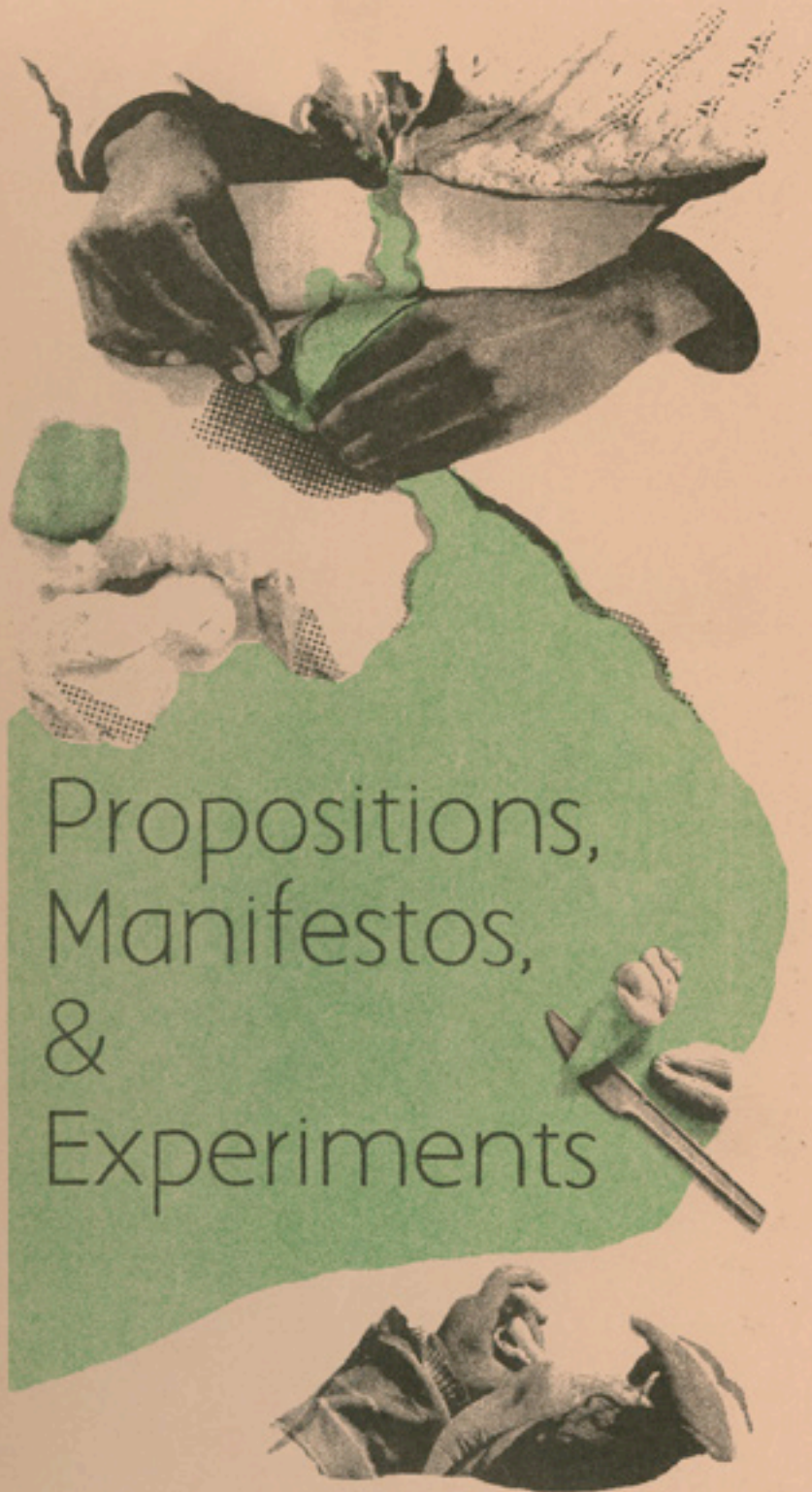


CULTURAL BEPBOBES

# Propositions, Manifestos, & Experiments



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## AN INTRODUCTION

Draw all the parallels you like between the life/work of an artist and that of a parent: each can be deeply satisfying, emotionally challenging, and potentially result in something or someone that outlives us. To take on both is an infinitely more complex and improvisational process. For those who have defied the advice of mentors and gallerists by deciding to raise children while also pursuing an artistic practice, it can be hard to know how to proceed. While many well-known artists have managed to be engaged parents while pursuing successful careers, mention of this creative balancing act is largely absent from critical discourse, and so we find ourselves reinventing the wheel again and again.

**Propositions, Manifestos, and Experiments**, then, is an ad hoc handbook for anyone interested in the intersection of art practice and family life. As the art world expands to include models for creative practice beyond the dominant template of the singular genius working alone, we recognize artist-parenthood – biological and otherwise – as one of many possible options, and search for creative strategies to make it work.

This publication started with a call for contributions divided into three sections: **Letters to** an artist named **M** considering the consequences of potential parenthood, **Skillshare**, our personal tactics and missteps in negotiating the creative life as an artist-parent, and **Future Plans**, a series of speculative proposals that are alternately humble and ambitious. As these came together our tidy categories of past, present, and future began to overlap and merge. Parenthood is full of temporal shifts and strange rituals that expand and contract the continuum of time, so why not let letters to present or former selves get mixed up with visions of the future, failed utopias intermingled with vibrant optimism? These personal experiments represent the need to create sustainable and sustaining artistic lives for all artists. The challenges of parenthood bring a sense of urgency as we work to make the art world we want to be a part of, one that includes and values the perspectives of those raising children and is infinitely more interesting for it.

Christa Donner  
Artist, Mother, Cultural ReProducer

Anonymous

## DEAR M,

June 2014

I understand your confusion, as I am currently going through a similar state of indecision. Yesterday, I watched Ann Marie Slaughter's TED Talk. It's interesting because on the face of it the argument she makes is old, and yet I have to confront the fact that it is still relevant and even applies to me. The idea that we don't, but should, equally value the work of caregiving or parenting to the work of a career is in fact quite challenging for me. I'm reflecting on a recent encounter with a quite successful male artist, who I was meeting for the first time at the closing of his art exhibition at a major art gallery in New York. When he mentioned his wife, who was not in attendance, I asked, "What does she do?" He told me that she is currently full-time at home with their son, and I thought to myself, *ugh, that's not very interesting*, essentially dismissing her in my mind.

My mother was the primary caregiver for my sister and I. I was (still am) so totally attached to my mom that there was virtually no way other than maternal-primary-caregiving for my parents to effectively parent me. I was a kid who needed my mother's extremely hands-on time for my emotional well-being. My sister was very different, much more independent. And maybe my kid would also be different, but at the end of the day how can I hold the values I have for hands-on parenting while devaluing the labor of parenting? Is this contradiction at the heart of my mixed-feelings and indecision?

M, I always thought that I would get married and have kids, but when that didn't happen my work became my sustenance. At thirty-eight, my work now provides me with so much of what I need: my income, my emotional highs-and-lows, my sense of purpose and meaning, spiritual connectedness, my social life (what little of it I have), wisdom and life-lessons, it all comes from my work. So much of my self-respect comes from my efforts in the studio and the new opportunities those efforts bring. The possibility of shifting my priorities or relying on different or complimentary sources for those feelings is incredibly scary. What if I end up losing them from the one without gaining them from the other or gaining them from the other at the detriment of the first? My friends assure me that this won't happen, but I know that life offers no guarantees and that others are not reliable gauges of my own experience.



At other times in my life, even recently, I've felt very optimistic about the possibility of it all coming together: of being the kind of parent I would want to be and the kind of artist I want to be. Now I worry that the two would be in constant conflict, that rather than feeling totally present in each activity, I would always or often feel that I should be doing the other while doing the one. I have blissful images of myself doing both simultaneously: I have a child playing at my feet in the studio, or I'm coaching a school-aged kid through their homework while also painting. I often joke that my painting could be done by a trained monkey, except for crucial moments of decision. But the couple of times that I've heard artists speak to the idea of combined studio and parenting time, they say it's not possible -- the suggestion being (I assume) that kids need less divided attention. The idea of hiring help either for studio-work or caregiving, however, is not an easy or comfortable idea for me. I generally don't like company, interfacing with institutions, or even having a schedule. As it is now I spend the vast, vast majority of my time in my home-studio by myself with few external demands. I've organized my life this way to ensure my productivity and with the hope of reaching my artistic goals. I worry that changing those conditions might lower the likelihood of achieving my dreams.

I also worry that the economy of my life would change if I had children. I'm currently financially sound. My work provides more than enough money for me to sustain my life, which has relatively low expenses. I worry that with the addition of a child my expenses would rise, and my erratic and often modest income would no longer provide the necessary money or security to meet my needs. Most of the artists I know solve this problem by teaching. However, based on my previous experiences, I derive no pleasure or satisfaction from teaching.

My life is blissfully simple. I spend my days in the studio. When I'm not in the studio, I'm doing other things I enjoy: baking, cooking, exercising, managing my career and spending time with my partner. I love my life! I deeply fear making a radical change, yet I now have the circumstances that could allow me to fulfill my long-held desire to have a child. I have a partner who wants to be a father and my curiosity and interest in motherhood persists. Despite my many reservations, I am confident that if we choose to have children, we will be great parents.

