

MOTHERS

Marta Ghelma · Claudia Bellante · Mirko Cecchi · Bruno Zanzottera

PARALLELOZERO





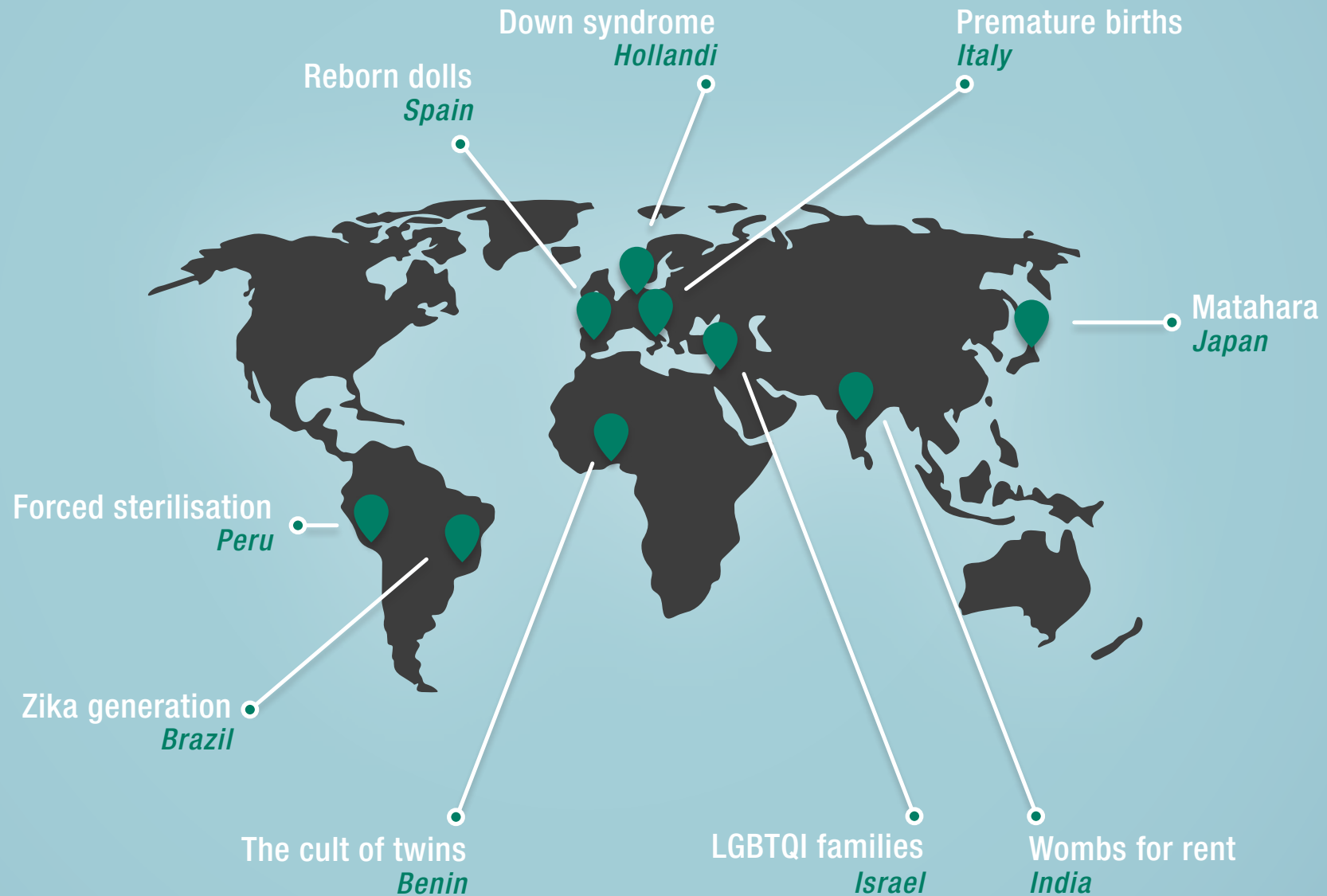
Marta and Nicola

MOTHERS is a journalistic and photographic journey focusing on the world of pregnancy. Through the stories and images of women who differ by ethnicity, culture and social background, the project seeks to break the stereotypes, prejudices and media clamour associated with motherhood by looking at the unresolved, the unsaid and the unordinary. An inner and outer path which lasted nine months and arose from the “bellies” of journalists Marta Ghelma and Claudia Bellante. With photos by Bruno Zanzottera and Mirko Cecchi.

Claudia and Tina



Project map



1st MONTH - Forced sterilisation

Peru - The children we haven't had

During the government of Alberto Fujimori (1990-2000) in Peru, 272,028 women were deceptively and violently sterilised to satisfy a supposed program for reproductive health and family planning. The first complaints were voiced in 1998 but to date, none of the victims have received justice or compensation and the Public Prosecutor has closed the case after

excluding the responsibility of Fujimori and the Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Health. Despite this, Sabina, Esperanza and Victoria, along with hundreds of other women from the country's poorest and most marginalised regions, have appealed to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and continue to fight by telling their stories, hoping that the case will be reopened.







