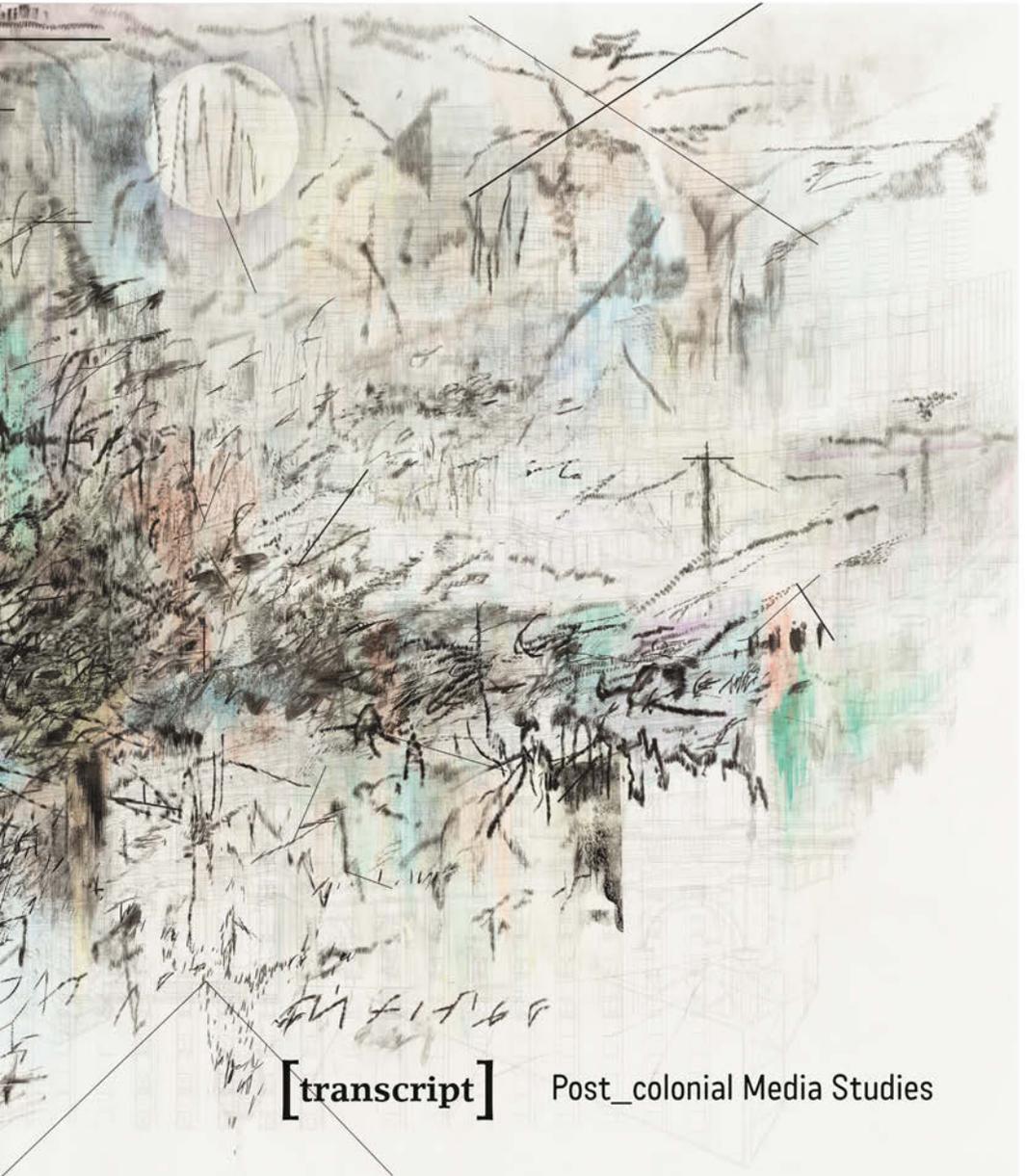


Henriette Gunkel, kara lynch (eds.)

We Travel the Space Ways

Black Imagination, Fragments,
and Diffractions



[transcript]

Post_colonial Media Studies

From:

Henriette Gunkel, kara lynch (eds.)

We Travel the Space Ways

Black Imagination, Fragments, and Diffractions

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A new take on Afrofuturism, this book gathers together a range of contemporary voices who, carrying legacies of 500 years of contact between Africa, Europe, and the Americas, reach towards the stars and unknown planets, galaxies, and ways of being. Writing from queer and feminist perspectives and circumnavigating continents, they recalibrate definitions of Afrofuturism. The editors and contributors of this exciting volume thus reflect upon the re-emergence of Black visions of political and cultural futures, proposing practices, identities, and collectivities.

With contributions from AfroFuturist Affair, John Akomfrah, Jamika Ajalon, Stefanie Alisch, Jim Chuchu, Grisha Coleman, Thomas F. DeFrantz, Abigail DeVille, M. Asli Dukan with Wildseeds, Kodwo Eshun, Anna Everett, Raimi Gbadamosi, Alexis Pauline Gumbs, Milumbe Haimbe, Ayesha Hameed, Kiluanji Kia Henda, Kara Keeling, Carla J. Maier, Tobias Nagl, Tavia Nyong'o, Rasheedah Phillips, Daniel Kojo Schrade, Nadine Siegert, Robyn Smith, Greg Tate and Frohawk Two Feathers.

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For further information:

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Acknowledgement

This book project has been an exciting and challenging journey of collaborative and collective future visionings. The voices and practices that form the foundation of this volume are those generated by African descendent people, sometimes in conversation, and/or alongside with white European scholars, which opens the ‘we’ that is indicated throughout the pages of this book, to all the complexities and contradictions in this collectively assembled project. We want to thank all the contributors who embarked on this journey with us. Focusing on the political objective of centering and amplifying black lineages of thinking, making, acting, dreaming therefore necessarily means decentering particular systems of thought that are embedded in whiteness. We want to acknowledge how complex it becomes to write into each other’s voices – as editors, contributors, artists, collectives, and thinkers.

Some of us, at one point or another, met in Bayreuth, Germany where the Academy of Advanced African Studies with its thematical focus on “Future Africa, Visions in Time”, and particularly the subproject “Concepts of Future in MediaSpaces” with Susan Arndt and Peggy Piesche, provided a meeting point that enabled a number of discussions and ideas reflected in the book. The complex field of African Studies, at the same time, made apparent how this project requires our constant critique of whiteness as a violent system that produces a certain system of thought through the elision of other histories, experiences and knowledges.

This book provides us with an understanding of how much the project of searching for and manifesting multiple black visions are drawn to the act of excavation of the past and of the archive – while tackling the complicated question of representation and, importantly, providing us with an epistemological shift on how we think about race. It urges us to tackle the question of how then can we collectively consider the ‘dreaming and visioning’ of our ancestors? While realizing that the excavation of the past is important to all of us, no matter of the racialized positionings, all contributors to this volume actively center black epistemologies and aesthetics – not in a way that makes whiteness yet again invisible or assigning it a ‘neutral’ position but by acknowledging how the different histories – some visible,

some not – define us all, albeit differently. Whiteness is produced by the elisions in the archive, and by pointing to the void in the archive from multi-ethnic perspectives, we seek to provide an understanding that the histories that are missing are the histories of all of us and that the different and complex power relations that have formed these histories and experiences are still operating today. Taking seriously that we “dwell within neoliberalism” and as Tomlinson and Lipsitz remind us, that “the discourses we inhabit seek to shape not merely what we think but, more importantly, how we think” (2013: 7-8), as editors, we are grateful to each contributor for their leap of faith and trust that in bringing all of their pieces together into one volume we could compose something that brings out each voice and vision in accompaniment¹ that makes space for discord, melodies, harmony, through call and response, overlap, repetition, cross-talk, deep reflection, and improvisation. We do so in honor of those whose shoulders we stand and those who will follow. Intellectual and artistic forbearers are acknowledged throughout this volume in our collective citation and references.

We want to thank the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies for the generous and important support in this research and book project. Thanks to Doris Loehr and Renate Crowe for facilitating meetings points and research fellowships that allowed us to finalize this project. Institutionally, Hampshire College has provided vital support for the completion of this project through sabbatical leave and faculty development funds and their disbursement by Jean Sepanski and Jackie Jeffery in the Dean of Faculty Office. We want to thank Ulrike Bergermann for believing in this project and offering it a place in her book series *Post_colonial Media Studies*, and for the general support from the Transcript team, particularly Annika Linnemann and Daniel Bonanati. We want to thank Ken Wissoker and the anonymous reviewer of Duke University Press for their productive feedback.

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1 Tomlinson, Barbara and George Lipsitz (2013): “American Studies as Accompaniment.” In: *American Quarterly* 65/1, The Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 1-30.

A significant meeting point for us, as editors, was the AfroSat II exhibition at the Iwalewa Haus, University of Bayreuth and supported by the BIGSAS Festival of African and African-Diasporic Literatures in the spring of 2012 and we are grateful to both Anna Schrade and Daniel Kojo Schrade for this significant intervention and introduction.

kara lynch would like to thank colleagues in Africana Studies at Hampshire College, Amy Jordan and Chris Tinson, for their support for offering an advanced Africana Studies seminar spring 2016 entitled, *hacu 333::Black Imagination, Fragments and Diffractions – Dialogs across the African Diaspora*; and acknowledge the dynamic exchange between students that informed and emboldened this project. Thanks to: Izy Coffey-Moore, Eunice Esomonu, Kayla Foney, Dykee Gorrell, Rahma Haji, Sydney Loving, Sara Orzak, Langston Sanchez, and Olivia Streisand for their collective innovative engagement with, and enthusiastic, deep dive into the material, and their leap of faith as we hovered at the edge of the black hole that generated spectacular research projects. There are of course too many people to name whose love and support and whose art practice inspired that has made it possible to dedicate time and energy to this project, I would like to thank biological family – Lynch and Dounelis sides – especially Stevia, Wayne, and Steve, for constant belief in my art practice and for decades of living and learning how to thrive in the complexity of Diaspora and displacement; and queer feminist family – you know who you are – for teaching me collectively with joy. Special thanks for your mentor/companionship on this intellectual journey: Joy James, Joan Gibbs, Celeste Henery, jamika ajalón, Peggy Piesche, Grisha Coleman, Kevin Quashie, Sara Abu Ghazal, Maite Bermudez, Morelia Privas, Elizabeth Steeby, Charlotte Brathwaite, Courtney Bryan, Mariana Valencia, and Constance Valis-Hill; and for the many art dates that span the course of this project: Robin Coste Lewis and Hope Tucker.

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Black Astrophysics: A Homemade Field of Love

Dedicated to Clyde Eliot Gumbs

ALEXIS PAULINE GUMBS

I. BY THE TIME I REALLY SEE YOU, YOU ARE GONE

The night my father died I called him on the phone to say hello and to see when he would be leaving the hospital. He didn't answer. I left a message and at the last moment before I hung up I quickly said, "rest well." I don't know if he heard me. Maybe he had the strength to listen but not to call back. I don't know. Maybe he was already in the place where he could hear everything I said, no matter that I was in a car in Durham, still sweaty from dance class, and his body was losing temperature and breath in a hospital room in New Jersey.

