

# Room for Taking Care

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## ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines how care manifests relationally. It questions how we relate and respond to what and who needs to be cared for. The performance series and exhibition *Room for Taking Care* presented the works of Toronto-based artists Amy Wong (with her toddler Rudi), Nedda Baba, and Ayumi Goto. Their creative engagements with care both invited and unsettled the viewer. Each of the artists performed in the Graduate Gallery at OCAD University on separate days to expand the dialogue on care in the gallery. The Wongs altered the physical appearance of the gallery space with paintings and drawings, Baba introduced familial traditions using pomegranates, and Goto demonstrated the ephemerality of caring practices through collective remembrance. Care ultimately manifested in the presence and actions of the viewers and the participatory engagements of the audience.

**Key words:** Care, contemporary art, performance, diaspora, exhibition spaces, curatorial practice, collaboration,

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**Figure 1.** Erica Cristobal, *Tita's Washing Dishes*, 2017.

## **CURATORIAL ESSAY**

The work involved in washing dishes for my relatives in Angadanan, a municipality in Isabela, Philippines, is threefold: to start, you must pump water from the well, use large bowls and *tabo*'s (also known as a “dipper”) to transfer and store the water, and wash each dish by hand. In this process, the washing of dishes becomes more than an eternal chore; it becomes a ritual of physical labour that is collaborative. I watched my *titas* (a Filipino term for aunt or a woman who is a respected family friend) carry out this task during my visit in 2017.<sup>1</sup> My comprehension of Tagalog and Ilocano was minimal, but I read a distinct sense of care in their body movements. These women crouched low to the ground, using every muscle in the body to participate in the task. I assisted them with the water pump, and we moved methodically under the heat with my cousins playing underfoot. The movements of our bodies in unison demonstrated a performative quality to the act of washing dishes. It bridged the generational gap and cultural divide between me and my *titas*, reflecting a practice of care based on physical and collaborative labour.

This particular anecdote served as a conduit for my experience as a woman of Filipino descent living in Toronto. It demonstrated the lifestyle my parents had prior to their immigration to Canada in the early 1980s and sparked a definition of care that encouraged me to examine discourses of care animated by collaboration and the body. Feminist scholar Maurice Hamington views the term care beyond its approach to morality, and states that care is an action to be performed and effectively received.<sup>2</sup> According to Hamington, this reciprocal characteristic becomes a reflection of what we know and who we are. After the experience with my *titas*, I

thought a lot about my engagements with care as I saw my parents in the roles of caretakers (my mom was a patient service aid worker at Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto and my dad was a janitor for the Toronto Catholic School Board). The care that I practice draw from these examples and feed into my interpretation of knowing care through physical labour and relationality.

Acknowledging my identity as a first generation Filipino Canadian was critical to foreground as I engaged with and researched care in this project. Care intersected my position by involving multiple practices of care from my family's experience with hospitals and schools, which I brought into the context of curatorial practice. In “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” cultural theorist Stuart Hall argues that cultural identity transforms constantly. He claims that cultural identity draws from common historical experiences, and these lineages evolve over time.<sup>3</sup> In this process, care is needed for the survival and evolution of these roots. The artists exemplified this demand through their performances in Room for Taking Care. Amy paved the agency for her family to feel welcomed in the space, Nedda used food to make connections with personal stories, and Ayumi fostered companionship towards the previous happenings and attendees of the room. Care was entangled with my identity, the artists's identities, and continued to unfold with the audience. The project was able to present care from these multiple perspectives as a result of interweaving the significance and individuality of one's cultural identity.

Moreover, I was compelled by the interdisciplinary role of the curator and its responsibilities to take care. Curator Anthony Huberman examines curatorial behavior with care as a means for slowing down and celebrating the artworks and artists.<sup>4</sup> Drawing from these various practice of care and taking care, I was shaped and affected by the climate of my



surroundings. I attend to this story of my family not as a form of nostalgia, but to speak more broadly about the concept of care demonstrated in the domestic context and cross-culturally.

The performance series and exhibition *Room for Taking Care* featured Toronto-based artists Amy Wong (with her son Rudi), Nedda Baba and Ayumi Goto in the Graduate Gallery at OCAD University. Exploring the relational affect of care, this project relied on participatory engagement to contribute to the understanding and experience of care in the gallery. Each of the artists mobilized care through artistic gestures that drew from their positions as Asian diasporic women. To better grasp their perspectives, the works were presented in succession, one day after the other, to present an ongoing conversation of care in the gallery.

