



Artfull Mother

Winter
2018

Boulder, Denver and Beyond



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Devoted to the Interests of Mothers and the Art that Empowers Them!



Welcome Winter



Winter 2018

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read current & back issues

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SarahKate's Body Art Models:

Stephanie (cover, 2-7)
Jennifer (this page
& the page before)
Katy 9-13
Julie 15 - 16 and
the back cover
Kathrina 17 & 19

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Creative Mistakes

It's so tempting to crumple it up after the first mistake, there's always the thought that if you could start over you'd do a better job, but there is magic in continuing with the art to see where it takes you. To go on as if it wasn't a mistake at all, but instead, a new idea, a new direction. Or just a part that's a little different.

I first learned this type of artistic perseverance when taking piano lessons for about 6 years in my 30's. My teacher encouraged me not to stop playing when I made a mistake, that I was just to carry on the best I could. It was so difficult and embarrassing! Of course, my piano teacher knew when I got the notes wrong, but I discovered she was the only one. When I played for others, they never

heard the mistakes, they simply enjoyed the beauty of the music.

As I learned henna, I discovered this truth. Henna is not easily erased. I can fix any mistake I've made in the first minute, but longer than that, it has already begun to stain the skin. It was through body art that I realized there is a place in creating where you feel as if there are no mistakes, that it is turning out the way it's meant to. I give myself permission that it doesn't have to be perfect, that imperfections are what make it unique, what creates "my style" as opposed to something that looks like a stamp.

Creating art for pregnancy has been a passion of mine for a DECADE now!

Being pregnant and raising

babies is a creative act in itself! Though new mothers may not have the time to pursue their creative hobbies much (or at all), instead they must think creatively as they guide their little one through life. How can I present this idea so that my baby likes it? How can I speak to my children so they ENJOY getting along? This requires tremendous patience to learn new skills and think creatively.

In this issue, we hear from several mothers on how they have approached the creative task of motherhood.

~ **SarahKate Butterworth**
Creative Director of
Artfull Mother Magazine

Stephanie's Birth Story



I chose a tree of life design as it is something that has been present in our family since its start. My husband and I met in Jordan and traveled to see the original tree of life mosaic in Israel. We had handmade mugs with the tree of life on them as our wedding presents. It was the perfect piece for this next chapter of our lives. I was struggling to connect with this pregnancy and the tree of life brought it full circle.



Birth photography by Monet Nicole



I had an amazing experience at Mountain Midwifery Center. Bradley was our second child there. Stacie is an amazing midwife. I birth efficiently. So, we got there around 2pm. My water broke at 2:30 and he was born at 3:07pm. As you can tell, there was light and laughter in the room. It was extremely positive.

Bradley is named for my older brother, Bradley. My husband knew the sex, so when he born, he said, "Meet your son Bradley." He handed me a named baby. I was shocked. I didn't think it would be a boy and I certainly didn't think he would be named for my brother. My husband said he had picked out the name two months before the baby was born.

My proudest moment was laughing, joking and smiling through most of my birth. I am also proudest for surviving the ring of fire. Instead of screaming through it, I focused on breathing with my doula (and Monet). There was a lot less drama in the room this time. Initially, it was too much - too many people, too much chaos. I needed a minute to settle into my birth. But, I was able to relax in the tub and joke with my husband, tell stories and just be in that moment.





Olivia was so excited to be a big sister. She immediately wanted to take everyone home. That makes sense, right? Let's go home with our new brother. He's part of our family now. She continues to be a great big sister, singing lullabies, keeping him company when the world gets busy and introducing him to every person in the supermarket! She is super protective of him- sometimes a little too protective, but I love that.

{All these birth and family photos are taken by Monet Nichole,
an outstanding Denver area photographer!
<https://www.monetnicole.com/> }







Katy's Motherhood Journey

When Katy and her husband were looking for a home in Longmont, the advertisement for their home said, “The best neighbors you’ll ever have!” and it turned out to be true!

They got to know their neighbors through the years and realized they live in a very special neighborhood. Katy’s neighbors participated in a meal trail for both their babies and helped her with childcare, which was invaluable help since this couple has no family in Colorado.

