

IMAGE BY: DAVID ALABO

Ms. Taylor Presents
AFROFUTURIST ART
Imagining the Past, Present and Future





IMAGE BY: DAVID ALABO

AFROFUTURISM

- Literature
- Music
- Film
- Fashion
- Architecture
- Visual Arts

AFROFUTURIST UNIT

Assignment #1: Octavia's Brood

Assignment #2: Transmissions from Space

Assignment #3: Afrofuturist Film: Black Panther

Assignment #4: Afrofuturist Fine Art and Architecture

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE IN 50 YEARS, 200 YEARS, 500 YEARS...

- *What would you like to see happen in the future?*

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- *What does music sound like in the future?*

LEADING QUESTIONS: THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE IN 50 YEARS, 200 YEARS, 500 YEARS...

- *What would you like to see happen in the future?*
- *What do the people look like in the future?*
- *What does music sound like in the future?*
- *What does the art (paintings, buildings, sculptures) look like?*
- *What does the planet look like? Are we even on our planet?*

What is Afrofuturism?

Watch YouTube Video:
Ytasha Womack - Afrofuturism Imagination and Humanity

*"Part of the resilience of
black culture and black life
is about imagining the
impossible."* - Alondra Nelson



What is Afrofuturism?



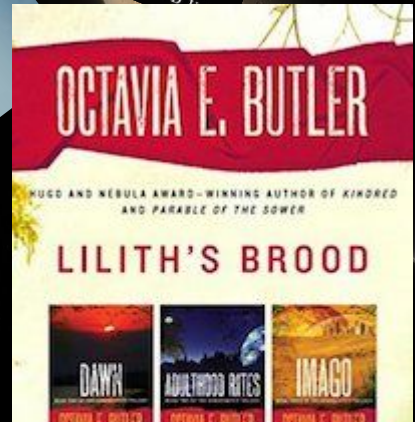
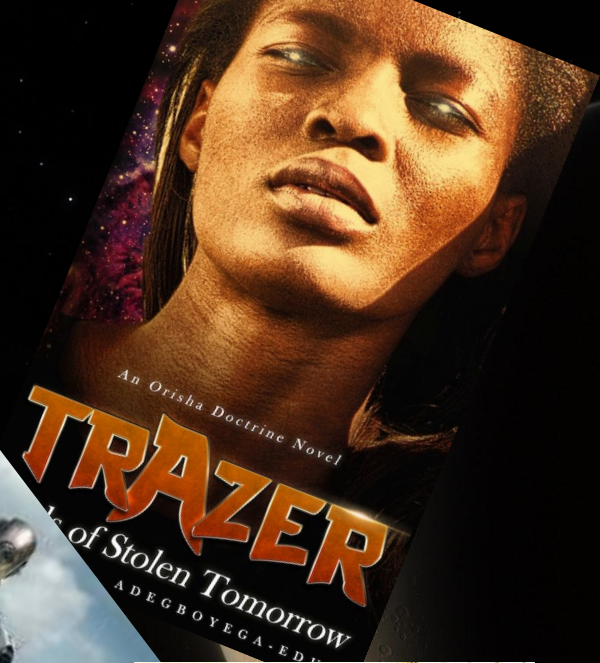
IMAGE BY: DAVID ALABO

- RECLAMATION OF BLACK IDENTITY THROUGH ART, CULTURE AND POLITICAL RESISTANCE
- CREATION OF A PAST/PRESENT/FUTURE WITH BLACK PEOPLE IN IT
- RESPONSE TO: SLAVERY, SEGREGATION, RACISM, COLONIALISM
- COMBINES: TECHNOLOGY, FASHION, ART, MUSIC, MYSTICISM, TRADITION, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND MORE

LITERATURE

I THINK THAT ONE OF THE MOST
RADICAL THINGS THAT ANYONE IN
THE WORLD CAN DO IS IMAGINE
THAT BLACK PEOPLE HAVE A
FUTURE.." - N.K. JEMISIN

