

The Motherlode

Logline: A defiant, process-oriented story of agency and of resources, Motherlode explores the unique and visually captivating world of people working in the arts who identify as mothers (and mo-theys) across cultures, diverse perspectives, and various creative practices.

I. Intro

- No visuals, just a cacophony of voices all layered describing how hard the juggle of 2020 was is layered over a black screen. Other voices filter out and a single voice is heard saying “there really wasn’t much time for anything else! Just trying to survive...”
- Fade into Jennida (J) and Zahra (Z) sitting at the dining room table with homework. Zahra reads a couple of lines from her short story The Water Droplet.
- J and Z walk into an empty soundstage. Z is running and dancing in spotlights. J (very) briefly describes her rocky transition into motherhood and that Zahra has been in many of her short films ever since...
- Overlay a clip or two of RVA G40 visuals and some photos of Z in a stroller from that summer’s work process.
- “I guess I just want to know how other folks are doing it... and show my daughter that it CAN be done!” over quick shots packing gear into the car to head out and find out

II. Actions and words flowing through life together with the kids... I meet up with different creatives who invite me into their world to participate in some kind of process related to what they do or who they are...

- Lil building giant cardboard puppets, discussing being a non-binary mo-theys parallel edited with footage of the Halloween puppet parade
- Angela A making tamales with the kids while discussing the concept of making a documentary and the struggles and work/life out of balance and LA vs rural midwestern college towns, and sometimes we need solitude and a break from family duties to think straight for a second
- Sonali and J work to fix a treehouse (and do some yard work in Virginia), discussing motherhood and queerness
- Belinda shows J how to make jam, discussing both being raised as a 3rd culture kid
- Amenda works with kids on a dance production with her Manibus and we discuss working collaboratively and trusting intuition and relying on others in the process
- Tao wrangling ducks at sunset on a homestead, and we chat about raising multiracial children and discussing graphic design principals
- Marie takes J on a tour of her news station and chats about the struggles of being a single mom
- Lauren teaches J how to make pigment out of rocks and artist-in-residencies (not being conducive for working mothers) parallel edit of hiking in NJ
- Leslie and J shoot photos with the kids in the Santa Cruz Mountains and discuss working with our kids

- Kate shows J how to blow glass parallel edited with hiking in NZ. Not having the cash for babysitters... but still, all the money in the world doesn't mean I don't enjoy having my kid with me...
- Alev and I (along with Belinda) installing an exhibition with our kids running wild, discussing the lack of childcare availability and balancing space with kids. Parallel edited with Alev working in Ankara.
- Lejing at an opening at CICA in S Korea, comparing having family helping take care of kids, Lejing's mom with the kids (and J not having either parent alive now, admitting some jealousy)
- Cora teaches J, Clara, Clark, and Z how to sew a garment and we talk about time as a terrible teacher
- Alex and I make sushi and reminisce about shooting a film on location, discuss leaving our kids/families at home to do this (overlaid with footage of us running through the countryside), and the discussion of resources—no money, no time is no fun.
- Anna packing for an international move to Montreal, while producing a live musical (parallel edit) discussing race as a major element in the musical and confronting society. Anna performing in Montreal after the move
- Angela R. shows us how she makes bread for her business Flo Dough while discussing the importance of art history (and teaching it)
- Amber shows J around the museum she curates and talks about being new to motherhood and what changes in a perspective when you become a mother
- Jo and J walking through Berlin with the kids parallel edited with one of Jo's videos, we discuss the lack of inclusivity in art spaces and resources as a SUBJECT.
- Nina shows J a couple of daily processes on her Connecticut farm with the kids running around, they talk about putting things you care about into your art, and how you hope your kids see it and make sense of it—and of food systems in the black community
- Heide teaching kids (including Z and Lilly) how to paint using pagan rituals with inks and fire, discussing how much screen time is too much for kids
- Heide teaching J how to ride a motorcycle, discussing late capitalism and its role in the arts

III. And what if I DON'T?! J briefly chats with 3 female artists who didn't have kids and why space needs to be made for women to just be whomever they frick'n ARE. What do we miss when we don't make space for other perspectives?

IV. Conclusions are inconclusive. There is no wrong way to eat a Reece's. Just stop fucking with mothers and support them for chrissakes!

- Wrong answers only blooper reel: (VERY fast montage of everyone just shouting out shocking hypotheticals like—"just throw the playpen on the fire escape for a while")
- Many of the artists featured in the doc come together to construct a mobile artist residency. They build a structure that is family-friendly and comes together to make some collaborative projects with the kids obviously present.... (This happens in Greensboro, NC with support from UNC-Greensboro (of space).