

# 2023 SUMMER READING LIST

Art as a Catalyst for Social Change

Dear Maverick Collective community,

We are excited to share Maverick Collective's 2023 Summer Reading List. Each summer, we use the reading list as an opportunity to keep our community energized and connected, provoke our thinking, and introduce new voices that can help shape and influence our work. **This year, we are exploring the theme of art – in its many forms – as a catalyst for positive social change.**

Art and activism have always gone hand-in-hand. Many Maverick Collective members are involved in projects that use the arts for narrative and social change, and throughout the last year we have taken opportunities to do, experience, and interrogate art justice projects together. In September, we gathered at the Brooklyn Museum to tour [Judy Chicago's The Dinner Party](#). In January, several of us attended the Sundance Film Festival to witness and celebrate the premiere of [Plan C](#), which was supported by many Maverick Collective members. In June, we spent an afternoon with artist-activist [Favianna Rodriguez](#) at the [Center for Cultural Power](#). As we continue our work shaping philanthropists into more authentic, accountable, and activated agents of social change, we couldn't think of a more fitting theme for our literary indulgence this summer.

This year's summer reading list features a collection of women artists and authors that inspire us, stimulate our imagination, challenge societal and cultural norms, spur us to reflect on and interrogate our assumptions, and motivate us to act. We chose books for adults and children and offer pairings with other forms of creative expression.

Pick and choose how you want to enjoy each pairing, follow your curiosity, and enjoy what inspires you! Whatever you choose, consider this:

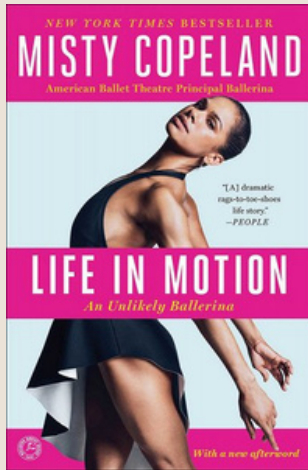
- What inspires your creativity? How have you drawn that inspiration forward in other aspects of your life?
- How can we as a community creatively inspire others and move them to action in support of gender equity?

If you choose to purchase a title, please consider doing so from a local bookstore. If you prefer to shop online, you can support local bookstores by [purchasing books from bookshop.org](#)

Happy reading and have a joyful summer!

The Maverick Collective Team

# Art as Inspiration



## Life in Motion: An Unlikely Ballerina

*Misty Copeland*

In this memoir, Copeland shares her journey from a difficult childhood to becoming the first African American female principal dancer with the American Ballet Theatre. Misty's love of dance helped her overcome obstacles and achieve her dreams. Her story is an inspiring testament to the power of perseverance and art. To see Misty's artistry in action, watch her performance in [Romeo & Juliet](#)

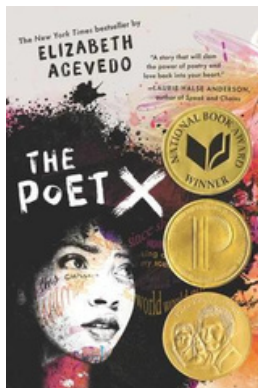
**Join Maverick Collective on September 11** for an Author Chat with Misty where we explore her life as an artist, advocate, and author.

## Malala's Magic Pencil

*Malala Yousafzai*



This children's book, written by Nobel Prize laureate and women's rights advocate Malala Yousafzai, inspires young readers to believe in the power of their voices. The book encourages girls to pursue their dreams and inspires them to make a positive impact in the world. Both Yousafzai and Copeland's stories remind us that by using our voices for good and fighting for what we believe in, we can change the world.



## The Poet X

*Elizabeth Acevedo*

This novel in verse tells the story of Xiomara, a Dominican-American teenager who discovers the power of spoken word poetry in expressing herself and confronting the oppressive forces in her life, including her strict religious upbringing and her mother's disapproval of her dreams. [Poet X](#) is available in audio format, read aloud by author Elizabeth Acevedo in a powerful callback to the protagonist's spoken word poetry.

