



jina valentine and Sylvan, photo by Nathan Keay, 2020.

Interview with jina valentine

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Interview conducted by Lena
Šimić and Jennifer Verson

Interview edited by Lena
Šimić and Jennifer Verson

jina valentine is a mother, visual artist, and Associate Professor of Printmedia at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her independent practice is informed by traditional craft techniques and interweaves histories latent within found texts, objects, narratives, and spaces. jina's work involves language translation, mining content from material and digital archives, and experimental strategies for humanizing data-visualization. She is also co-founder (with artist Heather Hart) of Black Lunch Table, an oral-history archiving project. Her work has received recognition and support from the Graham Foundation, Joan Mitchell Foundation, and Art Matters among others. jina received her BFA from Carnegie Mellon and her MFA from Stanford University.

Jennifer: I was curious how you identify as an artist and if your mother/artist identification features in your work. I'm also interested if there was a transition in your identification from before you became a mother and after you became a mother?

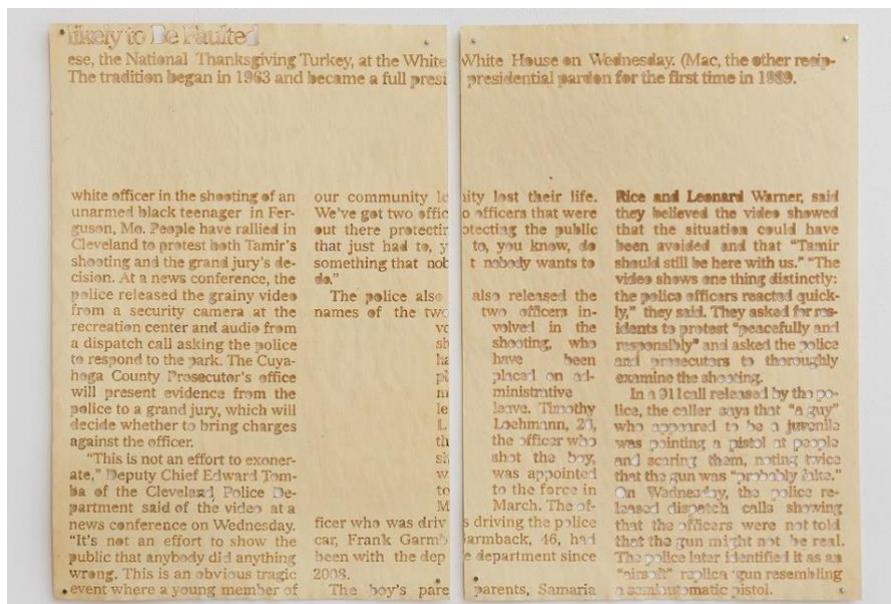
jina: That's a really good question, how do I identify? It's always in the list of things, the hats that I wear. I'm an artist, writer, professor and mother, sometimes I say that I'm a mother, artist, professor then writer. It depends on which is requiring more of me. Lately, especially during the pandemic and because of online schooling – my son Sylvan is just over there playing Minecraft – work-life balance became a funny thing. So much of my practice is related to the work that I do as a mother as well.

Was there a shift? I think that my practice definitely shifted as I became more aware of my role as a mother and thinking about my role as a mother and teacher, this person who's always being asked 'why'. In my artist statement I talk about how I've had to shift the way that I describe things because the definitions that I have hung onto need to be explained. And they also need to be explained in a way that an eight-year-old can understand.

I often use the example of white supremacy. Before teaching at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) I was at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. For a long time, there was a Confederate monument on campus and we would go to rallies and protests there. I was explaining to a four-year-old what the Confederacy was and why we were there. It's important that they understand what the protestors are doing there and why it's important and also why I'm there. Of course, between explaining to a four-year-old and an eight-year-old the language has to shift, so it's not like a one-time offering of this kind of language.