Katy wasn’t sure if adding a 2nd child would double the trouble, but her experience was positive - her 2nd son was an ‘easy baby.’ “The second time along I just felt a lot more comfortable with everything and not that it wasn’t difficult, but I had more resources to pull on and I knew how it felt to be sleep deprived, and I knew which neighbors I could reach out to to come over for a couple hours here and there, and it wasn’t all brand new. That was a nice to surprise for me. I thought it was going to be a lot harder than it turned out to be.”

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Finding your tribe is so important as a mother, and it doesn’t have to be local. Katy found support in her group of friends that she’s been in touch with since high school. “I have a group of 4 best friends from high school and we all have kids roughly the same age and we text all day, everyday, about breastfeeding or sleep or behaviors. They are really my big support system I would say.”

Through the years, she has witnessed her friend’s challenges with raising children and the special challenge of having siblings “get along.” She wanted to make sure that her boys had a positive relationship. “One of the things I’m most proud of is the relationship of mutual respect and love that I have cultivated between my two boys. Zero aggressive behaviors towards or around the baby were tolerated since he joined our family. I did lots of talk around what the baby might be thinking or feeling which I think helped make it easier to relate to him for my older one. There were also lots of suggestions for hugs, kisses, and snuggles, and examples of how to behave around him to keep everyone safe.”

Being a working mother is challenging! “I’m very proud of being able to breastfeed and be a nurse working 12 hour shifts taking care of patients. It’s really hard to make that happen, but both times I’ve been successful at that and that feels like a big accomplishment and a lot of work. I’m also proud of my self care, making the time to take care of myself and feel good in my body again after the big shift that happens with pregnancy.”

Finding a new gym as a parent was difficult, and Katy was disappointed in the childcare many gyms offered. “I go to Rally Sport in Boulder, and the reason I go is for the child care. It’s an expensive gym. Prior to having babies I went to a gym that was \$24 a month, this one is \$133 a month, but I feel like it’s worth it for the care that they get. Rally is great because it’s basically the same people every day. They’ve got infant swings and an outdoor area that has a shade cover, sandbox, slides and the people there are just wonderful. Plus, they start taking babies at 6 weeks old. So that’s been a big piece of my self care; making to the gym and making it comfortable for all of us- they like going there. My workouts are either aerobics, climbing or running; I try to do that 3 to 5 days a week. That’s big part of how I feel good, exercise, it always has been. It’s really nice to keep that in my life and keep the endorphins coming.”

When I asked Katy what advice she would give herself if she could go back in time, she said,

“Just try to be as flexible as you can and let go of the things that have always been important for you. And being flexible with what’s important to you - whether it’s how or when you like to eat, or exercise, or how clean you like to have your

house, because all those things kind of change and it’s really hard and at the same time it doesn’t really matter because you have this little baby and when you look at them, for me anyway, they mean more than all those other things.”



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journee' to motherhood an art journaling retreat

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When: Saturday, March 24 from 1:00-5:00 pm (Yes - 4 hours of guided time for YOU to reflect, create, and refresh. It goes so fast and will be so so good for your soul.)

What: journee' to motherhood creative retreat through guided art journaling

Where: Mountain Midwifery Birth Center, 3535 S. Lafayette St., Suite 100, Englewood, CO 80113

Cost: \$80 per person, all supplies included. Earlybird 10% discount if registered by February 28.

What to bring: A children's picture book of a story you love that has a typical beginning/middle/end, preferably one with a conflict/resolution. I recommend purchasing a hard back copy from a used bookstore that is approximately a standard 9x11 (or larger). This book will be your canvas for our art journaling process.

Registration: Now open through www.rubicreative retreats.com or email Jenna LaFleur with questions at jenna@rubicreative retreats.com

4th Trimester

Transitioning into a family of Four

There's a tremendous amount of pressure on new moms to not be slowed down by motherhood. As I spoke with Julie about her experience, she said, "I feel like our culture has a super-woman ideal for every stage of our lives, including motherhood. How much can you do while pregnant? How quickly did you lose the baby weight? How seamless will your transition back to work be? How fast were you able to get back to doing things the same way you used to? This is one of the big lessons I've had to learn as a mom. I started telling myself, 'Don't be afraid to slow down. Don't be afraid to leave things unfinished.'"

