



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## MICA presents first of its kind festival featuring the art of mothers



Rythea Lee. Image courtesy of the artist.



*Finding the Words* still. Image courtesy of the film.

**Northampton, MA** (October 19, 2022)—[Mothers Institute for Collaboration and Art \(MICA\)](#) will host an inaugural arts festival to highlight the creative practice of mothers and primary parents— the first of its kind. The event will feature live performances of dance, music, poetry, comedy, and theater, plus a gallery installation of visual art - all created by mothers. The weekend-long festival will take place at Northampton Center for the Arts at 33 Hawley Street in Northampton from Friday, October 28 through Sunday, October 30.

MICA launched a free open call for submissions over the summer and received more than 100 applications from artists across the country. “We were so impressed by the number and quality of the submissions,” said MICA founder Lyza Fennell. “We’re confident that we’re presenting a top-notch artistic experience for the community.”

MICAfest is also a venue for many featured artists to debut new work and work specifically created for the festival. Jennifer Scully-Thurston and Amy Lee will premiere *My Body/ My Precious* at the festival. Central to the performance is a knitted naked gown, which evokes a female body over time. Rythea Lee will debut *Don’t Go In My Room: The Clusterfuck of Caretaking*, a new performance piece created for MICAfest. Lee is a dancer and multi-disciplinary artist, who balances intensity with humor, highly physical dance with spoken word, and social commentary with personal stories.

Executive Producer Alexandra Wagman, Director of Photography Aundrea Marschoun, and Composer Kelly Vogel will premiere a trailer for their latest film, *Finding the Words*. This documentary is about the creativity, joy, and resilience of women in Western Massachusetts, who



overcome adversity through writing. Jacqueline Velez-Vazquez, Sonia Mendez, Amie Hyson, Judy Holmes, and Daisy Diaz, all mothers featured in the film, will perform their poetry and participate in a Q&A with the audience.

The Performance Project is bringing its First Generation ensemble to MICAfest, where the group will present a preview of *Mother Tongue* before it premieres in December 2022. *Mother Tongue* is a multilingual physical theater performance collaboratively developed by seven ensemble members and three co-directors, Iyawna Burnet, Lesley Farlow, and Julie Lichtenberg.

Finally, Happier Valley Comedy designed a set specifically for MICAfest. *The Mother of All Improv Shows*, which, yes, will involve audience participation, is sure to put a smile on your face. Their slate of talented improvisers, including Katharine Daube, Sally Ekus, Kelsey Flynn, Holly Ruderman, and Pam Victor, will kick us off with some true stories of their experiences with motherhood, and those stories will inspire a series of completely improvised scenes.

In addition to these new pieces, MICAfest will present live music by Lisa Bastoni, Christa Joy and the Honeybees, Rebirth, and many more. The visual arts exhibition features works by 23 artists. Between performance sets and looking at art, attendees will enjoy delicious Filipino Street Food offered by Ginger Love Cafe. There will also be candy for trick-or-treaters. Fennell says, “We know that where moms go, kids often go, too. So we will of course provide treats for anyone who makes MICAfest part of their Halloween weekend.”

MICAfest will take place at 33 Hawley Street from October 28-30, 2022. Tickets for the festival are on sale now and all proceeds will pay artist stipends and fund MICA's future programs. To buy tickets, view the complete lineup, and learn more about MICA, visit <https://experiencemica.org/>. MICA is grateful to T-Ray Music, The Institute for the Musical Arts, Delap Real Estate, Myers Catering, and Northampton Open Media for their generous support of this event.

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Founded in 2022, [Mothers Institute for Collaboration and Arts \(MICA\)](#) aims to support artistic mothers by building community. Through festivals, workshops, and support groups, MICA produces opportunities for mothers to create, showcase, and get paid for their creative work. MICA is a mother-led organization committed to responding to the unique needs of mothers and making space for mothers in the arts and cultural ecosystem through systemic change. MICA is fiscally sponsored by [Fractured Atlas](#), a New York-based nonprofit devoted to helping artists and arts organizations by providing fundraising tools, education resources, and support.

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