Lena: In my work with the Institute for the Art and Practice on Dissent at Home¹ – a project which had to do with intervention into family living and thinking critically about how you raise your children – we've tried to, through the protests and performances we've done, to educate and raise the children critically and lovingly. To which degree do children feature in your work? Your son, is he part of your work – is he there as in visible in your artwork – or is he more in the background that you draw material from?

jina: Around 2016, maybe before then, in 2015, was the first time I really remarked on it in an actual statement. I think it was when Black Lives Matter came into public discourse, into popular culture, and I was thinking about my role as a mother and a Black woman raising a little person that identified as Black. How do you explain that moment to him?



Testimony, Disintegration. 2015. found paper, iron gall ink, treated with oxidant. 24 x 32 inches.

I made a work called *Testimony* (2015)² in which I was trying to deal with my inability to empathise with mothers who have lost their children to state violence and not really wanting to feel sympathy.

How do you have care and show solidarity without being sympathetic, which is not really a position that I wanted to take. I also felt that it was

¹ See [The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home](http://www.institutefortheartandpractice.com/)

² See <https://www.jinavalentine.com/Testimony>

part of my responsibility as a mother to be able to explain that moment to him to the degree that he could understand it. I don't know if that answers your question *how he is involved in the work*. Maybe it's more about me – me thinking about how my perspective and my responsibility as an artist has shifted since becoming a mother.

I think the work that I have done since having him is more political, it feels more urgent in a way. Not just because I have less time practically to make it – to sit and dream in my studio – but it feels like work that actually needs to come out and sooner. My son has always travelled



Sylvan Palm Valentine (age 2) at Moral Mondays rally, Raleigh, NC 2014

with me: he comes everywhere for *Black Lunch Table* (2005–current) projects, my collaboration with Heather Hart.³ And now we have a smallish team of audio technicians, programmers, transcribers and managerial staff and Sylvan just comes with us because practically he has to, but also, I think it's important that the children of artists are involved in their parents' studio practices too. I have thought about Dr Deborah Willis, photographer and art historian, and her son Hank Willis Thomas who is a huge art star and I think so much of his

education as an artist was about being with her all the time.⁴

Jennifer: That's so interesting. Lena, your children have often been in your practice, visually. I've known Lena since my daughter was two, she was my first artist mum friend, she saved me from the despair of

³ For more information see [About – Black Lunch Table](#)

⁴ See [Deb Willis \(debwillisphoto.com\)](#)

‘there’s no other artist mums’. I identified then as an artist activist. The only time my daughter Ella appeared visually in my work was when I made her carry a sign for the Royal Wedding in the UK in 2011, that said ‘Princesses Are Pigs’. I pushed her in a stroller. I’ve always been slightly incognito about press, but there I am with a two-year-old in a stroller with a big sign that says, ‘Princesses Are Pigs’. The guy from *The New York Times* interviewed us. And I spelled my name for the reporter because if I’m going to be in *The New York Times* protesting with my baby, I wanted them to get my name right. Other than that, Ella’s never been visually in my work. That’s an interesting tension that you’re holding – the way that your motherhood enters your work and how your son enters your work but doesn’t appear in your work visually.

jina: Right, not explicitly. He’s always in my presentations and there are a couple of images of him holding signs, maybe the one that I shared at the maternal forum with him in a baby carriage holding a placard that read *31st in Education Spending* which was in North Carolina, that was part of the Moral Mondays rallies.⁵ I am just thinking of our mum friends who are artists, their children also go to with them to residencies or sit in on their classes or the kids hang out together when they’re dragged to art openings and lectures. It’s a special kind of community, my friend Christa Donner who I’d like to mention, runs a project called Cultural ReProducers and my dear friend Hồng-Ân Trương and I did an interview with Christa.⁶ We talked about how our work had changed since becoming mothers. Hồng-Ân is an activist, an artist and professor as well. We talked about the urgency that our practices had taken on and how it also affects our teaching.