Sincerely yours in indecision,  
*an artist on the brink of making a choice.*

## I WISH SOMEONE TOLD ME

- ◆ PARENTING IS NOT A MONOLITH. YOUR EXPERIENCE MAY BE VASTLY DIFFERENT FROM OTHERS, EVEN IF YOU SHARE BEING A PARENT AND BEING AN ARTIST. DON'T FOCUS ON THE DIFFERENCES, BUT SEE THAT THERE ARE COMMONALITIES, AND WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN SUPPORT EACH OTHER.
- ◆ IT'S OK TO FEEL CONFLICTED / AMBIVALENT ABOUT BEING A PARENT, OR BEING AN ARTIST, OR BOTH.
- ◆ SOMETIMES YOU WILL COME HOME FROM ART STUFF FEELING LIKE SHIT, BECAUSE IT SEEMS THAT BEING AN ARTIST AND A PARENT ARE MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE.
  - it's ok to take a break and be frustrated with it for a while.
  - but, periodically, look at your favorite artists or whatever helps you get excited about art again.
- ◆ IT'S OK TO NOT MAKE ART ABOUT BEING A PARENT, OR THAT SEEMS COMPLETELY DISCONNECTED FROM THAT EXPERIENCE.
- ◆ IT'S OK TO WANT AN ART PRACTICE THAT IS SEPARATE FROM PARENTING AND SEPARATE FROM YOUR KID.
- ◆ IT'S OK TO NEED YOUR OWN TIME TO DO STUFF, TO THINK, TO MAKE AWAY FROM YOUR KID.
- ◆ IT'S OK TO HAVE A DIFFERENT WAY OF MAKING, OR A DIFFERENT PACE THAN THE EXPECTED ONE.

and...

comparing your practice/life to people without kids will only leave you feeling bad. Own up to your experience + choices...

AND SO MUCH MORE... BUT I HOPE THIS IS A

GOOD START — ♥ — CHIARA



# Oxytocin

THE DAY I WEANED  
RAMONA....



NO MORE  
"MILKIE"  
OKAY  
DARLING?



...WAS THE SAME DAY  
I GOT AN INTERN AND  
STARTED TO UPDATE MY  
WEBSITE A LOT.



I FOUND BREASTFEEDING  
TO BE AN EXTREMELY  
PLEASURABLE EXPERIENCE.



APPARENTLY THIS IS  
BECAUSE OF A CHEMICAL  
CALLED OXYTOCIN.



OXYTOCIN IS ALSO  
RELEASED IN A MAN'S  
BRAIN RIGHT AFTER  
HE EJACULATES.



SO I WONDER IF MY SUDDEN  
BURST OF CREATIVE DRIVE ....



... IS BECAUSE I'M  
NO LONGER  
ON A  
SLOW  
OXYTOCIN  
DRIP.



# CREATING CONNECTIONS

## The Mothership Project

In early 2013 a Dublin based artist coming to terms with the challenges of parenthood sent an email around to a few fellow artists, wondering if others related to her situation. Some weeks later in a studio at the Irish Museum of Modern art a group of five artists met to discuss their shared experiences. As a painter working from a studio at home and feeling the increased isolation that comes with being a mother and an artist, I shared my experiences. Others raised different issues related to their practices. The notes from this meeting were circulated, a web page developed and within weeks the network had grown to a group of 25. **The Mothership Project; a network of Irish parenting visual artists and artworkers** was born.

## The Issues

Although we had similar experiences, problems and anecdotes to share, due to our different practices, work commitments and the differing ages of our children, we each had distinct needs and expectations from the project. Four themed meetings were agreed upon, each hosted by a different artist based on a subject of particular interest to them. These were:

- \* **Studios at home:** Can we create a network of professionals working outside a group studio structure?
- \* **Time and Money:** How does parenthood impact upon the precarious earning of artists?
- \* **Perception of Mother/Artist:** How does having a child affect the artist within a reputational economy?
- \* **Childcare:** Can we create alternative models to support artists?

## Isolation

I am a painter and a mother of two children, aged 8 and 5, so having a studio at home was a practical solution enabling me to balance my two roles and work evenings and late into the night if necessary. However the problem of invisibility and lack of contact with my peers became a reality. This was what I wanted to address.



## AtHomeStudios

As part of **The Mothership Project** I hosted the first meeting proposing a virtual group studios for professional visual artists working from home or outside of a group studios. Seven parenting artists attended this meeting in my home. We discussed the many advantages of working from home including convenience, cost, being more productive, private and more connected to daily life but we also raised the disadvantages of working from home particularly the isolation, lack of peer critique, lack of social and networking opportunities as well as the sense of invisibility many felt. This meeting concluded with the formation of **AtHomeStudios**, developed as a platform to redress some of these concerns.

**AtHomeStudios** is a collective of parenting artists practicing from a studio that is based in their home. It has provided opportunities for peer critique, collaboration and a space to share ideas. This group now meets regularly in one of our studios, each person bringing work to present. We have tried to create a space for meaningful exchanges and relationships between the artists that are supportive of each artist's practice and to offer advice and feedback on each others work. To date we have met four times over one year.

## Obstacles and Benefits

The biggest obstacle facing the members of **AtHomeStudios** has been coordinating our busy schedules to arrange a meeting. With our different commitments including various teaching roles, school and creche timetables and partners schedules, it is difficult to make it happen. When it does happen, it has been rewarding and insightful to get to know the other members' practices and to receive valuable feedback on my own work. This year we are hoping to expand the group to include more artists, which will hopefully create more opportunity for common interests and connections to emerge amongst the group. At this stage we are quite open to seeing where this will lead us and whether future projects are developed collectively or whether the collective functions primarily as structure for peer critique and engagement with fellow artists.



For more:

[www.orlawhelan.com](http://www.orlawhelan.com)

[www.athomestudios.wordpress.com](http://www.athomestudios.wordpress.com)

[www.themothershipproject.wordpress.com](http://www.themothershipproject.wordpress.com)

## DEAR M,

I remember never giving this issue much thought until the day I found myself pregnant. It was a conversation I really was not that invested in. I was married for 10 years and was 36 years old. I was living the life of the artist, working in a home studio, making ends meet. When I realized I was carrying a child, I felt like I was ready... but to be honest, I had no idea what to expect.

It was not very popular for artists to have children, but I was steadfast in my decision. I remember thinking I might not be taken seriously as an artist after this. It was odd to see my belly stretch out in front of me, and to feel the pulsations of life growing inside of me.

Ramon was born during the winter. A few weeks later, I remember fretting about going to an art opening, as it seemed odd to bring a baby with me. I was trying to get used to this new part, which was like walking with a new limb, so to speak. As fate would have it, the phone rang. My dear friend, Hettie Jones, poet/mother was calling to check up on the recent mom and new baby. I told her about the opening, and she convinced me that I had to go. I went, despite my fears that I'd lost my identity as the artist to this new reality called mother. In fact it was powerful: I became both things simultaneously. Baby Ramon was bundled up in his shower gifts and he and I together walked in. As I held him in my arms he became the object of desire, not the art on the walls. He intoxicated everyone around him. It was lovely.

Learning to juggle the "we-ness" of those years, when your child is totally dependent on you is daunting and doubt invariably clings like a nasty cold. Fortunately, I did know and was friendly with artists who had





children, so that helped tremendously. These women were also successful: Elizabeth Murray, Allison Saar, Laura Letinsky, Hettie Jones. They all seemed so comfortable around their kids, and they made it seem possible as their studio work flourished. They were my role models as I gained confidence and joy in sharing a well of knowing that you just cant really explain, but need to live through.

Parenting did have an impact on my creative practice: I learned to multi-task, as time and exhaustion competed for prominent roles. At the end of the day, there was not a lot of time to catch up or socialize. Unfortunately, friends who were childless we saw less and less. Bright colors seemed to follow me from the baby shower through high school. Slowly they seeped into the studio and became important to the paintings. It was as traumatic as it was exciting. All in all, I would say motherhood was the best thing that happened to the artist that lives inside of me. It pushed aside all doubt to the background, as love, confidence, intuition, patience, moved to the foreground. Ramon is a constant reminder that we are still always becoming ourselves.

- Candida







Max is the name his Birth Mo  
then wanted to name him  
It is the middle name  
on his first birth

it is the middle name  
on his first birth  
certificate and  
may stay +  
his name

the name  
she calls  
him w  
kens  
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ees  
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N.  
A.P. the  
name of his  
brother;  
N

i  
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the cat  
the sweetest  
animal  
on the  
planet

P

713 PZ 6

124  
454  
919  
110

on the

include both names. A friend gave her

five parents who  
it was important to

Frank and 12 Potter is  
st name for both adop-

Arbeitsanweisung: Potter ist aus 19

R

nels sending gifts and guilt.  
 The cradle adoption commu-  
 nity of other parents, reunion  
 and special classes for  
 parenting adopted son  
 Serbian godmother.  
 daughter of close Cousin adoptive fat-  
 friends + network hers sister son in  
 in serbia one of first sit  
 "adoptive father  
 "adoptive father  
 "adoptive father

[illegible]

## The Culture Doula Collective

### A Movement to Change The Nation

*I am an artist who is 15ish years from my MFA; I have a couple long-term day jobs and a child. My creative practice is stretched so thin as to be a bare gilding on my everyday life—it is constantly put at the bottom of my list of daily priorities if it enters the fray at all. I now belong to an artist's collective and have noticed many others in my position so I wondered: what if we got together and created a collective specifically structured for parents with culturally productive tendencies? I have a friend who is a self-styled Art Doula\*, and my conversations with her developed into the obvious variation of the **CULTURE DOULA**. Let's put together a creative collective movement wherein we help each other get back into the swing of making while being parents!*

#### THE IDEA

- Find a rough warehouse space to rent cheaply and build out as a collective work space.
- Include a variety of storage and workspace options from small cubbies to full studios of various sizes. If possible, reserve space for shops and have members bring in all those tools they had in storage. Sign lease contracts and safety waivers so everyone can use the tools.
- Build out one area where children could safely play when supervised by adults. If possible, include a safe outdoor space as well.
- Recruit Cultural Producers who are parents at any level of their career, as long as they are out of school and have children. Be sure to target and welcome people whose work has foundered beneath the pressures of parenting.
- Recruit Culture Doulas: successful cultural producers who have conquered the challenges of parenting and who are looking to develop their careers as curators, advisors, consultants, life coaches, cultural critics, and general mentors.
- Develop the overall organization as a non-profit, volunteer-run collective wherein members apply with a portfolio and take turns maintaining the space.
- The mission is to create a symbiotic cultural refuge and work space that maintains itself through affordable rental and membership fees and low overhead for our target population.
- Our members will be encouraged to produce the best work as their individual trajectories allow. We will promote our members and seek input from external resources relentlessly.