Creating these new thought patterns was part of her nourishing

self care practices, shaped in part by decks of affirmation cards made specifically for mothers to support them in pregnancy, birth and breastfeeding. Renegade Mama (<https://therenegademama.com/>) has beautiful cards that say, "It's okay to be honest with my emotions.", "I have the energy I need to take care of the responsibilities in my life." and "I trust that my baby is healthy and getting everything he needs to eat." These cards helped Julie a lot. "I'll just go through the cards and see which ones stand out to me and meditate on them through the day or week."

Even though her parents offer support, including randomly coming by to do loads of laundry or holding the baby for a few hours, she still felt very isolated in the small town of Canyon City, Colorado. Social media helped her feel less isolated. Before becoming a mother, Julie had found an exercise accountability group online, and several of the mamas had babies around the same time. These new moms would post things like, "I got a workout in and the baby slept through half of it!"

"It was as big source of encouragement during the pregnancy and now." Julie also follows several moms on Instagram and enjoys their true-to-life posts.

Julie is most proud of how she's learned to trust herself as a mom, "...and just trust myself in general. It's allowed me to become a lot more compassionate with myself when I made mistakes, which I think has been huge. I'm okay with thinking, How can I do this better? I'm proud that I'm willing to learn all those lessons and not get overwhelmed by self doubt. I do struggle with them, but I don't get bogged down."

It was a monumental transition to go from 1 to 2 kids. At first there was a honeymoon period where Grace (nearly 3) was a star child, so excited, sweet and compliant, "...and then it hit her, and she started doing all those toddler behaviors that she hadn't been doing much of before like temper tantrums. I'm a psychologist and I've read books, but in that moment, I didn't know what I was supposed to do! I didn't have time to go back and read those books, and I thought, what am I going to do? There was a period where I thought, I guess I'm not going to know what I'm going to do and that's okay. Then, I listened to some podcasts from Janet Lans-

bury and everything re-clicked, and I got back in touch with my confidence and my trust in myself and her. It's okay if she screams before bed, it's okay if she gets tired and has a temper tantrum at the store, that's so normal and healthy. It doesn't mean that she's not okay or I'm not doing a good job. That shift in perspective was so huge."

When I asked Julie about advice she'd give herself if she could go back in time, she said she'd want to prepare herself that it is a challenge to maintain balance. Responsibilities change, and sometimes it is very isolating to be at home with the baby, then

at work, then at home with the kids and not have much (if any) time for socializing. "I expected myself to do this easily. It's hard! And there's no formula, it's different for every mom, different from day to day, seeing that it is more of an art and a process to nail down has been a huge lesson that I'm still learning. Sometimes it feels extremely hard, and that's normal, there will be waves; sometimes it will feel natural and sometimes unnatural. Sometimes it feels like you don't have what you need and that's okay. It feels like you're failing, it's so easy to feel like you're not doing everything you're supposed to do, but there is no failure, it's about being present."



Don't be afraid to slow down. Don't be afraid to leave things unfinished.

Turtle Blessings

Kathrina's first daughter came 2 months early and spent several weeks in the NICU, so for her 2nd pregnancy she was thrilled to have made it into her 8th month. Born in the Philippines and raised in Hawaii, Kathrina had a special affinity for turtles. A turtle sighting was rare & special, considered to be lucky. When I asked her what design she wanted for her henna, she immediately picked a turtle, as she felt lucky herself to have made it this far in the pregnancy.



This henna design and photo is from 2009!



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Kathrina had a difficult childhood and vowed to raise her daughters differently, to instill love and respect and for each other through good communication. Her daughters, now 8 and 10, have their spats, but their mother also gives them the tools to work them out. From the beginning, she emphasized how lucky they were to have each other, that the sister bond was a powerful one! “I’m so blessed they get along, they are very sweet girls, they can just play forever. Their mood is different, their temperament is different.” One daughter is more independent and often needs space; finding the way to express these needs and feelings has been an ongoing process of empathy education. It was such a pleasure to see the 3 of them as part of a Mother Daughter Art Project I began recently.



2010



Kathrina and her daughters this past fall, 2017.



Nourishing Yourself with Ayurveda

That person, who always eats wholesome food, enjoys a regular lifestyle, remains unattached to the objects of the senses, gives and forgives, loves truth and serves others, is without disease.

