

BETHANY ARTS

KRISTINE ZELLMAN + SHANNON SIGLER

Waiting, with a lap full of feelings

The Artists



Kristine Zelman and her husband are local Seattle residents. Kristine is a thinker of big thoughts, a lover of rain, and a believer in the significance of community. She finds joy by exploring the outdoors, singing with Coastland Commons, a local arts non-profit, and mentoring middle school and high school girls through sports. In her free time she loves to cook, cheer on her favorite Sounders and cuddle with her two fur-babies, Ebey and Buster.

This work of poetry was written in 2016 and is currently traveling with the Art of Infertility Non Profit. Learn more at www.artofinfertility.org



Shannon Sigler is an artist and theologian, and currently serves as the Executive Director of Fuller Seminary's Brehm Center in Seattle. She is married to Matt Sigler, a Seattle Pacific University professor; and has a super creative son named Elijah. Her work is influenced conceptually by explorations in family life, vocational roles, and investigations in theological aesthetics.

See more work at www.shannonsigler.com

Waiting, with a lap full of feelings

A word from Arts Elder, Sarah Sawers

As we near the end of the year, and as I close in on the final months of my term as your Bethany Arts Elder, I'm finding myself reflecting on the past and thinking about the arts more deeply. I'd like to take a moment to share a few of my thoughts on why I believe passionately in engaging with and supporting artists and the arts, and why I believe the arts are essential to us individually and as a community of faith.

At the heart of it, the arts give us a window into other worlds. The arts allow us to experience a new way of seeing, hearing, feeling, and sometimes even tasting and smelling. This is significant because when we engage with another's art, we first must put ourselves in their place, to see from their point of view. We ask ourselves, what was this artist thinking or feeling and why did they make the choices that they did to create this?

While we each can live only our one individual life, we can gain compassion, knowledge, inspiration, understanding and love as we place ourselves, with empathy, into the stories and views of others. Just as the Bible stories that feed our faith are not our experience, and sometimes, they are not even close, in the same way, most artists are telling stories that may not connect with our own and yet, we are invited into them. We are invited to find where we are and where we are not, to learn of where God has been in the past and where God is going now, here with us in the present.

The story we focus on at Advent is the story of the upcoming birth of Jesus, we await the son of God as we follow the story of Mary awaiting the birth of her son. I imagine there were great and complex emotions happening in the months between when Mary was visited with news from the angel Gabriel and that night we are awaiting in the Bethlehem stable. And so it is with this exhibition, where there are great and complex emotions, contemplating the journey of motherhood from two artist's perspectives.

Shannon Sigler has created works of charcoal and resin, revealing a figure that holds a pile of jumbled letters in one's lap, a lap that hopes to hold a child. These letters were carefully and intentionally cut and removed from a child's daydress. The garment carries history of the past and the words removed are contemplations of the artist's future. Here, "fullness" "anger" "longing" "contentment" "grief" "choice" and "surprise" commingle together.

Kristine Zellman's work of poetry is a public grieving of her journey to motherhood, not at the end but in the midst of a struggle to become pregnant. The work reads to me as a Psalm: an honest wailing of an intense desire and hurt, while also seeing the light in the loved ones who are there, sitting with this woman in the midst of her waiting.

I love the way these works acknowledge the complexity of the emotions that can arise around motherhood, becoming or not becoming a parent, and around this Advent and Christmas season. I invite you to welcome the emotions that arise for you this season and to step into the stories around you as we sit together, waiting this season with a lap full of feelings. And remembering that we do not wait in vain. The light of the world is coming and is holding all that you feel and all that you are.

- Sarah Sawers

Titles

Lap Full of Words, I and II

Charcoal, cut fabric letters, pencil, and epoxy resin on board. 2017

Daygown Dreams

Cut vintage baby gown, starch. 2017

Artist Statement

With mixed media - including charcoal, photographs, textiles, and epoxy resin - Shannon's artwork seeks to explore how our family relationships can change over time. The organic nature of elements like charcoal interact in interesting ways with industrial materials like the high-gloss epoxy, exploring how family roles and rhythms can be simultaneously authentic and artificial; natural and mechanical. These three works explore themes of pregnancy, motherhood, and choice.

Like Mary, women have the opportunity to declare: "Let it be to me as you have said" to our God when called forth. But it is important to understand that this declaration was a choice for Mary - she could have said "no" - and we have choices in our lives, as well.

The two charcoal drawings, "Lap Full of Words I & II," are layered with letters from words cut out of the traditional baby daygown, representing competing vocations in the life of a woman. The words express desires, goals, and dreams; sifted, sorted, and eventually - scattered and dumped into the artist's lap.

