



Whose Story Is It?

March 6th-26th

Spilt Milk Gallery CIC presents their first group exhibition of 2022 marking a return to in-person programming for the first time since the pandemic. Harnessing the power of storytelling for social change, this new exhibition asks us to consider; Whose story is it?

The exhibition brings together a diverse grouping of international mother artists whose work responds to the notion of collective healing. Recognising the disproportionate affect the pandemic has had on mothers, and the desire to mend fractured communities, the need for collective healing has never felt so acute. As the late bell hooks suggested: "rarely, if ever, are any of us healed in isolation. Healing is an act of communion."

The power of community has been key to Spilt Milk's success over the past two years and with the rise in accessible online working, their artistic community has grown worldwide. Coming up time and again from our community is that in order to heal, we need space to share our stories. With work spanning a variety of disciplines, the exhibition provides not only the space to tell these stories, but an opportunity for the retelling of stories which have historically been told from the per-

spective of men. If storytelling is key to empowerment, we must also question the narrator. Whilst these artists were brought together through the collective experience of mothering, the exhibition presents a diverse and inter-generational set of narratives. These narratives create space for shared grief, explore lost maternal lineages, represent family outside the binary and act as a catalyst for progressive conversations toward intersectional equity. The exhibition asks us to step back and to listen, to create space for all stories to be heard in the hope that all marginalized voices can be empowered.

Exhibiting Artists:

Lisa Alberts, Cassie Arnold, Ruth Batham, Charmaine Beneyto, Marisa Bernotti, Shweta Bist, Amy Briggs, Katie Croft, Roberta De Caro, Lisa Evans, Lynn Fraser, Deja M. Jones, Aleksandra Ka Kusowska, Carole Loeffler, Draya Madú, Rachel Kiddie McClure, Jen McGowan, Lauren McLaughlin, Barbara Nati, Kasia Ozga, Siusan Patterson, Laura Rosengren, Katie Heller Saltoun, Celine Sheridan, Victoria Smits, Meredith Starr, Maddie Swainhart, Kara Thorndike, Shona Wardrop, Kirsty Whiten.

Spilt Milk Gallery CIC is a social enterprise based in Edinburgh. Our mission is to support the work of artists who identify as *mothers, and to empower mothers in our local community through artist-led activities. Through our international membership network we offer inclusive opportunities designed to highlight the work of mother artists, give voice to the diverse experiences of mothering, and champion a more equitable art world.

*Spilt Milk uses the term 'mothers' however we are committed to providing a safe and inclusive space for non-binary parents and trans mothers, long-term carers, those that experience racism, disabled mothers, lesbian, gay and bisexual mothers, young mothers, older mothers and those from a low income background.

Please note that one of the works in the exhibition contains nudity and imagery of a sexually explicit nature. Please speak to a member of the exhibition team for more details.

www.spiltmilkgallery.com



Lisa Alberts (U.S.A.)

Acute Onset no.6

Linen, light sensitive dye, polyfil, thread

10x70x7 in

I use alternative photography techniques to create textiles and soft sculpture that explore ideas of play and repetition and examine how the maternal experience feels in the body. Process is central to my work and my children are an inherent part of that process. The act of watching my kids playfully create a sunprint, the act of folding and unfolding fabric, the act of stitching and knotting, are physical representations of ideas I aim to explore in my work. Art and Motherhood are both the knowing and the unknowing, the creation and the healing of wounds, the isolation and the never-aloneness. I like to investigate the duality of this uncertainty amidst repetition.

Many Ways of Being began with a summer storm. When the large black walnut tree cracked in two my children and I splayed out sheets in the backyard and dragged its jettisoned branches to be forever imprinted by the light. Their small bodies heaved and hauled the tree's remains across the yard like something one might call a dance, our very own performance piece just for us and the birds.



Cassie Arnold (U.S.A.)

1 in 4 (I had a Miscarriage)

hand knit linen and stainless steel thread, undyed cotton, pine, brass
12x60x4 inches

Weeks after seeing a sonogram of my baby's healthy heartbeat, I experienced a miscarriage. I struggled with the loss for a long time and felt isolated by the experience. It wasn't until later that I learned how common miscarriage is and that 1 in 4 pregnancies end in miscarriage. I created this piece while I was pregnant for the 4th time, just 4 years after experiencing my loss. I had become the statistic. I created this piece to give caregivers a safe space to talk about their experience, bond with others who have walked through the same kind of loss, and hopefully bring healing in knowing that we are not alone.



Charmaine Beneyto (England)

