



The District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia—known locally as the DMV—is a fertile center of art-making for women of color of diverse heritages. Washington, D.C. and its surroundings have long been home to a rich community of artists of color, ranging from those born and raised here to others who built connections to the region as short-term residents. The exhibition DMV Color features an eclectic assortment of contemporary works by women of African American, Asian American, and Latina heritage. The artists' books, graphic novels, photobooks, and zines depict intimacies of family life, legacies of enslavement, effects of rampant development, dislocation and newfound freedoms tied to immigration, and other topics.

November 4, 2019–March 4, 2020
Betty Boyd Dettre Library and Research Center
National Museum of Women in the Arts
Monday–Friday: 10:00am–12:00pm & 1:00–5:00pm
Closed on Weekends

Featured Artists

SABRINA BAREKZAI
Afghan Superstitions, Vol. 2, 2016
Zine

Sabrina Barezai's zines and DIY-publications highlight the voices of marginalized groups and explore her Afghan heritage. Incorporating stories that the author heard as a child from friends and family, this zine intersperses Afghan superstitions with photos of Barezai's family from the 1980s. Northern Virginia's Afghan community is believed to be the second largest in the United States.

Follow on Instagram [@sabrinabarezai](https://www.instagram.com/sabrinabarezai)

ELIZABETH CATLETT

Walking Blindly, 1992

Color lithograph

Raised in Washington, D.C., and educated at Howard University, Elizabeth Catlett (1915-2012) spent most of her artistic career traveling between the U.S. and Mexico. While at Howard, Catlett studied under artist Loïs Mailou Jones, whose children's book illustration is also included in this exhibition. Catlett's work explores themes ranging from maternity and childhood to meditations on race, politics, violence and voice. *Walking Blindly* is one of six prints Catlett created, that were inspired by Margaret Walker's poem, "For My People." Two additional prints from this series can be viewed on NMWA's third floor.

SUZANNE COLEY

All I Have, 2018; Look in Thy Glass, 2019

Artists' books

Baltimore-based artist Suzanne Coley uses the book form to create textile history archives. She has a background in classical literature and philosophy, and often incorporates Shakespeare into her work. In *All I Have*, Coley imagines and gives voice to a woman's painful mourning of a son drowned while crossing the Mediterranean from North Africa in hopes of a better life in Europe. The artist responded to the loss of nearly 16,000 migrants' lives in the Mediterranean in the last five years. *All I Have* is one of twelve books that Coley constructed from textiles given to her by the Warren M. Robbins Library at the National Museum of African Art. *Look in Thy Glass* combines text and textile in an evocative gesture that links fabric and narrative.

Follow on Instagram @coleyism52

MAGDALENA CORDERO, TRANSLATIONS BY URSULA K. LE GUIN

Long Chilean Gaia, 2016

Artist's book

Chilean artist Magdalena Cordero attended the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D.C. Nobel-winning Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral's posthumous publication "Poem of Chile" inspired *Long Chilean Gaia*. Cordero created this artist's book to introduce the poet's work to English-speaking audiences. It subsequently won first place in the 8th Artist's Book Triennial Vilnius 2018 in Lithuania.

Follow on Instagram @codapress.chile



Long Chilean Gaia, Magdalena Cordero, Betty Boyd Dettre Library and Research Center, National Museum of Women in the Arts

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IBÉ CRAWLEY

My Cotton Book, 2010

Artist's book

An artist and teacher, Ibé Crawley founded Ibé Arts, an art studio and gallery in the Anacostia neighborhood of the District of Columbia. Crawley approaches bookmaking as a sculptural practice, describing *My Cotton Book* piece as a "quilted story." This highly textured work incorporates cotton pieces, string, fabric, and paper. Her work explores the centrality of cotton farming and processing to African American heritage by depicting its impact on children.

