

Blood Baby

creation and direction **Meg Foley**
dramaturgy **Michèle Steinwald**
fiber **Jesse Harrod**
text and facilitation **Sylvan Oswald**

engagement activities
November 2020–early 2023

presentation begins
Summer 2023
Velocity Dance Center, Seattle

***Blood Baby* is an iterative performance quadriptych exploring the intersectional experiences of gender performance, queer motherhood and parenthood, queer sexuality, and belonging.**



Presented in parts or in total, *Blood Baby* embraces performance, dance and somatics as expansive, extending beyond a discrete theatrical moment. The four forms—**Carpet Womb**, **Communion**, **Primordial** and **Blood, Baby**—can be presented together or accorded apart, each embracing a distinctive aspect and materiality of the experience of parenting queerly through choreography, sculpture, and drag.

Created and performed by a community of queer artists, *Blood Baby* enlists the perspective of queer parents to extend the physical materiality of gestation and gender into performance. Developed alongside a series of queer parent convenings, *Blood Baby* utilizes multiple materials and performative formats to unhinge the intersectionality of gestational experience, queer experience, and parenthood and bring distinct parts into relief.

Blood Baby is broad in its approach to unpacking queer parenthood. It does not culminate in a single performance but a series of intimate, public events. The whole project becomes a prism, bridging visual and experiential art, participatory workshop, and dance, using text, foam, fabric, carpet and site-responsive, durational, participatory, drag, performative sculpture devices. Tying these forms together is a creation story/myth written by Foley and Oswald.

- **Carpet Womb:** An environment of overwhelm and totality. A dance amongst viewers inside a small constructed room entirely covered in carpet so that every surface provides tactile feedback.
- **Communion:** A spare theatrical environment. Responding to community conversations with queer parents, Oswald will create a text-driven performance to be enacted by both audience and performers.
- **Primordial:** Alternative drag performance as a fabric rock, performed in various environments and presented through film and photographs. A durational, devotional somatic process of inserting oneself into environments, exploring one's body, warmth, wild, and edge pressed into an earthly or architectural other.
- **Blood, Baby:** A participatory somatic workshop with the sculptural and prop materials to share the choreographic practices of *Blood Baby*.

Throughout development and presentation, we will host **convenings with queer parents** to share their experiences of pregnancy, labor, and delivery in relationship to gender, sexuality, community, and what parenting queerly means to them. Their words will serve both as the raw material for Oswald's text and as a backbone of the project, an ongoing reinforcement of *Blood Baby*'s critical orientation and the need for these conversations. *Blood Baby* will engage a patchwork of local networks, driven by connecting queer parents and communities and aligning the modular form with a particular venue's vision and capacities, building temporary communities towards a larger national network. Post-presentation convenings provide a forum to advance the conversation.

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Timeline & Partners

2020–2024: Residencies and community engagement convenings—National Center for Choreography at The University of Akron; Velocity Dance Center (Seattle); Kinsey Institute (Bloomington, IN); Chocolate Factory Theater (NYC); CounterPulse (San Francisco); Painted Bride Art Center (Philadelphia); and locations in Denver and Los Angeles to be confirmed.

2022–2024: Presentations—Velocity Dance Center (Seattle); Painted Bride Art Center (Philadelphia); Kinsey Institute (Bloomington, IN); Kelly Strayhorn Theater (Pittsburgh); potential presentations at CounterPulse (San Francisco) and locations in Denver and Los Angeles to be confirmed.

Blood Baby is supported by a NEFA National Dance Project Production Grant.

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About Meg Foley

For the past 20 years, I have made performance projects with the self as subject, crafting body-based explorations of identity, belonging, and time from a queer perspective. In a loving tumble with formalism in dance and what constitutes performance and influenced by my identity as a queer mom in a trans family, I work on a continuum of research that centers the 24-hour body and asks how identity is occupied: an all-the-time, ever-shifting self, a sacred site, a portal, a prism, bloody, sweaty, sexual, mundane. It is an active mapping of oneself from the inside.

I danced wherever I was every day at 3:15pm for four years. I developed *action is primary*, an improvisational performance practice that trains a hyper-articulate interiority in direct dialogue with shape/form/feeling/being as choreography (2010–2017). In 2016, I began using fabric, foam, and carpet to extend embodied space through interactive objects and installations, affording somatic life to objects and “feeling back” on my body.

My dances have been presented by TanzFabrik Potsdam, Art Stations Foundation at Malta Festival, Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space, Summerworks Festival in Toronto, DraftWork at Danspace Project, CATCH! at Invisible Dog Art Center, and Philadelphia Fringe Festival (curated). A 2012 Pew Fellow in the Arts, my visual art work has been shown at Moore College of Art and Design, Pilot+Projects, and Vox Populi. Grants include: Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, Independence Fdtn, Dancemakers Centre for Creation, and a Foundation for Contemporary Art Emergency Grant. I have taught across the US and abroad, most recently in the graduate UCLA Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance. I was named one of Dance Magazine’s *25 to Watch 2017*, called “a dancer of extraordinary power.”



Images (from top):

Blood Baby rehearsal with Meg’s queer spawn. Photo: Meg Foley

The undergird (2018). Photo: Gema Galiana

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