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# Inertia

*identity at state of rest*

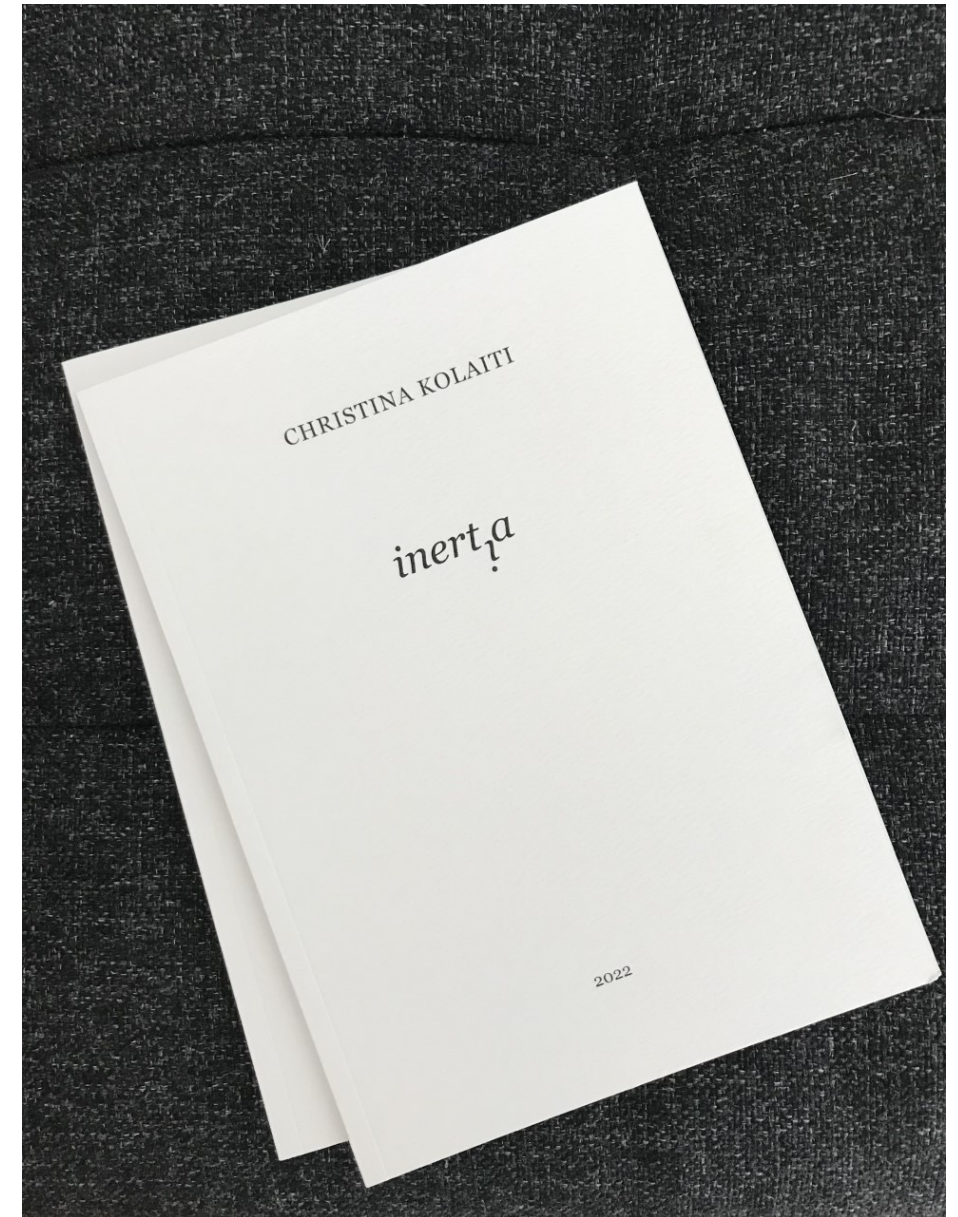
The early days of the post-birth experience have been described as the art of stillness, during which the female body slows down and sinks into stillness to respond to the infant's need for the mother to be with them.