### **Amy and Rudi Wong: Baby Tag**

Amy Wong's practice draws from her experience as part of the Chinese diaspora. She creates platforms for collaborative and dialogical exchanges in the form of soup gatherings and talks. In 2018, Wong hosted a workshop on institutional critique at the Gardiner Museum with artist Amy Lam in response to the exhibition, *Obsession: Sir William van Horne's Japanese Ceramics* (2018). It was an act of resistance against the content of the show, which fetishized the collection of Japanese ceramics collected by the president of the Canadian Pacific Railway, Sir William Van Horne. The premise of the critique was to bring attention to diversity work in institutional spaces. Los Angeles-based writer Maya Mackrandilal uses the term *diveris*, meaning to turn different ways, specifically from expected paths that must be challenged. <sup>5</sup> Wong's coordination in this project and in her role as the founder of Angry Asian Feminist Gang (AAFG), a collective

of diasporic cultural producers in Toronto, exemplifies *diveris*. Her dialogical responses to issues that reflect the erasure and mistreatment of communities in the peripheral of dominant culture underscores the gaps in which care is needed.

Working with her son in *Baby Tag* (2019) allowed Wong to acknowledge her realities as both mother and artist. The performative gesture of the work responds to the hostile atmosphere of the gallery space.<sup>6</sup> Together they used materials such as washable children's paint and watercolor materials to paint on the walls and plinths, the latter of which they scattered around the room in an attempt to recreate and reclaim the environment. The duo's treatment of the plinths and wall surfaces shifted from their museological function of containing and displaying artwork to serving as a canvas for drawings and scribbles. In this tactile and mobile treatment, the artists altered the atmosphere of the space into one of playfulness. In addition, Wong and her son also used music to instigate dance and thus further created alternatives to the staid rituals of the white cube.<sup>7</sup> Subsequent viewers were invited to contribute to painting and drawing on the walls as a means for using the site to play.

This collaboration of Wong and her son suggested a rethinking of the gallery in terms of its architectural façade and the construction of social dynamics.<sup>8</sup> *Baby Tag* used the Graduate Gallery as a platform to present subversive actions and tendencies that foreground performance, playfulness, and the everyday to take place. The traces left over from Wong and Wong's playing and drawing reimagined the gallery as an active environment. Such work reconfigured the traditional concept of the white cube and signified what art historian Claire Bishop points to as "presentism," the act of bringing into conversation current issues as subjects for rethinking.<sup>9</sup> Wong creatively engaged how the gallery space produced a set of standards for artworks and

how its function mediates against the presence and visibility of children in the space. In applying drawing and painting materials made for kids, Wong and her son complicate the expectations of what is shown in a gallery. Through this *diverus* Wong confronts the distancing effect of the gallery as a way of bringing in outside relations (material, familial, domestic ones) through the act of caring for her son.

### **Nedda Baba: Of Fruits and Memories**

Interdisciplinary artist Nedda Baba works between images, found objects, performances, and interactive installations to investigate how diasporic identities appear and enter into dominant culture. She draws from personal narratives by assessing the tensions in belonging and representation of marginalized bodies as a second generation Assyrian-Canadian. Baba examines her relationship to her cultural context and in living in Toronto. The result is a process of transformation and involvement with care.

The performance *Of Fruits and Memories* (2018) demonstrated Baba's process for transformation by using and deseeding pomegranates. She handled the fruit with a knife to score and peel at the skin in a procedure reflective of her grandmother, who prepares the snack for family members. Unhurried and meditative, Baba cracked the seeds from their flesh and collected them into a bowl to offer to participants who pass by and sit with her for consumption and to generate conversation. In this work, she ruminated on her grandmother's stories of immigrating from Kirkuk, Iraq, to Hamilton, Ontario. Rather than echo the traumatic transition felt by her family from moving, Baba brought into conversation how these stories affected her.

The sharing of pomegranates gathered people, which became a methodological approach to taking care. The embedded familial connections and traditions associated with pomegranates shared a history of diaspora. Bringing this fruit in reflection and in conversation, Baba opened up a space for these memories to take new forms as well as explored ways of navigating the tensions these memories may hold.

