Nicole Crowder is a furniture designer and the independent upholsterer behind Nicole Crowder Upholstery. The studio—established in 2017 and based in Washington, D.C.—specializes in designing bold custom and bespoke furniture for homes, hotels, and design studios. Nicole sources and hand upholsters one-of-kind vintage furniture and mixes it with contemporary and eclectic textiles that best suit a space.

Her work has been featured in Design*Sponge, Modern Luxury DC, The Washington Post Express, Washingtonian, DC Modern Luxe magazine, Apartment Therapy. Her furniture has been showcased in West Elm. Previously Nicole was a photo editor in the publishing and tech industry for The Washington Post, AARP, and Netflix.
Quilter Sandy Barrett Hassan greets the day early, sometimes at 4 AM, eager to be among her quilting fabrics and patterns and colors—the bolder and more ebullient the colors, the better. What began for this native Washingtonian as gift-making for friends in the 1970s, has now blossomed into a serious art form. Her quilts are exhibited in museums, featured in books, and are currently for sale in the gift shop of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture. The District of Columbia Historian commissioned Sandy to create a quilt celebrating the District’s Bicentennial. A former member of the African Heritage Dancers and Drummer troupe, Hassan no longer dances in the traditional sense of the word. Instead, she says, “My quilts do the dancing for me.”
Njena Surae Jarvis, multi-media sculptor and performance artist, was born in Washington, DC. She attended The Duke Ellington School of the Arts and graduated from The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art with a Bachelors in Fine Arts.

Initially, Njena worked mainly with costume-based sculpture, large cut paper backdrops and other fabricated “props,” used to satirically illustrate old stereotypes. Jarvis transitioned from using the body as an armature/structure for these costumes, to the body as a literal document of one’s inherited legacy. She now utilizes the casting of the body and objects as a vehicle to inform a larger conversation about identity and myth. She currently lives and works in Washington, DC.
Morgan Davis is a fashion designer, graphic designer, photographer, and videographer and proud graduate of Howard University. Originally from Michigan, she has made the DMV area her home for the past 8 years. The arts have always been a large part of Morgan’s life. At the age of 17, she started her first plus-size clothing line, where she would sew custom pieces for women sizes 14 and up. This business was a full-fledged catalyst for her current career, providing custom clothing, business development, graphic design, marketing, and photography services. In addition to providing freelance services to a variety of businesses throughout the DMV and abroad, she is also the founder and CEO of Distinctly Creative, founded in 2015. The business focuses on providing opportunities and platforms for black creatives and entrepreneurs. Morgan constantly strives to combine her love for the arts and her passion for providing innovative ways to help black creative entrepreneurs succeed professionally -- because representation matters.
Hadiya Williams is an art director and intuitive visual arts maker. She is also the owner of Black Pepper Paperie, based in Washington, DC, a creative maker’s studio that focuses on boutique event design and one-of-a-kind handmade clayware and printed works.

Her work has been featured at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, and recently her letterpress invitation for a wedding dubbed the "Blackest Wedding of 2016" has been accepted into the permanent collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American Art and Culture. With a background in graphic design and art direction, Hadiya uses intuition, culture and design to create unique pieces and memorable experiences.
Cherryl T. Cooley

Poet/Playwright Cherryl (/churl/) T. Cooley has published two single-author volumes of poems; Utterance: A Museology of Kin and Exquisite Heats. Her chapbook Chops was published by Nexus Press as a part of the Fulton County Arts Council’s DIALOG Fellowship and is in the Museum of Modern Art’s permanent collection. Her poems have been published in journals and magazines widely, including in Poetry and Essence. She appeared on The Oprah Show on the “Heart of a Woman” Book Club segment filmed in the home of the late Dr. Maya Angelou. In the fall of 2017, her poem “Percussion” was selected by the Lincoln Center for Performing Arts in New York to accompany a concerto by the group Sō Percussion. As a poem maker, Cherryl is deeply bonded to the music of language, folklore and myth, “new South” culture (especially that of her native Carolinas), women’s stories, historical icons and contemporary perceptions of race. Although she is a champion of the book as a creative outcome, she is a huge advocate for moving poetry #BeyondtheBook.
Antonio McAfee is a photographer raised and based in Baltimore, MD. He received his BFA in Fine Art Photography from the Corcoran College of Art and Design. Shortly after, he earned his MFA in Photography from the University of Pennsylvania. His fascination with history, portraiture, and what makes photographs drives his activities.

Antonio McAfee’s work addresses the complexity of representation. Through appropriating and manipulating historical portraits, he engages in prescribed views of individuals and rework images to provide an alternate - more layered image and concept of the people depicted. His photographs oscillate between formal considerations (modifying the print’s surface) and imaginary potential (establishing new back stories and roles) of the photographed sitters. Antonio currently teaches at American University.
Exhibit Photographer
Jai Williams

Head upstairs to see a collection of her photographs!

Jai is a photographer and author whose photography has been seen in publications such as the Washington Post, Serious Eats, Michelin Guide, and Ad Week to name a few. She has photographed for both domestic and international tourism boards. Additionally, her work was selected as a semi-finalist in competitions such as Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington's RAMMYs in Focus, and The Historical Society of D.C.'s For the Record.

Contributing her photography to books like New York One-Food Wonders and Discovering Vintage Washington, DC, Jai's creative spirit focuses on the food, beverage, and travel industries. She has also co-authored a book on the plantations of Virginia, and enjoys researching as well as photographing the South’s past, present, and future.