



2022-2023

ANNUAL REPORT

A LOOK IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR

PREPARED BY

THE HUMANITIES TRUCK TEAM

ROAD MAP

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DISPATCH FROM THE DIRECTOR

DAN KERR

At the end August of 2023, the Humanities Truck completed its fifth year of programming across the Washington, DC metropolitan region. The 2022-2023 year proved to be our busiest year yet. We organized more events than ever before (75) and directly reached over 8,000 people with these events. Since our inception, we have held over 270 events and had face-to-face interactions with over 29,000 people. We added twelve new digital exhibits this past year and currently host forty-nine digital exhibits at www.humanitiestruck.com. The website has now been viewed by 22,000 people from 113 countries around the world. Our community archive, which houses over 1,000 images and 450 oral history interviews, has received over 270,000 page views!

This success largely draws on the extraordinary contributions of the those who have worked on the project, including eighteen “Graduate Fellows” who run the daily operations of the truck and twenty-five “Project Fellows” who lead their own distinct community based projects. Throughout the year the fellows meet regularly, we organize skills-based workshops, we carefully document how we do things, we reflect on our practice, and we continually seek to innovate new ways to be more effective, collaborative, and interactive with our programming.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Henry Luce Foundation have been critical in supporting this work. The first round of funding for the project expired on August 31, 2023, and this past year we were able to gain renewals of support from both foundations, which will keep us now fully funded through August 31, 2026. We are now working to build long term

support and are engaged in an endowment campaign to establish the Humanities Truck as a permanent project at American University. Your support is critical.

Why are we so busy? What are we working towards?

The project fellows last year did extraordinary work across the city, and many of these projects expanded our work with youth and elders. Jane Palmer drove the truck to youth centers across Washington, DC to document the perspectives of youth on the everyday issues that are shaping their lives. Elizabeth Rule furthered her work documenting the history of Indigenous DC by conducting over a dozen oral histories and developing a truck exhibit. Shannon Clark and Aaron Howe worked with residents of displaced tent encampments, partnered with Remora House to build an exhibit on the history of displacement in the Shaw community, and developed a resource guide to aid in the navigation of the Permanent Supportive Housing process. Melissa Scholes Young published the 10th volume of *Grace and Gravity*, which featured the works of 38-DMV-area women writers, and she organized readings across the city in collaboration with local independent bookstores. Carletta Hurt conducted interviews and organized focus groups with African American girls who have experienced dress code violations in the DC schools, which will form the basis of a podcast series and three short documentaries. Alison Chrisler developed a series of intergenerational playgroups and focus groups to gain a greater understanding of how intergenerational play may benefit the city's aging community.

Our recently announced cohort of fellows for 2023-2024 will focus on oral histories of the predominately Latino Buckingham neighborhood in Arlington (Ludy Grandas), refugee resilience in the DMV (Quynh Vo and Christina Juhász-Wood), black culture and the "Black Hair Experience" (Kernysha Rowe), a collaborative film making project, "Run, Hope Work," with teens in Wards 7 and 8 (Brigid Maher), and a project designed to develop dialogue between tourists and DC residents (MJ Rymsza-Pawloska).

The truck's main office this past year organized over two dozen events, including activities at community festivals across the city. We have been especially innovative in developing site-based interactives. Core to our mission, we seek to facilitate community dialogue and reflection in public spaces across the city. That is not such an easy objective, considering that most of the people we engage with at festivals and on city sidewalks, parking lots, and parks did not plan their encounter with us. Our interactive activities (button makers, prompt cards, photo booth, drawing stations, and community collages/portraits) offer an encouragement to stop and spur many people to inquire what this spectacular red truck is all about. People frequently do not travel alone, but are with family, friends, partners, co-workers. The demographics change by season, time of day, and location, but one constant is that children are the most likely to want to stop and create. They are also the least likely to let their agenda be derailed by a prompt card! We have found ways to welcome participation of all ages, scale participation from simply stopping to see what is going on all the way up to sitting down and recording a short form oral history interview.

Two events this past year highlighted the way we have innovated our interactive activities. For the past four years, we have participated in the Lunar New Year's celebration by setting up the truck and our exhibits in front of the Wah Luck House, which houses many elder residents in the community who do not speak English and who were more likely to work in the neighborhood restaurants and businesses than to own them. In past years, we have not been successful in involving the residents in our activities. One resident, however, spurred us to develop a photo booth activity through his request that we take his portrait. This past year we learned from that experience and introduced our new community portrait interactive. We offered to take people's portraits, asked them to add their photos to a community portrait wall, and provided them with an additional photo to keep for themselves. Despite the language barriers, we managed to generate a lot of excitement and participation from Wah Luck residents. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the 1882 Foundation and deepening these community relationships in 2024.

With the 2023 Pride Festival, we added a new element to our photo activity and asked folks to place their portraits on a map in places that have been significant to them. The photos were connected to spots on a large map with colorful strings, creating an artistic web mapping queer spaces across the city. Alongside their portraits were photographs of historic sites, some of which haven't been operating for decades, giving the map a temporal as well as spatial dimension. The portraits allowed people to see themselves represented alongside others on the map, and to also situate themselves in a long history of Queer DC.

With these activities, we seek to cultivate meaning making experiences in communities across the city that have been significantly impacted by gentrification and neighborhood change. Rather than being activist oriented, seeking to rally people to action around a cause, the truck project starts its work by identifying where people are at, both in terms of their conceptualization of the world they live in and where they physically gather. Rather than tell people what the issues are, our starting point is to ask people questions about their personal experiences and to elicit their analysis and ideas of those experiences and the world around them. From there, we situate their experiences alongside those of their peers and others from communities that may be different from their own. It is through seeing one's experiences, alongside those of others, that we gain a lens into the larger structures of power that shape our lives. Collective dialogue and reflection on both shared and differing experiences allows for the identification of the critical issues that give rise to solidarity and mobilization.

Together we are Driving Community Change!

Dan Kerr

DRIVING CHANGE ACROSS THE DMV

REFLECT

The truck creates a unique space for documenting participatory, cultural and educational experiences in the humanities. It can function as a recording studio for doing oral histories, a digitization station, a workshop space, or a pop-up exhibit gallery.



AMPLIFY

The truck co-curates gathered materials through both our website but also by hosting events out in the larger community space. Together we can collect, create, interpret, and curate stories that can return to the communities they originated from and circulate throughout the metropolitan region

MOBILIZE

Using the truck, we seek to mobilize the humanities and democratize the sharing of knowledge by bringing together scholars at American University with community residents across Washington DC.

