

t r a n s f o r m e r

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Artise Fletcher: *Commemorative Strands* *Transformer's 19th Annual DC Artist Solo Exhibition*

September 17 – October 22, 2022

Opening Reception: Saturday, September 17, 4–6pm

Programming details below.



Transformer is pleased to present *Commemorative Strands*, an exhibition featuring textiles, photography, and video art by Artise Fletcher in her first solo exhibition. *Commemorative Strands* will explore the sociological meanings and issues surrounding hair, especially in Black culture, through the presentation of large tapestries that are the artists' reimagined versions of commemorative cloths using synthetic Kanekalon hair, along with photographs and projected video works.

Fletcher's inspiration stems from her recent research on textile artists in different African countries as well as from the woman weavers of Chinchero, Peru, in which textiles are used as a form of expression, especially for marginalized voices. These various commemorative clothes commonly feature intricate patterns, symbolic colors, and photographic imagery that – especially in African fabric prints – honor individuals, political figures, events, and more.

In *Commemorative Strands*, Fletcher is reinterpreting these traditional cloths to highlight individual stories of Black women's personal journeys and relationships with hair using Kanekalon hair, a synthetic hair composed of fine plastic fibers created in various colors. In depicting modern subjects in her commemorative cloths, Fletcher investigates the history of Black hairstyles and the societal conventions of beauty, and generates contemporary conversations about the various sociopolitical implications that hair has.

Commemorative Strands includes several public programs that will raise public awareness about the nuanced conversations surrounding hair, including a workshop that encourages visitors to reflect upon their personal experiences with hair, and a panel exploring the connections between health and hair.

Commemorative Strands is Transformer's 19th Annual DC Artist Solo Exhibition, continuing our commitment to highlight the work of exceptional DC-based emerging artists through solo exhibition platforms.

Artise Fletcher is a self-taught visual artist born and raised in Washington, DC. Fletcher's practice explores the relationship Black women have with hair – how it affects their health, identity, self-esteem, and environment, and unpacks the significance of hair as a personal form of expression. Utilizing synthetic Kanekalon hair, Fletcher narrates individual stories to assert our unique nature. Through Fletcher's use of imagery and unconventional textiles she celebrates inclusion through the narratives that unfold through her work.

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EXHIBITION PROGRAMMING:

- Sat., Sept. 17, 4–6pm: **OPENING RECEPTION**
- Tues., Sept. 20, 6pm: **ARTIST TALK**
Tune into @transformerdc to hear Artise Fletcher in conversation with Katie Lee, Transformer’s Exhibitions and Programs Manager, as they discuss Fletcher’s multidisciplinary practice, as well as conceptual and material elements of the exhibition.
- Sat., Oct. 1, 2–4pm: **STRENGTHENING OUR BOND WORKSHOP**
Create your own mini-commemorative cloth by designing a symbol to reflect your personal interests and experience related to hair. At Transformer from 2–4pm.
- Wed., Oct. 12, 6–8pm: **STRENGTHENING OUR BOND WORKSHOP**
Create your own mini-commemorative cloth by designing a symbol to reflect your personal interests and experience related to hair. At Transformer from 6–8pm.

Exhibition Hours: Wednesday – Saturday, 12–6pm, and by appointment.

Image Credit: Artise Fletcher

t r a n s f o r m e r is a Washington, DC based 501 (c) 3 artist-centered, non-profit visual arts organization. Founded in June 2002 by artists & arts organizers, Transformer provides a consistent, supportive, and professional platform for emerging artists to explore and present experimental artistic concepts, build audiences for their work, and advance their careers. A catalyst and advocate for contemporary artists and emergent expression in the visual arts, Transformer connects and promotes emerging visual artists within regional, national and international contexts through innovative exhibition and programs partnerships with a broad & diverse range of individual and organizational partners.

t r a n s f o r m e r’s 2022/23 Exhibition Series and programs are supported by: The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, Corcoran Women’s Committee, The CrossCurrents Foundation, The DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities/NEA, The Robert Lehman Foundation, The Sachiko Kuno Foundation, The National Endowment for the Visual Arts, Truist Foundation, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Transformer’s Board and Advisory Council, and The Visionary Leaders Circle – a growing group of individual donors & corporate sponsors.

Commemorative Strands Exhibition Partners include:



Tiwani Heritage brings you ethically-sourced, sustainable, premium quality synthetic hair extensions which emulate a range of natural hair textures and styles. Our name embodies exactly what we stand for; drawing cultural identity from our ancestors. 'Tiwani' is based on the Yoruba phrase for 'our heritage'. It is a spiritual claim stating what belongs to us.