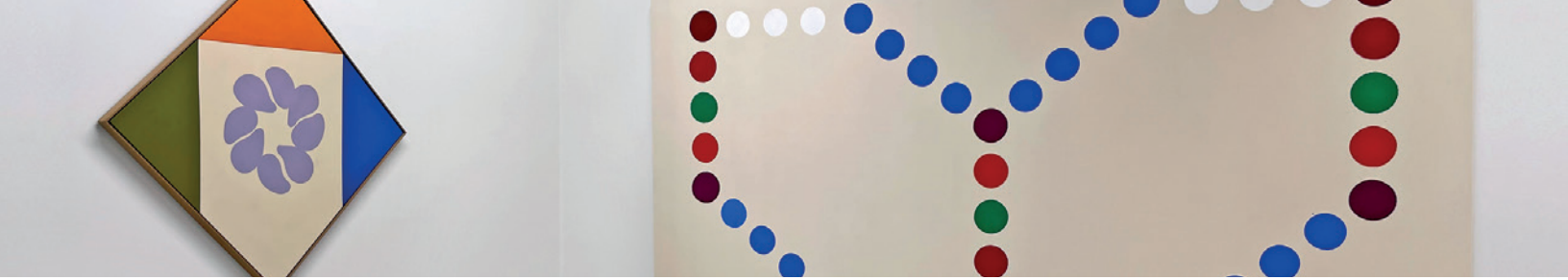


COLORS OF CONFIDENCE

JULY 16 - AUGUST 22, 2021



PFA



Colors of Confidence

PFA is pleased to present its new exhibition *Colors of Confidence*, showing eight Washington DC based abstract artists: Willem De Lopper, Thomas Downing, Tom Green, Simon Gouverneur, Jacob Kainen, Howard Mehring, Paul Reed, and Carroll Sockwell.

Some of the artists from these group, such as De Lopper, Downing, Green, Kainen, Mehring, and Reed, were directly associated with The Washington Color School and others clearly influenced by it as leading members of the DC arts community. Although these artists joined the movement at different stages, some like Downing, Mehring, and Reed, were founders who participated in their landmark exhibition *Washington Color Painters* at the Washington Gallery of Modern Art. Nevertheless, despite the evident differences in their art and the phases when they joined it, their work shows a commitment to explore the diverse tendencies of abstractionism and the experimental use of color.

Willem De Lopper (1932-2009), one of the most recognized artists in this group and a well-known member of the Washington Color School. He is represented in the exhibition by one of his classic pieces from 1975. It was from the period when he filled the surfaces with stripes of different widths made of diluted paint. This treatment produced the hallmark luminosity of his works during this phase. It is evident in this painting with an ochre tonality. There is spontaneity and flux in these pieces that suggest total freedom of conception. De Lopper was also a curator. He worked at Phillips in several positions, from a guard to Assistant Curator and the institution's Chief Curator.

Thomas Downing (1928-1985), a founding member of the Washington Color School, is represented by several paintings of his distinctive colorful dots. Two pieces, *Run* and *Split Possession* are from 1972, both reflect his interest in exploring the circle as a single element and as part of a unit. He used the geometric form in many ways in his compositions but always as a protagonist. Color is the other component of his images. Together, it creates a visual rhythm that generates an optical movement. His third piece, *Quadrille*, explores the circle differently by enlarging it.

Tom Green (1942–2012), was also associated to the Washington Color School and taught at the Corcoran College of Art and Design for 35 years. His career spans several decades, and the piece in this show is from 1997. It illustrates Green's work between abstraction and figuration when he created compartmentalized compositions with several sections. *Sightings* illustrates that formal solution, with five parts of apparently incongruous images.

Simon Gouverneur (1934-1990) is known for his compositions based on mysticism. His roots influenced him to take a multicultural approach to art and life, creating his cosmos from different sources. His work is full of symbolism taken from various spiritual sources such as Buddhism and Hinduism. Influenced by its mysticism, he included symbolic elements from them in his pieces. *Snare*, from 1986, shows an inherent tension between content and form through a rhombus inside a circle. His gridded works, like this one, contain symbols like the circles in this one. The *Snare* shows a grid-like similar to a board game with round chips.

