

Fika Midwifery Commissions a New Painting by Renowned Portraitist Julia Bottoms

Artwork Highlights Later-Stage Breastfeeding

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

August 22, 2024

Fika Midwifery at The Coit House recently commissioned renowned artist Julia Bottoms to create a painting for its birth center. This project is a collaboration between Fika Midwifery, portraitist Julia Bottoms, and art consultancy C.S.1 Curatorial Projects. Fika Midwifery, the only accredited birth center in Western New York, has a deep commitment to reproductive justice, antiracism, and providing the best possible health care and wellness experience for the widest range of clients. An unveiling and reception of the new commission will happen later this fall at a date to be determined.

Julia Bottoms is a visual artist based out of Buffalo, NY working primarily in oils and acrylics. Her work often addresses the topic of race and identity as it relates to one's position in mainstream culture. She views her portraits as an opportunity to counter the harmful stigmas and stereotypes imposed by popular media. Her work is currently on view at the Buffalo AKG Art Museum in the memorial exhibition for May 14. It was featured in *The New York Times*, *The Art Newspaper*, and *TIME* magazine.

Bottoms' work in recent years has shifted to focus on motherhood, as she is a new mother of a two-and-a-half-year old. Numerous group portraits in her recent survey *A Light Under the Bushel* honor mothers. "To me, being a mother and an artist is one singular identity," says Bottoms. "Both aspects involve the creation of something beautiful: a painting, a life, a story that will one day transcend your own. To bring life into this world means committing to beautiful uncertainty. This is a commitment that is required of any act of creativity."

The artwork will highlight later-stage breastfeeding as this is an issue important to the health of women and children. Only 17 % of all breastfeeding mothers continue to breastfeed beyond a year. The team hopes people will see in this artwork the beauty and positive effects of continuing to breastfeed children beyond infancy. Also, they hope to normalize later-stage breastfeeding for people who are unaccustomed to it. They especially want to reach women of color, who statistically, are less likely to breastfeed beyond a year.

"Having this portrait at Fika will tell our clients that extended breastfeeding is possible," says midwife and Fika owner Maura Winkler, "even if they might not be seeing it amongst their family or peers or in their communities regularly."



C.S.1 Curatorial Projects' President and Founder Claire Schneider encouraged Fika to connect with one of their clients as a model for the commission. Challis Graham has had two children with Fika and is the first person in her living heritage to breastfeed. Bottoms' portrait will document Challis breastfeeding her sixteen-month-old Zuri.

"I'm excited about the effect this investment can have. Commissioned art in the business space is unfortunately not the norm," says Schneider, "yet its impact can be profound. I applaud Maura for her vision to support artists and her clients in this way. And I'm thrilled for the opportunity to work with Julia at a synergistic time in her career and to produce something very rarely, if at all depicted, in the history of art."

About Fika Midwifery

Fika Midwifery at the Coit House offers orientation sessions for any member of the community who wishes to learn more about midwifery-model birth center care and tour Buffalo's oldest home. Register online at www.coithousebuffalo.com IG: @fikamidwifery

Fika Midwifery supports physiological birth and provides attentive partnership throughout gestation, the postpartum period, and beyond. Building on the belief that midwifery is an art as well as a science, Fika is invested in supporting the arts and craftsmanship at all levels. The thoughtfully designed space provides clients a warm, comforting, homelike environment within a modern medical facility.

Their evidence-based information model follows the typical prenatal wellness care schedule and offers the same lab work, ultrasounds, and genetic screening and testing, including non-invasive prenatal testing options. They also provide in-house ultrasonography to all members of the Buffalo community, offering a family-centered experience, welcoming partners and children to participate in a first peek at the baby.

About Julia Bottoms

Bottoms' most notable projects include a collaboration with the Buffalo AKG Art Museum (formerly known as the Albright Knox) for *The Freedom Wall*; the *Mamie Smith Memorial Mural* in Cincinnati, Ohio; her most recent exhibition *A Light Under the Bushel* at the Burchfield Penney Art Center; and *Before And After, Again* at the AKG Art Museum. Her work has been featured in *EBONY*, *The New York Times*, *The Public, Buffalo Spree*, the *Challenger, Hyperallergic, The Art Newspaper*, HBO's *Insecure*, online through AfroPunk, and most recently in *TIME* magazine. Additionally, her work is in the permanent collections of the Burchfield Penney Art Center, the Flint Institute of Art, and the Buffalo AKG Art Museum.

Www.JuliaBottoms.com

IG: @Julia Bottoms Art



About C.S.1 Curatorial Projects

C.S.1 Curatorial Projects is committed to bringing to life positive, joyful art experiences that help people think differently and find a bigger view of the world. President and Founder Claire Schneider's passion for site-specific context and immersive experiences began with successful exhibitions at major institutions such as the Buffalo AKG Art Museum (*Extreme Abstraction*), Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art (*Architecture + Art*), and Ackland Art Museum (*More Love: Art, Politics, and Sharing since the 1990s*).

www.cs1projects.org IG: cs1projects.org

For Images & Further Follow-up

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