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MATERNALISMS

CURATED BY NATALIE LOVELESS

MARCH 23 TO 25, 2012

A weekend of performance, performance-based video, artist talks,
and community events exploring the materiality of motherhood.

FEATURING

Alejandra Herrera Silva
Alice De Visscher
Dillon Paul and Lindsey Wolkowicz
Gina Miller
Hélène Matte
Jill Miller
Lenka Clayton
Lovisa Johansson
Mark Cooley and Beth Hall
Masha Godovannaya
Marlène Renaud-B
Victoria Singh

Mercer Union
1286 Bloor Street West, Toronto
Event Pass \$12

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FRONT COVER: *THE MILKY WAY*. PHOTO BY LOVISA JOHANSSON
BACK COVER: GINA MILLER, *FAMILY TISSUES*. PHOTO BY ELI GORN
DESIGN: LISA KISS DESIGN



MATERNALISMS

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

Forty years after feminist art first intervened in the sexual division of labour, what is the experience of the daughters of the 70s who are now mothers? How is this experience expressed in our artwork? And what is the relation between this artwork and the work done in the 70s? I am thinking here especially of Mary Kelly's infamous six-year installation piece *Post-Partum Document*, which she worked on from 1973 to 1979. With work like Kelly's in mind, I invited a group of artist-mothers to produce a performance or video piece speaking to their experience as mother-artists today. These artists use performance to bring attention to the embodied, biological, and material enmeshment of early maternity in ways that stand in stark formal contrast to Kelly's work. They do this in a way, however, that is not simply at odds with the insights of post-structuralism and the linguistic turn informing *Post Partum Document*. Rather, while grounded in a "return to the body," they demonstrate a commitment to non-determinist modes of signification and analysis, opening up the affective, enmeshed, experiential flows of maternal experience in ways that invite us to ask questions about maternal invisibilities and the power and challenge of the maternal to the professional body of the artist.

I would like to thank all the members of the FADO Performance Art Center, and Shannon Cochrane in particular, for the invitation and opportunity to develop this event. I am also grateful to Mercer Union for opening its doors to us and to Lisa Kiss for the beautiful design of the postcard and this booklet. Above all, as this show is opening on my mother's birthday weekend, I reserve my greatest gratitude for her: Happy Birthday Mom! This one's for you.

Natalie Loveless

NEW MATERNALISMS

New Maternalisms responds to a recent upsurge in attention to the maternal: new books and exhibitions, documentary and experimental film projects, new journals, blog-based projects, and networks, all of which pay particular attention to the intersections of art and motherhood.¹ This upsurge also extends, of course, to contemporary maternal art projects like Berlin-based queer sex-positive performance artist Sadie Lune's ongoing *Biological Clock*. Since 2009 this project has engaged in public and private performances which include tracking Lune's own reproductive cycle, interviewing people regarding their personal relationship to fertility, and seeking potential sperm donors or "seminal collaborators" to perform multiple inseminations as art. Closer to home, consider Marni Kotak's *The Birth of Baby X* (October 2010), a month-long performance where the artist publicly prepared for and gave birth in Brooklyn's Microscope Gallery. This performance marked the beginning of Kotak's current year-long project: the first year of life as a mother lived as art. Pieces like Kotak's and Lune's reflect the need expressed by many mama-artists to find creative ways of integrating their practices as mothers, artists, curators, writers, and teachers. This integration, however, does not benefit from being thought of as a "survival strategy." It is far more than that. By taking seriously the need to create from local and embodied conditions, these practices bring visibility and value to the maternal *in* and *as* art.

The aim of *New Maternalisms* is twofold: to enact a collective care practice and to bring public attention to the status of motherhood in contemporary art. By offering artists the opportunity to make work directly from the transformative affective and political place that is the maternal, this exhibition engages not only a set of representations but also a deeply lived material-semiotic experience, one where "mother" is understood as a social role that anyone can inhabit.²

NEW MATERIALISMS

In *New Maternalisms* this perspective emerges in a number of complimentary and dissenting ways, with strategies ranging from durational performance, body/action-based pieces, and social practice intervention to media-based pieces that use Skype or video to make maternal performance possible given the constraints of care in the life of an artist after-child.³

As an example of this latter strategy, **Dillon Paul** and **Lindsey Wolkowicz** present *In Place*, a performance-based video that documents the ebbs and flows, frictions and restrictions of a week in the life of one Western family made up of two working artist mothers and their two year-old daughter. During this one-hundred-and-sixty-eight-hour performance, a camera positioned over the artists' bed records family life as a negotiation of competing needs to nurture each other, perform wage-labour, and maintain creative lives as artists. **Gina Miller's** *Family Tissues* also uses video to document a private social practice performance between her and her three sons. Her action for the piece is to defrost her children's placentas and, over the course of an afternoon, discuss the biology of the placenta, make placenta prints, and perform a burial ritual with her sons in the backyard. Intercutting performance documentation with found footage contextualizing the action, Miller's *Family Tissues* reflects on the messiness of birth and on the problematic role of the placenta in Western culture.