Jacob Kainen (1909-2001) was a painter, printmaker, teacher, scholar, and curator. His piece in this exhibition, *Secretary General*, from 1972, corresponds to a period in his art when he returned to exploring form and color. This painting is an excellent example of the period, with a mixture of figurative and abstract elements coexisting on a floating and vivid atmosphere. Among Kaine's achievements as curator include his position at the U.S. National Museum from 1944 to 1966. He oversaw the prints department there. He also looked after prints and drawings for the National Collection of Fine Arts (now the Smithsonian's National Museum of American Art) from 1966 to 1970.

Howard Mehring (1931-1978) is another well-known member of the Washington Color School. His pieces are known for the bold colors applied in large areas of geometric shapes. His painting *Magenta Double*, from 1964, is a great example of his work from the period with its thick bands of brilliant and contrasting colors.

Paul Reed (1919-2015) was a founder of the Washington Color School, and similar to Green, also taught at the Corcoran School of Art. His piece in the show, *#12A*, from 1964, shows a biomorphic shape like a flower in the center. On three corners, colorful and contrasting triangles delimit the space. This piece is part of a series he did following the series of Mandalas paintings inspired by Jungian psychology. The central figure is a clear reminder of that influence.

Carroll Sockwell (1943-1992) is represented by an untitled piece from 1980. It is an excellent example of the artist's combination of geometric and gestural elements in his work. The piece is almost monochrome, mostly grey, and the composition is chaotic. The dark and stoic image conveys a sense of turmoil and uncertainty, transmitting anguish and despair. Sockwell also worked as curator at the Barnett-Aden Gallery in 1965-66.

Color of Confidence brings together once more a group of artists who lived and worked in the Washington D.C. area between the 1950s and the 1990s. Some of them taught art at the same school, influencing young artists who later became prominent in the art world. Others shared their artistic work with curatorial labor in recognized institutions in the area. Some of these artists are well recognized, while others are more under the radar despite their successful careers in their lifetime. However, these artists coexisted; many were friends and collaborators, like Mehring and Downing, who shared a studio for a few years. Despite all the differences in their circumstances, they developed their art within the same parameters and constrictions of their time.