#### THIS COULD WORK! WE CAN DO THIS!

If we work hard, this sort of mutually-beneficial organization can easily come to be. We could become horizontally integrated, working together to find, cultivate and support cultural producers who would otherwise flail under the pressures of parenting. If we build in checks and balances to ensure as much transparency as possible, we would be unstoppable cultural institutions in no time. At the very least, we can start a conversation and a virtual community to help each other.

\*Her name is Susan Vander Mellen, and she is pretty awesome



## HOW WE COULD DO THIS

# A Dream Program

## What We Could Build

### DOULA TO CULTURAL PRODUCER DISTRIBUTION

We would like to recruit a core group of Culture Doulas whose expertise covers a wide range of skills. Then we would recruit up to 4 cultural producers for each Doula, aligned by disposition and discipline as much as possible. The Doulas would be carefully screened to ensure they are active, engaged professionals dedicated to helping their mentees develop and succeed in their individual creative practices. Each person in this cohort would benefit from this altruistic structure: if one succeeds, we all benefit in turn.



At most, there would be four mentees per Doula

### DOULA / MENTEE RELATIONSHIP

Each cultural producer would meet on a regular basis with her/his doula. Workshops, shows, demonstrations, and other events would be developed and held to help to meet the needs of our members so each member makes progress. Members would be asked to produce actively each year, according to their individual trajectories. Inactive members will be placed in supported stasis so they can get their footing or choose to end their tenure and make room for new members.

### FUNDING

We would charge the lowest membership and rental fees possible in order to keep the actual space running day-to-day. Then, we could hold key events throughout the year to bring in key funds for capital improvements and membership subsidization. Ideally, a Grant Writing Doula would concentrate on finding funding streams to support us further. No one would make money from this venture directly, but members would all be far more prepared to compete and succeed.

### CHILDCARE

It would be imperative to have regular childcare hours in a safe area, staffed by members who have been trained according to state regulations. These members could be granted space on a work-study basis. Members who choose to use the childcare option would be charged a nominal maintenance fee (at this point, we are considering \$10/hr). Childcare would be available as long as the distribution of adults to children is acceptable, given the medial age of the group present. Childcare would only be available to cultural producers working within the space.

### WHAT'S THE CATCH?

We founders would be investing in the future of our community. The idea started out of an impulse to help ourselves and our friends, but we have found there to be an enormous lack for this sort of holistic, proactive support for parents with creative careers. The larger culture has a hard time understanding the creative processes in which we find our life's work, much less the need for support we specifically need. This is a workable plan to take care of ourselves and the successive generations. The more we help each other succeed, the more influence we will all have in the culture around us.

INTERESTED IN STARTING A MOVEMENT? VISIT [CULTUREDOLAS.COM](http://CULTUREDOLAS.COM)

## BROODWORK : FOOD FOR THOUGHTS : FEEDING CURIOSITY

*Food for Thoughts: Feeding Curiosity* is a site-specific installation that toys with the idea of sustenance by means of a stacked topography built of milk crates- the representative storage container for an iconic food of childhood. All of BROODWORK's projects are designed for the intergenerational needs of parents and focus on the complex building of community. Here we create an experience for caregivers and children ages 1-4 that feeds both physical and mental exploration.

*Food for Thoughts: Feeding Curiosity* works through the slow reveal of discovery instead of an immediate comprehension of the whole. It is bounded without using the negative symbols of boundedness- walls and gates- so that it feels safe but is not limiting. The installation thus operates on the complementary levels of the child and the caregiver, shifting the role of the caregiver from that of protector to that of observer. It also sets up opportunities for adults as well as children to form community through subsets of smaller areas within the larger whole.

*Food for Thoughts: Feeding Curiosity* is a comprehensive, abstract environment. While being constructed out of prefabricated plastic commercial units, it presents an open-ended and natural system. Instead of the riot of primary colors attributed to most

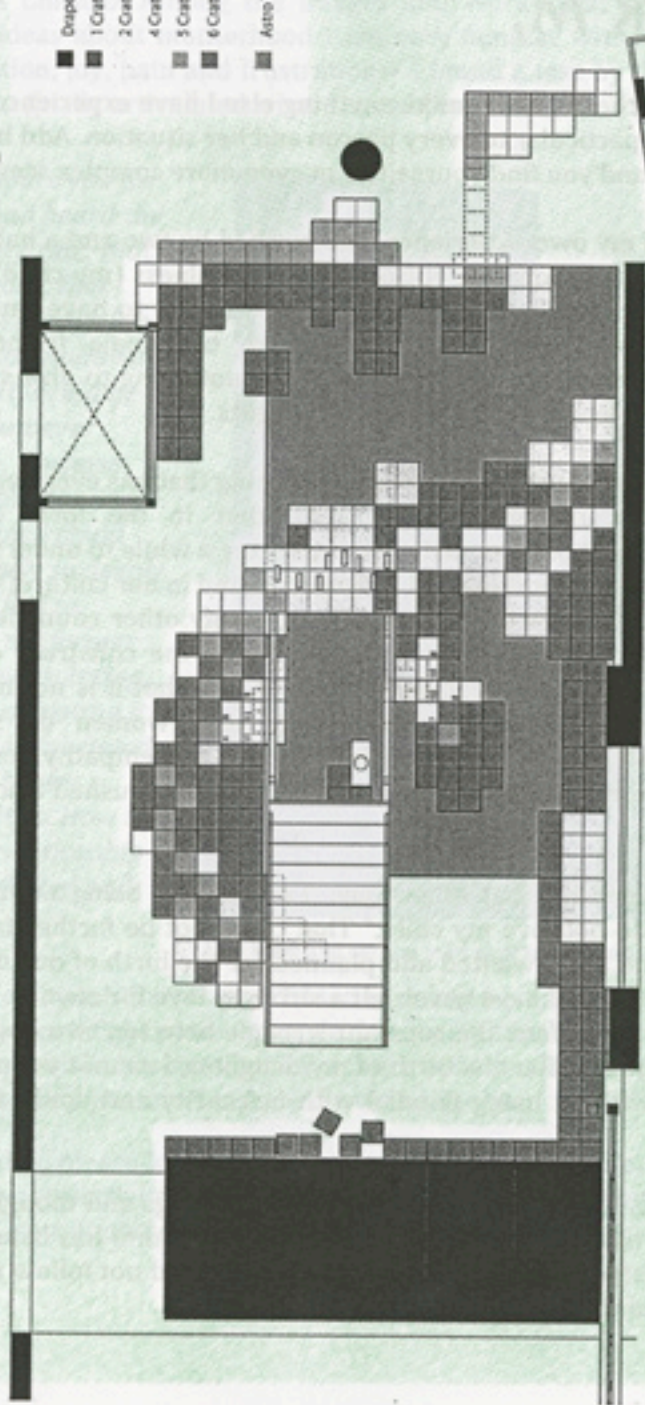
early childhood spaces, a framework of dark grey milk crates accentuated with green astro turf, pulleys with books, and colorful climbing ropes creates a soothing respite from daily chaos.

*Food for Thoughts: Feeding Curiosity* provides an answer to caregivers who often ask us what is truly nutritious for young children after their primary needs are met. BROODWORK advisor Ellen Galinsky, in her revolutionary book *Mind in the Making*, defines seven essential life skills that children need to possess in order to thrive; these skills become the essential building blocks for any age. They include focus and self control; perspective taking; communicating; making connections; critical thinking; taking on challenges; and self-directed, engaged learning. It is the seventh and most interactive- self-directed and engaged learning- that we highlight in *Food for Thoughts: Feeding Curiosity*.

BROODWORK is the collaboration of Iris Anna Regn and Rebecca Niederlander, who came together to implement work that furthers the fundamental inquiry of the relationship between creative practice and family life. [broodwork.com](http://broodwork.com) & [facebook.com/broodwork](https://facebook.com/broodwork)



Drape  
 1 Crate  
 2 Crates  
 4 Crates  
 5 Crates  
 6 Crates  
 Astro Turf



Plan Diagram  
 Scale: 1" = 1/4"

Irene Pérez

## DEAR M,

Being a mother is both unlike anything else I have experienced before and something particular to every person and her situation. Add being an artist to the mix and you find yourself in an even more complex scenario.

Because of my own experience, one marked by two and a half initial years of sleep deprivation, one episode of severe illness (my child's), continued isolation and loneliness, and a constant struggle to have time to produce work, I would give unsolicited advice to female friends and even acquaintances to not have children. I am not going to give such advice to you. Instead let me just share a few thoughts.

