

2024 INDEPENDENT PRACTITIONER FELLOWSHIP PROJECTS

Jon Gann: *Reframing 20th Century DC Artists*

A series of short documentary films chronicling the lives and works of DC-based artists to introduce them to new audiences.

Paul Grant: *Seven Rising: On Oral History of the Ward 7 D.C. Council Primary*

SEVEN RISING is an oral history project and documentary by Washington, D.C.-based filmmaker Paul Grant. It explores a moment of generational change in political leadership in Ward 7-a predominately African American community of 28 economically diverse neighborhoods in Southeast and Northeast, Washington, D.C. The project also examines how this local primary in a predominantly Black community mirrors our fractured and contentious national politics and how this moment might shape the future of this area.

Urmila Janardan: *Documenting the Woodner Tenants Union*

The Woodner is the largest apartment building in DC with over 1,000 units and 2,000 people in Northwest DC. It is also the last bastion of affordable housing in a neighborhood that is rapidly gentrifying. Through this project I aim to archive the work of the Woodner Tenants Union (WTU) and produce a documentary about how the tenants union builds community as it fights for dignified, affordable housing. By documenting and sharing WTU's work, I hope to inspire DC residents to think expansively and creatively about how they might foster community in their neighborhoods. I hope to encourage people to see themselves as a part of DC history, much like the residents of the Woodner.

Kristy L: "We Were Here Rockin It!" Zine Project

Women and non-binary people have been rocking DJ decks for decades in DC--- weaving community spaces and making cultural waves! The dance cultures they have contributed to have been spaces of joy, escape, connection, and cultural innovation for countless Washingtonians, yet these stories are not always considered in the official history of our city. Through the fun visual format of a self-published zine, you can explore interviews with DC Djs since the 1970s as well as the stories told through their keepsake flyers, photos, record covers and more.

Dwayne Lawson-Brown: *Host With The Most: How To Curate The Vibe!*

Do You have what it takes to be a great host? Navigating venues, audiences - all while empowering artists to share their truth. In this oral history project, Dwayne Lawson-Brown interviews hosts spanning 1998 - 2024, collecting often unheard accounts regarding the backend of open mic events. Most know the freedom of expression - but what about disciplinary action within the spoken word community when someone commits harmful acts? How does the relationship with a venue shift the tone of the event for the audience and host? What role do places like Busboys and Poets play in the DC poetry ecosystem? This will culminate in the release of a book detailing a "Host Philosophy" for those looking to break onto the scene.

Tracy Chiles McGhee: *In Zora's Footsteps: Narratives of DC*

The project "In Zora's Footsteps: Narratives of DC" explores the rich tapestry of Washington, DC's Black-centered language through educational and writing workshops, coupled with the creation of a digital compilation of selected works from participants. Drawing inspiration from Zora Neale Hurston's literary legacy, this initiative seeks to mirror Hurston's preservation of Black cultural expressions while highlighting the importance of storytelling in understanding the human experience. By fostering a dialogue around DC's narratives, we ensure the city's stories continue to be shared, valued, and preserved.

Benji de la Piedra: *Chocolate City Editor: How Herbert Denton, Jr. and the Washington Post City Desk Storified DC's Long 1970s*

As part of a larger effort to write the biography of Washington Post journalist Herbert H. Denton Jr. (1943-1989), this project examines Denton's work as a Metro reporter and city editor between 1968 and 1980 as richly layered evidence of a complex and transformative period in DC's political and cultural history.

Luke Sutherland: *Lilac Peril*

Lilac Peril is a small DC-based publisher and literary journal that centers transgender writers, founded by Luke Sutherland and Andrea Morgan in 2023. We are excited by writing that addresses areas of trans experience commonly missed by the literary status quo. Publishing, an already opaque industry, is even more inaccessible to writers with marginalized identities. We want to empower trans writers to see themselves as the artists they are, throw fantastic public events, and, of course, publish more books. Lilac Peril released its first anthology in March 2024, and its second anthology is forthcoming in early 2025.