As these examples might begin to illustrate, the material experience of the maternal is an ongoing feminist issue. While few institutions or individuals would admit to any prejudice, I know few new mothers who *don't* feel the difficulty and sometimes impossibility of maintaining their professional and creative lives. And I am not just speaking to the physical demands of nursing or the effect of

interrupted sleep; I am also speaking to a social organization in which the practices of motherhood are individualized, ghettoized, and considered somehow antithetical to professional *excellence*. In other words, motherhood is rarely if ever seen as an asset when it comes to professional performance. For artists, the problem is compounded. Unlike the wage-laborer, in the Western popular imaginary the cultural worker must be wedded to her craft. Her students, books, and artworks *are* her children, they are her fulfillment and her gift to society, and they demand her complete attention. The single-mindedness of this commitment is a given; excellence, we are told, demands it. And of course it is hard not to agree—as I try to write these words with my son grabbing my leg. Or crying. Or hungry. Or just plain bored.

Born in the 70s, I grew up with an expectation of equity that has been seriously tested since the birth of my son twenty-odd months ago. Indeed, this is despite having a supportive partner and inhabiting ostensibly feminist circles. In a so-called post-feminist world, “motherhood” and “career” are just supposed to magically work together without any special structures in place and without either category impinging on or seriously *remaking* the other. Being told not to have a baby while working on my dissertation; strongly advised to hide my pregnancy from prospective employers; being encouraged to remove myself and my son even from a feminist studies conference... in short, motherhood has shocked me. These experiences have led me to question the maternal *invisibility* imposed in my own creative and professional environments, and to interrogate a culture of autonomy and individualism that, in spite of feminist interventions, remains firmly grounded in an uncrossable divide between the private and the public. Within this culture, collective care practices are not only not the norm, they are fundamentally devalued.

Jill Miller's *The Milk Truck* speaks directly to this issue. Outfitted with a giant boob and flashing emergency-light nipple, this truck makes public breastfeeding a collective care issue. In an ongoing social practice performance, Miller places *The Milk Truck* on-call for mothers subjected to uncomfortable public reactions while breastfeeding. Here's how it works: whenever a mother is harassed or hassled for nursing in public, she can call, text, or email the truck and have it spring into action. The crew of *The Milk Truck* arrive to host a spontaneous breastfeeding party at the site of the offending establishment, raising awareness of the continued coding of the breast as *sexual* but not *functional* in public

space.⁴ Collective and participatory artistic gestures like this challenge both the privatized individualism of contemporary motherhood and the segregation that supports the invisibility of the maternal in public space and practice. Miller's work reminds us to ask what we are losing by being unwilling to negotiate the difficulties, interruptions and challenges of maternal practice in our public and professional spaces.

Deploying a radically different aesthetic strategy, but also speaking to the segregation of care practices, **Alejandra Herrera Silva's** *Challenge* paints a poignant picture of some of the difficulties for artist mothers in a world where women still do the majority of the domestic labour. Working with milk and wine, wielding broom and dustpan, and stationed among 60-odd empty baby food jars and a dozen old salad bowls, Herrera Silva undertakes a three-hour performance that cycles through materials, moving them, arranging them, breaking them and cleaning them up again. By invoking the materiality and distributed attention of domestic labour, Herrera Silva does not so much *represent* domestic and maternal labour practices as *implicate* her viewer-participants in their unfolding. At once trapped in and dedicated to these maternal practices, Herrera Silva draws attention to the question of sustainability in our maternal desires to nurture, love, and care. The *Challenge* here, then, is how to take the social and biological drive to nurture and nest seriously without reducing its complexity, simplifying its expression, or coding which bodies can do what and how.

Masha Godovannaya also invites us into the texture of her daily struggle to balance her identity as an artist with the demands of maternal labour in a 39-minute split-screen piece, *Hunger*. While the middle screen invites us into an intimate view of the artist breastfeeding, screens to the left and right contrast this performance of nourishment and bonding with the mess and frustration of everyday life as a mother-artist. Godovannaya's *Hunger* grows out of the artist's exploration of her experience of the conflicts of motherhood and creativity, domesticity and self-reflection, reflecting the ambivalent but poignant process of *being remade* as an artist through the practice of mothering.

Calling maternal labour "mother's work" and understanding it through the structure of the nuclear family leads directly to the kinds of maternal insanity explored in **Lovisa Johansson's** *Jumping Lullaby*. In her endurance-based performance,

Johansson works with a large tray of alarm clocks that are constantly going off. Jumping to soothe them and wrapping them in swaddling cloth, her action becomes more and more frenetic and exhausting in what might look like an exaggerated play on night-wakings but that, for those who have experienced extreme sleep deprivation, hits the nail all too closely on the head. Nothing compares to the desperation and powerlessness of holding your baby close as they wail inconsolably for the umpteenth hour. Everything in you is driven to soothe them, but nothing works; everything urges you to care, but the caring is torture. Indeed, this attention to care also informs Johansson's second performance, *The Milky Way*. In this three-hour durational performance, Johansson recalls her experience of the time-space and care-filled attention of the early maternal relation. Working with a ring of hourglass-shaped baby-bottles, *The Milky Way* invites us to join the artist in inhabiting the syncopated rhythm and subtle detail of milk dripping from nipples in space.