When I say motherhood is not the best thing that has ever happened to me, most of the responses I get are either in the form of dismissive encouragement or utter disbelief. It took me a while to understand how the *romantic* idea of motherhood is deeply rooted in our culture(s) -- I am from Spain, but I believe this also applies in many other countries. I could get into all the theories about where and why the construct of the *perfect mother* and the *super woman* come from, but that it is not my point here. What I need to say to you is that most women do struggle with motherhood and that very few find support and empathy. Instead, most of us who voice our opinions and experiences are brushed aside or frowned upon.

Please understand that when I say, "I do not love being a mother" I am not saying, "I do not love my child." That could not be further from the truth. My husband and I wanted and planned for the birth of our daughter and I can honestly say I have never felt a stronger love for anyone before. This is actually the *problem*: the constant struggle between two opposite feelings that, four years after the birth of my daughter, I cannot yet put into words properly without being flooded with insecurity and doubt for feeling the way I do.

Thankfully, I have been able to share my feelings and thoughts with other women artists like my dear friend Anni Holm. Anni has listened patiently, has understood my struggle and, fortunately, did not follow my advice and had a beautiful baby boy.



Last June, Anni, her son and I went to the exhibition *Home Truths: Photography and Motherhood* at the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago. Among the images and works that presented situations and ideas about motherhood I am very familiar with – lack of privacy, exhaustion, joy, pain and frustration – I found a text by the artist Kate Murray that finally articulated what I have been through:

*"No one can prepare you for motherhood. I had heard the clichés from every side: that it was a lot of work, that I could (or couldn't) have it all, that my priorities would have to change, that it would be the best thing that ever happened to me. However, there was a failure to communicate how I could feel simultaneously so deeply fulfilled by, and feel so disconnected to my former childless self. How isolating, suffocating and depleting it could be, and the associated guilt for having those ambivalent feelings. How this most profound relationship would be so conflicted and complicated.*



Anni Holm and her son in front of Janine Antoni's *Inhabit*

All I can say to you now is that I have chosen to do my best as my daughter's mother and fight so the struggle does not get in the way of our relationship. I have also chosen to not have more children. My choices are like yours will be: very personal and not devoid of doubt.

Having said all this, please know that whatever you choose to do, to have children or not, your decision deserves the upmost respect and that both in your choice and your doubts you are not alone.

best,  
Irene

4.34 - crying - 10.25s  
 sleeping 4.47  
 crying 1.06  
 sleep 9.06  
 crying 1m  
 sleeping 11.03  
 crying 15s  
 sleeping 1.35  
 breastfeeding 8.54  
 crying 1.32  
 sleeping 20.50

crying 17m

writing (to godan series, for brother 8.51)

