

9 MAY –
11 AUGUST 2024
Online

CURATED BY
REA MCNAMARA

ORGANIZED BY
THE MACKENZIE ART GALLERY

EXHIBITION DEVELOPMENT
CAT BLUEMKE AND JONATHAN CARROLL

WAKE WINDOWS: THE WITCHING HOUR

Participating artist Wednesday Kim with curator Rea McNamara

Wednesday Kim is an interdisciplinary artist and a co-founder of De:Formal. She is from Seoul, South Korea and is currently based in California. Kim works with analog and digital media, including 3D animation, video, performance, installation, print, and sculpture, with a clusterfuck aesthetic. Her work in the exhibition, *Sleep Deprived Workers* (2019-2020), is a series of four digital animations that was created in collaboration with local artist-mothers encountered during Kim's 2019 residency with London's Procreate Project while caring for her then-toddler daughter. I was introduced to Kim's work from her online exhibition, [The Rise of the Care Machines](#), which she co-curated with Flavia Visconte, and featured works by new media artists who are mothers, including Faith Holland and Rory Scott.

Below is an edited and abridged interview I conducted with Kim via Zoom in May 2023 and via email in May 2024.

Rea McNamara (RM): How do you feel, then, with your daughter now 6, being an artist-mother? How did your work shift?

Wednesday Kim (WK): Mostly, I missed out on many openings and going to shows because—I don't know, maybe it's just me—but most shows are not so child-friendly. I missed out on many things, which is sad. Also, I can't concentrate as much as I used to. When she starts going to school, I think I'll have some time—my own time.

RM: I remember talking with someone about the concept of "mommy brain." She said, "Yeah, I still have it." Her kid is 9.

[Laughter]

I just think there is something about having a child and all of that that you kind of go

through...this is just my personal experience, but my brain is probably still kind of broken.

WK: How old is your child?

RM: She's 18 months.

WK: Oh! Aw!

RM: So she's still kind of young.

But yeah, that's a barrier, like you're saying. [Art] openings only happen during that "bedtime" hour.

Pandemic aside, did you find that you had to change how you network or connect with other artists or curators? What are the ways you've had to change that for yourself?

WK: Before that, I mostly said "Yes" for

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everything. After, sometimes I have to say, “No.” Because I sometimes can’t make it, or no one is going to take over for her, or I can’t take both of us to visit shows, or my shows and stuff. I don’t know if this makes sense.

RM: Yeah, no. Totally. Sorry, I feel like I’m asking you very intense questions! I hope I’m not coming across—

WK: No, you’re not. It’s just my brain.

[Laughter]

WK: If it’s okay, can I ask you the same question? How did your work, routine, and lifestyle change after the baby? How do you handle everything?

RM: In some ways, I have appreciated how I used to work—working until 1 or 2 AM and being obsessively focused on one thing—doing that kind of stuff—I obviously can’t do that anymore. So that changed, which started when I was pregnant. That was a significant shift for me in terms of how I work. But, the upside has been that I now plan more: “I have two hours—what do I do?” And that’s been helpful because it’s now forcing me almost to plan a project and figure out the following steps rather than just throwing myself into it.

But it’s been hard because—I don’t know how you navigate it—but as a writer and curator, it’s definitely, like you said, you’re now more comfortable about saying no because of the logistics and doing stuff. And I’m not as socially engaged anymore in my arts community, locally, because of the barriers [you mentioned]. Maybe it’ll change when my

kid is in daycare.

WK: [Laughs] It will.

RM: It will? Okay, good.

WK: [Laughs]

RM: But the thing is, it’s funny because, and I don’t know if this is the same for you, but before I had a child, I was one of those people that it’s like: “If I ever have a child, I’ll never say anything publicly about my child, and no one will know about it, and I wouldn’t—Oh my god, those people who do work about children and being a mother—Not me!” And then, you know, fast forward, when my kid’s six-months-old, I was writing a review for *Hyperallergic* about the experience of taking a six-month-old to a Biennial.

