

# Afrofuturism as an Arts Movement: Black Fantasy, Science & Speculative Fiction in Visual Arts from 2009 - 2019

Quentin VerCetty Lindsay, 2019 Researcher-In-Residence

## Abstract

The 2009-2019 decade has been a high point in the epoch of Afrofuturism thus far, due to the success of cinematic projects like *Pumzi* (2009), CBS' *Star Trek Discovery* (2017), Sharon Lewis' *Brown Girl Begins* (2017), an adaptation of Nalo Hopkinson's book *Brown Girl in The Ring* (1994), and Marvel Studios' *Black Panther* (2018) in the mass media. Their achievements made room for exhibitions across Canada including Wangechi Mutu's *This You Call Civilization?* (2010), Jean-Michel Basquiat's *The Time Is Now* (2015), and the *Scratch and Mix Project* (2015) among others. Focusing on the ideology of Afrofuturism, a term coined by American cultural critic, Mark Dery (1994), and then further expanded upon into *Afrofuturism 2.0* by Reynaldo Anderson and Charles E. Jones (2016), this paper contains an annotated bibliography and additional selected resources that identifies Afrofuturism not just as a methodology, aesthetic or theory, but as a 21st-century art movement. The content was selected based on the inclusion of Canadian artists and cultural producers along with its relevancy to the Canadian art world. The content compiled here provides a basis for understanding Afrofuturism as an international, intersectional contemporary art movement and social movement of the early 21st-century art history epoch.

**Keywords:** Art movement; Contemporary; Afrofuturism; Science fiction; Black Panther; Marvel Studios Canada; Speculative

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## Introduction *Tings*:

“Every mickle, makes a muckle” (Translation, every little piece adds up) – Jamaican Proverb.

In the 21st century, Afrofuturism has become more than just a term or description for an aesthetic or genre category for content and subject matter that carries similar aesthetic and merits. In contemporary art culture, Black artists, in response to the times and conditions that they are subject in, are collectively exploring the usage of speculative fiction and science fiction tropes informed by pre-colonial African ideologies and concepts in their creative methodologies and pedagogy. The term Afrofuturism, introduced by American cultural critic, Mark Dery (1994) in his essay, “Black to the Future,” looks at the speculative and synergetic connection between several Black American musical and visual artists in the 1980s and 1990s. Dery (1994) defines “Afrofuturism” as:

Speculative fiction that treats African-American themes and addresses African-American concerns in the context of twentieth-century technoculture—and, more generally, African-American signification that appropriates images of technology and a prosthetically enhanced future—might, for want of a better term, be called “Afro-futurism” (180).

Dery’s definition launched a series of academic debates and challenges which over the years encouraged transfiguring by writers like Alondra Nelson, Kodwo Eshun, Sofia Samatar, Lisa Yaszek, and Ytasha Womack – all of whom further identified Afrofuturism as a philosophy and ideology that empowers a movement. This transfiguration led to the publishing of *Afrofuturism 2.0*, by Reynaldo Anderson and Charles E. Jones (2016). For them, the advent of the Internet, social media and consciousness of interconnected and shared experiences of Black people globally demanded an expansion in the understanding and approach of Afrofuturists and Afrofuturistic thought and practice. They defined *Afrofuturism 2.0* as the following:

The early twenty-first century technogenesis of Black identity reflecting counter histories, hacking and or appropriating the influence of network software, database logic, cultural analytics, deep remixability, neurosciences, enhancement and augmentation, gender fluidity, posthuman possibility, the speculative sphere, with transdisciplinary applications and has grown into an essential Diasporic techno-cultural Pan African movement... Contemporary Afrofuturism2.0 is now characterized by five dimensions, to include: metaphysics; aesthetics; theoretical and applied science; social sciences; and programmatic spaces (Anderson and Jones X).

This expanded definition not only identifies Afrofuturism as a multifaceted and disciplined practice, but as a movement that is about artistic, technological and cultural innovation. It also offers the added function of being a tool for a social cause of Pan-Africanism beyond the United States (US).

This annotated bibliography, organized for the **2019 Ethnic Art History Research (EAHR) Residency: Diversifying Academia** at Concordia University, highlights a few key sources that demonstrate the different qualities of Afrofuturism as an art movement from 2009 to 2019, which is identified by the author as the second wave of Afrofuturism also referred to as Afrofuturism 2.0. The choice to focus on 2009 as the starting point of this analysis was the key shift from political speculation to reality when Barack Obama became the first Black President of the US. It is worth noting that since 2005, Canadians reveled in having the Right and Honourable Michaëlle Jean as the first Black Governor-General of Canada (until the end of her mandate in 2010). The significance of the two figures holding office at the same time was most keenly felt during the *Black Legacy Month* (also known as Black History Month) celebrations of February 2009 when President Obama was greeted by Governor General Jean as he arrived at the Ottawa airport during his first visit to Canada. This meeting sparked speculative dialogues and ideas in the media and among the Black diaspora communities for what the future might hold for Black people not just creatively, but socially and politically. The year 2009 is also an important point in time with regards to Afrofuturism as an art movement as numerous art exhibitions and commissions both accompanied and complemented many of the breakout Afrofuturistic films that came out in the mass media. Firstly, and most notably was the critically acclaimed success of the first Kenyan science fiction film, *Pumzi* (2009). The film was directed by Wanuri Kahiu; it premiered at the *Toronto After Dark Film Festival* and would go on to win Bronze. A number of other film projects also followed including *Battledream Chronicles: A New Beginning* (2016) – a multi-award-winning featured length animation by Martinique animator and film director Alain Bidard, which premiered in Toronto and Montreal as a part of the *Caribbean Tales International Film Festival*; the Canadian Screen Award-nominated film by Sharon

