

**THROUGH
THE
EYES
OF
THE
MOTHER**

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눈으로



**COLLABORATION BETWEEN
KOREAN AND AMERICAN WOMEN ARTISTS
From the Feminist Perspective**



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FIRST THANK YOU! On behalf of myself, the Women's Caucus for Art and the American artists, we would like to begin to say thank you so much to Hye-Seong Tak Lee for inviting us to Korea. We are deeply honored to be included and to be a part of this wonderful exhibition.

The exhibition "Through the Eyes of the Mother" was a big success at the Korean Cultural Center in Wheeling, Illinois this past February and was enjoyed by all the guests and the Women's Caucus for Art members.

We are so pleased that we have the opportunity to join you for this exhibition in Korea and look forward to future collaborations.





ABOUT ME. My name is Karen Gutfreund and I have lived in all four corners of the United States but am now in the Bay Area of California from with my family. I have been actively involved on the board of various arts organizations and I am an artist, curator and art consultant.

- I am currently the National Exhibitions Director and the Museum and Gallery Liaison for WCA for the Women's Caucus for Art, Member of ArtTable, the Northern California Representative for The Feminist Art Project, and Curator for UniteWomen.org.
- I promote the work of women artists with national touring exhibitions. We create large scale "blockbuster" art shows exhibiting hundreds of women artists across the country. The images above are the exhibition catalogs I have published to document and preserve the important work by these artists.
- The focus for the shows I create is "art as activism" for women artists to make art based on the conditions of their lives and what they view in their society and the larger world.
- With exhibitions like "Through the Eyes of the Mother", I believe the artist expressing their experience will effect positive change to end the marginalization of women.

HISTORY AND THE START OF FEMINIST ART

The feminist movement in the United States grew out of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960's and thus began the Women's Rights Movement in the 1970's and the birth of Feminist Art and recognition of women artists.

WHO IS A FEMINIST: anyone who believes in the full social, economic, political equality of women and men.

Information About Women's Caucus for Art

The Women's Caucus for Art is an national member organization that was founded in 1972 in connection with the College Art Association (CAA). At the time it began there was not even one female artist included in any major art history textbook.

- The mission of the Women's Caucus for Art is to create community through art, education, global art activism and advocate equity in the arts for all.
- WCA uses art as the universal language to engage artists and civil society on a broad range of issues such as gender equity, human rights and environmental sustainability.
- WCA is committed to recognizing the contribution of women in the arts; providing women with leadership opportunities and exhibition opportunities.
- WCA is very happy to have Hye-Seong Tak Lee, Director of the Feminist Artist Network in Korea, as a part of our organization and are very grateful for all her work to promote women artists.



Gloria Steinem, pictured here is has played a huge role in promoting women's rights and defining feminism and is still very active today.

KOREAN AND AMERICAN COLLABORATION FOR “EYES OF THE MOTHER”

I was very interested and intrigued by the theme of this exhibition proposed last year by Hye-Seong Tak Lee as a collaboration between Korean and American women artists. I was so pleased to be asked to assemble a body of work of American artists for consideration for this important exhibition at the Korean Cultural Center in Wheeling, Illinois for the exhibition in February 2014.

We researched and presented many artists and Hye-Seong then had the difficult task of choosing the work that best fit the theme and would also fit in the gallery space. A difficult task indeed, we presented over sixty works of great merit. The breadth and depth of work on this subject was remarkable and we both wished we had a larger exhibition space to showcase the entire collection.

Having to choose brings to mind the decision making process of Solomon from the Bible when two women were fighting over a baby boy – each claiming it belonged to them. I saw this in a movie as a child and the image has never left me, and I think of it often. Solomon, in his wisdom, commanded that the baby be cut in half. Instantly the rightful mother threw her body across the infant; protesting that the child be given to the other woman to save him, proving her love and maternity, thus sparing him and ultimately getting him returned to her.

What are we willing to do as mothers, and how does it affect our lives and ultimately our work? So often women, particularly mothers, are portrayed as weak or soft, and I am astonished at the absurdity of it. The passion, love, dedication and strength that mothers prove over and over rival the strength of any warrior; and the art that comes out of this experience is moving, compelling and significant. Motherhood, this is the stuff of life – messy, complicated, emotional, but it is what makes the cycle keep going.

