


why politics, artists & children don't mix

In a previous life,
as a previous wife

and mother of two grade school step children and my own little toddler of three, I was struggling to fit into my new environment.

I went from a second year art school student, to a quick marriage and gave birth within months to my little son. It was a ritzy neighborhood and I was one of many doctors and lawyers wives on our block. We were all stay at home moms and as the newcomer, I got roped into hosting a luncheon for a local woman running for some political position. Wanting to appear as competent and normal as everyone else (knowing fully well I was a fish out of water) I agreed enthusiastically to play hostess.

We had a lovely 4-bedroom, old Tudor style house and I started lining all the right things up for the luncheon. I bought and arranged flowers, hired a cleaning lady, made platters of perfect tea sandwiches, tiny cookies and had tea services and every trapping of civility and style meant to impress.



Our front entry opened on to our living room, and the landing that led up stairs. I had set the time to coordinate with the naptime of my toddler. So, he went down, and shortly after, the ladies started showing up. It was just a lovely thing. After a while, our guest of honor stood up and began her pitch on why we should vote her into office. She stood up with her back to the staircase and started in with her most sincere delivery. I had my back to the stairs as well; to be sure I could keep an eye on my guests in case they needed anything. As I watched the captive audience, I noticed mouths dropping and hands going quickly up to faces in a sort of mock horror.

Then quiet giggling started and my best friend and neighbor came rushing up to me and said, “You better turn around!”

All eyes turned to the staircase, where my toddler was making his glorious descent down the staircase, buck-naked save covered from head to toe with self-adhesive maxi pads. ‘Maxi Pad Man’ made his way down the stairs with a big sleepy grin on his face, beaming with pride. My first reaction was that of ... cool! He actually found a more entertaining use for those things than we women have used them for decades. Plus, it was pretty funny. Well, the look of horror on other’s faces told me I could be the only one in the room having that reaction. It was very similar, it seemed, to the reaction I had when he proudly took me into his room to show me his ‘decorating’. After discovering the staple gun in my studio, he went to work stapling everything he owned to his walls. And I do mean everything. Little Superman underoos, Star Wars figures, pillows, sneakers, tee shirts, books, the lamp shade off his lamp. I thought, (again) cool! At least everything was off the floor, and he really was sincerely proud of the effort. So, where was the real surprise when Maxi Pad Man made his way down the stairs in full feminine hygiene regalia? That’s my boy!

I really felt badly for that woman and her campaign. She was horribly upstaged by my weird kid, who continues to be weird, just not with feminine hygiene products. And my sad attempt to fit in backfired on me in spades.

That’s why politics, artists and children don’t mix. It’s also best to keep those personal hygiene products on top shelves. **mm**

Catherine lives in the hill country of south central Texas, out where Jesus lost his shoes. She likes it that way as it affords her plenty of time to paint and think deep thoughts in an uninterrupted manner — far from the maddening crowd and the great unwashed.

Her companions are her best husband, two great dogs, two cool kittens, two donkeys, two horses, and a small herd of goats.