

NAOMI BLACKLOCK, ELISA JANE CARMICHAEL,
BONITA ELY, CHANTAL FRASER, SALLY MOLLOY,
ELIZABETH WILLING

AN OFFERING

CURATED BY AMY-CLARE McCARTHY
CARPARK
4-25 MARCH 2023

Taking Bonita Ely's work *A Mother Shows Her Daughter to the Universe* (1982) as a starting point, *An Offering* presents new works from five contemporary Brisbane artists relating to their own experiences of motherhood.

GLASS DOOR ROOM

1. Bonita Ely
A Mother Shows Her Daughter to the Universe 1982
Performance documentation
2. Elisa Jane Carmichael
Pieces of Home 2023
Driftwood, ochre, shells and ungaire
Dimensions variable, formation rearranged by Ira Carmichael
3. Sally Molloy
A Mother Puts the Potatoes to Sleep Under an Olive Tree 2023
Performance residue: mat, sack of potatoes weighing the same amount as the artist's son.

ROOM 1

3. Elizabeth Willing
Carve 2023
Linen, acrylic paint, and embroidery thread
220 x 220cm
4. Elizabeth Willing
Methylene Blue 2023
Linen, acrylic paint, and embroidery thread
220 x 220cm

ROOM 2

5. Naomi Blacklock
Ritual for Aruna 2023
Soil, clay plots, incense, contact microphones

ROOM 3

6. Sally Molloy
Echoes of Invasions (Babies Falling, Mountains Forming) 2023
Acrylic on reconstituted kitty litter, cloth nappy, weeds, dog hair, lint, old sheets and string
75 x 35 cm
7. Chantal Fraser
Altar Lua 2023
Air drying clay, shells, coral, glitter, thread

*Elisa Jane Carmichael courtesy of Onespace.
Elizabeth Willing courtesy of Tolarno Galleries.*

This exhibition is the result of Amy-Clare McCarthy's Lord Mayor's Creative Fellowship (18-19), the Lord Mayor's Creative Fellowships are an initiative of Brisbane City Council. Her pitched Fellowship project was postponed, cancelled, now reimagined, following the birth of her children.

AN OFFERING

TEXT BY AMY-CLARE MCCARTHY

Following the birth of my second child, deep in the throes of the work of mothering, in a muddled sleep deprived state, I wondered how I would ever have time for anything else. How would my other work, my *paid* work, fit into my life again? Thoughts of work and motherhood turned to art, and thinking of art always brought me back to **Bonita Ely's** *A Mother Shows Her Daughter to the Universe* - an artwork that has long been a favourite of mine. The concept as described by Bonita - *An alternative to the Christian baptism ritual, Ely lifts up her infant daughter up towards the universe, and down towards the Earth, welcoming her daughter to her life on Earth, forging connections with the natural environment. At the edges she lifts the child up to [see] the universe, and in the centre of the mandala, bent down on one knee, she shows her baby to the Earth.*

It occurred to me that bringing motherhood into my work would be my way forward, and Bonita's performance became the starting point for this exhibition. I invited five artists (contemporaries of mine both in their careers and in motherhood; we all have small children, ranging from a few weeks old to nearly 5 years old) to create new works based on their own experience of motherhood. Studio meetings were sometimes playdates, and burbling babies were present in phone calls. It's been a rewarding way of working.

The first work you see on approaching the space are the photographic prints that make up the documentation of Bonita's original performance. Sharing the room with these photographs is **Elisa (Leecee) Jane Carmichael's** work *Pieces of Home*. All the materials in the work are from Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island), driftwood collected by Leecee and her son Ira from Pulan (Amity Point) over a few weeks in summer. Leecee was inspired by how Ira was getting to know Country - through feeling and touching the objects that interested him. During the opening event Ira was delighted to be reunited with the objects, playing with them and moving them from the spiral form Leecee created. The work has been left how Ira rearranged it. Behind the wall is documentation from **Sally Molloy's** performance work; where she rocked a bag of potatoes in the same way she rocks her son to sleep, humorously reflecting on the everyday labours and physical work undertaken by mothers.

Hanging in Gallery 1 are **Elizabeth Willing's** two linen works; the first features appliquéd shapes taken from recipe books demonstrating how best to cut a cake in order to make it into new shapes (train, duck etc). The second has the outlined forms of Elizabeth's daughters puzzles when empty of their pieces. Through the imagery of her father's brightly coloured medication, Elizabeth confronts her own psychological experience of parenthood.

Documentation of **Naomi Blacklock's** *Ritual for Aruna* fills Gallery 2. A homage to Bonita's work, Naomi lights incense and builds layers of sound, making her way over an egg of life mandala made in soil, as a way to connect her daughter to the spirit of her matrilineal line, the ritual ends with Naomi lifting Aruna.

In Gallery 3 is **Sally Molloy's** painting *Echoes of Invasions (Babies Falling, Mountains Forming)*, that considers the way that colonial imagery can make its way into the home through children's content. She has made her own paper for the work, made of pulped detritus from her home. Nearby **Chantal Fraser** has created an altar honouring symbols that she has drawn power from surrounding the arrival of her second child just a few weeks ago. A marriage of thoughts drawn from the desire to esteem the historic pre-church and State matrecentric way of life; holistic midwives; Birthkeepers; and other artists meet in the forms on the discs. One includes the trilogy of the proposed rites of passage for women as described by Dr. Rachel Reed: menstruation, mothering years (whether you mother your own child or others), and menopause. Connecting it all is the red thread of ancestors, honouring the lineage of the wise women that came before.

CARPARK AT MILANI GALLERY

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