8 Great Afrofuturist Reads



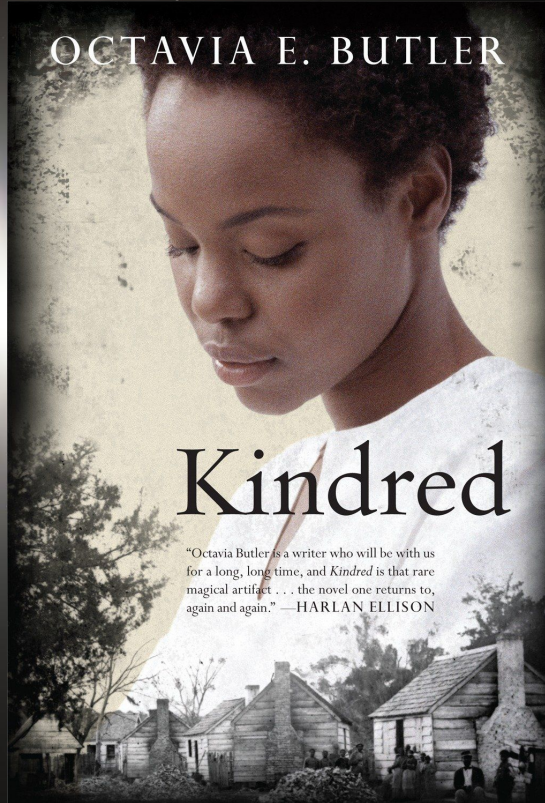
Octavia Butler

Octavia Estelle Butler, often referred to as the "grand dame of science fiction," was born in Pasadena, California on June 22, 1947. She received an Associate of Arts degree in 1968 from Pasadena Community College, and also attended California State University in Los Angeles and the University of California, Los Angeles. (octaviabutler.org)



READ: [Octavia's Brood](#)

Octavia Butler's Kindred



The book is the first-person account of a young African-American woman writer, Dana, who finds herself being shunted in time between her Los Angeles, California home in 1976 and a pre-Civil War Maryland plantation. There she meets her ancestors: a proud black freewoman and a white planter who has forced her into slavery and concubinage. As Dana's stays in the past become longer, the young woman becomes intimately entangled with the plantation community. She makes hard choices to survive slavery and to ensure her return to her own time.

Kindred explores the dynamics and dilemmas of antebellum slavery from the sensibility of a late 20th-century black woman, who is aware of its legacy in contemporary American society. Through the two interracial couples who form the emotional core of the story, the novel also explores the intersection of power, gender, and race issues, and speculates on the prospects of future egalitarianism. (Wikipedia)

Assignment #1: Octavia's Brood

- Have each student read a different story from Octavia's Brood.
- Student's must respond to their story in an artistic way. This includes using a medium of their choice: painting, drawing, sculpture, printmaking, etc.
- For some specific ideas:

Students may decide to create a portrait of the main character, express the story's main theme visually, express the feeling that the story gave them in abstract form, create a comic book or movie poster for the story, or a sequel of the story. It is up to the student's imagination.

- Each student must present and discuss their piece and give an outline of the story.

READ: [Octavia's Brood](#)

MUSIC



Sun Ra



LE SONY'R RA, BETTER KNOWN AS SUN RA, WAS AN AMERICAN JAZZ COMPOSER, BANDLEADER, PIANO AND SYNTHESIZER PLAYER, AND POET KNOWN FOR HIS EXPERIMENTAL MUSIC, "COSMIC" PHILOSOPHY, PROLIFIC OUTPUT, AND THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES. (WIKI)

Sun Ra



Sun Ra's grand myth cycle is formulated against the tumultuous backdrop of upheaval and change in 60s and 70s American politics, culture and science. The civil-rights movement, Vietnam, social unrest, moon landings, youth culture, identity politics and hypercapitalism are the meat and bones of this period.

