

Mothering-ArtAdemics

Intersecting Identities of Strength

Using personal narratives as a feminist approach to produce knowledge, we explore theoretical positions that acknowledge the interdependency of maternal, artistic, and academic identities. This approach, while critical of societal structures that fail to support working mothers and young children, outlines the benefits of creative practice, teaching, and mothering rather than viewing the experience as a deficit. Through interwoven personal narratives we reflect on our journeys becoming mothers on the tenure-track and reinventing our artmaking practices as academic mothers. Each subtopic outlines individual experiences, offering the reader two different paths toward applying for tenure while creating a family. Through our narratives we illustrate the ways in which our art practices grew when becoming mothers, due in part to time constraints, a desire to work without toxic art materials, and with conceptual shifts that address mothering in our artmaking. In conclusion, we argue for increased structural change to support successful mothering academics that ranges from increasing partner participation around domestic work to federally funded, mandated maternity and paternity leave.

The Interdependence of Mothering Artist-Educators

The three roles of artist, academic, and mother reinforce one another, and make us stronger in each area. These interdependent roles create stability by keeping us better informed, emotionally grounded, and financially secure. Embodying these three identities simultaneously results in a fluency that we would not find if we compartmentalized them. We argue that in order to support these complex and interconnected identities, in which numerous other mothering roles are performed, societal structures need to shift through mandating support

for working mothers by state and federal institutions and partner participation in the domestic sphere. We agree with Andrea O'Reilly that the oppressive patriarchal institution of motherhood, which she defines as "male-defined and controlled," must be dismantled (11). We have chosen to become empowered females by identifying as Mothering-ArtAdemics as "mothering, freed from motherhood, could be experienced as a site of empowerment, a location of social change." In other words, while motherhood, as an institution, is a male-defined site of oppression, women's own experiences of mothering can nonetheless be a source of power (O'Reilly 11).

Together, we come from a platform of unearned privilege as white cisgender women with inherited monetary and social knowledge. We both have advanced degrees and are in married, heterosexual relationships. As women, we climbed the professional ladder with societal support systems put in place by our parents, with the expectation and financial support to attend college. As married women, we benefit from the security of our husbands' incomes; as motherhood is now the single best indicator that unmarried middle-class women will end up bankrupt and that women will wind up in poverty in old age (Crittenden). It is from this platform we approach creating, teaching, and mothering, and together claim that these identities strengthen one another and give us a fullness that would not be obtained if one were missing. Ruth Bader Ginsburg describes this fullness in *My Own Words*:

Work-life balance was a term not yet coined in the years my children were young; it is aptly descriptive of the time distribution I experienced. My success in law school, I have no doubt, was due in large measure to baby Jane. I attended classes and studied diligently until four; the next hours were Jane's time, spent in the park, playing silly games or singing funny songs, reading picture books and A.A. Milne poems, and bathing and feeding her. After Jane's bedtime, I returned to the law books with renewed will. Each part of my life provided respite to the other and gave me a sense of proportion that classmates trained only on law studies lacked. (xvi)

A more visionary title for this article would be "Parenting Artist-Educators," equally including fathers as caretakers. This would assume that males are taking on equal responsibilities in the domestic sphere. Research proves, however, that this is not the case (Schulte). Because working mothers still carry the brunt of the "second shift," this article focuses on the specific experience many mothers face. It also focuses on heterosexual relationships, as research on same-sex couples demonstrates that domestic work is more often split according to preference rather than gender roles (Dunn).

Rachel Hile Bassett argues that first-person narratives “play an important role in changing others’ perceptions of parenting in academia and serve as well to broaden academic parents’ own understandings of their situations” (12). Maria Castañeda and Kirsten Isgro “are convinced that personal narratives have the potential to serve as critical intervention in the social, political, and cultural life of academia” (9). The following interwoven personal narratives—“Becoming Mothers on the Tenure Track” and “Re-inventing our Artmaking Practices as Academic Mothers”—reflect on both our journeys, and together we assert how the roles of artist, academic and mother reinforce one another making each identity stronger together. In conclusion we argue for societal change in order for structuring successful mothering academics.

Becoming Mothers on the Tenure-Track

Each of us teaches art education in American state university systems; most of our teaching load is devoted to elementary education majors and a small portion to art education majors. Previous to our academic careers, we each spent over ten years teaching in K-12 classrooms. There is substantial data claiming that performing in the combined roles of mother and academic can lead to burn out; therefore, fewer females are awarded tenure (Armenti, “Women Academics”; Drago and Colbeck; Drago and Williams; Mayer and Tikka; Young and Wright). As Carmen Armenti states, “having children before tenure can reduce the likelihood of achieving tenure” (“Women Faculty” 76). The literature clearly states that the academic clockwork of tenure is distinctly male, and that having children while working for tenure has different affects for male and females academics (Grant et al; Armenti, “Women Academics”; Wilson, “Female Scholars”; Wolf-Wendel et al.).

