

No Mans

Why this work

Read

Postnatal Psychosis (PP) affects around 1 in 1,000 new mothers – roughly 600 people in the UK every year.

It has no entry in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) as a diagnosis in its own right (ONS, 2025; Spinelli, 2021).

"Given that this state of murky diagnostic affairs has progressed relatively little since the early nineteenth century, contemporary life writing may help to update cultural scripts around this opaque and much-stigmatised illness." – Spinelli, 2021

We know this territory personally, and through the women in our families. We want to raise awareness, open conversations, and exorcise the taboos around women's mental health – around birth and beyond.

Long-term ambition: to contribute to the case for PP's reclassification in the DSM.



via DOCTRIINA magazine

ORIGINAL MONOLOGUE '22
THE WITCHES YOU DIDN'T BURN
Holly Sonabend

Up - we've got to go.
It's happening again.
Quickly now.
Shh.
Come on.
No no, nothing.
Just get out.
Emergency bag's outside.
Come on, quickly.
They'll be alright.
Please!
No - no!
No!
There there... hush now.
We'll deal with this. It's... it's...
That doesn't matter now.

365 Degree Burns
Heresay! Heresay, its deemed heresy
No mention of his sexual fantasy, fallacy,
forgery..
Not quite condemnable they say
Despite all whispers
The allegations made happened in slurs.
Well, it's always been this way
I've heard much worse
So we'll continue, empty purse.

What's next?
All options closed,
I haven't got a plan,
Are we cursed -
or merely fighting man?

The noose around our neck's
We're condemned before out of our cots
The entire thing, down to our blood clot's
Don't squirm - We all have it.
Own.
Belong.
Sing the loudest song!
Otherwise it's all...
Shirked off,
Shaved,
Removed,
Erased.
Hidden,
Stuffed into corsets,
Denied air
Perfected in permed, curled and quaffed hair.

It's bad.
It's inside me.
No wait...
Only I exist within.
Narratives someone else paraphrased for me
Most likely, no Definitely, a He.
Suddenly a breeze
It rattles the bones
Please. Put down your cell phone.

Oh yes - didn't you know
This *itch transcends time and space
Don't look at me with that face.
Burnt.
Flayed.
Spayed.
Drowned.
Yet we still Howl.

This revival is no coincidence
No thing to be ignored
Their voices have been stored in our marrow
Reverberating against our skin.
Society instills an impenetrable shame,
I argue its no longer ours, give it it's real
name.
Stand tall.
Nurture the bits of yourself we've been taught to
repress,
Be it your desires, your place, the way you
dress.
If you can't do it for you,
My - oh MY!
Do it for them, for us.

Hush - hush now - you're alright now..
Come on. Inhale deeply, yes that's good,
Hold it, slowly exhale, look at me.
Look at me.
Try - please.
Just try.

There you go.
Pause
It's okay. You're okay.
You're good, I promise you.
Hmm?
Well yes... but... well it would.
Yes it would take a while - okay.

Get comfy. Uh - huh.
No, no more water before bed -
your sooky-cup is just there for emergency's.
BEAT
That's not an emergency, darling, but...
Well, Nice Try.

BEAT
(Panicked)

You're..you're right. I do - I smell it too.
It's... it's



Our Story

We want to challenge the harmful stereotypes of 'female madness'

Rooting our story in domesticity, we follow a young couple navigating the first weeks of life with a newborn.

Having them as our foundation, we can portray how PP affects the intimate, the personal; how it attacks people, relationships and the beliefs we value most.



Our Vision

Drawing upon the ancient, and disappearing Scottish ritual of Keening: where women would lament as one in the face of grief.

Merging and fusing timelines, we aim to support, hear and give platform to women - enabling them to feel supported as a collective, not isolated in the individualistic.

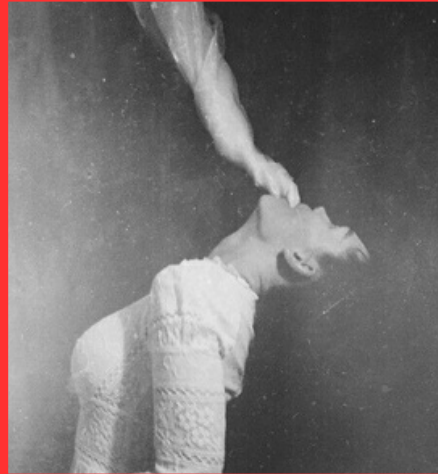
This play is to be a KEEN

'As I sat with these women, I saw that song is a raft for grief, allows it to land somewhere, to both be simultaneously expressed and transformed.'

And the group of women droning and humming around the one song, crying for her story, for all of us to see and know, a raft for us all.

We all have grief songs, what a beautiful way to hold oneself and to be held in grief'

-Maeve Gavin



EXPLORING THE KALEIDOSCOPE

'Trying to sleep - a kaleidoscope of colourful images appeared, spinning, swirling, shrinking and enlarging'

-Aaisha Alvi, A Mom Like That

Using the kaleidoscope as the frame: different timelines of different women, happening simultaneously.

How do we transition and merge between them in real time?



Stained Glass - Notre Dame, Paris



The Kaleidoscope

'The wall between what you are experiencing, all the memories and the subconscious is broken. And it felt like everything I had ever experienced, read about or known was being processed at the same time'

-Catherine Cho, Inferno



Melinda Edwards



Mara Dyer



ATEEZ (에이티즈) - 'Youth (윤호, 민기)'



Sigrid Colomyès Photographie | Minus 16 / Ohad Naharin

SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES

Seeing the Devil in Postnatal Pyschosis - does it come from the fear of being a bad mother?



Lisa Sorigini/ Behind Glass

What does my baby see?



Can we embody the baby's perspective through our ensemble's physicality?



Pina Bausch Rite of Spring

Do they see me failing?



How does this inner judgment manifest on stage?



Can we project the baby's POV?
Evoking Woman's fear that she is under surveillance ?



Conceal



Show