

HESSE FLATOW

Cascone, Sarah. "My Practice Looks Very Different Today": 15 Artist-Mothers on Balancing Work and Family After a Year Like No Other." *Artnet News*. Online. January 4, 2021.

artnet news

People

'My Practice Looks Very Different Today': 15 Artist-Mothers on Balancing Work and Family After a Year Like No Other

We spoke with artists from around the US and the world.

Sarah Cascone, January 4, 2021



Madeline Donahue in her studio. Photo courtesy of Madeline Donahue.

The events of 2020 turned the world upside down for everyone. But the burden of life in lockdown has predominantly fallen on women, and on mothers in particular, with many pressured to leave the workforce entirely to focus on childcare while schools are virtual, relying on a husband's typically higher income.

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For many artist mothers, especially those who already work from home studios, this issue has shaped their experiences of the pandemic, limiting their studio time as they struggle to adapt to new roles as full-time teacher, chef, maid, nurse, and playmate.

The situation, with its expanded caregiving demands, only adds to the professional disadvantages mothers who are artists already find themselves facing.

We spoke to 15 artist-mothers about their experiences during the pandemic, the challenges of stay-at-home parenting, and how they've achieved some sort of balance between their dual identities as artist and mother heading into 2021.

Madeline Donahue, Brooklyn



Madeline Donahue and her daughter Twyla, age four, glaze ceramics. Photo courtesy of Madeline Donahue.

As lockdown began my mom was in Brooklyn with us helping out with my newborn. My now four-and-a-half year old daughter was in preschool. I was a ceramic resident at Artshack Brooklyn, skipping with glee as I walked the few blocks to the ceramic studio every morning.

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That all changed with the lockdown. The ceramic studio shut down, and I couldn't go to my painting studio in Bushwick. Though our apartment is spacious, we have no outdoor space.

We decided to head up to my husband's parents' house in Connecticut. What we thought would be a couple of weeks turned into a six-month stay. For a while we had three grandparents helping out.

My husband has cooked every meal since March. I can't even cook a single dinner without burning it to carbon. Something about having two kids, I've lost any ability to make food.

It *is* very difficult to make work. I'm tired. But I do feel like I have had more time to make work because I am not commuting to my studio. I found a way to work with my kids around. I simplified my practice to drawing and ceramics. I bought a kiln in Connecticut so I could continue my ceramic work. I've taken advantage of the outdoors and really enjoyed making ceramics with the backyard birds. I am now attached to my kiln and am desperate to find a way to have one for myself now that we are back in Brooklyn.

Responses have been edited and condensed for clarity.



Sarah Cascone

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