In academe, the strategies of deciding to not become a mother or hiding the fact that you are is disparaging, as male academics do not face these choices when working to succeed (Eversole et al.). Today, there are more female academics than ever before, even so “the structure of the university has not been altered to accommodate their lifestyle; rather women have been assimilated into a pre-existing university life” (Armenti, “Women Faculty” 78). We too, “chose to ignore advice (either given overtly or tacitly by administrators and colleagues) to delay having children until after achieving tenure” (Guyas et al. 68). As two female tenure-track assistant professors of art education, both that have chosen to become and re-become mothers, our biological clocks have been ticking against our academic tenure clocks (Hensel; Armenti, “Women Academics”; O’Laughlin and Bischoff; Wilson; Wolf-Wendel et al.).

Meaghan

I completed my PhD dissertation defense in the summer of 2012. Shortly after, my husband and I moved so I could accept a visiting track position that started in August. My husband and I wanted to have children after I secured employment, and as luck would have it, we became pregnant that September. My journey as a mother and academic have always run parallel to each another. I was six-months pregnant when I was back on the job market for a tenure-track position. I was advised by senior women mentors to tactfully hide my pregnancy in the first round of interviews knowing that once I got the campus visit I could confidently express that the birth of my first baby would not impede my dedication to the job. In her qualitative study of female academics, Armenti claims, “it was commonly thought that women with children were not serious about their careers” (“Women Faculty, 71). I became a mother in early May to my first daughter, Hazel Anne, only a week after courses ended. The timing of the birth was exactly what I had hoped for, and I had unknowingly become part of the “May Baby Phenomenon” (Wilson, “Timing”; Armenti, “Women Academics”; Castañeda and Isgro.). As Robin Wilson states, “it’s become an unwritten rule in academe that female professors who can manage it give birth between May and August” (qtd. in Castañeda and Isgro 47). I started my tenure track position while still nursing and mothering my twelve-week-old daughter. When people ask how many years I have been a tenure-track professor, I instantly think of how old my first daughter is, as they produce the same number. In order to move for my job, my husband’s job required, and still requires him, to travel weekly, which supports the fact that in our current society, the majority of women are still the primary caregivers (Armenti, “Women Academics”; Drago and Williams).

My husband and I both each have one younger sibling, and we always wanted the same for our family. I was obsessed with getting pregnant at the similar time, so I could have another “May Baby.” We became pregnant once again in the fall of 2016. That semester I was under an immense amount of stress at work, as I was teaching a seven-course load while also observing five teacher-candidates in their final residency programs before graduation. My husband was travelling for work (a job he took in order to support my career as an academic) leaving me to the second shift at home with our first daughter. Nature took its course, and I lost my second baby. I believe that the stress and pressure of working fulltime as an academic, and mothering without the structural support we outline in our conclusion, contributed to the miscarriage. This baby would have been born two days after the semester ended. Losing this baby caused me to fall into a depression. I was plagued with guilt that we had missed our window to have a second baby and also worried that perhaps this was nature’s way of telling me that motherhood and academe do not support each other

as the literature claims: women who have at least one child within five years after their doctorate are significantly less likely to achieve tenure than men who have had children early in their career (Armenti, “Women Academics”; Bassett; Mason et al.; Wolf-Wendel et al.).

In medical terms, I was considered an advanced maternal age, and if we waited another year to try for a third May Baby, I may not have been successful getting pregnant, but if we tried again sooner this meant I would have a baby mid-semester. I decided to speak with my department’s interim chair at the time. I expressed my concern for having a baby mid-semester while working on tenure. I asked if this would cause me delay in promotion, or worse, prejudice from the tenure committee. As Armenti discovered in her qualitative study, “the structure of academic careers silences women’s personal lives and creates taboos related to being a parent” (“Women Academics” 235). Though not a mother herself, the interim chair was kind and showed empathy for what I was going through. She looked at me and told me “go make a baby. Family always comes first; we will figure the rest out later.” Looking back, without the support of her, I might not have decided to try again for another baby. As Mary Ann Mason and Marc Goulden have found, female faculty members are more than twice as likely as men to report having fewer children than they wanted. With strong structural supports put into place, this challenging decision would not need to be made by mothering academics.

