Blood Baby

creation and direction Meg Foley
fiber Jesse Harrod
video and installation Carmichael Jones
scenic design Rabbit Al. Friedrich
light Valerie Oliveiro
costume Noel Puello
project advisors Sylvan Oswald, Michèlè Steinwald

Original text written and assembled by Sylvan Oswald based on interviews with Meg Foley, Dr. Shaunna Morrison and Jason Young, used by permission, interpreted and altered by Foley.

engagement activities
November 2020–Fall 2023

presentation begins
Fall 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 Touch Library—can be presented together or accordioned 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 an auto-mythological creation story.

- **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, designed by Friedrich.
- **Communion:** A spare theatrical environment, an alternative re-situating of our physical selves in the universe that embraces an extended lineage and immediate sensory noticing, and a soft somatic journey, enacted by both audience and performers, led by Foley’s facilitation.
- **Primordial:** Alternative drag performance as a fabric rock, performed in various environments and presented through visual installation created by visual artist Carmichael Jones. 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.
- **Touch Library:** 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 serve as a backbone of the project, an ongoing reinforcement of Blood Baby’s critical orientation and

more info meg.foley@gmail.com / megfoley.org
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.

**Timeline & Partners**

**2020–2024: Residencies and Community Engagement Convenings**—Kinsey Institute (Bloomington, IN); National Center for Choreography at The University of Akron; ONE Archives (Los Angeles); Redline Gallery (Denver); SPACE Gallery (Portland, ME); Velocity Dance Center (Seattle).

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

Blood Baby is supported by a NEFA National Dance Project Production Grant, a National Performance Network Creation Fund and Development Fund, Leeway Foundation, and an Indiana University Arts & Humanities grant. Blood Baby is made possible in part through an NCCAkron Research Residency.

::

**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

**more info** meg.foley@gmail.com / megfoley.org