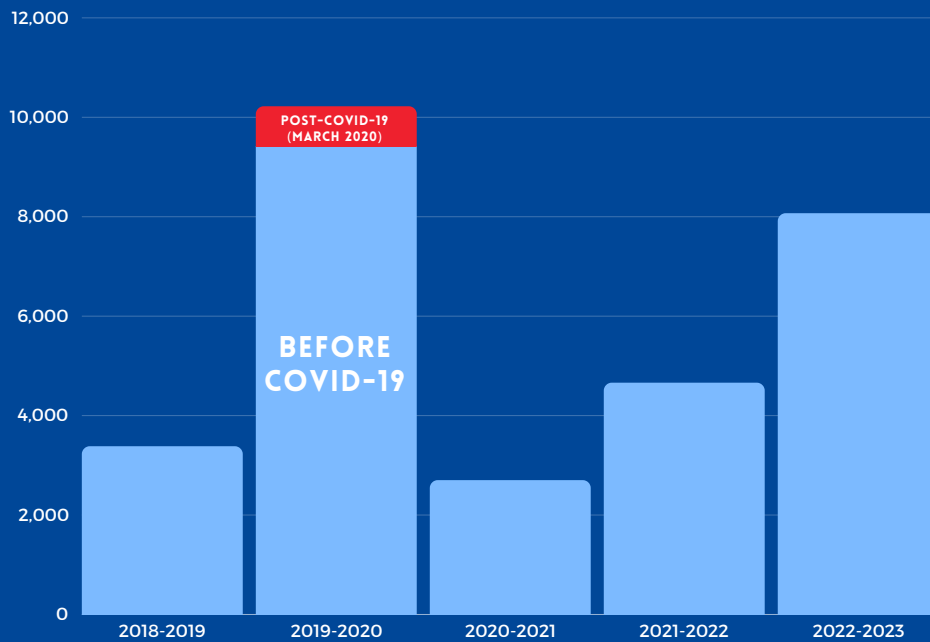


The Humanities Truck is a project through American University, made possible with funding from the Henry Luce Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

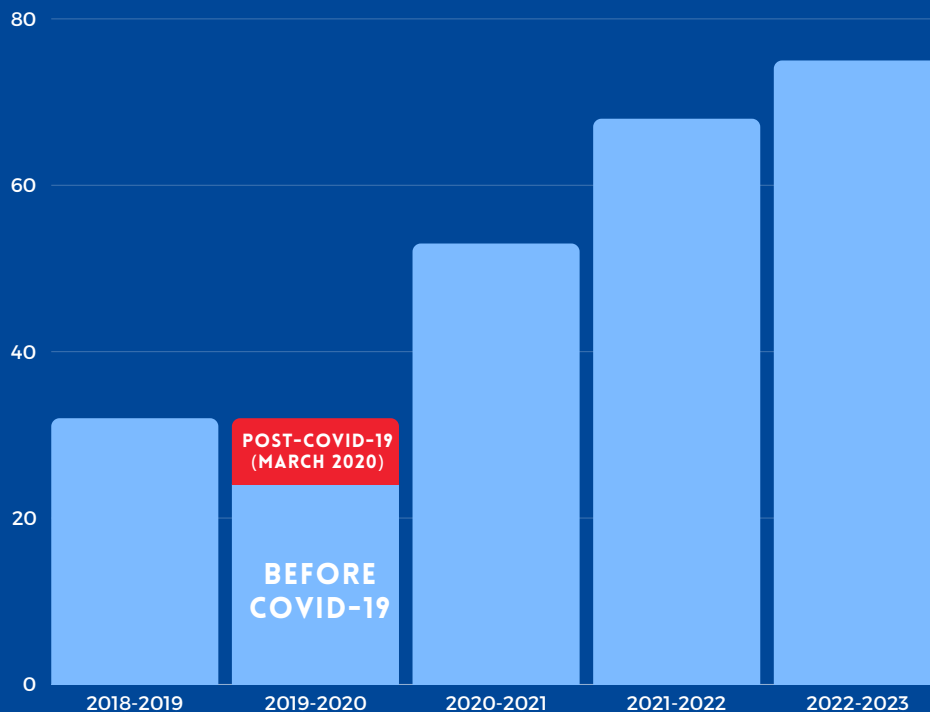
A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

FROM THE FIRST YEAR UNTIL NOW

PEOPLE ENGAGED BY THE TRUCK



NUMBER OF EVENTS



FOR A GRAND TOTAL OF...

29,041

**PARTICIPANTS OVER 260 EVENTS
IN FIVE YEARS**



IN 2022-2023, WE DELIVERED...

75
Events

8071
Engagements

216
Interviews

12
Exhibits

OUR PROJECT FELLOWS 2022-2023

The Humanities Truck Fellows include a multi-disciplinary array of scholars, both faculty and graduate students, who are committed to the practice of community-based research. The Truck Fellows are committed to an ethically grounded, collaborative research process as they engage communities in the DC metropolitan region. The Truck creates an exciting tool that draws these Fellows together to engage in deeper dialogue with one another in order to help enhance each other's practice.

As a platform, the Humanities Truck is designed to facilitate collaborative community-based research, scholarship, and exhibitions. These collaborations take time and can take many different forms. The Humanities Truck Project Fellowship program provides a year for the Truck Fellows to be able to use the truck to develop these community relationships. Truck Fellows are expected to build a collaborative process that involves community partners in each phase of their projects, from research and documentation, to interpretation, and scholarly creation in the form of accessible exhibitions and performances. Throughout the year, Truck Fellows meet together to reflect upon the effective practices of community-engaged scholarship and also to share the findings of their own projects.

DISPLACEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT: A Century of Evictions In the Shaw Neighborhood of Washington DC

Our project focused on the history of displacement in the Shaw neighborhood of Washington D.C. As a historically Black neighborhood, Shaw has a long history of state sponsored redevelopment projects aimed at “cleaning up” the area that resulted in residents losing their homes. We started with alley dwelling clearance in the 19th century and moved through different historical periods of mass displacement, such as 20th century Urban Renewal and the gentrification of the area in the 21st century. We ended by exploring a massive city project that evicted three of the city’s largest homeless encampments, one of which, the New Jersey Avenue and O Street NW encampment, was located in Shaw. Our final mobile exhibit told the story of those who grew up in the Shaw neighborhood and their experiences of forceful eviction. We featured the exhibit in the Shaw neighborhood and at a nearby tenant resource fair. Through this research and interviews with housing case managers and unhoused people we developed a housing process guide geared towards unhoused people navigating the Permanent Supportive Housing process. We continue to collaborate with unhoused people and case managers to enhance this guide which our community partners, Remora House, distributes to unhoused neighbors and homeless outreach organizations.