i become you

Installation/ sculpture

100x100cm

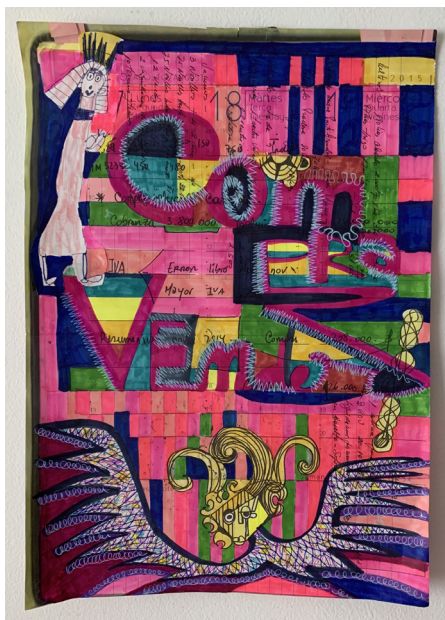
i become you is the symbolic representation of the lived experience of my child self. The symbolism of the child's tent alludes to the practice of child's play. Through the tent I am transported back to my bedroom when I was five. The age I experienced child trauma. The tent's poles are constructed from Elder wood taken from The Elder tree- the December tree, being the month I was born. The Elder is the wild-child representative of rebirth, regeneration, death and magic. It is also thought to house the spirit of the Elder mother who will both harm and protect those around her. The deep link to regeneration comes from how broken branches can easily take root and regrow; the rebirth of a new tree; a symbol of the end that takes us back to the beginning in a cycle of life and death. For me, coming into motherhood has been the exploration of intergenerational trauma and healing. A cyclical state that with each generation represents a new birth (beginnings) and death (breaking away from old patterns). When my first child turned five I went through a deep state of psychosis, I became paralysed with fear. To concede how small they were, I was able to see myself in their image, the child whose lived experience was trauma and for the first time I was finally able to access and locate my grief. What followed was the healing process that went deeper than I had managed before. As mothers, we can be fragile. This is representative of the transparent silk that cloaks the tent; we are always striving to safeguard our children's fragility. Like the Elder tree, we can do both harm and protect. Behaviour that is passed down from one generation to the next, until one day, we will find ourselves at peace.



Ruth Batham (England)

Out Of
Acrylic on Paper
42x60cm

'Out of' speaks of the journey of healing. The process of unpicking who you are once you become a new mom. There is a feel of an out of body experience. This painting is about maternal mental health. The pinks - often associated with girly newborns - here aim to have a fleshy, unsettling feel. The curving line in the bottom right is reminiscent of the foetal position. Maybe of the newborn? Maybe of the newborn mom? The woman is thrown up in the air: this is a scene of transient mental health. With the supporters around her she is moving towards a place of healing. There is an uncertainty in colour and in unfinished lines. Just like the overwhelming uncertainty a lot of new mums face in postpartum. The fleshy pink background that is nowhere in particular alludes to how new mums may feel after giving birth - a sense of time and a sense of place disappears as strong thoughts and feelings take centre stage. But this can ebb and flow and dissipate to become gentler, more understanding thoughts and feelings.



Marisa Bernotti (Uruguay,
South América)

Journal Comprar Vender
Mixed media, collage, work on paper
42 x 29,7 cm

When artists become parents they struggle to have time to work as artists and keep being parents. The pandemic in 2020 and 2021 along with its moments of quarantine have changed us forever. With my daughter Federica, who was 4 years old, we began to share intense moments in the studio, enjoying spending time together, doing something that we both like from the soul: painting and creating. Suddenly Federica made a proposal to me: what about if we trade our canvases? It was a surprise for me to change the rule from "don't touch my stuff" to "how about if we share everything, even our canvas?" Our canvas, is it serious? Our first work in collaboration was two versions of "The Wolf and Little Red Riding Hood." I like to work about fears, and The Wolf was a fear we share. After this Federica collaborated in this body of work; "Journals". Works from this series were exhibited in New York and Chicago.



Shweta Bist (U.S.A.)

At Times, It Isn't Perfectly Clear
Who's Mother to Whom, 2021
Photography- Archival Pigment Print
20 x 14"

My interest lies in exploring the emotional dynamics in familial relationships and how that shapes the human experience. The stories I seek to tell are greatly influenced by my experience as a woman and a mother, and the transformative impact this continues to have on my view of the world. It is my endearing effort to present the maternal perspective and make the labor of mothering visible.

As a mother to daughters, I have felt responsible to educate them about the strength of their femininity, and share stories about our maternal past with them. Historically, the stories of mothers and their life's work are forgotten- work that has long been considered noble yet largely invisible. In this collaboration with my daughters, we pay tribute to my mother and maternal grandmother on Mother's Day to celebrate their lives, sacrifices, and labor. I believe that it is by being there for one another and celebrating the lives of the women that have been before us, that we can hope to empower our girls.



Amy Briggs (Scotland)
Élever
Watercolour
10x7in

Élever' portrays an older child breastfeeding, not the typical image of a newborn baby at the breast. This speaks to Collective Healing in many ways. Both mother and child form a strong bond through the breastfeeding relationship, one which evolves as the nursing grows from baby to child. By choosing to depict natural term breastfeeding in Art, I hope to aid in normalising nursing past babyhood and expose the collective bias towards breastfeeding as an act purely reserved for the tiniest babies, if at all. By celebrating breastfeeding beyond those early days, I hope this work contributes towards healing the collective misconception.

A self-taught Artist, Amy Briggs, lives and works in Fife, Scotland. She received an education in Psychology at the University of St. Andrews and went on to postgraduate studies in Teaching. As a Primary School Teacher, she cultivates creativity every day, but her true passion has always been in her own painting and drawing practice. With the birth of her daughter in 2017 and her son in early 2021, her practice transformed, focusing on what it means to be both a mother and a woman. She creates portraits and nudes in watercolour and acrylics, drawing inspiration from her own experiences of pregnancy, breastfeeding and beyond.



Katie Croft (U.S.A.)
Could I Have Been Anyone Other Than Me?
Ceramic
12" x 12" x 6"

This work was inspired by Rebecca Solnit's essay, *Whose Story is This?* Historically when stories are told they are told from the perspective of a man. They are often stories of women, but the women's voices are frequently left out of the story and they become character that circle the male protagonist. What would happen if our founding myths were told by the women who sit off centre within them? What if the women's voice were heard and recorded?