Baba presented *Of Fruits and Memories in Room for Taking Care* after Wong's intervention, and amongst the remnants left behind in the gallery. Similar to *Baby Tag*, Baba performed in the gallery to examine relationships with family. Using the space in relation to Wong and Wong, she built on the concept of care by embracing the space as it was to interact with the work.

### **Ayumi Goto: 撫育の空気 (buiku no kūki)**

Ayumi Goto has a performance practice that takes up notions of nation-building, cultural belonging, and activism. Working in collaboration with Cree Metis multi-media artist Cheryl L'Hirondelle, Siksika interdisciplinary artist Adrian Stimson, and Tahltan performance artist and object maker Peter Morin, she studies the notion of collective responsibility as it is expressed through performance. Her practice shows an interest in care that mobilizes beyond geopolitical and familial boundaries, including spoken and written language, and notions of belonging. Working with other artists, Goto seeks to respectfully acknowledge the limits of care.

Goto's participation in *Room for Taking Care* reflected the collective gestures needed to take care. She performs last in my series of performances with 撫育の空気 (*buiku no kūki*)

(2019). **撫育** (*buiku*) is a noun which alludes to “tending” or “to tend to” and **空気** (*kūki*) means “air or atmosphere” in Japanese. In this performance, Goto responded to the works made earlier by the Wongs and Baba through movements that enacted an appreciation for their presence in the gallery. She imagined herself as a future ghost, and wandered the gallery meditatively to contemplate the objects left in the space. The embodied care Goto presented showed a respectful acknowledgement. Her observations from the previous performances informed her actions in **撫育の空気** and unfolded in her understanding of being in the gallery space. In this way, the ghost that Goto referred to worked both within the future and past of this performance series as a way to transform the atmosphere of the exhibition space.

### **Embodied Practices**

The artists in *Room for Taking Care* approached the notion of care in relation to the cultural demands of belonging. Where the Wongs’ work changed the entirety of the gallery space with paint and drawings, Baba’s work introduced comforting memories of familial traditions. Goto demonstrated the ephemerality of caring practices and reflected on how actions are traced and embedded into materials and space. Throughout the exhibition, the artists introduced performative forms of taking care that took root from their personal experiences as a way to comprehend and investigate how we are all affected by care. Care was mobilized in the gallery through these participatory events, and manifested in the presence and actions of the artists and viewers.

The Wongs, Baba, and Goto all utilized care as a nodal point for familial connections, cultural continuance, and collective responsibility. Each of their performances enacted a practice of care reflective of their positions as Asian diasporic women. As a result, the atmosphere of the room changed throughout the duration of the exhibition due to the temporal and collaborative exchanges with the audience. Care was placed at the foreground of each of the performances and was mobilized through physical actions. This exhibition functioned as an incubator for learning how we relate and respond to what and who needs to be cared for, ultimately bringing people together to think through this chain of ideas on taking care. 10

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> *Tita* is also a term of endearment and can be used interchangeably. I use the term in respect to the women from this scene who are family friends and neighbours.

<sup>2</sup> Maurice Hamington, "Performative Approach to Teaching Care Ethics: A Case Study," *Feminist Teacher* 23, no. 1 (2012): 34.

<sup>3</sup> Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in Jonathan Rutherford (ed), *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, (1990) 225. See also Homi K. Bhabha "The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism," *The Location of Culture*, London: Routledge (1994): 66 – 84.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony Huberman, "Take Care." *The Show Room*, [http://www.theshowroom.org/system/files/062015/55842f3817f49e6da50001b8/original/Take\\_Care.pdf?1506568407](http://www.theshowroom.org/system/files/062015/55842f3817f49e6da50001b8/original/Take_Care.pdf?1506568407) (accessed January, 2018).

<sup>5</sup> Maya Mackrandilal, "Diverus." *Mice Magazine*, Issue 01 (2016), <http://micemagazine.ca/issue-one/diverus> (Accessed November 11, 2018).

<sup>6</sup> In Brian O'Doherty's *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, he analyzes the spatial characteristics of the white cube gallery and its affect on viewership and the presentation of artworks. He describes the spaces as "unshadowed, white, clean, and artificial" to point to how these characteristics constructs a simulated space separate from the outside world. Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (San Francisco: The Lapis Press (1976).