Alice De Visscher's *Dream or Nightmare of Motherhood* similarly asks us to pay attention to the materiality of dripping milk. Not yet mothers, the artist and her wife are engaged in the process of *becoming-mother*. Through short but potent actions De Visscher invites the viewer into both her terror and her desire surrounding maternal embodiment: in action #1, standing naked and neutral before the camera eye, De Visscher blows a white balloon slowly bigger and bigger until it overtakes the frame and pops in perverse mimicry of pregnancy; in action #2 she stands with two milk-filled wash cloths over her breasts, facing the camera as the milk trickles down her naked body and out of the frame.

Such performances are indebted not only to 60s/70s work dealing with domestic and maternal labour but also to the decades of feminist art and debate surrounding representations of the female body. Consider, for example, Annie Sprinkle's *Public Cervix Announcement* (1989), in which audience members were invited to look at the artist's cervix through a speculum in a lovely if unintentional play on feminist theorist Luce Irigaray's 1985 *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Similarly, Lynda Benglis' semi-naked dildo-wearing oiled body in the pages of *Art Forum* (1974) or the many versions of Hanna Wilke's naked body (1975-92) contributed to a critical history of the sexualized and gendered body in art, one that is still going strong.⁵ That said, while early feminist art and activism drew attention to sexualized representations of the female body, it generally distanced itself from

motherhood and the maternal. When it did bring attention to the maternal, it was the thinking, analytic mother who was celebrated, while the messy biological presence of the maternal body was—more often than not—seen as dangerously essentializing. Arguing that women's status as mothers had been used to keep women out of the workforce, out of public office, and out of the universities, many early feminist art strategies and discourses carefully avoided the maternal, the feminine, and the sentimental, thereby leaving the material-semiotic complexity of maternal practices uninterrogated.

Speaking to this history of debate surrounding the status of the female body in art, **Hélène Matte's** text and action-based performance, *L'Essence de la Vie*, urges us to inhabit a space between the densely local maternal body and the social narratives that structure our relations to it. The only performer to use speech as one of her central materials, Matte works with language, humour, and visual puns, asking us to consider mothers as cultural-workers, social structures, and poetic images that knot together new life and inevitable death. Similarly, **Marlène Renaud-B's** action-based performance *Dis/sociation* works at the intersection of representation and material enmeshment, using a night-vision camera, a mirror, and a baby monitor to explore the limits of sight and sound as access points to the maternal body. Playing with distortion, reverberation, and mediated or doubled images of her body, Renaud-B reminds us that *representation*—a structure organized by identification and objectification, subject and object—is no longer sufficient for understanding maternal art practices. Instead, her tripartite performance draws us into an ambivalent negotiation of the materialities of body, affect, and image.

Performance practices like these and others in *New Maternalisms* might be seen to extend the “somatic turn,” what some have called the return to the body. This (re)turn, however, is not simply a rejection of the “linguistic turn” that informed pieces like Mary Kelly's *Post Partum Document* (1973-79)⁶; instead, this (re)turn to the body complicates the theories of representation implicit in the linguistic turn, demonstrating a commitment to non-determinist modes of signification and analysis, modes that privilege experiential complexity over representational unity. In other words, these performance practices pull us into moments of material specificity without, however, grounding us in what feminist theorist Joan Scott has called “the authority of experience.”⁷

For those of us formed by the poststructuralist tradition, any return to the materiality of motherhood is fraught territory. *New Maternalisms* is in part inspired, however, by a recent school of thinking that takes this fraught territory for its own: “new materialism.”⁸ In contrast to the radical disjuncture between language and bodies posited by poststructuralism, the new materialism proposes that the relations between bodies, spaces, psyches, and meanings are never *a priori* determinable. We find ourselves instead in the realm of what Donna Haraway calls the “material-semiotic,” a non-reductive enmeshment of modes that we have been trained to think of as separate: practice and theory, mind and body, private and public, etc. As philosopher of science Isabelle Stengers puts it, “an idea always exists as engaged in a matter, that is as ‘matter[ing].’”⁹

Inhabiting the space between detailed local care practices and the social frameworks enmeshed with them, **Beth Hall** and **Mark Cooley’s** *Safe* explores how ideas are engaged in matter and matters engaged in ideas. *Safe* juxtaposes the overwhelming medical data, advice, and rules that face parents in the information age with specific actions that invoke the maternal everyday: hand washing, hair brushing, flossing, etc... As accompaniment to these texts and images, a fetal heartbeat repeats and multiplies in the background, creating a soundscape of the periodic monitoring that punctuates modern pregnancy and stands as evidence that all is right and safe in the womb. At the same time, this soundscape insists on the anxiety of information, an anxiety that obstructs any ability to even entertain the fiction of unmediated experience, freighted as we are by the immensity of information and disinformation characteristic of contemporary motherhood.