2nd MONTH - Reborn dolls

Spain - The queen mother of silicone children

In Leioa, in the suburbs of Bilbao, the Spanish woman and expert in special effects for films Cristina Iglesias created Clon Factory in 2014, a laboratory which creates human dolls in silicone. Clon Factory produces about 35 different models of dolls a month inspired by the features she gives to their faces, such as Berlin, Kyoto and Miami, with prices ranging from 1,200 to 3,000 euros. One of her

successful experiments is the animatronic doll, which breathes and sucks a pacifier thanks to a button on her back. It costs € 4,000, but for the moment only a limited edition has been created. Cristina's clients include collectors, therapists who use the dolls to treat patients with Alzheimer's and plastic surgeons, but also mothers who have lost their children prematurely or could not have them.









3rd MONTH - Matahara

Japan - Or work or life

It sounds like a Japanese word, but in reality it is the acronym created in the Land of the Rising Sun for “Maternity Harassment”, i.e. Japanese companies’ attempt to lay off pregnant mothers through psychological and physical bullying. Despite a state law protecting the right to maternity, over 65% of women in Japan leave work

during or immediately after pregnancy. Sayaka Osakabe suffered two spontaneous abortions due to the stress created by her employer; today she is a Japanese women’s rights activist who received the prestigious “International Women of Courage Award” from Michelle Obama.







Yamanote Line



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nd respect for the obligations arising from treaties and...

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4th MONTH - LGBTQI Families

Israel - There is no more religion

A study by the American Psychological Association states that there is no scientific evidence that the sexual orientation of parents defines their ability to be good fathers or mothers. Research has shown that children raised by gay and lesbian couples have similar stability, development and psychological health to those raised by heterosexual couples. While in many

countries the rights of gays and especially the possibility for gay and lesbian couples to have children through artificial insemination or adoption are denied, in Israel, a country strongly conditioned by religion, it is not rare to see two men or two women walking, holding hands and pushing a baby carriage. Nooya, Udi and Guy tell their stories as parents.









5th MONTH - Down syndrome

Holland -The fantastic world of Lize

With the prenatal screening available today, parents can learn during pregnancy whether their future baby will suffer from Down syndrome; when the answer is yes, abortion is often encouraged. For this reason, nations like Denmark and the Netherlands have taken on the challenge to eliminate the birth of Down children within a few decades. Lize is a 25-year-old girl with Down syndrome. She attended her city's secondary and middle schools, after which she attended specialisation courses in green schools

and restaurants. She has participated in various Special Olympics, where she won several gold medals. She was an actress (with four other down actors) in the soap opera "Downistie" broadcast on Dutch TV in the early evening, which has provoked extensive arguments between those for and against it throughout the Netherlands. Today Lize works in a university canteen and lives with her boyfriend Ruben. They will soon marry and are discussing whether or not to have children. Lize is a happy girl.









6th MONTH - Zika generation

Brazil - Beyond the media clamour

In the winter of 2016, the Zika virus broke out in Latin America and led to the birth of thousands of children with microcephaly, caused by the women affected by the virus-carrying mosquito during pregnancy. A year later, in 2017, the epidemic was declared over; but in Recife, the epicentre of infection,

the lives of hundreds of mothers and their children continue among infinite pain and difficulties such as water rationing, poor public health quality and a high birth rate resulting from the difficulty or inability to abort in one of the most religious countries in the world.









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7th MONTH - Premature births

Italy - When the stork is in a hurry

Approximately 4,100 children are born every year at the “Fatebenefratelli” hospital on Rome’s Tiberina Island, 400 of whom are premature. Of these, about 100 have a gestational age of less than 29 weeks and/or a birth weight lower than 1,500 grams. Despite the fact that the number of premature births is constantly rising in Italy (the recent causes include above all the greater age of the parents, multiple

births and the increase of births after assisted fertilisation), so far this difficult reality has remained a real “taboo” that the concerned families often find themselves suddenly having to manage without the due and correct information or, even worse, in solitude. In fact, psychological and practical support for families of premature babies in Italy is still lacking, especially in the post-admission phase.









8th MONTH - Wombs for rent

India - The clinic of the greatest wish

In many countries of the world, the practice of “renting” a womb is illegal. For this reason, many couples with infertility problems must also face long journeys to find a solution that lets them have a child. In the state of Gujarat in India, Dr. Nayna Patel has created the Akanksha Infertility Clinic, literally “the clinic of the greatest

wish”. Using the so-called “womb for rent” technique, 1,162 children have been born here since 2006. “Before criticising” - comments Dr. Patel - “everyone must consider the deep pain of a sterile woman and the unbearable poverty of a surrogate mother”. But the ethical question remains open, and not just in India.









9th MONTH - The cult of twins

Benin - Western Africans beliefs

The highest worldwide rate of natural twin births is registered between Nigeria and Benin, particularly among the Fon, Ewé and Yoruba populations. In many other areas of Africa, a mother who conceived twins was accused of having relationships with the spirits and was therefore murdered along with her children. But in this region overlooking the Gulf of Guinea, the birth of twins is an extremely favourable and fortunate event. A true syncretistic cult of

twins has developed there, with altars and offerings dedicated to them. If one or both twins die, the mother makes statuettes in the image of the missing children. They are not said to have died, but “left in the forest” and are often identified with the monkeys found in the voodoo deities’ sacred woods. The mothers keep the statuettes as if they were real children, washing, nurturing and talking to them as if they were still present in the family’s day-to-day.









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