



WOMEN'S CAUCUS for ART
DC, Maryland & Virginia Chapter

Newsletter



Your Wild and Wonderful Life

Manju Sadarangani , Chapter President

While guiding a yoga class last month, I was reminded of Mary Oliver's iconic last line from her poem, The Summer Day,

"Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"

Ruminating on the line plunged me into a slight panic. I found myself questioning if I was doing enough. Luckily, I made the sage decision to go back and actually *read* the rest of the poem. I laughed as I realized how very incorrectly I had heard Mary Oliver. Here is the poem in its entirety:

Who made the world?

Who made the swan, and the black bear?

Who made the grasshopper?

This grasshopper, I mean—

the one who has flung herself out of the grass,

the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,

who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—

who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.

Now she lifts her pale forearms

and thoroughly washes her face.

Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.

I don't know exactly what a prayer is.

I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down

into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,

how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,

which is what I have been doing all day.

Tell me, what else should I have done?

Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?

Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?

—Mary Oliver
(Source: Library of Congress)





Your Wild and Wonderful Life, Cont.

Of course, I had completely misunderstood the poet's intent. Mary Oliver stresses the importance of rest, of idleness, of observation, of quiet introspection — valuing moments that are typically deemed wasted and unproductive. As a woman, perhaps especially as a woman of color, I feel routinely pressured to justify my self-worth in terms of productivity. Anything less than intense and measurable results make me feel guilty, lazy, even immoral.

What about our practice as creatives? So much of being a creative is pondering, planning and practice. Hidden endeavors which may not result in a piece, a sale, an exhibit.

Winter is traditionally a time when everything in nature rests. Everything slows down and gives itself a moment to hibernate, to replenish. We don't typically judge trees for their bare leaves in winter, or sneer at lakes for their frozen surfaces. We trust that they are doing what they need, even if it seems idle. The more I thought about the brilliant Mary Oliver, I decided to give myself permission to reflect, to relax, to be idle, without sharp self-judgment.

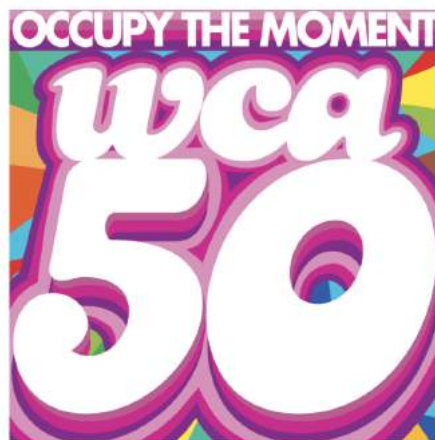
I am delighted to be part of a newly elected board, committed to building on the solid foundation our outgoing board members left us. Holly, Barbara, Rosemary, and

Jeanine, left us in wonderful shape, engaging in necessary behind the scenes modernization efforts such as edits to our antiquated board bylaws and website. Now, it's incumbent upon us as the new board to reflect upon the feedback we have received from our membership, and work toward giving them a DC Chapter committed to their needs.

In this monumental **50th year of the Women's Caucus for Art**, I invite you to take a moment to pause, and ponder on our goals and direction. Do it without guilt and share your vision with us with integrity. Know that you're doing tremendous things with your wild and wonderful life. This community exists to support your creative gifts.

Cheers!

Manju



Our anniversary theme:

“Occupy the Moment: Embracing Our History, Enhancing Our Impact”

Celebrates our strengths and accomplishments and explains how we are moving to embrace new agendas and support emerging voices going forward.

The mission of the Women's Caucus for Art is to create community through art, education, and social activism. WCA is committed to recognizing the contribution of women in the arts; providing women with leadership opportunities and professional development; expanding networking and exhibition opportunities for women; supporting local, national and global art activism; and advocating for equity in the arts for all.



National Meeting of the Women's Caucus for Art

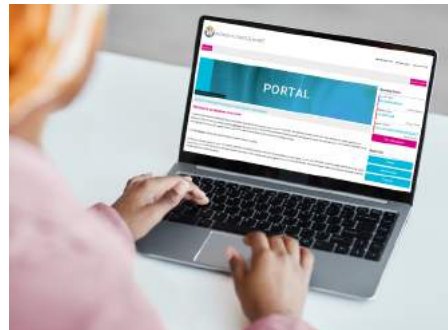
Ellen Maidman-Tanner, Treasurer

On February 13th, representatives from the national leadership of WCA met with Zoomed representatives from chapters across the country and discussed issues ranging from this year's canceled annual gathering to national initiatives to regional chapter reports.