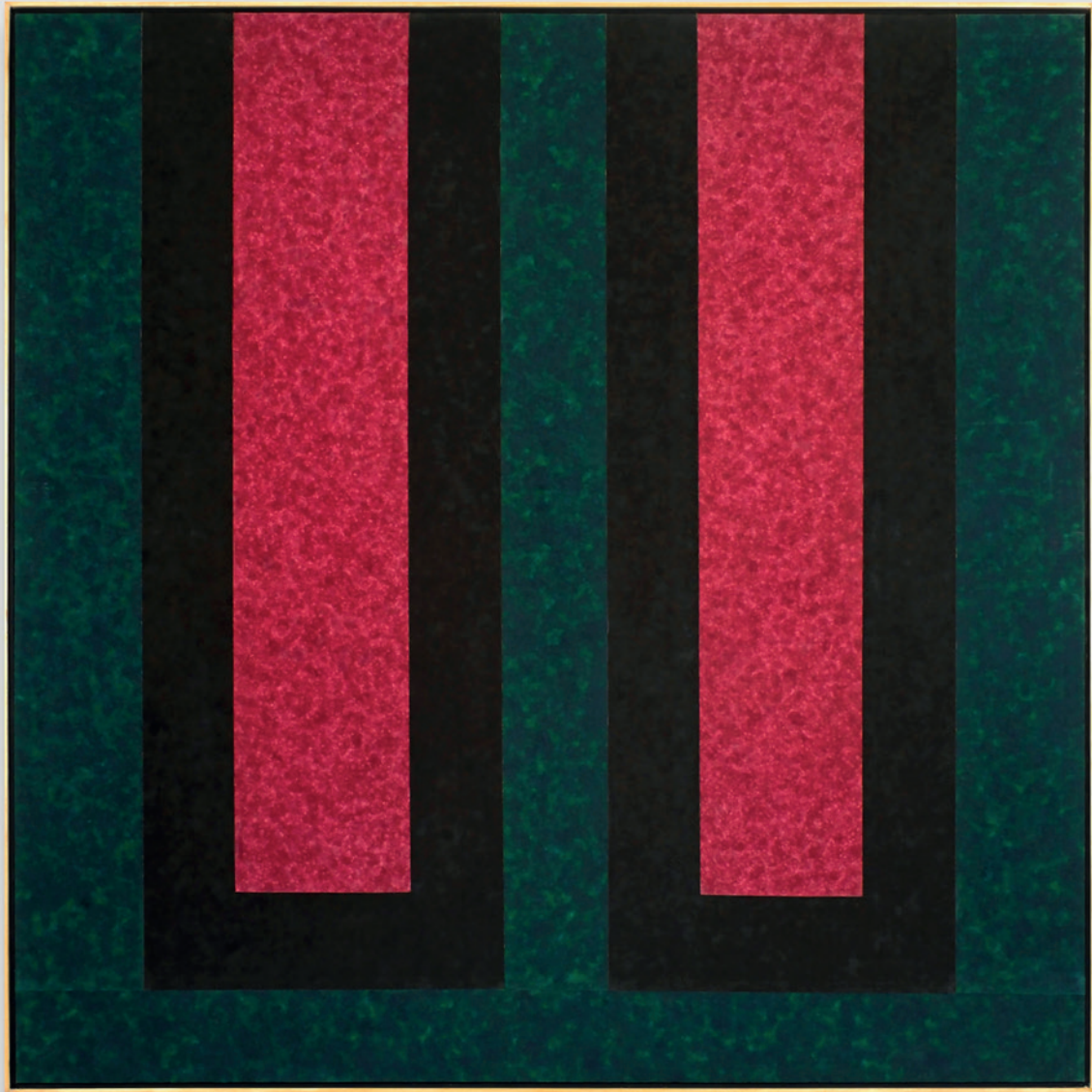
This show presents us with a panoramic view of the artistic scene in the city around those decades, bringing back a vibrant and exciting time in this city in a new light.

The exhibition opens July 16th and continues thru August 22nd, and it is on view at PFA, 4228 Howard Ave, Kensington, MD 20895.

Text written by Irina Leyva Pérez.

