



New exhibition at MIAD aims to foster empathy in current divisive social and political climate

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PRESS RELEASE

MILWAUKEE... In our current divisive social and political landscape, the newest exhibit at the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design (MIAD) asks viewers to do what lately seems rather difficult: feel empathy. **“Humanly Possible: The Empathy Exhibition” is on view in MIAD's Frederick Layton Gallery January 12 – March 3.** The public reception is Friday, January 19, 5 – 9 p.m. on Winter Gallery Night. This exhibition is generously sponsored by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Mary L. Nohl Fund.

“The best way to avoid empathy is to avoid sensorial contact,” says exhibit curator John Schuerman. In this exhibit, viewers cannot avoid such contact. Instead, they are immersed in the works of 12 artists who have varied perspectives. While internalizing the experiences of others through art, viewers are challenged to engage their potential for empathy, and ultimately decide whether to exercise it.

Participants include seven artists from the exhibit's original Minneapolis run and five new artists, like recent Mary L. Nohl Fellowship winner Lois Bielefeld of Milwaukee. Her photography and digital media work explores the power and complexity of gender identity. Raoul Deal, also of Milwaukee and new to the exhibit, displays large-scale woodcuts that address the difficulty of celebrating one's Mexican heritage in a society that can be hostile toward immigrants. Work by Juliane Shibata, Tina Blondell, Inna Valin, Chase Boston, Christopher E. Harrison, Nooshin Hakim and Peter B. Nelson (all from the original exhibition) and Liza Sylvestre, Gudrun Lock and Sue Coe (new to the exhibition) is also on view.

Additional Programming:

- **Thursday, February 1, 6 p.m. – Empathy Through the Visual Arts: An Artist's Discussion**
Three of the exhibition's artists (Lois Bielefeld, Tina Blondell and Gudrun Lock) along with curator John Schuerman and moderator and MIAD Writing & Humanities/Fine Arts Professor and Service Learning Director Leslie Fedorchuk discuss the concept of empathy and its manifestation in the visual arts. Reception to follow.
- **Thursday, February 15, 7 p.m. – Empathy, Connections and Borders: An Evening of Poetry and Storytelling**
A night of visual and oral storytelling between artists and writers from Milwaukee and Minneapolis exploring empathy, creating human connections and crossing borders. Performers include Michael Kleber-Diggs, Anais Deal-Marquez, Kavon Cortez-Jones, Dinorah Marquez, Isela Xitlali Gómez and Eli Avalos.
- **Thursday, March 1, 7 p.m. – 100 Lullabies (Lullaby Songs for Syrian Refugees)**
An experiential platform for listening to stories of war, face to face with artists who grew up during war in the Middle East. Audience members will be invited to sing and record a song of comfort or lullaby in their own language for children who are affected or displaced from their motherland by war. Participants include: Nooshin Hakim Javadi, Pedram Baldari and Katayoun Amjadi.

MIAD's galleries are free and open to the public, Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Free gallery tours are available at miad.edu/gallerytours.

At the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design, students driven to become creative professionals have the freedom to develop their talents beyond traditional boundaries while immersed in a transformative studio, academic and career-driven curriculum. On graduation, they join thousands of successful MIAD alumni whose talents are continuously in demand, and whose lifework is driven by the passion to inspire, problem solve, and innovate for our economy and society.