Laura Morrison, WCA's president and Alyce Haliday McQueen, our VP of Chapter Relations welcomed all, updating attendees about the various long-distanced/ Zoomed activities that are taking place in lieu of the annual in-person Chicago gathering. (The National Meeting had to be canceled due to the Omicron spike this winter.) Of note were the two exhibitions taking place in Chicago: '**Occupy the Moment, Intersect History with Impact**', on view now at the Bridgeport Art Center and online through Feb 25, along with the '**Best of Women Show**', on display through March 13, at Stola Contemporary Gallery and on Vimeo here. Other aspects of

the parceled out meeting will be posted through announcements and on the national website.

There was a significant focus on the new member portal on the national WCA website, as this will streamline new member access to the organization.



Karin Luner, Director of WCA operations (and our only paid staff) has taken it upon herself to help the chapters Membership Chairs and Treasurers become acquainted with the new, multi-use platform.

Chapter presentations were delivered in Regional breakout rooms (DC meeting with Georgia, the Carolinas, Alabama and Florida, as members of the SE Region),

and that discussion revealed the tremendous variance in chapter strength and objectives. Despite that diversity, it was clear that our region's focus was on new membership growth focusing on younger members, and within that cohort, members of color. Exhibition opportunities are key to all, as well as a better understanding of how technology can foster communications and activity, particularly when circumstances (like Covid-19) force the use of it. One great comment from the Regional breakout was the mentoring of younger members for leadership roles in chapters.

Listening to other chapter board members, it became clear that our activities and 'staffing' are more robust than some other chapters. Having a robust volunteer organization is clearly predicated on the sheer will of those who choose greater involvement, and a recognized set of objectives for an agreed upon plan of action.

@wcadcorg Instagram feed

Tag @wcadcorg to get your Instagram post on our story!

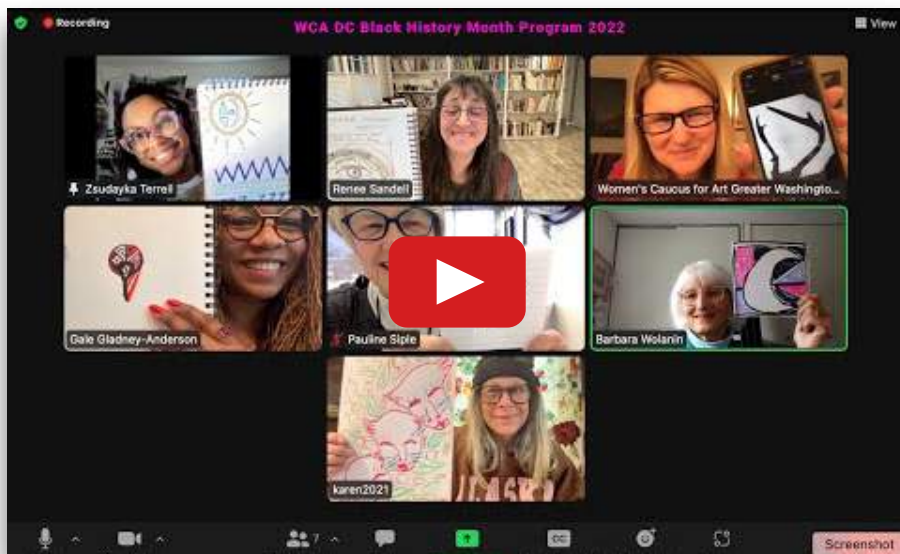


February Program Celebrated Black History, Art, & Women

In celebration of Black History Month and the contributions of women of color to the arts, WCA DC member **Zsudayka Terrell** led us on a journey of discovery, with an impromptu art assignment!!

Also included, video interviews with women of color speaking about their art and inspiration.

Click on the YouTube link below to watch!



History of Black History Month

Black history is American history. Black History Month in February provides an opportunity to discuss and reflect on the role Black Americans have played in shaping the United States.

It was [Carter G. Woodson](#), the "father of Black history," and historian who first set out in 1926 to designate a time to

promote and educate people about Black history and culture in public schools.

Fifty years later, President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month during the country's 1976 bicentennial. Ford called upon Americans to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often

neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history."

February was chosen primarily because the second week of the month coincides with the birthdays of both Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass.



Maxine Cable Retrospective

Sebrof-Forbes Cultural Arts Center, Kensington, Maryland

Jen Packard, Communications

Maxine loved the exotic.