Victoria Singh’s *SON/ART: Kurtis the 7 Chakra Boy*, for its part, returns us to the intersections of art and everyday life. Documenting a seven-year “art and life” piece performed with her son, *SON/ART: Kurtis the 7 Chakra Boy* was produced in collaboration with Linda Montano’s *Another 21 Years of Living Art* project, to which both Kotak and Lune’s pieces are indebted.¹⁰ For seven years Singh declared her life as a mother “art.” While most performance actions during those years remain undocumented, the practices that Singh did document are organized around maternal affect and enjoyment and not public display. As he grew up, Singh observed her son’s indoctrination into various normative social rituals and through highly ritualized performances she worked to teach him to examine them critically. What, she asked herself, was she imparting to her son through their

daily practices (such as kneading bread or brushing teeth), and how could she use the ritual of performance to de-naturalize those practices? How might she bring the experience of pregnancy and motherhood into her performance life? Moving back and forth between formal rituals and everyday ones, between debate and discussion, and between socialization and critical awareness, *SON/ART: Kurtis the 7 Chakra Boy* addresses the pedagogical role of mother and asks how art can teach us to reexamine the embodiment of social behaviours.

Bringing art and life together in yet another way, **Lenka Clayton's** *Maternity Leave* speaks both to the difficulties of producing work as a performance artist with child as well as to the importance of working *with* maternal interruption in our social practices and not *against* it. For *Maternity Leave*, Clayton will stay home with her infant son, Otto, and allow his voice, his cries, and his needs to infiltrate the gallery space through a live-stream audio baby monitor. With no way to choreograph when, how, and where Otto's voice will pull our attention, no way to contain it as it forces us to deal with its interruption, *Maternity Leave* alters our relation to the other performances and to each other, demanding that we accommodate ourselves to *it* and never vice versa.

Indeed, with the many artists performing simultaneously each night and surrounded by performance-based video pieces, *New Maternalisms* pulls us into the material, durational, and endurance aspects of the maternal, invites us to respond to and dwell with them, spurs us into relations of both interruption and care. It is precisely this relation of care and interruption—of being in a relation of care to interruption—that challenges the frameworks of autonomy and individualism that I began with. When my son wakes up at 4 in the morning, I am the one. The call of the child is not one that the maternal relation is permitted to ignore. I cannot *not* heed the call. I am always the one, but a “one” who is, in the moment of being named, affectively enmeshed in a way that undoes the autonomy of the “one,” creating it as both singular responsibility *and* relational enmeshment all at once. It is this particularity that artist and post-Lacanian psychoanalytic theorist Bracha Ettinger calls the “matrixial relation,” or what feminist art historian Andrea Liss calls “thinking (m)otherwise.”¹¹

Thinking *(m)otherwise* means remaining attentive to webs of material-semiotic enmeshment that tack back and forth between labour, affect, autobiography, and

embodiment. This is, I argue, a very powerful place from which to investigate any social and ecological ethics organized around care. What might we gain by taking seriously the *remaking* of selves and practices demanded by motherhood? According to a new materialist worldview, knowledge is never simply disseminated or applied, but is rather always made by its subjects as it is in turn remaking them. Alongside social activist practices that work towards wage labour for mothers, adequate day care, shared parenting, and parental leave, we can also look to contemporary maternal work in the arts to remind us that it is not only the balancing of work and motherhood that are at stake but also the *remaking* of how we *do* and *think* these and other categories. While we may continue to value the capacity to be self-sufficient, autonomous, and independent, a vision of care—even and especially care-for-interruption, care that is not convenient—can become an alternative ethical and political *practice*, a practice that I am calling *New Maternalisms*.

Natalie S. Loveless

Toronto ON, March 2012

Natalie Loveless received her MFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. She also holds a PhD (History of Consciousness, UCSC) and an MA (Art History, Theory and Criticism, Tufts University). Previous curatorial projects include *Participatory Dissent* at Vancouver's Western Front Society (2007) and *Intervene! Interrupt! Rethinking Art as Social Practice* at the University of California, Santa Cruz (2008). Also an interdisciplinary artist, her wall-drawing installations, performance actions and video works have been presented in festivals, galleries and artist-run centers in North America, South America, Europe, and Asia. Her son, Orion, is almost two. www.loveless.ca

ENDNOTES

1. See Bracha Ettinger's groundbreaking *The Matrixial Borderspace* (2006); Andrea Liss's monograph *Feminist Art and The Maternal* (2009); Jennie Klein and Meryl Chernyk's *The Real M Word: Mothers in Contemporary Art* (2011); and Rachel Powers' *The Divided Heart: Art and Motherhood* (2012). As for exhibitions, the two iterations of *Maternal Metaphors* (2004 and 2006) immediately come to mind; Irene Lusztig's *The Motherhood Archives* and Mary Trunk's *Lost In Living* explore the maternal through film, while the journal *Studies in the Maternal* and the research network *Mapping Maternal Subjectivities, Identities and Ethics* (mamsie.org) do so through research and conversation. I would also be remiss not to mention in this list the long-standing and still active work being pioneered here in Toronto by York University professor Andrea O'Reilly, the *Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement* (motherhoodinitiative.org, previously *Mother Outlaws*), and its journal (first published in 1999).