Lewis, *Brown Girl Begins* (2017), the first Caribbean Science fiction and Canadian Afrofuturism film which is an adaptation of Nalo Hopkinson's debut novel *Brown Girl in The Ring* (1994); CBS' *Star Trek Discovery* (2017), that was filmed in Vancouver and Toronto studios and featured numerous Black Canadians actors and sites from across Canada; and the ground-breaking Marvel Studios film *Black Panther* (2018). All of these works inspired exhibitions, conventions and discussions both nationally and globally around speculative *Afrofutures* while adding to the canon of Afrofuturism's visual art momentum.

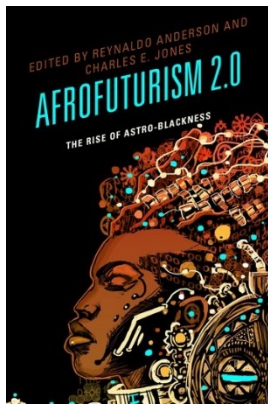
This annotated bibliography offers a launching pad for those who seek to learn about Afrofuturism from a non-American perspective and to be aware of Canada's visual arts presence, contribution, and influence on this historical, contemporary cultural Pan-African art movement. This bibliography helps to decolonize a pedagogical tradition that focuses on European art movements and U.S. artists. There is a Congolese proverb that says, "Foot would never know how far the town is if it's been carried there." An interpretation of this could mean that if a person has no knowledge or experience of the process that was taken to get to a specific end goal, then that person would never know how to achieve it themselves or understand how much effort is needed to get there. The resources analyzed in this annotated bibliography allows for future researchers, students, and enthusiasts to find their own way to "the town"- which can be interpreted as the different visions of far distant futures and realities of Afrofuturism. There are many artists yet to be documented and exhibitions yet to be critiqued through historical, social and academic lenses within the Afrofuturism art movement. This analysis will raise awareness for the need for more work to be carried out, and the different steps that could be taken in order for us to get "there" .

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## i. Books

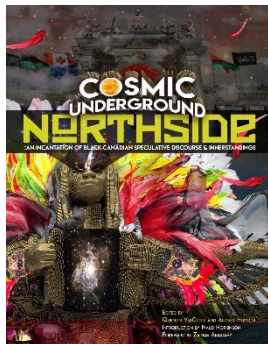
Anderson, Reynaldo, and Charles E. Jones, editors. *Afrofuturism 2.0: The Rise of Astro-Blackness*. Lexington Books, 2016. Paperback.



This title builds upon previous notions and ideas relating to Afrofuturism in late 20th century around issues of the digital divide, music and literature. Reynaldo Anderson and Charles E. Jones curated an 11-chapter book of modern ideas relating to the newly identified Afrofuturism 2.0 and look specifically at Afrofuturism as an art movement with a wider umbrella that deals with spirituality, urban planning and architecture, visual art, philosophy and social change. The book's introduction is where Anderson and Jones clearly illustrate Afrofuturism's breadth in a multifaceted cultural and social art movement with Pan-Africanism at its core. They refer to numerous, mostly U.S. artists, although they do make mention of Canadian Nalo Hopkinson. The book contains essays from Canadian scholars Tobias C. van Veen of British Columbia, entitled *The Armageddon Effect: Afrofuturism and the Chronopolitics of Alien Nation* (63-90) and a text by Ontario's Ken McLeod, *HipHop Holograms: Tupac Shakur, Technological Immortality, and Time Travel* (109-123).

Explore other libraries that also own this book via Worldcat [here](#).

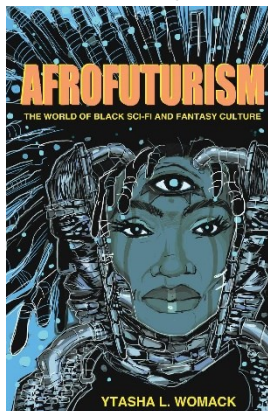
VerCetty, Quentin and Audrey Hudson. *Cosmic Underground Northside: An incantation of Black Canadian Speculative Discourse and Innerstandings. Vol. 1*. Cedar Grove Publishing, 2019.



A visual arts-focused, multi-volume work that engages with Afrofuturism from a Canadian lens and experience. Containing visual works from over 100 Black Canadian artists – and over 20 different article contributions – the content looks at the diasporic connection of Afrofuturism and how it translates in a multi-cultural place like Canada where Blackness is recognized as not being homogenous but diverse and multicultural with different regional, ethnic and historical practices. Several essays highlight the works of Canadian Afrofuturists and encourage the concept of expanding Afrofuturism as a way of life and thinking (and not just a theoretical creative outlet and theory).

{Book to be released in November 2019}

Womack, Ytasha. *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci-Fi and Fantasy Culture*. Lawrence Hill Books, 2013.



