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## “DESIGNING MOTHERHOOD” EXPLORES HUMAN REPRODUCTION THROUGH A DESIGN LENS

### Updated Exhibition Dates:

**November 9, 2024 – March 15, 2025, at Houston Center for Contemporary Craft**

#### Designing Motherhood

**November 9, 2024 – March 15, 2025**

Main, Front, and Asher Galleries  
Houston Center for Contemporary Craft  
4848 Main Street, Houston, TX 77002

#### Fall Opening Reception

**Friday, November 8, 6:00 – 8:00 PM**

The evening will celebrate the new exhibitions, *Designing Motherhood* and *In Residence: 17<sup>th</sup> Edition*, and feature open studios with current resident artists.

#### Exhibition web page

<https://crafthouston.org/exhibition/designing-motherhood/>

#### Hours & Admission

Open Tuesday - Saturday, 10 AM – 5 PM. Fall and winter holidays: Closed November 28 for Thanksgiving and December 25, 2024 – January 1, 2025. Admission is free.

**(HOUSTON, TX) September 27, 2024** – This fall, Houston Center for Contemporary Craft (HCCC) is pleased to present *Designing Motherhood*, the first exhibition of its kind to consider the arc of human reproduction through a design lens. The exhibition originated in Philadelphia at the Mütter Museum at The College of Physicians of Philadelphia and the Center for Architecture and Design. HCCC’s iteration of *Designing Motherhood* will be the first mounted in the Southern United States and the first to extend the contents to highlight the craft perspective on the topic. Featuring over 60 craft and design objects and prototypes from the past 50 years and the work of more than 20 contemporary artists, the show traverses themes ranging from the DIY culture of parenthood and health activism to reproductive access and equity, parental leave, and the work-life balance of artist-mothers.

*Designing Motherhood* invites audiences to consider why and how designs have been developed to facilitate reproductive health, and to ponder the political, economic, and social implications of medicalizing reproduction. The exhibition explores experiences of (in)fertility, pregnancy, postpartum, parenthood, and early childhood through blown-glass weaning vessels and hand-carved rocking chairs to art jewelry inspired by breast pump flanges, pacifiers, and nipple shields.

“Handcrafted objects are the intermediary space between the womb and the world. From handwoven swaddling cloths and knitted baby blankets to embroidered baby carriers and basket-woven bassinets, craft is

often the first human experience of the material world,” notes HCCC Curator and Exhibitions Director Sarah Darro. “HCCC’s presentation of *Designing Motherhood* draws out the intertwined properties of labor, care, embedded history, material intelligence, and intergenerational knowledge shared by craft and parenthood, ultimately asserting such reproductive experiences as forms of craft themselves.”

With the aim of spotlighting contemporary experiences around human reproduction, this multivalent project consists of a traveling exhibition, a book published by MIT Press, an Instagram account, a design curriculum, a Narrative Portraiture project, and ongoing public programs with community partners across the globe. “Our aim was to have this exhibition speak to all visitors in some way,” states the *Designing Motherhood* curatorial team. “We wanted to showcase the beauty, elegance, and ingenuity of so many quotidian objects related to the arc of human reproduction, and for our visitors to stop and contemplate the social and cultural context surrounding these designs.”

*Designing Motherhood* is curated and organized by design historians and writers Juliana Rowen Barton, Director of the Center for the Arts and Curator of Gallery360 at Northeastern University; Michelle Millar Fisher, Ronald C. and Anita L. Wornick Curator of Contemporary Decorative Arts within the Contemporary Art Department at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Zoë Greggs, Executive Assistant at BlackStar Film Projects; Gabriella Nelson, Associate Director of the Voices for Health Justice program at Community Catalyst; and Amber Winick, an independent early childhood and design researcher and curator. Since 2021, the exhibition has traveled to the MassArt Museum in Boston and the Bill and Melinda Gates Center in Seattle. Opening concurrently with HCCC’s exhibition is another iteration of *Designing Motherhood* at the Swedish Centre for Architecture and Design (ArkDes).

HCCC Curator & Exhibitions Director, Sarah Darro, is the organizing curator of *Designing Motherhood* at Houston Center for Contemporary Craft. Developed in collaboration with local and regional community partners, a robust slate of public programming will accompany the exhibition.

### **Related Programs**

Saturday, November 9, 3 - 4 pm, Curator + Artist Walkthrough  
Friday, December 13, 12 - 1 pm, Noontime Talk: Queer Parenthood  
Saturday, January 4, 11 am - 3 pm, Hands-on Houston: Natural Dyes & Clothing Swap  
Thursday, January 9, 6 - 8 pm, Reading & Happy Hour  
Friday, January 10, 10:30 am – 3 pm, Birth Story Art Book Workshop  
Saturday, January 11, 10:30 am – 3 pm, Birth Story Art Book Workshop  
Saturday, January 11, 3 – 4 pm, Designing Motherhood Curatorial Team Panel Reception  
Saturday, February 1, 11 am – 3 pm, Hands-on Houston: Peg Doll Families  
Friday, February 14, 12 - 1 pm, Noontime Talk: Infrastructures of Care  
Saturday, March 8, 12 - 1 pm, Noontime Talk: Is Motherhood Craft?

### **About Houston Center for Contemporary Craft**

Serving as a treasured resource in the Houston arts community for more than 20 years, Houston Center for Contemporary Craft (HCCC) is a nonprofit visual arts center dedicated to advancing education about the process, product, and history of craft. HCCC showcases emerging and acclaimed artists in exhibitions, introduces visitors of all ages to contemporary craft through hands-on programming, and supports the development of working artists through its artist residency and retail programs.

HCCC is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 AM – 5 PM. Closed major holidays. Fall and winter closures: November 28 for Thanksgiving Day and December 25, 2024 – January 1, 2025. Admission is free. HCCC is located in the Museum District at 4848 Main Street, two blocks south of Highway 59/69. Free parking is available directly behind the facility, off Rosedale and Travis Streets.

HCCC is supported by individual donors and members and funded in part by The Brown Foundation; Houston Endowment, Inc.; the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance; Texas Commission on the Arts; the National Endowment for the Arts, the Kinder Foundation; the Morgan Foundation; Windgate Charitable Foundation; and the Wortham Foundation. HCCC is a member of the Houston Museum District and the Midtown Arts District. For more information, call 713-529-4848 or visit [www.crafthouston.org](http://www.crafthouston.org). Find HCCC on Facebook, Instagram and X @CraftHouston.

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