So I’m just wondering: Did you ever have boundaries with your work or sense of that change with becoming a mother? Or did you find that you were always open about touching on specific subject matter—that this was just in the same flow?

WK: Yes, the same flow. I think I’m pretty open, but I used to say, “I’m not going to make any art related to motherhood, like never. Or any topic with a child involved.” But then it changed—somehow, it flowed into my work naturally. But, the thing is, none of my work looks [at] the bright side of motherhood—but I think it’s okay. Nothing comes out brightly, mostly the dark way.

RM: Well, that’s what I really love about it.

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I'm interested in [*Sleep Deprived Workers*'] focus on postpartum [depression].

Could you talk more about that?

WK: I was depressed when I was pregnant because I was [high risk and prescribed] bedrest...I still wanted to stay connected with mother-art communities, so I looked up online: Do mother artists exist? Because I wasn't interested in mother-artists' work and those kinds of stuff before. So I started looking up—is there any community I can fit in? I [eventually] found this open call about mother artists, Open Call by the Procreate Project, so I applied and got in as a shortlist. So I was like, Oh, there [are] many artists who are mothers and making videos, and other mediums, too.

Luckily, I got a phone call from Procreate Project and a residency program spot. I went there for the residency with my [then-toddler] daughter. [But] I was really into postpartum depression at the time because it was my first time and I [was] struggl[ing].

So, I had a chance to meet some mothers, and even though it was a blind date setting, it was easy to talk because we [were] all mothers who experienced motherhood, but at different times. One of the oldest participants, we [will] call her V, actually wrote a poem for this piece. One of the videos features her reading that poem. It was particularly meaningful to collaborate with her, as she wrote the poem specifically for me, for the project, which gave me a heartwarming memory.

RM: So the experience, in terms of then, talking about your own postpartum experience, and

then connecting with these other mothers, were you specific that you wanted to talk to mothers who also had dealt with postpartum depression?

WK: Not all of them but, I think, one of the mothers—she's also an artist—she didn't suffer crazy postpartum depression, but she was stressed out because of time, because she was running out of time all the time, and she has a lot of ideas to express and make something. So we [spent] a lot of time [working together]. She [had] built [on her own] a small—I think it was storage before—but she has made her own space to separate from her daughters. So, she customized her small storage in the backyard into her studio. So I visited her studio, and it was really lovely.

RM: This is more of a technical question, but what software do you use to make your work?

WK: I use Blender, After Effects, Photoshop, Daz 3D, free presets, and any apps that make things easier, as well as found images. Sometimes, I find actual objects through online shopping, such as Amazon and Temu, which I then transform into digital images.

RM: What is it like working in a 3D virtual environment?

WK: I don't consider myself a 3D person. I always loved building installations but did not have the chance, so I chose a virtual environment. I have always thought I didn't have a personal space since becoming a mom, so it was a safe place to hide.

RM: I'm fascinated with the *Care Machines* show that you curated. What I think is cool about it is

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that you were really looking at the experience of being a mother and also working digitally. I was wondering if you could talk a bit about that show and how it came together.

WK: Obviously, I became interested in mother-artists after I became one. And I only have a few friends I know who are artists and mothers. And I haven't seen any digital mothers having a show together. Maybe I don't have much knowledge. But from my experience, I haven't seen anything. I was like, "Oh, why not? We can gather and have some fun together and share our experiences." So that's how we started. And I was talking to Flavia [Visconte], [who] also co-curated the show. We usually share memes about motherhood and like, "Okay, why don't we do something together? I see some dark side in you." [Laughs] We should do something together, and then it happened after.

RM: *Care Machines* is presented in an immersive 3D environment, where works are situated on different levels of an abandoned building. How did you choose to present this show online?

WK: With *Care Machine[s]*, I built the space with [the VR platform] Mozilla Hubs [and] Wix)...It is user-friendly and [can be] connected with [the 3D asset website] Sketchfab.

I picked an abandoned place because I thought I belonged there as a mother. As abandoned spaces are neglected and forgotten, the contributions of mothers, particularly those who are also artists (new moms), can sometimes evoke these kinds of

feelings within society.