eating 12.30

reading about 12.5

9m

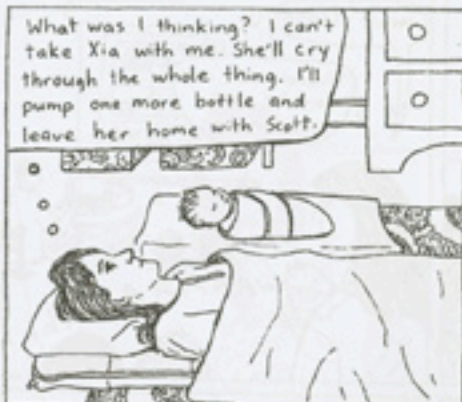
reading





Keiler Roberts

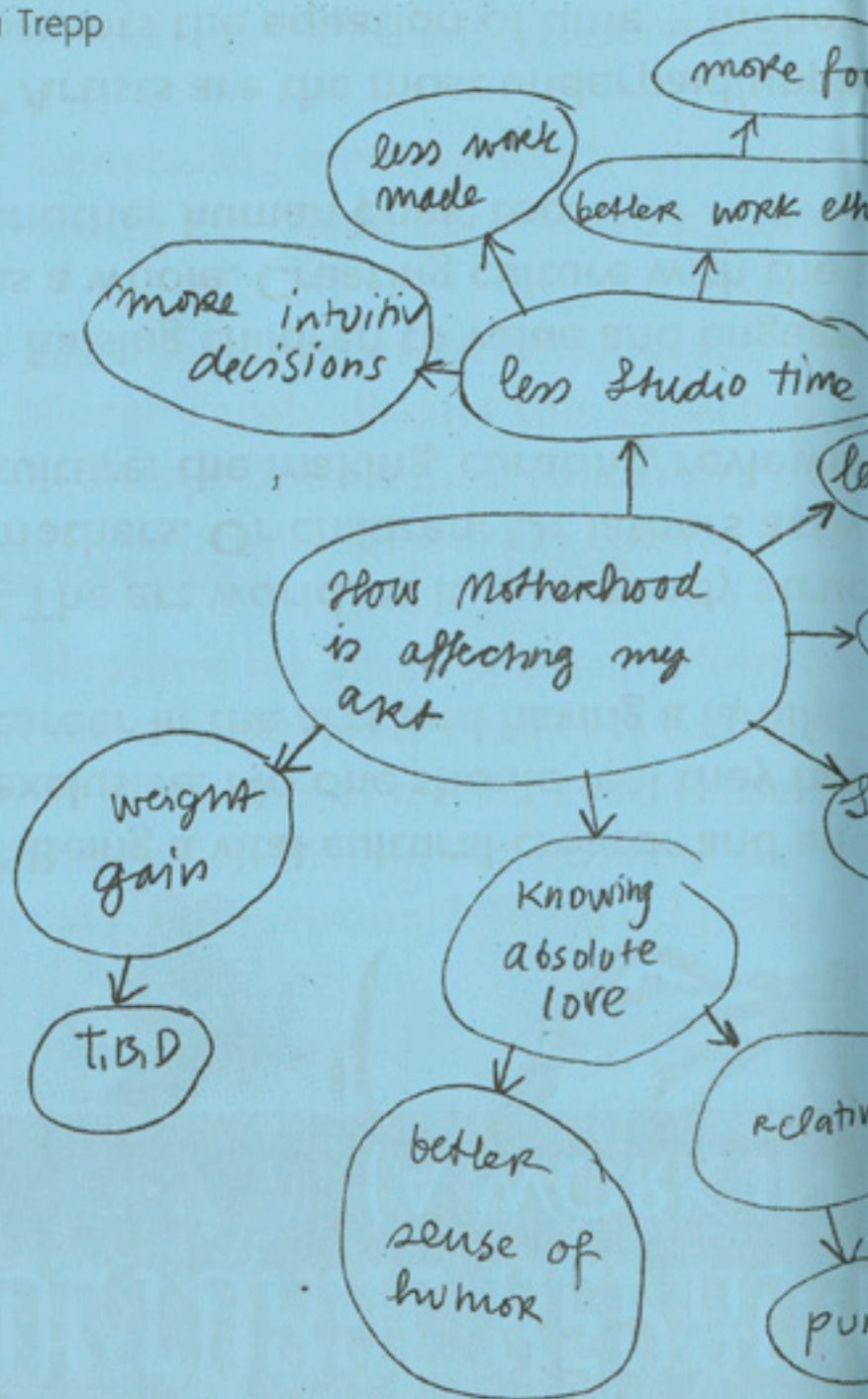
# Public Breastfeeding



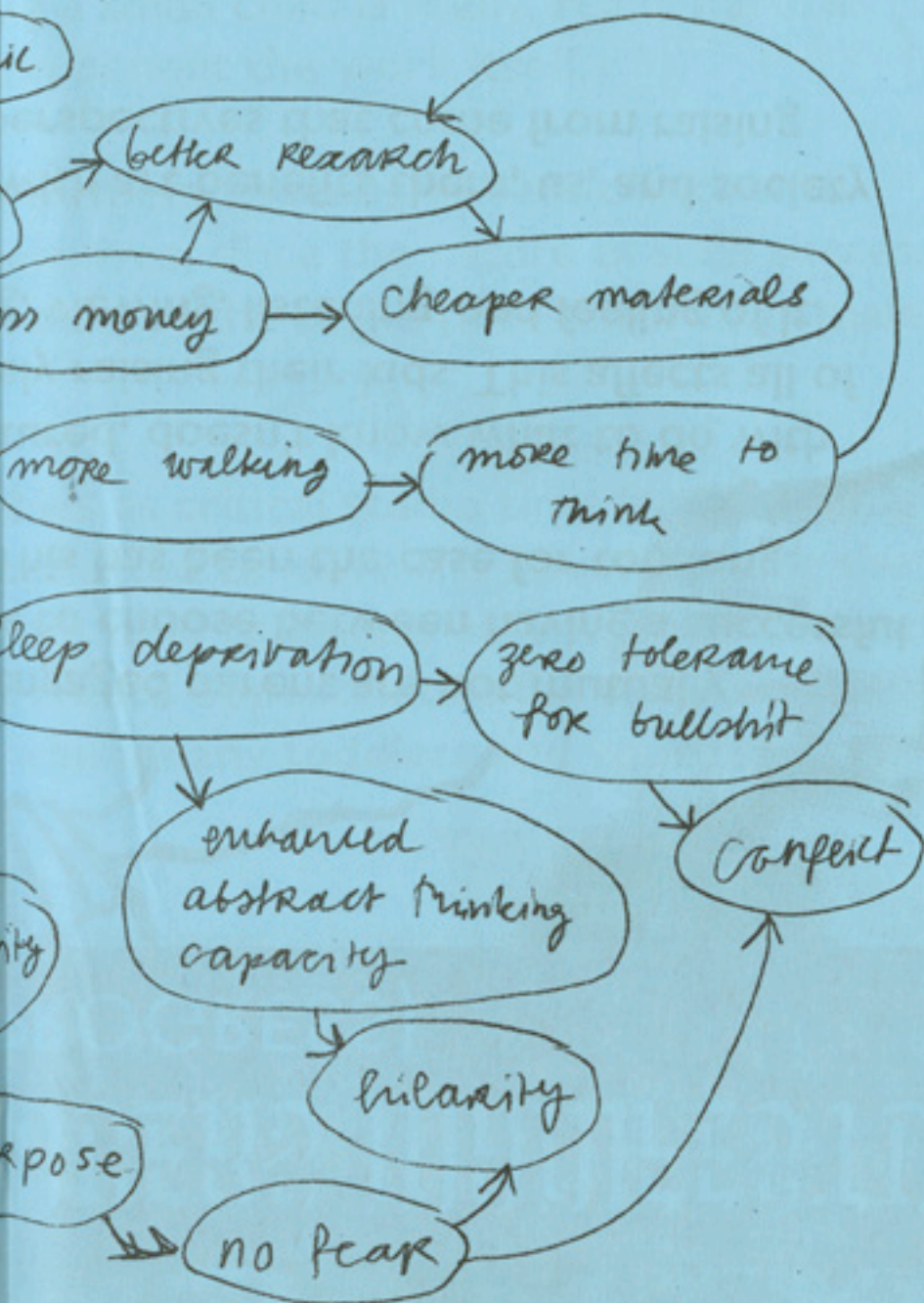












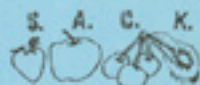


# CULTURAL REPRODUCERS MANIFESTO

## (A WORK IN PROGRESS)

- \* Being a vital cultural creator and an engaged parent are not mutually exclusive. No one should feel they have to choose between having a successful career in the arts and having a family. This has been the case for too long.
- \* The art world, as it is currently structured, doesn't know what to do with mothers. Or children. Or fathers actively raising their kids. This affects all of culture: the making, curating, reviewing, viewing, listening, and feeling of it.
- \* Raising children to value and engage with art benefits them, us, and society as a whole. Creating culture with the perspectives that come from raising another human does, too.
- \* Artists are the most underpaid/unpaid workers in the arts economy. For parents the equation of time = money is literal. Focused time in the studio, attending an evening event, or just going to work adds up to hours of childcare expenses. We expect fair compensation (monetary or in exchange for goods/services) for the creative work that we do.
- \* Generating creative work while raising a small child is really, really hard. It can also be incredibly rewarding, and can benefit the work itself.
- \* Successful artists/writers/curators/performers/choreographers/critics with children rarely discuss this aspect of their lives, since the nature of such success has always been centered around the model of the single (and historically male) cultural producer working alone.
- \* Naptime for small children often doubles as critical studio time for parents. Sleep schedules also make it more complicated to leave the house. During the first few years of a child's life these factors tend to isolate parents from the art community. Whenever possible we will create opportunities for cultural exchange between 9:30am – 11:30am, when many toddlers and younger children are active.
- \* Instead of isolation we seek networks of support, visibility, and dialogue. By working together to realize our collective needs and desires we will expand the field to make possible new forms and ideas.





For Immediate Release

January 24, 2014

## Impromptu Briefing by S.A.C.K. board member Kyle Schlie, 1/24/2014

J.T.B.C.C. Lunch Room\*

12:53 P.M. CST

MR. SCHLIE: Good afternoon. . . . Good afternoon, I hope you're all having a nice lunch. We all like food, and that's sort of what I want to talk to you about.

Some of you have noticed, may have noticed, that I'm wearing a fruit sticker on my shirt. (looks down) I'm actually wearing 3 fruit stickers on my shirt. The reason for the stickers is that today I have eaten: a banana, a kiwi, and a pear. To be completely honest I only had that (cell phone ringing) kiwi because I wanted—can somebody get that. I only, I only had that kiwi because I wanted another sticker, which. . . you know I didn't really need to eat it. Anyway this gets me to the real reason for the stickers, which is the promotion of S.A.C.K. Awareness Month. S.A.C.K. Awareness Month is the month of May, which is still four months out but we urge you to get a head start and begin wearing your stickers and spreading the word so that when the month gets here we'll have laid the groundwork for a comprehensive strategic plan. I should say campaign, not plan. It's very easy to do. Whenever you have a piece of fruit you simply remove the sticker and plant it on your shirt; or blouse, or sweater, jacket, whatever you have.

In short, we need to raise money. But first we need to raise awareness to raise the money, to raise the support for these artists and their kids. If you don't know what S.A.C.K. is then you know exactly what we're up against. But through the purchase of artworks from artists with children and/or kids we can make a difference, even if that difference isn't getting media attention. Additionally these children and/or kids need fruit for their lunches. Here's where the sticker comes in. With the sticker we can show our appreciation for children and kids as well as artists who raise them. Additionally the stickers are a conversational leadin for S.A.C.K. talk. What's S.A.C.K. talk you may ask. Well, S.A.C.K. talk is talking about S.A.C.K., which is to say talking about supporting artists and their children or kids.

Now, S.A.C.K. has had a rough start. Many of you know this too well because you've been there from the start, which isn't to say that you are responsible, but . . . Well, to summarize, in November we committed to buy a drawing from Meg Nafziger and in our December member's meeting we selected the work, and at that same, uh . . . same meeting we kicked off the first wave of our fundraising campaign. In mid January we initiated the second wave of requesting funding. That was just like two weeks ago. And in February we will launch the third because neither of the first two seem very promising.

We've yet to raise the full amount of money but Meg has been gracious in creating a payment plan, though, which we have already violated and then we restructured, is still, Meg is still working with us to make this purchase final. We're still I think 40 dollars short of our total dollar goal so please help us get closer. You can do that in part by wearing the stickers that are on the fruit that you will eat. And, please stay tuned for an announcement about a sack lunch in a couple weeks. That lunch will be the third wave I referred to. And . . . I think that's it. Thank for your time and enjoy the remainder of your lunches. Thanks.

END

12:58 P.M. CST

\* Note: J.T.B.C.C. is now Globe Al Chemical Company (JTbcc is still Joint Trust for a Beneficent Creative Culture), amended 9/3/2014



### Our Mission:

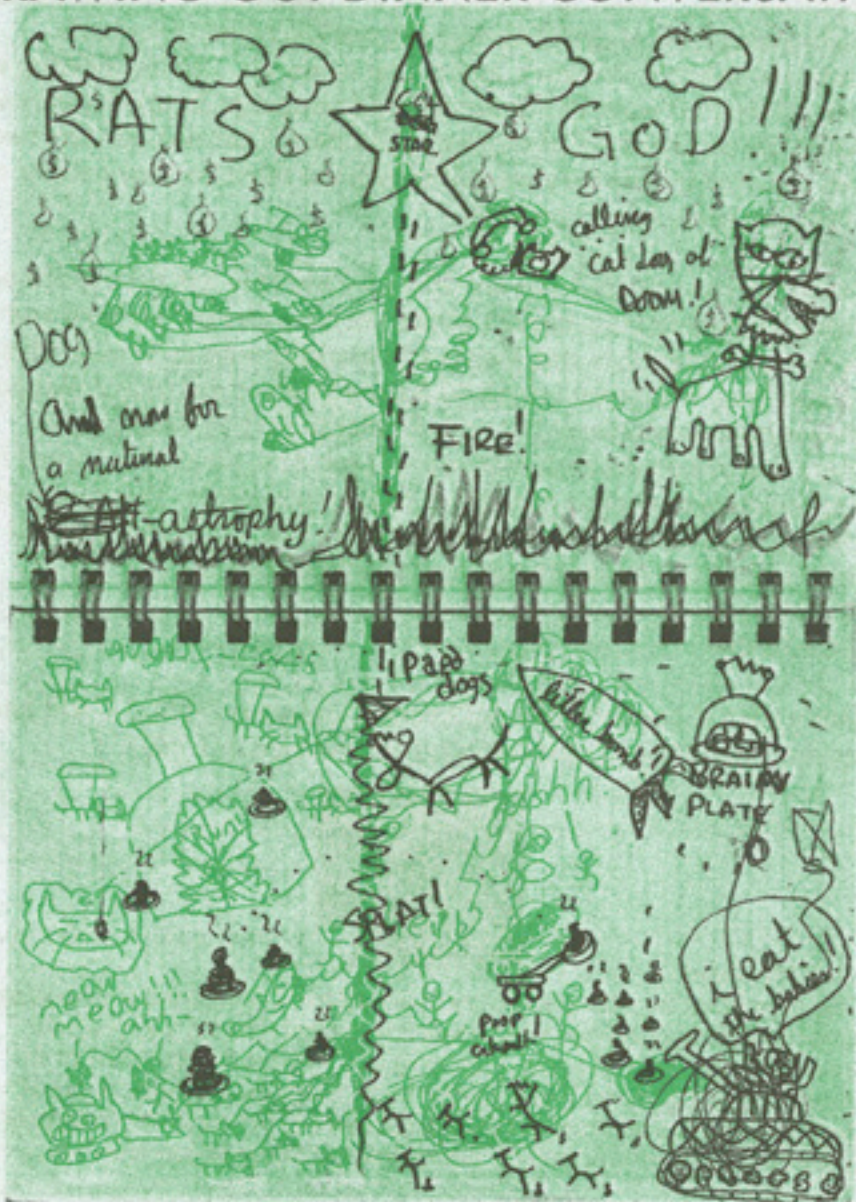
The Joint Trust for a Beneficent Creative Culture is committed to providing funding and support where and when it is needed. The S.A.C.K. program contributes to the well-being of an artist and her/ his family. 100% of all donations will go directly to the artist in the form of a purchase of one of her/his works. In addition to the cash purchase of artwork, we irregularly provide recipients with fruit for school lunches for up to one year.

