

# afterbirth

\af-tr-brth\ Function: noun Date: 1587

the placenta and fetal membranes that are expelled after delivery

# spectacular

\spek-ta-ky-lr\ Function: adjective Etymology: Latin spectaculum Date: 1682  
of, relating to, or being a spectacle : striking , sensational <a spectacular display of fireworks> — spec·tac·u·lar·ly adverb

Building on the conceptual foundations brought forth through the works of psychologist Jacques-Marie-Émile Lacan and artist/writer Mary Kelly this project considers the current state of birth (distribution and reception) in its captured and deliverable form and the shifting sensitivities and expectations indicated through an abundance of vernacular media/dialogue published online. This project considers questions regarding: transparency, power, sexuality, demystification, media induced [false] memory, attraction/repulsion, game inclinations, biological/virtual experiences, empathy, and our relationships with the “natural” world.

AfterBirth Spectacular is networked based art because it invites users to participate in a birthing process through interactive video accessible on the web. The intention is a visceral, interactive experience with a real, and intensely personal moment. A user can give birth too, interactively, forwards and backwards, using a scrubbing gesture.

## Motivations

1 : A YouTube keyword search for “live birth,” “birth,” “home birth” turns up thousands of relevant results. Women frequently publish themselves in the throws of labor on the internet for their friends, neighbors, and the whole world to see, share and comment on.

2 : I dont remember being born, but my son [b.2000] does. He saw it on video. Now he “remembers.” Is all this broadcasting changing the definition of memory?

Jessica Westbrook is an artist working with photography, video, language, and information design. Her projects explore desire, cues, cultural artifacts, and contradictory sensations that vacillate between fortune and catastrophe. Increasingly semantic in nature and modular in form, she considers her work a section of visual language culled from a complex matrix of assets, reconfigured and repurposed per space and time. Westbrook received her MFA from Tyler School of Art and has exhibited internationally. In 2005 she established SEED, an artist collective based in Tennessee. In 2009 she began collaborating in TEH, an art and technology research group with special interests in simulation and interactivity. Westbrook's recent creative research has lead to her work being screened at the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington DC, publication in *Static*, the *Journal of the London Consortium* and a solo feature on Chicago's [artstorage.org](http://artstorage.org). She is Assistant Professor of Art at UT Chattanooga where she teaches courses in both the photography/media arts and graphic design concentrations.

Adam Trowbridge is focused on artistic research based on communication and community in the fields of theater and performance; algorithmic, generative and instruction art; and video. Materially, his recent work has been in the form of theater, performance, computer-driven installation and projected video. He received his MFA from the University of Illinois Chicago in the fields of Electronic Visualization/Responsive Art. He holds a BFA in painting and sculpture from the University of Central Florida, where he studied under sculptor Jóhann Eyfells. His video and sound work has been featured nationally and internationally including Anthology Film Archives, NYC; Pleasure Dome, Toronto, Ontario; Gallery Aferro, Newark, NJ; MicroCineFest, Baltimore, MD; and Square Eyes Festival, The Netherlands. Adam teaches History of Time-Based Media and Video Art at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.