No matter. Just energy. So now I have to learn astro-physics. What we do with the light of stars that are gone by the time we notice them. What we do with the darkness that scientists fear. The darkness we are all taught to fear. The unknowable that scholars fear and fetishize. The darkness where we think we see a star.

Is any message too late? In the colored people's time sense? In the black sense? In the cosmic sense?

I was born just a few hours too late to share my father's birthday. Now I fear celebrating will break me. So I procrastinate like the day will never come. I make no plans. My own approximation of darkness. I cling to not knowing as long as I can. My father's first birthday after he died, I went to the Hayden Planetarium. One of his favorite places. With my head tilted back towards a round projected sky, I listened to Neil DeGrasse Tyson tell me that I wasn't the center of the universe. And that I was. And that everything in the universe is moving apart. Further every second. By the time I really see you, you are gone. This time I won't let the stars distract me. The ever-present darkness says *expand*.

That is to say, I love you. But I cannot keep you. And part of me hates the rate of change that means that I will lose everyone I love, or they will lose me. And

both. I know that writing this is changing me. Faster than I can accept. Could I be the same person, even for the length of one essay? The process of one prayer? I am opening this by opening up. Letting go and holding on to you, and poets, and prophets, and physicists, and particles, and my father, and my freedom, and my fears. But we both know, in the time you take to read this book, what you knew about yourself will burn. By the time you see these words, I am gone.

II. SOME OF US DID NOT DIE (YET)

In my practice of speaking to the dead a little too late, I am not alone. I am joined by almost all of literature. Let's use the example of June Jordan. June Jordan went to Barnard many years before I did. During my first year of college I dug through the archives and brought her words to a new generation of black students, I kept them on my walls. June Jordan was alive then. She came and spoke at Barnard, one of her last speeches ever. It was after September 11th and the speech was called "Some of Us Did Not Die." She was alive. I missed it. I was somehow out of town. And then she did die. And I did not. I ended up being the first researcher to visit her archival papers. And I have been writing about her ever since. Turns out she writes to dead people too.

In 1977, the great Civil Rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer died of breast cancer. And days later June Jordan published a poem in the New York Times in the second person

as in:

"You used to say 'June?
Honey when you come down here you
stay with me.' Where else?"

June Jordan's most anti-imperialist book of poems is called *Living Room*. She sat in her kitchen and told Alexis De Veaux and *Essence Magazine* that "poems are housework" and should be "as nutritious as a good breakfast." And her definition of home was shaped profoundly by Fannie Lou Hamer.

Fannie Lou Hamer who fed and housed organizers after being kicked out of her home for attempting to register to vote. Fannie Lou Hamer who stayed in Mississippi after the window next to her bed was shot through in the night. Fannie Lou Hamer who was jailed and beaten until her body felt like lead. Fannie Lou Hamer who spoke her truth in protest of the Democratic National Convention. "Is this America?" she asked. Fannie Lou Hamer who adopted children after the state hos-

pital sterilized her without her consent. Fannie Lou Hamer who created a farm where disenfranchised black and white farmers could nourish each other and their community. That Fannie Lou Hamer was June Jordan's mentor and model for what Jordan called "Black home."

In 1970 in the New York Times, Jordan wrote about Mississippi as a "Black home," a site of dark energy. She spoke against the way black lives were invisible to the readers of the New York Times except in death. She insisted:

"They are there, right there. They are alive and changing their lives, point by point."

Not exactly stars, but impactful and dark points of black, like most of the energy and matter in the universe.

In 1977, feeling homeless and proud, June Jordan described Fannie Lou Hamer as:

"one full Black lily
luminescent
in a homemade field
of love"

In her recent book *Field Theories* and in her mixtape poem in honor of June Jordan, poet Samiya Bashir, student of June Jordan and participant in her "Poetry for the People" program at UC Berkeley cites part of that same poem:

"one full Black lily
luminescent
in a homemade field"

What exactly is a field? What is the difference between a store-bought one and one made at home? Can we think of a field in the astrophysical sense as a relation? Can we think of it as the energetic context of darkness in the universe; most famous for the enlightenment-confounding phenomenon of black (w)holes;¹ those places in the universe where time does not necessarily move forward; where you are not necessarily one being;² where, as Rasheedah Phillips explores so beautifully in her work, you come back and meet yourself because what happened is unhappening?

1 Shout out to Evelyn Hammonds.

2 Shout out to Fred Moten and Édouard Glissant.

Ronald Mallet, a retired black theoretical physicist, is building a time machine so he can reunite with his father who died when he was a child. Literature reaches for what black life already wants. Everything that was taken too soon.

Which is to say, everything.

Do you think Fannie Lou Hamer can hear her name being spoken across time in print right now? How many times do I have to repeat it? One of my niece's first words was "Hamer." She has her own copy of the out of print children's book "Fannie Lou Hamer" by June Jordan.

Was June Jordan creating black hole portals for black (w)holeness with her pattern of writing to the dead? Are we all doing that? Are we participating in an astro-physical exercise to undo the meaning of black life as death?

In 1992, June Jordan wrote to fellow black West Indian poet, mother, and teacher Audre Lorde soon after Lorde died, in time for the funeral program. In this letter, again in the second person, she talked about their differences and what brought them together. Their relationship, shaped by tokenization was not always an easy one. June Jordan's first public appearance after Fannie Lou Hamer died in 1977 was to introduce Audre Lorde as the first black poet to read at the national library. She compared Lorde to Fannie Lou Hamer, and Lorde wrote a letter thanking her.

By the time of the 1992 letter, Audre Lorde had died, like Fannie Lou Hamer, from breast cancer, a disease that June Jordan was fighting as she wrote the letter and which she would fight with support from her community for ten more years.

Early on in the letter Jordan explains their common motivation in the struggle for open admissions at City University of New York. Against arguments that the admission of the black and Puerto Rican youth who made up the majority of the NYC public school systems would lower the standards of the university, she said:

"We knew better. We had been Black children. And each of us had given birth to a Black child here, in America. So we knew the precious, unimaginably deep music and the precious unimaginably complicated mathematics that our forbidden Black bodies enveloped."

Right. Dark energy. So now I gotta learn math. And how to get back to you with the supermassive weight of all I want to unhappen.

III. BLACK SPACE TRAVEL / NOT BECOMING STARS

A year before my father died, he was close to the threshold. He was getting life-saving blood transfusions every few days. Every few days his blood ran out. At some point his doctor prescribed him a new medicine that stabilized him for a

while. But, before that, one day while I sat with my father in a small room in New Jersey, I didn't know what to say. So I tried to read him my afro-utopian young adult novella, shaped around *his* father's frequent warning "those who do not hear will feel." He could barely keep his eyes open in the hospital bed.

At some point he told me to stop reading so we could tune in and be with "the brothers and sisters in Detroit." Was it the pain medication or the lucidity of being barely alive that made him want, need, and know how to move beyond his body and be anywhere? We were physically in New Jersey, just a few miles from where he grew up, and where I was born, and where much of our family lived. But though neither of us had ever lived in Detroit, I was not surprised that we would go to such a black place of sound. I believed him that we could travel there. And so we did. Grace Lee Boggs had recently died, so maybe the door was open. We were going through some changes that would change us forever anyway. We were going to Detroit.

Do black geographic spaces function as portals? What happens when due to gentrification (or urban recolonization) traveling to erstwhile black cultural spaces also requires us to travel back in time? Are black spaces inherently irresistibly attractive to light? Whence the density of Detroit? What is the intergalactic weight of the changes black spaces are going through?

June Jordan related her changes to Detroit's changes too. In her 1971 debut poetry collection *Some Changes*, she relates her own heartbreak to the situation of black urban spaces. Whereas my father reached out from his hospital bed to "the brothers and sisters in Detroit," the poem "The New Pieta," in Jordan's book is dedicated to the "mothers and children of Detroit." Jordan starts in iambic pentameter:

"They wait like darkness not becoming stars,"

connecting this work on Detroit to classical forms in poetry and painting and referencing the sacred mothering in the pieta (used to describe paintings of Mary and Jesus). Three stanzas of three lines each invoke the trinity. Is it mother, child, and missing father? Is it son, spirit, and missing God? How do we calculate the thermodynamics of the Detroit rebellion in the relationship of a black mother to her dead and dying son? Is it collective cremation? Does it register as dark energy? What about the burning streets still "not becoming stars"? Jordan offers the images of "a poor escape from fire" and "lights to claim to torch the body" and "(a burning door)." But the end of the first and last stanzas repeat the result of the thermodynamic situation:

"he moves no more."

Was my father warning me of a shift in his movement, of where he was headed? Was he teaching me a new mode? Immobilized by the preventable cancer in his bones that no one noticed until it was too late because he didn't have health insurance most of his life, did he actually develop a skill for transporting himself to black space? Is the lack of health insurance already a black space? Is dark energy a space of queer movement, of disability justice? Why was a man, who could not move from his bed, the first person to seriously invite me travel through space and time? Can we take on the leadership of disabled black travelers in a journey that queers the meaning of movement all together? Can we be like June Jordan "not becoming stars" but following instead the darkness of what we want, the togetherness that enlightenment won't let us have?

I wish that violence and neglect didn't steal black life right in front of our faces. I wish that my father was here. This writing is how I bring him. Who are you bringing? Death reveals to me that all my archival obsession, all my research, all my poetics, all my ritual making is a black refusal to be separate from blackness, from the unknown and the unknowable, from you. The black breadth of the universe. A homemade field of love.

Lift Off... an Introduction

KARA LYNCH AND HENRIETTE GUNKEL

We travel the Space Ways
from Planet to Planet.
SUN RA 1960/1

We hold this myth to be potential
Not self-evident but equational
Another Dimension
Of another kind of Living Life.
SUN RA 2005: 231

We Travel the Space Ways: Black Imagination, Fragments and Diffractions is an aspirational research project to gather together in one volume a range of voices that ring across this narrow bridge between the 20th and 21st centuries; each pulling with them legacies of 500 years of contact between Africa, Europe, and the Americas while reaching towards the stars and unknown planets, galaxies, and ways of living life.

As we collectively orbit towards the year 2020, the editors and contributors of this volume have noticed a re-emergence of the currency of a black visioning of a future that is political and cultural, and proposes practices, identities, and a way of being in the world. Although some of these outcroppings have become branded and sold back to us through the capitalist system, a radical strain of black fictions, visions, and imaginings surface and retain collective resonance. Those that attract our attention are queer, feminist, and circumnavigate continents.

In this volume, contributors from multiple geographical contexts and racialized positionings engage critically, consciously, and creatively with questions of race, time, space, technology, imagination, speculative aesthetics and content, outer space, and black history/presence/future to mark their vision for Afrofuture con-

templation. We have invited artists, scholars, writers, musicians, and cultural critics: visionaries, friends, and fellow travelers, to guide us in this journey.

OUTER-SPACE // AT SEA // UNDERGROUND :: WHERE YA AT?

...there is no crossing that is ever undertaken once
and for all.