Katie Croft is a multidisciplinary artist based in Brooklyn, NY. She graduated from Pratt with her MFA in painting and drawing 2020 and is currently a candidate at for her MSP in Creative Art Therapy from Pratt, 2022. In her work she uses clay as a canvas positioning her drawings, paintings, and photographs onto the surface to create sculptural figures who are simultaneously revealed and veiled. Narratives and stories, tropes, hidden images, and secrets confront the ongoing behaviour of dismissing female identity and perspective while celebrating the bountiful history and power of the feminine.



Roberta De Caro (England)
By a Strand
Ready-mades, hair, parsley, parsley tea

Roberta De Caro's artwork *By A Strand* (2021) depicts the ties between four generations of women in the artist's family. It is a transcription of Anna Maria Maiolino's *Por Um Fio* (*By A Thread*) (1976), a photograph portraying Maiolino, her daughter and her mother, connected by a thread. In De Caro's work, the familial conduit is a strand, idiomatically linked to hair and to shared DNA, but also to storytelling, as the work is made in response to the discovery of a family secret that traces the origins of intergenerational trauma.

The artist's, her daughter's and her mother's hair are served on dinner plates to mark their places around a table. A cup of tea is the only marker for her grandmother Antonia, who died young of parsley poisoning, in an attempt to interrupt her third pregnancy, as it recently emerged. In 1950s Italy, parsley tea was commonly used for illegal abortions, often with dire consequences due to the high toxicity of its oleoresin Apiol.

Parsley embodies the intangible weight of trauma, its impact portrayed by the ratio of parsley to hair. In Antonia's case, the absence of hair signifies loss.

Surrounded by a wreath of burnt parsley leaves, a lock of hair belonging to the artist's mother shows her life engulfed by that loss. The artist's own hair is covered in dried and freshly chopped leaves, old and fresh wounds coming to the surface in the creative process. The garnish on her daughter's long hair signals hope. With this allegory, the artist rewrites the script

of her family's intergenerational trauma, revealing her story in an attempt to resolve it, processing it through engagement with materials, and crystallising it as a compass for the next generation, particularly in the context of the recent attacks on women's reproductive rights.

Lisa Evans (England)
Needs and Desires
participatory installation

'Needs & Desires' is a participatory installation whereby mothers/carers of all ages and backgrounds are invited to answer the questions 'What do you need?' and 'What do you desire?'. Recognising the strain put on mothers/carers throughout the pandemic, this piece allows them to pause and reflect on what they want and dream of; now or in the future. In addition, its purpose is to raise awareness of the societal pressure put on mothers to be the perfect mother and to ignore their own needs. Throughout the exhibition, responses will be taped to the gallery wall to create an evolving text installation. For those who cannot attend the gallery in person, they can submit answers through the Spilt Milk website.

Evans makes artwork that expresses the complexity of our lives and human vulnerability. She has a strong desire to connect with those who are marginalised or under-represented in society to challenge views and question societal norms. Her practice primarily focuses on the female experience and empowerment with the intention to challenge perceptions and promote change. Evan's works are deeply personal, she utilises her life and experience as artist, woman and mother to connect with others. Her process starts by focusing on subjects that have been under-represented within our culture and society. She uses herself as subject and story-teller to encourage participation, challenge societal norms and raise the voices of those who engage with her practice. Working in such a personal way helps to build trust and encourage willing participation. She takes stories, anecdotes and phrases from participants and uses these as the material of her practice re-representing these with sensitivity, care and consideration as soundscapes, books, textiles and sculptures.



Lynn Fraser (Scotland)
the shout
Photography: concept and body art.
84 x 59cm
Painting: Lynn Fraser, Photography: Laura Findlay

When my brother died, it was like a bomb had gone off.

We were blinded, grappling around. Lost.

But our wee mammie? She got bigger. It was like she became 200 feet tall.

She carried her grief and all the family in her arms and saved us from drowning.

She stumbled, but put one grief-stricken foot in front of the other. And with fortitude, grace and love: She. Kept. Going.

15 years on, and I ask her to take part and collaborate with me for an exhibition.

'An all women collaboration', a project 'using paint on the naked body to help heal the loss of a son, a brother, who took his own life.'

"Will it help other people?" she asks.

"Yes" I say.

"Then let's do it! If we are not here to help one another" she says, "then what's it all about?"

I painted, and we talked about him mostly, that Monday afternoon.

And, mostly, we laughed.

A special time.

She was then photographed cradling his painted image - just like the Pieta: Mother and Son. She was happy and content that day.

When I'd suggested taking a shower to get the paint off, she said: "No, I'm not going to wash there for a few days. I'm going to keep him here. I want him to

fade into me." And she closed her eyes, and fell asleep. Spent but content.

Before the exhibition opened I brought mum in, to see the images in the quiet and alone. There she saw herself larger than life and mighty.

Her eyes filled up, she took my hand and gave a smile. "We've done a good thing, darling. A good thing. And if it helps just one person, then it's been worth it."

It was never my plan to re-show this work. To bring it back. But then Mammie died. Two months after the exhibition.

So I present the work here as a new piece, a new story, as it now has a different resonance for me. Reclaiming my someone that has been taken away. I shout out my sorrow.