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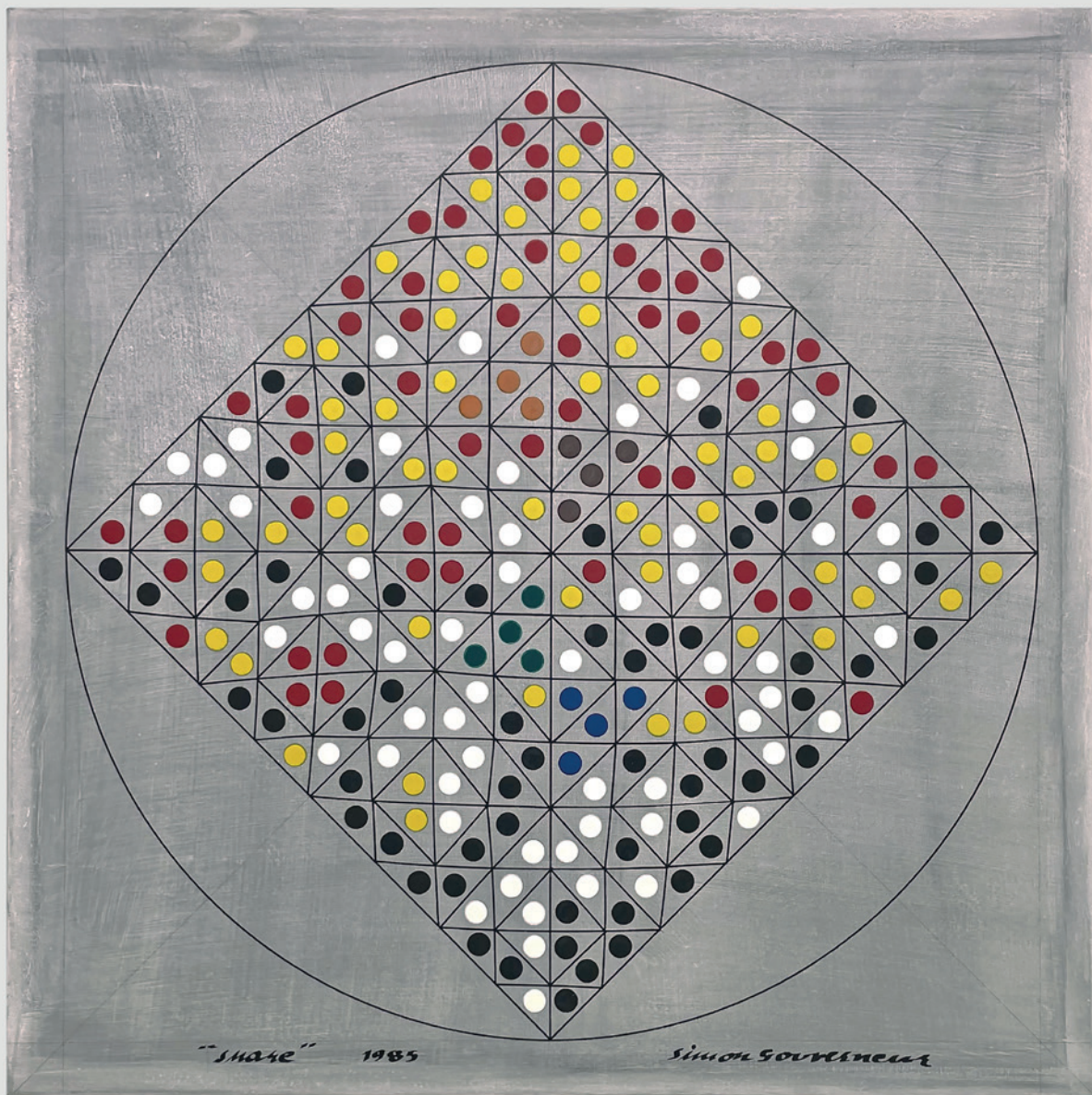




Howard Mehring
Magenta Double , 1964
Oil on collaged unprimed canvas
72 x 72 in
182.9 x 182.9 cm

Provenance: A.M. Sachs Gallery, New York | Collection of Gilbert & Sandra Oken

Exhibitions : Washington, DC, The Washington Gallery of Modern Art, Washington Color Painters, Jun. 25 - Sep. 5, 1965; traveled to Austin, TX, University of Texas, University Art Museum, then to Santa Barbara, University of California, Art Gallery, then to Waltham, MA, Brandeis University, Rose Art Gallery, then to Minneapolis, Walker Art Center