M. JACQUI ALEXANDER 2005: 6

As editors compiling this volume, we acknowledge the concrete impact of anti-black violence *and* we also circulate in other spheres, ones that breathe some space into speculating and dreaming otherwise. In these spheres time and space converge and transform. While paying homage to the people that walked these paths before us, it is black visioning that looks into outer-space, underground, and at sea that guide us. These visionary fictions reference the past in our present in order to claim a future. This is what happens when ‘afro’ meets futurism. These speculations rely upon memory and the body as an archive and as the seedling for expanding the horizon of what could be. These proposals, not bound to the power dynamics of geopolitical realities, shift our perspective to see and envision what is possible in the here and now.

At the crossroads. This project begins at the crossroads.

As a touchstone for black imagination, *The Last Angel of History* encourages us to consider all the roads and pathways sparked by an anti-colonial, pan-Africanist future project. In this film, produced in 1995 by the Black Audio Film Collective and directed by John Akomfrah, the Data Thief, moving in and out of space and time in the context of blackness, finds himself at the crossroads. When he roams the ‘internet of black culture’ he moves between contemporary diasporic futurist interventions and past African futurist projects. After travelling back and forth between the African continent and its diasporas, the Data Thief, however, fails to return to the ‘land of African memory’. This points to a void in the archive, an unfinished conversation between African(ist) utopian projects, as well as to the restrictions upon black subjectivity and the obstacles to *belonging* in the context of migration.

In revealing these intersecting lines and trajectories we look towards the crossroads from the continental plates of Africa, the Americas, and Europe. Contributors find home-space in Nairobi, Johannesburg, Lagos, Lusaka, Luanda, London, Paris, Berlin, Bayreuth, Lisbon, Toronto, Amherst, New York, New Orleans, Tempe, Durham, Los Angeles, Kingston, and Philadelphia. And through their interventions

we find ourselves in the crosscurrents of being at sea, in outer-space, and the underground, recognizing that, as Jared Sexton puts it, “black life is not lived in the world that the world lives in” (2011: 28). We do not travel to these deep dark tides for escape; rather we gather in this confluence as a practice of critical fabulation (Hartman 2008) and re-membling from what M. Jacqui Alexander describes as “a forgetting so deep, we had forgotten that we had forgotten.” (2005: 263).

The circulation of people, knowledge, culture, technology, and the stuff of life across different geopolitical contexts calls upon us to pause when thinking through a contemporary re-emergence of the currency of black visioning. In recognizing these triangular routes past and present, we need to also acknowledge the politics of time in these geopolitical formations. From the Enlightenment project onwards, Europe, for example, continues to position itself up in relation to Africa. In this way, temporally, Africa, and by extension its diaspora, remains spatially outside – an anachronistic space – always as a past that Europe races to leave behind by way of settler colonial logics of eminent domain.¹ The colonial viewpoint renders black people spatially static and outside of history. Current economic discourses of ‘Africa Rising’ and also the emergent interest in future projects on the continent continue to give meaning to these discourses. Africanist science fictional interventions on the continent and its diasporas emerge and circulate in this context, not outside of it. Following in the footsteps of Hortense Spiller’s tracing of the *beginning* ruptures, massive demographic shifts, violent formations, and interruptions to the development of black African consciousness and culture initiated by the Atlantic Slave Trade,² the resistant strains within this volume “write under the pressure of these

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- 1 In her discussion of *panoptical time* and *anachronistic space* in the first chapter of her seminal book *Imperial Leather*, Anne McClintock writes: “Hegel, for example, perhaps the most influential philosophical proponent of this notion, figured Africa as inhabiting not simply a different geographical space but a different temporal zone, surviving anachronistically within the time of history. Africa, announces Hegel, ‘is no Historical part of the world [...] it has no movement or development to exhibit.’ Africa came to be seen as the colonial paradigm of anachronistic space, a land perpetually out of time in modernity, marooned and historically abandoned. Africa was a fetish-land, inhabited by cannibals, dervishes and witch doctors, abandoned in prehistory at the precise moment before the Weltgeist (as the cunning agent of Reason) manifested itself in history” (1994: 40-41).
 - 2 “The symbolic order that I wish to trace in this writing, calling it an ‘American Grammar’, begins at the ‘beginning’, which is really a rupture and a radically different kind of cultural continuation of the massive demographic shifts, the violent formation of a modern African consciousness, that take place on the sub-Saharan continent during the initiative strikes which open the Atlantic Slave Trade in the fifteenth century of our Christ, interrupted hundreds of years of black African culture. We write and think, then, about an

events” (1987: 68-9). By articulating this form of *wake work*,³ this project revises, recalibrates, and recognizes African descendants as a global people – we/they⁴ are in Ferguson, Marikana, and Calais – and critically contests anti-black violence, past/present/future that circulates through the crosscurrents of the middle passage and the Mediterranean Sea.

Geographies are not fixed, and no one vantage-point privileged over another. As Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung⁵ prompts us in his suspicion of the sudden interest in African futures, we endeavor to pay attention to the limitations that accrue when the future becomes the privileged dimension of time and, by extension, consider the future as inseparable from the past and present. Criticisms from the African continent convince us that even though we know that Afrofuturism and black visioning were never enclosed by the national or geopolitical borders of the Americas or Europe, it is important to address the diaspora’s dominance in claiming this moniker. Once we shift our geographical standpoint from New York, the U.S., North America, to London or Berlin, Europe, The Diaspora, to multiple locations within Africa – Luanda to Nairobi, Ghana to South Africa – and in conversation with practicing artists, scholars, and collectives on the continent, we also shift and expand our conversations about futures and future-making.

While this volume emphasizes the movement and exchange between different geographies, and focuses on artists, writers, scholars, and activists who reformulate and reshape our understanding of space, we acknowledge that our points of reference are predominantly Anglophone. In considering the gap this creates, we suspect that in the Americas and on the African continent there are stories – encoded in multiple indigenous languages, Portuguese, French, and Spanish – that contend with digging into the past to speculate a future, or that conjure the supernatural. Additionally, in these contexts, labels such as magical realism and fantasy may be

outcome of aspects of African-American life in the United States under the pressure of those events. I might as well add that the familiarity of this narrative does nothing to appease the hunger of recorded memory, nor does the persistence of the repeated rob these well-known, oft-told events of their power, even now, to startle. In a very real sense, every writing as revision makes the ‘discovery’ all over again.” (Spillers 1987: 69)

3 See Christina Sharpe (2016).

4 Following the example of Eve Tuck and K. W. Yang (2012). „Decolonization is not a Metaphor,” In: *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1/ 1, p. 3 and as an African Descendent scholar and a white European scholar writing together, we have used forward slashes to reflect our discrepant positionings in our pronouns throughout this essay.

5 Cited in Heidenreich-Seleme and Sean O’Toole (2016: 131).

interchangeable with science fiction.⁶ We see this project in conversation with a multilingual and multigenre African fictioning.

Digging into the past to vision the future and address the present means developing critical analyses and practices that challenge and disrupt white settler colonialism and whiteness as the dominant thread of future making and revisiting the motivations behind and the legacies of pan-African future projects. Questions of science, technology, space, and revolution are upended and revisioned from a black African perspective. Jim Chuchu reminds us in his questioning of the very term Afrofuturism:

“Does the ‘Afro’ prefix serve to demarcate Afrofuturism as being separate from broader, more serious futurisms? Who benefits from the construct of Afrofuturism? Is it an imaginary audience of Africans in need of utopias, or the curatorial bureaucracy around Afrofuturism? What do Africans think of African futurism? Why do so many Afrofuturistic images involve Africans appropriating junk and remixing waste? Is there no room for the new in the future? Does the too-easy, broad-stroke application of the term Afrofuturism eclipse other irreverent or subversive urges that have nothing to do with futurism?” (Heidenreich-Seleme and Sean O’Toole 2016: 95)

Here, Chuchu points to the complex layers within the political that guide us through this research project. When it comes to new and challenging ways of using science and technology, this meditation on ‘Africanicity’ (see also Akomfrah in this volume) generatively destabilizes binary divisions between *North* and *South*, and likewise, between *privileged* and *disadvantaged*, as expressed in the notion of the digital divide. We recognize a shift from thinking the body in relation to technology to one in which we understand the body *as* technology and how this reconceptualization of technology – sound, image, machine, etc. – becomes our theoretical anchoring – in other words, becomes theory itself (see, for example, Coleman and DeFrantz in this volume). These theoretical practices do not produce a static temporal divide that leaves the African continent in the past. Not beholden to,

6 For those who may deepen this project with further research into a rich archive of African diaspora stories of the global South in languages other than English, in this volume, we point to Kodwo Eshun’s rich exploration of Kojin Karuwa’s writing as a template for engaging the complexity of genre bending works. Additionally, the dynamic discussion between Kiluanji Kia Henda and Nadine Siegert that unearths currents of intercontinental archiving of ritual and culture, and the overlaps between superpowers and witchcraft in Angola. We believe these may prove generative in later considerations of black science fiction and black visioning in Central and South America where there is a long tradition of magical realism in literature, art, and politics.

nor entrapped by whiteness and settler colonialism, what is significant about *Black Imagination, Fragments, and Diffractions* is that black speculative practices are of our/their own imagining.

FUTURES OF MOURNING // HORIZONS OF HOPE

Our ancestors dreamed us up and then bent reality
to create us

WALIDAH IMARISHA 2015: 11

In the current moment, the integrity and substance of black people as whole and human is contested and dismantled globally with the continuum of African and African descendent people's social and physical death. This constant black death is evidenced by mass migrations and human trafficking of people of African descent fleeing the devastation wrought by structural adjustment, war, and climate chaos, and their subsequent perishing at sea or in camps; the refusal by the European Union to provide safe harbors for migrants in distress in the Mediterranean Sea; the systematic racial profiling across Europe; mass state sponsored killings of black youth by U.S. trained Brazilian para-military troops; the militarization of police forces and the impunity with which they mete out violence and death on black communities in the U.S.; neoliberal, neocolonial, and neo-communist policies of extraction, speculation, and exploitation of human labor and natural resources all across the African continent; displacement of Black people from their indigenous lands in the Americas and the African Continent from Colombia SA to Namibia; and the refusal by European countries and the U.S. to disburse reparations to African peoples as restitution for colonialism, slavery, and genocide.

In this context, we recognize the need to reconsider the very notion of the human (Wynter 2003; Jackson 2016), and black imagination as an aesthetic-political counterpoint that animates and builds our social and political movements. We agree with the editors of and contributors to the recent anthology, *Octavia's Brood* that grassroots political movement building for black people has always relied upon speculative fictioning and visioning another world as a radical response to concrete oppressive and repressive experiences on the ground.⁷ As further articulated by

7 In her introduction, Walidah Imarisha states immediately: "Whenever we try to envision a world without war, without violence, without prisons, without capitalism, we are engaging in speculative fiction. All organizing is science fiction. Organizers and activists dedicate their lives to creating and envisioning another world, or many other worlds" (2015: 10).

Wildseeds Collective member Soraya Jean-Louise and Rasheedah Phillips of AfroFuturist Affair in this volume, here practices of future fictioning can provide a safe(r) space from which to formulate a radical and collectively assembled critique of the present while providing an epistemological shift around how we think about race and point to alternative systems of thought and knowledge – and as such rendering modernity forever suspect.⁸ With this in mind, we align the goals of this project with the speculative fictioning and movement building of #BlackLivesMatter as a digital platform, organizing principle, and queer and feminist rallying cry that critically analyzes the continuity and brutality of anti-black violence and in turn mobilizes black imagination towards direct action for black lives.