I had a conversation with my old friend Alex Paik who is one of the founders of ‘Tiger Strikes Asteroid’ which is a loosely defined

⁵ For more information see [Moral Mondays - Wikipedia](#)

⁶ For interview see [Cultural ReProducers: Interview: Hồng-Ân Trương and Jina Valentine](#)

collective of artist-run gallery spaces across the country.⁷ He's a dad and has talked about how being a primary care provider in his family has affected the urgency that he has in creating work and re-thinking his approach to the art world too. So, he thinks less about participating in the gallery system – the Chelsea / New York gallery system – but thinking about how he can create communities and networks of support and invite our children and families into them. That's really important.

CULTURAL REPRODUCERS

HOME ARTISTS RESOURCES EVENTS RESIDENCY REPORT IN PRINT MANIFESTO ABOUT

FEATURED

Who Cares for Whom? Parenthood in the Creative Community

Alberto Aguilar, *Rest Area* (Museo Picasso Barcelona), 2011 by Christa Donner. The Atlantic magazine has just bafflingly proclaimed...



WHO WE ARE

Cultural ReProducers are an evolving group of active cultural workers who are also parents. This site is for anyone interested in making the art world a more inclusive and interesting place by supporting arts professionals raising kids.

SEARCH CR

SEARCH

MOST VIEWED

Not Your Mama's Residency
The following letter was shared by an artist who was recently awarded a place in a competitive residency program. For the sake of prof...

Residency Report: Poppa Picking, Hamtramck, MI
Residency Report is an ongoing series of posts from artists undertaking creative residencies with their families. Find out about programs t...

Friday, July 14, 2017

Interview: Hồng-Ân Trương and Jina Valentine



In the midst of social, environmental, and political unrest, two of our most important resources are care and creative thinking. Artist-parents play a critical role in both, mindfully raising the next generation while also activating public imagination. Cultural ReProducers explore this intersection through a series of conversations with artists about the future our children will inherit, and the work we're making in response.

Hồng-Ân Trương and **Jina Valentine** are active artists, writers, mothers, and professors based in Durham, North Carolina, where they both teach at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC). Their practices share a deep engagement with issues of cultural identity and social justice, and they've joined forces through the community-based project, *All Rise*, which we were lucky to catch at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago in April. *All Rise* combines strategies from two ongoing collaborative projects: Hường Ngô and Hồng-Ân Trương's public performance *And And And Stammering: An Interview* and Jina Valentine and Heather Hart's *Black Lunch Table*, activating

Cultural Reproducers: interviewed by Christa Donner, with Hồng-Ân Trương. 2017

⁷ For more information see [Tiger Strikes Asteroid](#)

Lena: What networks are important to us as mother/artists and how we want to insert or not insert ourselves into the art world is a crucial question. Recently at ‘The Missing Mother’ online conference at the University of Bolton,⁸ I felt a kind of a tension from us as a group of mother/artists, a desire or need to be affirmed and recognized by big art institutions, like the Tate, but actually what's much more important is that we manage to create our own networks and contexts, that we are capable of sustaining and therefore creating a new culture.

In a way Cultural ReProducers – it seems to me, looking from the outside, having read their interviews and been on their website – is a creation of a different kind of network, a different kind of support group. To which degree are these support groups, artistic or otherwise, important to you? Which ones do you belong to?

jina: I think I'd like to be more intentional about building community. The folx that I have befriended since moving here to Chicago three years ago, they're artists, they're educators, they're also parents. They're artists and educators who are bringing their children with them. Other examples of folx whose practices I would mention would be Alberto Aguilar who also teaches at the Art Institute⁹, is a brilliant artist, and is father to five kids. His work has always included a more holistic approach to his life. One of his younger daughters Madeleine is now a grad student in Printmedia at SAIC, and is an amazing and very dedicated artist.