[Listen to Sun Ra spin his intricate, otherworldly theories](#) ([OpenCulture](#))

Sun Ra

Watch YouTube Video:
Sun Ra - Night Music 1989



Assignment #2: Transmissions from Space

MATERIALS:

- WATERCOLOR PAPER (MANY)
- WATERCOLOR PALETTE
- WATERCOLOR BRUSHES
- WATER AND CUP
- INTERNET, SPEAKERS AND AFROFUTURIST PLAYLIST

Teachers: *Create a Spotify or Youtube playlist of Afrofuturist musicians. This can include: Sun Ra, George Clinton, Jimi Hendrix, Grace Jones, Erykah Badu, Flying Lotus, Janelle Monáe, Quazarz vs. The Jealous Machines, and others. (Check songs for explicit language)*

Afrofuturist Youtube playlist (explicit language):
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLrsX-CnzalDbnvUbbrRxhTEMEaFB8NbzP>

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Students: *Focus on the music being played for you. You can choose to tune into the lyrics and/or the symphonic sounds.*

Think about these questions while making your art:

- What is it that you see in your mind when this music plays?*
- What symbols do you think of?*
- What colors, shapes and lines?*
- How does your mind/body respond to the music?*

Be aware of your senses. Create marks on your paper and follow along with the music. You may listen to your body's reaction to music and paint intuitively. Alternately, you can create literal representations of what the music is about. Work the entire class period, grab new paper if you need. Share your works of art with the class.

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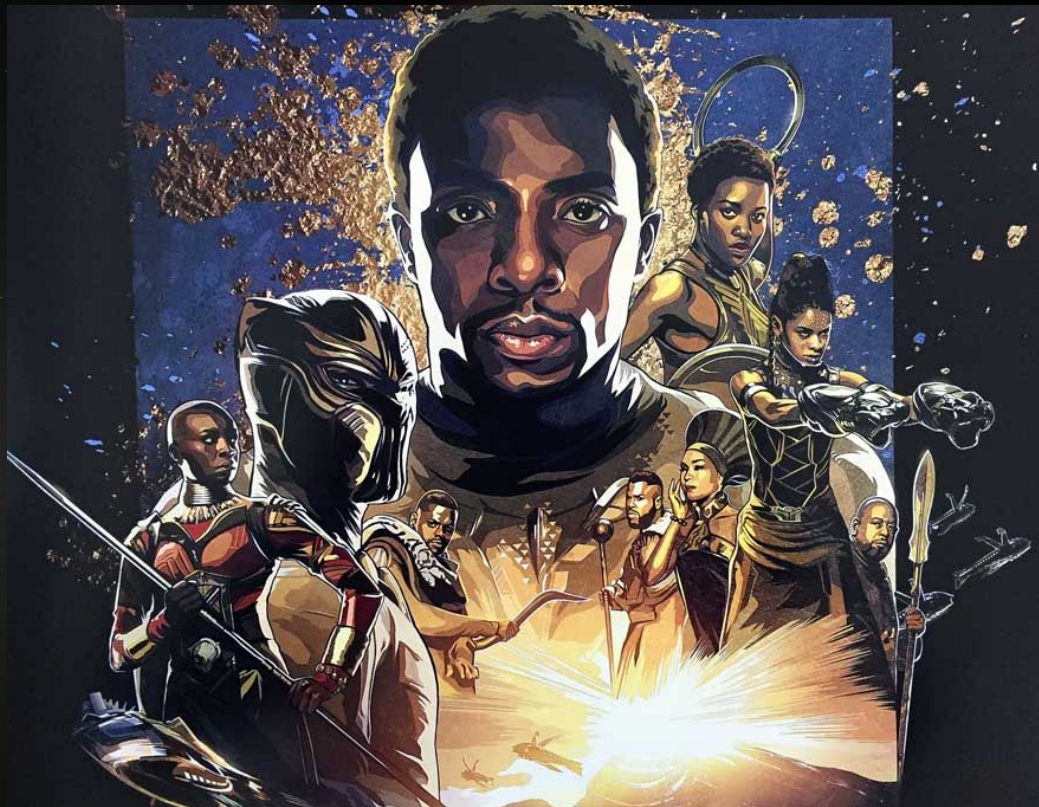
Discussion Questions:

