

Train Talk: An Introduction is a collaboration by Myrel Chernick and Margaret Morgan, arising from presentations for *Mapping the Maternal: Art, Ethics and the Anthropocene*, colloquium organized by Nathalie S. Loveless and Sheena Wilson CoLab, Arts Based Research Studio, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada May 11-14, 2016

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Feminist art practice that articulates qualities of nurturance, sustenance, community and an ethics of care are more compelling than ever. In a world under the multiple threats of climate change and global conflicts that tear millions of people from their homes, feminism and feminist art may be gaining greater visibility and urgency. Morgan examines feminist art debates about the body and its representation through the lens of new materialism; while Chernick looks to the kind of feminist, maternalist, eco-feminist art that offers a way forward and an ethics for living.

Morgan argues that a new materialism casts a different light on earlier debates within feminist art practice that split feminist art into Constructionist versus Essentialist art practices. In Morgan's reading of these feminist art debates, the question of essentialism becomes moot: women are already essentialized by global misogyny and those feminist artists once criticized for their 'essentialism' can be viewed as more relevant than ever, especially in the US, the government of which, under the 45th president, feels like patriarchy run amok.

Chernick ruminates on the limitations of and possibilities for change in the Anthropocene and considers the question of how to lead an ethical life: Small and large practices of kindness, care and feminist mothering are models for behavior, both within art and at large. Close readings of the work of several maternalist, eco-feminist artists provide examples of art making that takes the ethics of care to the public sphere.

In a conversation located in and around Documenta 14 in Kassel, Germany in July 2017, Morgan and Chernick reflect on the absence/presence of maternal work in the exhibition and various iterations of the art world. They assess their own lives and histories in relation to this work, while covering the body as material, eco-feminism, and questions of an ethics of care. In conclusion, they suggest strategies for moving forward with one's art and life in the Anthropocene.