survival for people experiencing homelessness is real – each day brought monumental challenges, things that you and I take for granted on a daily basis. The more I delved into this project, the more I began to see the 'hidden homeless' people sleeping in cars, on living room floors, couch surfing, under bridges. Young men, old, men, woman and children – there is no discrimination in homelessness.

Many of the stories people so graciously shared with me were heartbreaking, but shared with a resolve firm and steadfast.

I am very thankful for everyone that allowed me to take their portrait, their contribution to this cause was invaluable, and for those that couldn't participate for one reason or another, opened up and shared their life and stories. To see the images in colour visit: <https://www.clairereynolds.com/homeless>

Claire Letitia Reynolds has worked as a photographic artist for over 15 years, developing her practice and learning to communicate not only her own stories but also the stories of others. Capturing subjects at their most intimate and familiar moments, Reynolds blurs the boundaries between art, social commentary and documentary. Reynolds has also been awarded multiple Arts grants in 2021; Regional Arts Development Funding Sunshine Coast, Arts Queensland QASP funding, and Australia Council Arts Funding Individuals, whilst also completing a Graduate Diploma in Visual Arts at Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, 2021.

"I make pictures as a way of navigating life. The colours, the lines, and the light intermingle, to form a single pattern different every time, no matter what. Just before I take a picture, I feel this strong energy force – it takes over. At this moment, I feel real. I feel honest ... and I feel alive".



Corrine : photographer Clare Letitia Reynolds, 2020.

If you could tell the world one thing about yourself?

***"I have studied the psychology of
human emotional reactions in life, its
what forms our personality".***

Corrine, 2020

Corrine sadly passed away in 2021, may she RIP.