<sup>7</sup> This idea of ritualistic behavior draws from Carol Duncan's book, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*. She discusses the nature of the museum to prescribe a level of performativity reserved for learning and contemplation enforced by the architectural structure as well as its patrons. Carol, Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*. London: Routledge, (1995).

<sup>8</sup> For more information about how the gallery space has evolved from a site for viewership into one with participation and social engagements, see Tony Bennett, *The Birth of The Museum: History, Theory, Politics*. London: Routledge (1995), Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, Verso books, (2012) and Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, Dijon: Les presses du réel, (2002).

<sup>9</sup> Claire Bishop, *Radical Museology, or What's Contemporary in Museums of Contemporary Art*, London: Koenig Books (2014), 7.

<sup>10</sup> Community became implicit throughout the exhibition. See Sara Ahmed and Anne-Marie Fortier, "Re-Imagining Communities," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 6, no. 3 (2003): 251-259; Taraneh Fazeli, *Class Consciousness: Taraneh Fazeli on Night School.(ON SITE)*, Vol.

47 *Artforum* (2009) and Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* Berkeley: University of California Press (2004).



## ***SUPPORT PAPER***

### **Introduction**

This paper outlines the theoretical frameworks that informed my curatorial decisions in the performance series and exhibition *Room for Taking Care*. It discusses contemporary art exhibitions and programming that utilize care as a catalyst for proposing alternative approaches to the way we interact with one another. A close look at the methodological approaches in this project demonstrates that collaboration was an implicit part of the process and presentation of care in the gallery. Lastly, the overview of the installation and programming substantiates the premise that care is relational and traverses in space and through the body.

*Room for Taking Care* featured the performance works of Toronto-based artists Amy Wong (with her son Rudi), Nedda Baba, and Ayumi Goto in the Graduate Gallery. Care resonated in the relations between the artists and the audience. In presenting the artists one day after another, the gallery shifted into a site for possibility and learning. I viewed the gallery space as a potential for learning to disengage from its conventional museological function and re-engage with more intimate and generative relations based on ideas to taking care. The succession of the performances was intentional to facilitate the dialogue of care more broadly and recognize the agency of the artists and the audience in the space.

## **Literature Review**

This project draws from an interdisciplinary range of literary frameworks that addresses my concerns in curatorial practice. It turns to a diverse range of scholarly perspectives as they relate to feminist care, critical pedagogy, performance and live arts, and postcolonial theory as they intersect with curatorial practice. These subjects enabled me to form a more comprehensive conception of working in an institutional space and formed a backdrop for this project.

Critical pedagogy impacted my decisions to work collaboratively based on on-going communication with the artists.<sup>1</sup> I turned to this theoretical framework as it moved me to think beyond my conception of care and consider how the artists grapple with the term. It was important that the exhibition space generated conversation to interweave the agency of the audience and its diverse voices.<sup>2</sup> Feminist care ethics became a part of my research into care. I examined care as a relational and embodied manifestation based on ongoing and reciprocal relationships.<sup>3</sup> Since the artworks in this thesis project were performance-based, it was critical to also review performance and live arts. I learned to treat the performances not only as a one-time event, but with consideration to the artists who required to be taken care of simultaneously.<sup>4</sup> This thesis project was grounded on a personal anecdote of my family that acknowledges my position in the Asia diaspora. It was important for me to use this story as a seed for my understanding on taking care.<sup>5</sup> Bringing in post-colonial theory illuminated why care was a significant theme in my studies. My experiences with “Otherness” and in feelings of belonging, I began to approach care as a means for taking action against practices that marginalize and discriminate against minority groups.<sup>6</sup> Altogether, these ideas shaped this thesis project and my curatorial practice.

## **Exhibition Review**

The following exhibitions were surveyed for their collaborative and participatory characteristics. Both *Take Care* (2017-18) and *Ayumi Goto and Peter Morin: how do you carry the land?* (2018) widened the potential for care to be enacted in a gallery setting. Taking form in collective projects, dialogical programming, and participatory engagements, ideas of care were mobilized into forms of public programs. These exhibitions encouraged forward thinking into the ways we work and respond to each other, which was influential to my curatorial decisions in *Room for Taking Care*.