Shannon Clark and Aaron Howe are PhD Candidates in the Dept of Anthropology and co-founders of the unhoused support collective Remora House, which provides material aid and advocacy for unhoused residents of Washington D.C. Shannon is currently completing her dissertation research on petrochemical manufacturing, regulatory science, and environmental policy in the U.S. Aaron conducted their dissertation research about Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and the management of public space with the unhoused community living in the NoMA neighborhood of D.C., and has published several opinion pieces with the Washington Post and StreetSense advocating for the city's unhoused communities and for decreasing the power of undemocratic public-private partnerships that drive gentrification. Together, they do weekly supply distributions at unhoused camps around the city, provide material aid to other unhoused outreach and support groups, help neighbors transition into stable housing, and advocate for the right of unhoused people to live in public spaces.



SHANNON CLARK &
AARON HOWE

YOUTH VOICES / YOUTH POWER

We believe that when youth use their voices, they build their power. Jane Palmer and DC Action collaborated with the Humanities Truck and 10 community-based organizations to create the Youth Voices Youth Power Project, a vehicle to give young people the opportunity to share their opinions and experiences about life in the District. Through the Youth Voices Youth Power Project, they spent the year collecting and amplifying young people's stories to help channel and build their power. The main subjects of their interviews ranged from the lack of mental health support from schools and healthcare institutions and the impact of violence on their families, schools, and communities, to the need for more therapeutic support and restorative justice for young people caught up in violence and the necessity of in and after school programs to help people engage with community and express themselves. Check out their videos at dcyouthvoice.com.

Jane Palmer has more than a decade of experience working in community-based non-profit organizations with children, youth and adults as a social worker, advocate, community organizer and manager, with an emphasis on the eradication of violence. In addition to her Humanities Truck project with DC Action, she is engaged in community-based research projects with Trans Lifeline and the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence. All three projects are grounded in her belief that the people affected by an issue should inform the solutions to that issue. At American University, she is a term associate professor in the School of Public Affairs, the founder of the Community-Based Research Scholars program, and the faculty advisor for the undergraduate certificate in community-based research. She teaches courses on research methods, gender violence, transformative justice, and child & family policy.



JANE PALMER

GRACE AND GRAVITY

DC Women Writers

With the Humanities Truck Grant, we were able to publish Vol. 10 of Grace & Gravity, which has championed more than 300 hundred DMV-area women writers in nine print anthologies over the last twenty years. In this volume, we have featured 38 established authors and emerging writers while highlighting the DMV as an impressive home of artists. G&G serves the area through literary readings, student engagement, and local partnerships. Community outreach is a huge part of our public-facing project. In all, we put together 7 events across DC and Maryland with the help of 22 AU students, while collaborating with local indie bookstore, Politics & Prose, The Inner Loop (a literary reading series), and partnerships with art labs, festivals, museums, universities, non-profits, and restaurants, including VisAbility Art Lab, Gaithersburg Book Festival, Sandy Spring Museum, George Washington University, Writer's Room Salon, The Writer's Center, and Grill From Ipanema.

Melissa Scholes Young is the author of the award-winning novels *The Hive* and *Flood* and the chapbooks *Guinea Pig* and *Scrap Metal Baby*. She is a Contributing Editor for *Fiction Writers Review* and Executive Editor of *Grace in Darkness*, *Furious Gravity*, and *From the Attic*, anthologies by women writers. Her work has appeared in the *Atlantic*, *Ms.*, *Washington Post*, *Poets & Writers*, *Ploughshares*, *Literary Hub*, and *Believer Magazine*. She has been the recipient of fellowships from the Bread Loaf Bakeless Camargo Foundation, the Center for Mark Twain Studies, and the Virginia Center for Creative Arts. Born and raised in Hannibal, Missouri, she is a professor in the Department of Literature at American University and serves as Director of Undergraduate Creative Writing.



MELISSA SCHOLES
YOUNG

GUIDE TO INDIGENOUS DC

Through the Humanities Truck Fellowship, Elizabeth Rule drew on multiple community partnerships in a year-long collaboration to add an oral history component to the Guide to Indigenous DC and to create a traveling exhibit featuring these new multimedia components in order to disseminate this research to new audiences. Phase One was dedicated to the collection of oral histories that correlate to the sites of Indigenous importance included in the Guide to Indigenous DC. These oral histories were conducted with Indigenous members of the DC community and DC-based subject material experts, and prioritized the collection of Indigenous knowledge. Phase Two was dedicated to the creation of an exhibit that was installed in the Humanities Truck and shared with public audiences across the city and on the National Mall. In April 2023, Rule published **Indigenous DC: Native Peoples and the Nation's Capital**.

Elizabeth Rule is an enrolled citizen in the Chickasaw Nation and an Assistant Professor of Critical Race, Gender, and Culture Studies at American University. Rule's Critical Indigenous Studies research has been featured in the Washington Post, Matter of Fact with Soledad O'Brien, The Atlantic, Newsy, and NPR. She has also released articles in American Quarterly and the American Indian Culture and Research Journal, and has two forthcoming monographs. The first, *Indigenous DC: Native Peoples and the Nation's Capital* (in production, Georgetown University Press), analyzes historical and contemporary sites of Indigenous importance in Washington, DC. Rule's second book project, *Reproducing Resistance: Gendered Violence and Indigenous Nationhood*, links reproductive justice and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women; this work received the Association for the Study of Law, Culture, and the Humanities' Julien Mezey Award in 2020. Rule is the creator of the Guide to Indigenous DC (2019), Guide to Indigenous Baltimore (2021), and Guide to Indigenous Maryland (2022) digital map and mobile applications. Rule's work has received support from the Henry Luce Foundation, MIT Solve, Ford Foundation, Center for Black, Brown, and Queer Studies, and more.



ELIZABETH RULE

THE POWER OF PLAY

The goal of The Power of Play was to bring awareness to the lived experiences of DC's aging community which are often overlooked and go unheard. Additionally, the project aimed to highlight an intergenerational playgroup as an innovative community activity that promotes the health and wellbeing of those aging, as well as build community and reduce ageism among young families. We partnered with a local synagogue that had both a daycare onsite and an active aging community to create the playgroup, made up of four older adults from the local synagogue and five children from the onsite daycare. For the playgroups, we completed a total of six sessions lasting one hour that occurred once a week. We secured additional funding to continue our intergenerational playgroup with our community partner. Once we complete the playgroups for this academic year, we will complete focus groups with the parents of the children who participated. We will then combine these results and submit this for publication.