2. For more on this see Sara Ruddick's writing on "maternal thinking" and Bracha Ettinger's writing on the "matrixial." As a figure for thinking through contemporary social ethics, Ettinger's "matrixial" is no more attached to the biological woman than the Lacanian phallus is assumable by the biological man. From a different theoretical lineage, Ruddick insists that "anyone engaged in maternal practice, male or female [birthmother or not], can develop maternal thinking" (Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace*, Beacon Press, 1995, emphasis added). And yet, that said, both Ettinger and Ruddick also insist on distinguishing something unique in the material conditions of gestation and birth—while the maternal can be widely inhabited, every human birth is the result of a *particular* labouring female body. It is this uncomfortable and complex intersection of matter and meaning that *New Maternalisms* is interested in.

3. This latter (the inclusion of technological mediations like Skype and video) is important because action-based and durational performance often demand travel in conditions that are not conducive to young children. Indeed, the artists in *New Maternalisms* were given the option to include their children in their performances. Without exception, this option was rejected. While some struggled with the decision, for others it was clear. Also, in several cases artists who initially accepted the invitation to perform decided not to *because* of the impact it would have on their lives as mothers; still others requested that they be allowed to send in a video piece because this would allow them to conjoin their maternal choices and artistic desires.

4. For *New Maternalisms*, Miller has solicited stories of past public breastfeeding experiences from the Toronto community. While still available for emergency nursing needs, Miller will also be visiting these sites to interview the owners and present them with either a "boob-friendly" or "boob-phobic" certificate, playing on Toronto's current push for a "baby friendly" designation from the Breastfeeding Committee of Canada.

5. One example of this is the exhibition *Have We Met Before*, currently up at the Ronald Feldman Gallery in New York City. *Have We Met Before* brings together historical and contemporary artists—Eleanor Antin, Chris Burden, Lynda Benglis, Heather Cassils, Marcel Duchamp, Yishay Garbasz, Detlef Henrichs, Christopher Makos, Man Ray, Andy Warhol,

Hannah Wilke, Gil Yefman, and Rona Yefman—around the question of the body and performance of self and identity. While travelling familiar conceptual terrain, this show adds a new focus on “trans” bodies. For example, Yishay Garbasz chronicles the changes in her body before and after “gender clarification surgery” while Heather Cassils documents her six-month durational and endurance-based performance *Body Composition* (2011), an homage to Eleanor Antin’s 1972 *Carving: A Traditional Sculpture*. In Cassils’ version, instead of dieting for the camera over a one-month period in parody of ideals of female beauty, she undertook a rigorous bodybuilding regimen that included steroids and force-feeding herself the caloric intake of a 190 pound male athlete, all the while documenting her body from all angles as it reached towards ideals of masculinity and landed instead in a firmly *queer* zone.

6. *Post-Partum Document* (1973-79), perhaps the most famous instance of mama-art in contemporary art history, charts the development of Kelly’s son from birth through latency. This charting of her son’s psychodynamic development and increasing autonomy also brings attention to Kelly as a *mother* and her navigation of the social and sexual structures surrounding “being a mother” in England in the 70s. *New Maternalisms*’s focus on the performing body directly responds to work like Kelly’s. In her writing about *Post Partum Document*, Kelly famously argues against the presence of the female body in feminist art in favour of a heterogeneous, *dispersed* body produced through what she calls “diagetic space.” Suppressing the performance and research elements of her project in favour of minimalist installations that employ indexical and metonymic elements (objects, graphs, texts) as bodily *proxies*, Kelly invites the viewer into multiple levels of critical reflection, claiming that these produce a “split” space that allows new forms of identification to arise. Her most famous contention is that the presence of a female body (either on display, live, or represented in images) automatically inscribes the viewer into a desiring relation that undoes the possibility of critical engagement: in short, the female form, in art, can do nothing but re-inscribe systems of patriarchal and sexist domination. While this was an important political stance for a particular moment in feminist art, my contention is that the enmeshed, material performing body is precisely what we need to be attending to in thinking through today’s art and the maternal.

7. Joan Scott “The Authority of Experience,” *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 1991, pp. 773-797.

8. According to most understandings, “new materialism”—a term attributed alternately to Rosi Braidotti and Manuel DeLanda—is organized around a central presupposition: that our world is not in the first instance divided into subjects and objects or the inert and the active, but that it is instead made up of “various materialities constantly engaged in a network of relations” (Jane Bennett “The Force of Things: Steps toward an Ecology of Matter,” *Political Theory*, Vol. 32, No. 3, 2004, pp. 347-372). While the “new” in “new materialism” is a contentious and perhaps fictitious branding trope, for my purposes here we may consider that the “new” is meant simply to distinguish “new materialism” from the work of “historical materialism” traditionally conceived.

