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**Eighty M/other Artists Converge in Northampton, MA, this May. Mothers
Institute for Collaboration and Art (MICA) Presents MICAfest Art for Change:
The M/others' View
Cracks in the Cradle, Shattering the Motherhood Myth Through Art**



Ellen Wetmore, *Melt*, plaster, 2009. Image courtesy of the artist.



Eva Pushkova *Beacon View*, tufted wool rug, 2024. Image courtesy of the artist.

Northampton, MA [Mothers Institute for Collaboration and Art \(MICA\)](#) presents [MICAfest Art for Change: The M/others' View](#), a month-long, city-wide visual/performing/literary arts festival from May 1-31, 2024, in Northampton, MA. MICAfest challenges societal expectations of m/otherhood (m/other is an inclusive term), amplifies the diverse voices of m/other artists and drives change through creative expression with themes such as *Beyond the Ideal*, *Unseen Stories*, and *Beyond Biology*.

Gender stereotypes continue to permeate the arts, resulting in a lack of recognition and opportunities for women. For m/other artists who share their time as both artists and caretakers, the challenges can be tenfold: inadequate access to affordable childcare, preconceived maternal bias, time constraints, the "motherhood penalty," and isolation.

MICA seeks to change this by putting m/other artists in the spotlight and providing opportunities for them to showcase their work. "MICAfest isn't just



about showcasing art," states Lyza Fennell, MICA's founder and managing director, "it's about creating a space where m/other artists can reclaim their narratives and drive essential conversations about m/otherhood and social change."

Major Themes Across the Festival

The Perfect Mother

Several artists confront postpartum depression, anxiety, and the overwhelming mental load of motherhood. In her installation, [Catherine LeComte-Lecce](#) explores the under-researched impact of postpartum anxiety and depression on the brain. [Karin Trachtenberg](#)'s one-woman show *My Mother Had Two Faces* exposes the struggles hidden beneath the facade of the perfect mother.

[Ellen Wetmore](#)'s sculptures and films confront societal expectations of mothering: "Pregnancy is terrifying, even life-threatening, and Motherhood is a leap into the unknown future, but it is not socially acceptable for mothers to ruminate on this." In "Articles of Comfort: Holding Grief," [Eva Pushkova](#)'s tufted wool rug collection represents the lived experience of grief, embodying the search for resilience, comfort, and hope with the rich colors and warm, plush pile.

Identity & Reclamation

Belly, by [Haile Eshe Cole](#), is an intergenerational love voyage of Black womanhood and motherhood that transpires through word, song, and dance. [Mary Warren Foulk](#)'s *Erasures of My Coming Out (Letter* explores identity suppression and marginalized narratives, using the concept of 'erasure' to resist silencing and reclaim power.

[Kelly Silliman](#)'s *Miss Treated* is a solo dance theatre piece exploring gender, power, and medical mistreatment, created in collaboration with Melissa Edwards.



Social Justice Through Art

The festival also addresses social and cultural challenges. [Esther S. White](#)'s work tackles the surveillance and judgment mothers face in public, while [Helen Ellis](#) confronts the struggles of incarcerated mothers and their children. These works urge viewers to question societal norms and advocate for change.

This process of reclaiming stories and subverting expectations extends beyond the singular narrative of m/otherhood. MICAfest artists confront the erasures in the romanticized "motherhood myth" with the intersections of gender, people of color, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ populations, and communities rendered invisible.

The MICAfest Opportunity

MICAfest offers a vibrant artistic experience throughout Northampton. Explore visual exhibitions at [Northampton Center for the Arts](#), [Anchor House of Artists](#), and [Bombyx Center for Arts and Equity](#). Enjoy dynamic performances at Anchor House of Artists and Northampton Center for the Arts, including [M/otherhood in Motion: Dance and Theatre](#), [Perfect Imperfections Behind the Facade: an Evening at the Theatre](#), and [The Mom-ologues: Unfiltered Stories & Music Jam](#)



Mother's Day will be celebrated with poetry and [The Lark Jazz Trio](#) for a unique art bash at [Spill the Tea Sis Apothecary](#).

Exhibition Organization and Support

This exhibition is organized by the Mothers Institute for Collaboration and Art (MICA) in Northampton, MA. MICAfest 2024 is made possible with generous support from:

- The City of Northampton ARPA Community Recovery Grant (For a statement of support, please contact Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra at mayor@northamptonma.gov)
- Northampton Arts Council
- Amherst Cultural Council
- Massachusetts Cultural Council
- Northampton Center for the Arts, Anchor House of Artists, Bombyx Center for Arts and Equity, Spill the Tea Sis Apothecary, along with [Loculus Collective](#), [The Institute for Musical Arts](#), [Ko Fest of Performance](#), [Hilltown Families](#), and [Hillary Lynn Photography](#).
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Ten [VIP Tickets to MICAfest](#) are now on sale. Month-long passes and single-event tickets go on sale on April 1st. Join us for this groundbreaking event, a platform where the truth of m/otherhood and the voices of underrepresented artists collide. Visit [ExperienceMICA.org](#) for the full artist roster, performance schedule, and event locations. Let's make some noise in Northampton!

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Founded in 2022 by Lyza Fennell, [Mothers Institute for Collaboration and Art \(MICA\)](#) is a mother-led organization dedicated to amplifying the voices of m/other artists and advocating for their inclusion in the arts landscape. MICA creates opportunities for collaboration, artistic showcasing, and professional support through exhibitions, festivals, and community-focused events. MICA aims to develop sustainable programming that addresses the systemic barriers m/other artists face, empowering them to thrive creatively and professionally. [MICA is fiscally sponsored by Fractured Atlas](#), a New York-based nonprofit



devoted to helping artists and arts organizations by providing fundraising tools, educational resources, and support.

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