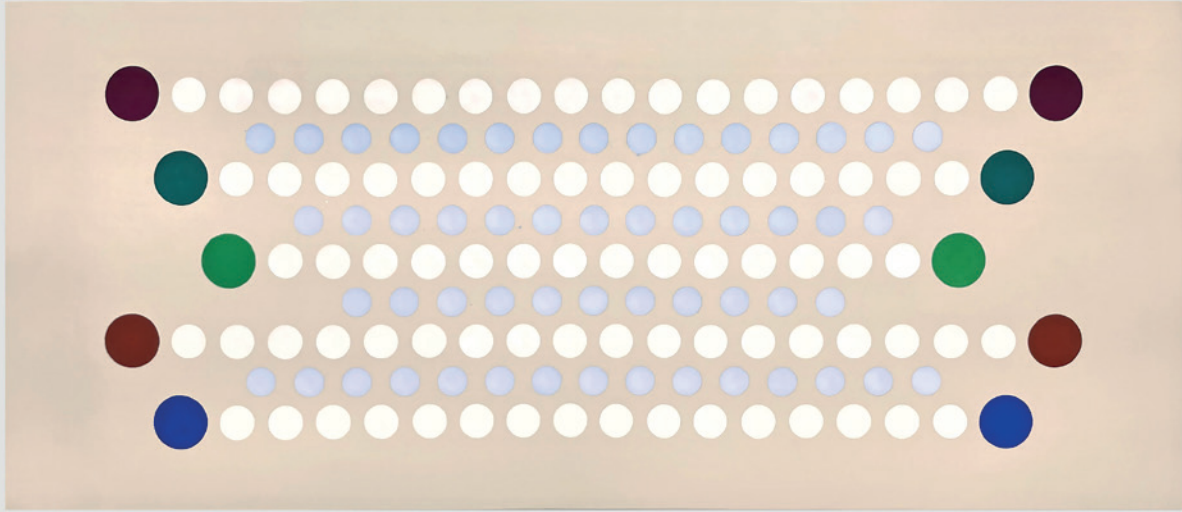


Simon Gouverneur
 Snare , 1986
 Egg tempera and acrylic
 and graphite on canvas
 42 x 42 x 1 in
 106.7 x 106.7 x 2.5 cm

Provenance: Estate of Simon Gouverneur

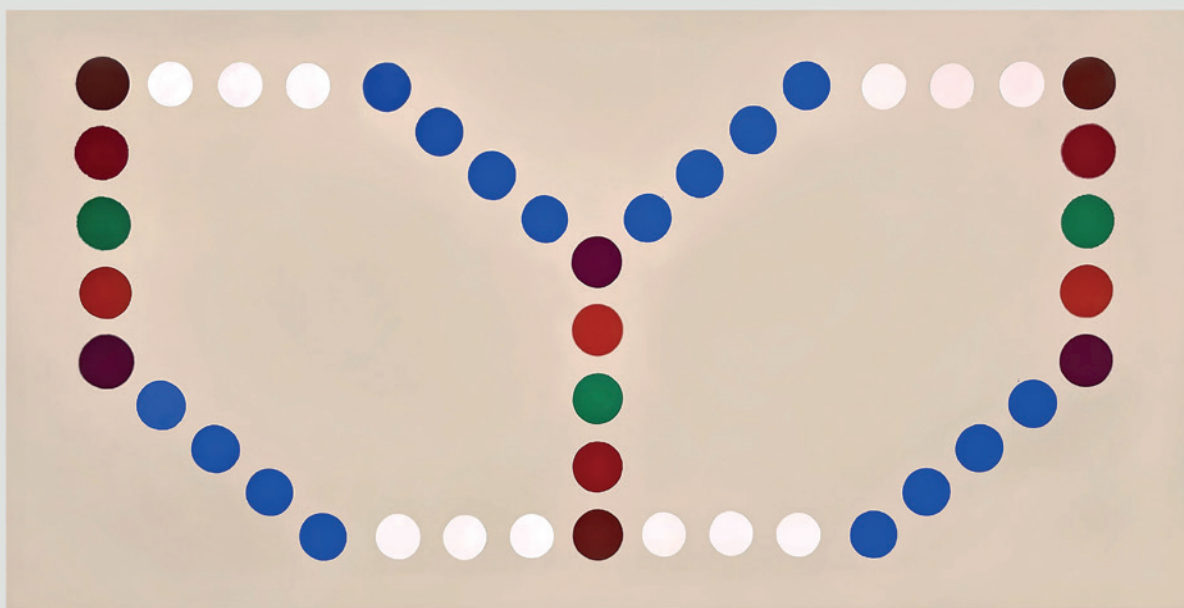


Thomas Downing
Quadrille
Acrylic on canvas
56 x 56 in
142.2 x 142.2 cm



Thomas Downing
Run (TD2804), 1972
Acrylic on canvas
62 x 144 in
157.5 x 365.8 cm

Provenance: Thomas Downing Estate | Gary Snyder Fine Art, NY



Thomas Downing
Split Possession, 1972
Acrylic on canvas
66 x 130 in
167.6 x 330.2 cm