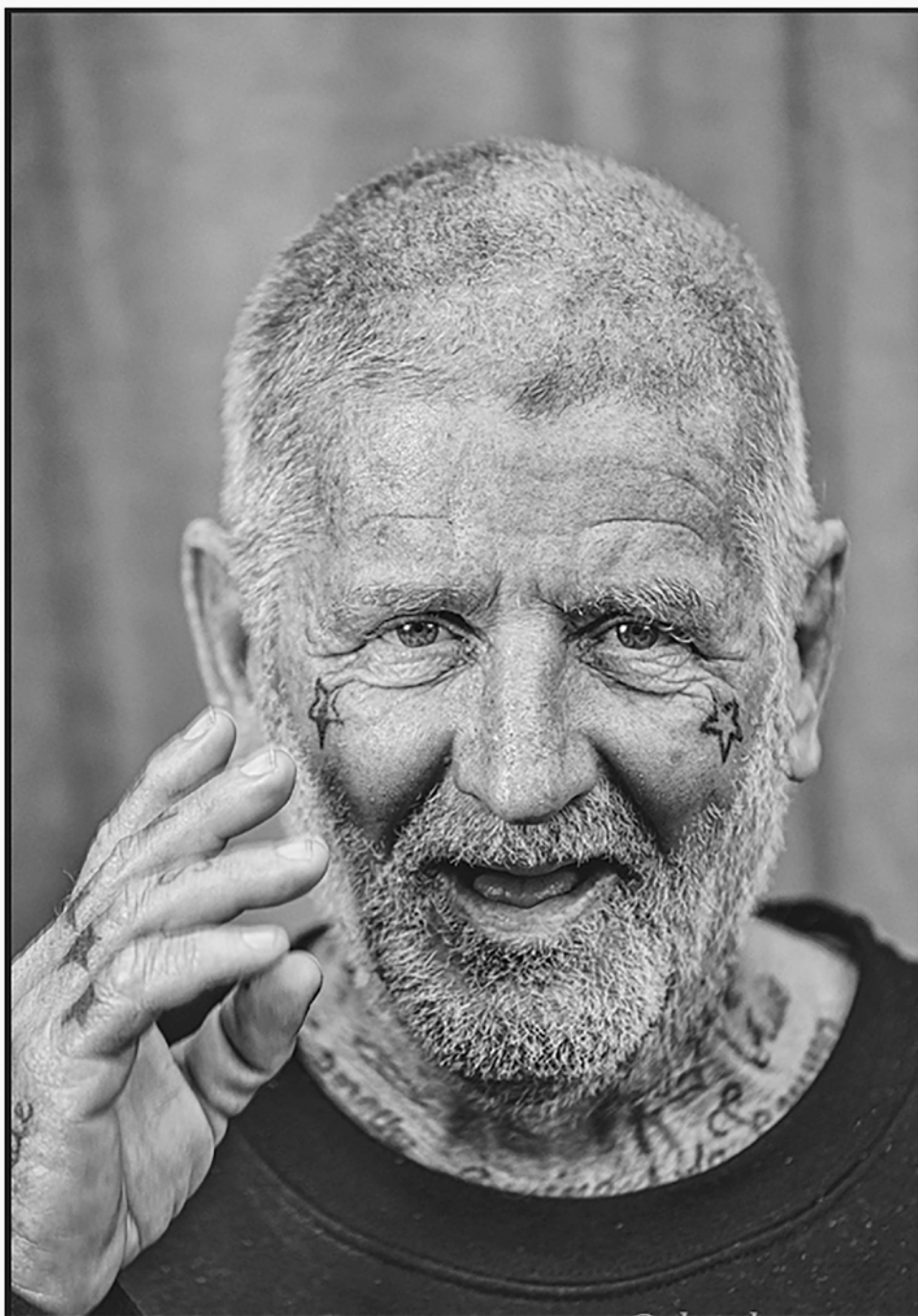


Danielle F. : photographer Clare Letitia Reynolds, 2020.

If you could tell the world one thing about yourself?