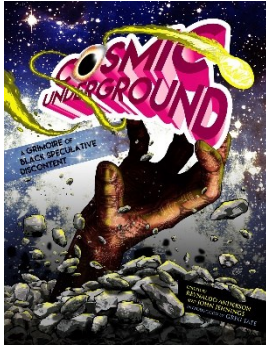
Author Ytasha Womack takes a personal approach in this book to explaining Afrofuturism and her own understanding of different Afrofuturistic works from different artists, art works, literature and artistic experiences. In the first chapter, *Evolution of A Cadet* (3-24), in the section, *A Cyber Movement Is Born* (17-19), Womack shares her views on Afrofuturism as a cultural arts movement. Further expanding her thoughts in the chapter, *Divine Feminine In Space* (97-115), in the *Feminist Space* (108) section, she quotes Afrofuturist scholar Alondra Nelson's argument that, "Afrofuturism is a feminist movement". This book documents the shift from Mark Dery's original definition of Afrofuturism in 1994 and the discourse that took place afterwards. It identifies Alondra Nelson as being at the forefront on the second wave with the advent of the Internet. As

well, it explores how ideologies and approaches to Afrofuturism, as they relate to the representation of Black people in worlds of Fantasy, developed with access to the Internet

Explore other libraries that also own this book via Worldcat [here](#).

## ii. Catalogues

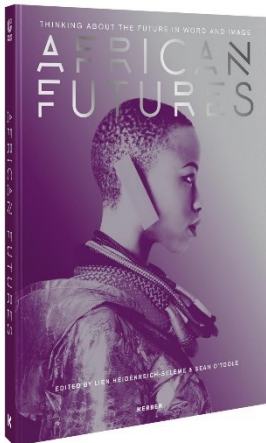
**Anderson, Reynaldo, and John Jennings, editors. *Cosmic Underground: A Grimoire of Black Speculative Discontent*. Cedar Grove Publishing. Paperback.**



This title follows up on the ground-breaking New York City exhibition, *Unveiling Visions: The Alchemy of the Black Imagination* (2015-2016) also curated by Reynaldo Anderson and John Jennings. The catalogue introduces Afrofuturism and Afrofuturistic thought through contemporary cultural production and where they may lead. It looks at how different Black creatives are shifting the narrative with their work. It contains the works of Canadian-and-Quebec-based Cecilia Bracmort, Sonet (Tetra) Providence, Maliciouz, and Quentin VerCetty; Alberta's Minister Faust (also known as Malcolm Azania) along with Ontario's Arthur Tanga, David Brame and Nalo Hopkinson; with a literary contribution from British Columbia's Tobias C. van Veen. It also makes references to the likes of Kapwani Kiwanga and Camille Turner.

Explore other libraries that also own this book via Worldcat [here](#).

**Heidenreich-Seleme, Lien, and Sean O'Toole, editors. *African Futures: Thinking About the Future Through Word and Image*. Kerber, 2016. Print.**



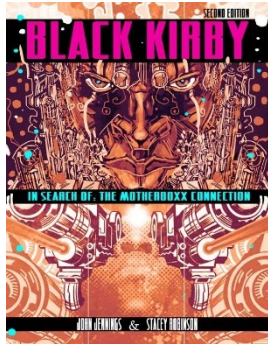
Offering different views and ideas from a variety of African artists, scholars and cultural producers who share their own stance on the future of African literature, film, performance arts, visual arts, music and science. Canadian born artist Kapwani Kiwanga makes several contributions to this book.

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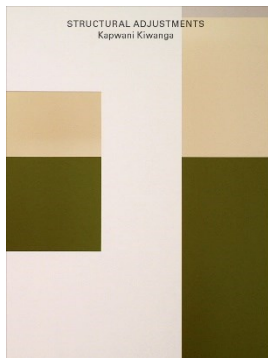
Jennings, John, and Stacey Robinson. *Black Kirby: In Search of The MotherBoxx Connection. Vol. 2.* Cedar Grove Publishing, 2015. Paperback.



The second volume of work of visual art by John Jennings and Stacey Robinson who make up Black Kirby features new work and essays that dig more deeply into the motif of W.E.B. Du Bois' double consciousness from the *Soul of Black Folks* (1903) – that deeply informs their visual art. Playing with a comic medium style of work fused with Hip-Hop influences, this innovative and provocative project became a travelling art exhibition that was presented in Toronto at OCAD University in 2016. In the catalogue, Jennings and Robinson share how Afrofuturism has become a part of their visual communication pedagogy.

Explore other libraries that also own this book via Worldcat [here](#).

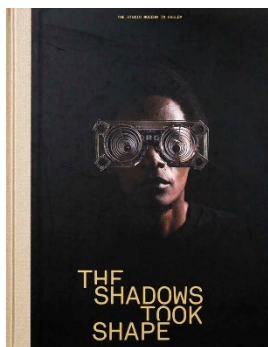
Kiwanga, Kapwani, Yesomi Umolu, and Gaëtane Verna. *Structural Adjustments: Kapwani Kiwanga.* Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts; University of Chicago Press; The Power Plant, 2018. Print.



This catalogue interprets award winning Canadian artist Kapwani Kiwanga's multi-disciplinary architecture and related works presented at the Logan Center Gallery, University of Chicago, along with works shown at The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery in Toronto. The catalogue offers insight into Kiwanga's process, research interests and methodology. Demonstrating the ways that Afrofuturism and Black speculative thought can even inform architectural space, how one experiences it, and how one retains the memory of such experiences.