The five-month exhibition series, *Take Care*, curated by Letters and Handshakes (a collaboration with Greig de Peuter and Christine Shaw) at the Blackwood Gallery in Mississauga was organized around five themes of care: Labour of Curation, Care Work, Infrastructure and Aesthetics of Mutual Aid, Stewardship, and Collective Welfare.<sup>7</sup> It was presented in a series of public programs and workshops led by artists, activists, curators, performers, and researchers. In this context, care was defined in response to histories of colonialism and hierarchies and drawn from the perspectives of the contributors.<sup>8</sup> It set a precedent for care to intersect topical themes in contemporary art, and was carried and defined by a multiplicity of voices.

Care was implicit in the exhibition *Ayumi Goto and Peter Morin: how do you carry the land?* curated by Tarah Hogue at the Vancouver Art Gallery (VAG). The curatorial methods and performance-based programming engaged viewers and artists to reflect on the land whether in a metaphorical, present, historical, or physical point of view. Artists Ayumi Goto and Peter Morin showed works from their respective practices and with invited collaborators. Altogether, they examined the land not only as a site where we live, but as a place that carries histories and stories.

These exhibitions are contemporary examples of care used as a theme to address and transform systemic forces with intimate and dialogical affinities. *Room for Taking Care* extends from these shows as an incubator for care to be felt atmospherically and relationally in the gallery.

## **Methodology**

The research in this thesis project included studio visits, a literature analysis and a survey of exhibitions that addressed the theme of care. I examined Toronto-based artists to gain a local perspective on artists dealing with care, and visited art shows and events on this theme.<sup>9</sup>

Performance became the ultimate medium as it allowed the artists to engage with participants and each other to expand a dialogue on care. The engagements with the audience extended the notion of caretaking to be enacted by those involved in the performances.<sup>10</sup> Each of the artists presented ideas of care through actions that stemmed from personal and cultural experiences.<sup>11</sup>

The ongoing relationships I built with the artists in this project became crucial to the exhibition's aim of presenting their individual ideas of taking care. In some ways, the curator-artist relationships ran parallel with the exhibition theme of taking care. I aimed to maintain a more collaborative and non-oppressive relationship that was based on constant communication, inclusivity, and consent.<sup>12</sup> As a result, my curatorial practice became reflective of a collaborative and process-based methodology. My research and work with the artists allowed me to observe and make use of multiple and diverse forms of knowledge, each contributing to the production of this exhibition. From this experience, I was able to determine the unique qualities that each of the artists brought to this discussion on taking care. The decision to present their works in succession and built atop each other was deliberate as a way to show the temporality of the works and to

cease prioritizing one from the other. These methodological approaches were used to achieve a multi-faceted understanding of the act of taking care.

### **Installation Concept and Design**

*Room for Taking Care* took place in the Graduate Gallery at OCAD University. Since the artists performed one day after another, it was essential that they left the remnants of their work in the space for subsequent visitors and artists to respond to and reflect upon earlier happenings. The initial appearance of the gallery featured a strip of yellow paint across the lower half of the walls.<sup>13</sup> This was a deliberate decision made to ground the performances and bring the artists and participants closer to the ground. In diverting from the clean and pristine white cube atmosphere, the installation of this exhibition became a space for participation and dialogue. The artists agreed to leave the remnants from each of the performances, which posed questions about care and whom the performances were for and what was to happen with its traces.<sup>14</sup> There was another question of care that became an afterthought as the materials accumulated: how the room was going to be cared for at the end of the performance series. Care was ultimately carried out in this project from its conception to when it was fully restored to white walls.

Performance became the ultimate medium since it not only allowed the artists the opportunity to think about the notion of care more organically, it was inspired by a gesture enacted by Goto and artist Peter Morin in the opening of the exhibition *Ayumi Goto and Peter Morin: how do you carry the land?* (2018). At the entrance of the VAG, Goto and Morin stood side-by-side calling out “Come on in!” and in waving their arms to gather viewers around a low circular platform with hand-made *den den daikos* (Japanese pellet drums) and elk and deerhide rattles.<sup>15</sup> With the crowd, Goto and Morin used the instruments, their voices, and their bodies to

produce noise in the gallery space. The artists dedicated this collective action to communities of people who were unwelcomed and turned away not just from the art institution, but also from the courthouse that is now occupied by the VAG. By disrupting the still ambience of the gallery setting, Goto and Morin marked the surroundings as a space for inclusivity by bridging the colonial gap with gestures of welcoming. In this performance at the VAG, Goto, Morin, and the audience collectively took care. This gesture of acknowledging the surrounding space and the people in it resonated with me.