- How did the music inform your artwork?
- Describe your experience, what went on inside your head, what did you think about?
- How did your body feel while listening to music and painting?
- Use the “I See, I Think, I Wonder” Chart for discussing artworks, etc.

FILM

OTHER
AFROFUTURIST
FILMS:

<https://www.okayafrica.com/8-must-see-afrofuturism-films/>



Watch: *Black Panther* (2018)

Available on Disney+

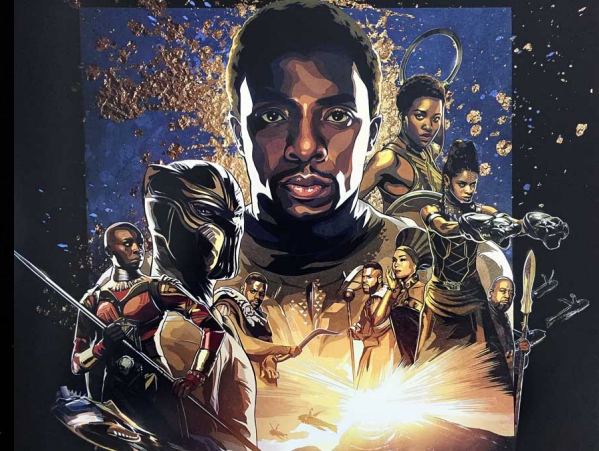
Assignment #3:

WATCH THE FILM *Black Panther* (2018) Available on Disney+

Discussion:

- What did you like, dislike about the film? Explain?
- What did you see, think/feel, and wonder about the film?
- Discuss the art, design, music, architecture and fashion of the film. How does it represent Afrofuturism?
- Why is it important for us to see different races and cultures represented in film and art?

Vimeo:
[PUMZI](#)



STUDENTS:

USE THE "I SEE, I THINK/FEEL, I WONDER" CHART. IN THE "I SEE" SECTION, WRITE DOWN ALL THE ARTISTIC ELEMENTS (COLOR SCHEMES, PATTERNS, ARTWORK, DESIGN, MUSIC, ARCHITECTURE, FASHION, TECHNOLOGY, ETC) THAT STICK OUT TO YOU IN THE FILM. WHAT DID YOU THINK OR FEEL ABOUT CERTAIN PORTIONS OF THE FILM? WRITE THEM IN THE "I THINK/FEEL" SECTION. DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS REGARDING AFROFUTURISM OR OTHER THINGS YOU WONDER? WRITE THEM IN THE "I WONDER" SECTION.

I see (objective)	I think/feel	I wonder

FINE ART AND ARCHITECTURE

VICE VIDEO:
WHAT AN AFROFUTURIST
WORLD LOOKS LIKE

Frohawk Two Feathers



Umar Rashid (Frohawk Two Feathers) is well known in the art world for rewriting the master narrative of our colonial past. Through the creation of the fictional super empire “Frengland,” Rashid blends fact and fiction, often highlighting the forgotten histories of the enslaved and free Black people in the locations where he exhibits. Umar paints ink and acrylic portraits, battle scenes and maps on tea-stained paper – mashing visual codes of the past and present.

“Initially, I began this series out of a desire to find the parts of my identity that I felt was [sic] missing. Later on, it became a crusade to tell the history of marginalized people throughout the globe. However, at its core the oeuvre lives and breathes in the present. It speaks to the now via the past, and presents the collective ‘we’ with a vision of a future that will come true or not, depending on how the record is processed. And at the core of it all, the work is an illustrated account of the human condition (whatever that truly is).” (UAMA)

Frohawk Two Feathers

"Solid. Solid as a Rock Lord protector Casimir Theroux of Pomerania (Poland) and his wife Helen Sidney of London," 2012. Acrylic, Ink, Tea, and Coffee on Paper. 44 x 30 in.