I became pregnant with my third baby later that fall, which caused my second daughter Maribelle to be born in mid-July. I could not take the fall semester off for childrearing, and was also assigned a new, large-scale lecture course requiring many hours of course prep. Pulled in multiple directions and unable to focus fully on either mothering or academe, I experienced what researchers cite as “role conflict theory” (Barnett and Hyde; Barnett and Marshall; Crosby; Fowlkes; Marshall and Barnett; Ward and Wolf-Wendel). Kelly Ward and Lisa Wolf-Wendel explain role conflict theory as the incompatibility of the roles of professor and mother claiming “that individuals have limited time and energy, and adding extra roles and responsibilities necessarily creates tensions between competing demands and a sense of overload and inter-role conflicts” (237).

At my university, teaching has the most weight in the tenure process, then research or service next depending on the tenure-track faculty members strengths and the weakest following close behind. Teaching has always been a strong area for me; my course evaluations are always above the department and university average. Community-based arts is an interest and strength of mine; therefore, I chose to provide service as my second area. I collaborated with a public school art teacher and my local parks department to create and sustain the first free kids arts festival in the state of Tennessee. With over five thousand in attendance in June 2017, the annual Kids Arts Festival of

Tennessee is entering its fourth year and is now on the permanent calendar of the Franklin Parks Department. My university views this service as successful for not only me but also for the university as I make great attempts to involve students as master teachers and volunteers; the university, therefore, gains name recognition at the event.

As a new mother focused on teaching and service, I had no research publications to my name. I received my third-year-review letter a month before Maribelle was born. As expected, research publications were an area I needed to work on in order to gain tenure. With one young child, another on the way, a travelling partner, a 4/4 teaching load, and many hours spent on sustaining the kids arts festival, time for writing was non-existent. As Armenti claims, “assistant professors who are in their childbearing years feel that publishing is made more difficult and less feasible when combined with the care of young children” (“Women Faculty” 75).

I spoke with my interim dean at the time about this. A successful academic mother herself, she understood my situation but restated what the letter had said. If I did not publish, I would not gain tenure. She shared with me that our university offered a “stop the clock” policy that would provide me an extra year to work on publishing. I was hesitant to use the policy, as I did not want to appear incapable, since, as Armenti reports, “while some universities now have maternity leave and stop-the-clock policies, many pre-tenure women are reluctant to use existing benefits” (“Women Faculty” 78). Upon further reflection, I understood this policy was put in place to support mothers just like me, and, as the first in my department to use this policy I am helping to set a standard for other tenure-track mothers in the future. My dean also offered me the opportunity to participate in a writing group along with a course release to work on writing. From my dean’s support, I was able to gain the time in order to write and therefore have become successful in publishing and expect to be awarded tenure when I apply.

As a mothering academic, I benefit from the support provided from my husband and parents, who live close by and can help with our daughters. With a loving and supportive partner, who is a dual caregiver to our daughters and fulltime chef when home, who has moved four times to support my career and adjusted his career in order for me to be successful in academe, I still need support from society and my university in order for me to succeed as a mothering academic.

Jennifer

I spent fourteen years teaching K-12 before entering higher education at the age of thirty-eight. Like many women in my socioeconomic bracket, I delayed marriage and children until I felt professionally and financially stable.

The choice to work was never a choice for me, but rather an inevitability, as I adhered to my mother's consistent plea to becoming financially independent and self-reliant. She had gone back to school after having three children and consistently urged me to continue my education so I would be paid at the highest level possible when I started to teach. With her guidance, I completed graduate school and was a licensed public teacher paid at the highest possible salary by age twenty-two.

In my thirties, I continued to postpone having children, as I wanted to go back to school to earn an MFA before having kids. At thirty-seven, I was hired at The University of Montana to teach art education and foundations. As a new professor transitioning to higher education from K-12, teaching took all of my energy, with service a close second. I put research on the backburner. Then at thirty-nine, I came up for air, and just two months before turning forty, my husband, who did not want children, agreed to try. We luckily became pregnant in my first cycle, which at thirty-nine and ten months is incredibly rare. Our daughter, Lur, was soon born, and my world was completely changed. I knew on her third day of life that I wanted another child. For two years, we tried for another, but at age forty-three resorted to IVF with a donor egg. It was a high price to pay for putting my career first, both at the financial and emotional level. I gave birth to a son, Emile, at age forty-four, nine months before applying for tenure. Out of fear, I did not stop the tenure clock for our first child, but did for our second.