## **Conclusion**

One of the most memorable moments at the start of this thesis project was attending the Groundworks: Summer Intensive at the University of British Columbia Kelowna Campus in 2017. It was here where I began to witness artists and curators decentring individual authorship and engaging in creative initiatives for recomposition in institutional spaces.<sup>16</sup> Throughout this thesis, I found myself scrambled to find footing in curating. It was in the relationships with the artists and my cohort at OCAD University when the notion of care was revealed as a significant and integral practice of curation.<sup>17</sup> I came to draw inspiration from my family and peers as they represented ideas of care that I found radical to intersect with curatorial practice.<sup>18</sup> The performance series and exhibition contributed to a research of contemporary discourses on care. It differed from a standard exhibition as it literally turned the space upside down and broke rules and conventions to ultimately experiment. *Room for Taking Care* was messy in a generative and productive way that I could not have planned or orchestrated by myself.

## **Postscript**

This project began with queries on care that were then carried out by research and a performance series and exhibition. The end of the show may be considered an end to the project and the end of my involvement with care, but the ideas from the project and its collaborations became lived and embodied experiences that persisted. One of my challenges was to give volume to personal stories, which paved an understanding of care through practice. Care continued to evolve and unfold after the show and into the takedown, the completion of this paper, and perhaps beyond the life I live after this thesis is submitted.

Restoring the gallery to its original state was another form of care. This part of the project meant cleaning and respectfully returning the space for the next person to use. It challenged me to continue to think through care as I had from the project, and consider what I needed to do to care for the space as well as myself. Some of these ideas meant for me to communicate what I was struggling with and to acknowledge when I needed to take a step back to breathe. I came to this realization of care for myself after the exhibition, and even this was a process of understanding and learning.

The project used the gallery as a testing ground the potential for care, since the white cube is historically an alienating space. Nonetheless, the examples presented by the artists, and the situations constructed by their performances, recast the space as a familial and everyday environment. The ideas of care generated by this project do not have to be centred in the gallery, however, for they can exist in any place that care manifests relationally. There is no saying what a future iteration of this project can look like, for the lessons learned here will continue to shape and inform me.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> This theoretical framework dismantles the hierarchies of knowledge. See bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*, New York: Routledge (1994) and Paulo Friere, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition*, Bloomsbury Academic (1970).

<sup>2</sup> For more on positioning gallery spaces for dialogue see, Taraneh Fazeli, “Class Consciousness: Taraneh Fazeli on Night School”, (ON SITE) Vol. 47 *Artforum* (2009); Roger I Simon, “Afterword: The Turn to Pedagogy: A Needed Conversation on the Practice of Curating Difficult Knowledge” in *Curating Difficult Knowledge: Violent Pasts in Public Places*, edited by Erica Lehler, Cynthia E. Milton, and Monica Eileen Patterson, pp. 193-209, 2011; Rebecca Uchill, “Hanging Out, Crowding Out or Talking Things Out: Curating the Limits of Discursive Space,” *Journal of Curatorial Studies* 1, no 1 (2012): 27-43.

<sup>3</sup> See Maurice Hamington, *Embodied Care: Jane Addams, Maurice Merleau-Pont, and Feminist Ethics*, Champaign: University of Illinois Press (2004). Hospitality was a branch of this research but did not become the main focus of this thesis project. See Jacques Derrida and Anne Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, Stanford, CA: Stanford UP (2000).

<sup>4</sup> Curating live arts creates a consciousness for the curator to tend to the exhibition space, the artists and the community. For more on how the curator must act as the mediator, see Tany Mars and Johanna Householder, *Caught in the Act: An Anthology of Performance Art by Canadian Women*, Toronto: YYZ Books (2004); and Roselle Pineda, “Framing a Network, Charting Dis/Courses: Performance Curation, Community Work, and the Logic/Anxieties of an Emerging Field” in *Curating Live Arts: Critical Perspectives, Essays, and Conversations on Theory and Practice*, ed. Dena Davida, Marc Pronovost, Véronique Hudon. (Berghahn Books, 2018).

