PRESS RELEASE

Essma Imady: Thicker than Water

New MAEP Exhibition at Mia Examines Anxieties Facing Refugee Parents

MINNEAPOLIS—February 27, 2018— The Minnesota Artists Exhibition Program (MAEP) at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) presents “Thicker than Water,” a new exhibition by artist Essma Imady. Through film, sculpture, and performance she explores the tension inherent in the emotions that refugee parents experience—safety and fear, familiarity and strangeness, nostalgia and heritage. “Thicker than Water” is on view March 15 through June 24, 2018.

For this exhibition, Imady traveled to Istanbul and Canada to engage with and interview children in the Syrian community. Her resulting films examine the relationships between children and parents grappling with the complexities of living as refugees abroad. One of her interviewees, a young girl and aspiring beautician living in Canada, passed away shortly after the interview. Imady memorializes her with a performance at Mia’s Third Thursday on April 19 that engages both the audience and her work.

Alongside the films are mini-installations that also speak to the anxieties faced by parents and refugees, including works such as Receiving Blanket (2016), Comfort Object (2018), and Coming-Home Outfit (2018). Through this new body of work, Imady hopes to inspire conversations about what we pass on to our children, as well as provoke a visitor response that goes beyond empathy.

“My work aims to heighten the emotional experience of the viewer in order to facilitate understanding and investment. I work on translating emotions and experiences into a common tongue that can be understood in a space that is beyond the specificity of language and culture, residing within the collective human experience,” said Imady.

About the artist
Essma Imady is a filmmaker, sculptor, and installation artist based in the Twin Cities. She grew up in Damascus, Syria, and was dislocated to Minnesota in 2011. She received her BA from St. Cloud State University and her MFA from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD). Her work explores missing narratives within the art world.
About Minnesota Artists Exhibition Program
Founded in 1975, the Minnesota Artists Exhibition Program (MAEP) is a curatorial program of the Minneapolis Institute of Art, dedicated to exhibition and supporting artists living and working in Minnesota. MAEP is located in Mia’s U.S. Bank Gallery.

Generous support for MAEP provided by: McKnight Foundation.

Additional support provided by RBC Wealth Management and Helen and Dan Lindsay.

Press Contacts
Michaela Baltasar-Feyen  
+ 1 612 870 3280  
mbaltasar-feyen@artsmia.org

Tammy Pleshek  
+ 1 612 870 3171  
tpleshek@artsmia.org

About The Minneapolis Institute Of Art
Home to more than 90,000 works of art representing 5,000 years of world history, the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) inspires wonder, spurs creativity, and nourishes the imagination. With extraordinary exhibitions and one of the finest wide-ranging art collections in the country—Rembrandt to van Gogh, Monet to Matisse, Asian to African—Mia links the past to the present, enables global conversations, and offers an exceptional setting for inspiration.

General admission to Mia is always free. Some special exhibitions have a nominal admission fee.

Museum Hours
Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday  
10am–5pm
Thursday, Friday  
10am–9pm
Sunday  
11am–5pm
Monday  
Closed
For more information, call + 1 612 870 3000 or visit artsmia.org