---Vagbhata Sutrasthana, an ancient Vedic Text

At the core of Ayurveda, the science of life from India, is dinacharya, seasonal daily routine. This is the ultimate self-care regime. Think: home spa, meditation, yoga retreat with amazing food! Dinacharya is a daily routine that you orchestrate with the help of an Ayurvedic Practitioner, or on your own, and is based on the current season, how you are feeling holistically, your current digestion, where you are geographically.

Dinacharya is composed of many self-care techniques performed at relatively the same time each day to encourage balance in the body, mind, emotions and spirit and prevent disease by alleviating doshic accumulation (the five elements can build up and cause imbalance) in the many layers of the being.

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Dinacharya is also called swasthavritta, referring to healthy lifestyle habits. (Sebastian Pole, 2006) When one created a personalized healthy lifestyle, meaning one in balance according to nature, there is more opportunity for harmony inside and outside of the body.

Being in tune with outer nature also means being in tune with your inner nature, your constitution or prakriti: vata (air/ether), pitta (fire/water), kapha (water/earth). This means we are continually fine tuning our inner ecology by adjusting to our ever-changing environment and daily lifestyle.

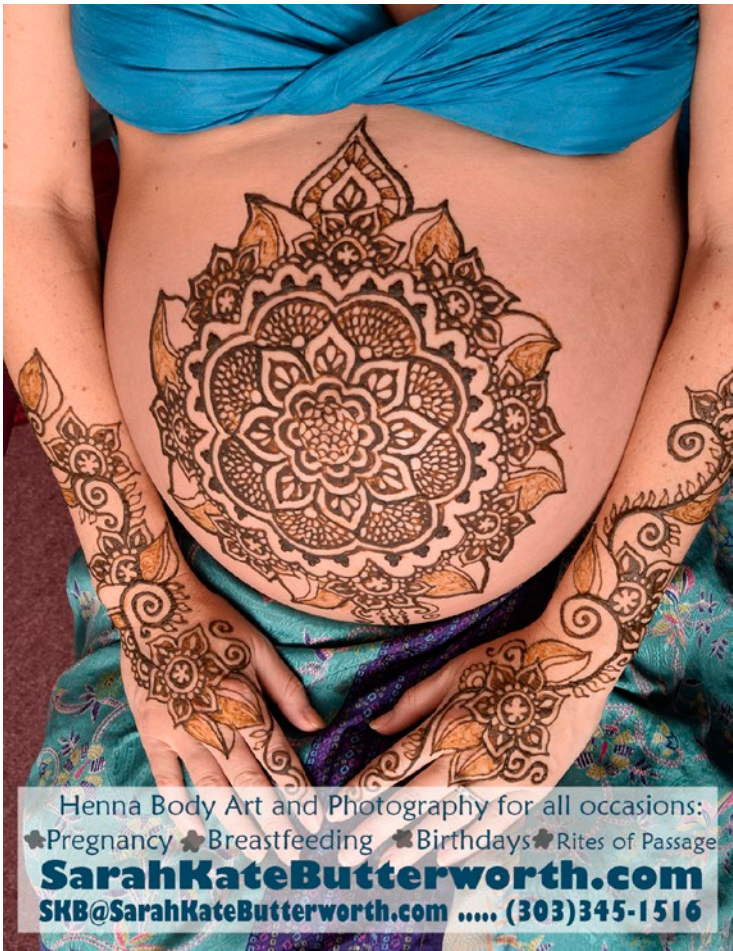
There are many influences on us from nature: seasons,

climate, day and night, life and death, and aging. There are also many influences on us that are man-created such as traffic, stress, air-pollution, water-pollution, busy schedules, financial stress, and more. All of these influences that we come in contact with have an effect on us. If there are similar qualities that we are repeatedly in contact with, these can build up and cause imbalance in our body, mind and spirit.

For example, if we regularly expose ourselves to too much heat from multiple sources such as: spicy food, intense/heated conversations, soaking in hot water, a lot of direct sunlight, excess anger, etc., and if it is the summertime and we have a pitta (fire/water) type constitution,



photo by Radha Schwaller



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we can very easily go out of balance in pitta (fire/water). This means we may experience rashes, diarrhea, heartburn, inflammation, hot flashes, anger, frustration, feeling excessively critical, overworking, a desire to be on the go and accomplish and eventual burning out.