9. Isabelle Stengers, “Introductory Notes on an Ecology of Practices,” *Cultural Studies Review*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2005, pp. 183-196.

10. The piece began on the 7th minute of the 7th day of the 7th month of Kurtis' life, and was organized by the sequential order of the seven chakras (the soundtrack, composed specifically for this piece by Kurtis' father Derek Champion, references the drones associated with each chakra). This organizational principle came from Linda Montano's first *Seven Years of Living Art*, during which she "lived" each chakra for seven years, dressing only in that color, painting her room that color, etc. More information on this first installment and the second, including collaborators, is available at http://www.lindamontano.com/living_art/index.html

11. On "thinking (m)otherwise" see: Andrea Liss, *Feminist Art and The Maternal*, University of Minnesota Press, 2009. On the "matrixial" see: Bracha Ettinger, *The Matrixial Border-space*, University of Minnesota Press, 2006. Without detailing Ettinger's theoretically complex model—which relies heavily on Lacan and Deleuze—I want to bring attention to her argument for an ethical model of the social grounded in an emergent scene that is "scattered, partial, multiple, non-unified and nonunifiable, [a] scene that is closed over again and again by our talk of identity and our presumption that what we most need is recognition for what we distinctly are" (Butler in Ettinger 2006, x).

DOUBLE

Saturday March 24 7-10 pm

PERFORMANCES

Hélène Matte, *L'essence de la Vie* | FRONT GALLERY

Lovisa Johansson, *Jumping Lullaby* | BACK GALLERY

Marlène Renaud-B, *Dis/sociation* | FRONT GALLERY

SKYPE PERFORMANCE

Lenka Clayton, *Maternity Leave*

ON-GOING PERFORMANCE

Jill Miller and The Milk Truck

PERFORMANCE-BASED VIDEO

Alice De Visscher, *Dream or Nightmare of Motherhood* | 4 min loop

Dillon Paul, Lindsey Wolkowicz, Maeve Paul, *In Place* | 2 hr 50 min loop

Gina Miller and her three children, *Family Tissues* | 6 min loop

Beth Hall, Mark Cooley, and daughter, *Safe* | 60 min loop

Victoria Singh, Kurtis Singh-Champion (with Linda Montano),

SON/ART: Kurtis the 7 Chakra Boy | 22 min loop

Masha Godovannaya with her child and partner, *Hunger* | 39 min loop

Sunday March 25 1-4 pm | FREE

MAMACTIVISM TALK WITH JILL MILLER

Join Jill Miller for a performative talk and collective performance action. Learn about the history of The Milk Truck and its relationship to contemporary and historical feminist art practice; learn about “art as social practice” and discuss the relationship of art to motherhood today.

Video installations will be running throughout this event, as will *Maternity Leave* by Lenka Clayton.



Lenka Clayton

is a UK born conceptual artist whose work exaggerates and reorganizes the accepted rules of everyday life, extending the familiar into the realms of the poetic and absurd. She and writer Michael Crowe are currently writing a hand-written letter to every household in the world. Her son Otto is almost one.

For New Maternalisms, Clayton performs *Maternity Leave*, a durational, Skype-mediated piece that invokes overlapping cycles of responsibility: government to citizen, institution to artist, artist to audience, parent to child, and audience to artwork. *Maternity Leave* was originally commissioned by the Carnegie Museum of Art for the 2011 Pittsburgh Biennial. lenkaclayton.com



Alice De Visscher

lives and works in Brussels, Belgium. She has been working exclusively in performance since 2006 and has exhibited both nationally and internationally. De Visscher uses her body, objects and space to create images that challenge expectations and open new meanings. De Visscher and her wife are currently trying for a baby.

