

(WOMEN) ARTISTS

What does it mean to be an artist? What should it mean? We posed this question to a group of female-identifying artists from the Baltimore area. Their answers are below. More responses are available at artbma.org/2020.

ERIN FOSTEL

“Being an artist means relaying a personal experience through drawing and hoping to enhance or inform a viewer’s own personal experience. The best compliment I have ever received was that my drawings encouraged a viewer to look longer and harder at the world around them. What a gift to know that one’s art can make that kind of impact. That long after the moments of looking at something hanging on a wall, they are taking what they observed in that piece of art and allowing it to alter their perceptions. It is a privilege, in itself, to get to be an artist, but a greater dream fulfilled to have that kind of impact.”



MURJONI MERRIWEATHER

“To be a woman artist to me is going against the norm and pushing our voice that is seen as less than, especially as a black woman. I think of my mom. The things my mom does are labeled as things that ‘men’ should be doing, like rewiring the lighting in the house, fixing the plumbing, or building things in the home. My mother has paved the way of killing stereotypes aimed at black women for me. Showing me that I can do anything that a man can do. I can do anything I want. Having my own strong opinion makes the way for other black women to stay their peace and doing the things they want without being afraid of rejection.”



SE JONG CHO

“It means to me that I am adding my story to the human narratives that define our existence. This is about taking control of our destiny because our future is founded on our present reality. Art is like a mirror that reflects our reality. On this mirror, I want to see women’s stories reflected as legitimate and equal part of our history.”



MONICA IKEGWU

“When I think of what it means to be a woman artist, I think of people who are setting an example for the younger generation of girls. Me being an artist lets them know the arts is an option they can follow, too. I think of new perspectives. Certain subject matter and topics are looked at through a new lens.”



LATOYA HOBBS

“Sacrifice, persistence, discipline, early mornings, late nights, and sometimes all-nighters in the studio; delayed gratification, legacy building, and the creativity, energy, and foresight needed to ‘keep it together’ and move forward. These are some of the things that come to mind when I think about my life as an artist, wife, mother, and educator.”