

# Foreign/bodies

*'I see a different me, a body that is not sexual, not feminine but distorted, disfigured and a reminder of my HIV status. I then ask myself – am I a woman, am I still a human being, can I be loved with this distorted body? My daily life is filled with inadequacy and low self esteem – I have lost the essence of me. Life saving drugs have saved my health but at the same time has taken my sense of self'.*



Foreign/bodies is a collection of images that explores women's negative experiences of living with HIV: the disconnect between self, identity and body image.

**Living with HIV** impacts on all aspects of women's lives – and yet little attention is paid to how women often experience a shift in body image and identity – a disconnect between self and body, before and after. The impact is multi-layered and complex. Foreign/bodies aims to explore women's experiences of living with HIV and documents changes that can be seen and those that can not.

The first set of images that have been produced explore one woman's feelings about her body after being on antiretroviral therapy (ART) for a number of years.

Many women who are on ART suffer from lipodystrophy (fat redistribution) which changes body shape by reducing fat in arms, legs and buttocks and increasing fat in the breasts, neck and stomach. Although different drug regimens do exist, that include alternative drugs with fewer side effects, these options are not available to women in most countries.

