

The Empathy Project

Project Statement

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By Marcus Civin and Paul Rucker

Welcome to The Empathy Project.

The Empathy Project invites you to engage. During the run of this exhibit, every day is an opportunity. We would like these galleries to become a safe place where all are welcome to share, reflect, participate, and maybe even fail. Be personal. Be critical. Be supportive. Be yourself.

There are multiple communities within the MICA community as well as outside MICA. When these communities don't interact or engage, there can be misunderstandings and misconceptions. With all the differences in cultural background, race, nationality, language, gender, age, sexual orientation... socioeconomics... different physical and mental abilities... misunderstandings are frequent.

The Empathy Project is an open group exhibition, a conversation, and a participatory experiment. We ask for artworks and proposals that re-invest in discarded materials or re-imagine failed projects. The new artworks might still feel like failures on some level. Be courageous and share these artworks anyway. We are hoping that the process of working with a given artistic situation will help members of this community practice improvisation and practice putting aside their egos. Some of the artworks in these galleries will be collaborations, records of experiences practicing some of the skills necessary for empathy. Some of the artworks in these galleries will be about empathy. Some of the artworks in these galleries will be participatory.

We also ask for writing that defines empathy and/or recalls your earliest experience with empathy. We hope that you will tack up your writing about empathy.

Hang up your writing about empathy.

Hang up your artworks.

Upload or download your artworks.

Project your artworks.

Perform on the stage downstairs.

Sit down and participate in discussion.

Relax on a cushion in the meditation room.

Breathe.

Do some more writing.

Rethink what you think of as presentable.

Label your artwork by handwriting your name on an index card and tacking that to the wall...

These questions will keep The Empathy Project going:

Is empathy a skill that can be taught?

What can we gain as a society from empathy?

What are the challenges in promoting empathy?

Does empathy help intercultural communication?

Where do we go from here?

How will we incorporate what we learn in this project into curriculum and programming at MICA?

We look forward to discussing some of these questions with you!

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