Alison Chrisler is a Professorial Lecturer in the Department of Health Studies. Dr. Chrisler is a Certified Child Life Specialist with over a decade of experience in community-engaged research and evaluation. Dr. Chrisler's research and evaluation expertise focuses on working with children, youth, and families that are often overlooked, with a special emphasis on community-based interventions that enhance the wellbeing of community members and reduce health disparities. She is currently a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Faculty Fellow developing a measure to capture critical thinking among public health undergraduate student. Additionally, Dr. Chrisler currently serves as the Executive Editor of The Journal of Child Life.



ALISON CHRISLER

REMNANT REFLECTIONS

Dress Codes and Hair Policies in DC Schools

Remnant Reflections interviewed six Black girls attending DC public and charter schools about their experiences with dress codes and other policies that make them feel isolated at times. Two of the participants who expressed interest were unable to participate due to class schedules. Filming during the summer provided more opportunities to fully engage with the young ladies.

While the DCPS policy has changed regarding what happens if a student violates the dress code policy, many of the girls still feel that they are judged differently and targeted in other ways. An unexpected discovery how far they travel daily and the amount of school activities that require so much time before and after school. For the most active participant, she could easily spend 12 hours in a day getting to school, participating in activities, and returning home. The notion that DC students attend their neighborhood schools is no longer the norm. All of the students took Metro regularly to get to and from school. Related to dress codes, half of them mentioned the harassment on the Metro and having to navigate that before getting to school adds additional stress and frustration.

Carletta S. Hurt is an educator, producer, and youth advocate. An adjunct professor in the School of Communications, she is passionate about all things Black girls and women. Her award-winning documentary, *Clothed Minds*, was a catalyst for this project as she works to amplify the voices of Black girls in education and beyond. She also produced *NOISE*, a short about a young black male teen's struggle with mental health, and the award-winning short, *The Catcher*, based on her experiences as a school counselor supporting homeless students. This Georgia native comes from family of activists, entrepreneurs, and creatives. Her desire to tell stories started when she became a Teen Reporter for her local paper, *The Macon Telegraph and News*. Since that time, she published over three dozen articles and produced nearly two dozen media projects. A self-proclaimed SUDOKU champion, wordsmith at Scrabble and Words with Friends, she has worked as a teacher, administrator, and currently works as a school counselor in Washington, DC. Hurt is pursuing her doctoral degree and is a mother to the most amazing little person, William.



CARLETTA HURT

**INTRODUCING OUR
PROJECT FELLOWS
2023-2024**

ORAL HISTORIES OF THE CHANGING BUCKINGHAM NEIGHBORHOOD

Ludy is a senior professorial lecturer at the Department of World Languages and Cultures. Her teaching focuses on Latin American studies of Culture, Latinx populations in the DMV, as well as Spanish language. For her courses, she does research on labor, migration, immigrant labor, and cultural studies as practiced in Latin American. As for her connection with the community, for several years she collaborated with the Latin American day laborer community in DC. Alongside Trabajadores Unidos of Washington, DC, she brought day laborers to AU and AU students to the community. Together they completed several interesting projects. She has focused on a community-based approach in several of her courses. Ludy has been a Humanities Truck Fellow three times!



LUDY GRANDAS

This project intends to establish a collaboration between the Buckingham's community organizations in Arlington County and the Humanities Truck. These organizations strive to find ways to assist tenants, to provide programs that benefit families, and to voice concerns of the Latino population before the County. Our collaboration is multipurpose: to record, share and archive stories; to further the communities' outreach; to creatively engage the community with the organization and to the Humanities Truck project by creating/producing an array of materials (photos, recordings, and/or other products that may need to be developed) for the benefit of the community and the organizations' own archives. We will use the truck to share and show what was produced during this year is at the core of our collaboration.

REFUGEE RESILIENCE IN THE DMV

Dr. Christina Juhász-Wood is a Professorial Lecturer in the Department of Critical Race, Gender & Culture Studies at American University in Washington, D.C. She is the daughter of a refugee; her scholarship has focused on refugee resettlement to the US Southwest. She has conducted interviews with and analyzed art created by Southeast Asian refugees and their families to the city of Albuquerque, New Mexico. She situates this work within the broader context of colonial racial capitalism and militarization in the Southwest, highlighting cross-racial and cross-cultural solidarity-building for decolonization and demilitarization. She teaches courses on Critical Refugee Studies and Settler Colonial Studies.



CHRISTINA
JUHÁSZ-WOOD

Dr. Quynh H. Vo is a professorial lecturer in the Department of Critical Race, Gender, and Cultural Studies at American University in Washington, D.C. Her research projects focus particularly on transnational Asian American politics and aesthetics, power and revolution, race, gender, and sexuality, as well as US empire, migration, and neoliberalism. Dr. Vo is the co-author of *The Making of Little Saigon: Nostalgia, (Dis)enchantment, and Aspirations*, in which the authors chronicle stories of community building, social engagement, and relationships between Vietnamese American generations of refugees and immigrants residing in Little Saigon, Orange County, California, by interviewing subjects working in different professions and providing recent records about their sociopolitical evolution over time. The book is sponsored by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Studies Center and the Pacific Research Institute for Information Systems and Management (PRIISM) and is forthcoming in 2024.



QUYNH H. VO

Our project traces refugee art and politics within the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia (DMV) to champion their collective remembrance of war and displacement as well as resilience and cultural formation. Refugees are often represented through damage-centered narratives as helpless and passive objects of rescue or as dangerous potential terrorists. In this project, we reconfigure refugees as active social theorists who bring attention to the ongoing and interconnected forces of settler colonialism, militarization, imperialism, cis hetero patriarchy, and white supremacy. We seek to foster spaces of cross-cultural and cross-racial solidarity-building to work towards mutual aid, abolition, sanctuary, demilitarization and decolonization and to imagine alternatives to the carceral regimes of borders and incarceration. Our project will culminate in showcasing refugee cultural production as well as a digital archive of refugee narratives, resources, and histories in the DMV.

RUN, HOPE, WORK: YOUTH COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

Brigid Maher is a tenured full professor in the School of Communication. She is also a Senior Fellow at the Community Voice Lab at American University and Founder and Creative Director of the Anacostia Youth Media Festival. She is an award-winning documentary filmmaker focusing on women, from women's issues in the Middle East to women's health and beyond. She recently completed the documentary *Experimental Curator: The Sally Dixon Story* (2022), about a little-known pioneer in the male-dominated art world who transformed experimental cinema by helping film artists make it and the public see and understand it. Recently the film premiered at the Ann Arbor Film Festival, which is the oldest and most prestigious experimental film festival in the United States. The film also broadcast on public television across the country during Women's History month.