Bethany Arts
Advent 2018

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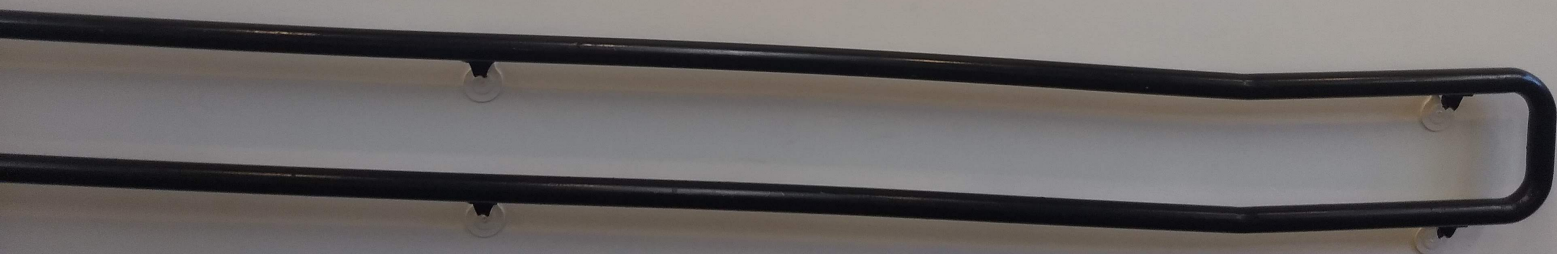
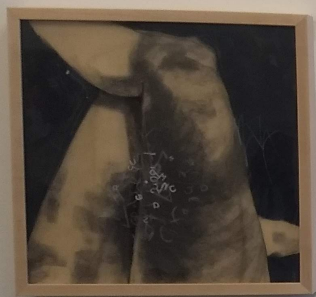
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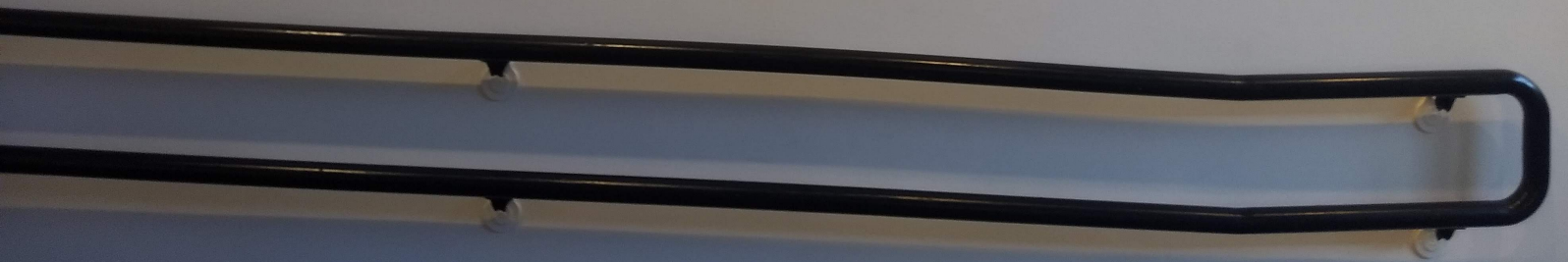
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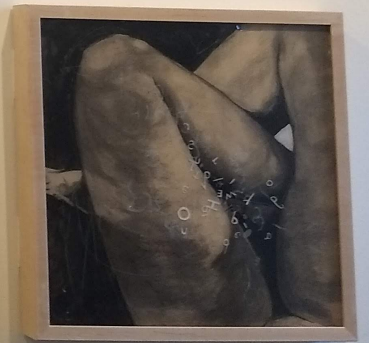
- Sarah Sawers











May 8, 2016

Celebrating turning 27 on Mother's Day.
Normally, it would be beautiful.
Luncheons.
Flowers.
Cake.

Not today.

Boycotting church.

Avoiding social media.

Purposely staying away from places with
happy families.

This is how it feels to be celebrating Mother's Day
while struggling with infertility.

This journey has been long for us.

In many ways, it's just another day.

I'd be fine if it was just my birthday.

But Mother's Day too...

Ugh.

I actually thought this last round of IVF
was going to work.

That it ~~HAD~~ worked.

That I would **FINALLY**.

After three **YEARS** of struggle.

Be pregnant.

It wasn't meant to be.

Blood.

Failure.

Again.

Failure.

Frustration.

Anger.

Utter depression.

Why.

WHY ME?!

This isn't supposed to happen...

Happy smiles, children's laughter.

Not mine.

Not ever mine.

Hope?

Oh maybe it's mine.

Somewhere in the back next to "why don't you just adopt?" and "it's all part of God's plan."

Is it?

Do I really serve a God who picks and chooses who to bless with children?

I can't.

I can't even begin to have that conversation.

I don't know how to have it.

I don't know how to believe,

But I doubt.

I question.

I struggle.

Light.
The light sustains me.
The small, dim flicker of light in my soul
has somehow endured
Smiles from a dear friend.
A gentle word of encouragement.
A knowing look that says "I'm holding you
here."
Here, on this day.
This day that holds so much pain and also
such promise.
A new year.
A new chapter.
A blank canvas.

There is light in my future,
I believe it.
But for today, I sit and I remember.

7 tiny embryos.
Gone.
Do they count as people at day three of
cell division?
I don't know.
But I mourn who they could have become.

You can't tell me now that I'm not
a mother.
For I have been and I will be again.

The light is coming.

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It won't hurt.

Bad.
Failure.
Again.
Failure.
Frustration.
Anger.
Utter depression.
Long.

WHY ME?!

This still supposed to happen...

Happy smiles, children's laughter.
Not mine.
Not ever mine.

Hope?
Oh maybe it's mine.
Somewhere in the back next to "Why don't
you just adapt?" and "it's all part of
God's plan."
Is it?

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