Explore other libraries that also own this book via Worldcat [here](#).

Keith, Naima J., and Zoe Whitley, editors. *The Shadows Took Shape.* Malatjie, 2014. Hardcover.



Drawing its title from a Sun Ra poem, this catalogue by Naima J. Keith, assistant curator at The Studio Museum in Harlem, and Zoé Whitley, independent curator, this publication features the work of 29 different artists who engage with Mark Dery's ideas on Afrofuturism and its evolution since the 1990's. The art works from the exhibition and accompanying essays not only look at personal themes of identity and self-determination in communities of the Black diaspora, but they also address concerns regarding changes in techno-culture, utopias and dystopias.

Explore other libraries that also own this book via Worldcat [here](#).



Moos, David, editor. **Wangechi Mutu: This You Call Civilization?** Art Gallery of Ontario, 2010. Hardcover.



Dealing with narratives of beauty, consumerism, colonialism, race, identity and gender politics, this catalogue accompanies the first major showing of a Black artist at the Art Gallery of Ontario. The catalogue contains articles that aide with the visual deconstruction of Mutu's work and her use of speculative fiction as a metaphor for her Kenyan upbringing in contrast to her American realities of societal views and treatment of the Black female subject.

Find this book at Concordia Library [here](#).

Explore other libraries that also own this book via Worldcat [here](#).

Nia Centre For The Arts, **The Scratch & Mix Project**. Blitz Printing House, 2015. Paperback.



Produced by the Nia Centre For the Arts in partnership with the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Michaëlle Jean Foundation. *The Scratch & Mix Project* is the catalogue of an exhibition that came out of Foundation's national program 4th Wall: Make the Invisible Visible, which focused on showcasing the artwork, experiences and transformative ideas of underrepresented youth in Canada. This particular exhibition took place at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto and featured the works of 11 youth including Oluseye, Jah Grey, Halima Jama, Anique Jordan, Ian Keteku, Ebti Nabag, Gervais Nias, Komi Olaf, Giselle Tyrrell, Quentin VerCetty and Karen Weir. Their works engaged with personal themes and speculative thought around Afrofuturism. It includes key essays that connect the speculative works of the exhibition to the likes of Jean-Michel

Basquiat and other notable contemporary Afrofuturists and to the similarities between the expressions of their Black experience.

{Catalogue available via Nia Centre For The Arts: [info@niacentre.org](mailto:info@niacentre.org) }

### iii. Selected Articles and Journals

Digri, NTH. "Afrofuturism in Ottawa: An Underground Space Shuttle Going North." *Apt613*, 25 Jan. 2017, <https://apt613.ca/visual17e-ottawa/>.

Spoken word poet and musical artist NTH Digri, also known as Anthony Bansfield, gives an account for an Afrofuturism themed art event that featured several Canadian artists. NTH Digri illustrates the interconnectivity of the different artists and works on display and how it correlates to their American contemporaries.

Parris, Amanda. "Marvel's Black Panther is Just the Start. Why a New Movement in Black Art Is Coming to Canada." *CBC Arts*, 21 Oct. 2016, <https://www.cbc.ca/arts/marvel-s-black-panther-is-just-the-start-why-a-new-movement-in-black-art-is-coming-to-canada-1.3815988>.

In one of the first articles about the Black Speculative Art Movement in Canada, Amanda Parris documents the different Afrofuturist artists involved with this movement. She captures their views on the Canadian art world, the social climate in which they work, and how the Afrofuturistic art movement can shift the gauge.

Sofia Samatar. "Toward a Planetary History of Afrofuturism." *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 48, no. 4, 2017, pp. 175–191. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/reseafri.48.4.12](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/reseafri.48.4.12).

Written by Afrofuturist educator Sofia Samatar, the essay provides a framework for analyzing contemporary works by Afrofuturist artists instead of contextualizing history of Afrofuturism in relation to African science fiction. Samatar calls for more discourse around the inclusion of African artists in the artistic movement and how African diasporic and African ideologies converge and complement. This article provides an access point to argue for the inclusion of Canadian Afrofuturism through a multicultural lens.

van Veen, tobias, and Reynaldo Anderson. "Black Lives, Black Politics, Black Futures." *Topia: Canadian Journal Of Cultural Studies*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2018, pp. 1-221 . Project MUSE, [muse.jhu.edu/article/706962](http://muse.jhu.edu/article/706962). Doi: <https://doi.org/10.3138/topia.39.00>

A special issue of the academic journal *Topia* that was edited by tobias van Veen and Reynaldo Anderson. This number looks at the intersectionality of Afrofuturism with Black social change praxis and resistance. The introductory article starts off with quoting Toronto-born Afrofuturist activist and founder of Black Lives Matter Toronto chapter, janaya khan, to merge the world of social activism and social change with the intersectionality of gender issues and establishing a safe space or the Afrotopia, as the goal of the ideal Afrofuture.

Find this book at Concordia Library [here](#).