BRIGID MAHER

The Run, Hope Work: Youth Media Collaboration will produce short social media stories as well as a single short format documentary on the Run, Hope Work program in fall 2023. The Run, Hope Work fall program focuses on vocational training for at risk youth. The Run, Hope, Work Collaboration will be a project-based learning initiative which will train teenage youth in Wards 7 and 8 to make thoughtful documentaries on peers within their communities. American University film student's will work with Professor Maher and Community Leads to teach the youth technical skills and guide them through creating a longitudinal-based documentary.

THE BLACK HAIR EXPERIENCE

Kernysha L. Rowe, PhD is an Assistant Dean of Students, Adjunct Professor, and people and culture thought leader. Dr. Rowe is passionate about Black women, specifically the ways Black aesthetics shapes Black experiences. Dr. Rowe has spent the past ten years working in higher education supporting students in residence life, leadership development, and student conduct. Dr. Rowe is a second-generation British Jamaican citizen, who later immigrated to the U.S. She has a strong desire to elevate the voices and experiences of women of the African Diaspora. Dr. Rowe's award-winning dissertation, *Crowning Glory: Exploring the narratives of Black women with natural hair and hair texture during the construction of professional identities as medical and law professionals*, as well as her role as advisor of AU's newly minted Multicultural Student Organization was the catalyst for The Black Hair Experience Truck.



KERNYSHA ROWE

The Black Hair Experience Truck is a mobile interactive celebration of Black culture that centers Black hair and Black textures while touring Predominantly White Institutions in the District of Columbia. The Black Hair Experience Truck plays a crucial role in serving as a catalyst for education, empowerment, and celebration for Black and Brown students. It serves as a platform to showcase the creativity and artistry associated with Black hair through an exchange of knowledge, increasing access to products and services, as well as creating a safe, inclusive space for dialogue to enhance an individuals' self-expression and pride around Black hair. The Black Hair Experience Truck cultivates transformative experiences and aids in the preservation of lived experiences of those who embody Black hair and hair textures.

COMING TO WASHINGTON

MJ Rymsza-Pawlowska researches and teaches U.S. cultural history and public history theory and practice. She is the author of *History Comes Alive: Public History and Popular Culture in the 1970s* (UNC Press, 2017) as well as numerous articles in scholarly and general interest publications. As part of her public history practice, MJ is currently on the Board of Directors at Humanities D.C. and Scholar-In-Residence at the Heurich House Museum. MJ also serves on the editorial board of *Washington History* magazine and as series editor of the National Council on Public History and National Park Service's 250th Commemoration Scholars' Forums. MJ was born in Wrocław, Poland, but grew up in DC's Brookland neighborhood. In her spare time, she enjoys bicycling, visiting galleries and museums, and exploring the DMV.



MJ RYMSZA-
PAWLOSKA

Coming to Washington draws upon my current scholarly project on the history of visiting Washington by tourists, activists, officeholders, and militia, from 1800 to the present. It has two main goals: 1) to document the expectations and experiences of current visitors to the city and 2) to give Washingtonians an opportunity to tell visitors what they want them to know about the city. In collaboration with local partners, we'll spend the first half of the year incorporating Washingtonians' feedback and ideas into an installation housed in the Humanities Truck, which will travel to tourist locations in the Spring and Summer 2024 season. At these pop-ups, visitors will be invited to view and interact with the exhibit inside the Truck. We will also use interview, oral history, and other interactive elements to learn about their impressions of Washington. Each iteration of the project, as well as the valuable information and insights generated through the interviews, will be documented in the Truck's Community Archive and on a dedicated website.

OUT OF OUR CELLS

Dr. Aram Sinnreich is a media professor, author, and musician. Originally from Brooklyn NYC, he currently lives with his wife and musical partner Dunia Best in the Washington, DC area. Sinnreich is a professor at American University's School of Communication, where he currently serves as Chair of Communication Studies. His work focuses on the intersection of technology, law, and culture, with an emphasis on subjects such as music, data surveillance, and copyright. As an author, he writes both nonfiction and fiction, often on themes related to his research, including music and technology. As a novelist, he collaborates with his sister, Rachel Hope Cleves, using the shared pseudonym R.A. Sinn. He has also written articles for outlets including The New York Times, Wired, Billboard, and The Daily Beast. As a musician, Sinnreich plays bass, percussion, and guitar. As a composer in styles such as jazz, reggae, and soul, he has been a finalist in the John Lennon Songwriting Competition (2014) and the Bernard/Ebb Songwriting Award (2020). His song "It's Never Easy, Si," performed with his group Dunia & Aram, reached #2 on the World Independent Music radio charts in 2023.



ARAM SINNREICH

Out of Our Cells will connect incarcerated composers in the DC jail system with recording artists in the DMV area, and produce a compilation of songs combining the talents of these two interconnected communities. The project will also collect oral histories and the self-reported experiences of both incarcerated composers and the musicians who collaborate with them, in order to map the complex web of interdependencies in the DMV-area musical community and to chart the consequences of the carceral system for creative expression and local communities. Using the Humanities Truck as a mobile recording studio, Professor Sinnreich, his community partners, and his students at SOC will work in conjunction with the Georgetown University Prisons and Justice Initiative, which provides education for incarcerated students in the the DC Jail system.



HUMANITIES TRUCK TEAM 2022-2024



The Humanities Truck staff runs the behind-the-scenes operations in the office, from planning and executing exhibits and interactives to building post-event digital exhibits and archiving the materials. The Humanities Truck staff also facilitates the project fellows' year-long projects by helping them to imagine and realize the potential of the Truck.

DAN KERR

Project Director



When he dreamed of being a truck driver as a child, Kerr never envisioned himself driving the Humanities Truck. But who knew how much fun that could be? Working alongside other visionaries at American University, Kerr, an associate professor of history at AU, spearheaded and now directs the Humanities Truck Project. He is an active community and oral historian committed to the democratization of knowledge production. He is the Past President of the Oral History Association and directs American University's Public History program. Since his earliest work with the Cleveland Homeless History Project, he has sought out ways to bring the oral histories he has collected back to the communities they originated from. Through community workshops, participants in his projects have collectively reflected upon and interpreted the gathered stories. He is currently working on the Mobilizing Against Homelessness project, which seeks to document and amplify the voices, perspectives, and analysis of those currently experiencing homelessness.