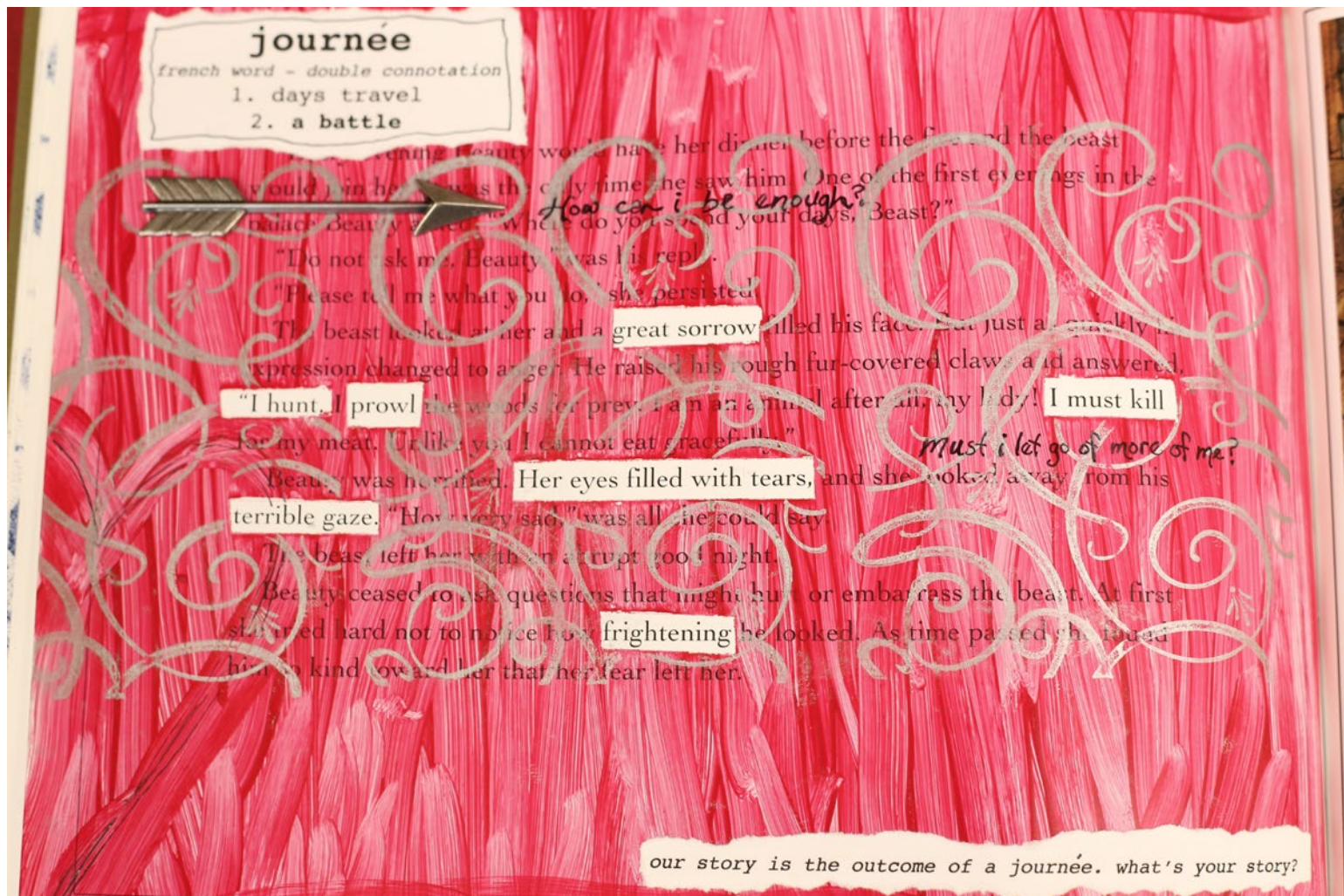
We are a sponge to our atmosphere and will retain the qualities that we are exposed to as we are presented with them.