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## iv. Biography of Selected Canadian Afrofuturists

### Painting (Analog + Digital)

- **Komi Olaf**

Komi Olaf is a Nigerian-Canadian fine art painter, muralist, poet and architectural designer with a Master of Architecture degree from Carleton University. Through the lens of Afrofuturism, he uses his artistry to help connect a shared sense of history amongst people of the African continent and the diaspora. In 2015, he was listed by media outlet Blavity as one of [“8 Afrofuturists Artists You Need To Follow Right Now”](#)

*Notable article:* Shoberiy, Nick. “Art and Afrofuturism: An Interview With Komi Olaf” *Ottawa Life Magazine*, 3 Oct. 2017. Accessed 29 July 2019. <http://www.ottawalife.com/article/art-and-afrofuturism-an-interview-with-komi-olaf>

*Personal Website:* <http://komiolaf.com/>

- **MALICIOUZ**

MALICIOUZ is a fine art painter and muralist of Haitian descent based in Montreal. Her work focuses on presenting Black women as spiritual beings and deities. MALICIOUZ artistry has allowed her to travel internationally and most notably in 2019 she was able to complete six collaborative murals in Haiti over a span of a week. In 2019, Maliciouz was the recipient of the visual artist of the year from the Gala Dynastie in Montreal.

*Notable article:* Pichot, Alizee, and Lehoux Ariane. “The Artist Maliciouz and Her “Matriarch”: Exhibition from March 26 to April 29 in Montreal” *La Fabrique Crépue*, 17 Mar. 2018. Accessed 29 July 2019. <https://www.lafabriquecrepue.com/2018/03/17/lartiste-maliciouz-et-ses-matriarche-exposition-du-26-mars-au-29-avril-a-montreal-par-alizee-pichot/>

*Personal Website:* <https://www.maliciouz.com/>

- **Kelvin Nyeusi Mawazo (Black Sun Comics)**

Kelvin is the author, illustrator, and owner of Black Sun Comics; a publishing company that creates Afrofuturistic, African-centered science fiction and fantasy comics. His work incorporates various elements of ancient African cultures and places them in a futuristic setting where science, technology, magic and mysticism combines. Using the composition techniques he learned as a photographer, Kelvin connects elements of photography with graphic design with 3D renderings. He creates the content for Black Sun comics by digitally “photographing” and framing the 3D models and scenes he creates, then he digitally paints over them to achieve a balance between 2D illustration and 3D art.

*Notable article:* Swinimer, John. “Kelvin Nyeusi Mawazo, Creator of ‘Black Sun’, Says Image Creation Is More About Emotion than Content” *True North Country Comics Podcast*, 22 May, 2018. Accessed 29 July 2019. <https://truenorthcountrycomics.com/2018/05/22/kelvin-nyeusi-mawazo-creator-of-black-sun-says-image-creation-is-more-about-emotion-than-content/>

*Personal Website:* <http://blacksuncomics.com/>

- **Danilo McCallum**

Danilo McDowell-McCallum is a Toronto-based a multidisciplinary artist. Danilo McCallums works professionally as a painter, videographer, illustrator, graphic designer, muralist and art mentor. With a degree from Ontario College of Art and Design in illustration. Inspired by science-fiction movies and comics, Danilo McCallum tells various stories of Black people astral travelling and existing in the distant

future free from the oppression that exists when he was growing up. In 2013, Danilo had a solo show called Black Future Month, exploring the ideas of Afrofuturism. In the following year, he grew it into a 10-artist group exhibition which gave birth to the annual Black Future Month group art exhibitions.

*Notable article:* Battersby, Sarah-Joyce. "Toronto Artists Builds Instagram Database Toronto's Black Arts Scene", *The Toronto Star*, 18 March, 2016. Accessed 29 July 2019.

<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2016/03/18/toronto-artist-builds-instagram-database-torontos-black-arts-scene.html>

*Personal Website:* <https://www.danilomccallum.com/>

- **Kaylan F. Michael (Lost in The Island)**

Kaylan Michael also known as "Lost In the Island" is a freelance Montreal based visual artist and graphic designer. Her work is focused on using photo manipulation collages techniques, visual arts illustrations, branding & identity, editorial design, illustrations, apparel design and APP UI design. Providing frequent tutorials online to teach others how to create the work she does Kaylan's content explores themes of spirituality and femininity with an African touch.

*Notable Article:* Trendland Team. "Afrofuturism Collages of Kaylan Michel". *Trendland*, 28 June, 2018. Accessed 29 July 2019. <https://trendland.com/afrofuturism-collages-of-kaylan-m/>

*Personal Website:* <http://lostintheisland.com/>

## Performance

- **Camille Turner**

Camille Turner is an international multidisciplinary performance focused artists, a graduate of Ontario College of Art and Design and York University's Master's in Environmental Studies program where she is currently a PhD candidate. In her most recent practice Turner creates "The Afronautic Research Lab" performance spaces where the audience engages in encouraged to engage in research to encounter lesser known African histories. Camille Turner is also the founder of Outerregion, an Afrofuturist performance group that does a variety of public performance from walking tours to flash mob theatrics. Turner and Outerregion was profiled on CBC's *Art is My country* series.

*Notable Article:* Turner, Camille. Evoking a Site of Memory: An Afrofuturist Sonic Walk that Maps Historic Toronto's Black Geographies. *FES Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Series*, vol. 18, no.5, 2012, Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, <https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/handle/10315/20829>

*Personal Website:* <http://camilleturner.com/>

- **d'bi young**

d'bi.young anitafrika is a Black queer feminist dub poet playwright, director, dramaturge, educator, activist and scholar. With four collections of poetry, twelve plays and seven dub albums d'bi young is also a three time Dora-award winner, a Canadian Poet of Honour and the recipients of the KM Hunter Theatre Award and the YWCA Woman of Distinction in the Arts. One of her most notable projects is her 333 album release in 2016 where she explores the intersections of gender fluidity and African mythology. d'bi.young is also the creator of the Anitafrika Method — "an emancipatory praxis for self-recovery, creative growth, and leadership development". She is currently completing her post-graduate studies at Goldsmiths, University of London, UK to further develop her research in Black performance and the anitafrika Method.