## When the Violin

*performed by Vijay Gupta, Yamini Kalluri, and Reena Esmail  
Mechanics Hall, Worcester MA*



This performance combines dance, spoken poetry and violin into a single production. It is coordinated by Vijay Gupta, founder and artistic director of Street Symphony, a musical community-building connection for people coming out of homelessness, addiction, and incarceration. Each element of this performance brings a unique artistic identity to the larger recital. It is an inspirational reminder of the multiple dimensions of our individual identities, and as with [The Poet X](#), which can be read or listened to, the way you choose to consume this performance will affect how deeply you are able to experience and relate to it.

# Reflecting and Interrogating

## Hshouma: Corps et sexualité au Maroc

*Zainab Fasiki*

This graphic novel, printed in bold black, white, and red, was created as an artistic manual to discuss the taboo topic of women's bodies. Fasiki, who calls herself an "artist" (an artist and activist), uses the book as a medium to deconstruct misogyny. Since its publication, Hshouma has blossomed into an educational project bringing understanding and clarity to the stigmatized subjects of gender and sexuality in Moroccan society. The book is currently available in [French](#) (original), [Italian](#), and [Portuguese](#). You can learn more about Fasiki in the short subtitled documentary "[4 Arab Women Comic Book Artists](#)".



## A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night

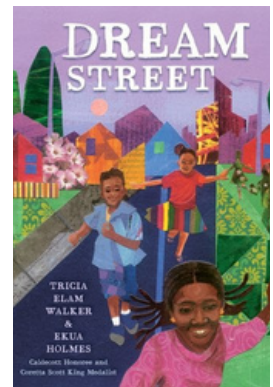
*directed by Ana Lily Amirpour*

This Farsi, genre-crossing vampire film, hailed as groundbreaking work in feminist cinema, challenges traditional narratives about women's agency through scenes filmed in black and white. Amirpour's visually striking work explores gender, identity, and power through a unique artistic lens. While set in different places, you may notice similarities in style and storytelling between these two works. Watch with [prime Video](#); [Apple TV](#); [YouTube](#).

## Dream Street

*Tricia Elam Walker and Ekuia Holmes*

This children's book takes readers on a walk through the best street in the world full of joyful and loving neighbors. Pulling from the authors' own childhoods, the book uses poetic text and striking artwork to describe a place where warmth and security come from the people around you.

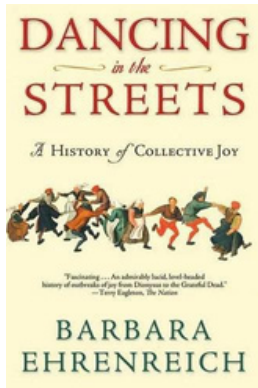


## Monument Lab

*Mural Arts Philadelphia*

This Philadelphia public art and history project explores the relationship between social justice and public spaces. You can explore virtual tours showcasing a range of murals addressing topics like racial and gender equity and social justice movements around the city. As you reflect on how the design of these spaces impact the people who inhabit them, remember how the loving community in Dream Street produced happy, supported children. Take time to consider how the use of shared space can either support or undermine a person's sense of security, worth, and belonging – and why this might encourage people to use public spaces for activism and justice.

# Taking Action, In Community



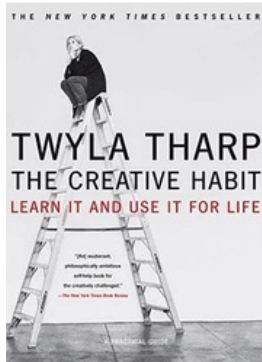
## Dancing in the Streets: A History of Collective Joy *Barbara Ehrenreich*

In this book, Ehrenreich explores the historical and cultural significance of communal celebration, particularly celebration through dance. She describes a repeating historical pattern of encouraging and then stifling collective dance, as well as the psychosocial benefits that dancing with others can have.