The grief is with me every day, the hurting. I'm still enveloped by 'her going'. It touches everything.

After a discussion with a friend I came to realise this work embodies a reclamation of sorts. My mum redeeming the terrain of her old body and shouting out her pain and grief. For a short while she has a physical image of her son, and she can hold him again after losing him so violently.

She makes her mighty shout out with her body.

And alongside her I am made mine. My sorrow. My loss and shout out to the world. My brother, my mother, larger than life.

Here again. If only for a little while at least...

Silences are as important as conversations. Lynn Fraser works in many mediums often painting on women's skins with therapeutic or political intent, building a bond of permission and trust with her subjects. An umbilical cord of sorts, where meaning flows into the work: hope, fears, dreams gently explored over a period of time.

This deeply physical art helps to create a shift of emotion. A deceptively simple step towards healing. To acknowledge hurt. To express love. Enabling them to 'speak' their stories when words are not available, or enough. Sometimes ephemeral: captured on the body alone with no physical artifact once paint has faded or washed away. Other times Lynn collaborates with creative women photographers to honour the emotions and intensity of the sitters' stories.



Deja M. Jones (U.S.A.)

She is the First, She is the Last

Acrylic paint and paper on wood
8 x 13 x .25 [inches]

Déja Jones, uses their ancestral gifts to create whimsical multi-media artworks that invite the viewer into the perspective of working-class POC to communicate, advocate, and educate on the behalf of community's needs and preserve their great cultural legacies. They combine found objects, bright colors, and bold designs to tell stories of disenfranchised communities across nations- highlighting their similarities and ultimately their unity. Their work is used as a catalyst to encourage progressive conversation and dedicated organization towards the intersectional equity of the oppressed nation.

The social expectation put on women is the role of the caretaker and nurturer. They're told, like it or not, qualified or not, you're a mother, nurse, therapist, teacher, protector, and the list goes on. Obligation is bound to women as if it were a birthright. In this piece, Jones conveys the pride, grace, and wearying resilience that is the experience of the Black woman. Black women had to advocate, protect, and fight for themselves. No one else knows their unique struggle better than them. Knowing their history is understanding why they are the way they are. The loudest. The proudest. The most resilient. Advocacy and the will to fight are ingrained in their DNA.



Aleksandra Ka Kusowska (Scotland/Poland)

Exploration 2

Photography / Performance

Aleksandra Ka Kusowska is a single parent, Polish-Scottish visual artist working from Aberdeen. She is an activist with a keen interest in psychology and supports local and international environmental and educational initiatives. The freedom to practice creatively between many mediums results in her artwork mainly emphasising colour and frame, however she is guided by intuition.

'Exploration' emphasises the experiences of single parents and carers.

handwriting on the back of a photograph or greeting card, stitches in a quilt, or on a handmade garment. I feel a strong connection to an anonymous person from an unknown time and place. The power of mark-making and stitches bind us together in humanity and suggest imagined narratives and a renewed purpose. Our stories matter. Our lives are intertwined in the objects we use and own. I am interested in excavating, amplifying, and embellishing the stories of women before me – to bear witness and learn from the matriarchs of the past. How can these objects and the work I create help light a path forward?

Through my hands, domestic textiles become imbued with the spirit of my imagined foremothers – emblazoned with positive affirmations – as if the spirit of the maker comes to life and offers solace and support. I am the caretaker of these thrifted and found objects and the messenger from which their stories flow. We are stronger together and I aim to find ways to break down hierarchy and reimagine a world of support and connection.

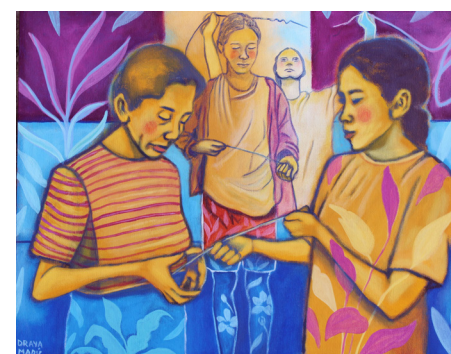


Carole Loeffler (U.S.A.)

whose story is it

found unframed needlework and felt
12"x12"

My work utilizes found objects and textiles often donated by women across the US and found in the "buy by the pound" goodwill bins and other charity shops. Of particular excitement and interest to me is discovering evidence from the previous owner's



Draya Madú (Mexico)

Mama Flora

Acrylic on stretched canvas
40 x 50 cm

I am interested in the impact that our emotions have in our lives. I love using a palette of pastels and greys, but my use of colours depends a lot on my different moods. The recurrent themes in my paintings are motherhood, nature and animals set nowadays and in current events, sometimes in magical backgrounds and a little surrealism.

I find painting as a powerful therapy that takes me away into worlds that I create as I go along, it's like an alternate reality where I can feel free and have a period of escapism.

What inspired me to create this piece was my attempt to understand the history of the women in my family tree to find the root of the inherited traumas that continued to repeat themselves from generation to generation and that have not allowed us to function properly, affecting our children's behaviours and self esteem. This painting explores the intergenerational trauma which is represented by the thread that gives continuity to the wounds inherited from previous generations.

These wounds are manifested through behaviours coming from broken people and through the normalisation of these negative human behaviours rooted in the past continuing systematically which leave us feeling powerless, worried and with emotional and psychological distress. The women try to help each other by pulling the thread and ending the cycle. They approach trauma from compassion, resilience and mutual support, the plants represent flowering, an awakening of awareness and hope.