<sup>5</sup> I began to see how vital it was for me to recognize the different layers of my identity as they each intersect. See Kimberley Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum*: Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8.

<sup>6</sup> For more on post-colonial theory, see Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Representations of the Orient*, New York, NY: Pantheon (1978). Guyatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the subaltern speak?” In P. Williams & L. Chrisman (Eds.), *Colonial and post-colonial theory* (pp. 66-111). New York, NY: Columbia University Press (1994) and Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang, “Decolonization is not a Metaphor,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (2012): 1- 40. These readings were influential to how I understood my position as a woman of colour and in the role of the curator.

<sup>7</sup> Each of these categories was in response to the neglect of care as it is influenced by capitalism. See Nancy Fraser, “Contradictions of Capital and Care,” In *New Left Review* 100 (2016): 99-117.



8 There are more than 100 contributors in this exhibition who derive from diverse communities and regions in Canada. To see a complete listing of these individuals, see the Blackwood Gallery website, <http://blackwoodgallery.ca/exhibitions/2017/TakeCare.html>.

9 I researched Toronto-based artists who specifically use the term care in their practice. It was also important for me to seek out artists who come from a place in diaspora and are exercising care through dialogical and collaborative engagements.

10 For more on gender acts, see Judith Butler, “Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory”, reprinted in *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*, eds. Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina, and Sarah Stanbury, New York: Columbia University Press, originally published in *Theater Journal* 49, no. 1 (1988): 519–531. Sara Ahmed also speaks on how certain behaviours are repeated, specifically in institutions where a certain straight line must be followed. Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, Durham and London: Duke University Press (2006).

11 Each of the artists presented a story on taking care that was individual and full of unique memories. For more on the intimacy of telling stories, see Trinh, Minh Ha, *Woman, Native, Other*, Indiana University Press (1989).

12 This motive was inspired by feminist theorist Maurice Hamington’s course Performance, Phenomenology, and Feminist Ethics from the Metropolitan State University of Denver in 2012, and Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed 30th anniversary ed.* New York: Continuum (2000). Hamington experimented with the teaching of ethics as an embodied and performative activity, which involved exercises using improvisation. Making a connection with Freire’s analysis of the teacher and student dynamic further demonstrated that hierarchical knowledge was authoritative and does not tend to individuality.

13 The colour yellow carries an underlying racist color-metaphor that discriminates against Asian people. Erika, Lee, “The “Yellow Peril” and Asian Exclusion in the Americas,” *Pacific Historical Review* 76, no. 4 (2007): 537. Selecting this colour was made for the purpose of brightening the Graduate Gallery as it served as a space for welcome and not as a symbol for the presence of the artists and myself included coming from the Asia diaspora. See also Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*, London, UK: Pluto Press (1986).

14 Working with the artists in this manner drew inspiration from Peter Morin’s Museum Exhibition where the exhibition space changed over successive days based on how the different components of the installation was used. Peter Morin, Karen Duffek, “Peter Morin’s Museum” Vancouver, BC: Satellite Gallery, Museum of Anthropology (2011). <https://moa.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Sourcebooks-Peter-Morin.pdf> (Accessed October, 2018).

15 Ayumi Goto and Peter Morin “Ayumi Goto and Peter Morin: how do you carry the land?” (performance, Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, BC, July 13, 2018).

16 At this time, I was reading writer David Garneau to gain a perspective on creating a space sensible to decolonization. See David Garneau, “Imaginary spaces of conciliation and reconciliation”, *West Coast Line* 74, 46(2), 28-38 (2012) and David Garneau, Extra-rational aesthetic action and cultural decolonization, *Fuse Magazine* 36, no 4 (2016).

17 See also Helena Reckitt, “Support acts: Curating, caring and social reproduction,” *Journal of Curatorial Studies* 5, no. 1 (2016): 6-30.

18 See also hooks who positions care as the foundation of love as it is both an intention and action, and artist Jenny Odell who examines the importance of being physically and mentally present with our surroundings as a connective opportunity to shift our perspective on what and whom we pay attention to. hooks bell, *All About Love: New Visions*, William Morrow and Company Inc (2000). Jenny Odell, *How To Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy* Melville House (2009).