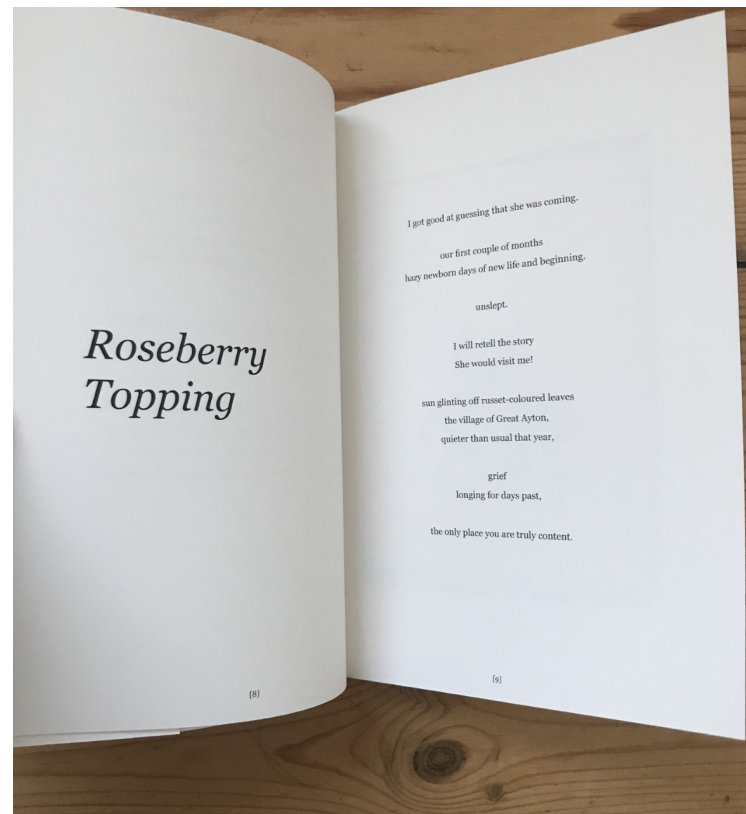
Frequent night awakenings to care for the newborn result in a kind of sleep inertia, where one exists in the transient state between sleep and awake. Such occurrences of stillness, sleeplessness and night-time solidarity provide a silent space for reflection and self-redefinition during the early days of motherhood.

This collection considers the transitional identity of the new mother as a symbolic form of inertia, which retains its state of rest in spite of being acted upon by external forces.

The complex dynamics of such forces become apparent in a series of visual artworks and poems. Placed side by side, words and images form a kind of curated dialogue, which just like mothers conversing with each other, unravels points of convergence and divergence in the breadth of maternal experience.