Frohawk Two Feathers

The Fall of Avalon

40 x 50 in. Acrylic, ink on deerskin 2013



Frohawk Two Feathers

*Sin Fronteras. Map of the Most Violent Place
on Earth. (It can be argued)*
52 x 61 in. Ink and Black Tea on Paper 2018



Frohawk Two Feathers

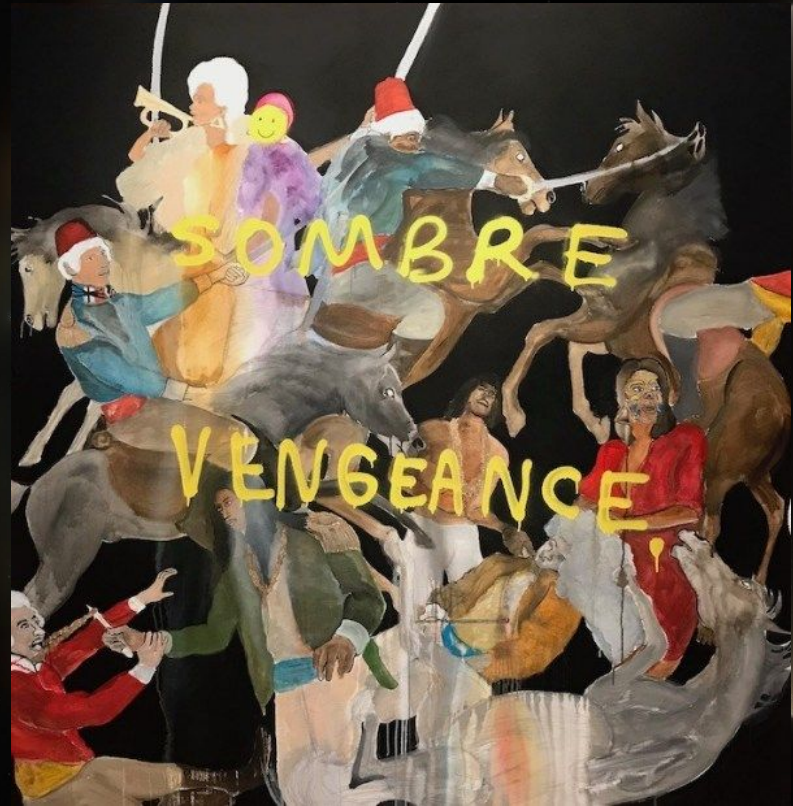
Uma and uta. Pussian. Twin girl assassins. To
see them is a guarantee it will be your very last
time breathing

Ink and Black Tea on Paper 2018

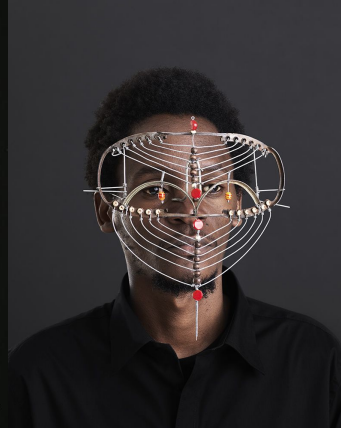
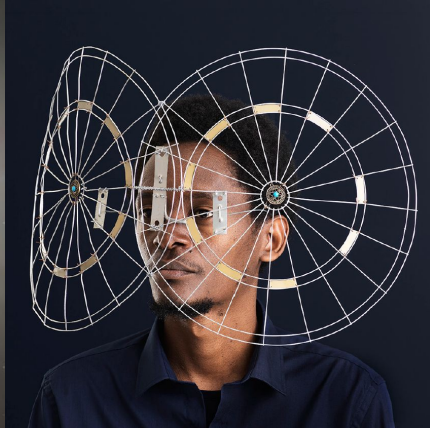
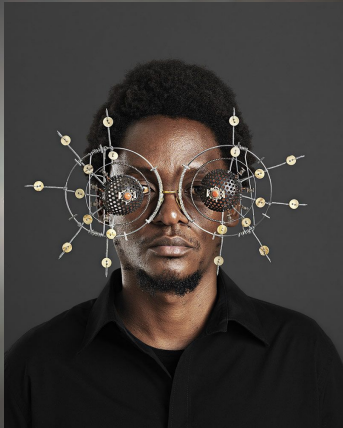


