

Thea Jones
York University

The Outlawed Nipple: Breastless parents and the desire to conform to normative mothering

The Outlawed Nipple introduces how the ongoing politicization of the maternal body and methodology harmfully impacts maternal subjectivities. This paper takes particular notice to confluences of breastfeeding politics laced in ideology, the mother or parent body post-mastectomy, the harm of normative mothering, and how trans and queer parents are excluded from but complicit in normative motherhood. I argue that the pervasiveness of breastfeeding is a part of normative mothering and has diluted potential alternatives to this normativity that include altered bodies and how they perform. The accepted vision of motherhood (past, present, and future) is far too limited by dictates of gender, social responsibility, and healthcare that parents will risk their safety to conform. Authentic maternal subjectivities are lost, damaged, and destroyed in the pressure to parent normally, therefore, a theoretical, medical, and familial space is needed that includes dictates which define queer-parenting or parenting queerly as the future and as the norm.

Thea Jones is an interdisciplinary artist, working in video and textiles. She maintains a lifelong performance project which started in the summer 2013 titled I will save the world by mending. Jones completed her MFA at York University, her thesis focused on repetition in language, video, and textiles as a way to re-imagine, re-invent, and remember. She received her BFA from Concordia University, and worked at Hexagram Institute for Research/Creation in Media Arts and Technologies. Jones has exhibited at PlugIn (Winnipeg MB), Cambridge Galleries (Cambridge ON), InterAccess (Toronto ON), Anna Leonowns Gallery (Halifax NS), and at the Amnua Nanjing Biennial (Nanjing China). Jones is currently a PhD candidate at York University in the Gender, Feminist and Women's Study program, research focuses on the precarity of women, mothers, and trans* parents living post-surgery due to cancer prevention, diagnosis, or gender affirmation. Jones lives in Hamilton ON with her family.