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## **APPENDIX A - Artist Biographies**

### **Nedda Baba**

Nedda Baba is a Toronto-based artist. Inspired by the tensions between subject and authority, her work is reflective of personal narratives and how they subvert the perceived objectivities of dominant discourses in education, religion, the media, gender, and queer spaces. She is interested in practice-based research and often investigates relationships to memory and archive through a diasporic lens. Her practice oscillates between images, found objects, performances, and interactive installations. She has exhibited and performed in various spaces in Toronto, Hamilton, and Montreal. Nedda is a recent graduate of the MFA program at York University, where she also completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2016.

### **Ayumi Goto**

Ayumi Goto is currently based in Toronto. Born in Canada, she often draws upon her Japanese heritage and language to creatively challenge sedimented notions of nation-building, cultural belonging, and activism. Inspired by collaborative work, she also explores conceptions of inbetweenness, land-human relations, and space-time beingness. She has exhibited works at Doris McCarthy Gallery, Gallery 101, the Alternator Artist Run Centre, Shingwauk Residential School Centre, Algoma University, the Art Gallery of Southern Manitoba, the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, and the Vancouver Art Gallery. Ayumi has performed in London, England, Berlin, Germany, and in Naha, Okinawa, Kyoto, Japan. Ayumi has a Ph.D. in Communication Studies at Simon Fraser University and is currently a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Ontario College of Art and Design University in Toronto.

## **Amy Wong**

Amy Wong is an Angry Asian Feminist disguised as an oil painter. She is the founder of Angry Asian Feminist Gang, a collective dedicated to dialogue centred on diaspora Asian concerns. Foregrounding care labour, Wong conditions spaces for thinking through together to aspire towards feminist and decolonial ways of being. Wong's paintings, drawings, mixtapes, healing soups and other performative actions layer diverse references and between different systems of representation to evoke non-linear narratives. She often works with what she considers bad ideas or clichés in order to redefine them on her own terms. Wong completed her BFA at Concordia University in Montreal, an MFA at York University in Toronto, and post-graduate studies at De Ateliers in Amsterdam.



## APPENDIX B – Documentation

CURATED BY ERICA CRISTOBAL

A THREE-PART PERFORMANCE SERIES

**ROOM FOR TAKING CARE**

APRIL 1 - 4, 2019 | 10 AM - 6 PM  
GRADUATE GALLERY AT OCAD U  
205 RICHMOND STREET WEST (GROUND FLOOR)

OCAD U

APRIL 1 - AMY & RUDI WONG  
APRIL 2 - NEDDA BABA  
APRIL 3 - AYUMI GOTO  
APRIL 4 - CLOSING

The gallery is open everyday from 10 AM to 6 PM. The performances will occur throughout each day.

**BABY TAG BY AMY & RUDI WONG**  
Monday, April 1, 2019  
Amy Wong and her toddler, Rudi, paint and color on the walls and plinths. They come together to present a rereading of the gallery as a site to play.

**OF FRUITS & MEMORIES BY NEDDA BABA**  
Tuesday, April 2, 2019  
Nedda Baba deseeds pomegranates as an act of reflection and of transformation. The seeds become a point of exchange for participants to eat and share in conversation.

**撫育の空気 (BUIKU NO KŪKI) BY AYUMI GOTO**  
Wednesday, April 3, 2019  
Ayumi Goto responds to the previous performances by imagining herself as a future ghost. She moves into the reiterations of care, which changes the space through the shifting air.

**CLOSING RECEPTION**  
Thursday, April 4, 2019  
The remnants from each of the artists remain in the gallery to trace the performances as entryways for contemplation and dialogue. All are welcome to touch, paint, eat, and sit in the space.

Figure 2. Design for promotional material by Joeb Cualing, 2019.



**Figure 3.** *Room for Taking Care* (2019), installation view April 1. Photo: Ellen Snowball.



**Figure 4.** Amy and Rudi Wong, *Baby Tag* (2019) performance. Photo by Ellen Snowball.



**Figure 5.** Nedda Baba, *Of Fruits and Memories* (2018) performance. Photo by Ellen Snowball.



**Figure 6.** Ayumi Goto, *撫育の空気 (buiku no kūki)* (2019) performance. Photo by Ellen Snowball.





**Figure 7.** Room for Taking Care (2019). Installation detail April 4. Photo by Ellen Snowball.