



As long as we have each other

Alejandra Hernández

Opening 30.07.2022 h 18
readings h 18:30
30.07.2022 - 30.09.2022

In collaboration with Movimento delle Mamme di Modica

Dear Visitor,

I'm glad you could make it here, and I'd like to share a few thoughts on how this exhibition came into being. *As long as we have each other* could be described as a journey, one that I'm still going through as a woman who recently gave birth, becoming a mother for the first time. A journey as deeply challenging and transformational as it is vivid and sublime. An event that split my life in two, and ever since then, I've been putting the pieces back together to construct a new version of myself, acknowledging the remnants of my old self I'm still trying to hold on to and the many me's I left behind for good.

An exhibition as a self-portrait:

This exhibition was first envisioned as a gathering of live portraits I painted over the last few years, most of which had never been shown to the public and/or had never shared a space with one another. It later started to mould into a kind of self-portrait through the depiction of others.

Something that joins everything together is the feeling of empathy and the time given to one another. The people in these portraits have crossed paths with me in various contexts, timelines, life transitions and continents, and each experience portraying them remains in both their and my memory as well as on the canvas as I depicted them. They represent a chunk of a constellation of people I have been painting for the past 13 years. By showing them together, each in their private space accompanied by their personal objects chosen by them, I am also sharing bits of myself: bits they have so generously left in me.

This side of the exhibition is me: the artist, the painter, the portraitist, the one who had all the time to sit and talk and paint for hours, the one who welcomed people into her studio for these wonderful sessions over and over again, the one who fell in love with these encounters and conversations, and this way of offering a seat and giving myself to the sitters in front of me.

On the opposite side of the exhibition space, you will encounter a different version of me: a quieter, more subtle, more inward-looking self. In the series of blue drawings, I share impressions of another way of inhabiting this world. The mother and the artist struggling to find ways to meet each other. Drawing and photography became my allies, for here they momentarily replace the role of painting, since they are more direct media, ones I can manage with the limited time I have most days. That is how the *Nap Drawings* series came to be. They are literally drawings I made while my daughter was asleep. Over the last few months, I would sit between twenty minutes to two hours and paint these watercolours, based on photographs either I or my partner had taken. These blue images became my breathing space; they provided me with a renewed sense of purpose and gave me back a piece of myself I was sorely missing.

The wall drawing was painted by some members of the Movimento delle Mamme di Modica. I'm incredibly grateful for their presence in the exhibition as I couldn't attend in person due to my choice to stay with my baby, who is still breast feeding. Although I would love to be present, I'm glad that some women from the movement could be there to paint the wall and attend, taking my place symbolically in mom-to-mom solidarity. I admire their dedication to educating, reflecting on and working together for and with the community.

I hope many or at least some of you can relate to the experience I intend to share, not as an individual anecdote but as a reflection on our relation to others and the value of the time we have with one another while we're still here. Also, as a recognition of the transformative ways that parenting or taking care of another human being can push us through and how we need to re-educate ourselves to create a society where we can be nurturers, yet still thrive and be supported because we are generating and supporting life. Therefore, we need to be surrounded by abundance, nourishment, empathy, love and care so we don't forget ourselves in the process.

Thank you Corrado and Anna for making this possible, for your patience, understanding, dedication and care for the artist/person, as well as your commitment to integrating the work you do with the community in Modica.

Last but not least, thanks are due to my family for their support, to all the people who sat for me during the portrait sessions, to the Movimento delle Mamme di Modica for their generosity and labour, and to you, dear visitor, for your presence and time.

Alejandra Hernández
10 July 2022



Movimento delle Mamme di Modica