The work that Hye-Seong has chosen is an incredible thought provoking exhibition! I was honored to be involved with this project that I know will touch the hearts and minds of the viewers. “Eyes of the Mother” inspired creative, didactic dialog on what it means to be an artist and mother with all the joys, sorrows, trials and tribulations that accompany the journey.



THROUGH THE EYES OF THE MOTHER

The exhibition provided the opportunity to engage multiple cultural communities by presenting a variety of deep experiences on the universal theme of the maternal and motherhood. It opened the door to cross-cultural conversations to examine and redefine the complexities of actual family relationships. The exhibition featured works by a multi-cultural group of nationally and internationally recognized artist-mothers whose works represent the changing realities of motherhood in the new millennium.



This show enabled important dialog about women's roles and conditions in society about motherhood. Motherhood is a profoundly feminist subject. Women/mothers even today are excluded from many types of roles and looked down upon as inferior. Even within the feminist movement women artists who chose to be mothers were marginalized.



The question of art versus motherhood, is one of the toughest balancing acts between work and family, then also gives way to the perception that society doesn't consider an artist's work as "work" just like motherhood isn't acknowledged as being real work. When a woman exchanges her identity for that of a mother, it leaves little room for her self-identity as an artist.



We hope that these exhibitions will change societies views on the Artist-Mother.

History of Exhibitions on the Maternal

- ***Hidden Mother*** by Laura Larson (TFAP), Blue Sky Gallery, Portland, OR in August 2014, Palmer Museum of Art in Spring 2015, and Allen Memorial Art Museum in Fall 2015
- ***Are You My Mother?*** Sponsored by Kansas TFAP chapter at Watson Gallery, Salina, Kansas 2014
- ***Home Truths: Photography and Motherhood*** by Susan Bright, The Photographers Gallery, London, October 2013 - January 2014, The Foundling Museum, London October 2013 - January 2014, The Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago, Illinois, April – July 2014, and Belfast Exposed, Northern Ireland, October - December 2014
- ***Complicated Labors*** by Irene Lustzig in Santa Cruz, California, 2014
- ***New Maternalisms*** by Natalie Loveless at FADO Performance Art Center, Toronto, Canada 2012 and Chile 2014
- ***Through the Eyes of the Mother*** by Hye-Seong Tak Lee and Women's Caucus for Art, Korean Cultural Center, Wheeling, Illinois 2013
- ***Postpartum*** for E.B. White Gallery, by Rachel Epp Buller, Bethel College, North Newton College, Kansas, April 2013
- ***Breaking in Two: Provocative Visions of Motherhood***, by Bruria Finkel at Arena 1 Gallery, Santa Monica, California, April 2012
- ***Separation Anxiety***, by Denise Johnson and Rebecca Trawick, Wignall Museum of Contemporary Art, Chaffey College, Rancho Cucamonga, California 2010 and Pelham Art Center, Pelham, New York, February - March 2012
- ***Beyond Re/Production: Mothering*** by Felicita Reuschling at Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien, Berlin, Germany, February-April, 2011.
- ***Mothers*** by Rachel Epp Buller, Woman Made Gallery in Chicago, Illinois in November – December 2010
- ***Reel Mothers*** by Andrea Liss, California Center for the Arts, Excondido, California, 2009
- ***Mother/mother**** curated by Jennifer Wroblewski at AIR Gallery, Brooklyn, NY, December 2008 – January 2009
- ***Maternal Metaphors*** by Myrel Chernick, RoCo, Rochester, New York April-May 2004 and Ohio University Art Galleries, Athens, Ohio 2006
- ***Double Bind*** by Signe Thiell in Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin. May – June 2003.
- ***MOTHER ART*** - A collective of women artists dedicated to creating social-political art practice. Many exhibitions, performances, video and publications from the 1970s to today.

FUTURE COLLABORATIONS

What would happen if a woman didn't have to choose between work and family and instead carved out a path to care for her family and children without losing her own self-fulfillment?

Thank you and together with these organizations we hope to continue working on creating exhibitions in the future to unite Korean and American women artists!



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