ISBN: 978-1-5272-9703-6





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CHRISTINA KOLAITI

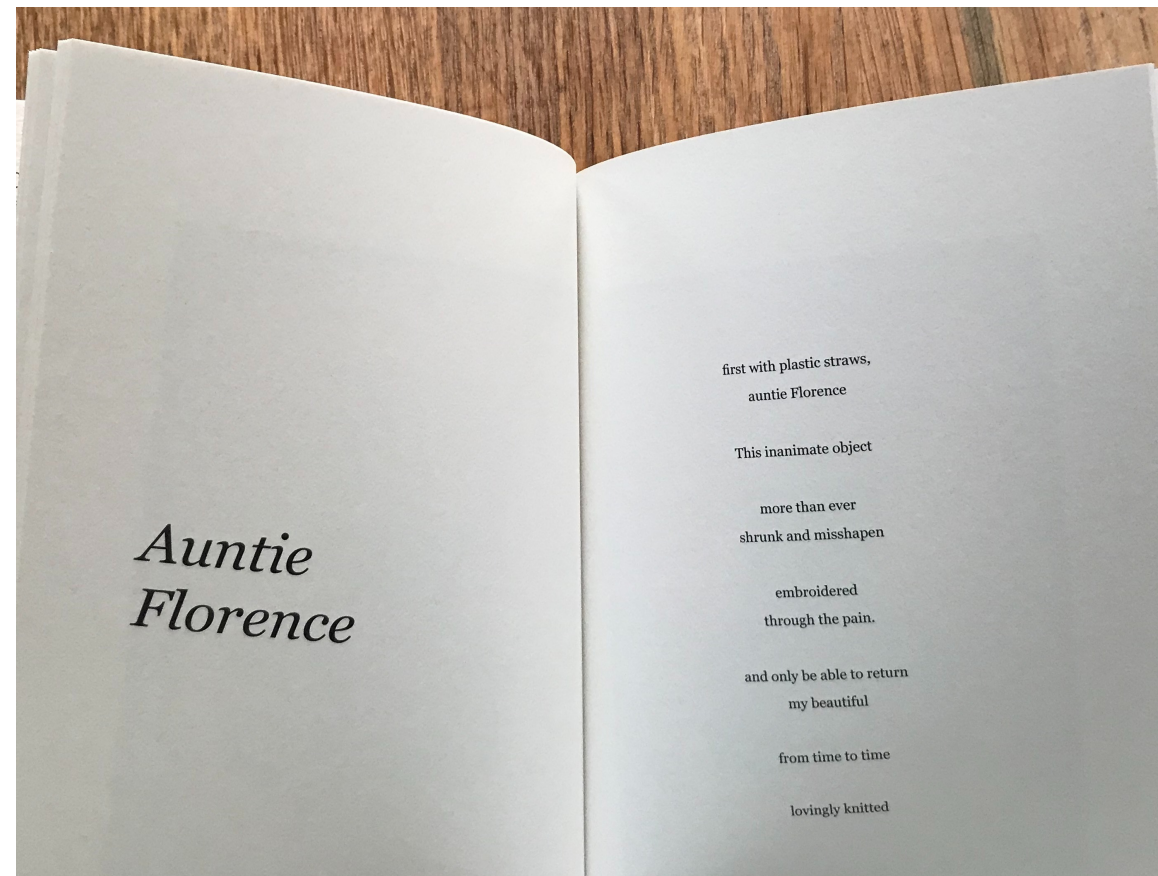
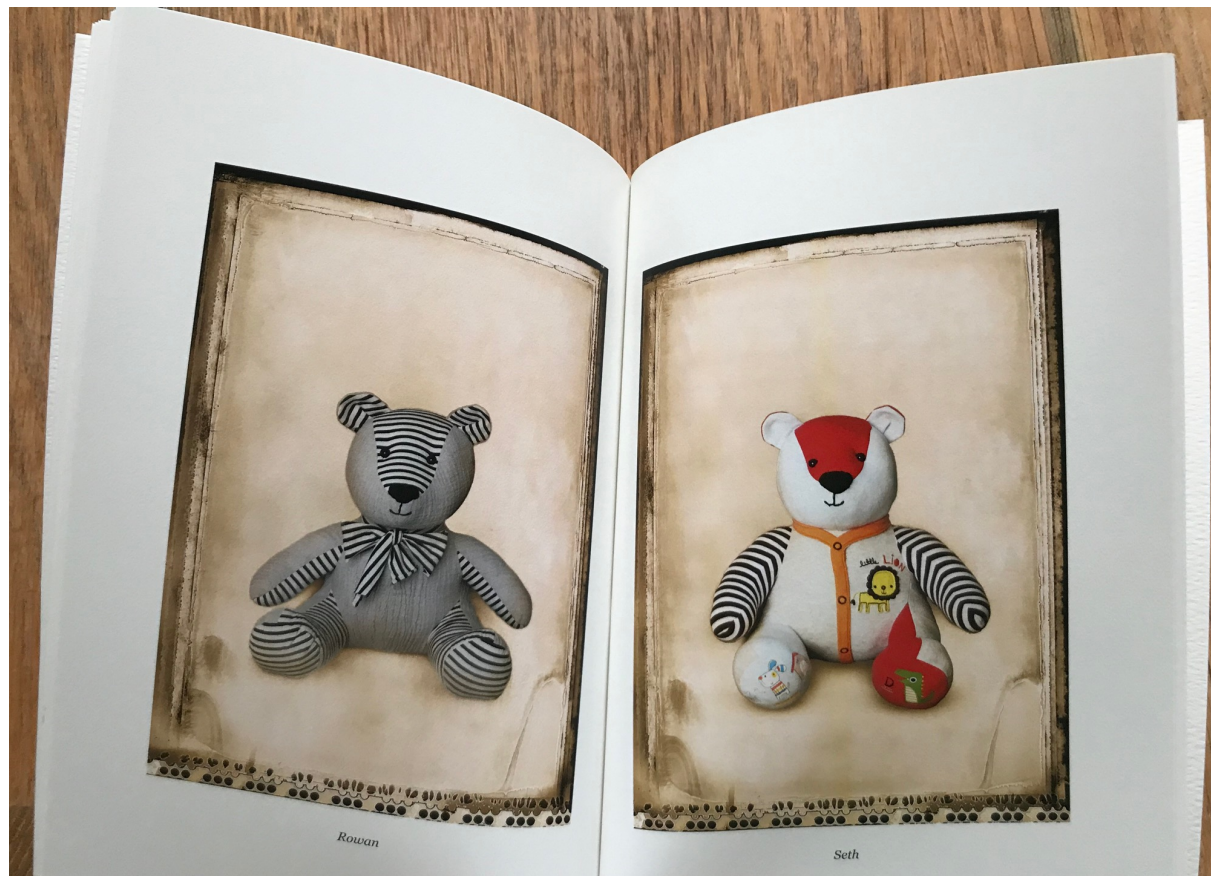
# inertia