When I became pregnant the first time, I was terrified at how pregnancy and parenting would affect my profession, and asked to privately meet with a printmaking professor who has two children for advice. She was supportive and urged me to contact the university's faculty development officer, who shared the details of the institution's new, generous modified duties leave program. This program, for tenure-track and tenured faculty only, is available for new parents (through fostering, adoption, or live birth), for professors to care for family, or for professors with personal health issues. My university's leave program supported my transition into motherhood and my husband's into fatherhood. It is the pinnacle of model support for family as described in Anne Marie Slaughter's book *Unfinished Business*. For my first pregnancy, my teaching load was reduced from three classes to one with 98 percent pay. My second pregnancy package was even more generous: 98 percent pay and zero teaching for a semester. And with those semesters often flanked between January and summer break, I was left with a total of six months off for the first child and eight for the second, which is below Europe's standard but is stellar for the United States. Additionally, my husband, also a professor of art, was given reduced teaching loads (from three courses to one) for each child, at the same pay. I did not engage with service while on leave, but my husband did.

Both my husband and I completed some research during the first semester on leave. In our second semesters on leave, neither of us was able to complete much research. This shared and egalitarian maternity and paternity leave program set up a successful dynamic in our family, and allowed each of us to experience lead parenting and work fulltime. The relationships my husband developed with our kids when I went back to work set the tone for them to view us both as caregivers. And it also allowed me to work on my career without the weight of 100 percent of the domestic load (at least for that semester, anyway).

When I was hired, the dean informed me that earning tenure at our university is “easy” due to our 3:3 teaching load, which means that tenure does not hinge on research. In my pre-tenure experience, I was able to generate sufficient research, engage in numerous service projects, and strengthen my teaching. My third and fifth-year reviews were positive, and I am confident that I will be awarded tenure.

What I find maddening and discriminatory is that faculty who engage heavily with service and teaching, traditionally women, are penalized for engaging in those areas over research. At our university, we compete with our peers for pay increases, and every year, two \$2,500 base-pay increases are awarded to those who excel in one of the three areas. Yet the unwritten rule is that research is valued more than service and teaching, as most merits are given in the area of research. This means that those of us who create relationships with community via service learning, offer extended and personal advising sessions, and design robust and changing curriculum simply do not have time in the day for intensive research on top of specialized, innovative teaching and caring for our children, especially when we are the lead parent at home. Because women still do more domestic work in households (Parker and Wang), quality teaching and service to our community puts us at a financial disadvantage, as research is often the first part of the job to place on the backburner.

Creating, teaching, and mothering are central to my identity. Although there are moments that are challenging, I am grateful that I get to experience mothering after over a decade in the K-12 classroom. Teaching has provided me with skills in setting boundaries, organization, and breaking down complex tasks into small steps—the list goes on and on. Additionally, it provides me financial independence that is central to my emotional health. As my husband and I ensure that our family has medical, life, and home insurance, I am taking steps to protect myself in case my husband dies, is injured, or if we divorce (Bennetts). As a mother, I now understand parents’ hesitancy to relinquish control over their children. I have witnessed developmental theory in action in with heightened radar, and I am now deeply empathetic to parents struggling with children who reach milestones developmentally late. I entered motherhood later than average, and became fluent in placing myself first in

order to achieve professional and personal goals. Through mothering, I came to understand selflessness at a deeper level. As an artist I have experienced the fear that emerges with a blank canvas or the disappointment that is experienced when a ceramic piece explodes in the kiln. Because I engage in the creative process, I am more empathetic to the learning process.

Reinventing Our Artmaking Practices as Academic Mothers

With artmaking as our first interest, and the core reason we have sought to join academe, it was detrimental to our feminist beliefs that our artmaking practices had started to take a backseat to our mothering and academic pressures. Andrea O'Reilly states, "empowered mothering begins with the recognition that both mothers and children benefit when the mother lives her life and practices mothering from a position of agency, authority, authenticity, and autonomy" ("Rocking", 18). As empowered academic mothers who challenge and change the current norm, we contend that it has been our most recent artmaking practices that have in turn strengthened each of these identities singularly and as a whole.

Meaghan

Outside of my academic duties of teaching, research and service, my personal artmaking practices became nonexistent on the tenure track. I have been an artist my whole life, but my two recent identities as mother and academic slammed into each other, which left no time, space, or energy for my first, always-yearning identity as an artist. Before I was an academic mother, I was an artist first, one who joyously and selfishly created for my own pleasure and aesthetic. My first memories of creating and painting are from the same age Hazel Anne is now. Judy Kanis, a Sausalito painter who studied under Richard Diebenkorn, mentored me at a very young age. I remember the smells of the materials, the building where a hundred different artists shared their studios for the sole purpose of making art. Hazel Anne is fortunate to have an amazing art educator at her preschool, whom she makes art with twice a week. Each day when she tells me about her day at school, her story starts with whether or not she got to make art.

