

The birth of Aura

In 2018 I attended my first birth. Kyra gave birth to Aura in a birthing centre in the hills near Adelaide Australia.

Kyra is a young woman having her first child with my brother Pablo and his son Mason. Kyra had spent time envisaging this birth as natural a process as possible, and had done much to prepare.

We gathered in the late morning and remained together well into the night. Pablo & Kyra's families had only met briefly once before. Our families are pretty different from each other in terms of size, age and origin.

There were almost ten of us at times. We had the impression we were taking up too much space. My brother was the only person allowed to be with Kyra the whole day. Her Mother paced the corridor, her Grandmother swayed in her seat. I made cups of tea and sandwiches. We could hear Kyra moan and strain. When we thought she might be close, we gathered in a semi-circle by her door. In silence with our heads bowed, we chewed our lips and shook our heads gently.

As the Doctor bristled past us, he shook his head in quite a different way with some tutting to go along with it. "Your'e putting that little girl under an awful lot of pressure" he said. She was the furthest thing from a little girl I could imagine right now. And I don't think she knew we were there, we hadn't made a peep. No one knew what to say to your pain Kyra. All we could do was witness and support with our hearts. A nurse came out a minute later and asked us to leave. We went out in to the car park and smoked, even those of us who didn't, did.

"Less noise, more push" was her instruction as they guided her to preferred birth sounds, which left her feeling self-conscious about the sounds her body really wanted her to make. Aura was born by C-section under advice from the doctor, once Mum and baby started showing signs of fatigue.

We are a musical family as it happens. I'm in the habit of carrying a recorder when I travel. My brother captured some of Kyra's freer sounds, before she switched to gritted teeth, which we've made into a song. Birth Metal. It's our creative response to quiet birth preferences. A 6min epic (not as epic as the birth), called "Birth of Aura".

Thank you Kyra for allowing us to share this in support of other women who find them selves pressured into preferred birth sounds. Keep it loud and proud!