***"I will do whatever I can to help
people".***

Danielle, 2020

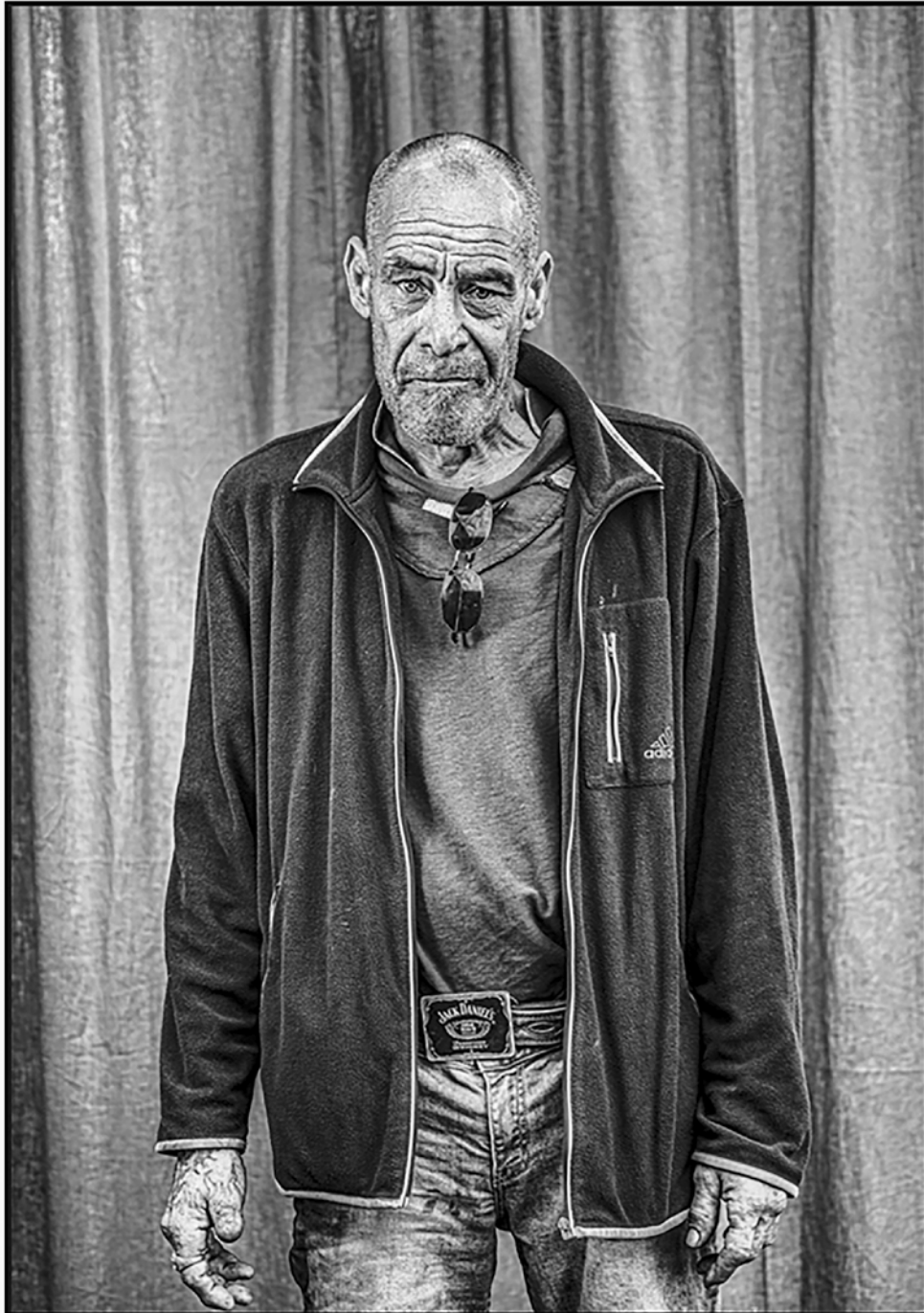


Dracky : photographer Clare Letitia Reynolds, 2020.

If you could tell the world one thing about yourself?

"Everyone should be good to their Mum".