Frohawk Two Feathers

Sombre Vengeance 2018



Cyrus Kabiru



A self-taught artist, Cyrus Kabiru's ingenious sculptural objects constructed from salvaged scrap materials have gained him international recognition. He transforms worn-out bicycles into intricate and novel kinetic sculptures, but he is best known for his sculptural glasses, called C-Stunners, which he also photographs himself wearing. Cyrus's rough-hewn pieces transform trash into futuristic eye-wear. What does he see when he looks through these lenses? Growing up in the Eastlands of Nairobi as one of six children living in a two-bedroom house opposite a refuse dump, Cyrus used what was at hand to fashion spectacles to seek out an alternative view of the future. Through his re-imagining, the original utility and value of materials are abstracted, and the glasses reflect on the power structures of visibility and systems of representation.

<https://10and5.com/2018/09/18/6-afrofuturism-artists-watch-explore-modern-african-diaspora/>

Cyrus Kabiru

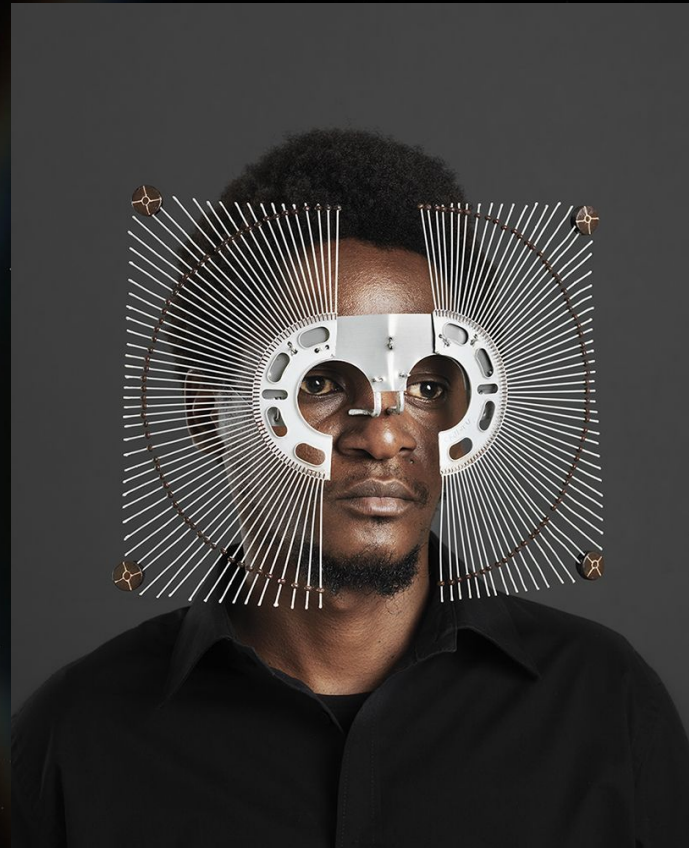
Not for riding



[VIMEO: The End of the Black Mamba](#)

