

Infertilities, A Curation

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Maria Novotny

Robin Silbergleid

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After their experiences with infertility, Elizabeth Horn, Maria Novotny, and Robin Silbergleid put together *Infertilities, A Curation*, a collection of essays, art, and poetry on the subject.

Prior to the COVID-19 shutdowns, the ART of IF (a play on Artificial Reproductive Technologies of Infertility) put on pop-up exhibitions of work by people experiencing infertility. Expanding those exhibitions from live events into a lasting one, this book counters the silence around infertility, which suggests that the issue is less pervasive than it is. With pieces from over 60 contributors from diverse backgrounds, the book captures myriad ways of expressing feelings surrounding infertility.

These contributors visualize and relate their feelings with compelling rawness. They correct words in use in the public sphere, including “implanting” and “embryo,” in the context of personal experiences, raising awareness around misconstrued concepts. And the book’s delicate page layouts, with art and poetry placed between essays and blank pages between sections, gives space to each piece’s unique sensitivities. There are artist statements alongside the book’s sculptures, mixed media projects, comics, and paintings too.

Herein, personal anecdotes become objects for public witness. As they are treated seriously as art, the pieces issue serious messages and demand empathetic responses. Many feature eggs, wombs, and children, but several make use of the equipment and medication used in in-vitro treatments to comment on the experience of loss and feelings of displacement. There’s coverage of mistreatment in doctors’ offices and in encounters with pregnant women. While many of the entries are raw, angry, and sad, comics and poems are present to lightening effect too. The result is a developed dialogue between the viewer and their own body and thoughts, in harmony with the self-reflective works presented.

Grown out of support groups, *Infertilities, A Curation* is an interactive artistic collection that nurtures healing and acknowledges pain.

MARI CARLSON (September / October 2023)

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