Mark 'Dracky', 2020

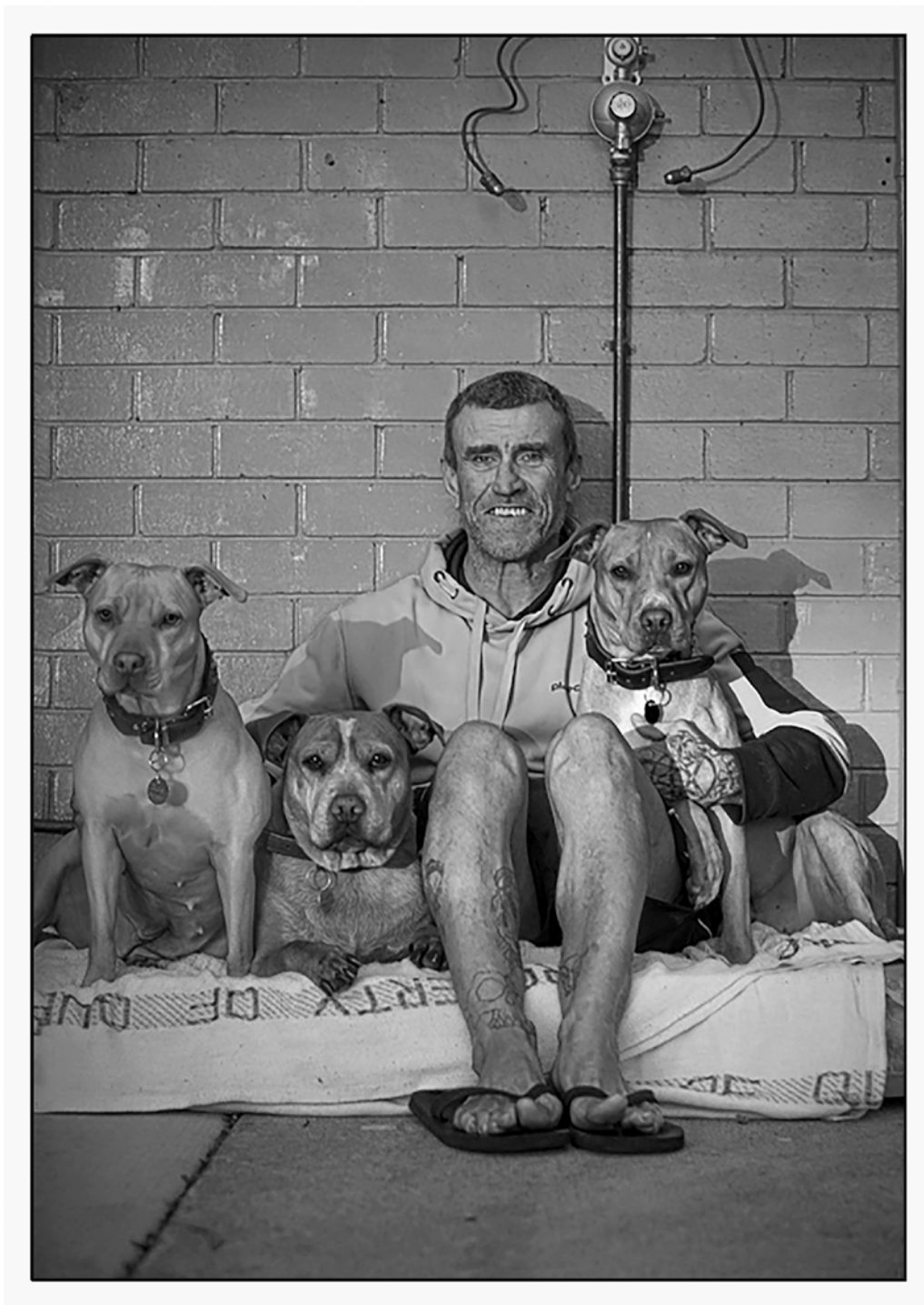


Andrew, 'Drew' : photographer Clare Letitia Reynolds, 2020.

If you could tell the world one thing about yourself?

"I'm the best, but I'm biased. You have to love yourself before you love anyone else".

Andrew 'Drew', 2020



Gary : photographer Clare Letitia Reynolds, 2020.

If you could tell the world one thing about yourself?

***"I'm friendly and so are my dogs, we
are family".***

Gary, 2020



Glen : photographer Clare Letitia Reynolds, 2020.

If you could tell the world one thing about yourself?

"I'm loyal and helpful".

