

**STILLP • INT**  
A MAGAZINE IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

# A STUDY OF BARE HANDS

## – FASHION EDITORIAL –

### RASHIDA TAYLOR



Model: Motana Joseph. Photography: Fiona Ibanichuka

Tenderness rang everywhere in new motherhood. In curves of babies, in being stitched together, heart breaking open. The world was suddenly, impossibly tenuous, soft, strong.

*When I saw them  
This little miracle  
That lived inside me  
Moved inside me  
And spoke in breaths only meant for me  
When after 8 hours of deep and painful soul gathering  
They finally arrived  
I knew the world had changed forever.*

There's an unwavering softness that motherhood unlocked within me. A new experience of patience. I want her to know that as much as I can teach, I am equally learning more... from her. I want her to feel this as much as she does her heartbeat.

*illegal tender*

*to mother in these times is*

*to tend to an Other (by definition a 'not you')*

*is to M(Other) in these times*

*to practice care without expectation of payment*

*with no guarantee of return*

*with contractions*

*without a contract*

*To M(Other) in these times*

*is to welcome the children who arrive empty-handed*

*to cherish life birthed simply for itself (not yet to grind, produce, pay)*

*to hold that life and let those hands remind you how you too need to be held*

*to recognise empty as another name for heaven*

*to know the illegally tender of non-contractual love*

*to M(Other) in these times*

*is a study of bare hands*

*is the practice of a wild illegal tender*

My experience of pregnancy, giving birth and being a new mum to my son have really taught me how to trust my body and its innate ability to expand, share, protect, and persist. My body has really shown me how to love unconditionally.

*We set you down on the living room rug*

*eating our deli sandwiches in silence*

*gazing down at a still unfamiliar face.*

*We were unsure what to do next exactly,*

*yet already nostalgic for this moment in the dark.*

*Our parents felt the same visceral tug thirty years ago,*

*and there we were. Tears welling; awestruck at your newness*

*and time's relentlessness.*

To mother is to tether one's self to other life. She, a returning spirit that I housed simply for a while, a child I nursed and nourish: it was an epiphany in that moment her spirit alighted within me. And now, blessing and burden, unforgiving weight of souls and bodies that we make supple and fragile and raw, us all always unfolding, delicate, wounded.

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*Due to institutional racism, black mothers are five times more likely to die in childbirth than white mothers. Read more and get free resources to support your or someone else's birth [here](#).*

*Words in order of appearance by Marie Gernes, Barby Asante, Remi Sade, Foluke Taylor, Montana Joseph, Molly Vasich, Anne Marie Wirth Cauchon*

*Gathered by Rashida Taylor*

[Barby Asante](#) is a London based artist, curator, and educator. Her collaborative and performative works are concerned with the politics of place, space, identity and the histories and legacies of colonialism.

*Marie Gernes*, PhD, is a researcher and lecturer in Education at the University of Iowa.

[Montana Joseph](#) is a trainee art therapist and illustrator based in London.

[Remi Sadé](#) is a creative. A celebrated voice on topics such as social economics, politics, race, gender, sexuality, and parenting across various platforms. Her work is mainly presented in a style which allows for her strong anthropological perspectives to be understood. Remi finds the documentation of many people to be vital in her work. She does this through the mediums of writing and podcasting.

[Foluke Taylor](#) is a psychotherapist and writer living in London. With black feminisms providing the ground and ethical steer, she explores writing as a relational, creative, psycho-political therapeutic. Foluke teaches at the Metanoia Institute and is involved in a range of transdisciplinary collaborations and experiments. Her forthcoming work *Unruly Therapeutic: Practices in Living Room* is being published by W.W. Norton.

*Molly Vasich* is an administrator and instructor of English in the Minneapolis Public Schools.

*Anne Marie Wirth Cauchon* is Editor-in-Chief of *Stillpoint Magazine*, and Creative Director of the PrairieCare Institute's Center for Applied Psychoanalysis, the mother of two, a PhD candidate in English and Comparative Literature at the University of Minnesota, and the author of the novel *Nothing*.

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*Rashida Taylor* is Fashion Editor of *Stillpoint Magazine*, a writer, and stylist based in London, encouraged by artistic expressions of the Black experience in all its various forms.

*Fiona Giali Ibanichuka* is a visual artist and digital curator from London. She is the founder of TBJ, an online art review platform.

*Additional credits:*

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