Notable Article: anitafrika, d'bi.young. "Black Plays Matter: Watah Theatre, Creating Safe Space for Black Artists in These Dangerous Times." *Canadian Theatre Review*, vol. 165, 2016, pp. 26-31. Project MUSE, [muse.jhu.edu/article/609612/](http://muse.jhu.edu/article/609612/)

Personal Website: <http://dbiyounganitafrika.com/>

- **Kapwani Kiwanga**

Kapwani Kiwanga is an international multimedia performance artist and a graduate from McGill University (Montreal, Quebec) studying anthropology and comparative religion. Kiwanga's practice explores sound, film, oration, relying on research of historical narratives and their impact on political, social, and community formation. Kiwanga was nominated for the the British Academy of Film and Television Arts in 2016 along with being the recipient of 2018 Sobey Art Award and the Frieze Artist. Her renowned performance art piece *Afrogalactica trilogy project* demonstrates her creativity and her interest not only in the past but also the future, telling Afrofuturist stories from a futuristic perspective to create a reflection of the social implications of different historical events from different eras.

Notable Article: Steingo, Gavin. "Kapwani Kiwanga: Extraterrestrial Speculations." *Re-views images. History, Anthropology and Theory of Art*, no. 14, 2017, <https://journals.openedition.org/imagesrevues/4083>.

Personal Website: <https://www.kapwanikiwanga.org/>

## **Film and Photography**

- **Sharon Lewis**

Sharon Lewis is an award winning actress, film director, screen writer, producer, television personality and visionary. In 2005 Sharon Lewis directed her first project *Chains*, which went on to win the best Sci-Fi short at the Eugene International Film Festival. While in 2017 Lewis feature length film, *Brown Girl Begins* the first Caribbean-Canadian science fiction film which won numerous awards including *The Merit Special Mention in the African American Category* at the Indiefest. The success of this film was also covered by CBC's exhibitionist show and received much praise and media recognition.

Notable Article: Phillips, Genice. "Afrofuturism, Black Resistance, and the Caribbean Dystopian Narrative in Sci-Fi Cinema: An Interview with 'Brown Girl Begins' Director Sharon Lewis during Black Futures Month", *Potent Magazine*, 22 Feb. 2018. <https://www.potentmagazine.com/interview-with-brown-girl-begins-director-sharon-lewis-black-futures-month/>

Personal Website: <https://www.thesharonlewis.com/>

- **Adeyemi Adegbesan (SoTeeOh aka Yung Yemi)**

Adeyemi Adegbesan is a Toronto-based photographic artist, who has been creatively exploring different aspects of Black identity. As a photographer known as SoTeeOh, his work has been selected by Instagram as a featured photographer and has worked with numerous brands. He also shot innovative science fiction inspire music videos for Canadian and international artists. But as of the 2016 under the persona of Yung Yemi he has also been creating unique photographic collaged based works of different Black personalities as regal nobles covered with symbolic gold jewellery and accessories, which has been featured in numerous shows and publications globally.

Notable Article: Palmieri, Sabina. "How four artists are celebrating black identity through their work" *Revolt*. 28 Feb. 2018. <https://revolt.tv/stories/2018/02/28/celebrating-black-identity-art-07000d06f3/>

Personal Website: <https://soteeoh.com/> | <https://yungyemi.com/>

## **Literature**

- **Nalo Hopkinson**

Nalo Hopkinson is a Jamaican-born Canadian writer. Hopkinson's wrote her first novel *Brown Girl in the Ring* in 1998, earning the Locus Award for Best New Writer. In 1999, she was the recipient of the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer and the Ontario Arts Council Foundation Award for Emerging Writers. In 2000, Hopkinson's novel *Midnight Robber* was shortlisted for the James R. Tiptree Jr. Memorial Award. In 2001, it was nominated for the Hugo Award for Best Novel. Hopkinson's short story collection *Skin Folk* received the World Fantasy Award and the Sunburst Award for Canadian Literature of the Fantastic in 2003. Her novel *The Salt Roads* received the Gaylactic Spectrum Award for positive exploration of queer issues in speculative fiction for 2004, presented at the 2005 Gaylaxicon. In 2008, her novel *The New Moon's Arms* received the Aurora Award (Canada's reader-voted award for science fiction and fantasy) and the Sunburst Award for Canadian Literature of the Fantastic, making her the first author to receive the Sunburst Award twice. In the same year, *Brown Girl in the Ring* was a finalist in Canada Reads, produced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. In 2013, the novel *Sister Mine* earned the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America 2013 Andre Norton Award for Outstanding Young Adult Science Fiction/ Fantasy Book. In 2017, *Brown Girl in the Ring* was the inspiration for *Brown Girl Begins*, a feature-length film by Sharon Lewis. Still gaining accolades and passionate about new narratives, Nalo Hopkinson completed another literature feat with *House of Whispers – Powers Divided, volume 1*, as a part of DC Comics Sandman universe with Neil Gaiman in 2019.