Follow on Twitter @IBearted

JAMILA ZAHRA FELTON

The Deep End: Or, Some of Us Learned How to Swim, 2016

Artist's book

Originally from Boston, Jamila Zahra Felton has been printmaking painting, and bookbinding for many years. Felton has long worked as a public school teacher in Boston and the District of Columbia. She now serves as the librarian in a D.C. independent school. As a poet and librarian, Felton's artists' books explore themes of memory, love, identity and history.

Follow on Instagram @beatofblossoms

MALAKA MERCENE GHARIB

I Was Their American Dream, 2019

Graphic novel

Malaka Gharib is an artist and prolific zine-maker. She cofounded the D.C. Art Book Fair and created the D.C.- based food zine *The Runcible Spoon*. *I Was Their American Dream* is a tribute to her immigrant family and their experiences. Here, Gharib navigates her dual heritage as the daughter of a Catholic Filipino mother and a Muslim Egyptian father while adapting to white American culture. Her childhood memories and adolescence are vividly expressed through her red, white, and blue color palette and playful drawing style.

Follow on Instagram @malakagharib; Twitter @MalakaGharib

ROBIN HA

Cook Korean!, 2016

Graphic novel and cookbook

Robin Ha moved from South Korea to the U.S. at fourteen. She graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design and moved to New York City to start a career in the fashion industry. Ha now works as a cartoonist, textile designer, illustrator, and painter in Falls Church, Virginia. *Cook Korean!* is a hybrid graphic novel/cookbook contains recipes and colorful illustrations of Korean dishes.

Follow on Instagram @robinhaart

LOÏS MAILOU JONES

Negro Folk Tales, 1938
Children's reader

Lois Mailou Jones (1905-1998) was an influential artist and educator, teaching at the Howard University art department for forty-seven years. Jones created wide-ranging artwork that reflects influences from her extensive international travel. This children's reader combines illustrations by Jones with text by Helen Adele Johnson, a prominent African American educator who worked in the South during the first part of the twentieth century.

JIHAE KWON

A Different Kind of Carousel, 2014; To the New Land, 2014
Artists' books

Born and raised in South Korea, Jihae Kwon was a graphic designer for eleven years before getting her MA in D.C. at the Art and the Book Program at the Corcoran College of Art + Design (now part of George Washington University). She teaches at the Visual Arts Program at Brigham Young University in Hawaii. A twist on the idea of a carousel as a joyous and carefree space (and on the book arts term for this form), Kwon's *A Different Kind of Carousel* depicts human-eating plants and animals, subverting expectations in hand-painted gouache. Inspired by the cosmologies revealed by Mexico's archaeological wonders, *To the New Land* depicts places of worship, movements of the sun and stars, and imagery of farming and animals to tell the story of a journey taken by indigenous people to the Americas.

SARAH MATTHEWS

transient, 2014
Artist's book

Sarah Matthews is a 2016 MA Art and the Book graduate from the Corcoran School of the Arts & Design at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Matthews teaches bookbinding at Anne Arundel Community College and printmaking at the Columbia Art Center and the Frederick Book Arts Center, all in Maryland. Her work explores her own experience growing up as a military child, traveling and living without roots. This work, one of a series of three, describes her movement through the DMV, New York City, North Carolina, and Japan.

Follow on Instagram @iamsarahmatthews



transient, Sarah Matthews,
Courtesy of the Artist

MARÍA VERÓNICA SAN MARTÍN

In Their Memory, 2012

Artist's book

San Martín is a Chilean-born, New York-based artist working in printmaking, sculpture, performance art, and bookmaking. She received her MA in D.C. at the Art and the Book Program at the Corcoran College of Art + Design (now part of George Washington University). *In Their Memory*, based on San Martín's archival research, documents the disappearance and torture of Chilean citizens under General Augusto Pinochet, who ruled Chile from 1973 to 1990. Her printmaking process explores the role of memory in creating "sculptural memorials" and documenting the violence under Pinochet's dictatorship. The work invites viewers to grapple with the erasure of the tumultuous era's human rights injustices and violent political history, and the resurgence of political repression today.