As a mothering academic, somewhere in the process of earning my PhD and tenure-track position, I lost my confidence and desire to simply make art. I have minimal energy left at the end of the day after performing as a nurturing academic mother and mother of my own children, that my ability to embody my identity as an artist has grown dormant. According to Kelly Ward and Lisa Wolf-Wendel, "women faculty themselves bear significant responsibility for achieving their own sense of balance" (234). In order to find balance as an

artist, academic, and mother, I needed to combine these roles, as I could not embody them successfully separately.

Each year, I attend and present at the National Art Education Conference. At the 2016 conference, I co-led a community arts-based caucus field trip throughout some of the sites of the Theaster Gates Rebuild foundation on the Southside of Chicago. It was at the Stony Island Arts Bank that I met a painter by the name of Arthur Wright. Arthur was working on a collaborative painting (see Figure 1).



Figure 1, Arthur Wright Working on a Collaborative Painting, 2016, Acrylic on Canvas

I spoke with him about his process of collaboration. Arthur told me he first grew to love the process of collaboration by painting with his daughter when she was young. I had curated the collaborative creation of multiple community arts-based projects, but I had never considered the power of collaborating with my own daughter.

In the months after the conference, I created opportunities for Hazel Anne and I to paint together. We have worked on large canvases together (see Figure 2) and have also passed smaller works back and forth (see Figure 3). We have collaboratively painted when I was both pregnant, nursing (see Figure 4), and always mothering her, which allowed me to embody the identities of artist and mother together.



Figure 2. Hazel Anne Painting on Our Collaborative Work, 2017, Acrylic on Canvas



Figure 3. Hazel Anne Painting on Our Collaborative Works, 2017, Mixed Media



Figure 4. Meaghan breastfeeding while painting on Our Collaborative Works, 2017, Mixed Media.

Together, we experiment with different media and the conditions in which we use them. Collaborating with my four-year-old has refueled my interest in increasing my studio time. Hazel Anne’s raw energy to simply create for creative purpose, with no predetermined outcome or levels of success to intimidate her, has challenged my inhibitions. Her free and purposeful brushstrokes push me to enjoy painting as I did when I first learned how to play with different media. She has lit a fire in my artist identity. If I claim to be an artist, then I must behave and perform as one. I teach her that actions speak louder than words and that truth and integrity make for good qualities in a growing young person; thus, my actions must mirror my claims. Her artistic practice helped me rediscover my own interest in making art.

How serendipitous to have my identities as artist, academic, and mother enforce and collectively strengthen one another into a “Mothering-ArtAdemic.” It is my identity as a mother that has brought light to my previous identities and, in turn, has created new venues to perform at higher levels. Each role benefits the other, and probes the best of each individual identity to rise to the top and support the other.

As I have worked hard to achieve this high education and this place among scholars in academe, I had lost the passion that started this journey. It was

the process of painting as a child with Judy that I first experienced love, a love of painting, and desire, a desire to make and create. Now it is the process of painting with my own child that I am rediscovering my love for painting once again. As a Mothering-ArtAdemic, I am influenced by young eyes and by new and innocent experiences of collaborative artmaking. As Andrea O'Reilly claims "we attended too often to what women need from 'mothers' and mentors"; attend too little perhaps to what we who are old need from 'daughters' who create and preserve what we care for and care about, whose energy and sheer determination carry us on" ("Rocking" 5-6).

Jennifer

In my twenties, I thought I had to choose between artmaking and motherhood, which parallels Marina Abramovic's claim that children hold back female artists (qtd. in Cashdan). Alas, her worldview is a romantic, modernist view of an artist—one that allowed men to rise to the upper echelons of the profession on the backs of their wives, who year after year cared for their children and completed unpaid, tedious domestic labour associated with having a family. Numerous contemporary female artists have critiqued Abramovic for this claim, as Tara Donavon states to Marina Cashdan in an interview:

While I understand the pressures of the art world all too well, the notion that women must sacrifice the pleasures of motherhood for the sake of a "Career" reflects insidious double standards from a bygone era. I think Abramovic has chosen to operate in an art world that reflects the values of this bygone era, where masculinist hierarchies determine what constitutes "value" and "success."

