Curtain Razors shared the following *Consultations on Care* in 2023
as part of their Balancing Act Level UP! Pilot Project.

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Curtain Razors
Consultations on Care

Connected to Curtain Razors' Level UP! Compassion Fund Project, Artistic Associate Johanna Bundon consulted with three guiding artists who supported the project: Fritz Pino, Curtain Razors Board Member; Pete Kytwayhat, Artist and single dad; and Erin Goodpipe, Artist and new parent. The following are Johanna's reflections from these rich conversations.

Consultation 1: Fritz Pino, Curtain Razors Board Member

Dr. Fritz Pino's research focuses on the lives and experiences of historically marginalized communities, particularly those who identify as LGBTQ, racialized immigrants, and older adults. She is interested in examining how they navigate the complexities and contradictions of everyday life in the margins as reflected through their bodily performances, affect and emotions, and personal desires. Theoretically, her work is informed by critical intersectionality approaches, particularly from a queer diasporic lens, which pays significant attention to the impact of transnational migration, nation-state of belonging, and normative discourses.

We talked about conference that Fritz instigated in the summer of 2022 through the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Regina focused on practices of care. I heard the story of how the conference came to be. We shared stories about care in relationship to institutions and care in relationship to "deliverables", deadlines, and reporting. We talked about grant writing and reporting as a process of personal reflection and how to practice self-care and reciprocity in formal processes initiated by institutions.

Consultation 2: Pete Kytwayhat, Artist and Single Dad

We debriefed about past experiences working with Globe Theatre and their attempts to accommodate parent-artists in a creation process. The takeaways were that each parent does things differently and that, as artists, we each have a desire to be engaged in conversation about how we want to integrate parenting and our creative process. Parents know best what the kids need and the environment that they want to be in.

We talked about school-aged kids and working when they are at school. We also imagined new schedules that would allow for some time when kids are at school to be at home and clean the house!

The desire for work time, integration, home life, errands in a balanced week.

Spend some time with my kids, split schedule weekdays and weekends to get some time at home and to tend the home.

Useful questions when considering a gig:
Is this a good fit for me?
Is this a good fit for my kid?
Is this a good fit for my energy and attention?

We talked about working independently and leading one's own projects, which means you can lead the schedule. But even then, sometimes, we don't remember we can do it differently.

We talked about parenting in public, being perceived as a parent is the most stressful thing. We called this "parenting in view".

How not having a kid in the art-making space can be better.

We reflected on what makes spaces kid-friendly.
We talked about having family close by, in the city, to be with kids. Or not having that if your family lives elsewhere.

We talked about paying for childcare, how it can formalize things and make it clearer, more transactional. Less personal and easier to address concerns or issues if they arise. Like, hiring a professional babysitter so that the agreement is clear.

How it's not conformable when someone looks after my child for free. It's more comfortable to pay someone because it's a big job being with kids.

We considered:
Situation A: Someone watches the kid at home. Cooking at home.
Situation B: Having the kid close to the process—in the space. Eating on the go.

The Economics of all of it …

We talked about how parents do magic in the background to make it all work.
How new parenting / young parenting interacts/correlates with artists trajectory …
Losing people from the industry at a phase if we don't accommodate their needs.

Employees should have access to resources.
Having cash on hand always ready to go to expedite to support needs.
So it's not a big ask, it's easy and fast.

We talked about time.
Time to participate in democracy / read a book / learn a language / exercise.
The demands of life.

Life / art integration in a big way.
Our desire to make meaningful art.

Having overlapped numerous times with Pete in art projects, it felt appropriate to ask Pete about his experience of being a parent-artist as I admire his way in the world.

Consultation 3: Erin Goodpipe, Artist and Parent

Erin is a new parent. We spoke about her experiences interacting in the world as a new mom, and considering how her recent experiences could help us further understand processes that work, and those that don't. This exchange happened in April 2023.

A few notes here:
Art is important for family life.
And family life is important for art.

Life doesn't stop when we step into creation processes.

How can we support one another by making it normal to talk about kinship and art.
It's not extra, it is the thing.

Circles, kin.

How we do a disservice to the artistic process when we don't invite children into the room.

How children's voices are integral to the work.

How it can be chaotic and rambunctious.

How can we ask for help?
How can we make spaces where we can ask for help?
It’s normal to need, it’s normal to need help.