Glen, 2020

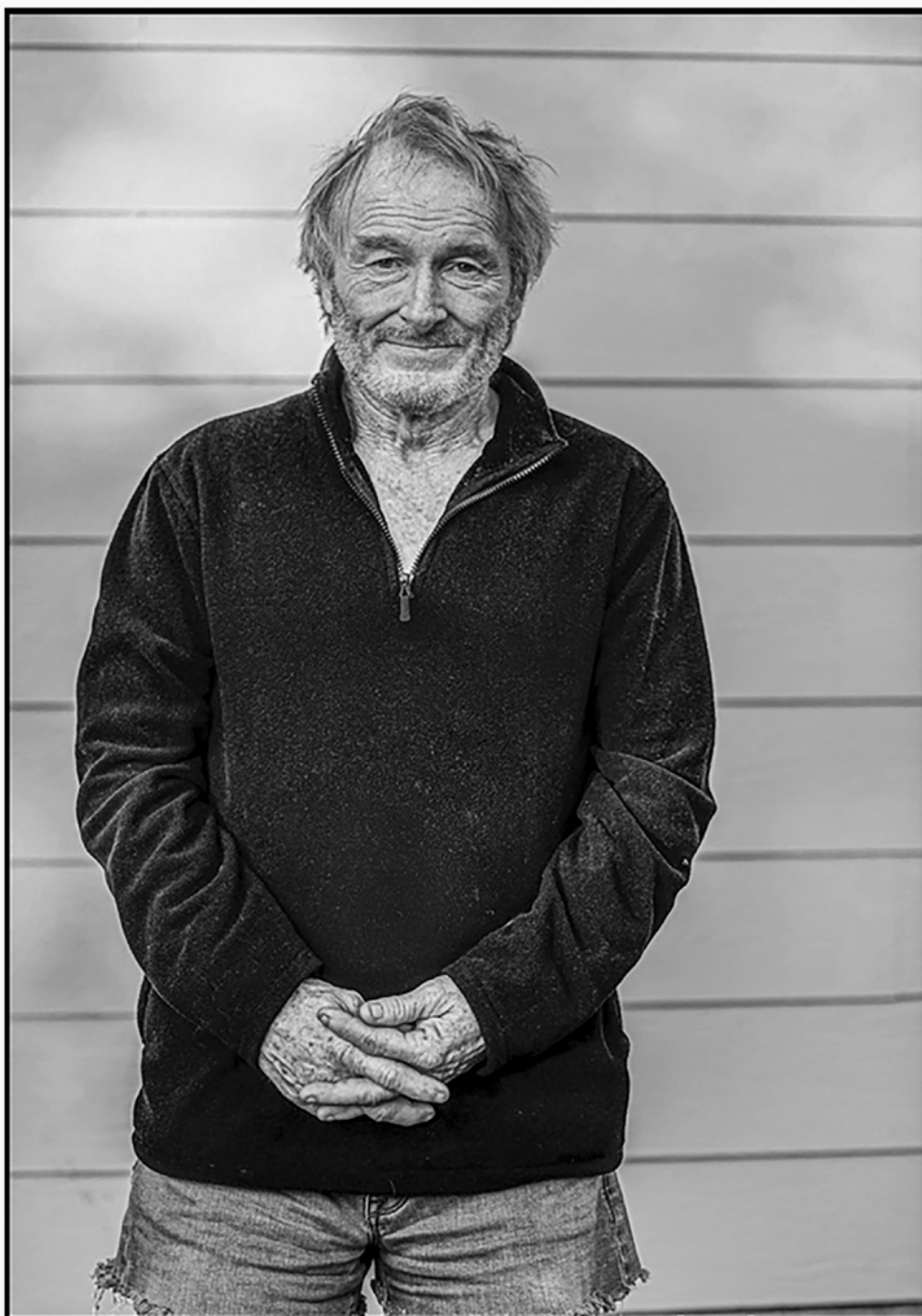


Steven : photographer Clare Letitia Reynolds, 2020.

If you could tell the world one thing about yourself?

"I'm lovely".

Steven, 2020



John : photographer Clare Letitia Reynolds, 2020.

If you could tell the world one thing about yourself?