An artistic practice is an asset to my trifold identity of artist, academic, and mother. This article argues that for the two authors, each of these roles builds upon the other, which makes us better informed, emotionally grounded, and financially secure. In essence, working and mothering make us essential, productive members of our democracy. However, there are many obstacles for women who choose to pursue these three areas—and even more if she values self-care and the relationship with her partner. What Abramovic (qtd. in Cashdan) does get right is that the current societal structures in place do not support women to work and care for family. My definition of family includes young children, aging parents, and chosen family members (Slaughter). With ever-increasing demands, carving out studio work and writing time is almost impossible, much less creating the mental state optimal for creative practice that Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi terms as "flow." Female artists who become mothers and do not have supportive partners or who cannot afford to hire out childcare and



Figure 5. Jennifer Combe, *Worry Scroll: The First Year*, 2014, Intaglio, gouache, 70' x 10"

domestic labour will find the task daunting, as do women who aim for both in any profession.

In my studio, the impetus of my artworks became more conceptual because due to pregnancy and breastfeeding, I could not rely on my previous toxic oil painting practice. A complete new body of work relating to my new role emerged. The first piece, *Worry Scroll: The First Year*, is a seventy-foot long collection of worries and confessionals I wrote during my first year of motherhood (Figure 5). This artwork is a physical recording of the “emotion work” that married women take on after having children. This additional work, along with the three and a half times as much housework as married fathers, (Pamela Smock qtd. in Dunn 18) sent me into

overdrive and exhaustion. The methodical process of writing, printing, painting, and sewing balanced the new, unpredictable life I carved out for myself. The concerns surfaced and dissipated as the months rolled by, and I was surprised at the intensity and volume of the unknown.

To-Do, 2015, is comprised of twelve to-do lists from the 2014-2015 academic year; it is a response to the overwhelming tasks related to working, mothering, and self-care (see Figure 6). After many failed attempts to digitally organize my schedule, I resorted to clipping quarters of 8 ½ x 11 inch paper as a way to organize the mountain of work I faced. These lists make each of twelve collages, one grouping of daily lists per month.

This piece also responds to the value our culture places on what we accomplish rather than who we are as a record of worth. It acts as a reminder that achievement is irrelevant if we are not able to find joy in the mundane. Anne Dillard in *The Writing Life* states, “How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives” (32). I hold her words closely as I find ways to experience contentment in the tedium of the day-to-day. Her words also cause me to pause, evaluate the domestic work division in our household, and reevaluate my situation. I soon was motivated to hire a housecleaner to come once a



Figure 6. Jennifer Combe, *To-Do 2014/15*, 2015, Screen print, 30" x 26'

month, which is challenging on our modest middle-class income. The *Journal of Marriage and Family* reports that, for working couples who became first-time parents, men did an equal share of housework until they became dads. By the time their baby had reached nine months, the women had picked up an average of thirty-seven hours of childcare and house work per week, whereas the men did twenty-four hours—even as both parents clocked in the same number of hours at work (qtd. in Schutle).

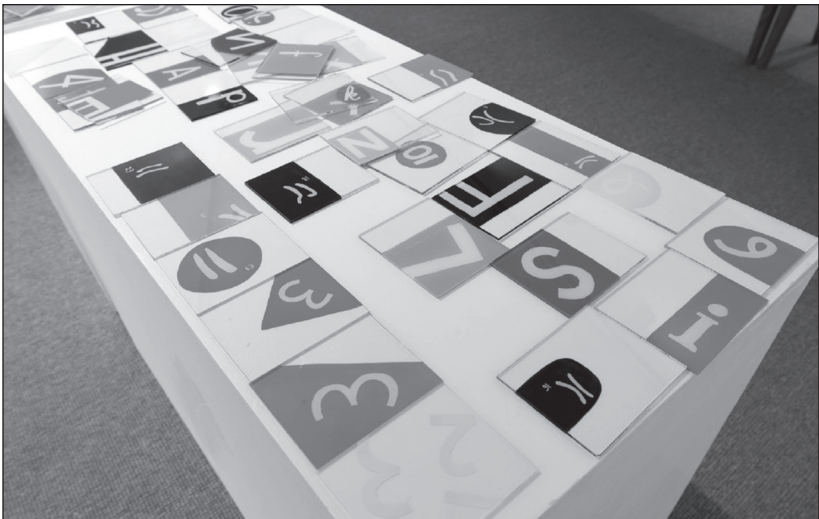


Figure 7. Jennifer Combe, *Nature, Nurture*, 2016, Acrylic on glass.



Figure 8. Jennifer Combe, *Hidden Mother*, 2016, Archival pigment print, 37" x 27".