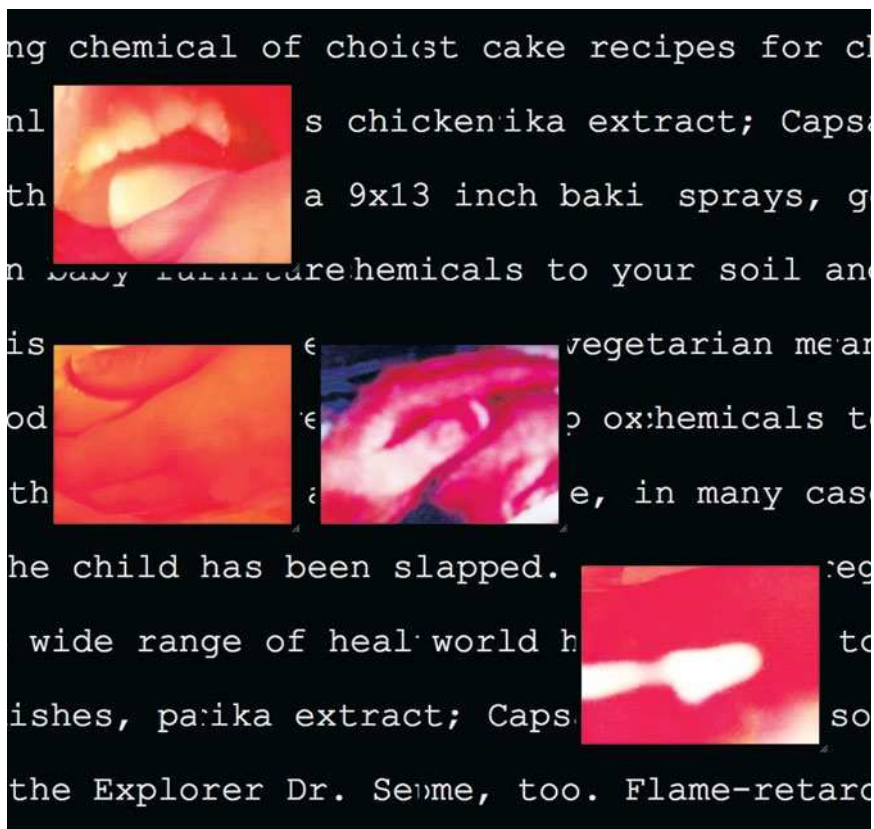
For New Maternalisms De Visscher presents *Dream or Nightmare of Motherhood*, two short performance-based videos that invoke her fantasies and fears surrounding the experiences of birth and lactation. alicedevisscher.mosaicglobe.com



➡ Masha Godovannaya

is a filmmaker and visual artist based in St. Petersburg, Russia. Godovannaya completed her MFA at Bard College. After living in New York for seven years, she returned to St. Petersburg where she teaches at St. Petersburg State University. Godovannaya's work has been shown internationally at festivals, screenings and galleries. Her son Timofei is nine and a half years old.

For New Maternalisms, Godovannaya presents *Hunger*, a performance-based, split-screen video recording her experience of the conflicts of motherhood, creativity, domesticity, and critical self-reflection.



Beth Hall & Mark Cooley

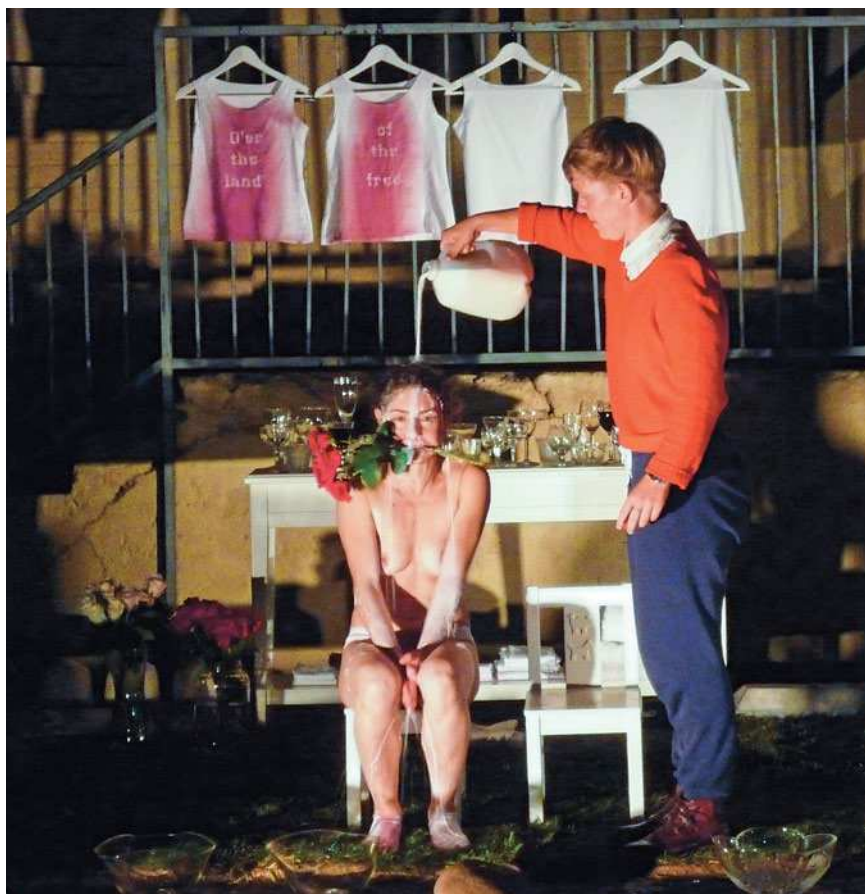
are interdisciplinary artists who have spent the past seven years engaged in a daily radical institutional critique of the parental roles handed to them by their well-intentioned parents. When Hall and Cooley are not learning from their daughter and struggling to figure out the principles of design that might give artistic form to a simple and satisfied existence, they can be found teaching in Northern Virginia. Their daughter Celia is seven years old.