“She was part of that whole quest for finding whatever the essence was of something,” said Claudia Vess, first Coordinator (president) of the original Greater DC chapter for the Women’s Caucus for Art (1978).

Claudia and Lucy Blankstein, Executive Director II of the Washington Womens’ Arts Center, led a tour and discussion of the Maxine Cable retrospective for members in January at the [Sebrof-Forbes Cultural Arts Center in Kensington, MD](#). The retrospective was comprised of more than 80 artworks, assemblages, sculptures, and collagraph prints, from Cable’s work through the decades.

Speaking of the era of Cable’s heyday as an influential artist, Vess recalled, ***“In the 60s and 70s, both revolutionary decades, people really were looking for something; for the “it” ... The one equation that would explain everything.”***

Maxine Cable’s own quest for ‘it’ involved turning from color painting to installations and assemblages of found objects and impressions gathered everywhere from Delaware beaches to Asia. To Cable, objects served to express life’s ephemerality, as metaphors



for the spiritual experiences she found in ancient and contemporary cultural and religious beliefs and rituals. Her work also examined circumstances of war, peace, ecology, and her own spiritual enlightenment as it developed.

As Installation Art came to prominence in the 1970s, Cable was a pioneer of this conceptual medium. In 1974, she was one of the founders of Gallery 10, Ltd., a prominent gallery in Dupont Circle known for offering local, national, and international artists opportunities to exhibit in all media. Up to this era, women were not represented equally in museums and galleries, which Gallery 10 aimed to change with their nondiscriminatory approach to art and artists.

Early in her artistic career, Cable visited Egypt and became enchanted by the history of the

culture and its symbolism. This illuminating pilgrimage would inspire more journeys to include India and Nepal, where she was introduced to Buddhism. Her husband Jim, also an artist, supported her work and together they embraced the teachings of Buddha.

“Maxine was on this kind of other search,” said Vess,

“She was not that verbal in terms of what she was doing. It was about sensibility, and the relationships of these things that she would put together. She would keep rearranging them, and adding to them or taking them apart until she got the sensibility that she was looking for.”



Retrospective, Cont.

Among the various 2 and 3-D pieces, the retrospective contained hundreds of baskets both unusual and ordinary, that Cable collected and stacked ritualistically with a critical eye juxtaposing textures, shapes and color, some towering above eye-level.

Further investigation revealed that the stacks, topped with inventive finials, conceptually and impressionistically, had been transformed into "stupas." A stupa is a mound-like structure containing relics. It is believed that when one is before a stupa, the face is turned away from ego and toward enlightenment. One could surmise from the sheer number of these stacks that Maxine Cable was very much enlightened.



"Stupas"

Cable and her husband spent a lot of time on the beaches of Delaware, where she collected driftwood, horseshoe crab shells and other objects brought in by the tides. Her "Self Portrait" is an assemblage of such finds, including a textile reminiscent of a 1920s flapper dress with sequins. A horseshoe crab shell appears in the vicinity of the heart. An homage to a creature that has not changed across the millennia? And if so, by extension, to women's role in society as well?



"Self Portrait", Mixed Media



"Self Portrait", detail of horseshoe crab shell



This small horseshoe crab shell appears fossilized, encrusted with smaller shells. Vess explained,

“She found it that way. Maxine had hundreds of horseshoe crab shells in her studio that she incorporated into installations dealing with struggles and war. To her, the larger ones also suggested armored tanks, protectors of the natural world... rebelling or fighting against humans and their climate destruction.”

In contrast to her spiritual enlightenment, Cable injected symbolism of war into many of her installations and mixed media works. During the peak of her artistic career as a creator and a gallerist, the reverberations of the Vietnam War inspired her to seek different ways of pursuing the question: *why does man continue to create and to destroy?*

“AP Ghost Forms I” and *“AP Ghost Forms II”*, are collagraphs whose matrix is a collage of thin wood strips, cardboard, string and a feather, many familiar elements also found in *“Self Portrait”*.

In printmaking, a *ghost* is the second print pulled from a matrix without re-inking. The rearrangements of the forms and color variations, bold cadmium and cool blues, within the series leave interpretation to the viewer. A closer look reveals that they are mirror opposites, the feather reminding one of the old saying, “Feathers appear when angels are near”? Is Cable inserting



“AP Ghost Forms I” and *“AP Ghost Forms II”*, Collagraphs

a breath, a sense of her own enlightenment within this formalized arrangement? Perhaps it is an appeal to faith or peace?