Nature, Nurture, 2016, provided an outlet for grappling with my second pregnancy, which was obtained through a donor egg and IVF (see Figure 7). As an undergraduate student who came of age in the heyday of identity politics, I was surprised at how much I struggled with wrapping my head around carrying and raising a child that would have none of my DNA. This piece contains glass interchangeable glass plates, each containing numbers, letters of the alphabet, and the twenty-three chromosomes. Delaying childbirth, common among Generation X members who pursued graduate degrees, results in abhorrent medical costs, as most states do not require insurance policies to cover infertility (McClure).

Hidden Mother, 2016, was influenced by Linda Fregni Nagler's collection of "hidden mother" portraits. In nineteenth-century portraiture small children were placed in the arms of people, mostly mothers, to keep them still for long exposure times (See Figure 8). Metaphorically, this hiding of the mother speaks volumes to the unpaid domestic labour of the lead parent. For my "hidden mother," I chose to expose my hands, bringing attention to this work.

Conclusion: Structuring Successful Mothering–ArtAdemics

Castañeda and Isgro assert, "a forty-hour work week is simply not enough to produce excellent scholarship, engage in master teaching, and cultivate service and outreach partnerships" (3). Like mothers outside the ivory tower, women scholars, more often than men, shoulder greater household and childcare responsibilities; therefore, they experience more family and work stress (O'Laughlin and Bischoff; Wilson, "Timing"). As universities have awarded higher degrees to more females, the literature exploring the ever-rising glass ceiling of simultaneously becoming a supermom and superemployee has become a theme of discourse (Crittenden; Hewlett; Mason et al; Stone; Castañeda and Isgro). With the current level of support provided by academe and by our government, working mothers are maxed out, and less happy in the twenty-first century than they were in the twentieth. The issue is not that a woman has to choose between her career and mothering; rather, we need structures in place that enable women to enjoy the richness of both without reaching burnout (Alcorn).

Structural social change would allow working mothers to excel in both professional and domestic lives. Structures of support for working mothers we propose are as follows: partners who take on or share the role of lead parent; adequate alimony settlements in divorce cases for women who took on the role of lead parent (with or without a paid job); social security for domestic labour; flexible work schedules; in-workplace, high-quality childcare and preschool; universal preschool; universal college; insurance policies that cover infertility; one year of paid maternity leave minimum, along with paid leave for fathers and/or partners so they may develop their dual caregiver roles; and a culture that values caring for children and elders as much as it values competition (Slaughter). With these structures in place, more women will choose to work outside the home and care for family—resulting in financial security for women and fathers and/or partners who more readily participate in the domestic realm, and in a culture that values care. After all, parents who conscientiously and effectively rear children create workers who, in our modern economy, contribute to "human capital" and are the major wealth producers in our economy (Crittenden). With these structures in place, working mothers

would not be burdened with student loans, the need to delay childbearing that often results in astronomical infertility costs, insufficient pay to cover daycare and preschool, postpartum depression because of returning to work too early, or miscarriages due to work and stress. If their partners participated in both the mental and physical loads of running a household, mothering professionals would have more time to devote to their multiple identities.

As artists, academics, and mothers, we assert that these three roles reinforce one another, and are stronger when performed in unity as Mothering-Art-Ademics. We will continue to explore our constantly evolving identities as artists, academics, and mothers. We call on others to explore and research the ways in which their multiple identities reinforce and strengthen one another. Just as mothering, artmaking, and educating require critical thinking skills, nurturing, prioritizing, and efficiency, so do other identities and professions, and we encourage the continuation of research that will lead to systemic change.

Works Cited

- Alcorn, Katrina. *Maxed Out: American Moms on the Brink*. Seal Press, 2013.
- Armenti, Carmen. "Women Academics Blending Private and Personal Lives." Unpublished dissertation. Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 2000.
- Armenti, Carmen. "Women Faculty Seeking Tenure and Parenthood: Lessons from Previous Generations." *Cambridge Journal of Education*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2004, pp. 65-83.
- Barnett, Rosalind C., and Janet Shibley Hyde. "Women, Men, Work, and Family: An Expansionist Theory." *American Psychologist*, vol. 56, 2001, pp. 781-796.
- Barnett, Rosalind C., and Nancy L. Marshall. "Worker and Mother Roles, Spillover Effects and Psychological Distress." *Women & Health*, vol. 18, pp. 9-40.
- Bassett, Rachel Hile, editor. *Parenting and Professing: Balancing Family Work with an Academic Career*. Vanderbilt University Press, 2005.
- Bennetts, Leslie. *The Feminine Mistake: Are We Giving Up Too Much?*. Hachette Books, 2007.
- Cashdan, Marina. "You Can Be a Mother and Still Be a Successful Artist." *Artsy*, 8 Aug. 2016, www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-why-motherhood-won-t-hinder-your-career-as-an-artist. Accessed 7 Oct. 2017.
- Castañeda, Maria, and Kirsten Isgro, editors. *Mothers in Academia*. Columbia University Press, 2013.
- Crittenden, Ann. *The Price of Motherhood: Why the Most Important Job in the World Is Still the Least Valued*. Macmillan, 2002.
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. *Flow*. Edited by Robert DiNozzi and Howard Gardner. Into the Classroom Media, 2003.

