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HOST: This Mother's Day probably looked a lot different for a lot of us. Whether you're missing your mom because you can't visit her, because you've never met her, or because you've lost her. These are some of our Walrus Talks that remind us of the powerful role mothers play [breath] and how their love can shape our future. First up, writer Lisa Moore talks about conversations between mothers and daughters - the kind we can't forget. This is from The Walrus Talks the Art of Conversation.

Lisa Moore: My mother was one of those mothers who gave this advice for just about every problem that came up: "Remember who you are." It was enigmatic advice, a kind of Zen koan, a riddle. I wasn't anybody at all. I think she meant, "Don't get sidetracked," or "Stay true," or "Imagine who you want to be and then don't forget what you want."

One day we are sitting on the edge of the bathtub together, and I am nine, and I don't know why we're on the edge of the bathtub. My mother has a children's book with cardboard pages on her lap, which is strange because we're already into chapter books. It begins innocuously enough with flowers. First flowers, then birds, and then some bees. It seems too young for me, but it's a fun game being alone together, and what is my mother up to? I can read by myself! But we're having some kind of experience; some cozy, slightly formal mother-daughter thing, and it feels faintly ritualistic. We are just together, just the two of us. Something's going on, there's an air of anticipation. Then, she turns the cardboard page and there is the image of a man on top of a woman with his penis in her vagina.

I felt betrayed. The embarrassment. Then, I knew. Meaning, I was visited by a profound revelation at that very instant. That my mother had done this very thing with my father. This is how babies were made and I had been their baby. "Why?" I asked my mother, "Why would anyone do that?" "Because it feels nice," my mother said. "Because it feels beautiful. Because it is an expression of love." Did she say that? Am I remembering right? Remember who you are.

What is the conversation between mothers and daughters? What I have learned from my mother is to be courageous of desire. It's also what I've learned from my daughter, because it feels nice. Because I don't have to do anything I don't want to do. Because I can do and be whatever I want. Because it's all tangled up with love.

I teach creative writing and I tell my students that plot equals desire plus action. And that you have to be honest and write about those relations that matter, and matter to the very core of you are and where we come from. If I could be a fairy godmother instead of a regular mother—who sometimes gives way to fear for our daughters for their safety... if I could be a courageous fairy godmother instead, I would say "We come into being through desire and action. Experience this world with all of your senses and then act. Remember who you are." Thank you.

HOST: Next up, musician Pierre Kwenders reflects on the power of the matriarchs in his life and their power as black women in shaping the future of Africa. This is from Walrus Talks Africa's Next Generation.



Pierre Kwenders: If you ask me who I am today or how I became the man that I am today, the answer will be simple. First, my real name is Jose Luis Modabe, also known as Pierre Kwenders, who was my grandfather. And I'm the son of Bridgette Konkwande. I'm a young Black man forged by the unshakable results of Black women. I will not be standing before you today if Marie did not marry Pierre, or give birth to Bridgette and Chimba. My presence here today is a direct result of Bridgette's (?), my mother's, strength and undoubtable spirit. She brought me up alone and made me the person that I have become. She instilled in me the same values and principles she learned from her parents.

My aunt Chimba, with her love for family and devotion, implored my mother 15 years ago to join her in her journey to Canada. With courage and foresight, my mother raised me, her only son, not only to be proud of my heritage, but also to be determined and ambitious in Canada, which is a country far from home—home with those rich experiences and upbringing, I'm convinced that the future of Africa has lived through my generation is a core in the steadfast world of those that came before us. Most importantly, this era of Black women; our daughters, grandmothers, sisters, also our mothers.

There is nothing more important in a life well-lived than the nurturing and devotion of a mother. Mothers always look for a better future for their children, some raise their children against incredible odds and still manage to instill in them a hope for a better future.

I believe we all here want a better Africa and that is inevitable. Africa gets better every day and I say that so in those small parts, in their dreams, and sheer power of Black women, like those ones that I've been blessed to have in my life.

