

05 Sep 2025

Ei Arakawa-Nash
Non-Gestational Co-Nursing
September 05th — November 1st 2025

Galerie Max Mayer is delighted to announce the opening of its new gallery space in Berlin, debuting with *Non-Gestational Co-Nursing*, a solo exhibition by **Ei Arakawa-Nash**.

Known for their performances, installations, and collaborative scenarios with artists, musicians, writers, and art historians, **Arakawa-Nash** engages with the legacies of postwar avant-gardes, including Gutai, Jikken Kōbō, Fluxus in Japan/USA/Europe, and New York performance art from the 1960s to the 2000s. Their practice subverts the repetition of art histories, the commodification of experience, and the desire for authenticity.

Arakawa-Nash's third show with the gallery presents a body of work that offers personal and social reflection on the artist's new role as a parent. Central to the exhibition is a digitized 16mm film, showing the artist and their partner nursing their children with a chest-feeding device designed for non-gestational parents. By filming various ways of feeding babies, the work challenges conventional ideas of nurturing and presents their own approach to bonding. Where earlier performances such as *WEWORK BABIES* (Artist Space, New York 2019) and *Don't Give Up* (Kunsthalle Friart, Fribourg 2023) engaged with the theme symbolically, the current approach is grounded in lived experience with the artist's own twins.

In dialogue with the film, the exhibition features four LED paintings that reference early androgynous and performative works by Jürgen Klauke, a pioneering figure in postwar German Body Art. Klauke's practice in the 70s investigated the mode of patriarchy in Germany, using his own body to question social norms around gender, sexuality, and appearance. Arakawa-Nash uses this historical precedent to support their ideal of queer and inclusive parenting. Incorporating a prosthetic chest-feeding device developed by a Japanese duo (Taikan Hoshino & Osamu Takahashi), the works interrogate fixed roles and gendered expectations surrounding the feeding of babies. Syringes and nasogastric tubes filled with fake baby formula connect the act of nourishment and the question of artistic ancestors. *Non-Gestational Co-Nursing* offers a first glimpse into the thematic directions **Ei Arakawa-Nash** is exploring for their upcoming solo presentation at the Japan Pavilion during the Venice Biennale 2026.



Artist's Comments

I do not assume other roles, I don't want to be a woman or any other person, and I'm certainly not striving for unity and divine perfection - if anything it's the "happy hybrid". It's still possible to find your own identity through that of others - a raising of consciousness, a reaching out for the limits - and with a little luck perhaps even beyond.

Jürgen Klauke (interviewed by Peter Weibel), 1994

I love both of my children, Soh & Yunta, but let me talk about just where Yunta's name comes from because it relates to Germany, where this show takes place. Yunta is named after my teacher Jutta Koether. This was a deliberate naming choice because the Chinese character for yun is 弓, meaning bow, and ta is 太, meaning "great" or "extensive." It's a very boyish and masculine meaning, even though it sounds cute in Japanese. I wanted my son to have a German female name. Yunta can be a hybrid name from another culture and another gender. So he has many liberties to grow up with his own name. I am grateful that Jutta has been in my life, and my performance practice owes her a great deal.

I asked Jutta, while I was an inquisitive student, where her performance influence came from. This was 20 years ago. Jürgen Klauke and Michael Buthe's names popped out among a few other less-known Cologne figures, such as Peter Rech, who influenced her teaching. This week, when I spoke with her again, she recalled a performance by a performance artist named Mike Heinz (who appears to have no online presence). When the performance began, the door was locked. A landline in the space suddenly rang, and Jutta, in her 20s, was in the audience. She answered the phone, and Klauke was on the other side. Hallo? Then, Klauke seemed to ask young Jutta to take off her clothes! She laughed out loud, and it sounded hilarious.

I became a parent 9 months ago, and my partner Forrest and I have to come up with a mode of parenting by learning by doing. This show is a rather small queer gesture, but I drew a shape of my ideal nurturing visions. What are they? I searched for the early influence of my teacher's performance attitudes. It was neither Beuys nor Kippenberger, although they are all part of relationships. I am planning to make art with my children until they are around 3 years old. It's weird to structure such a thing, but that is the age when most adults' earliest recalled memories are formed. I would like my performance to attempt to capture some aspect of the twins' unrecorded early years.

Ei Arakawa-Nash