Black imagination embodies and emboldens our complex *subjectivities* and collective visions that include histories and futures of mourning, resistance, resilience, healing, black joy, and horizons of hope. As articulated in the by now pivotal quote by Samuel R. Delany:

“We need images of tomorrow; and our people need them more than most. Without an image of tomorrow, one is trapped by blind history, economics and politics beyond our control. [...] Only by having clear and vital images of the *many* alternatives, good and bad, of where one *can* go, will we have any control over the way we may actually get there in a reality tomorrow will bring all too quickly.” (2012: 14)

Those of us searching for and manifesting multiple black visions are drawn to the act of excavation of the past and of the archive precisely because, as Delany points out, African peoples have been forcibly restricted from access to our histories. This visioning is simultaneously entangled with an excavation and confabulation⁹ of the archive in order to recognize and realize images of our past. Knowledge production generated by African Descendent peoples is the foundation for this volume. All those contributing to the volume come to it with the political objective of centering and amplifying these lineages of thinking, making, acting, dreaming. This project also requires our constant critique of whiteness as a violent and voracious ideology that will extract, consume, and call the ‘other’ its own. How then do we collectively consider the ‘dreaming and visioning’ of our ancestors? White European contributors to this volume actively shift away and against the supremacist visions of their

8 Toni Morrison makes this point in conversation with Paul Gilroy (1994).

9 With this we bring into the conversation Saidiya Hartman and her approach to the archive of the afterlife of slavery, and Jared Sexton’s reading of Donna V. Jones’ 2010 book *The racial Discourses of Life Philosophy: Negritude, Vitalism, and Modernity*, in: “The Social Life of Social Death: On Afro-pessimism and Black Optimism.” In: *Tensions Journal* 5, winter 2011, Toronto, Canada: York University, pp. 13-15.

predecessors as they center black epistemologies and aesthetics. African Descendent contributors equipped with potent frameworks of 21st century double consciousness and fortified by legacies of black freedom dreaming¹⁰ offer “clear and vital images of the *many* alternatives... where one *can* go” (ibid). Practices and forms of future fictioning, which we can find across literary, sonic, visual, and performance art, draw our attention to non-linear conceptions of time, to different rhythms and rituals of time, and inspire our theorization of futurity as alternative space-times (see also Phillips in this volume). Afrofuturism is arguably the most famous concept that allows this non-linear model of the future of the African diaspora, a concept that Alondra Nelson understands as:

“Neither a mantra nor a movement, AfroFuturism is a critical perspective that opens up inquiry into the many overlaps between technoculture and black diasporic histories. AfroFuturism looks across popular culture – jazz, hip-hop, and techno music; experimental film; graffiti art; new photography – to find models of expression that transform spaces of alienation into novel forms of creative potential. In the process, it reclaims theorizing about the future.” (2000: 35)

As a number of contributors in this volume have expressed their interest in an inter-generational and cross-continental exploration of the term, rather than an investment in the term itself, we lean into Nelson’s exposition of it in order to foreground the crosscurrent movements that the term Afrofuturism entails.

Sonic fiction, digital ecology, myth-science, hyperstition, biomythology, hauntology, fabulation, confabulation are terms that circulated at the time of the 1990s when Afrofuturism was coined. These terms all name and theorize certain art practices and critical/theoretical approaches that we can find, not necessarily exclusively, when blackness and science fiction meet in the context of black visioning (see Akomfrah and Eshun in this volume). We observe that these earlier terms seem to have taken a backseat or even disappeared in the context of black futures/black visions. In our re-consideration of Afrofuturism, we see that there has been a re-focusing that expands the disciplines, forms, cultures, and practices that fall within its sway.

10 See Robin D.G. Kelley (2008) for the conceptualization of freedom dreaming in the context of black radical imagination.

WALK WITH ME :: TRANSFIGURATION TO TRANSLINEAR LIGHT¹¹

...if we put one fourth of the time into trying to understand our spirituality that we put into wanting to grow more wealthy, we would find some of the incredible things occurring in our universe that we need to be aware of...

ALICE COLTRANE N.D.¹²

We pause to acknowledge that all of these ‘future’ terms by themselves are not necessarily progressive in and of themselves.¹³ Given how much speculation informs the current financial market, or how much fictioning operates in the context of current election campaigns leading to Brexit and Trump as the current U.S. president, this distinction is imperative. Rather, it is through a combination of these practices in the context of black liberation and self-determination, and the conscious production of alternative space-times through art and politics in the context of alienation, that black visioning issues a futurism that is *not* embedded in fascism, that reveals forms of the imagination detached from the Enlightenment project, and initiates a form of speculation that operates against the neoliberal market/SF capital and its processes of individualization.¹⁴

We are particularly interested in exploring these practices from a queer-feminist perspective that emphasizes collaborations and collectives as well as notions of the commons. Working from this framework we see how often these concerns were neglected in the context of Afrofuturism, and we question and critique how, when referenced, this earlier moment became singularly male and heteronormative and

11 These are the title tracks of Alice Coltrane Turiyasangitananda’s last two recordings respectively – 1978/2004 – between which she dedicated her life practice to a deep spiritual journey of meditation and musical exploration. We attribute these aspirations to her here as a guiding light and touchstone for recalibrating our collective freedom dreams.

12 As quoted on a website dedicated to her life and practice: <https://www.alicecoltrane.com/life>. Last Access 29.08.2018.

13 See Gunkel, Hameed and O’Sullivan (2017) for further discussions on future fictioning and its relationship to contemporary global politics.

14 “Building oppositional practices within and across multiple simultaneous sites is imperative in political struggle as is the cultivation of the discipline of freedom and collective self-determination in terms that supersede those of free-market democracy. Yet, oppositional consciousness is a process rather than a given before the fact of political practice. And further, we cannot afford to be continually, one-sidedly oppositional” (Alexander 2005: 6).

was consistently attributed to a few individuals with name recognition, and often situated in the U.S. context. This masculinist depiction of the field did not jive with what we know of generations of visionaries and their black imaginings. As we re-contextualize current cultural and political practices that we see emerging we invoke theorist Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley's conjuring of the black Atlantic as queer Atlantic:

"The key to making black queer sense of such self-pieces is *not* turning to race-, class-, or geographically unmarked models of sexuality and humanity – based in European Enlightenment philosophy that justified slavery in the first place – *but tracing as carefully as possible the particular, specific, always marked contours, the contested beach-scapes of African Diaspora histories of gender and sexuality*. So in the black queer time and place of the door of no return, fluid desire is neither purely metaphor nor purely luxury. Instead – like the blue embrace of two bodies of water – its connections and cross currents look to speak through and beyond the washed lading, the multiply effaced identities of the Middle Passage." (2008: 211)

Our journey then has been one of mapping the legacies, and topographies of collectively assembled black visions. In this book project we want to foreground practices that inform the range of concepts that we find in the context of Afrofuturism and black visioning to our sense of being together in this world. We do this while exploring our sense of time, space, and community and the concrete implications of such practices. We recognize art strategies that propose different forms of being in the world by cutting familiar lines of association and reassembling new worlds as visible in practices of collage, montage, layering, the cut-up, syncretism, and fragmented writing, for example. Practices represented in *We Travel the Space Ways* traverse literary forms, sound and performance art, visual and plastic arts, and likewise community organizing/visioning/action.

Our collective imagination guides us in our practices as we continue to ask, 'How will we be free?' What is at stake here in the context of the imagination is building and working through mourning, resistance, resilience, healing, hope and joy – together. This road map to our survival¹⁵ and our thriving is a historically situated project that does not leave past experiences and events or the community behind. It rather understands history as an ongoing and participatory project that extends into alternative visions of being in this world together.

Examples of this can be found in earlier projects like *afrofuturism.net*, a full issue of *Social Text* in 2002 edited by Alondra Nelson, *Dark Matter: A Century of*

15 Here we are inspired specifically by the tools and maps that a visionary author like Octavia Butler provides in books like *Parable of the Sower* (1993) in which she makes a checklist of our survival kit for the 21st century.

Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora edited by Sharee Renee Thomas, the Afro-Geeks conferences spearheaded by Anna Everett, and *The Last Angel of History* which started off as a research project and involved Edward George in collaboration with the Black Audio Film Collective. These legacies continue in projects like *Octavia's Brood* (2015) where editors Walidah Imarisha and adrienne maree brown collaborate with organizers and movement builders to generate an archive of their visionary fiction in honor of and inspired by Octavia Butler's oeuvre. In *We Travel the Space Ways*, listening in on the collective conversation reveals that *Wildseeds: The New Orleans Octavia Butler Emergent Strategy Collective* began as a feminist science fiction reading group formed out of their shared connection with Butler's writing. *sorryyoufeelluncomfortable* also incorporates reading groups as a component of their collective art practice and this is in conversation with exhibitions and public projects. *AfroFuturist Affair* culls its resources to create a year-long community engaged art and social practice entitled, "Community Futurisms: Time & Memory in North Philly" where residents of North Philadelphia participate in oral history, visioning projects, and science fiction writing workshops in order to hold onto their past and envision their futures as a community under the siege of eminent domain and physical displacement. Multiple conferences, workshops, socially engaged art projects, reading groups, film screenings, and performances all influence our understanding of community building and meaning making, as well as our experience of public space.

Initiatives in the 21st century further include The Nest Collective in Nairobi – of which Jim Chuchu is a member – that understands itself as a "small army of thinkers, makers and believers" working in film, music, fashion, visual arts and literature in order to explore "our troubling modern identities, re-imagine our pasts and remix our futures".¹⁶ In this volume, Kiluanji Kia Henda introduces *Fucking Global*, a public intervention in an abandoned hotel in Luanda by his cohort of Angolan artists in which they collectively move towards alternate modes of display and experience of art. Reaching people across spaces and making connections, forming collaborations as set out through sound waves is visible in the history of community-based pirate radio stations, as explored by Carla Meier and Stef Alisch in the context of London in this volume, for example. It is also visible in projects like the *Pan-African Space Station* (PASS), a pop-up live radio studio that also operates as performance and exhibition space as research platform and living archive, and is linked to *Chimurenga*, a pan-African publication of writing, art, and politics based in Cape Town.

16 See Gunkel in this volume.

What these projects have in common is a commitment to the speculative collectivity and action. We owe a great deal to these manifestations and initiatives and place this project in the mix of our collectively assembled archive.

WE TRAVEL...

An artist project initiates each section of this volume. Contributions experiment with form and take aesthetic-political stances, which are in dialog with the thematic and conceptual intervention posed by the visual material. *A City Called Mirage*, *The Palace of the Quilombos*, *The Archivist's Vault*, *Brother Kyot*, and *Prophetika* provide wayfinding for our black visioning and imagination. Mirroring one another, each section includes: a dynamic conversation between peers and fellow travelers, fictioning and speculation projects, a close reading of cultural artifacts and arguments, and expressive essays that engage strategies of fragmentation, diffraction, and personal/political propositions. Each section provides a strong dialog between the three continents, Africa, America, and Europe, and develop our feminist and queer thinking around black futures. Among the interventions by authors and artists in each section: *A City Called Mirage* is a play between shadow and light, permanence and ephemera; *The Palace of the Quilombos* offers a syncretic, marronage palimpsest for liberation; *the Archivist's Vault* circumnavigates the crossroads of a black time-space continuum across centuries and continents; we follow the trickster *Brother Kyot* through a collage of allegory and parable; and finally, *Prophetika* coaxes dark matter back to the beginning – and into the future.