Follow on Instagram @san.martin.maria

GAIL SHAW-CLEMONS

Old Money, 2013

Artist's book

Born in Washington, D.C., printmaker, artist, and activist Shaw-Clemons received her MFA in printmaking from the University of Maryland. Shaw-Clemons has exhibited her work in the United States, Brazil, Norway, Sweden, China and Ireland. Her self-published book investigates the term "old money" as representing a "privileged, untouchable class of people" whose wealth is intertwined with the historical role of her African ancestors.

JULIE SHEAH

Dream Book 1, 2014

Artist's book

Originally from Texas, Julie Sheah is a D.C.-based graphic designer and book artist working in both traditional studio art methods and digital practices. She received her MA in Art and the Book at the Corcoran School of the Arts & Design at George Washington University. *Dream Book 1* is a meditation on man-made environmental degradation in which Sheah visualizes trees taking their revenge on humans.

Follow on Tumblr @juliegoesnuts

CLARISSA T. SLIGH

Wrongly Bodied Two, 2004; Reading Dick and Jane with Me, 1989

Artists' books

Born in Washington, D.C., and now working in Asheville, North Carolina, Sligh has worked as an artist, lecturer, and essayist. Throughout her career, Sligh has explored "the cultural, historical, personal and political to explore concepts of memory and transmutation, and perceptions of boundaries and identity: themes that have roots in her own experiences." *Wrongly Bodied Two* relates the stories of Jake, a present-day white man who transitions from female to male, and Ellen Craft, a nineteenth-century black woman, who escapes slavery by passing as a white man. In photographing Jake, Sligh explores society's response to the act of changing one's identity and re-examines her own fears of crossing the boundaries of gender, race, and class.

RENÉE STOUT

Seven Windows, 1996

Iris prints on paper

District of Columbia resident Renée Stout grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and received her BFA from Carnegie Mellon University in 1980. Stout has drawn inspiration from the legacy of the African Diaspora and the urban landscape of D.C. to create mixed media pieces that encourage "self-examination and self-empowerment." In *Seven Windows*, Stout offers a glimpse into the world of her alter ego, Madam Ching, a mysterious fortune-teller and root worker. Arranged in the form of a journal, this artist's book features individual pages with texts describing Madam Ching's daily activities—brewing perfumes and love potions, buying and selling exotic herbs, and reading letters.

Follow on Instagram @reneestout5

RUTH TAM

Women of Washington, 2018

Zine

Ruth Tam is a writer and illustrator based in Washington, D.C., where she works as a public radio producer and podcast host. *Women of Washington* features short biographies of iconic women from the District of Columbia, including poet Dolores Kendrick and artist Alma Thomas.

Follow on Twitter @ruthetam

CAROLYN TOYE

The D.C. I See, 2018

Photobook

As a native Washingtonian and photographer, Toye seeks to document the rapidly gentrifying urban landscape around her. Toye's photographs record the beauty she sees in the city in which she grew up. Through simultaneously realistic and abstract images of a rapidly changing Washington, she preserves city views that some have vowed to eradicate.

Follow on Instagram & Twitter @carolyntoye

JENNIFER WHITE-JOHNSON

Knox Rox, 2018

Homie House Press

Photo zine

Born in Washington, D.C., artist and activist Jennifer White-Johnson received her MFA in graphic design from Maryland Institute College of Art. White-Johnson became an educator in art and design at Bowie State University. White-Johnson's pedagogical practices emphasize social justice and fostering diversity, equality, and inclusion. *Knox Rox* combines text and photographs to celebrate the author's five-year-old son Knox, who has autism. White-Johnson is dedicated to bringing visibility to neurodiversity issues among children of color through photography.

Follow on Instagram & Twitter @jtknoxroxs



Knox Rox, Jennifer-White Johnson,
Betty Boyd Dettre Library and Research Center,
National Museum of Women in the Arts