***"I recently came out of a lung tumor,
now I look at life differently. Just
enjoy life".***

John, 2020

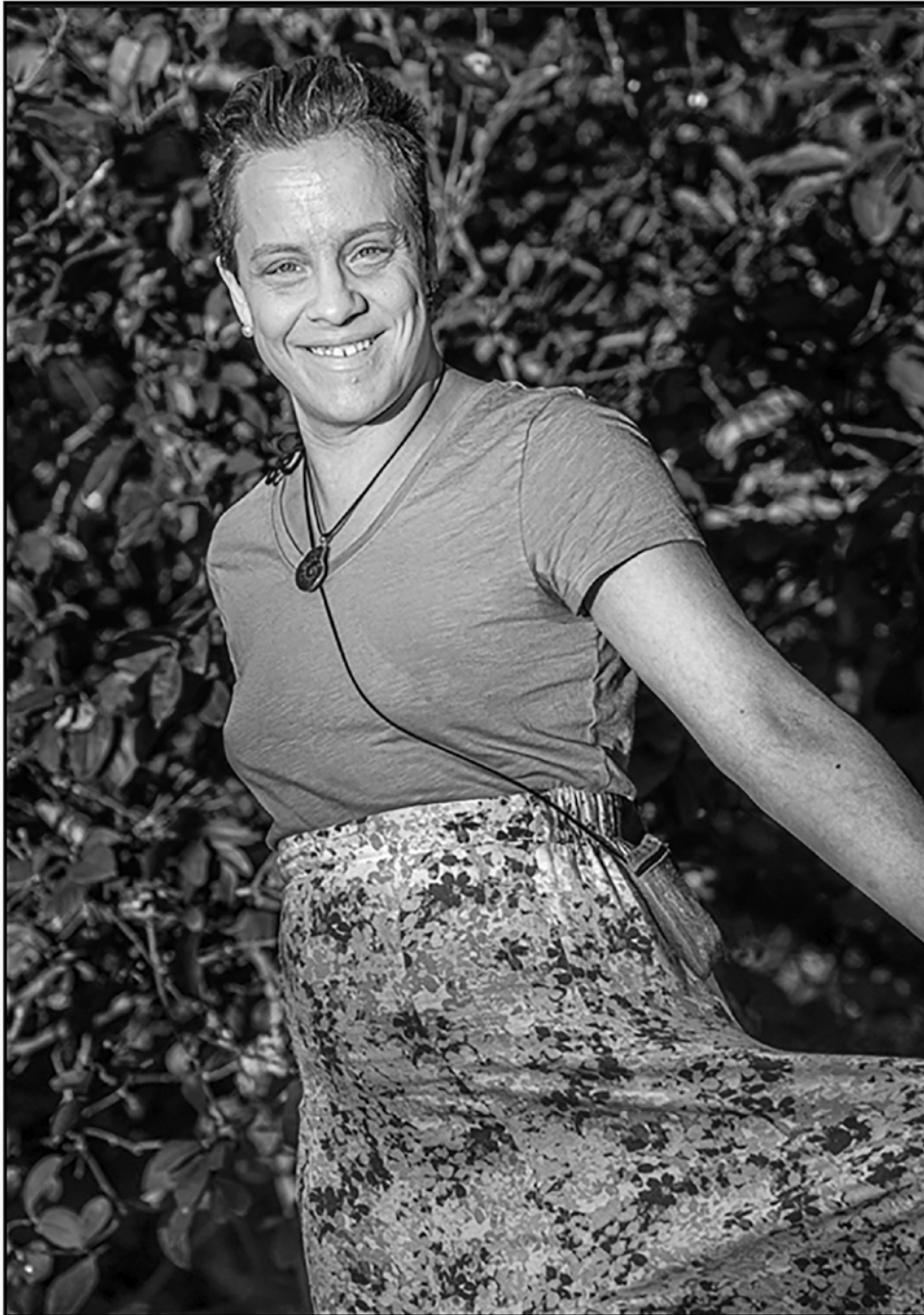


Jesse : photographer Clare Letitia Reynolds, 2020.

If you could tell the world one thing about yourself?

"I'm a peaceful guy and a mad keen fisherman".

Jesse, 2020



Danielle : photographer Clare Letitia Reynolds, 2020.

If you could tell the world one thing about yourself?

"Dreams are a wish your heart makes, never give up on your dreams, follow your heart".

Danielle, 2020



Dave 'Hoppy' : photographer Clare Letitia Reynolds, 2020.

If you could tell the world one thing about yourself?

"I'm happy, not snappy".

Dave 'Hoppy', 2020



Mory : photographer Clare Letitia Reynolds, 2020.

If you could tell the world one thing about yourself?

"I am a Mummy".

Mory, 2020