> A CITY CALLED MIRAGE

The book lifts off with Kiluanji Kia Henda's art work "A City Called Mirage" which proposes a new narrative structure that emerges out of the assemblage of ephemeral symbols and letters traditionally used in Angolan sand drawings when transformed and fixed into iron sculptures in the desert via mathematics and architecture. This freedom to reclaim and transform symbols and space, its meaning, and its narrative provides a new structure of thinking around history, heritage, and the commons and opens up to a selection of interventions by authors and artists in this section to work through or test their hypotheses.

The opening conversation between Grisha Coleman and Thomas F. DeFrantz explores the possibilities for Afrofuturist technologies in the context of ongoing anti-black violence and hence a conceptualization of Afrofuturism that accounts for contemporary programming and technological design today. Coleman and

DeFrantz' own art practices provide the framework for the discussion. DeFrantz shares a queer and feminist genealogy of African diaspora dance that insists upon black subjectivity while contextualizing a possible blueprint for recognizing the black body as a technology. As a case study, Coleman's project *Reach, Robot!* introduces us to the idea of programming *conduction*¹⁷ with sensors and sounds that are triggered by improvised movement in public space. Here the artist reconfigures a plaza in Pittsburg, PA so that black technologies reverberate through the space and the participants' bodies, while reaching into the archive and the black history of the place. Their practices engage composition, improvisation, movement, and black liberation, answering one of the key questions addressed in this conversation: "What could a viable 'black robot' tell us about power, resistance, survival, or mobility?"

The freedom to create new spaces through fiction is also evident in Greg Tate's writing in which glitches form an undercommons, a contested and dangerous space held together by desire and music. This space is in conversation and close proximity with a self-assembled archive that reconstructs a collective memory.

Kodwo Eshun's thorough introduction to a multifaceted continental critique of Afrofuturism oblige him to consider continental futurisms not as a new phenomenon but as part of an already existing black visioning on the continent. Eshun's exploration of Ghanaian author Kojo Laing's incredible visual language, Laing's visionary and speculative writing practice that creates new worlds and new alliances, forces us to pay attention to the specific context in which futurisms have been embedded – to search for them in unlikely places – in this case within magical realism. Liberating them out of this context, as Eshun does for us, enables futurist texts of the past to operate as possible pressure points in the discourse of Afrofuturism and raises a critique alerting us to the consequences of too easily placing continental futurisms within its frameworks.

In her performative and visual writing, Ayesha Hameed, similarly reaches into the archive and ferries us from outer-space to the bottom of the sea, understood here as an active archive that allows for connections between different geographies of time, the aural and visual afterlives of the middle passage, and contemporary migration from the African continent to Europe. While remaining committed to the materiality of the sea and to a critical ecology, Hameed explores the idea of a Black Atlantis through dialectical images, temporal leaps, the movement of bodies, and an

17 See Grisha Coleman and Tommy DeFrantz in this volume: "...Butch Morris developed a system of 'Conduction' to organize his music – at once rigorous and open so that he and the players he worked with could practice this *transferral* - test it. He created a technology for collective practice. A deeply black one, you knew from the sound, the themes, the sensibility – and that form!"

Afrofuturist soundtrack. Hameed's project insists upon an exploration of the accumulation of violence through a futurist scenario that continues to follow the quest for freedom and allows our bodies to move to a different beat.

>> THE PALACE OF THE QUILOMBOS

Space is the Place. Frohawk Two Feathers turns to places outside the center and reconsiders the sites of resistance, healing, and resilience. The world-making potential of quilombos is visualized through practices of remapping, reimagining, hyper-mythologizing, a play of symbols, and syncretism. Very similar to an Ancient Egyptian art tradition in which the living and the dead past/future are chronicled, Frohawk Two Feather's pictographs/pictograms/ciphers/ideograms/glyphs depict the past and predict the future.

In their cross-continental discussion of sonic practices that give way to resistant strains such as Grime and Broken Beat in the UK, and Kuduro in Angola, Stefanie Alisch and Carla Maier detail the sense of being in community through music set out by MC's, DJ's, musicians, and off the grid publics, while playing out the sounds of Afrofuturism as an analytic tool. What they find is a sense of a "rythmachinic takeover of space-time"¹⁸ that is affected and mobilized through dancefloors and sound system culture, pirate economy, and aerial connections. As such, these Afrofuturist practices resist capital consumption in that they rely upon alternative distribution circuits, while following traces of entangled histories and experiences, and imagining new sonic worlds between Europe, the U.S., and Africa.

Afrofuturism meets feminist discontent in the figure of secret agent Ananiya in Milumbe Haimbe's graphic novel "The Revolutionist" which is set in a dystopian future in which a sense of being in community is controlled by a corporation whose interest is maximal productivity through exploitation and control and aims to replace women through sex robots. This totalitarian, highly gendered regime is challenged by the 'Army for the Restoration of Womanhood', an army of revolutionists who are organized underground, and we follow Ananiya in her covert operation into the robotic plants in order to gather information about the new prototype that is indistinguishable from humans with the aim to stop its mass production. While she has the first encounter with the prototype her people are gathering in another part of the town to protest the brutal assault of a girl that went missing. "The Revolutionist" is a three-part graphic novel and what we have here is the full first chapter of Book I.

18 As coined by Steve Goodman in his book *Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect, and the Ecology of Fear*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press (2010: 173).

Tavia Nyong'o's engagement with a sense of being in relation via black death that includes queers and feminists and takes seriously performance art/action/the body, also provides ways of seeing and recognizing the ancestors who walk among us as we approach or enact the future they had envisioned for us. How will we understand a future in which many of our community will not join us? Thinking about black futures as a practice that pulls from the past to imagine the future – as well as the collectivity of those who dreamed our lives for us before we arrived; how will we both enact these present-futures they imagined and do the same for those who follow us? Nyong'o takes this haunting as a provocation to explore what he calls the crypt of blackness through the world-making works of AIDS-era Black gay poets and filmmakers Marlon Riggs and Assotto Saint and their echoes in current works by choreographer Mariana Valencia in relation to theoretical negativity as he beckons a future collectivity in Afrofabulation.

In “The Rise of the Astro Blacks” Greg Tate reaches into the archive and marks his trajectory, we witness a shared experience for which the example of this one person can illuminate the way, honoring past/present. Within the triangular movement that this book points to, Tate's contributions reflect back foundations that ground a future that is queer-feminist and Black.

>>> THE ARCHIVIST'S VAULT

“It is the present. Haunted by the past and doubtful of the future, The Archivist excavates the vault. She dusts off relics cataloging each artifact. From this vast inventory she selects series for the viewing public.”¹⁹ This selection, “The Door of No Return”, collapses time and space to offer a visual meditation of hauntings – skeletons, murmurations, rattlings, new constructions, and road-signs – at the crossroads of African migrations marked by the triangular route of the transatlantic slave trade.

Understanding Afrofuturism as a co-created project in the 21st century, we are drawn to the works of collectives in the realm of black visioning and initiated a virtual intercontinental diaspora conversation between three art collectives: sorryyoufeeluncomfortable in London, AfroFuturist Affair in Philadelphia, and Wildseeds – The New Orleans Octavia Butler Emergent Strategy Collective in New Orleans. This Afrofuturist timecapsule was mediated by Menka-t Asli Dukan who pulled from her own research on a history of blackness in speculative fiction.²⁰ Dukan asked the collectives to share their practices and concerns, how they came together, and to describe their future projects. Additionally, each collective was in-

19 See Lynch [(2013) 2099].

20 See Dukan (n.d.).

vited to choose an image as a moniker for their contribution to this volume. The outcome is full of temporal lapses and provides a rich assemblage of multidisciplinary community art projects, speculative solutions to issues of gentrification and displacement, creative tools for recovering and archiving histories, quantum time capsules, and intergenerational listening sessions that are cooperative/non-capitalist in nature and indebted to an expansive black queer-feminist tradition of survival and healing.

In “Organize your Own Temporality”, artist, lawyer, community organizer, Rasheedah Phillips, further expounds upon her theorizing of Black Quantum Futures by asking: How does a radical movement conceive of its own future in the face of hostile visions of the future when the future was never meant for them? Phillips lays out multiple living temporalities including black womanist and feminist, indigenous African time that forego linear Eurocentric dead-time frames. “Alternative temporalities embodied by such cultural movements as Afrofuturism, and DIY theories as Black Quantum Futurism, have developed practical tools and technologies for exploring reality and shaping past and future narratives”.

“‘I Feel Love’: Race, Gender, Technē, and the (Im)Proper Sonic Habitus” time travels toward disco as a rich colliery for, and progenitor of Afrofuturism. Simultaneously writing in dialog with fellow scholar, Tavia Nyong’o, Kara Keeling hails the gender, racial, and sexual difference of disco’s queer family at the temporal moment of its crossover appeal. In this provocative piece, Keeling shares an incisive, “... experiment in expanding the vibrational field and bringing forth errant connections between and among the we who are sound, Donna Summer’s performance of ‘I Feel Love’, as technē, [that] might remind us of pasts with futures that never were”.

As an early adaptor and organizer around black imagination in the digital diaspora, Anna Everett also revisits for us Afrofuturism twenty years later and through a geopolitical lens, as both a theoretical concept and a creative practice in what she calls ‘Trump Time’. In this personal/essayistic reflection she looks at current events and anti-black violence, black political movement building in the 21st century, popular culture and representation, the output of contemporary Afrofuturist cultural practitioners, as we hit a new edge in ‘toting technologies’. While questioning her “profound ambivalence about the hopefulness of Afrofuturism amid such black existential peril”, Everett draws continuities between the technological use and the success of the black women led Million Woman March in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1997 and Black Lives Matter’s Hashtag activism today, arguing that Afrofuturism allows for “imagining a creative resistance strategy to any number of persistent existential threats to black life and culture, especially today and going forward”.

>>>> BROTHER KYOT

Daniel Kojo Schrade's abstract, non-representational compositions and paintings provide research into unknown history while claiming central pieces or icons of European so-called high culture and repositioning them into an African and African-diasporic context. "Brother Kyot", a trickster figure, references Kyot, a scholar understood to have influenced Wolfram van Eschenbach's piece "Parzival", and as such occupies this liminal space between foreground and background that which Schrade asks us to pay close attention. By turning canons and icons upside down or injecting them with syncretism, tricksterism, and collage, Schrade's work reveals and recovers layers and layers of meaning to punctuate the contact between Africa, America, and Europe that is central to this book project. The result is a re-imagining, also in the context of Afrofuturism, and the creation of alternative space-times.