### Our Plea:

With significant cuts in arts funding over the last couple decades, demand for support is greater than ever. Many would say it's the artists themselves (and it trickles down to the children/kids) who suffer the most. Please thoughtfully consider making a gift today.



# DRAWING OUT DINNER CONVERSATION



Try not talking with your mouth full for a change. Sometimes dinner conversation can be one-sided, especially when you ask parent-type questions. My son and I sometimes draw during dinner and talk back and forth that way. It's never boring or wrong. Here is one we made that is particularly intense.

Turn Your House Into An Exhibition Space

Draw On The Walls

Let Your Family Collaborate With You

Keep A Sketchbook With You At All Times

Take Lots Of Photos

Put A Studio Desk In Your Living Room

Use A Digital Recorder

Have Fun & Wake Up Early

Make A LOT of Lists





Stephanie Diamond

# WHAT I PACK FOR FAMILY RESIDENCIES (with a baby & a husband)

Clock  
computers, charger  
breast pump  
including car  
charger  
TSA carry milk on  
plane OK  
white noise machine  
travel alter

Water plants  
Vitamins  
water bottles  
car ipod attachments  
night lights  
ipod, charger  
baby carriers  
flip flops  
yoga mat  
Sippy cup  
Silver cup  
Socket plugs  
Door safety things

Sunblock  
Diaper bag  
hiking boots

baby's birth  
certificate  
radio / stereo /  
Speaker  
toys  
bath toys

baby Vitamin D  
Underwear and socks  
and bras

Snacks  
blankets  
slippers  
baby books

head lamp  
chargers  
post-its  
baby towels  
tote bags  
camera, charger and  
cord  
pens  
blank black book  
art supplies  
baby book to write  
in  
business cards  
raincoats  
hand blender

baby's wooden spoon  
Bottles  
Diapers  
Wipes  
Hats  
Sunglasses  
B Shampoo  
nail file and clipper  
Nose frida

thermometer  
beach towels  
portable high chair

check book  
tooth brush charger  
wood baby spoon  
Neck pillows  
Shopping bags  
Beach bag  
Sun tent  
Advil  
Toiletries  
Sage  
water filter  
paper banner for  
above bed

rose absolute for scar  
sarongs  
stamps  
zip locks

Take out trash  
Recycle  
Dishwasher  
Double lock door  
Lock windows  
Empty fridge of  
perishables  
Water plants





Lise Haller Baggesen

Dear M,

You really need to make up your mind. Or is it already too late? Has your body already made up your mind? You would almost think so.

Why the sudden rush otherwise? The way you jumped out of bed to get on the phone with your sister, to tell her all about a broken condom. A broken condom, for fuck's sake! Surely you have been around long enough to know that a broken condom does not a baby make?

But you were cussing and crying already so sure. Because you've got everything you need / you're an artist / you don't look back, you are of the school that will say: if you can't stand the smell, get out of the kitchen!

But you will listen when she reasons that your body is not some easy-bake oven, and if the toxic fumes in the kitchen are bad for you they are probably bad for your baby and your lifelong togetherness that starts. Now.

So you can put down your brushes now, or at least put away the turpentine and turn to acrylics, that half-baked good that is neither fowl nor fish. Turn blue, blue, Pthalo Blue.

Although you cannot undo the past: already embedded in your fatty tissue are the toxins and the heavy metals of Lead Whites, Cadmium Yellows, Chrome Greens, Manganese Violets. It is your excess and your guilty pleasure, but it is also your craft. Those vibrant hues, those mixed substances you like to overindulge in.

No more Cadmium Red for you, at least for the time being. No more Manganese Blue. No more Chrome Orange. No more Red Light Red, Bottle Green and Cigarette White either.

There are other colors of course. Earth tones: Ochre, Sienna, Van Dyck, Naples Yellow and Caput Mortem. Earth tones like Shit Brown, Piss Yellow and Milky White.

You hate earth tones, or so you think. (Caput Mortem means dead meat, means you are dead meat, career wise, that is.) You're a modern girl, and you love life -you love vibrant colors and big gestures. You paint like a man, man!

This is the Gold standard where-and-when-ever older guys teach younger girls how to apply wet paint to dry canvas -and you can't paint like a man if you behave like a girl!

Sooner or later you will be pulled aside and you will be told that you better be prepared to choose, because as soon as Baby rears it's ugly head, you can throw out your ambition with the bath water. Whether in jest or in deadpan seriousness, whether drunk or sober(ing) whether followed by an attempt to merge your wet youth with their dried out mid century, you have been and will be told, repeatedly, that as soon as Baby moves in, your qualities as a painter will move out, as if your bold gestures, your good taste, and formal judgment, were purely hormone based.

You will be reminded of that misogynist mantra - the one you have chanted so many times it has become a truism, that "the worst enemy to good art is the pram in the hallway" - but this time you will be on the wrong side of the pram.

This is where female artists fall by the wayside, you will be told. Not only by men.

Judy Chicago, one of the most prominent feminist artists in the US, and arguably the world, boldly states that: "I became determined to use my time here on earth to create art, as much of it as possible and to make a place for myself in art history"

In *Institutional Time: A Critique of Studio Art Education* Chicago recalls how, in the early stages of her career, she would sometimes do "male drag;" a kind of formally tight, minimalist, hardline mode of sculptural abstraction that was fashioned to look like it had been made by a male artist. (What will also be referred to as "dude art" in the post-post-ironic future.) Chicago expresses some regret that she had to make these formal concessions, before "coming out" in



the late 70's with works such as the butch "Dinner Party" —a landmark of Feminist art. Regardless, she insists that these amends, both formally and privately, are necessary to prove that you are willing and able to play the game. It is understood that if your end game is a place in art history, recreation and procreation are necessary sacrifices, and to become "one of the boys" one must become "one of the boys." Furthermore she maintains that as a woman you need to realize that you cannot "have it all." 1

(As ever, the euphemism "it all" refers specifically to that sad cow double whopper of childbearing and career-greedy bitch in heat that you are!)

But, really, isn't Chicago's insistence that you cannot "have it all," — and not only as a personal choice, but as a rule applying to female artists in general — the most ill-fitting, alt-modish, unflattering "male drag" of all?

Somehow, coming from a woman and fellow feminist, this female on female misogyny hits below the belt. Not in the solar plexus of your ambition, but in the root chakra of your desire. Because, at its root, the impulse to mother is simply that: desire. A lust for life. A romantic sturm und drang, and then some. Not ambition, nor destiny, but as Kristeva calls it: a passion. Like art making is a passion. A desire as carnal as labor. As kinky as lactation and as disturbing as disfiguration. As mysterious as sharing your most intimate secrets with a perfect stranger. A desire as simple Courbet's "Origin of the World" as natural as obsessive as Bonnard's family idylls.

This one desire will wipe out all other desires for a full year, until all you desire is a full night's sleep. A full night's sleep, a bicycle ride, the sweet agony of a day spend in the studio followed by the mellow ecstasy of a night on the town, downing a few beers with some friends and smoking cigarettes in front of an art gallery and then, again, a full night's

---

<sup>1</sup> Judy Chicago: *Institutional Time: A Critique on Studio art Education*. Monacelli Press, 2014. quoted in Tiernan Morgan "The Birth and Education of Judy Chicago." *Hyperallergic*, July 14 2014.

sleep. This is the hedonist past you will mourn. Are you ready?

You'd better be, because:

*What's that sitting in your lap?/Why, it's the next generation/ and is it true that it's worth all the sacrifice we all have to bring, no matter how rich or poor?/ Yes, it's the next generation.<sup>2</sup>*

If you want to paint for the future, and if you want to make art for the next generation, go ahead and put your body and your mind in the service of the next generation, and not the "my generation" of your mentors.

Maybe in the future you don't need to paint like a Man, but you will paint with the lust for life of a Mother?

In her essay *Feminism and Motherhood* Susan Griffin states:

*I have been asked if I had the choice again, would I have a child? This is an absurd question. I am not the same person I was before I had a child. This young woman would not understand me.*

I have to ask myself now, giving you a piece of my mind, do I understand the young woman that you are? Am I matronizing you, when I insist that the ripening and gravitas associated with childbearing and -rearing can enrich your creative practice? That you can in fact "have it all," but "it all" may not be all you thought it would be?

I have been like you, you will be like me. You pity me and I mourn for you, and yet there is no way in life that I would trade places with you.

Why? It's the next generation.

Love, L

---

<sup>2</sup> Neneh Cherry "Next generation," *Raw Like Sushi*, Virgin 1989



# We are Project!! Wakaka!

This is a short story about us. In 2005 Chris and Jennie met. In 2006 Rudy was born. We all went to Norway on a residency that we had arranged before Rudy was a thought. They were happy for us to bring our new baby. He lay on the floor and gurgled and smiled and we felt determined..



We returned to Norway in 2008 and In 2009 Jennie and Rudy started making work together. The works came from conversations about many things: Ape e mosca. Badmington. Those kinds of things. And since Alice could hold a pen, she's joined in, too.

