

ERIC MAILLOUX

By Norah Paré

Eric Mailloux, a full-time father and teacher, has never lost his childhood connection to photography, re-entering Concordia's photograph program part-time this semester. With a degree in Canadian History, Eric seeks to capture the present lived experience through his photographs for future generations of historians. Inspired by artists such as Walker Evans, Eric's past projects have taken him to the streets to engage with the aspects of life we all tend to pass by in a distracted fashion, whether it be momentary eye-contact with a perfect stranger or the sculptural trees that persist within urban space. Autobiographical documentation has also been an ongoing project for Eric, who did a Polaroid series surrounding the birth of his first child, six years ago. The series became somewhat of a diary that featured specific, intimate interior moments investigating this new life stage. Eric continues on this self-investigation avenue with his latest project: *The Father Series*. The series investigates the roles and expectations surrounding the husband/father. The project acts as a reflection on the different representations of the "man" within the realm of the family. His work seeks to take the viewer beyond more traditional and, perhaps dated, male roles. Eric suggests that in the past, men's roles were limited to various incarnations of "household provider". Within the last decade Eric has met many men who have occupied the challenging role of father and lived the pressures associated with it. He suggests that while some traditions remain, today's male roles are being defined differently. This particular corpus of self-portraits was inspired by stories, childhood nostalgia, and Eric's own relatively new role as a father. In this series he raises a number of questions about traditional and non-traditional male, father and husband stereotypes. Are they still the same? How have they evolved? And what, if anything, have we inherited from our fathers?



Eric Mailloux. *Untitled*, from the series *The Father Series*.
2010. Photograph.

This photograph speaks to the role of father as nurturer for his child. The photograph is at once a self-portrait and a disguise. A traditionally female role, Eric positions himself as the 'mother figure'. Dressed in women's clothing and a wig, he breastfeeds the doll at his chest. By positioning himself as the mother, Eric questions the rigid, traditional expectations for 'mother as nurturer' and 'father as provider' and demands that we reconsider them.