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Bi Arts Festival Announces 2018 Program
September 18-23, 2018, Toronto, ON
www.biartsfestival.com

For Immediate Release August 22, 2018 - Toronto, ON, Canada: **The Bi Arts Festival today announced an exciting lineup of artists, authors and performers for the second annual festival, September 18-23, 2018, Toronto.**

Toronto's second annual Bi Arts Festival is the world's largest celebration of bisexual voices in art and culture and runs from September 18th to 23rd, 2018. The festival welcomes a diverse roster of artists to Toronto, including Vancouver playwright **Katie Sly**, Kingston's former Poet Laureate **Eric Folsom**, Cleveland poet-performer **Eris Eady**, Ojibway multi-disciplinary artist, filmmaker and stand-up comic **JL Whitecrow**, textile artist **Yahn Nemirovsky**, and spoken word artist and author **Mugabi Byenkya**, amongst others.

"Not only does the festival exist to showcase work by bisexual, pansexual, and other fluid artists," says festival founder **Catherine Jones**, "but we look for work that takes risks and that is challenging. Certainly, some of the work we present is playful but some of it is also deeply personal and at times quite uncomfortable." She adds, "as a community we are starved for authentic representations of bisexuality, because although bisexuals make up the largest slice of the pie that is the LGBTQ+ community, our stories are often invisible. We exist in an in-between space and that makes people nervous. Bisexuals are not considered queer enough for LGBTQ+ spaces but in society at large, coming out as bisexual usually means reactions ranging from disbelief, to titillation, to a deep mistrust."

The festival kicks off Tuesday, September 18th with the launch of Issue 2 of our zine **CRUSH**, and runs through Sunday, September 23rd with six days of vibrant and original programming. The festival presents visual art, craft, storytelling, performance, theatre, video, dance and film with over 90 participating artists and performers.

The full calendar of events is available on our website by [clicking here](#) and a [list of artists is available here](#).

Some highlights:

In her one-woman show **Womannish: Redefining Womanhood in a World that Won't Make Room** writer, poet, and advocate **Eris Eady** has an aggressively delicate conversation with herself about the complexities of showing up in this world as Black, bisexual and mostly cisgender.

We're also joined by playwright, performer, and author **Katie Sly** who will share a special workshop presentation of their new work in development - **How to Self-Suspend**, an X-rated narrative developed in part during a two-day in-studio residency with the Bi Arts Festival. Part photo-essay, part rope bondage demonstration, this performance looks at Katie's existence in three cities: their childhood being raised in instability and violence in Montréal, their ecstasy and injury in the Toronto BDSM

community, and their year living on the edge of Vancouver's Downtown East Side. This solo performance explores the impact of long-endured trauma, and how that trauma shapes what feels normal, digs into internalized rage and enacts revenge fantasies. **How To Self-Suspend** candidly excavates the challenges of isolation and recklessness.

Visual artists **Amanda Amour-Lynx, Alyssa Pisciotto, Claire Davis, Samantha Jones, Lynx Sainte-Marie Ciel, Jonathan Rollins, and Yahn Nemirovsky** take over the Beaver Hall Gallery (29 McCaul Street) with work that explores themes of bi erasure, desire and embodiment, colonization, and the shifting borders between art, craft and zine culture. They are joined by another ten artists from the Bi Arts zine **CRUSH** at the Glory Hole Gallery (at Glad Day Bookshop, 499 Church Street).

On Friday, September 21st, collectors are invited to the postcard show "**SWITCH**" at Beaver Hall Gallery. For only \$40 visitors can purchase an original postcard-sized work of art from an emerging or established artist - but they won't know whose work they have selected until *after their purchase* as all items are displayed anonymously and signed only on the back. It's the postcard show with a secret!

At Sunday night's **Cabaret** (Tranzac Club, 292 Brunswick Avenue) Hamilton-based singer-songwriter **Shanika Maria** performs songs of identity, empowerment and expectation, alongside a comedy set from **JL Whitecrow** who explores the concept of "Indian-ness" as it seeps into her everyday experiences as a hip, ambitious, and highly creative artist that escaped the Rez for a better life. JL blends stand-up comedy, prose, and performance art for an intimate, yet uncomfortable look at living as a First Nations woman that is never Indian enough. Toronto- and Kampala-based spoken word artist **Mugabi Byenkya** shares a set of new work, and is joined by burlesque and drag sensations **Bianca Boom Boom** and **Beauregard Deville**.

And there's so much more! In addition to the music and performances, a wide range of vendors will be present at our **Handmade Market at Trinity St. Paul's United Church**, on Saturday, September 22nd, selling jewellery, art, zines, badges, candles, bags, and more.

FESTIVAL PROGRAM, BIOS and TICKETS at www.biartsfestival.com.

PHOTOS are available for download from the festival's website under the [Media](#) link (bottom of page).

The Bi Arts Festival is produced with the support of the City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council.