The question of what becomes intelligible in the context of black visioning is addressed by Kiluanji Kia Henda in his conversation with Nadine Siegert. As we follow Kia Henda's trans-character in "Poderosa de Bom Jesus" being appropriated into a cis woman in another artist's work in Brazil, we learn about the syncretic and cross-fertilizing relationship between Angola and Brazil as a traditional culture meets in the past, present, and future and how that impacts on speculative fiction. Siegert's insightful prompts dig into Kia Henda's playful critical perspective on what happens when socialism, capitalism, and traditional culture intersect, and begin to understand the various contexts that inspire art practices from the continent. While Kia Henda's work draws inspiration from Sun Ra as well as the history of Cold War era science fiction and pays attention to a certain aesthetic developed in the context of socialist friendships and Superpower proxy competition on the African continent to trigger a narrative and vision that takes us into outer-space and back to the terrestrial, in this context Angola.

In Tobias Nagl's close readings of Schrade's work we encounter fellow travelers to Brother Kyot that operate as Leitmotifs in his ongoing work, such as Brother Beethoven and the Afronaut. Embedded in Schrade's biographical context, we are introduced not only to geopolitical positioning often ignored in an Afrofuturist canon, but also to an art historical interpretation of Afrofuturism. In Nagl's exploration of Schrade's art practice we follow Brother Beethoven and the Afronaut through complex layering of paint, charcoal lines, defining scriptural fragments, and figurative elements from an Afrofuturist archive that form the in-between space that the Afro-diasporic figures inhabit. Nagl's writing and Schrade's performances and paintings take us into this triangular movement between the three continents and through different time zones and as such combined provide a form and method of

time travel that is not understood as moving between clearly distinguishable dimensions of time.

Robyn-Brooke Smith's original Maroon comic of Nanny and her descendants, "Dismantling Imperia: Re-imagining the Superhero" centers three historical Caribbean freedom fighters and their 21st century descendants. Each one is a force of nature and their powers amplify with the passing of time. Each episode includes portrait drawings and establishing comics as a template for this prophetic series. Robyn-Brooke Smith's vision is informed by in depth research of folkloric, oral, and institutional historical accounts of the Caribbean and the African Diaspora in the Americas. It is also grounded in the present-day urgency of calls to action to contest anti-black violence and confirm that BlackLivesMatter. Womanist in vision and execution "Dismantling Imperia" interrupts the white tyranny of comics as Robyn creates 'a league of her own' to express black excellence, survival, resistance, and ultimately manifest freedom.

In Raimi Gbadamosi's personal and essayistic writing that reflects on reading comics while growing up in Nigeria we encounter yet another character, Powerman, a black superhero figure who helps him navigate American and British comics as colonial ideological impositions upon African contexts and their limitations in the envisioning of what 'Africa', but also African superheroes could look like. This text is about heroes and becoming a hero oneself. *There are storytellers everywhere*, and we can find them not only in a growing archive of a diverse range of comics and graphic novels on the continent, or in song lyrics, but also in the liminal space between reality and fiction.

>>>> PROPHETIKA

Abigail DeVille's "Prophetika: gaze in the mirror, invisible man", acts as a soothsayer and emerges at the crossroads between installation and performance art that time-travels and shape-shifts Sun Ra's icon into a queered 21st century cyborg. In a first response to the erupting protests to the death of Eric Garner at the hands of New York City Police,²¹ DeVille's project entitled "The Day the Earth Stood Still"

21 DeVille's thoughts for the exhibition were also shaped by the following quotation from the production script: "You the people of Earth have reached the danger point in your development. We can no longer merely watch. That is why I am here, to bring you my message of warning. Your hunting-killing instincts must be controlled. If not, your next step inevitably will be to travel beyond your own solar system and try to conquer peaceable worlds which have no defense against you ... I have lived among you. I have eaten of your food. I have walked your streets. I have seen where your poor live and your rich. I

imagines that “peaceful outer space visitors land on Earth and are greeted by a barrage of bullets.”²² We encounter electric trash that takes us back to the beginning, to analogue technology, which also takes us back to the promise of the internet – remember the Data Thief who roams the internet of black culture – while *Prophetika* takes us into the future. These meditations do not invent new technology in the context of Afrofuturism, but re-use and re-signify black technologies already available to us. What we see are reconsiderations of a future.

In their conversation, “The Secessionist Manifestoes of Certain Received Wisdoms”, Kodwo Eshun and John Akomfrah reflect upon *The Last Angel of History* twenty years after its production, and also in light of recent critiques of reading continental futurisms in the context of Afrofuturism. Together Eshun and Akomfrah critically dismember the terms and practices of Afrofuturism so that we can see them more clearly and to specify the ways in which identity and political formations come into being. What draws our attention is their engagement with what is often ignored in the discussion about the film: the historical aspect of it, the “unfinished conversation about the utopian African project” that the Data Thief keeps returning to in his travel through space and time, not in search of another layer of essentialism but in search for answers to the question of “what constitutes *Africanity* and how it might be talked about through and in the present.”

“They Sent You?” and *Stories of our Lives* push back on utopian ideas of outer-space and what ifs. These African fictional interventions are propelled by desires for liberation and collective self-actualization for Africans and the Diaspora. Here Jim Chuchu tackles the complicated question of representation while making an intervention into the present – the afterlife of colonialism – through a futurist setting. Interplanetary exploration becomes mundane and monotonous and what we find in another galaxy is more of the same for black people. There is no escape. And yet because it is a fiction, Chuchu plays out one possible storyline, (BLAM! electromagnetic disturbances no more), as an unlikely emissary from earth meets an

have met people who are good and kind. You have many good people among you, you must use them as examples. My friends, your choice is simple. Live in peace. Or pursue your present course – and face obliteration. We will be waiting for your answer. It is up to you. We will be watching ... and waiting” (from: *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, directed by Charlotte Brathwaite in 2015 which is the precursor to the 2016 co-created project, *Prophetika*).

- 22 The story “asks us to look at our exploding world and examine our own humanity in its midst. Through collected texts, stories, media images, sounds, and choreographed bodies, this project reflects on the world we live in and prompts us to imagine the world as we would truthfully like it to be.” (<https://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/event/2015-abigail-deville-exhibition>. Last Access 10.09.2018).

android left behind to ward off and protect a temple from earthly colonial destruction. No good guys in this story. It is a playing out and a recognition of our current experience set on an alternate stage to see what's possible and provide commentary on the here and now.

As Henriette Gunkel guides us through "Each Night I Dream", an episode of Chuchu's *Stories of Our Lives*, we can understand the repetition of the main character's dreaming as one with a difference. One that has an alternative rhythm not bound by Western time. In this queer time the ritual enchantment of backward moving becomes circular and transformative as the main character works through the multiple temporalities that answer: "what will we do when they come for us?" This dreaming and speculating takes seriously the physical violence of the here and now for queers in Nairobi, and strategies for survival while drawing from traditional fables, rituals, shape-shifting, and the supernatural to upend the outcome of mob violence. "If we're not Africans, what are we? Maybe we're aliens [...] Maybe we came here to find out what it's like to be human". Gunkel points to the fragmented and speculative ways of thinking about freedom and understands the journey into outer-space not as an escape but as a process of becoming in the context of anti-black violence that resists assimilation.

Being in community queerly is also central to Jamika Ajalon's biomythography, which reconstructs a collective memory and future in revisiting one's own physical, psychic, and analytical journey. Ajalon activates personal/collective storytelling and experimental prose/fiction/poetry/cipher in order to pursue this journey of radical movements of women of color below majoriborg surveillance, which makes visible that when we imagine our futures as queers of color, we are haunted and inspired by our ancestors of whom there are many. Crucially, this radical movement between different places and languages of resistance is as much a queer-feminist project as it is pan-African and points to the in-between spaces that define notions of diaspora.

ORBITS AND CONSTELLATIONS <<<

An invocation from Alexis Pauline Gumbs queers the math of dark energy and reminds us that through the voice of one comes that of many. Gumbs ushers us to the edge of the Black Hole: "Death reveals to me that all my archival obsession, all my research, all my poetics, all my ritual making is a Black refusal to be separate from Blackness, from the unknown and the unknowable, from you. The Black breadth of the universe. A homemade field of love."

Rasheedah Phillips expands notions of future in her *Keywords for Radicals* entry. Here she marks the extractive and oppressive trajectory of western linear time as it spatio-temporally confines and marginalizes through presentism. Out of this

‘future shock’ she offers a black history of western time, examples of indigenous African time, and highlights rebel future theory/practice – and specifically Afrofuturism – as a liberation technology that bridges past-present-future. In the swirl of dark matter, this afterword creates a dynamic feedback loop and amplifies circular orbits of time as *We Travel*...

...THE SPACE WAYS

We are the ones
 We’ve been waiting for...
 JORDAN 1980: 278

This collection of diverse voices makes visible genealogies of black imagination, points to predecessors and inheritors, and expands a new millennium discourse. In approaching early adaptors as interlocutors, we take on the recent retrieval of Afrofuturism in the contemporary moment and hear from those who were among the first generation of thinkers to share whether and how they engage with this framework and what, if anything, Afrofuturism provides to their current research and vision. In so doing, we trouble the political context from which it came and where we are now.

This project serves as a meditation on black imaginations today. As editors, our role is to instigate and facilitate this conversation. We hope that you find the volume as exciting as we do. It has been a rewarding process for us engaging with contributors and each other as we offer up this collective vision.

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Authors

Ajalon, Jamika is a disciple of the creative. She is an inter-disciplinary artist who works with different mediums independently, but also in multiple fusions-incorporating written and spoken text, sound/music, and visuals. A nomad, she grew up in America but has lived for years in Europe, including England, and now France. She has also “lived” Berlin (short stays of 1-3 months at time) over the years engaging with various communities of colour, and other “othered” individuals. During her travels (including countries in Africa) she has met and collaborated with artists, academics, who challenge ‘frontiers’ (external borders as well as internalized) and are planting seeds. A science fiction nerd, she has always looked at ‘space’ as a place to realize and talk about possible futures. Her publications and performances have been diverse. As she roams she has had the good fortune to perform, record, tour, publish and exhibit/screen her work in Vienna, London, Berlin, Senegal, Kampala, Paris...

Akomfrah, John, CBE, is a seminal figure in Black British Cinema and forerunner in digital cinematography. He has a body of work that is considered one of the most distinctive and innovative in contemporary Britain. Born in Ghana, to politically active parents he moved to London at an early age. He was a founding figure in the influential cine cultural group Black Audio Film Collective which was dedicated to exploring questions of Black British identity, race and class through film and media. In 1999, he set up Smoking Dogs Films – which simultaneously cohabits the worlds of broadcast, cinema and the arts – with his long term producing partners, David Lawson and Lina Gopaul. John has served on numerous boards as a governor, including the British Film Institute and Film, London and has taught at a number of institutions around the world including M.I.T., Yale and the University of Westminster. John Akomfrah is an artist filmmaker, director, writer and theorist who creates documentaries, feature films and exhibitions that have garnered international critical acclaim.