There are many benefits to keeping a routine in harmony with our inner and outer nature:

- Balanced digestion (meaning no gas, bloating or heartburn, feeling light after eating, hungry at meal times, daily well-formed bowel movements)
- Proper absorption and assimilation of minerals, enzymes and vitamins from food
- Generation of positive self-esteem
- Healthy self discipline
- Inner-peace
- True happiness
- Mental clarity and ability to focus
- Restful sleep patterns
- A pain-free body
- Long life without major disease
- Fulfilling relationships
- Balanced work/family life
- Healthy Boundaries

Our personal nature has a rhythm that is communicated through our body's biorhythmic clock. These bodily clocks synchronize with the sunlight, moonlight and temperature in the atmosphere, to name a few examples. It is also affected by what we choose to eat, think, when we sleep and when we rise. What I most love about this practice of deep self-care from Ayurveda is that it is very common-sense based. If we are in touch with our body, mind and spiritual life and the way it communicates with us, we can usually sense if something we are doing, eating and are involved with is beneficial for us or not. May you find the time and space each day to hear what is in alignment with your highest self.

*~ Radha Schwaller is a devoted Mother, Certified Ayurvedic Educator and Practitioner, Certified Sacred Pregnancy Instructor, INNATE Postpartum Care Certified Provider and Ayurvedic Postpartum Doula.
www.blissalchemy.net*



Jamie's Journee' to Motherhood -a rubi creative retreat experience-

A warm fall day with the gift of time. A plan to meet a fellow mother who offered to share a piece of her journee' to motherhood with me. An afternoon planned around exploring the connections between art and life story. A rustic, sunlit cafe in the heart of Golden, CO.

I walked in ready for coffee, but the smell of homemade soup and the server's accolades for it had me change my mind. So I ordered (both), found a table and settled in anticipating my meeting with Jamie. She had recently attended the "Journee' to Motherhood" art journaling retreat that I lead at Mountain Midwifery Birthing Center through my business, "rubi creative retreats." The focus around any "rubi" event is how art offers insight, identity, and imagination into our personal life story. The interplay between art and life story has me hooked, like the moment a novel captivates, brings you in. I have experienced for myself and through others the "new perspectives" and "unlocking of stuck places" art has the power to offer. But the "Journee' to Motherhood" retreat was the first time I'd designed a creative process specifically for moms to honor, record, and explore their own birthing story. I used, "Journee'" with the original French spelling as it implies a double connotation: 1.) a days travel; 2.) a battle. This whole idea I'd long wanted to bring to



reality, and now, after the fact, I had the opportunity to hear from Jamie about how (if) the creative process worked.

A few moments later Jamie walked in, arms full with her car seat carrier, baby Wilder (just 3 months) wide eyed and adorable. Wilder and I hung out while Jamie ordered and when she returned she began to share about her “rubi experience” in connection to her personal birth story of bringing Wilder into this world.

“I felt like I had this stuck energy. I had to push a baby out of my body, but that didn’t happen,” began Jamie describing her postpartum following her C-section. Jamie’s birth story did not unfold as she had planned and envisioned. A therapist herself, she understands how healing happens through the therapeutic process, and had done some deep work around the disappointments of her birth story with her therapist. “In trauma work I focused on what didn’t go well. Just because things didn’t go how I wanted doesn’t mean it was wrong . . . or that I was a failure. I know that during my pregnancy, I did a lot of work around not having expectations. But afterward I realized I still had so many . . . I just didn’t know . . . you can’t know until you go through it.” She came to “Journey to Motherhood” looking for more, “I had already done deep work, I wanted to move forward, wanted healing and closure.”

Of course, her story came to life through our conversation in more of a circular pattern, vibrant colors of words and thought weaving in and out of the time in labor, time of postpartum, and her time at the rubi creative retreat with art. I asked her about her experience at “Journey to Motherhood” with the guided art process. “I loved being creative in a framework. It took the pressure off. I feel like the art helped me to move forward. It felt hopeful. Doing art taps into this deep wordless space. It really resonates with me. The guided art helped me tap into emotions without putting words to it.”

Jamie took out her children’s picture book, a copy of, “Guess How Much I Love You,” that she had used as the canvas for our art journaling/mixed media work. She opened it to a spread where the



guided experience invited her to chronicle her “dream” vision of her birth story versus the “reality” of what actually happened in her birth story. The colors, ink, words popped out of the page bringing her story to life. “Writing the timeline helped me really see the vision I had in mind. Using colors was powerful as was naming the dream versus reality.”

