AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT WITH OTHER MOTHERS AND TO CREATE COMMUNITY THROUGH SELF-EXPRESSION

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Statement of Purpose:

Online blogging and chat rooms are popular in our technologically driven culture. They provide a unique opportunity to create community and feel connected to others who are in similar life situations. The blackboard space here at the Museum of Motherhood is a more intimate and immediate setting for community building. It is a dynamic space to express your opinions.

Each week a new question or quote was posted. Mothers were invited to respond however they felt moved to do so.

The intention of this project was to re-invigorate a space that was in the original plan and vision for the museum — a space for mothers to connect with one another and build community. In a culture where sharing online is the norm, would mothers and caretakers feel comfortable to share their thoughts and opinions in a more intimate setting? My hope was that mothers would feel connected to one another by sharing their thoughts, opinions, and experiences in a communal and common space.
**Week One**

*How has your relationship to power changed since becoming a mother?*

Responses:
- “I often feel I am powerless to bed time...”
- “YES?”

**Week Two**

*Paolo Montegazza (1831-1910) stated, “Maternity and breastfeeding quickly ruin many of woman’s most fleeting beauties.” What do you think?*

Responses:
- “Is beauty determined by our flesh or our experiences? And who decides? Men?” — Joy Rose
- “Truthfully I never had perfect to begin with so my answer is no. Only during breastfeeding in the beginning it can be scary.”
**Week three**

*Mothers, Moms, Mamas — who mothers you?*

**Responses:**
- “MY DAUGHTERS MOTHER ME”
- “MY SISTER AND I MOTHER EACH OTHER”
- “MY FRIENDS MOTHER ME”
- “MYSELF”
- “THAT’S FUNNY CUZ I MOTHER MYSELF TOO”
- “SOMETIMES MY HUSBAND MOTHERS ME”
- “I DON’T KNOW IF I WANT TO BE MOTHERED ANYMORE...”

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**Weeks four and five**

“... the maternal instinct is the root whence sympathy has sprung and that is the source whence the cohesive quality of the tribe originated.” — ELIZA BURT GAMBLE (1894)
WEEK SIX

“Western imagery surrounding motherhood does not match reality.” — J. Ockenden, 2000

WEEK SEVEN

“Breastfeeding is an unsentimental metaphor for how love works, in a way. You don’t decide how much and how deeply to love — you respond to the beloved, and give with joy exactly as much as they want.” — Marni Jackson

RESPONSES:
- “Many mothers do not possess a ‘maternal instinct’”
- “I love my kids (even when I want to kill them)”
WEEK EIGHT

“The joy and pain inherent in the day-to-day experiences of mothering are designed to be fruitful and growth inducing by ultimately accelerating a woman’s spiritual development.”

Responses:

“Breast milk = love”

“Every day devoted to the ‘great creator’ — in motherhood I have found the greatest creativity of all! If that’s not ultimately spiritual, I don’t know what is? — Joy Rose”