Alisch, Stefanie, (Humboldt University) studied musicology, Portuguese and English in Berlin and Salvador da Bahia while working as a DJ. She is a recent doctoral graduate of the Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies where she conducted research into the ‘carga’ concept in Angolan kuduro music and dance. Her work encompasses research, teaching, academic and journalistic publications as well as creative projects on kuduro, broken beat, groove, sound system epistemology, pleasure politics. She recently embarked on a postdoc project on mazurka in the Atlantic realm where she addresses malleable meter through computational methods.

Chuchu, Jim, is an artist living and working in Nairobi, Kenya. Chuchu’s photographs debuted in the exhibition, “Precarious Imaging: Visibility and Media surrounding African Queerness” at RAW Material Company, and his photography and video series have since exhibited in spaces such as the Guggenheim Bilbao, the Vitra Design Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Photography, the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, the Johannesburg Art Fair and the 1:54 New York and London art fairs. In the same year, Jim co-founded the Nest Collective – a multidisciplinary collective based in Nairobi. With them, he directed his first feature film – *Stories of Our Lives*, an anthology film based on the lives of queer Kenyans. *Stories of Our Lives* was banned in Kenya for ‘promoting homosexuality’, and has since screened at festivals in more than 80 countries around the world to critical acclaim, but is yet to screen in its home country.

Coleman, Grisha, is a composer and choreographer in performance and experiential media, her work explores relationships among our physiological, technological and ecological systems. She works as an Associate Professor of Movement, Computation and Digital Media in the School of Arts, Media and Engineering [AME] and the School of Dance at Arizona State University. Her recent art and scholarly work *echo::system* is a springboard for re-imagining the environment, environmental change, and environmental justice. Coleman is a New York City native with an M.F.A. in Composition and Integrated Media from the California Institute of the Arts, following which she was awarded a fellowship at the STUDIO for Creative Inquiry at Carnegie Mellon University. Her work has been recognized nationally and internationally including a 2012 National Endowment Arts in Media Grant [NEA], the 2014 Mohr Visiting Artist at Stanford University, and grants from the Rockefeller Fund, and The Creative Capital Foundation.

DeFrantz, Thomas F., teaches at Duke University and directs SLIPPAGE: Performance|Culture|Technology, a research group that explores emerging technology in live performance applications. DeFrantz received the 2017 Outstanding Research in Dance award from the Dance Studies Association. DeFrantz believes in our

shared capacity to do better, and to engage our creative spirit for a collective good that is anti-racist, anti-homophobic, proto-feminist, and queer affirming. DeFrantz acted as a consultant for the Smithsonian Museum of African American Life and Culture, contributing concept and a voice-over for a permanent installation on Black Social Dance that opened with the museum in 2017. Books include *Black Performance Theory*, co-edited with Anita Gonzalez (2014), *Choreography and Corporeality: Relay in Motion*, co-edited with Philipa Rothfield (2016). Creative: *Queer Theory! An Academic Travesty* commissioned by the Theater Offensive of Boston and the Flynn Center for the Arts; *fastDANCEpast*, created for the Detroit Institute for the Arts; *reVERSE-gesture-reVIEW* commissioned by the Nasher Museum in response to the work of Kara Walker, January, 2017.

DeVille, Abigail, received her MFA from Yale University 2011 and her BFA from the Fashion Institute of Technology in 2007. DeVille's most recent exhibitions include *Lift Every Voice Sing*, ICA Miami, (2017); *Empire State Works in Progress*, Whitney Museum of American Art (2017); *No Space Hidden (Shelter)*, ICA LA (2017); *20/20*, The Studio Museum in Harlem and Carnegie Museum of Art (2017); *Magnetic Fields: Expanding American Abstraction, 1960s to Today*, Kemper Museum (2017); *Harlem: Found Ways*, Cooper Gallery at Hutchins Center, Harvard University (2017); *Urban Planning: Contemporary Art and the City 1967-2017*, Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (2017); *LANDMARK*, Socrates Sculpture Park (2016); *Only When Its Dark Enough Can You See The Stars*, The Contemporary, Baltimore, MD (2016); *Revolution in the Making*, Hauser Wirth, Los Angeles, CA (2016). DeVille has designed sets for theatrical productions—at venues such as the Stratford Festival (2014), directed by Peter Sellers, Harlem Stage (2016), La Mama (2015), JACK (2014-16), and Joe's Pub (2014) directed by Charlotte Brathwaite. She has received 2014-15 fellowship at The Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard, 2015 Creative Capital grantee and received a 2015 OBIE Award for design. DeVille is the 2017-18 Chuck Close Henry W and Marion T Mitchell Rome Prize fellow.

Dukan, M. Asli, is a filmmaker and visual artist who works primarily in the genres of speculative fiction as a subversive artistic and liberatory practice. In 2017, her mixed-media installation, *Resistance Time Portal*, which centered black radicalism in a futuristic narrative, made its debut in the *Distance≠Time* exhibition at the Icebox Project Space, co-presented by Philadelphia's Black Quantum Futurism collective. She has been the recipient of several grants, awards and fellowships, including a 2016 Transformation Award from the Leeway Foundation, a 2016 NBPC 360 fellowship from Black Public Media, and in 2018, a Flaherty Seminar fellowship. In 2018, she also completed *Resistance: The Battle of Philadelphia*, a six-part, near-future web series about a community's struggle against state violence. She is in

post-production on *Invisible Universe*, a documentary about black creators in speculative fiction and in development on the anthology horror film based on the book, *Skin Folk* by Nalo Hopkinson.

Eshun, Kodwo, is Lecturer in Contemporary Art Theory at Goldsmiths, University of London, Visiting Professor, Haut Ecole d'Art et Design, Genève and co-founder of The Otolith Group. He is author of *More Brilliant than the Sun: Adventures in Sonic Fiction* (Quartet, 1998) and *Dan Graham: Rock My Religion* (Afterall, 2012) and co-editor of *Post Punk Then and Now* (Repeater, 2016), *The Militant Image: A Cine-Geography: Third Text Vol 25 Issue1* (2011), *Harun Farocki Against What? Against Whom* (Walther König, 2010) and *The Ghosts of Songs: The Film Art of the Black Audio Film Collective 1982-1998* (Liverpool University Press, 2007).

Everett, Anna, is Professor of Film, Television, and New Media Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB). She is a two-time recipient of the Fulbright Senior Scholar Award, organizer of the AfroGeeks conferences as well as co-organizer of the Race in Cyberspace conferences. Her many publications include the books *Returning the Gaze: A Genealogy of Black Film Criticism, 1909-1949*; *Learning Race and Ethnicity: Youth and Digital Media* (for the MacArthur Foundation's series on Digital Media, Youth, and Learning), *New Media: Theories and Practices of Digitextuality*; *AfroGeeks: Beyond the Digital Divide*; *Digital Diaspora: A Race for Cyberspace*; and *Pretty People: Movie Stars of the 1990s*. Anna Everett currently serves a County Commissioner and Chair of the Santa Barbara County Commission for Women.

Gbadamosi, Raimi, is an artist, writer and curator. He received his Doctorate (2001) in Fine Art from the Slade School of Fine Art, London. He is a member of the Interdisciplinary Research Group 'AfroEuropeans', University of Leon, Spain, and the 'Black Body' group, Goldsmiths College, London. He is on the Editorial board of *Journal of African Studies*, *Open Arts Journal* and *SAVVY*, and on the boards of *Elastic Residence*, London and *Relational*, Bristol. He is currently an Associate at Wits Institute of Social and Economic Research (WiSER), Johannesburg. Recent national and international shows and events include: *Histories of the Invisible*, The Centre for the Less Good idea, Johannesburg, *Words Festival*, NIROX 2017, South Africa; *Romulus, Rebus*, Priest Gallery, Johannesburg 2017, *Cemetery*, Johannesburg Art Gallery, South Africa, 2014/2015; *Banquet*, South Hill Park Bracknell, United Kingdom. Artist books include: *incredulous; ordinary people; extraordinary people; contents; Drink Horizontal; Drink Vertical; The Dreamers' Perambulator*; and *four word*. Recent essays include: *Pax Africana* Book Chapter 2017; *There are Storytellers Everywhere* Book Chapter 2017; *Testaments of a Cur-*

rent Moment Agenda 2016. Become a citizen at The Republic. <http://www.the-republic.net>.

Gumbs, Alexis Pauline, is a long-term space cadet and a professional cousin. She is the author of *M Archive: After the End of the World* and *Spill: Scenes of Black Feminist Fugitivity* and co-editor of *Revolutionary Mothering: Love on the Front Lines*. Her forthcoming book is called *Dub: Finding Ceremony*. Alexis lives in Durham, North Carolina where she co-stewards The Mobile Homecoming Trust (a queer black experiential archive) with her partner Sangodare.

Gunkel, Henriette, is lecturer at the Department of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London. Her work focusses on the politics of time from an anti-colonial, queer-feminist perspective. She is currently working on a monograph on Alien Time that focusses on Africanist science-fictional interventions. She is the author of *The Cultural Politics of Female Sexuality in South Africa* (Routledge, 2010) and co-editor of *What Can a Body Do?* (Campus, 2012), *Undutiful Daughters. New Directions in Feminist Thought and Practice* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), and *Futures & Fictions* (Repeater, 2017), which was nominated for the 2018 International Center of Photography's Infinity Award in the Critical Writing and Research category.

Haimbe, Milumbe, was born in Lusaka, Zambia. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Architecture attained from the Copperbelt University, and also holds a Master's Degree in Fine Arts obtained from the Oslo National Academy of the Arts in Norway. Milumbe is a multimedia artist interested in exploring diversity in popular media and culture. Her work combines several mediums including drawing, illustration, animation, video, 3D modelling, text and comic book art to navigate these themes. She represents a wide intersection of cultural minorities and believes that this intersectionality places her in a favorable position to lend her voice to the communities that she represents. She lives and works in Toronto, Canada.

Hameed, Ayesha, is a Lecturer in Visual Cultures and Programme Leader of the MA in Contemporary Art Theory at Goldsmiths, University of London. Hameed's work explores contemporary borders and migration, critical race theory, Walter Benjamin, and visual cultures of the Black Atlantic. She has performed recently at Homeworks Space Program Beirut, Mosaic Rooms, RAW Material Company Dakar, Arts Catalyst, March Meeting Sharjah, Keynote Society for Artistic Research, Camden Arts Centre, La Colonie Paris and Spike Island Bristol. Recent exhibitions include Dakar Biennale 2018, Showroom 2018, Konsthall C Stockholm 2018, "Forensic Architecture: Towards an Investigative Aesthetics" at MACBA Barcelona and MUAC Mexico City 2017. Her publications include *Futures & Fictions* (co-

edited with Simon O’Sullivan and Henriette Gunkel Repeater 2017), *Visual Cultures as Time Travel* (with Henriette Gunkel Sternberg, forthcoming 2019); and contributions to *Forensis: The Architecture of Public Truth* (Sternberg Press 2014), *Unsound/Undead* (Urbanomic Forthcoming 2018).