ANGIE WHITEHURST

Community Fellow



Angelyn (Angie) Whitehurst, is a native Washingtonian and active community who advocates for the homeless, the residents of the city, and for the country. She is a writer, poet, artist, actor, and film producer who also volunteers, serves on the Board for the DC Peace Team, and is a regular contributor to Street Sense Media and other local newspapers. Angie brings a plethora of experience having worked for the local government, federal government, and overseas.

GABRIELLA FOLSOM

Operational Fellow



Gabriella Folsom is a graduate student in American University's Public History MA program, and her work focuses on accessibility in digital collections and managing operations at public history institutions. She received two bachelor's degrees from AU, majoring in history and political science with a minor in Russian language. Her day job is as an administrative specialist at the Library of Congress. Her research interests include working with digital archives and cultural, Russian, and Soviet history. In her free time, she can be found with her kittens Kiwi and Daisy.

MORGAN CARROLL

2022-2023 Project Lead



Morgan Carroll completed their second year in the Public Anthropology MA program at American University in May 2023. They received their bachelors in psychology from Sewanee: The University of the South and a masters in social work from the University of South Carolina.

Her academic interests include food culture and tradition, rural queer communities, geopolitics and Appalachia. She currently researches local and community-based food justice efforts, including ways to mitigate food waste on the household level.

SHERRELL DALEY

2022-2023 Graduate Fellow



Sherrell completed her second year in the Public History MA program at American University in May 2023. She is from Brooklyn, New York and received her bachelor's degree in History at Allegheny College.

She is interested in U.S. History and Urban history and is passionate about public history and how historians can make museums more accessible and enjoyable for everyone, not just the select few.

CORINNE DAVENPORT

2022-2023 Graduate Fellow

2023-2024 Project Lead



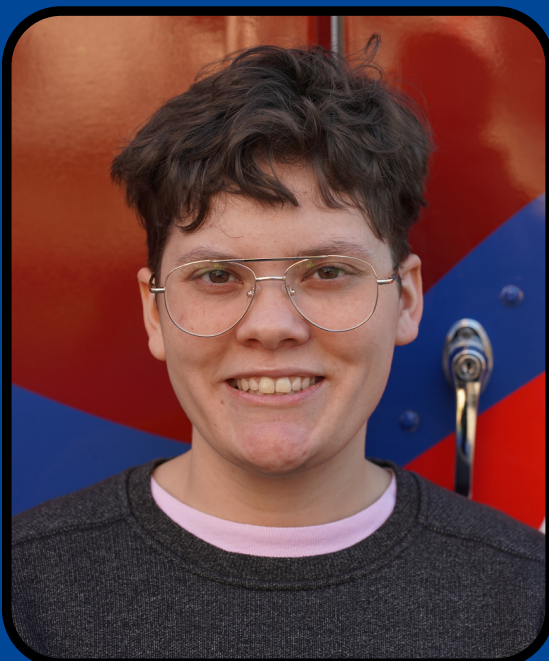
Corinne Davenport is a graduate student American University's Public History MA program. She received a bachelor's degree from Sarah Lawrence College, majoring in history with a minor in film production.

They're interested in the construction of nationalism in the modern US, and local queer community building and maintenance. She hopes to continue exploring documentary production and using digital tools and platforms to make oral histories and videos more accessible to help as many people engage with histories as possible.

MEGAN HENRY

2022-2023 Graduate Fellow

2023-2024 Project Lead



Megan Henry is currently a second-year graduate student in American University's Public History MA program. She is originally from Dayton, Ohio where she got her BA in History with a minor in French from Wright State University. Megan is interested in memory, its use in nation-building, and its influence on how history is remembered and contextualized from the local to the national level. She is also interested in the digital aspects of history, including the best ways to digitally preserve and archive historical materials.

DAIKI TSUMAGARI

2023-2024 Graduate Fellow



Daiki Tsumagari is a first-year Master's student in American University's Public History program. He is a Boston University alumnus with a B.A. in History and a minor in Anthropology. He is a Japanese American born in Washington D.C. but grew up in Singapore and Japan, and is academically interested in modern Japanese history, Japanese American history, and urban history in the late 19th and 20th centuries. In his free time, he is a die hard Washington Capitals fan (he has not been okay since 2018).

INAYA RIVERA

2023-2024 Graduate Fellow



Inaya Rivera is from Jacksonville, North Carolina, and received a BA in Public History with a minor in French from Meredith College. Inaya is currently a graduate fellow for the Humanities Truck. During her time at Meredith, she was a member of the Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, worked as an intern with the college library archives, and spent time working on various undergraduate research projects. After graduating, Inaya worked part-time for Durham Parks and Recreation as one of their Historic Site Interpreters and as a Behavioral Technician providing ABA Therapy to children with autism. Besides history, Inaya enjoys spending time outdoors, reading, cooking, and playing with her 4-year-old dog Cowabunga.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

Members of the Humanities Truck's Advisory Board provide valuable insight on the ways the Truck can more effectively engage with communities across the DMV region. They also assist in selecting Fellows and in strategizing for the project's financial sustainability.



KIMBERLY SPRINGLE
CHARLES SUMNER SCHOOL
MUSEUM & ARCHIEVES



NAIMA JEFFERSON
SHEPARD PARK CITIZENS
ASSOCIATION



NOEL LOPEZ
CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGIST,
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



LISA WARWICK
DC PUBLIC LIBRARY, THE
PEOPLE'S ARCHIVE



NANCY SHIA
COMMUNITY
PHOTOGRAPHER



SAMIR MEGHELLI
SMITHSONIAN ANACOSTIA
COMMUNITY MUSEUM

HUMANITIES TRUCK COMMITTEE

The Humanities Truck Committee is comprised of individuals from the American University community, and consults with Truck staff on the selection of Fellows and more.





EVENT AND PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



In 2022-2023 the Humanities Truck project had its busiest year yet! With events by the Truck staff and project fellows, the Humanities Truck was put to use collecting and displaying stories from all around the DMV. Check out some highlights from all that we did this year!