Notable Article: Perillo, Kate. "The Science-Fictional Caribbean Technological Futurity in Nalo Hopkinson's *Midnight Robber* and Beyond." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, vol. 22, no.2, 2018, pp.1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1215/07990537-6985642>

Personal Website: <http://nalohopkinson.com/>

- **Zetta Elliott**

Zetta Elliott is a Black feminist writer of poetry, plays, essays, novels, and stories for children. Zetta Elliot earned a Ph.D. in American Studies from NYU in 2003 and taught at Ohio University, Louisiana State University, Mount Holyoke College, Hunter College, Bard High School Early College, and Borough of Manhattan Community College. Zetta Elliott poetry is in *New Daughters of Africa: We Rise, We Resist, We Raise Our Voices*, the Cave Canem anthology *The Ringing Ear: Black Poets Lean South, Check the Rhyme: An Anthology of Female Poets and Emcees*, and *Coloring Book: An Eclectic Anthology of Fiction and Poetry by Multicultural Writers*. Zetta Elliott picture book, *Bird*, won the Honor Award in Lee & Low Books' New Voices Contest and the Paterson Prize for Books for Young Readers in 2008. While Elliott's novel, *The Door at the Crossroads*, was a finalist in the Speculative Fiction category of the 2017 Cybils Awards, and her picture book, *Melena's Jubilee*, won a 2017 Skipping Stones Award. Among other awards was having 3 of her books named Best of the Year by the Bank Street Center for Children's Literature in 2018, and *Benny Does not Like to Be Hugged*, a first-grade fiction selection for the 2019 Scripps National Spelling Bee.

Notable Article: Gruner, Elisabeth Rose. "'Dreaming Themselves into Existence': Reading and Race." *Constructing the Adolescent Reader in Contemporary Young Adult Fiction*. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2019. 85-111. [https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-53924-3\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-53924-3_4)

Personal Website: <https://www.zettaelliott.com/>

- **Minister Faust (Malcolm Azania)**  
Minister Faust is a multimedia artist, video game creator and writer based out of Edmonton, Alberta. He is the author of several books series. Notably his debut book, *The Coyote Kings of the Space-Age Bachelor Pad* was shortlisted for the Locus Best First Novel and Philip K. Dick awards. Along with his novels Minister Faust has also provided reviews and articles for numerous media outlets in Alberta and around the globe. His personal Afrofuturistic work focuses on the concept of “Afritarianism” which are narratives about future societies that are utopias inspired by ancient African civilizations where people of African descent are not struggling for justice, but for the stars. He also hosts a podcast called MF Galaxy, where he interviews different personalities within the realm of speculative and science fiction from around the world. In 2009 Minister Faust wrote and helped to develop the video game *Mass Effect 2 DLC* and BioWare’s *Gift of the Yeti* game application for Facebook.

Notable Article: Rogers, Shelagh. “Why Minister Faust mixes mixing contemporary urban life with ancient African history in his fiction” *The Next Chapter*. CBC Radio. 2 Oct. 2017. Accessed 29 July, 2019.  
<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thenextchapter/cherie-dimaline-john-maclachlan-gray-minister-faust-1.4311092/why-minister-faust-mixes-mixing-contemporary-urban-life-with-ancient-african-history-in-his-fiction-1.4313276>

Personal Website: <http://ministerfaust.com/>

## **Curation**

- **janaya “Future” khan**  
janaya khan also known as Future is a Black, queer, gender-nonconforming boxer, poet, writer, curator, activist and social-justice educator and the co-founder of Black Lives Matter Canada. In khan was the recipient of the 2015 Bromley Armstrong Human Rights Award from the Toronto & York Region Labour Council, and was named one of “Toronto's Most Influential” by Toronto Life in 2016. janaya currently resides in Los Angeles as the International Ambassador for the Black Lives Matter Network and Interim Campaign Director at Color of Change.

Notable Article: Diaz-Matus, Leandro. “‘Cyborg’ inspired by Afrofuturism to empower marginalized youth” *The Toronto Observer*. 28 April, 2014. Accessed 30 July, 2019  
<https://torontoobserver.ca/2014/04/28/cyborg-inspired-by-afrofuturism-to-empower-marginalized-youth/>

Personal Website: <https://janayakhan.com/>

- **Jayde Byard-Peek**  
Jayde Byard Peek—is a Mi'kmaw and Black woman of trans experience—is a multi-disciplinary artist and performer; sits on the NSCAD student union and is the provincial and national women's representative for the Canadian Federation of Students; Outside of the activism work Jayde is also an artist and curator. Studying at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) focusing on Black and Indigenous methodologies, social criticism, art education and curatorial practice. In 2017 Jayde curated a successful exhibition entitled “We Are the Griots” at the Anna Leonowens Gallery, which focused on tell the overlook or unheard-of Afro-indigenous stories of Halifax from the past and future.