The girl at the back, the last generation, is aware of the historical trauma therefore she has decided to end it by breaking the thread in order to promote healing, so the next generations will not keep manifesting the same inherited trauma, therefore allowing them to raise healthier children and a healthier society with great collective power.



Rachel Kiddie McClure (New Zealand)

I Think About This Everyday. Do you?
Mixed Media
50cm (width) x 70cm (height)

Rachel Kiddie McClure is a New Zealand-based artist, whose work embraces themes of home-life, motherhood, feminism, craft, nostalgia and storytelling. She has a diverse interest in art and craft, working in multiple disciplines such as drawing, illustration, painting, sculpture, quilt-making, cross-stitch, embroidery and crochet.

Kiddie McClure uses combinations of colour, pattern, text and symbolism to explore humour in everyday life as a mum and as a woman. Humour is an important and underlying theme in her work, with the quote "it's feminism with a frown turned upside-down" (Harford, 2013) a guiding sentiment in Kiddie McClures' practice. Fragments of sadness, rage and frustration also linger in the background which help to bring about contemporary critique and a sense of familiarity to the audience.

Her work sits comfortably within a kitsch aesthetic, utilising pattern, bold colour, glitter, craft, textiles, decorative embellishments and the ready-made. This work is titled 'I Think About This Every Day. Do You?' and is an autobiographical artwork exploring identity, feminism, domestic worlds, and the slow healing of ruptures created by colonisation. The idea of home is explored using oven mitts adorned with tokens that make up parts of the artist's identity as a Pakeha woman.



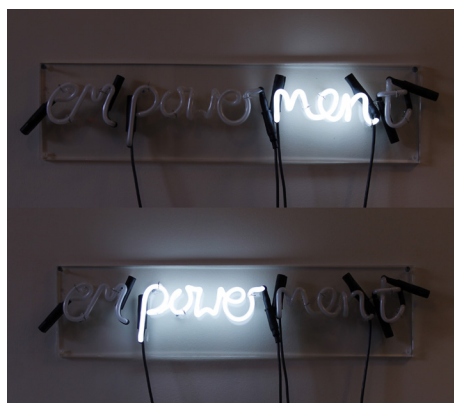
Jen McGowan (Canada)

Nuclear Family
Digital collage/digital manipulation
20x30"

'Nuclear Family' is about the ways our attention is diverted from world issues like the environment or war. How the status quo - our daily living patterns and comforts - are often the cause of these problems. When we try to keep up with the status quo, with our 9 to 5 jobs and working for the weekend, we leave little time or space to meaningfully confront these issues in our lives.

Jen McGowan has been trying to figure out what it means to be an artist since art school. She carries a Diploma of Fine Art from Langara College, a Bachelor of Fine Art with distinction from Concordia University and a post-grad certificate in Print Media from Capilano University. She has a Secondary Art BEd from UBC and has been teaching Animation, Film and Art in a Vancouver Secondary school for 10 years. She has also been trying to figure out what it means to be a mother since her daughter was born in 2011, and then her son in 2015. Motherhood has shifted both the focus of her art-making and the time she's been able to devote to it. Like with many parents, the identity crisis that comes with the role has been so profound it has fundamentally changed her self-concept and worldview. Currently, she uses drawing, painting, photography, collage and whatever materials she has on hand to question her own identity through a feminist lens on motherhood. Her work has been included in shows throughout Canada

and the US. Her digital collage, 'Cookies' was recently featured in an online exhibition called, 'You are not wonderful just because you are a mother' curated by Qiana Mestrich and hosted by the Artist/Mother podcast. In July 2020 she co-hosted '(Re)Igniting Your Creative Practice', a Kleio Collective workshop as part of their Feather Dusting/Future Lusting online exhibition with Abigail Hammond and Jody Boyer. Her poem, 'Milkbag of love' was featured in Brave magazine issue 10.



Lauren McLaughlin (Scotland)
Nobody's Free Until Everybody's Free
Neon, programmer and transformers.
60 x 13 x 5cm

This piece is produced in blown glass, with the two inner words 'power' and 'men' filled with gas and programmed to flash on and off in a continuous loop, the full word 'empowerment' never being fully lit. In 1971, pioneering nonviolent activist for the civil rights movement and the women's movement Fannie Lou Hamer stated; "Nobody's free until everybody's free." Adopting Hamer's words as the title, this work aimed to address the persistence of white supremacy and patriarchal oppression, calling attention to the progress still to be made in the fight for equality. None are free until all are free.

Just before the exhibition was installed, the glass letter 'p' cracked and therefore released the gas and no longer illuminates the word 'power'. After some consideration, I decided to exhibit the work anyway despite not fulfilling its original message. Sometimes we lose our power. Sometimes empowerment is invisible. Sometimes things need broken before they can heal properly and in order to heal we need to be able to see what is broken.

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Lauren McLaughlin is a multidisciplinary artist, activist and the founder of Spilt Milk Gallery CIC. Lauren's practice attempts to amplify the voices of women and mothers. Throughout her studio practice as well as her socially engaged projects, she aims to create space for narratives which are often overlooked and undervalued. Lauren graduated with BA (Hons) Fine Art from Central Saint Martins London (2012), and MA Applied Arts and Social Practice, Queen Margaret University Edinburgh (2021). Her work has been exhibited extensively throughout the UK and Europe and is included in permanent public collections. Her ongoing practice-research project; Making Something From Nothing, was shortlisted for the John Byrne Award in August 2021.



