# (M)OTHERHOOD ART AND LIFE

TATE ST. IVES SYMPOSIUM

APRIL 21 & 22 2023

With Katy Norris, Curator, Exhibitions, Tate St Ives and Melanie Stidolph, Curator Public Programme, Tate St Ives.

*The event is programmed in partnership with the* [*Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art*](https://www.paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk/)*.*

Opening presentation: The Last Portrait, Lucy Willow

Synopsis

The Last Portrait addresses grief, mourning and melancholia as perpetual state of searching. Searching for what has been lost. I find it a heightened psychic state that seeks particular spaces to find expression. Much of my work as an artist is drawn from the metaphor of working with the unfathomable depth of dark places such as black holes, the Hadal zone in the ocean and an ancient well in a Jack Perry’s (1990-2006) memorial garden in Lamorna. This presentation will focus on the space within an image titled *The Last Portrait* that opens up as a portal into another dimension. I will discuss this image as Hyperobject in relation Timothy Morton theory on the unfathomable space that inconceivable objects and events can give way to.

Tate Gallery Text, from website

<https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-st-ives/barbara-hepworth-art-and-life/motherhood>

Inspired by the major exhibition and publication [*Barbara Hepworth: Art and Life*](https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-st-ives/barbara-hepworth-art-and-life) this event focuses on under-represented perspectives on motherhood to consider how this might affect the making and understanding of art works.

How do we consider narratives about art through experiences of motherhood that include grief and childlessness not by choice?

This discursive event will feature artists, writers and art historians sharing stories and perspectives on how we interpret art through an artists' biography and how we are enabled or challenged in bringing our own experience as audiences to it.

This event will allow time for conversation with audiences and for spending time in the galleries. We appreciate there will be a range of life experiences in the room, which the speakers and host staff are respectful towards. This event will bring together a diversity of positions around creativity and motherhood, being childless not by choice, and grief and loss around motherhood to reflect on how we encounter art.

*Speakers include: Pragya Agarwal, Jody Day, Kerri ní Dochartaigh, Hettie Judah, Holly Slingsby, Lucy Willow and Sophie J Williamson. Please see the speakers' bios for more information.*

**Lucy Willow** works in sculpture and drawing to create installations that tell stories of loss and grief. *At Sea Again,* 2018 is a memorial artwork video installation depicting the scattering of her son’s ashes off the coast of Cornwall in 2016. In 2020 Lucy set up the project DUST, which contained a collection of broken artefacts, inviting visitors to tell their stories and share experiences of grief through the lens of the objects displayed. *The Dust of Objects* (2022) was presented at the conference *Death and Culture 4* at York University. Published work includes *The last Portrait*, in *Malady and Mortality: Illness, Disease and Death in Literary and Visual Culture* (2016).