I think the thing that is common across my parenting artist friends is that out of necessity we're pushing for a more holistic approach to our professional lives and our non-professional lives. Some acknowledgement that the work we do at home is still work, it's work that we love, and the work that we do at work is work that we also love,

⁸ For more information see [The Missing Mother \(wordpress.com\)](http://www.themissingmother.com)

⁹ For more information see [Alberto Aguilar](http://www.albertoaguilar.com)

and the division between the two – as I said you have the work/life balance – it’s unnatural and unrealistic.

I think at school my colleagues have a more activist approach to pushing for accessibility and dissolving this work/life balance, this artifice of the work/life balance. They have been pushing for things like more time for new parents to be on leave, or they also bring their children to class sometimes. (*Interacting with Sylvan*) A child came to class two weeks ago. It was my last day of class, remember?

But my students like you and you like them too, right? You came to school one time, they had a critique day and we had a field trip and my teaching assistant was missing that day so Sylvan stood in as my TA and he helped out in the critique and we went to the Newbury Library,¹⁰ to look at things from the archive. Sylvan asks lots of questions, and art students ask lots of questions too. I also think it’s important for students to see faculty as whole human beings who are also caretakers of themselves but also of young ones and older family members. I’m thinking back to the first time I saw one of my elementary school teachers outside of school. It shocked me that that person *existed* outside of the school. I never imagined that they had a life outside of the school.

I think the majority of my students also know my son and they also know that I’m a single mother and I think it’s a good example as far as representation goes, in terms of what is expected of artists professionally. There was at some time this idea that you had to drop everything in your life to be a parent, or drop everything to be an artist. I think it needs to be demonstrated that this is untrue.

¹⁰ For more information see [The Newberry - Chicago's Independent Research Library Since 1887](#)

Jennifer: I am feeling really sentimental because you're in my home town. I never really identified with this term as a United States citizen. I always identified as a Chicagoan. They were like, 'Who are you?' and I'm like, 'I'm a Chicagoan'. Do you know Maxwell Street? It's this famous street market, and then was demolished by the last Daley administration.¹¹ My dad grew up selling socks on Maxwell Street, my mum was in Albany Park, I grew up in Rogers Park. As an adult I lived in Logan Square where my mother had lived and my daughter was born there too. She used to take us to the free days at the Art Institute – this was my earliest education.¹² I took my daughter back, we emigrated when she was one, I took her back and walked to the Institute and I showed her the Chagall windows,¹³ crafting her identity as a Chicagoan. And I am really interested in your relationship to the city, to the body of city and the city as a body.

jina: Yeah. That's complicated. I was raised in the suburbs of Philadelphia, the Main Line, if you know anything about that area. The DuPont family lives out there, at Valley Forge. I went to undergrad in Pittsburgh, lived in North Philly after undergrad, moved to the Bay Area for grad school and then lived in Paris for two years. I was doing a residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts and then moved to North Carolina... and stayed in Durham for six years. So we're still relatively new here. (*Indicates Sylvan*) This guy considers himself a North Carolinian I think, or are you a Chicagoan? Will you ever be a Chicagoan?

Sylvan: I'm hungry.

jina: ... I enjoy living in Chicago, I feel there are so many art worlds possible here. I feel like there is a very long history of community

¹¹ [Richard M. Daley - Wikipedia](#)

¹² See The Art Institute of Chicago <https://www.artic.edu/>

¹³ [America Windows | The Art Institute of Chicago \(artic.edu\)](#)

organising and self-organising among artists and academics, it's just amazing. The city is so segregated it's very difficult to navigate... to determine exactly where we as a family unit actually belong in Chicago. For reference my son was going to a private school, a Montessori school, the other side of Andersonville, now he is at Disney Magnet School. So went from a school that was probably 95% middle, upper middle, upper class to a public school that is majority minority, like 80% minority, and 40% low-income.

There are of course many different Chicagos and so many communities that we are part of. I haven't found a natural way that they bridge. So do we like living here? My studio is out in Albany Park which is great.¹⁴ The original question is how do I feel about Chicago?