Barbara Nati (Italy & UK)
Briny chronicles I
digital collage
70x100cm

The increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has led to an increase of carbon dioxide in the waters of the oceans, which results in a decrease of pH and the subsequent dissolution of calcium carbonate structures such as shells and molluscs, plankton and corals. As a result, entire coral reefs

have died and others have suffered a developmental setback; the variety of shapes and colours of these natural structures has been replaced by white, translucent, ghostly outlines. The same outcome seems to have occurred to human structures in Barbara Nati's digital elaborations: buildings transmuted into evanescent constructions. Concrete, bricks, steel, everything is corroded and dematerialised, and all that remains of human engineering works are transparent facades. Barbara Nati (Rome, 1980) focuses on the dangers of environmental degradation. Using digital montage techniques, Nati creates dystopian visions of the future. These premonitions deliver social and ethical messages about the environment we are living in today.



Kasia Ozga (France)
On Your Toes
Polyester resin, gel coat, steel armature and base plate

These pieces juxtapose different sized male and female feet on tiptoe with forms of plastic water bottles, some regular sized, some elongated through repetition. The works are white and matte, and neutral in texture. The feet are solidly planted upon the ground, however they are also frozen in a very precarious position. A human body can only stay on tiptoe for a certain amount of time before feeling the need to step into a more comfortable position. Even though these sculptures remain in this straining position, the stress that they are under is palpable. Even though these sculptures remain in this straining position, the stress that they are under is palpable. The viewer senses a contradiction between an untenable body position and the reality of the object forcing the impossible. The shape also resembles that of a foot inside of a pair of high heels (and brings to mind the attenuating blisters and soreness

that accompany holding that posture for an eternity). Rather than being connected to a fully formed human body, the feet terminate independently, in the forms of identical, symmetrical water bottles. The bottles themselves are representative of our one-time-use culture. Rather than continuously filling a bottle with tap water, consumers purchase plastic bottles, drink them, and then throw them away. In the short term, it is cheaper to acquire goods and dispense with the accessory garbage than it is to filter tap water and reuse containers. This cursory attitude toward garbage is ever present in our society. Just as the posture of the feet on tiptoe cannot last forever, neither can this attitude toward our waste products.



Siusan Patterson (Scotland)

It's Fine

Acrylic and cotton thread on canvas
161cm x 109cm x 3cm

Women are fantastic! They hold up (more than) half the sky. My life has been filled with incredible women and in my work I am compelled to celebrate them. In Western society there is increasingly a youth and beauty obsessed culture whereby some women are made to feel 'less than' if they do not meet these stereotypical mainstream ideals.

All womxn are subject to unrealistic and somewhat unattainable expectations placed on them. It is important that, as some womxn often feel the weight of these expectations more acutely, that other womxn empathise, support and empower them to celebrate the diversity of real womxn. And together we will rise!

Taking inspiration from Greek Mythology and Renaissance paintings,

my work engages with the historical tropes of the classical female form found in traditional Western paintings and seeks to revise these conventions. Classical paintings of the female form are typically by the male gaze for the male gaze. My work reclaims the female body image by depicting it through a different lens. In a bold, colourful way I depict womxn representing themselves without fearing criticism.

Siusan is a visual artist from Northern Ireland now based in Scotland and she graduated from Glasgow School of Art with a BA(Hons) in Painting and Printmaking in 2019. She received the Royal Scottish Academy 195th Annual exhibition SABA award 2021 and was selected for the AON Community Award as part of her degree show.



Laura Rosengren (Canada)

Fed, Hospital & Fight

Watercolour, oil and felt on stretched and stuffed felt
30cm x 30cm

In my practice I consider the work of motherhood through painting, creating narratives around domestic rituals that are both familiar and strange. The paintings, both specific and vague, highlight the instability of memory carried in our bodies, objects and photographs. By introducing materials like wool and wax, and processes like scrubbing and stitching the work also amplifies the nature of mother work with its material disruptions and accommodations, but also the role nurture and healing. These paintings have a softness, not unlike a pillow, that

might comfort or support, absorb or muffle. Something is done and undone and re-done, every day, and out of the apparent futility, something is also continuous and forming.

Laura (she/her) is a Canadian artist, originally from Northwestern Ontario, currently living and working currently living on Stó:lō territory near Vancouver, BC. Her practice involves a mixed material approach to painting and considers questions around motherhood and labour. She is the recipient of a 2021 Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grant and a finalist in the 2021 Salt Spring National Art Prize. Laura has a BFA from the Alberta University of the Art, and an MA from Regent College. She has exhibited in both Canada and the US, including a forthcoming solo exhibition at Fifty Fifty gallery in Victoria, BC and is looking forward to participating in her first international exhibit at Spilt Milk gallery.



Katie Heller Saltoun (U.S.A.)

Together But Alone

Pen on Paper
18"X24"

I am a wife and mother of 3 and my current concentration reflects the time we spent together during the pandemic. My work takes place in spaces where my family rests after a long day. I am placed in the extreme foreground symbolising my role as matriarch, but also my anxiety as the group relaxes behind me. Being a mother can often feel very lonely even though you are surrounded by your family.