The difficult reality in Jamie’s story includes one entire week of intense pre-labor contractions. Around Day 4, Jamie posted on facebook about her never-ending contractions. She recalls a friend reaching out, encouraging, “Let your story be your story and let it unfold.” Her friend’s words called her to practice acceptance and gave her strength to continue. A story of dedication and determination to embrace the pain toward her dream vision — the natural birth she had planned. Only that didn’t happen. The doctor had to perform a C-Section to save the baby.

“At the “rubi creative retreat” I appreciated the focus on the tension of beauty and hardship, how it can be both. I was stuck in “hardship.” She shared that the creative process work helped her clarify a new perspective, “I am allowed to feel these things [disappointments]. There’s a pressure to feel that my baby is okay, so I should feel fine. But I’m really disappointed and sad that I had to have a C-section—and also really grateful for modern medicine, and to have a healthy baby. All these things are okay. Holding beauty and hardship together was huge for me.”

So much light. I felt my own spirit lift as I sat listening to Jamie reflect on the tensions in her story and exercise self-compassion, allowance for both. Sun rays flooded the cafe’s wood floors and wall art and the laughter from nearby conversations. Jamie and I sat warmed from the soup and coffee, and filled by our conversation. It was one of those timeless moments when you “get” another’s story as if it were your own. For me, the art and story work I do through “rubi creative retreats” is all about living in that tension of beauty and brokenness. It’s where the light lives.

Jamie flipped through a couple other pages from her book, to the final installment we worked on named, “Gift.” She had thought about what “light” (gift) had been birthed for her through the whole of her birthing story (pregnancy/labor/postpartum/therapy/rubi creative retreat). “The experience of labor and baby drew

out my patience. Since I’ve had him, I’ve had more patience for him, myself, my husband, and things unfolding. I’m proud of how I persevered through labor.” She shared how exploring her birthing story through art brought her that next step forward toward the closure that she was looking for. “I left with more balance, seeing more beauty . . . the transformation from journey into motherhood . . . It’s deep.”

A gift. Jamie’s story shared was a gift to me, as I believe it is to all mothers. And, a gift to me as a fellow mother and a story artist building my own business desiring to offer a transformative process to others through art. An encouragement of how using art to process our own stories (both the beautiful and broken) becomes a mechanism that transforms us.

~ **Jenna LaFleur** is a theatre and journaling artist who creates experiences that invite transformation into our life stories. <https://www.rubicreativeretreats.com/>



Messy to Mundane - The New Bond Project by Samantha Jessup

Life is messy. Life with kids is even messier. We start out knowing that our lives will change when we have a baby. Sure, we know it will never be the same again. But we are never quite prepared for exactly how our lives will change with this baby. Even if it isn't our first - even if it is our tenth tiny miracle. We know the basics: how to feed them, how to burp them, how to encourage them along their many milestones. But even as we become experts, a new child requires new chapters in our manual we use to get through life, through motherhood. These chapters are built as each child shows their huge personalities. All those little things they do that build upon each other until they become taller, stronger, smarter, and more confident. All those little things that become memories in the blink of an eye. *This is Us* had a great line in the second season where Sylvester Stallone tells the character Kevin, "There is no such a thing as a long time ago: there's only memories that mean something and the memories that don't." What memories are you making every single day that mean something? I'm not talking about all those trips to fancy places, and I am definitely not talking about the items you may buy. I am talking about the everyday moments. Do you cook with them? Do you read them a story every night? What about nerf wars in the hallway? What memories mean something to you? That you remember from

your childhood and that you are making right now with your family? Are you documenting them? Are you sharing your memories, your experiences, your chapters on motherhood? The Bond Project is growing to first and foremost help document some of these meaningful memories. All those messy moments, the unsure moments, and those moments of triumph! But also to continue to share a snippet of your chapters with other mothers to help them spend more time making memories of their own. And of course, still showcasing the beauty in feeding our littles - breast or bottle. We will first simply chat about your daily life and what that looks like in your home. Then I will come document some of these moments through photographs. And finally, we will share a bit of your story on my blog for other mothers to know they are not alone, that they are not doing it all wrong and that their story is meaningful too. If you'd like to learn more about the project or participate in it yourself go to:

<https://www.miraclekisses.com/motherhood-sessions/>

photos by Samantha Jessup





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