Jennifer: What's your relationship to it? As a part of my work, within an organisation called Migrant Artists Mutual Aid, I use the term 'migrant' as an intersectional radical term where it creates an identity of people who move. It's an important consideration, that we all moved around different cities, countries and regions. What you describe is this identity of the migrant, and in my work I am taking that as a positionality for solidarity.

There's a brilliant book written about Liverpool black community which considers the migrations of women, small minor migrations, from one part of the city to another, that address these barriers of segregation.¹⁵ The bigger question is really about how your work as an organiser and curator of the *Black Lunch Table* interacts with your solo work?

jina: We describe our project as nomadic – I'm here, Heather has been in New York for as long as I have known her. During its existence I've

¹⁴ See [Albany Park, Chicago - Wikipedia](#)

¹⁵ Brown, Jacqueline Nassy. *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail*. Princeton University Press, 2005.

lived in all those places that I've mentioned. We are supposed to move at the end of June, so I'll be in another location very soon. Part of our core team is in New York and the rest of our team is in Chicago. We have some folx out in Portland and LA and Texas. One of our proxies for our Wikipedia project is in Nigeria. So we're intentionally international, intentionally nomadic and the project itself, the archive part of the project is based on these community round-tables that we host. We work with institutions to host these events, which are essentially lunch or dinner and conversation amongst community members. We do invite specific people to come but it's also open to everyone.

I think the first time we convened what's now called the *People's Table* was back in 2014.¹⁶ It was previously called the *Black Lives Matter Table*. We realized we were discussing intersecting topics amongst disparate groups of friends: amongst artists, amongst our activist friends, amongst the academics and another conversation at little league soccer with parents. So we thought *what happens if we bring all these conversations together and have everybody who was invested in discussing these issues talk to each other*. It was so beautiful. People hugged at the conclusion of that roundtable session. And most often, participants linger, chat, exchange contact information... to keep in touch and continue the conversation.

The other roundtable session is called *The Artists' Roundtable* which invites Black artists to come together to talk about their lives and work. Because we do these round table events all over the country and internationally it is naturally nomadic and in most places we are not members of those communities. Yet it's really about those communities coming together and having those conversations.

¹⁶ For more information see [The People's Tables – Black Lunch Table](#)



Black Lunch Table: The Artists' Roundtable. Black Artists Retreat at Dorchester Projects, Chicago, IL. 2015

Me as nomad, I've never quite felt like I belonged anywhere. I grew up in very white suburbia north of Philadelphia. Heather and I started the *Black Lunch Table* because of our complicated relationship with Black lunch tables in school. There was always one in the school cafeteria. But there were always these other tables that you also sit at. I think my life has been spent within and between communities. And living in a place like Chicago which is really made up of very discrete communities, it's hard to figure out where to be. I think we might move to Rogers Park.¹⁷

Jennifer: I describe the place where we lived when my daughter was born as the only place in the world where Poland borders Mexico. You can buy five different types of rye bread and then one street away you can buy tortillas but there's no mixing?

¹⁷ [Rogers Park, Chicago - Wikipedia](#)

jina: That is fascinating for me. I'm working on a couple of research projects about emigration, international immigration to the Chicago area and also looking further back at people that migrated to the state from within the United States. I'm really interested in migration to Chicago in the years between 1920 and 1970 when a lot of people were moving: Black people moving from the South, but then so many people were moving here from Europe and South America also – this huge influx of people from within the country and from outside of the country, and what kind of community that created. There were so many migrations happening at the same time. I'm also thinking about the welcome that the migrants received or didn't receive. Thinking about how that has really shaped the way that the city looks today.

Jennifer: There is a political weight to words. You described the *Black Lunch Table* as nomadic, we often use the term 'diaspora', I use the term 'migrant' as I've remigrated to Europe in some ways, I returned. Your description of not feeling attached to a specific place and then creating a nomadic organisation makes me wonder about the possibilities of maternal performance to craft new spaces? New aesthetic spaces or new cognitive spaces for yourself as a mother/artist and for your relationship with your son? His identity too.

jina: I think it was for kindergarten that we did a project about home. We talked about how we were home for each other but also our community, our chosen family was our home. And that's something you can have that is in physical proximity to you but especially in the past year so much of home has been via Zoom or FaceTime or Google Meet. Other people in your community don't necessarily need to live down the street. Home is not so much a place as it is a community. I hope that's the lesson that I'm teaching him.

