



VM50A

BILLIARDS

JULY 2025

**DR. MELAINE
FERDINAND-KING**


***LEADING WITH HEART,
BUILDING WITH HISTORY,
LIVING OUT LOUD***

**BILLIARD5
CELEBRATING
FIVE YEARS
STILL SETTING
THE TABLE FOR
WHAT MATTERS**



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BILLIARDS
VIRGINIA & THE DMV



***“WE CANNOT AFFORD
TO NOT BRING OTHER
PEOPLE INTO THE
ROOMS THAT WE'RE
INVITED TO.”***

DR. MELAINE FERDINAND-KING



LEADING WITH HEART, BUILDING WITH HISTORY, LIVING OUT LOUD

Hosted By Naire Poole for Billiards VMSEA Magazine

A FORCE BEYOND ACADEMIA

"She's a cultural force," I began, setting the stage for an interview that would traverse academia, artistry, and the deeply personal narratives that shape Melaine's journey. Born in Silver Spring, Maryland, with roots running deep through Norfolk, Virginia, and now calling New Jersey home, her trajectory is as layered as it is inspiring.





THE MATRIARCHAL THREAD

Melaine's family history is a tapestry woven with resilience and matriarchal strength. "I am the youngest of five generations of firstborn daughters," she shared, her voice imbued with pride. This lineage, anchored by figures like her great-great-grandmother Annie Brown—a sharecropper and churchwoman who lived to nearly 105—informs her approach to life, scholarship, and community.

ROOTED IN LEGACY





DEFINING 'HOME' IN TRANSITION

When asked what home means to her, Melaine offered a reflection that transcends geography. "Home is anywhere or anyone with whom you can be honest, where you can reflect, and where you can ultimately reset." It's a sentiment that aligns with her life's journey from Silver Spring to Jersey, and now Providence, Rhode Island.







THE INTERSECTION OF **HUMANITIES** *CULTURE &* **COMMUNITY**

"I actively work to be in community with people—it's not automatic," Melaine emphasized. Her work as a humanities researcher and civic curator is a testament to this ethos. She believes community is built through intentional labor, vulnerability, and the willingness to be inconvenienced for the sake of connection.



ACADEMIC JOURNEYS

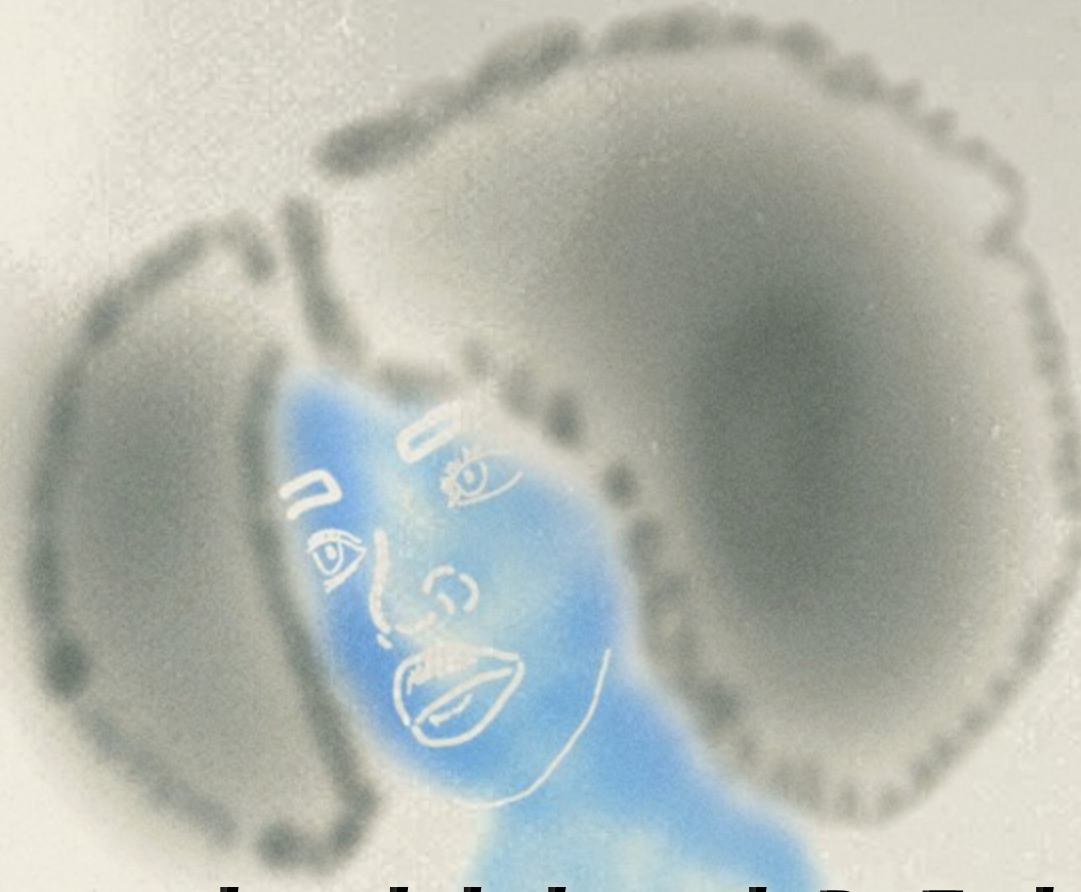
UNVEILING MYTHS



Reflecting on her academic path—from Spelman College to Brown University—Melaine highlighted the transformative power of historically Black institutions. *"Spelman College changed my life,"* she stated unequivocally. At Brown, she grappled with the complexities of academic gatekeeping, ultimately advocating for an inclusive approach to scholarship: *"We cannot afford to not bring other people into the rooms that we're invited to."*







Discussing her scholarly work, Dr. Ferdinand-King connected her studies to a broader cultural and historical continuum. "I see myself as part of this great flowing tapestry," she reflected. Her exploration of Afrofuturism and Black feminist thought positions her as both a custodian of the past and an architect of the future.

AFRO-FUTURISM BLACK FEMINIST THEORY AND THE FUTURE





CURRENT PROJECTS

WAYFINDERS FOR LOST WRITERS

Dr. Ferdinand-King is channeling her academic insights into community-based initiatives. "I'm creating Wayfinders for Lost Writers so that people who might feel a little insecure can write in community," she shared. This project, inspired by Toni Cade Bambara's essay 'What It Is I Think I'm Doing Anyhow', embodies her commitment to accessibility and collective growth.





AN **INVITATION** *TO* **CONNECT**

As our conversation drew to a close, Dr. Ferdinand-King extended an open invitation: "If you're listening and you don't know me or you do know me, hit me up, ask me more questions. I'm more than happy to answer."

For those eager to explore her work further, catch the full interview on Billiards VMSOA's website or stream it on Spotify. Dr. Ferdinand-King's story is not just one of personal achievement—it's a call to community, reflection, and action.





MELAINE

- Watch the full interview: BilliardsVMsOA.com
- Listen on Spotify – Billiards Podcasts
- Follow Dr. Melaine Ferdinand-King: [@melaine.mp3](https://www.instagram.com/melaine.mp3)
- More on Dr. MFK: melainejking.com

BILLIARD5

Thank You for Five Bold Years. From the start, Billiards has been more than a place for lovers—it's been a sanctuary for dreamers. Five years in, we remain committed to honoring culture, elevating voices, and curating moments that matter.

X

This September, Billiards is back. We return to the table with renewed vision, sharper stories, and a deeper reach. All new. Still us. Even more of what you came for.





www.billiardsvmsoa.com

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