TRUCK LOGBOOK

SELECTIONS FROM OUR 75 STOPS

SEPTEMBER 2022 - AUGUST 2023

- 09** ▶ **09/08** Homes Not Sweeps film screening
09/11 Adams Morgan Day 2022
09/18 Celebrate Petworth 2022
- 10** ▶ **10/03** AU Family Festival
10/13 Youth Action Open House
10/25 Youth Power, Youth Voice
- 11** ▶ **11/01** Indigenous DC
11/02 Grace and Gravity
- 12** ▶ **12/01** Visual AIDS: Day With(out) Art
12/02 Native Youth Alliance at the National Mall
12/20 Homeless Memorial Vigil
- 01** ▶ **01/22** Lunar New Year 2023
01/27 Youth Power, Youth Voice
01/30-02/03 OCMO Donation Drive
- 02** ▶ **02/03** Housing Focus Group
02/21 Youth Power, Youth Voice
- 03** ▶ **03/20** Preserving the Picket Line
03/24 DC History Conference
03/29 Youth Power, Youth Voice
- 04** ▶ **04/11** Youth Power, Youth Voice
04/22 Voices of Rosedale
04/27 Youth Power, Youth Voice
04/28 Humanities Truck film fest
04/29 Paul Robeson's birthday
- 05** ▶ **05/01** AUnion: Let's Strike
05/01 Grace and Gravity launch
05/04-09 Indigenous DC on the National Mall
05/16 Inner Loop G&G Reading
05/17 Youth Power Youth Voice
05/20 Gaithersburg Book Fest
05/25 Shove Off Day at City Point
05/31 Youth Power, Youth Voice
- 06** ▶ **06/03** Chinatown Community Festival with 1882 Foundation
06/07 Power of Play Playgroup
06/08 Sandy Spring Museum Reading
06/11 Pride Festival
06/14 Power of Play Playgroup G&G Writer's Room
06/17 Celebrating Community Connections
06/21 Power of Play Playgroup
06/24 Columbia Heights Day
06/28 Power of Play Playgroup
06/30 Youth Power, Youth Voice
- 07** ▶ **07/05** Displacement and Development exhibit
07/12 Power of Play Playgroup
07/20 Displacement and Development exhibit
07/29 Tenant Resource Fair

Adams Morgan Day 2022

For our first event of the the year, on September 11, 2022 the Humanities Truck attended the 43rd annual Adams Morgan Day. Parked in front of the Line Hotel, the Truck showed an exhibit, “Who’s Adams Morgan: Black, White and in Color,” which juxtaposed neighborhood photos taken by Nancy Shia with watercolors of neighborhood streetscapes painted by Mary Belcher over the past 50 years. Using the exhibit as inspiration, we conducted interviews with people in the neighborhood about places in the Adams Morgan that help them connect to community in the past and present, and what spaces they hope to see in the future.



Celebrate Petworth Festival 2022

For the festival, we built an exhibit on location, entitled, "The People's Masterpiece: Creative Expressions of Self, With Others, By Others." Throughout the day community members contributed photographs, self portraits, drawings, and reflections on prompt cards. Together we built a collage which documented important places, pictures of people, families, art, and artists, shoutouts to DC spaces and organizations, and messages of love for the neighborhood and the people in it.



Visual AIDS: Day With(out) Art

To honor the Day With(out) Art in 2022, the Humanities Truck partnered with The Lily and Earle M. Pilgrim Art Foundation to host a screening of the film, **Being and Belonging**, accompanied by performances from grammy-award winning artists Cathy Fink and Marcy Marxer, as well as a story-telling exhibition by puppeteer Rev. Dr. Julianne Robertson. Before and after the performances, Dan Kerr interviewed event goers about their connections to the AIDS epidemic, AIDS activism, and art.



Lunar New Year with the 1882 Foundation

On January 22nd, 2023 The Humanities Truck joined the 1882 Foundation in celebrating Lunar New Year by showing the documentary **Flashback: Oral Histories of D.C. Chinatown** and hosting a community celebration called “Reflecting/Envisioning Chinatown” where we invited parade attendees to reflect on their favorite Lunar New Year traditions, self representation, the significance of Chinatown, and the year of the Rabbit. After capturing their responses, the portraits and prompts were added to the community portrait built on site on the exhibition wall inside the Truck.



Voices of Rosedale

On April 22, 2023 we brought our audio recorder, cameras, photo printer and butcher paper to the Rosedale Recreation Center and Library. There, we partnered with Leigh Davis and Necothia Bowens-Robinson, the founders of the Voices of Rosedale project to host a community gathering. Inside the truck Davis and Bowens-Robinson conducted oral histories, and outside we worked with community members to construct a neighborhood portrait on the side of the truck. Over the course of the morning and afternoon, we crafted a collage that reflects the spirit and community of Rosedale.



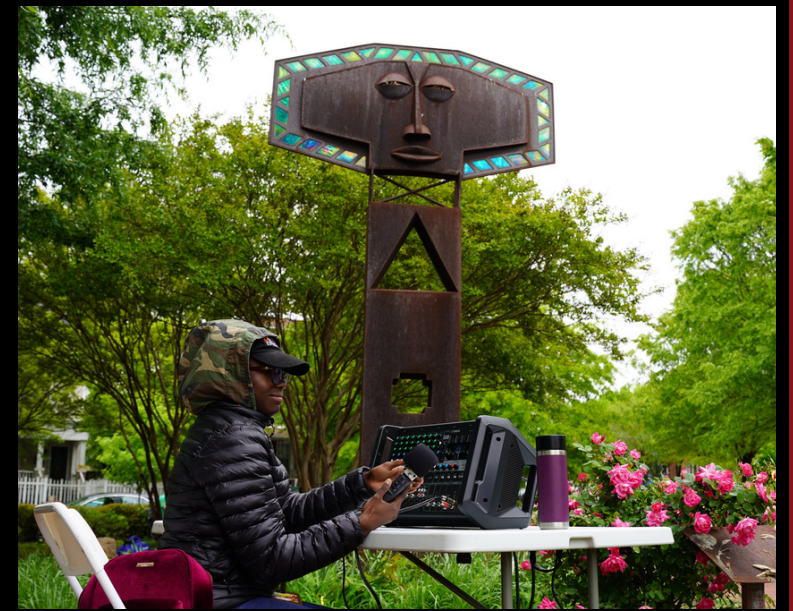
Humanities Truck Film Festival

On April 28, 2023 the Humanities Truck team hosted our very first film festival, showing the work of five project fellows from the past five years. Being able to have all these folks in the same room allowed everyone to see and celebrate the result of each other's hard work and see the connections between everyone's work, even if they seemed unrelated at first glance. The projects featured included works by the following fellows: Benjamin Stokes, Aram Sinnreich and Dunia Best, Ludy Grandas, Benjamin Stokes with directors Amin El Siwi and Phil Bouknight, and Laura Waters Hinson introduced by two of the main subjects: Sheila White and Reggie Black.