Lena: I grew up in a country that doesn't exist anymore, Yugoslavia. There was a civil war and then suddenly I was given a different

citizenship and so I became a Croatian. I now live in the UK and I'm British as well. Jennifer and I did a project about this idea of 'becoming British'. We were trying to look at our migration stories. Always searching for this place of belonging and not belonging anywhere. I wonder if becoming a mother in a way fixes you into a certain position. I felt that personally, suddenly there was this, at least through societal imposition, quite a fixed identity, that you can then rebel against. You are this 'mother' identity now, right?

I was wondering, in terms of your different art works, do you feel that you are also moving in between different art forms? Say, visual art and performance, that there is a kind of a migration happening as well, through different art forms as you are exploring different subjects or themes. Could you tell us about a couple of those to introduce the readers to your works?

jina: I was thinking about diaspora, the first *Black Lunch Table* we did outside the US was in Cape Town in South Africa. We had a series of very long conversations with our collaborators there, Ghairunisa Galeta, Ashley Whitfield and Thuli Mlambo – artists that we were friends with, who were working with us to help organise the tables and send invitations. The Artists Roundtable had always been for *artists of the African diaspora*, but if you are hosting a table on the continent, they're not diasporic Africans, right? So what does that mean? I think we decided ultimately to go with just "Black" and leave it open for participants to self-identify.

What am I doing right now? The responsibilities that come with motherhood have vastly decreased the amount of time that I have in my life for other things. However, I feel that I'm more focussed than I have ever been on the work that I want to or need to make. I went to a residency at Marble House which is a relatively new residency in

Vermont.¹⁸ They have a two-week session every year for “parenting artists.” When we went, there were six artists there with their children, some with partners. The children had camp during the day and play-workers would tend to them for seven hours. We would joke that seven hours for most people is not a lot of time, but seven hours for a group of parents is an eternity. We would sprint to our studios!

I don’t know that my work is actually changing as a result of motherhood per se. There has always been some pedagogic value to the work that I do, trying to explain how I see things, or trying to explain connections between phenomena that aren’t immediately apparent to most people. I think about why the audiences that would go to a museum or gallery should be aware of some phenomena. For example, I did a series of works a few years ago looking at executive memos, that came out during #45’s time in office and how those memos affected the earnings of the biggest for-profit prison companies in the United States.¹⁹ On one side of the paper is the executive memo, on the other side it was the earnings of the GEO Group. Both texts are written with iron gall ink, which corrodes and eats the paper; so the two sets of data become visible to/through each side of the paper. Maybe it seems obvious but I don’t know that most people put those two things together.

The work that I’m doing now is a several years long research project. I am using contemporary Census data (and other related demographic reports) to update or redraw *Exhibit of American Negroes*, the WEB DuBois’ series of sixty-seven drawings illustrating the lives of Black Americans.²⁰ The originals so beautiful and employ data – information

¹⁸ For more information see [Residency Programs — Marble House Project](#)

¹⁹ I’d rather not link to anything #45 related lol. Linking to the GEO Group is fine!

²⁰ See [W.E.B. Du Bois’ Visionary Infographics Come Together for the First Time in Full Color | History | Smithsonian Magazine](#)

and text – from 120 years ago, so I am using them to think about how much has changed and how much has remained the same.