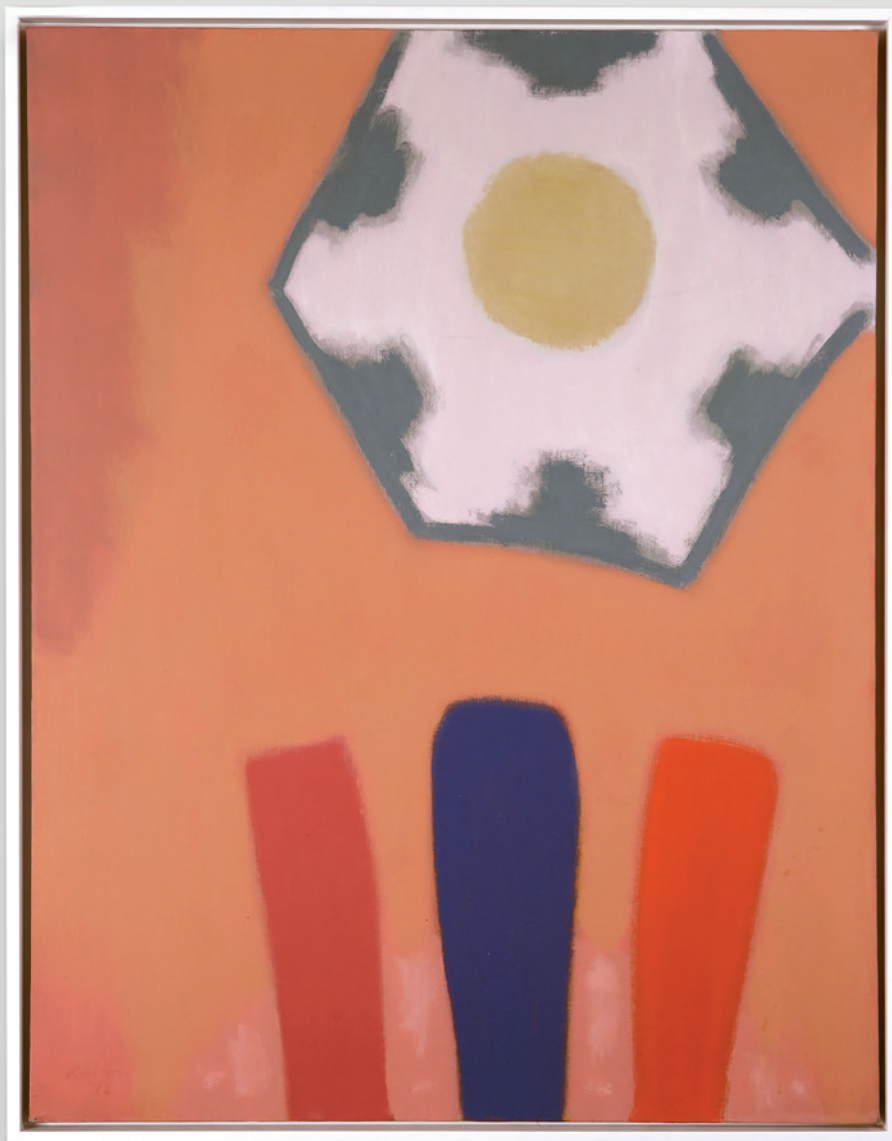
Provenance: Thomas Downing Estate | Gary Snyder Fine Art, NY



Tom Green
Sightings, 1997
Acrylic on paper
10 x 12 1/2 in
25.4 x 31.8 cm



Carroll Sockwell
Untitled, 1980
Pastel on paper
26 x 40 in
66 x 101.6 cm



Jacob Kainen
Secretary General, 1972
Oil on canvas
36 x 28 in
91.4 x 71.1 cm



Paul Reed
#12A, 1964
Oil on unprimed canva
34 x 34 in
86.4 x 86.4 cm

Provenance: Purchased directly from the artist | Collection of Gilbert & Sandra Oken



Willem de Looper
Untitled, May 1975
Acrylic on canvas
50 x 38 in
127 x 96.5 cm

Provenance: Willem de Looper Foundation

Exhibitions: B.R. Kornblatt Gallery, Washington, DC