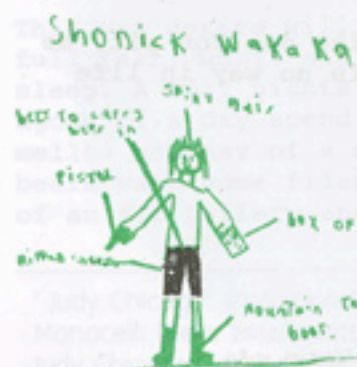


Alice was born in early 2010, Amazing Alice. A whole different energy. We became four. Well, five. Rudy was spending more and more time with Shonick Wakaka (a 30 year old Polish technician with a penchant for the odd smoke) Alice didn't sleep so well. We didn't sleep so well. Alice liked to be carried everywhere. We missed making work. We weren't sure how to make work anymore...

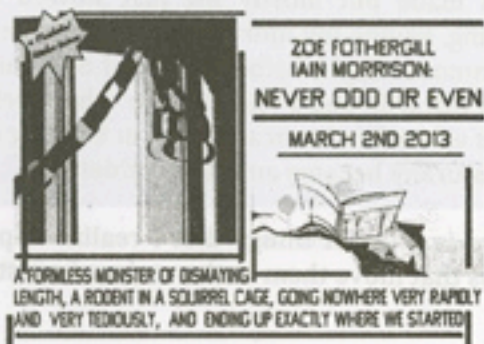


Our practices needed to change again. We knew that whatever we did, it had to come from our domestic place.

We lived in a three-room flat and decided to host an exhibition. We built a 6 x 6 foot gallery space in our kitchen and invited 18 artists and performers to take part. We called the exhibition Club Wakaka and Project!!Wakaka! was born.



With Project!!Wakaka! we began to make work in a way that completely embraced parenthood and the changes to our practices, which we felt that being parents to young children necessitated. We couldn't find a place in the artworld for our new form as a family of four. As parents to one young child we discovered a shift in our practices, but it was not until our second child that we felt the full impact of the difficulties that being artists and parents posed. We have worked with this and made projects that explore, though not always explicitly, what it means to be a parent and an artist. We collaborate with others and each other. We have offered our flat as residency centre for other artists and intend to explore this more fully in the future. As the children have grown, our collaborations have too.



In 2011 we launched our programme of Kitchen Lectures. These are an ongoing series of events that take place from our kitchen and (occasionally) throughout our flat. The events range from the format of traditional lectures through to film screenings, discussion forums and performances. It is a straightforward process that is open to the public, but with limited space. The Kitchen Lectures have allowed us to work with artists, performers and academics and have also allowed us to make and take part in work in which the inclusion of our children has not been problematic. We always imagined that the Kitchen Lecture model could transfer easily into the domestic spaces of others.





## ARTIST RESIDENCY : FAMILY MOVES

We were invited by Cara Megan Lewis to Shubert, Nebraska (population 150), the home of her recently deceased grandmother. She said she would go with us for the weekend of July 4th and leave us to stay as long as we wanted afterward. Midway there the engine of our 10 year old minivan died, but that didn't stop us from continuing our journey. Work was made but mostly life just slowed down: watching sunsets, star gazing, having my morning coffee outside, walking, playing baseball and dominoes. Right before leaving I constructed a monument in the room that my wife and I had slept in which belonged to Cara's grandmother. This was a family vacation but in keeping with my integrated art practice it naturally became an artist residency.

Here is a list of things that I realize happen while on extended family trips that move them to the realm of artist residency:

- ☒ Play native games



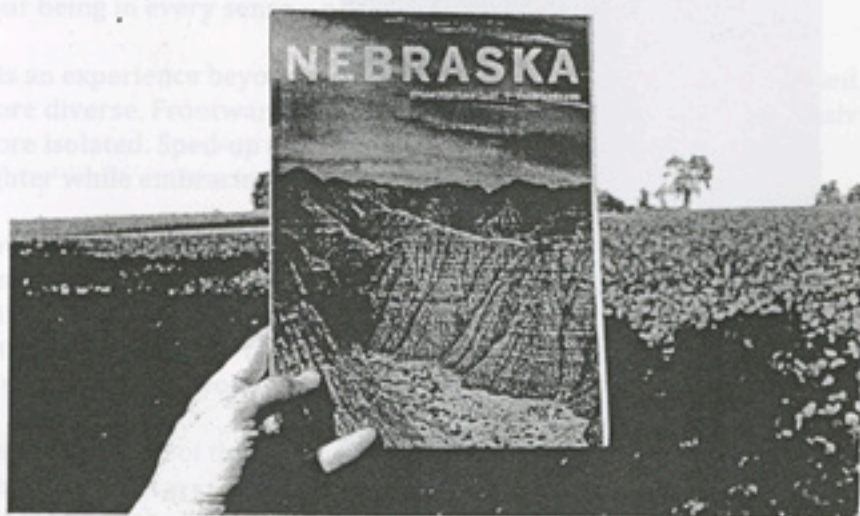
Baseball Corn Field

- ☒ Do nothing, move slow



Madeleine with Grasshoppers

- ☒ Get personal with the environment



Hold up Image (Shubert, NE)



- ☒ Observe everything with intensity



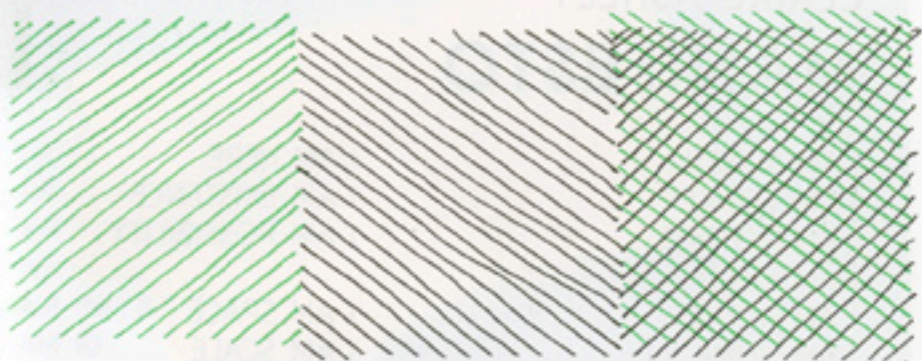
Watching the Sunset

- ☒ Become intimate with your surroundings



Chair Lift  
(For Cara Megan Lewis)

Laura Berman



## Dear M,

Being a parent is like no other being you have ever experienced.

It brings a deepening, a denser and richer life. Everything is more well-defined and more certain (the important things anyhow -- those not, just fade away). There is a constant intersection with every action, every decision, every word. An intersection between yourself and another person. But not just any other person -- a singular person unlike any you have ever known before. This person is simultaneously part of you and parting from you. Parenthood brings a constant fusion and fissure to your being in every sense -- physical, mental, spiritual.

It is an experience beyond words. Life is heavier, lighter. More focused, more diverse. Frontward-facing and backwards-looking. More inclusive, more isolated. Sped-up and endless. Scary and satisfying. Edges are tighter while embracing mysteries.

How does this affect creativity and making? Profoundly. Values shift, processes shift, rhythms shift. Like all good challenges, parenthood brings rewards beyond the imagination. Art can only grow-- deeper, denser and richer-- to be more relevant, more specific and more interesting to everyone involved.

I recommend all of this to you with my highest regard and complete confidence that you will succeed, progress and enjoy life as never before.

With very best wishes to you and yours,  
Laura Berman



CLAIRE ASHLEY

# MANIFESTO

I AM MAKER  
I AM THINKER  
I AM MOTHER  
I AM CHILD  
I AM HOUSE  
I AM HOME  
I AM FEMINIST  
I AM FEMININE  
I AM ACTIVIST  
I AM ARTIST

