

DRINKING GOURD GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 14, 2023

MEDIA CONTACT

Carol Torian | (919) 627-4994

citorian@gmail.com

North Carolina Artists Shine a Spotlight on the Menopausal Journey

Opening at Rocky Mount Mills on World Menopause Day, October 18, 2023, *M is for Menopause, Baby!* is a major group exhibition that will use art to raise awareness and challenge the myths, stereotypes, and stigma that surround the menopausal journey. Featuring more than 50 works from North Carolina artists—including vibrant paintings, works on paper, assemblage, and mixed media artwork—the exhibition celebrates the diversity and complexity of the menopausal experience.

By 2025, it's estimated that 1.1 billion women will be experiencing menopause, or "The Change" as it is frequently called. Menopause is not a disease. Menopause is not a mental health condition. It is a natural part of the aging process when a woman has gone 12 months without a menstrual period. In the United States, the average age for menopause is 51. However, it can occur earlier in life. But what is menopause? What does it mean to be perimenopausal or postmenopausal? Too often, these normal life stages are spoken about negatively in hushed tones as if they're something to be ashamed of or feared. Those with symptoms may be told it's all in their mind and struggling can become normalized. The *M is for Menopause, Baby!* exhibition will bring together creatives, healthcare practitioners, and librarians to help reframe the narrative around the subject of menopause.

The exhibition will be presented by Drinking Gourd Gallery in partnership with Rocky Mount Mills, Kiki Piper, and UNC Health Nash.

Carol Torian, exhibition co-curator and Drinking Gourd Gallery founder, said, "By sharing our questions, concerns, insights, and humorous moments, through this exhibition, we can be a support and help to those who are on the menopausal journey. We can also be a beacon of light for premenopausal individuals, so they are better prepared and informed when they begin their menopausal journey."

Kirsten Moore, exhibition co-curator and Kiki Piper founder, added, "This exhibition provides fresh insight about a subject that is still relatively taboo. There's so much secrecy and silence about perimenopause, menopause and postmenopause, but together we can change that and have some meaningful discussions."

Featured artists include Kristin Barta, Lyudmila Tomova Clark, Jacqueline S. Dulin, Michelle Franklin, Brenda Harris, Debra Johnson, Lisa Kelbaugh, Art Love and Rendon Foy, Darryl Matthews, Kiki Piper, Barbara Outtersen, Corliss R. Owen, Maria Tavaréz, Carol Torian, and many others.

This project also highlights the urgent need for health equity to reduce the disparity in health status for underserved populations. Building on that perspective, the exhibition will feature a silent auction during the opening reception on October 18, 2023, to benefit My Sister's House, which is a nonprofit that aids victims of domestic violence. Likewise, to address period poverty, a period products drive is occurring in conjunction with the exhibition, and drop-off boxes will be available at Rocky Mount Mills, Eastern North Carolina Medical Group, and UNC Health Nash. Menopause and menstruation share many commonalities. For some, the first period can be shrouded in the same embarrassment and confusion as the last period. And in both instances, life changes forever in new and unexpected ways that are often not talked about. The *M is for Menopause, Baby!* exhibition will provide an art-centered space to start a conversation that welcomes all voices.

Related Content

The exhibition will be accompanied by a variety of in-person and virtual engagement programs at Rocky Mount Mills, Books & Beans, and Larema Coffee House. Programming includes Let's Talk About It: Menopause, Perimenopause, and Postmenopause, with Dr. Joanna Dauber, DO, NCMP of Eastern North Carolina Medical Group; Yesterday, I Cried: Menopausal Grief & Loss, with Camilla Y. Black, M.Ed., LCMHC; and Positive Pause: Circle Dance, with Judy Robison. Visitors can also enjoy an artist talk, art-making workshops, book discussions, a nutrition session, and a comedy event. Programming details will be posted on the Drinking Gourd Gallery website. All programming is free and open to the public.

The exhibition will be featured on the Drinking Gourd Gallery website as well as on social media using the hashtag #MISFORMENOPAUSEBABY

Drinking Gourd Gallery

Based in Raleigh, North Carolina and established in 2018, Drinking Gourd Gallery is a commercial art gallery offering the works of established, mid-career and emerging artists in a virtual setting. Looking back and ahead, the gallery is dedicated to artistic freedom and committed to showcasing diverse voices and perspectives. Known for its eclectic, ever-changing collection, Drinking Gourd Gallery offers a relaxed space for visitors to discover and shop for unique artwork and gift items.

Rocky Mount Mills

Located along the Falls of the beautiful Tar River, Rocky Mount Mills is a development of historic proportions, bringing together residential, commercial, cultural, and entertainment amenities in one unique destination. The 82-acre campus of this restored cotton mill showcases a bold approach to historic preservation — honoring the past while also breathing new life into the plank floors, stout timbers, and intricate brickwork of this storied place that's listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Rocky Mount Mills features vibrant community gathering areas, abundant restaurant options, craft breweries, River & Twine a "tiny house" hotel, indoor and outdoor event venues plus light-filled residences and workspaces. It's a place to wander, to explore and be surprised. It's a place to connect, to collaborate, and be inspired — a place to craft your own story.

Kiki Piper

Founded in 2021, formerly Sola Bee Artistry, Kiki Piper is an online art gallery showcasing intricate, thought-provoking artworks that primarily use recycled paper as a medium. With a distinct approach to art and design, Kiki Piper offers a unique experience for those who love both art and environmental sustainability. Discover original prints, paintings, and other art-inspired pieces that are perfect for any space. Commissions also accepted.

UNC Health Nash

UNC Health Nash is a 345-bed hospital system based in Rocky Mount, NC, with a mission to improve the health and wellbeing of its community. A locally-owned non-profit hospital authority governed by a local board of commissioners, UNC Nash is also an affiliate member of the UNC Health system, which brings the expertise, innovation, resources and research of a world-renowned health system to the patients of eastern NC.

Visitor Information

Exhibition opens October 18, 2023, at Rocky Mount Mills, 1151 Falls Rd, Rocky Mount, North Carolina and closes November 15, 2023. For more information, please visit www.dggallerync.com or call (919) 627-4994. Admission is free and all are welcome.

Support

Drinking Gourd Gallery is grateful to the exhibition partners, artists, presenters, and sponsors for their support and exceptional generosity.

###