A lot of the work that I have been doing lately is related to looking at data and trying to humanise it. Data that we are presented with in newspapers and other media is abstracted to the point that it doesn't connect to a lived reality that we can comprehend or empathise with. I have written a class called '*in/un/data humanising data viz*' which is a crash course in really basic data visualisation and data extraction.²¹

Humanising data viz students were asked to think about what socio-political issues are of interest to them, and about how these phenomena are represented in news media, and then to think about ways to bring nuance to that. We talked about what data sets they might want to access and what other data sets they could pull to either support or contrast. Students produced drawings, sounds, writing, photographs...

We also did a postcard project – the last iteration of this class was taught online. A couple of the students were here in Chicago, one was in Shanghai and another was in Beirut. We did this project based on the book *Dear Data* (2016).²² They charted a day based on things that we had agreed on [for example, on Tuesday we decided to chart every time we were distracted by something]. Then we all sent these postcards to each other amongst the class and sent a copy to the Joan Flasch Artist Books Collection, which is part of the library at SAIC, so they have a whole set there as well.

I co-taught a class with professors Lisa Vinebaum and Ebony Patterson in the Fibers and Material Studies Department at SAIC, which was called 'Making in the Aftermath'. I don't know how to talk about this class. It was part seminar and part large group publishing project. We talked about what it means to heal in an aftermath. We were thinking

²¹ For more information see [in | un | data: humanizing data viz — Ox-Bow](#)

²² For more information see [The Project — Dear Data \(dear-data.com\)](#)

about overlapping aftermaths, what does it mean to live in the aftermath of something? When is the aftermath? Is it the aftermath of a pandemic? Is it the aftermath of our previous president? Is it the aftermath of the 2010s? Is it...? What aftermaths are we ahead of? Some students talked about how they themselves were the aftermath. As the legacy of their ancestors they are the aftermath. I think this does relate to parenting too.

Lena: I just wanted to pick up on this word ‘aftermath’ because Emily Underwood-Lee and I have finished writing a book on maternal performance in which we tried to write through stages of mothering.²³ We started with a kind of beginning and then loss, pregnancy, birth... the following chapter is called ‘aftermath’. That was a kind of aftermath following the event of birth, this period of what happens after it. And then interestingly I recently went through a divorce and there is a beautiful book by Rachel Cusk which she named *Aftermath* (2012), which is about her divorce and the period after the relationship breaks apart.²⁴ Aftermath is a very potent word.

jina: Yeah it definitely is. The aftermath is always longer than the event itself right? It’s everything after.

Jennifer: I was struck by the generosity and wisdom of your pedagogy in these two descriptions and your reflection on yourself as an educator and your relationship with your students. There's an expected understanding of the maternal relationship in being a primary carer of an offspring, but there are these non-biological maternal relationships.

jina: Yes, absolutely, that is real. There were some really hard conversations in class. Some of our students had either gotten sick or

²³ Šimić, Lena and Underwood-Lee, Emily. *Maternal Performance: Feminist Relations*. Basingstoke: Palgrave. 2021.

²⁴ Cusk, Rachel. *Aftermath: On Marriage and Separation*. Farrar Straus Giroux 2012.

their parents were sick or they'd lost family members ...they had real lives outside of class and they just wanted to make a community where we could talk and provide for each other in a way that was more organic than what is usually expected of a classroom.

My students are definitely not my children. But I think, I try to be available to them in whatever capacity they need. I do have students and former students from a decade ago I still talk to about things that are not necessarily related to school or work, they are colleagues, they're friends, with real concerns... and sometimes they just need reference letters...

Lena: We don't know when these relationships end. It's similar with mothering, when does my mothering end?

jina: Thinking back to the previous point about Sylvan being a part of my work – modelling a more holistic performance of the maternal in all aspects of one's life. I'm not just mother when I'm at home but I'm also mother in the classroom and in my studio. And making oneself available to students on a level that goes beyond the standard role of the instructor, is part of that too. I am also very much a student in my classrooms. I try to be a friend. And I try to be a good listener and I try to be generous in what I can share of my experience because I don't think I know how to do it any other way, but I also think that it's important because they need to see that being an artist is also part of that too, that these conversations are not necessarily separate.