Katie Heller Saltoun is a Brooklyn based figurative artist focusing on what it feels like to be a mother and working artist. She received her BFA

in painting and drawing from the University of Michigan with a focus on the figure. Katie then completed her MA in Art Education from Teachers College, Columbia University. She taught for 16 years at Great Neck South High School in an art department comprised of 5 female practising artists and educators. Katie recently completed a residency at the School of Visual Arts and is an active participant of the SVA Residency Alumni group. Katie is a wife and mother of 3 and her current focus reflects her family's time together during the pandemic. Her work takes place in spaces where her family rests after a long day. Katie explores her anxieties about motherhood, keeping her family safe, as well as her need for a break. The contemporary art world has begun to value the strength of motherhood with artists like Billie Zangewa, Alice Neel, Madeline Donahue, and Loie Hollowell. Joan Semmel defined feminist art as "art which in some way, however varied, validates the female experience." Billie Zangewa, a South African artist uses tapestries to convey motherhood's under-appreciated role as a feminist act, celebrating the 'regular' tasks as "daily feminism." Motherhood is complex and today's evolving landscape allows for important examination of how mothers feel recognized and seen at home, as artists, and more broadly.



Celine Sheridan (Ireland)
Aldi
Acrylic on board
38x29cm

Aldi is a painting that, for the artist, represents escaping the home during the many lockdowns.

At the core of Celine's investigations are perplexing and sometimes paradoxical questions about the body, it's 'psycho' and it's 'soma', which she explores on multiple levels across all media she uses, including painting, drawing, sculpture/installation and text based works.

In her practice, Celine examines the 'mothers' gaze' as well as the familiar genre of 'mother and child', with the use of simple line, colour, anthropomorphism, mutated and misaligned body shapes, the body estranged from itself, all nodding towards 20th Century painting styles. In other media including foam and textiles, she explores the history of human touch and lack of touch in child development and has made work influenced by 1940's Orphanage Study by Rene Spitz.

Through the lens of feminism which she only subscribed to after becoming a wife and a mother, she realised the politicised landscape of gender and gender roles. She examines the roles of the mother and the wife in a heterosexual marriage and the question of 'how are we raising our sons?' with a cultural backdrop of abuses against women. Her work reveals an undercurrent of her own biography – she grew up in 1980's Ireland with a rural society heavy with Theological Catholic teachings, GAA centred sports culture and the atrocity of Mother and Baby Homes for unwed pregnant women. She experienced PTSD after the birth of her first child which influenced this whole area of research interest.

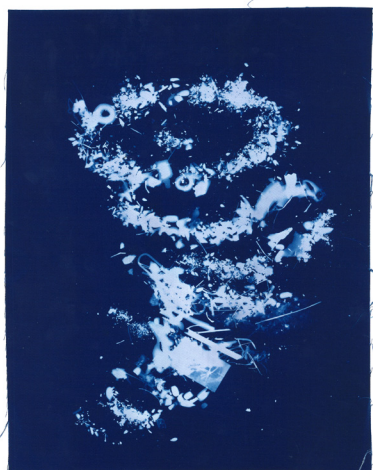


Victoria Smits (U.S.A.)
Mother Blanket
Hand stitched textile
33" x 48"

One of the first things a mother is offered after the birth of a child is a blanket; the wrapping of the baby delivers comfort. A blanket, at whatever age, affords physical warmth and security. This "Mother Blanket" is formed from a collection of fabrics to include my wedding dress, maps made by my youngest child transferred to cotton, shirts I wore to hide my changed body after the birth of my last child, avocado dyed cheesecloth and other cheesecloth, linens from my paternal grandmother, and adire cloth from time spent living in Nigeria. Its creation, with repetitive stitching, piecing of disparate parts, and several washes fraying the edges, references aspects of the maternal - the parts that make us who we are as we carry on generations of "being" while bringing another "being" into the world. Its existence, while currently insufficient for complete warmth, is a movement toward self-comfort: we must also mother ourselves.

The parts of my "Mother Blanket" are intentional. I come from a long history of familial anxiety that often interfered with healthy parent-child attachment. As time has passed, an understanding and awareness of past generations' lack of resources to address anxiety and in turn how it impacted their existence created a grace around lack. At the same time, intentional movement

toward a different existence with my role in the maternal interrupts the generational patterns. In mothering myself, I provide a different path, a healed path, for those who come after me.



Meredith Starr (U.S.A.)

The House Should Clean Itself
Debris from the kitchen floor one morning after breakfast, fabric cyanotype, C-print
11x14

The world has shifted and stayed askew: the pandemic and its ensuing lockdown tore enormous fault lines through identities, roles, friendships, and loves. Quarantine forced most of us to spend more time inside our homes than ever before – but it also invited us to spend more time outside than we'd done previously, distanced from other people but closer to the natural world. The process of creating a cyanotype outdoors serves as a record of this, and watching the rich blue emerge over time is itself a metaphor for our "before" and "after" pandemic selves. Through the artist's images and titles, the humour and joy of forced time with family is revealed. These artworks document the endurance of an unpredictable world, particularly when it's in crisis.



Maddie Swainhart (Netherlands)
Grammy's Praying For Me
Photography

If a home is where we become. What happens when we don't fit?

I am collecting, digging through the archive of my upbringing. With a family that represents something I could never become, I search for an image of what family can look like outside of the binary. By knowing what I was shown I can make sense of my inner child. A baby raised a girl, who never grew up to become a woman. I begin to understand what didn't fit right.