For *New Maternalisms*, Hall and Cooley present *Safe*, a performance and research-based video juxtaposing the daily rituals of child care-giving with the immensity of the information and disinformation overload that has come to characterize contemporary maternal experience. bethhall.net flawedart.net

Alejandra Herrera Silva

lives and works in Los Angeles, and has been an active organizer, artist and teacher in the field of performance for more than a decade. Her work has been exhibited extensively, both in her native Chile and internationally. Her recent performances question bodily sensuality and materiality, with particular emphasis on gendered power relations. She is mother to three daughters: four-year old twins Evelyn and Trinidad, and two-year old Diamanda.

For New Maternalisms, Herrera performs *Woman's Challenge*, a durational piece exploring the impact and affect of maternal labour.



LEFT: BETH HALL, RIGHT: MARIEL CARRANZA



Lovisa Johansson

is based in Stockholm, Sweden, where she is one half of the WOL performance duo. She has been working and exhibiting as an interdisciplinary artist since 1996, combining performance art, video, sculpture, installation, stage-design and sound art. Over the past six years Johansson's work has shifted almost exclusively to performance in the form of material theatre or material music. Her daughter Klara is five years old.

For New Maternalisms, Johansson performs *Milky Way*, a durational piece inspired by the intimacy of the breastfeeding relation, as well as an action-based piece, *Jumping Lullaby*, invoking the unique despair of maternal sleep deprivation. lovisajohansson.se / wolart.se



Hélène Matte

is a Québec-based painter, poet and performer whose practice investigates poetry and drawings as acts of presence. Her recent work is invested in the poetry of speech, word-matter and image-gestures and has been presented at numerous visual arts exhibitions and artistic events throughout Canada, and in Colombia, Italy, France, and Belgium. Her son Lionel is six and her daughter Aurélie is three.

For New Maternalisms, Matte performs *L'Essence de la Vie*, an action and text-based piece that offers a provocative, humorous, and sometimes threatening take on maternal embodiment and the cycle of life. helene-matte.com



👉 Gina Miller

is a visual artist based in Vancouver. Her recent work focuses on narratives surrounding growth: psychological, spiritual, and physical. She is mother to thirteen-year old Hewitt, seven-year old Rupert, and six-year old Harper.

For New Maternalisms, Miller presents her first foray into performance, *Family Tissues*, a video documenting and contextualizing a social-practice performance in which she defrosts and discusses her childrens' placentas with them. ginamiller.ca



Jill Miller

is a performance and new genre artist based in Pittsburgh, USA. Miller presents her work with humor, curiosity and often reverence, recontextualizing objects, images and processes in order to look deeper within them. Her work has been shown nationally and internationally and is collected in public institutions worldwide. She is mother to two sons, five-year old Paxton and two-year old Argo.

For New Maternalisms, Miller brings The Milk Truck, a mobile breastfeeding unit that combines guerilla theater, activism and slapstick humor, to Toronto for its Canadian debut. jillmiller.net themilktruck.org

Christine Pountney

lives and works in Toronto, and has published two novels, *Last Chance Texaco* and *The Best Way You Know How* (Faber & Faber). Her third, *Sweet Jesus*, comes out this fall with McClelland and Stuart. She is currently exploring the world of children's stories and will soon begin a serialization of *Madeline* stories on her forthcoming website. She is mother to four-year old Leo.

For New Maternalisms, Pountney will be blogging in real time from the gallery throughout the event. Read her reflections at newmaternalisms.wordpress.com

Dillon Paul & Lindsey Wolkowicz

are New York based artists and art educators. Paul's internationally exhibited performance and media work explores the body in physical, social, and political space. She shares a home with her partner and artistic collaborator Lindsey Wolkowicz. Wolkowicz's drawings, installations, and found objects focus on the intersections of the body and architecture, and have been exhibited both nationally and internationally. Paul and Wolkowicz are parents to two-year old Maeve.

For New Maternalisms, Paul and Wolkowicz present *In Place*, a performance-based video that offers a round-the-clock time-lapsed view into the shifting puzzle pieces, rhythms, and textures of the artists' family routine.

dillonpaul.com lindseyawolkowicz.com





Marlène Renaud-B

is a multidisciplinary artist living and working in Montréal. Renaud-B's recent work reorients familiar spaces and situations through the use of uncanny juxtaposition and discomfort. She has exhibited nationally and internationally in Brazil, France, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, and the United States. Her son Armand is three years old.

For New Maternalisms, Renaud-B performs *Dis/sociation*, an action-based piece exploring the complex ambivalence of maternal enmeshment.

marlenerenaudb.com

Victoria Singh ➡

is an artist and educator based in New Zealand. Singh's work focuses on ritualized and ephemeral acts of life as art, with particular attention to conscious and unconscious relations between self and Other. In addition to her artistic practice she works as a performance art curator, most recently at Vancouver's Western Front Society where she also published *Ritual In Contemporary Performance*. Her son and artistic collaborator for this project, Kurtis, is eight years old.

For New Maternalisms Singh presents *SON/ART: Kurtis the 7 Chakra Boy*, a video that compiles documentation from the seven year LIFE/ART performance that she began on July 7, 2004, in collaboration with Linda Montano (*Another 21 years of Living Art*).





FADO PERFORMANCE

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