So let's strive to provide these African women with the tools they need to carve a healthy and promising future for their offspring. Let's all follow the example of many women, including those who are sitting here. Above all, let us not forget that the secret to any strong nation is in the education of women, because they are the ones that make us whole. Thank you, merci beaucoup.

HOST: With her baby in her arms, artist Lido Pimienta seems to personify the future of the arts. Listen in.

Lido Pimienta: So the future of the arts, like I said before, is digital. But it is also uncertain until the normalization of motherhood in the arts takes place. The representation of women in the arts depends on this. We are made to feel shame, and as if though caring for others is stupid, that having children is for losers—if you're white—and a way to get a cheque if you're brown or Black, and the only thing you're good for if you're Indigenous or Native.

And in a political climate in which mothers and their babies and toddlers are being teargassed, running away from violence, what does art have even to do anything at all? Who even cares? Art now, as I see it, fuels the white supremacy's machine, and in Toronto, it fuels gentrification.

I have this vision of Shelly N - screenshot from you know, the shirt, "My ancestors were massacred and all I got was this shirt," Next to "The Future is Female" t-shirt. I don't know, I just look at them and go, "I don't know there is something there and maybe I'll make art out of it." And I think about how the future has been female, the future, and the present, and the ongoing, and the past and... we have been doing the work.



So when I look at this t-shirt, it gives me a bad taste in my mouth from when I look at it. Because, as I said before, my future is now, as a woman, doing everything, doing the most, doing all the labour, the emotional, the physical and still getting blamed for all the bad stuff that happens in the world. Being attacked by it when I raise my voice, because, how dare I? But maybe it's because of that children's story, maybe you read it, Eve and the apple and the snake. Yeah. I'll never read it to my baby.

But anyways, Amazonian women have been doing this "future is female" blah blah blah thing going on. They don't have a t-shirt though, and we don't see their artwork because their artwork as Indigenous Amazonian women who are fighting for the rainforest, it's not really art. That's not fine art. It's craft.

So, I would like to propose a new t-shirt, in honour of the future of art, if I may. "The future isn't female; the future is Indigenous. Indigenous cultures of the Americas are matriarchal, and children are well-taken care of, ensuring a good future for everyone." And art made by Indigenous people now is an art that, frankly, is exciting. That is the future of art, whether it self-destructs or not. Sorry, I don't like Banksy.

The beaters and weavers and makers of the world are the ones making fantastic art. Black girls using digital platforms to uplift themselves are the future. Kids with iPads, composing electronic music, are the future. The future of art will be once we normalize mothers and family, but not in a cheeky community art-type trope way, you know what I'm saying? Actually, we need to make adequate space for us. The consensus that I have to make as a mother, in order to be able to be a mother, should not rest on my hands and my hands alone. Art institution venues and all places that cater and nurture art that benefit from me must create spaces for me and my children, as well so that I, as a woman, have a space to prosper, a safe platform to create, to be relevant, to stay relevant and ensure our livelihoods.

Our periods and my breastfeeding 24-7 should be enough for all you to pay me more. The future of arts looks great, when I look at it from my perspective. My perspective as a woman who is prolific really talented artist, excellent performer, and a crafter who happens to be a mother. In my world, I am able to meet my deadlines, go to my shows, do my art residencies, and go on tour with or without my kids, knowing that I'll be compensated properly for my time, and knowing that the venues and entities will hire the extra help to make sure that I can work as a woman. That is how I see the future of art happening. Thank you.

HOST: Three of 800 brilliant Canadians who have graced the stage at The Walrus Talks. Pierre Kwenders, Lisa Moore and Lido Pimienta. Wish you had been there? Wish granted. Our YouTube channel is a THE PLACE to find of all The Walrus Talks. And we're coming to a city near you! Live and in-person as soon as physically possible. Until then, stay in touch with our events newsletter - find it at the [walrus.ca/newsletters](http://walrus.ca/newsletters).