Mother, May I (ask you)
Video (9 mins)

A video work directed towards my Mother, asking her questions on my upbringing. Using a selection from my family home videos — I look closely at how my parents documented us, and how they raised us.

Mom, these are the things I wish I could ask you.

For young Maddie, who had so much care to give, but couldn't see any caring characters who looked liked them. You are my muse.

My practice revolves around research and construction. I research the archetypes of the Mother, the Nuclear Family, and what nurturing looks like, while constructing a queered image of those. I wonder what family could look like outside the binary, considering the question 'Can we all mother?'

The tension between found footage and performance highlights the gaps between my utopian understanding of motherhood and the Mother figure you saw growing up. My use of self portraiture allows me to shift between fantasy and reality and emphasize the expectation of gender roles within domesticity, while giving you your own playground of The Home. This is for you and all the queer kids like you, an archive in the making. Giving you more options is the way I nurture.



Kara Thorndike (Scotland)
healing mamá
glass, metal, paper, ink

The instinct is to preserve our culture, memories, and ways of life. We memorialise, objectify, and cling to ideals of how things are, were, and should be. Even if these ideals aren't accurate for all. In trying to preserve an ideal, the one ideal, we gloss over a multitude of realities. To heal, we must set the past free. Let it be as it actually was; too big, too complex to be contained. We must open the jar, expand our understanding, and accept the multitude. If we set the past free, the future is free to become. Free to become a multitude of ideals, for everyone.

Kara Thorndike is interested in how we choose to be and why. She seeks wisdom in understanding the context of experiences that shape how we are to give voice to experiences, realised and otherwise, and multiple potentialities to come. Kara's own experiences working in education, social service, social science, design, and art have been a journey to piece together fragments of living in spite of and in the cracks. Growing up on a farm in rural upstate NY she observed and lived closer to nature's rhythms, rhythms that contrast greatly with ones of forces that push us apart and make life in the cracks necessary.

Kara has closely studied social systems, the distinction between private and public, and inclusion and exclusion while working on a MA in Sociology, and later a practice-centred MFA in Art and Humanities. She rejects that life, work, family, and environment are separate and/or static. Using photography to express temporality and potentiality, and sculpture to express the static, she attempts to reveal overlooked perspectives and experiences of being.

Currently, Kara is based in Dundee, Scotland. She travels about the UK, and escapes to Ireland and Budapest (for Tölcsibe and warmth!) as often as possible, dragging her son (and once in a while cat) along with her. Photographing travel experiences is sometimes a shared hobby with her young son, sometimes not so much.

Media Installation, Textile and my first love painting and drawing. Excited for the next phase of my creative journey and looking forward to collaborating and developing my social art practice."



Kirsty Whiten (Scotland)
planted women (open field)
watercolour and graphite on paper
76 x 57cm

Kirsty Whiten makes detailed watercolours and large, brightly coloured oil paintings. She works with human figures, stories and psychology. The images she makes are confronting and often humorous, concerned with picking over the social norms, exploring the body and human behaviour, especially gender and sexuality. Whiten has published two crowd-funded artist books; a hardcover book of misremembered rituals *WRONGER RITES* *The Quing of the Now People*, and another about ritual actions and healing *ICON ORACLE*.



Shona Wardrop (Scotland)
Lineage
Giclee Print
10 x 10"

Women have often captured their heritage and lineage using the medium of photo in its many forms creating a snapshot in time. These instant portrayals provided a vehicle to present a persona to the world. These female guises become layered over time as one generation informs and shapes the next. Although their presence sometimes becomes obscured in the push and pull of being a woman in a world that is sometimes confusing and bewildering in its insistence in containment and confinement of females to boxes. They are caught forever in photos both antique, analogue and digital with a strong and ever insistent female authority proclaiming, this too will pass.

Shona Wardrop is a mother and grandmother who after a 30 year career in social care, and following cancer treatment returned to the creative arts. "I am finally finding and able to express visually my unique voice. I am currently experimenting in Sculpture, Multi

Planted Women (open field) is a piece I made in response to a workshop with dancers and physical theatre performers in Copenhagen. The workshop was intended to develop a piece from the theme of 'Primordial Female Force'. The workshop held space for women to explore their experiences, and in sharing we were engaged in collective grieving, drawing strength and healing. On the final day, the dancers buried their lower legs in the sand of a local beach, and danced from that strong foundation, which was also a severe restriction of movement. I love the tension between that rootedness and the frustration, the direct connection with nature and expressions of rage and grief that came forward from time to time. I wanted to depict the dancers as a strange crop, or copse of women growing in the open field.

Kirsty Whiten is an artist known for her intricate figurative drawings and paintings and instantly recognisable street art. Graduating from Edinburgh College of Art in 1999, she lived in Paris and Edinburgh before building a house and studios in the village of Craigrothie in Fife. Whiten's work has been exhibited internationally, including solo shows with Stolenspace in London, Edinburgh Printmakers workshop and Arusha Gallery in Edinburgh. Whiten's son was born in 2006 and her daughter in 2010.

Contact us:

Spilt Milk Gallery CIC
Studio 4.12
Edinburgh Palette
151 London Road
Edinburgh EH7 6AE

www.spiltmilkgallery.com
info@spiltmilkgallery.com

instagram: @spiltmilkgallery
Facebook: Spilt Milk Gallery
Twitter: @spiltmilk_cic