Jean-Louis, Soraya, is a Haitian born, Harlem and Brooklyn raised mixed media queer womynist artist conjurer and healer currently living and loving in New Orleans. Her love of black womxn and families, motherhood, nature, wildcrafting, Black Feminist Futurisms, comics/graphic novels and the African Diaspora are central themes in her work. Soraya’s work as an organizer, mentor, counselor, doula, teaching artist, and medical anthropologist focusing on women’s health and African folklore strengthen her commitment to resisting oppression and facilitating healing through imaginative creative/art activism. Soraya has participated in several group exhibits in various New Orleans cultural institutions including the Mckenna Museum of African American Art, The JuJu Bag, Antenna Gallery, The Jazz and Heritage Gallery and a solo show at Café Rose NiCaud and Backatown Coffee Parlour. Soraya is the co-founder of ‘Wildseeds: New Orleans Octavia Butler Emergent Strategy Collective’ and was awarded the Alternate Roots Visual Scholars grant in 2014. Most recently, Soraya was the creative facilitator, curator and contributing artist for one of the largest public art exhibitions in New Orleans, Wildseeds “Sacred Space” at ExhibitBE and co-organizer of the inaugural Black Futures Fest: A Celebration of the Black Fantastic in New Orleans in 2015.

Keeling, Kara, is Associate Professor of Cinema and Media Studies at the University of Chicago. Keeling is author of *The Witch’s Flight: The Cinematic, the Black Femme, and the Image of Common Sense* (Duke University Press, 2007) and coeditor (with Josh Kun) of a selection of writings about sound and American Studies entitled *Sound Clash: Listening to American Studies* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), and (with Colin MacCabe and Cornel West) a selection of writings by the late James A. Snead entitled *European Pedigrees/African Contagions: Racist Traces and Other Writing* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). A second monograph, *Queer Times, Black Futures*, will be published in the spring of 2019 by New York University Press.

Kia Henda, Kiluanji, is an autodidact. A profound springboard into this realm comes from growing up in a household of photography enthusiasts. His conceptual edge was sharpened by immersing himself into music, avant-garde theatre and collaborating with a collective of emerging artists in Luanda. Kia Henda has participated in several residencies programs and in the following selected exhibitions: Triennial of Luanda, 2007; *Check List Luanda Pop*, African Pavilion, Biennale of Venice, 2007; *Farewell to Post-Colonialism*, Triennial of Guangzhou, 2008; *There*

is always a cup of sea to sail in, 29th São Paulo Biennial, 2010; *Tomorrow Was Already Here*, Tamayo Museum, Mexico City, 2012; *Les Prairies*, Les Ateliers de Rennes, 2012; *Mondays Begins On Saturday*, First Bergen Triennial, 2013; *The Shadows Took Shape*, The Studio Museum of Harlem, New York, 2013; *The Divine Comedy*, Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, 2014; *Surround the Audience*, New Museum Triennial, New York, 2015; *Museum (Science) Fictions - MUSEUM ON/OFF*, Centre George Pompidou, Paris, 2016; *Constellations*, Tate Gallery, 2017, *Imagined Borders*, 12th Gwangju Biennale. In 2012 he won the National Award for Culture and the Arts from the Angolan Ministry of Culture and in 2017 the Frieze Artist Award.

lynch, kara, is a time-based artist living in the Bronx, NY who earns a living as an Associate Professor of Video and Critical Studies at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts. Ambivalent towards hyper-visual culture, she is curious about duration, embodiment, and aural experience; and through low-fi, collective practice and social intervention lynch explores aesthetic/political relationships between time + space. Her work is vigilantly raced, classed, and gendered - Black, queer and feminist. Major projects include: *Black Russians* – a feature documentary video (2001), *The Outing* – a video travelogue (1999-2004), *Mouhawala Oula* – a gender-bending trio performance for oriental dance, live video, and saxophone (2009). The current project *INVISIBLE*, an episodic, speculative, multi-site video/audio installation – excavates the terror and resilient beauty of Black experience.

Maier, Carla J., is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Copenhagen working at the intersection of sound studies and cultural studies with a focus on postcolonial theories and practices and working with an interdisciplinary methodology combining sensory ethnography, music analysis and cultural analysis. In her current postdoc project on “Travelling Sounds: A cultural analysis of sonic artefacts in postcolonial Europe”, she investigates how migrating sonic artefacts – i.e. the mediated musical sounds and everyday sounds that travel across and beyond nation states, media, genres, identities – constitute and are constituted by the postcolonial and postmigrant conditions of Europe. She is preparing a book titled *Sound Practices: South Asian Dance Music as Cultural Transformation* to be published with Bloomsbury in 2019.

Nagl, Tobias, is Associate Professor of Film Studies in the English Department and associated member of the Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism at the University of Western Ontario. Previously, he has worked as a DJ, freelance writer (*SPEX*, *Jungle World*, *epd film*, *SPON*), newspaper editor (*die tageszeitung*), curator (Oberhausen Film Festival) and translator. He is the author of *Die unheimliche Maschine. Rasse und Repräsentation im Weimarer Kino* (The Uncanny Machine.

Race and Representation in Weimar Cinema, 2009) and co-editor of *European Vision. Small Cinemas in Transition* (with Janelle Blankenship, 2015). His research interests include Marxism and the Frankfurt School, postcolonial studies, film history and theory, critical theories of race, silent cinema, the historical avant-gardes and political modernism.

Nyong'o, Tavia, is Professor of African-American Studies, American Studies, and Theatre Studies at Yale University. His research interests include the cultural study of performance; black diasporic studies; Marxism and post-Marxism; queer and feminist aesthetics; and popular music studies. His books include: *The Amalgamation Waltz: Race, Performance, and the Ruses of Memory* (U Minnesota, 2009), which won the Errol Hill Award for best book in African American theatre and performance studies, and *Afro-Fabulations: The Queer Drama of Black Life* (NYU Press, 2018).

Phillips, Rasheedah, Esq. serves as the Managing Attorney of the Housing Unit at Community Legal Services of Philadelphia, representing low-income tenants in eviction defense and local and national systemic advocacy on preservation of affordable housing and tenants' rights issues. A recipient of the 2017 National Housing Law Project Housing Justice Award, 2018 Temple University Black Law Student Association Alumni Award, 2018 Community Legal Services Equal Justice Award, and recognized as a 2017 City & State PA 40 under 40 Rising Star, Rasheedah received her J.D. from Temple University Beasley School of Law, and graduated Summa Cum Laude with a B.A. in Criminal Justice from Temple University in 2005. In 2011, Rasheedah founded The AfroFuturist Affair, a grassroots organization and small indie publishing platform celebrating and spreading awareness of Afrofuturism in marginalized communities. She is also the co-creator of Black Quantum Futurism interdisciplinary arts collective, the award-winning Community Futures Lab, founding member of Metropolarity Queer Sci-Fi Collective, and is the author of several books and essays on black futurism, black temporalities, and speculative fiction stories. As part of her socially engaged art practice, she has been a recipient of the 2017 Pew Fellowship, 2017 Center for Emerging Visual Arts Fellowship, 2016 West Philadelphia Time Exchange Residency, and is a 2018 Atlantic Fellow for Racial Equity.

Rashid, Umar (Frohawk Two Feathers), was born in 1976 in Chicago, Illinois, and currently lives and works in Los Angeles, California. He earned his BA at Southern Illinois University in 2000. Rashid has created a narrative focusing on the colonial history of the Frenglish Empire – a fictionalized empire of his creation that combines France and England. His portraits, drawings, flags, maps, battle scenes, and other artifacts continue the long history of Frengland – an ongoing project Ra-

shid began working on in 2006. In Rashid's history, the dates of the Frenglish Empire (1658-1888) roughly correspond to the actual English Civil War and the abolition of slavery in Brazil respectively. Ten years in the making and spanning almost 140 years of Frenglish time, Rashid's global empire has developed a complex, global history, much like the trajectory of actual colonial enterprises. Similarly, his work references a panoply of cultures that collapses geography and time. Stylistically, Rashid alludes to Egyptian hieroglyphs, Native American hide paintings and ledger art, Persian miniature painting, and illustrated Spanish colonial manuscripts to name but a few.

Schrade, Daniel Kojo, visual artist and professor of art at Hampshire College, Amherst Massachusetts USA, studied in Germany and Spain. His work includes repeated motifs such as the 'Afronaut' figure and the cycle entitled "Brother Beethoven". Schrade combines performance, installation and abstract expressive painting strategies with textual elements and personal iconographies in his pieces. His paintings and installations have been presented internationally including the Museo de Arte Contemporaneo Oaxaca (Mexico), Artist Alliance Accra (Ghana), Haus der Kunst Munich, Iwalewa Haus University Bayreuth (Germany), the Indonesian National Gallery (Jakarta), and the Museum of Modern Art Warsaw (Poland). Amongst others, he was invited to lecture about his work at Goldsmiths University London, Kwame Nkrumah University Ghana, Georgetown University Washington DC, and the University of California Los Angeles. Daniel Kojo Schrade holds an M.F.A (Diploma) from the Academy of Fine Arts Munich, Germany. Most recently he was awarded Dartmouth College Artist in Residence for Spring 2019.

sorryyoufeeluncomfortable, formed in 2014 out of the Baldwin's Nigger Reloaded project initiated by Barby Asante and Teresa Cisneros, currently led by Rabz Lansiquot and Imani Robinson, syfu are a multi disciplinary group of young thinkers and makers working towards creative, nuanced study of how the intersections of race, gender, sexuality and class affect communities. All this as our personal and professional mode of challenging the oppressive foundations of the contemporary world:<https://www.instagram.com/sorryyoufeeluncomfortable>;<https://mobile.twitter.com/syfucollective?lang=en>; <https://m.facebook.com/syfucollective>.

Siegert, Nadine, is a researcher, curator and publisher with a focus on modern and contemporary arts of the Global South. Currently she is the Deputy Director of Iwalewahaus, University of Bayreuth and member of the research project *Revolution 3.0* at the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies. She was a Brooks International Fellow at Tate Modern/Delfina Foundation and Curator in Residence at Vila Sul, Goethe-Institute in Salvador de Bahia. She curated a number of exhibitions such as *FAVT: Future Africa Visions in Time* (since 2016), *Mashup* (since

2015) and *GhostBusters* (2012). In 2016, she published her PhD *(Re)mapping Luanda* on nostalgic and utopian aesthetic strategies in contemporary art in Angola (LIT). Since 2015, Siegert leads the project *African Art History and the Formation of a Modernist Aesthetics*. In this context, her current research project is on socialist aesthetic modernity in Africa.

Smith, Robyn, is a Jamaican cartoonist with an MFA from the Center for Cartoon Studies. She has worked on comics for NECIR (New England Center for Investigative Reporting), the Seven Days newspaper, College Humor, The Nib, and has most recently illustrated the comic *Wash Day* created by Jamila Rowser. She's been featured on The Comics Journal list The Best Short Form Comics of 2016 by Rob Clough and also Pen America by Whit Taylor, for her mini comic *The Saddest Angriest Black Girl in Town*. Right now, she's supposedly working on more weird, sad autobio stuff and holding on to dreams of returning home, to the ocean.

Tate, Greg, is a writer, musician and cultural provocateur who lives on Harlem's legendary Sugar Hill. His most recent book is *Flyboy2: The Greg Tate Reader* (Duke University Press, 2016). Tate also leads the Conducted Improv funk band, Burnt Sugar The Arkestra Chamber who will celebrating their twentieth anniversary in 2019.