Notable Article: Joachim, Joana. “‘Embodiment and Subjectivity’: Intersectional Black Feminist Curatorial Practices in Canada” *RACAR: Review of Canadian Art*, vol. 43, no. 2, 2018, pp. 34-47. *Erudit*,  
<https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1054381ar>. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1054381ar>



## v. **Selected Contemporary Exhibitions from 2009 – 2019**

- [\*Superpower: Africa in Science Fiction\*](#), exhibition curated by Nav Haq and Al Cameron at Arnolfini, Bristol, UK. May - Jun 2012.
- [\*Black Future Month 3013\*](#), by Danilo McCallum at Accents Bookstore Gallery, Toronto, Canada. February 2013 – March 2013.
- [\*The Shadows Took Shape\*](#), exhibition Curated by Naima J. Keith; Zoe Whitley and Thelma Golden at Studio Museum, Harlem, USA. November 2013 - March 2014.
- [\*Black Future Month 3014\*](#), curated by Danilo McCallum at Daniel Spectrum, Toronto, Canada. February 2014 – March 2014. **Downloadable digital catalogue:**  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Y4\\_yln2rqwafWj7VJZuw2cgVRNZXNNAC/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Y4_yln2rqwafWj7VJZuw2cgVRNZXNNAC/view?usp=sharing)
- [\*Black Future Month 3015\*](#), curated by Danilo McCallum and Quentin VerCetty at OCAD University, Toronto, Canada. February 2015 – April 2015. **Downloadable digital catalogue:**  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B5H8o3fj4PgKOWltRE9fa2xiX2s/view?usp=sharing>
- [\*The 4<sup>th</sup> Wall Scratch & Mix Project: Empowering Black Youth Through the Arts\*](#), by Michaëlle Jean Foundation and Nia Centre For the Arts at Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada. April 2015 – August 2015.
- [\*Unveiling Visions: The Alchemy of the Black Imagination\*](#), curated by John Jennings; Reynaldo Anderson at Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Harlem, USA. October 2015 - January 2016.
- [\*Black Future Month 3016\*](#), curated by Danilo McCallum and Quentin VerCetty at OCAD University, Toronto, Canada. February 2016 – April 2016.
- [\*Afropop\*](#), curated by Mali'Ciouz and Kandolo at Espace Mushagalusa, Montreal, Canada. February 2016 - March 2016.
- [\*Regarding Africa: Contemporary Art and Afro-Futurism\*](#), curated by Ruth Direktor at Tel Aviv, Israel. December 2016 – May 2017.
- [\*We are the Griots\*](#), curated by Jayde Byard Peek at Anna Leonowens Gallery, Halifax, Canada. February 2017.

- [\*Art Against Post Racism\*](#), curated by Philip S.S. Howard; Camille Turner at McGill University, Montreal, Canada; Queens University, Kingston, Canada; Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Canada. October 2017.
- [\*Afro-Tech and the Future of Re-Invention\*](#), curated by Inke Arns; Fabian Saavedra-Lara, at Hartware MedienKunstVerein , Dortmund, Germany. October 2017 – April 2018.
- [\*Afrofuturism: Embracing a New African Nova Scotian Perspective\*](#) curated by Kim Cain, Halifax North Library, Halifax, Canada. February 2018 – March 2018.
- [\*Us Here. Now. & A thousand Paths Home\*](#), curated by Wan Lucas at Toronto Union Station, Toronto, Canada. February 2019.

## vi. **Further Reading**

- Dery, Mark. "Black to the Future: Interviews with Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose." Edited by Mark Dery. *Flame Wars: The Discourse on Cyberculture*. Duke University Press, 1994. 179-222. University of Victoria. <https://www.uvic.ca/victoria-colloquium/assets/docs/Black%20to%20the%20Future.pdf>
- Eshun, Kodwo. "Further Considerations of Afrofuturism." *CR: The New Centennial Review*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2003, pp. 287-302. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41949397>.
- Lavender III, Isiah, editor. *Afrofuturism Rising: The Literary Prehistory of A Movement*. Ohio State University Press, 2019. Paperback.
- Griffith, Rick. "The Construct (The Art & Politics of Afrofuturism)." *Medium*, 25 Sept. 2018, <https://medium.com/@tiltwest/the-construct-the-art-politics-of-afrofuturism-d85f61b39348>.
- Nelson, Alondra. "Afrofuturism." *Social Text*, vol. 20, no. 2, July 2002, pp. 1-15. Project MUSE, [muse.jhu.edu/article/31931](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/31931).
- Roussos, Eleni. *The Art of Marvel Studios Black Panther: The Art of the Movie*. Marvel WorldWide, 2018. Print.
- Sorensen, Leif. "Dubwise into the Future: Versioning Modernity in Nalo Hopkinson." *African American Review*, vol. 47, no. 2/3, 2014, pp. 267-283, [www.jstor.org/stable/24589753](https://www.jstor.org/stable/24589753).
- Stotter, Magdalena. "Did You Say Afrofuturism? On Labelling Art." *Queer (In-)Visibilities in the Art of Africa and Beyond*, 2 Mar. 2016, <https://wikis.fu-berlin.de/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=646989083>.
- Tiffany E. Barber. "25 Years of Afrofuturism and Black Speculative Thought: Roundtable with Tiffany E. Barber, Reynaldo Anderson, Mark Dery, and Sheree Renée Thomas." *Topia: Canadian Journal Of Cultural Studies*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2018, pp. 136-144. Project MUSE, [muse.jhu.edu/article/706962](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/706962).
- Yaszek, Lisa. "Afrofuturism, Science Fiction and the History of the Future." *Socialism and Democracy*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2006, pp. 41-60. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08854300600950236>.