Maxine Cable (1931-2018) was a pioneering installation artist and gallerist from an era when women artists were seldom featured in solo museum exhibitions. For 36 years she championed exhibition opportunities, especially for women artists at Gallery 10, and was a committed

supporter of the National Museum of Women in the Arts.

As the gallery visit concluded, it was evident that Cable left behind a body of art representing a lifetime of experiences and personal growth. Striking, too, was the fact that her two colleagues, Claudia Vess and Lucy Blankstein, in curating this exhibition, took the time to reassemble Stupa Village. One could be so fortunate as to have a retrospective, and such good friends.

Right:
Members of
WCA DC
gather at
Sebrof-Forbes
Art Cultural
Center





WCA DC Exhibition Schedule 2022 - 2023

Sandra Davis, Exhibitions

WCA DC Members, let's get excited for our 2022 exhibition schedule!

The exhibition committee has worked very hard in securing some fantastic venues to showcase our member's incredible work. Please pay special attention to our website, calendar, and newsletters to learn more details about the themes, submission dates and deadlines. The exhibition committee is looking forward to your participation!

August 1 - 30, 2022

Friendship Heights Community Center

- Theme: "Songs That Make Us Move"
- In Person Exhibit
- Juror: Martina Dodd

September 7 - November 16, 2022

Sandy Spring Museum

- Theme: "What is Ours?"
- In Person and Open to ALL WCA Members
- Push for New Memberships
- Scholarship Fundraising
- Juror: Risikat "Kat" Okedeyi

January 30 - March 31, 2023

City of Gaithersburg, Activity Center, Bohrer Park

- Theme: "Our Voices Carry Weight"
- In Person and Open to ALL Regional Women Artists
- Juror: Christina Massey



MEMBERS:

Don't forget to post your exhibits on our website! Click

[HERE](#)



Member Happenings



Sarah Schneiderman

The Best of Women Art Exhibition
Stola Contemporary Art Gallery
1/27/22 - 3/12/22

3738 W. Irving Park Rd., Chicago, IL 60618
<https://stolacontemporaryart.com/current-exhibit/>



Undercurrents

Ely Center for Contemporary Art
3/6/22 - 4/24/22

51 Trumbull St., New Haven, CT 06510
<https://elycenter.org/undercurrent>



Cynthia Farrell Johnson

Hill Center Regional Juried Art Exhibition
1/11/22 - 3/27/22

921 Pennsylvania Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20003
<https://www.hillcenterdc.org/galleries/>



Ramona Davis

Testimony: African American Artist Collective
Nelson Atkins Museum of Art
9/20/21 - 3/27/22

4525 Oak St., Kansas City, MO 64111
<https://nelson-atkins.org/exhibitions/testimony/>

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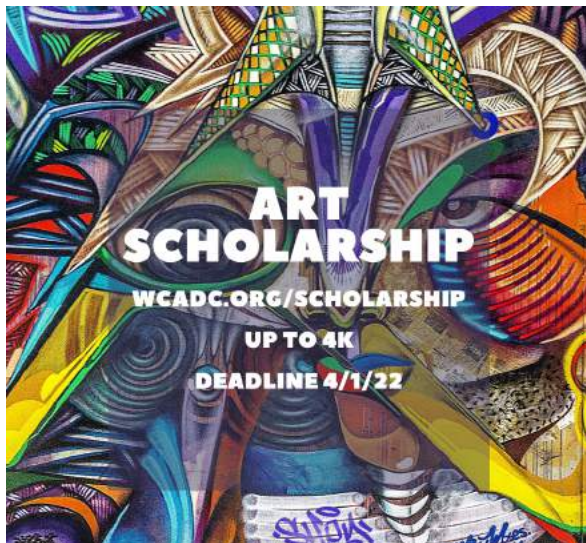
Jen Packard



WOMEN'S CAUCUS *for* ART
DC, Maryland & Virginia Chapter

Visual Arts Scholarship

Awards up to \$4,000



Eligibility:

- Must live in the DC, Maryland, or Virginia area
- Student currently in 12th grade, 1st or 2nd year in college
- Female-identifying, Black, Indigenous or person of color

How to Apply:

Submit 3 original pieces of art and complete the online application.

Applicants are judged on creativity, originality, and quality.

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED ONLINE BY 11:59 PM APRIL 1, 2022

Scan the QR code above for more information or visit:

<https://www.wcadc.org/scholarship>