## Taste the Nation *Padma Lakshmi*



This docuseries follows world-renowned chef Padma Lakshmi as she travels across America exploring food traditions among immigrant and indigenous populations and the cultural significance of community through food. The docuseries reflects Ehrenreich's book as it moves through communities that have been stifled and reinvented, but where the book explores using the lens of dance, the series applies the lens of art and food.



## The Creative Habit: Learn It and Use It for Life *Twyla Tharp*

This non-fiction book explores how to cultivate a creative habit. Tharp draws on her own experiences as a dancer and choreographer to offer practical advice on how to harness the power of creativity in everyday life.

## Make our Mark *An Activity for Kids from the Tate Museum*



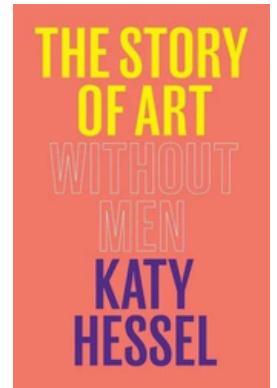
An activity from the Tate museum's collection of crafts for kids that guides children through group work to create a piece of art inspired by body movements and sound. This craft aligns with Tharp's creative process by harnessing the creativity of everyday life. Let yourself activate your own creativity as you complete the craft with children, and then consider how that creativity can be used to advance issues you are passionate about.

## The Story of Art Without Men

Katy Hessel

Recommended by Maverick Collective member Maggie Marcus

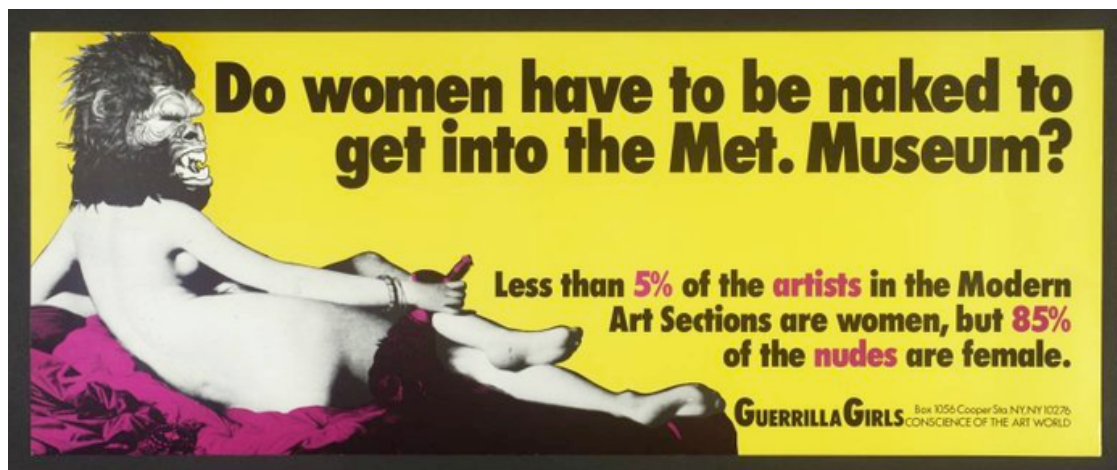
From Maggie: "I heard Katy Hessel [the author] speak at a Women in the Arts event at the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington DC. Katy described how during her education in art, women were consistently omitted in the museums she visited and the books she read. In response, she decided to write a book about women in art and leave out the men! This book is well-suited for Maverick Collective, not only because of its focus on women and girls, but because it questions social constructs and highlights the role of art in making the world fairer and just."



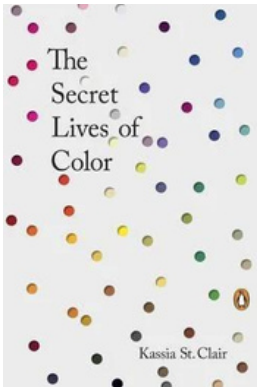
## Guerrilla Girls

*A Feminist Collective*

This anonymous collective of feminist artists and activists uses art and humor to expose gender and racial inequalities in art. They create posters, billboards, and other forms of public art to critique and challenge the underrepresentation and mistreatment of women artists. As you explore their publications, consider how creativity can be an effective way to challenge injustice.