*identity at state of rest*

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Copyright © Christina Kolaiti  
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Malton, North Yorkshire,  
YO17 6YA, United Kingdom



first with plastic straws,  
auntie Florence

This inanimate object

more than ever  
shrunk and misshapen

embroidered  
through the pain.

and only be able to return  
my beautiful

from time to time

lovingly knitted

ISBN 978-1-5272-9703-6



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# The Teddy Bear Cabinet

[32]

The *Teddy Bear Cabinet* features a series of sepia toned portraits of handcrafted teddy bears. The images resemble 19th century *cabinet cards*; an early form of portrait photography, which became associated with the family album. Often displayed in glass cabinets or exchanged between individuals, it established a practice of memory preservation through a physical object, the photograph.

Made from keepsakes such as baby clothes, muslins, pregnancy jumpers and baby blankets, the material presence of these treasured *memory bears*<sup>iii</sup> exhibits relatable narratives of nurturing in the elusive cabinet of stories of early motherhood.

*Roseberry Topping, The Moment of Becoming, The Other Side of The World, Auntie Florence, The Worst Mother and Lines Indent*, connect the experiences of twelve women unknown to each other, placing side by side words and phrases from the stories they transcribed about their early days of motherhood. This parataxis,<sup>iv</sup> uncoordinated and without the use of conjunctions, creates a pause in the poetic rhythm, which infers a *state of rest*. A moment of stasis, which diversifies the interpretative possibilities of the narrative flow, somewhat revealing the transient, fragmented, ambivalent, yet authentic nature of inertia.<sup>v</sup>

[33]