Paul Robeson's 125th Birthday

For the second year in a row, The Humanities Truck partnered with several community groups to host "Artists are the Gatekeepers of Truth: Paul Robeson's 125th Birthday Celebration" on April 29, 2023. Parked on the corner of Georgia Ave and Kansas Ave, the truck powered a community forum. The forum featured special guest and artist Uzikee Nelson as well as poet Celillianne Green, Dan Kerr, Michael Anthony Brown, and Peter Stebbins. Together they joined with the attendees to celebrate black art, community, and culture.



Indigenous DC on the National Mall

In partnership with the Trust for the National Mall and Beyond Granite: Commemorative Works in Washington, DC, Elizabeth Rule displayed her Humanities Truck exhibit, “Indigenous Washington, DC” on the National Mall for five days--May 4-8, 2023. She shared the story of Indigenous DC with tourists who visit the nation’s capital and locals who live here but who have no prior awareness of the Indigenous influences upon the city.

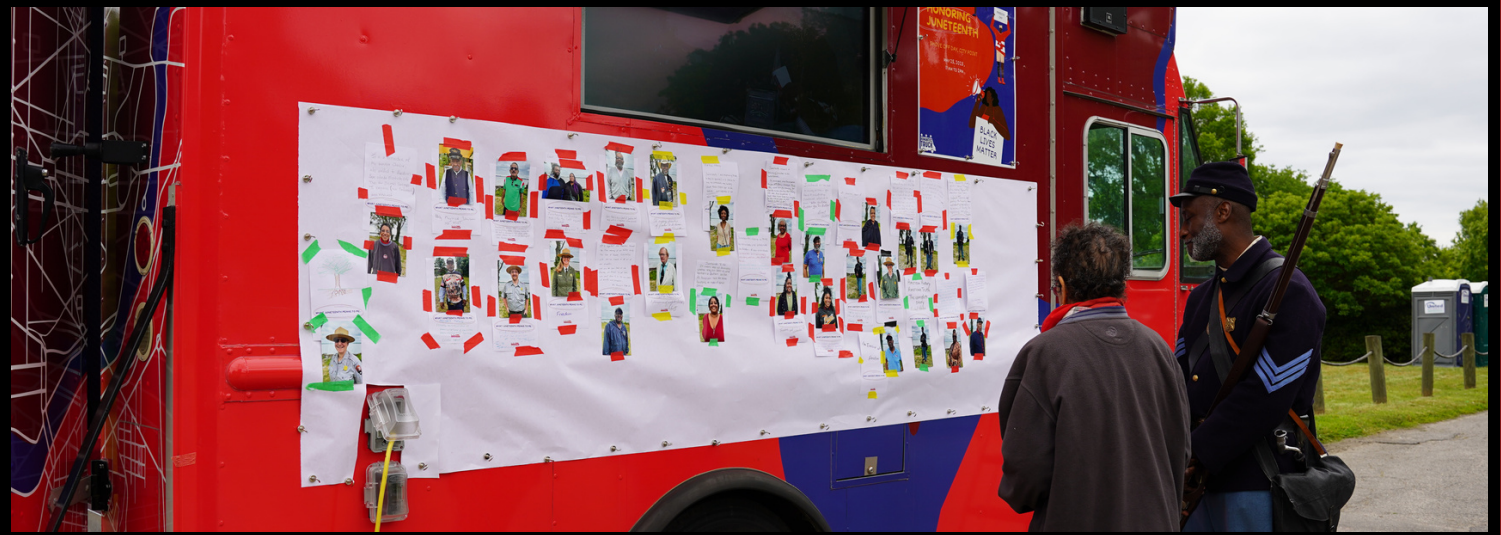
The exhibit was additionally enhanced by illustration and graphic design commissioned by DC-based Quapaw artist Mackenzie Neal.



Shove Off Day at City Point

On May 25, 2023, the Humanities Truck took a trip to the Old City Point Waterfront Park in Virginia to participate in a Juneteenth flag-raising ceremony performed by United States Colored Troops (USCT) re-enactors.

Alongside the National Parks Service and the National Juneteenth Observance Foundation, we took and printed portraits of re-enactors and attendees and put them up on a collage wall alongside their written answer to the question “what does Juneteenth mean to you?” After attendees added to our collage, we also recorded short-form interviews with many attendees and re-enactors explaining their connection to Juneteenth personally, historically, and politically.



"We're Here, We're Queer" - Pride Festival 2023

On June 11, 2023, the Humanities Truck parked at the intersection of 7th and E Street NW near Pride Festival 2023. This year, we brought out a new combination exhibit/interactive meant to help people learn about sites of queer history in DC going back to the late 1800s, and to help the Humanities Truck team learn about what sites in DC matter to LGBTQIA+ folks in the DMV area, from places they grew up or work, to where they met their partner or have started their own family.

After taking portraits of passersby who wanted to participate, as they were printing we asked them to think of a place that's meaningful to them or helps them connect to their LGBTQ+ community. We created a literal web of connections around DC, showing us what matters to queer people in the DMV, where they feel connected to, and how people are connected to each other in and around the city.



Columbia Heights Day

On June 25, 2023, the Humanities Truck came out to our first ever Columbia Heights Day. Parked next to the field at Tubman Elementary School, we constructed and displayed a neighborhood map. With several prompted cards meant to collect community members' favorite places, past and present. After writing down their favorite place(s), they were put on the wall and connected to their location on the map with a piece of string, so by the end of the afternoon Columbia Heights had constructed their own web of important places.

Along with building the community map, we collected short form interviews with long-time and newer residents of the neighborhood, asking about the location they added to the map and any changes they've seen or would like to see in the neighborhood.



WE'RE HERE, WE'RE QUEER

SCAN ME



SCAN THE QR CODE ABOVE TO VISIT THIS VIRTUAL EXHIBIT

PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING!

HONORING JUNETEENTH

SCAN THE QR CODE TO VISIT THIS VIRTUAL EXHIBIT!!!



SCAN ME

BLACK EXCELLENCE

FREEDOM DAY

BLACK LIVES MATTER



HUMANITIES TRUCK

Paul Robeson's 125th Birthday Celebration



Scan the QR Code to visit our virtual exhibit



SELECT EXHIBITS FROM 2022-2023



SEE THE EXHIBIT:

THE PEOPLE'S MASTERPIECE:
CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS OF SELF,
WITH OTHERS, BY OTHERS



SCAN ME



REPRESENTING COLUMBIA HEIGHTS



SCAN ME



Who's Adams Morgan?
Black, White and in Color
Featuring the works of Nancy Shia and Mary Belcher



SCAN ME



