

Linda Hughes Bakke

## Photographs

The mysticism of fertility is powerfully altered and geared for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Fertility's utilization by procreating men and women is increasingly set to a schedule that suits goals and lifestyle rather than the urgency of biology. Rituals are modernized, although the female body still follows the ancient determinate of the moon's cycle. Technology attempts to increase the odds. When folkloric superstitious and basic modern means fail then the attempts to achieve fertility in the technological age can take on a surprising number of forms.

As a woman nearing the end of her own cycle of fertility, I have listened to my peers and their plans or solutions to secure their chances of bearing a child. Some plans seem reasonable, within the realms of possibility, and others take on mythic proportions. However each situation plays out, I am always struck by the deep desire of these women to bear a child by almost any means necessary.

Each plan, each solution, as they were told to me, slowly conjured a desire to create accompanying allegorical visual narratives. Parable is not the goal. I hope to bring a delicate, graceful and deliberate examination of fertility to the contemporary discussion of family.

In some of the vignettes offered in my photographs I give over to whimsy and have created mythical hybrids. Some are inspired by stories from mythology and others play with the notion of the primal, unwitnessed scene as the exotic. Some are posed as a question: in the future what kind of precautions will a mother, faced with an altered climate, have to take? A mother, bearing clear markers of decay and perhaps a deepening distance from self, is desperate for children, regardless if they are human, a modern Lilith. The future holds more: a more direct narrative of in vitro fertilization, the varied processes, the welcome and in some cases, not so welcome results.

I call this series the Mythic Mother series.

Mythic Mother begins with women and fertility. From this vast and varied subject a natural course is followed into an investigation and deconstruction of the populist definition of marriage and to an effort to represent a more humane definition of family and nurturing. This part of the series will lead me into the community at large. Creating in collaboration, capturing on pixel-oid, how my subjects' definitions of the aforementioned might look.