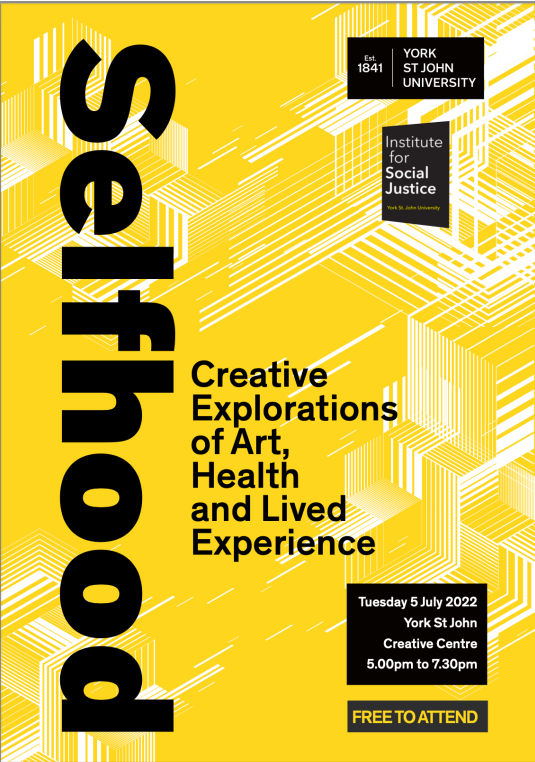
Book launch


Selfhood: *Creative Explorations of Art, Health and Lived Experience*

Event organized by the Institute for Social Justice

Creative Centre  
York St John University

July 5, 2022





## Christina Kolaiti Inertia: The Teddy Bear Cabinet

Christina Kolaiti is a senior lecturer in photography at York St John University. She is a visual artist whose interdisciplinary research collaborations with healthcare institutions have been recognised ‘for an outstanding contribution to the art and science of photography’ (rps.org). Her research activities have positioned the narrative properties of photographic portraiture as a form of reflective practice, within a diverse range of scientific and pedagogical contexts.

Christina’s current research challenges the conflicting landscape of early motherhood, as this is conveyed through social prescriptions, which interpret the body as a metaphor for self-worth and aim at controlling the mother-infant physicality. She will be presenting her project Inertia, which explores the transitional identity of the new mother during the early days of post-birth experience, through a series of visual narratives, artefacts, and collaborative poetry.

*The Teddy Bear Cabinet* [Exhibition]  
Creative Centre Atrium, 4th-7th July 2022



Research Presentation

Penning Parenthood:  
*Accounts of Early Parenthood*

Event organized by Professor  
Abi Curtis

Creative Centre  
York St John University

February 19, 2022



Nov 19

## Penning Parenthood: Accounts of Early Parenthood (Hybrid Workshop Event)

Join us for Penning Parenthood: Accounts of Early Parenthood through the Eyes of Those Who Have Experienced it First Hand.

By York St John University 983 followers [Follow](#)

### When and where

 **Date and time**  
Sat, 19 November 2022,  
14:00 – 16:00 GMT

 **Location**  
York St John University Lord  
Mayor's Walk York YO31 7EX

**About this event**

This event is aimed at new and experienced parents and carers of any sort. This event is a free flow event where people can wander in and out.

You will explore feelings about parenthood through writing and drawing at interactive station. We will provide materials to enable you to reflect on others' experiences, and your own. You can expect an interactive experience involving listening to a reading about the realities of parenthood given by another parent, and then participating in writing or artwork representing your own experiences.

**Speaker Bios:**

**Rachel Bower** is an award-winning writer from Bradford. She is the author of two poetry collections (These Mothers of Gods and Moon Milk) and a non-fiction book on literary letter. Her poems and stories have been widely published in literary magazines, including The London Magazine, The White Review, Magma and Stand. Rachel won The London Magazine Short Story Prize 2019/20 and the W&A Short Story Competition 2020. She has also been listed for the White Review Short Story Prize 2019, the RSL V.S. Pritchett Short Story Prize and the BBC Short Story Prize. She is currently editing an anthology with Simon Armitage (Faber & Faber).

**Caleb Klaces** is the author of the poetry collection *Away from Me* (2021) the novel *Fatherhood* (2019), which was longlisted for the Republic of Consciousness Prize, the poetry collection *Bottled Air* (2013), which won the Melita Hume Prize and an Eric Gregory Award, and two chapbooks, *All Safe All Well* (2011) and *Modern Version* (2018). He is Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing and English Literature at York St John University, and runs the York Centre for Writing Poetry Series.

**Dr Christina Kolaiti** is a Senior Lecturer in Photography at York St John University. She is a visual artist whose research has been based on interdisciplinary collaborations with healthcare institutions. For over a decade Kolaiti's research activity has positioned the narrative property of fine art photography within a diverse range of scientific and pedagogical contexts.

Her research profile includes exhibitions set within various hospital sites (for example, The Northern Surgery Skills Institute at Hexham General Hospital and The Royal College of Physicians in London). She has received research awards by The Arts and Humanities Research Council, The Arts Council England, York St John University and most notably, The Combined Royal Photographic Society and Royal Medical Colleges Medal in 2011, '[...] for an outstanding contribution to the advancement of medical photography.' (rps.org)