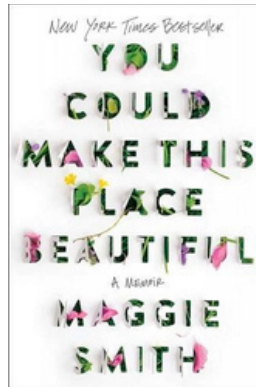
# What Else We Are Reading



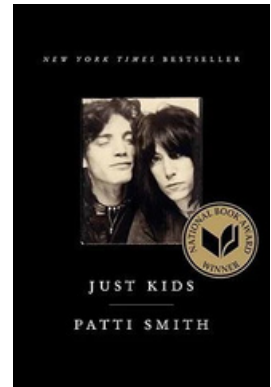
**The Secret Lives of Color**  
Kassia St Clair



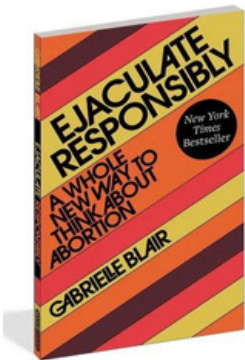
**The Color Purple**  
Alice Walker



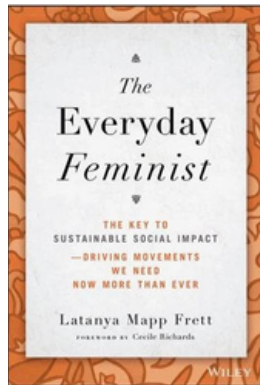
**You Could Make This Place Beautiful**  
Maggie Smith



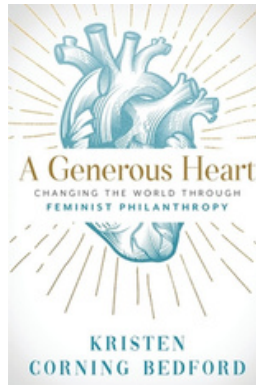
**Just Kids**  
Patti Smith



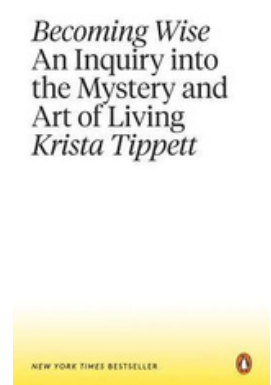
**Ejaculate Responsibly**  
Gabrielle Stanley Blair



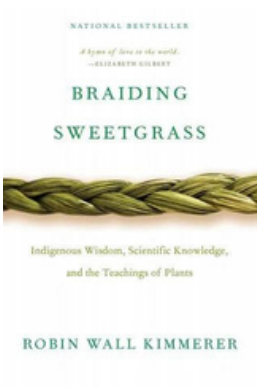
**The Everyday Feminist**  
Latanya Mapp Frett



**A Generous Heart**  
Kristen Corning Bedford



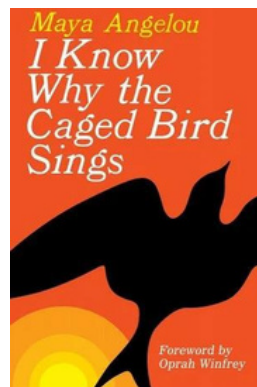
**Becoming Wise**  
Krista Tippett



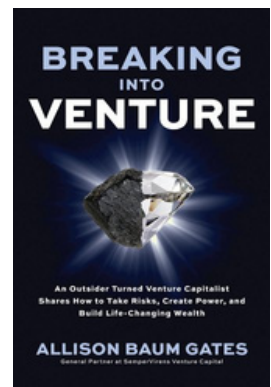
**Braiding Sweetgrass**  
Robin Wall Kimmerer



**Still This Love Goes On**  
Buffy Sainte-Marie  
\*Children's Picture Book



**I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings**  
Maya Angelou



**Breaking Into Venture**  
Allison Baum Gates

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