

Narrissa Wheatley

This D/Artaphact Comprises of a 3-page clay-journal. It was created in response to the emotions i felt, being unable to find willing mother participants for my PhD inquiry into the 'joys of mothering autistic children'. Not knowing how to deal with these feelings, I turned to research-creation thinking and practice and visual-diarying to make sense of these happenings.

Title- *Aches and strains; working through clay*

Aches and Strains; A Clay-Journal 8/08/22

I advertised for participants. Come! Look! Joy!
I try my best to entice but...no one takes the offer.
Am I doing something wrong?

Comments appear on my Facebook post.
"I wouldn't use that word"
What...joy?
"I am not there yet"
oh

I readvertise again. 4, 5, 6 times- different pages,
different people.
Where are the mothers with joy in their bones,
open to sharing their stories?

I work the clay into my likeness and my son
wanders past. "Is that me"? He asks,
oblivious to the clay-mother physique.
I work my fingertips into the fat folds of my
clay-self and giggle.

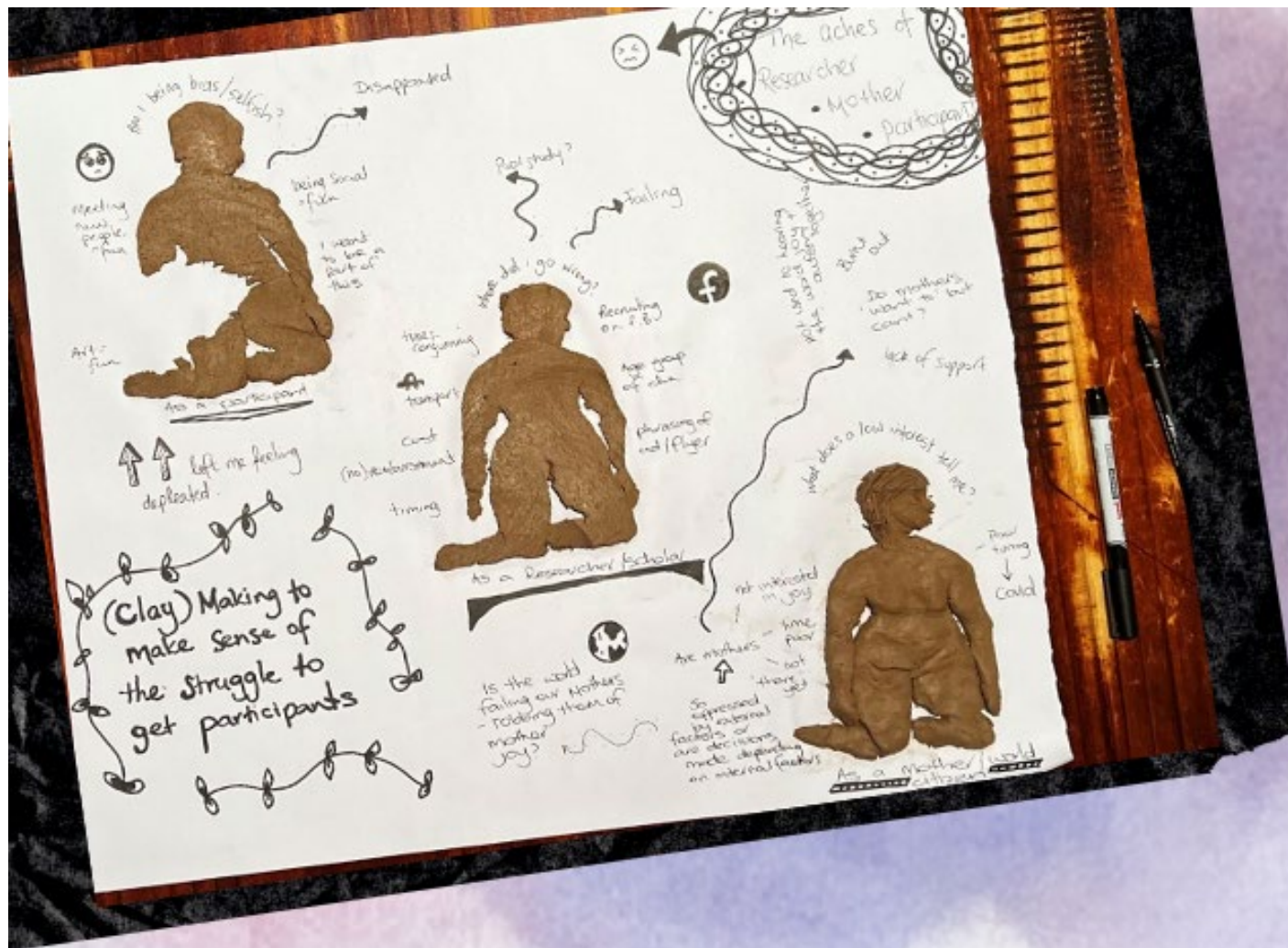


My son is a stick.
He does not equate the deliberate
(im)perfections of this
figure-making with his mother.
He tells me I don't look like that.
Then what do I look like? I ask.
'Love' he says matter of factly.

Thoughts grapple with the emotions in my
body.

I divide my clay-self with thread, trying to
make sense of my sadness





Mother- Researcher-Participant; each with ambition and hurt emotions.

I put words on the page but it doesn't dissolve my sadness.

6 days before my workshops starts and I have 1 participant.