


ARTS

The Little Art Galleries That Could and Do

Check out these art exhibitions off the beaten path.

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Artise Fletcher's Commemorative Strands at Transformer

There's no shortage of blockbusters coming to D.C.'s museums and galleries this fall. The Air and Space Museum will reopen on Oct. 14 following an extended construction project. The [Rubell Museum DC](#) will have its hotly anticipated opening on Oct. 29, creating a new venue for contemporary art in the city. And selfie snappers are sure to assemble for the last few months of *One With Eternity: Yayoi Kusama in the Hirshhorn Collection* and *Mexican Geniuses*, a new immersive experience featuring the work of **Frida Kahlo** and **Diego Rivera**. These outings are fun and all, but some of the most interesting and unexpected art can be found away from the crowds and tucked into some of D.C.'s coziest spaces.

One of the tiniest of these is Transformer, a gallery whose emphasis on emerging and experimental artists has made it one of the most exciting places in the city for artistic exhibitions and events. In June, Transformer celebrated its 20th anniversary, and it will continue to have special events through the end of the year. Starting Sept. 17, the gallery will open its *19th Annual DC Artist Solo Exhibition*, which features *Commemorative Strands* by **Artise Fletcher** this season. The D.C.-born and based artist has created textiles, films, and photographs around the topic of Black women's hair. Many of the works feature hair as a material or storytelling device. In addition to the show, a series of programming invites audience members to consider wider cultural meanings and personal feelings around hair and beauty. Events include a panel and discussion as well as a hands-on activity to make your own commemorative cloth.

The spaces at 52 O Street Studios aren't just used as studios—**Amy Morton** has hosted her contemporary art gallery Morton Fine Art there for the past four years. Without a street-level entry, the gallery is open by appointment only, which is great for gallery-goers who want to linger over the work uninterrupted, or interested buyers who want to spend some time with an artist's work. MFA represents a wide variety of artists from around the world, as well as a good slice who work in the D.C. area. This fall, MFA has two exhibits that capture the best of these worlds. *Take Me to the Water* features mixed-media works by **Kesha Bruce**, an artist and activist whose bright works explore artmaking as a form of slowness and self care. Following that, **Natalie Cheung's** exhibit *Made of Light* opens, showcasing her experiments with camera-less photography using light sensitive paper, movement, and stencil techniques.

Entertaining and dinner parties are extremely in style, and perhaps no dinner party will be more stylish than an exhibit of tablescapes at Friends Artspace in Arlington. *Mise En Place* continues the gallery's habit of showing functional art and design objects as well as fine art in the garage that curator **Margaret Bakke** has converted into a miniature gallery. A large table fills most of the space, and all sorts of tableware covers every available centimeter of the surface. There's place settings of course, but also goblets, candlesticks, mugs, sugar bowls, tureens, pitchers, vases, butter dishes, floral arrangements, chandeliers, and more. The exhibition's announcement proclaims, "people come and go but glassware is basically forever." Local artists and designers including **Hadiya Williams**, **Catherine Satterlee**, and **Dannia Hakki** are among those who get a seat at this table.

Commemorative Strands runs through Oct. 22 at Transformer, 1404 P St. NW. transformerdc.org. Free. Take Me to the Water runs through Oct. 11 at Morton Fine Art, 52 O St. NW. mortonfineart.com. Free, by appointment. Made of Light runs Oct. 15 through Nov. 12 at Morton Fine Art, 52 O St. NW. mortonfineart.com. Free, by appointment. *Mise En Place* runs through Dec. 10 at Friends Artspace, 2400 North Edgewood St. Arlington. friendsartspace.com. Free, by appointment.