Also, abandoned spaces represent traces of the past, evoking memories and narratives that shape our understanding of identity.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Wednesday Kim is an interdisciplinary artist and a co-founder of [De:Formal](#). She is from Seoul, South Korea and is currently based in California. Kim works with analog and digital media, including 3D animation, video, performance, installation, print, and sculpture, with a clusterfuck aesthetic. Her work is informed by personal experiences and human psychology. She derives imagery from nightmares, intrusive thoughts, and childhood trauma. Furthermore, she portrays the absurdity of information-saturated contemporary life in a surrealist fashion through wordplay, Wikipedia, voyeurism, and witticism.

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Rea McNamara is a writer and curator based in Tkaronto/Toronto. Her curatorial work has long been shaped by networked counterpublics' participatory cultures, particularly the collaborative processes of transformative fandom, alongside a social practice shaped by organizing community-based art initiatives. In her research, she often focuses on the emergence of otherness and hybridity within digital identity formations, informing an on/offline curatorial approach that connects and capacity-builds.

McNamara has previously held curatorial and public programming positions with the Gardiner Museum and Drake Hotel, and been awarded grants from the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council. She has curated and organized a range of exhibitions and public projects, including *dis-ease* (Vector Festival, 2021), *Obsessive Pop Tendencies* (Pleasure Dome, 2019), *Community Arts Space* (Gardiner Museum, 2016-2019), and *Safe Space* (Scotiabank Nuit Blanche 2024). In 2011, she founded the art party series *Sheroes*, which engaged with female celebrity fandom through music, performance, installation, and internet-based art. Her work has been presented at The Art Gallery of Ontario and is in the Whitney Museum of American Art collection.

Additionally, McNamara has written about art, culture and the internet for *frieze*, *Art in America*, *The Globe and Mail*, and been commissioned to write exhibition texts for Trinity Square Video, the Remail Modern, and Daniel Faria Gallery. From 2020-2021, she was the Emily H. Tremaine Journalism Fellow for Curators with *Hyperallergic*. She also gives talks, moderates panels, and lead workshops on fandom, curatorial practice, and the labour of mothering for The Toronto Public Library, Toronto Metropolitan University, NYU Tisch School of the Arts, and more.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Wake Windows: The Witching Hour

Led by a rebellious AI Chatbot, this interactive online exhibition guides viewers through interactive and time-based art by artists who are parents, caregivers, or educators who engage with public databases and “living archives.” In touching on maternal world building and our ever-evolving relationship with AI, *Wake Windows: The Witching Hour* intends to make visible the missing datasets in our collective understanding of the often invisible labour that is mothering. From animations to machinimas or virtual reality (VR) to interactive narratives, the digital exhibition traces how the artists' creative outputs have shifted since taking on this care work. Curated by Rea McNamara, participating artists and collaborators include Claudia Cornwall, Alejandra Higuera with Magnolia Higuera, Faith Holland with Ben Bogart and Hildegard Holland Watter, Wednesday Kim, Lauren Lee McCarthy, Rory Scott, Skawennati, and Rodell Warner. *Wake Windows* is part of a series of digital exhibitions created through the MacKenzie Art Gallery's Digital Exhibitions Toolkit and Art Installation Launcher (DETAIL)—a newly developed resource championing the development of art exhibitions for digital platforms.

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Faith Holland with Ben Bogart and Hildegard Holland Watter
Wednesday Kim
Lauren Lee McCarthy
Rory Scott
Skawennati
Rodell Warner

SPECIAL THANKS

Cat Bluemke
Jonathan Carroll
Iain Soder
Claudia Cornwall
Rodney LaTourelle and Louise Witthöft
Geoff Yuen and Lee Froese of The Hatcher
Crystal Mowry
Nicolle Nugent
Jayne Wilkinson
Lisa Karen Cox
Onika Powell
Sharn Peters
Natalie Haddad
Rosemary Heather
Linda Wilson
Tony Halmos and Quincy Lou McNamara-Halmos.

The curator acknowledges the support of the Canada Council for the Arts.