- Dillard, Annie. *The Writing Life*. Harper & Row, 1989.
- Drago, Robert, and Joan Williams. "A Half-Time Tenure Track Proposal." *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, vol. 32, no. 6, 2000, pp. 46-51.
- Drago, Robert, and Carol Colbeck. "The Mapping Project: Exploring the Terrain of U.S. Colleges and Universities for Faculty and Families." Final Report. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University, 2003.
- Dunn, Jancee. *How Not to Hate Your Husband after Kids*. Little, Brown and Company, 2017.
- Eversole, Barbara A. W., et al. "Mothering and Professing in the Ivory Tower." *Journal of the Motherhood Initiative for Research & Community Involvement*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2015, pp.65-80.
- Ginsburg, Ruth Bader. *My Own Words*. Edited by Mary Eileen Hartnett and Wendy Williams. Simon & Schuster, 2016.
- Marshall, Nancy L., and Rosalind C. Barnett. "Work-Family Strains and Gains among Two-Earner Couples." *Journal of Community Psychology*, vol. 21, no. 1, 1993, pp. 64-78.
- Mason, Mary Ann, and Marc Goulden. "Do Babies Matter?: The Effect of Family Formation on the Lifelong Careers of Academic Men and Women." *Academe*, vol. 88, 2002, pp. 21-27.
- Mayer, Audrey L., and Päivi M. Tikka. "Family Friendly Policies and Gender Bias in Academia." *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, vol. 30, no. 4, 2008, pp. 363-74.
- McClure, Marissa. "s/m/othering." *Studies in Art Education*, vol. 55, no. 3, 2014, pp. 253-57.
- Neuendorf, Henri. "Marina Abramovic Says Kids Hold Back Female Artists." *Artnet News*, 25 July, news.artnet.com/art-world/marina-abramovic-says-children-hold-back-female-artists-575150. Accessed 7 Oct. 2017.
- O'Laughlin, Elizabeth M., and Lisa G. Bischoff. "Balancing Parenthood and Academia: The Challenges and Contradictions of Academic Careers." *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal*, vol. 4, 2001, www.advancingwomen.com/awl/winter2001/bischoff_o'laughlin.html. Accessed 7 Oct. 2017.
- O'Reilly, Andrea. *Rocking the Cradle: Thoughts on Motherhood, Feminism and the Possibility of Empowered Mothering*. Demeter Press, 2006.
- O'Reilly, Andrea, editor. *Feminist Mothering*. SUNY Press, 2008.
- Parker, Kim, and Wendy Wang. "Modern Parenthood." *Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project*, 14 Mar., 2013, www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/03/14/modern-parenthood-roles-of-moms-and-dads-converge-as-they-balance-work-and-family/. Accessed 7 Oct. 2017.
- Schulte, Brigid. "Once the Baby Comes, Moms do More, Dads do Less around the House." *The Washington Post*, 7 May 7 2015, www.washingtonpost.com/news/parenting/wp/2015/05/07/once-the-baby-comes-moms-do-more-

- dads-do-less-around-the-house/?utm_term=.d1cfb1fad55c. Accessed 7 October 2017.
- Slaughter, Anne-Marie. *Unfinished Business: Women, Men, Work, Family*. Random House, 2015.
- Ward, Kelly, and Lisa Wolf-Wendel. "Academic Motherhood: Managing Complex Roles in Research Universities." *The Review of Higher Education*, vol. 27, no. 2, 2004, pp. 233-57.
- Wolf-Wendel, Lisa Ellen, and Kelly Ward. "Academic Life and Motherhood: Variations by Institutional Type." *Higher Education*, vol. 52, no. 3, 2006, pp. 487-521.
- Wilson, Robin. "Timing Is Everything: Academe's Annual Baby Boom." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, vol. 45, no. 42, 1999, p. 14.
- Wilson, Robin. "Female Scholars Suggest Slowing the Tenure Clock." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, vol. 46, no. 20, 21, 2000, p. 18.
- Young, Diane S., and Ednita M. Wright. "Mothers Making Tenure." *Journal of Social Work Education*, vol. 37, no. 3, 2001, pp. 555-68.