I AM MONUMENTAL  
I AM SCULPTURE  
I AM METAPHYSICAL  
I AM PAINTING  
I AM PHENOMENOLOGICAL  
I AM INQUIRY

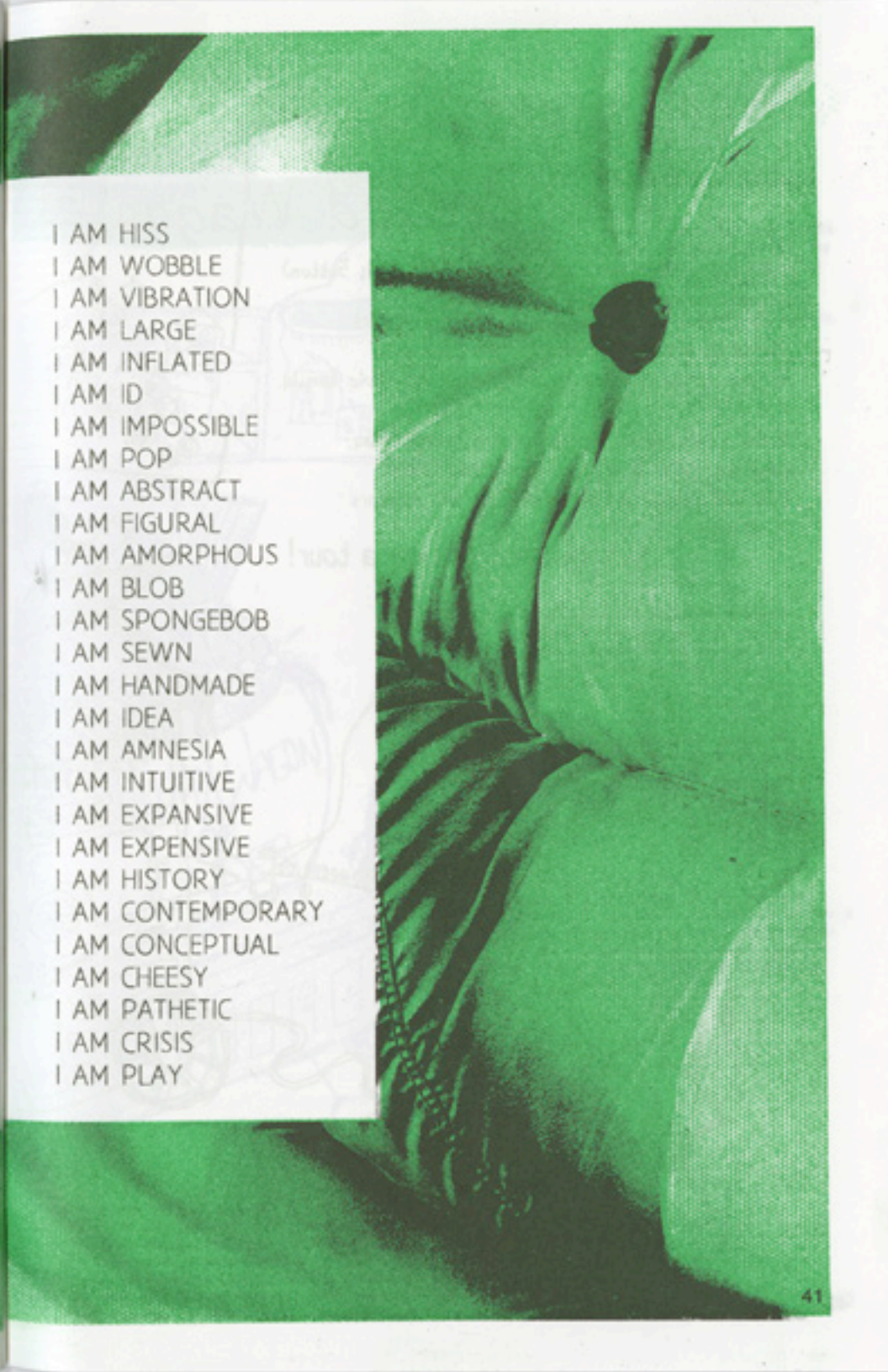
I AM POPULIST  
I AM WARMTH  
I AM HUMOR  
I AM LAUGHTER  
I AM LAUGHABLE  
I AM COMPLEX  
I AM DANCE  
I AM SONG  
I AM WEIRD

I AM HERE  
I AM EXISTENCE  
I AM POSSIBILITY

I AM SPACE  
I AM SCALE  
I AM MASS  
I AM STRENGTH  
I AM AIR  
I AM FORM  
I AM LABOR  
I AM TOUCH  
I AM SEX  
I AM RAPTURE

I AM MAXIMAL  
I AM BEAUTY  
I AM PASSION  
I AM POWER  
I AM BODY  
I AM FLACCID  
I AM FRAILTY  
I AM UNKNOWABLE  
I AM TEST  
I AM QUESTION  
I AM ACTION  
I AM REPETITION





I AM HISS  
I AM WOBBLE  
I AM VIBRATION  
I AM LARGE  
I AM INFLATED  
I AM ID  
I AM IMPOSSIBLE  
I AM POP  
I AM ABSTRACT  
I AM FIGURAL  
I AM AMORPHOUS  
I AM BLOB  
I AM SPONGEBOB  
I AM SEWN  
I AM HANDMADE  
I AM IDEA  
I AM AMNESIA  
I AM INTUITIVE  
I AM EXPANSIVE  
I AM EXPENSIVE  
I AM HISTORY  
I AM CONTEMPORARY  
I AM CONCEPTUAL  
I AM CHEESY  
I AM PATHETIC  
I AM CRISIS  
I AM PLAY



# !Announcing! The Wheeled Wagon of

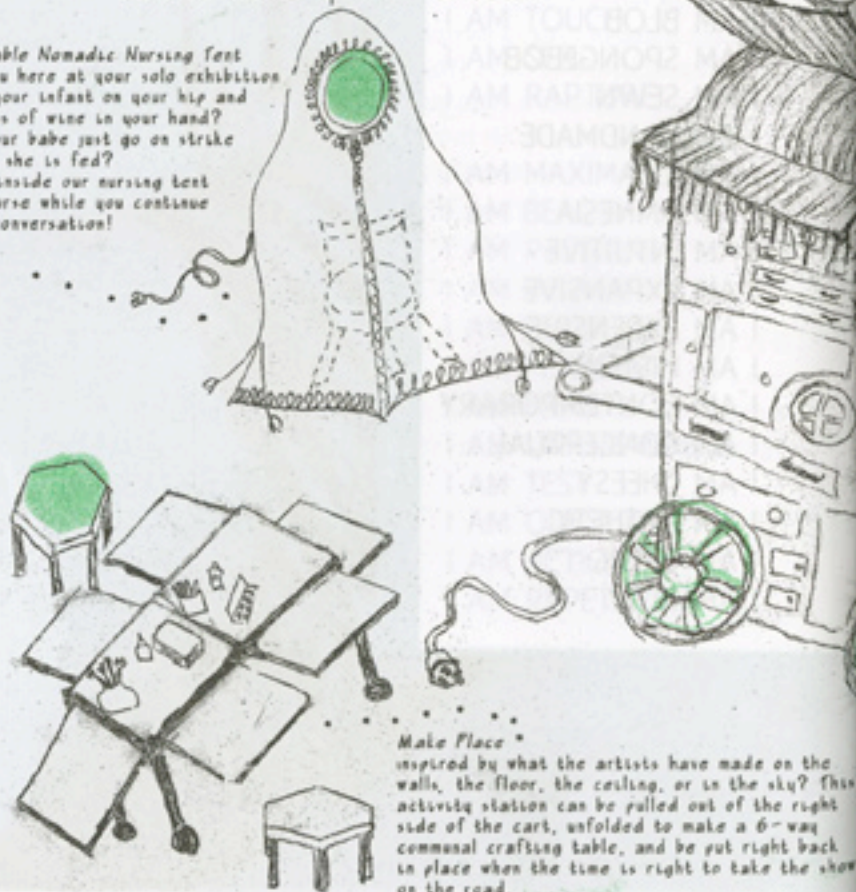
A project of Platform (Jane Marsching + Andi Sutton)

A city-sponsored, artist built, networked cart shared by artists spaces throughout the city for use during opening receptions for the whole family.

Make, craft, draw, animate, nurse, snack, play, hang out—this is a popup community space that can engage artists, families, and visitors of all ages.

Let us take you on a tour!

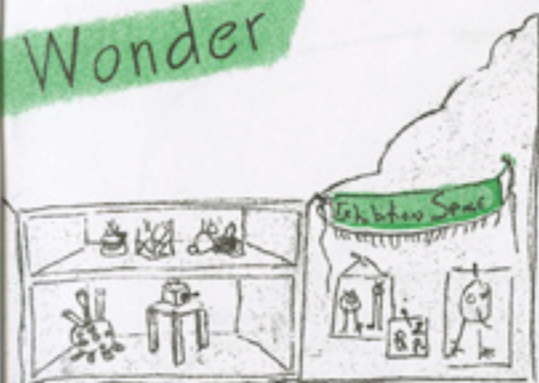
**Wearable Nomadic Nursing Tent**  
Are you here at your solo exhibition with your infant on your hip and a glass of wine in your hand? Did your babe just go on strike unless she is fed? Stop inside our nursing tent and nurse while you continue your conversation!



#### Make Place

Inspired by what the artists have made on the walls, the floor, the ceiling, or in the sky? This activity station can be pulled out of the right side of the cart, unfolded to make a 6'x4' communal crafting table, and be put right back in place when the time is right to take the show on the road.

# Wonder



## Cabinet of Curiosities

Did you just finish a masterpiece to match the ones hanging on the gallery walls? The front of our wagon opens out to reveal an exhibition space twice the width of the cart itself. Place your work salon-style alongside stuff you make with your friends.



## Toddler Play Space

There's even room for the wee ones under! Another side cabinet reveals a set of interlocking sponge floor panels and stacked moldable safety gates to build a playspace for the toddler set.



Networked Animation Center feeling techy tonight? Saddle up to the front of the cart, and activate our networked animation center.



# DEAR M.

Are you an artist?

No

Yes

There is time,  
though it  
May be of the  
essence

Do you agree with the following statement?

*"The act of creation implies a separation. Something that remains attached to the creator is only half-created. To create is let take over something which did not exist before, and therefore is new."*

No

Yes

Maybe

Maybe all things  
are simply  
one grand thing

And furthermore,

*"Birth begins the process of learning to be separate. The separation is hard to believe or accept. Yet, as we accept it, our imagination grows - imagination which is the capacity to reconnect, to bring together, that which is separate."*

No

Yes

Then raising a child may deepen  
your imaginary expanse and  
influence your work as an artist  
in unknown and unknowable  
ways-

- with certain exhaustion, but  
perhaps also with some  
resentment over an agency that  
defies your authorship, a an  
inevitable separation that  
demands your every creative  
capacity.

Then raising a child may deepen your  
imaginative expanse and influence your work as  
an artist in unknown & unknowable ways -

- with certain exhaustion, but without  
resentment. With the fearful and joyous  
responsibility to something you will never be  
able to control much less lay claim. The hidden  
abundances of uncertainty, the speed of time,  
the endless new.

Creation allows for everything  
(except excuses for its absence)

育児が男女間  
で等しく共有された  
なら、その問題は個人の領  
域を飛び出し、社会やインフラ  
問題として取り扱われる

**Invisible Spaces of Parenthood**

When childcare is an equally shared problem among genders, it transcends the private sphere and is treated as a public and infrastructural issue.





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+

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