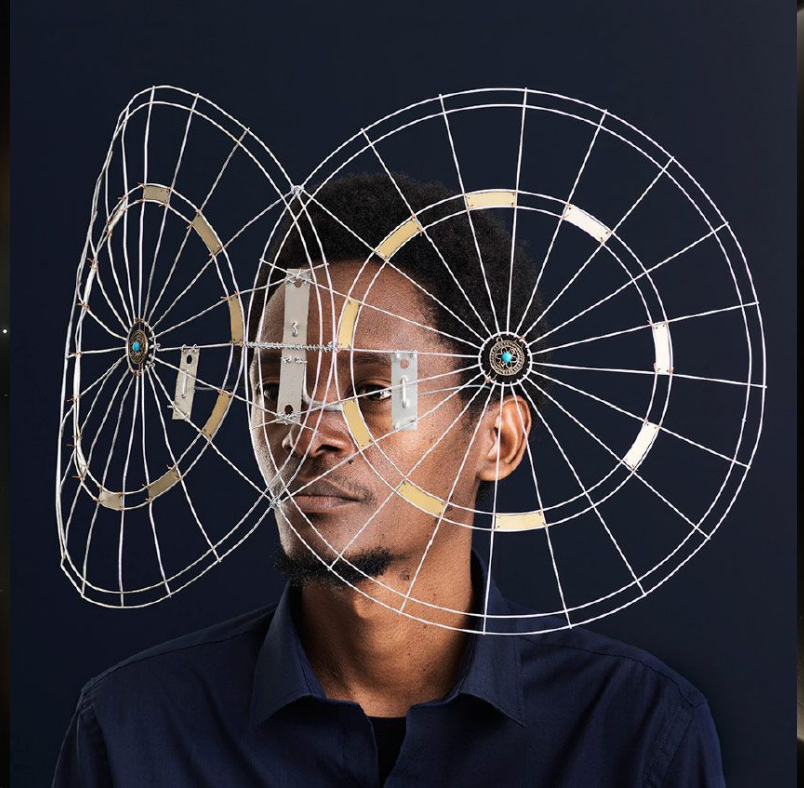
Cyrus Kabiru

*Kwa Kubadilishana Utamaduni, Macho
Nne: At the Dot, 2017. 59 1/10 × 47 1/5 in*



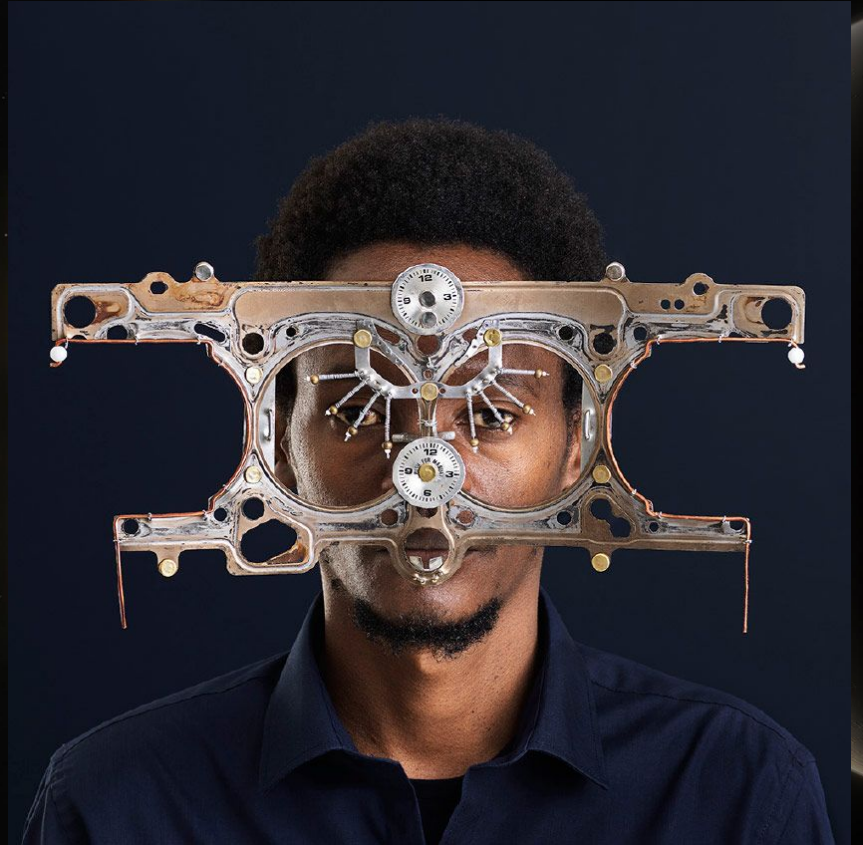
Cyrus Kabiru

Kubwa Macho Nne – American Darts, 2015.



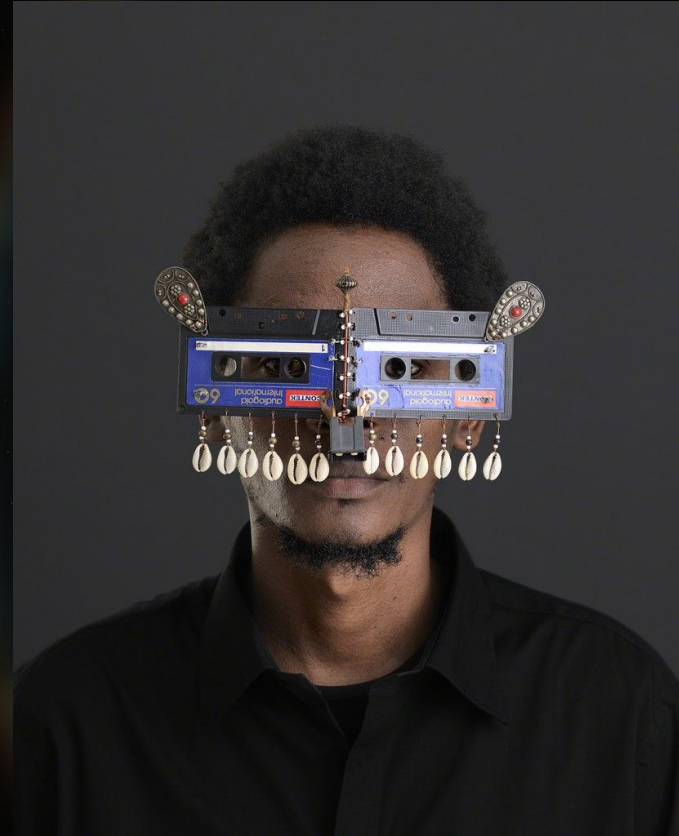
Cyrus Kabiru

Kubwa Macho Nne – Tom and Jerry (2015)



Cyrus Kabiru

Njia Ya Maisha Macho Nne Throwback, 2015



Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum



The figures in Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum's drawings and paintings are timeless and often faceless. They populate undefined landscapes that appear to be between worlds. Pamela is fascinated with ancient mythologies, technology and scientific theories, which permeate her visual language and orientates her work outside of time and place. In an essay for *African Futures*, she writes: "I am interested in this idea of locating landscapes of alternative and yet-to-be known possibilities within the space of imagination, rather than in a physical place. The space of imagination opens radically vast territories of possibility. The space of imagination allows for multiple, simultaneous 'utopianisms.'" The figures in her art have unfixed identities, and their multiple overlapping gestures and iterations suggest compound time. Pamela is deeply interested in what she calls the "re-seeing of Afro-mythologies" through the lens of science fiction, and argues in an essay for *Paradox Journal*, how this can be viewed as a "political tactic for restructuring experiences of the African present through the imagining of new African futures." (<https://10and5.com/2018/09/18/6-afrofuturism-artists-watch-explore-modern-african-diaspora/>)

Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum



Course, 2017.

Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum

Choice Assorted, 2017



Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum

Parable, 2016.



Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum

Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum, 'Desiree', 2018



Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum



Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum, *The Star + The Moon*, 2011, video animation

Kaylan Michael

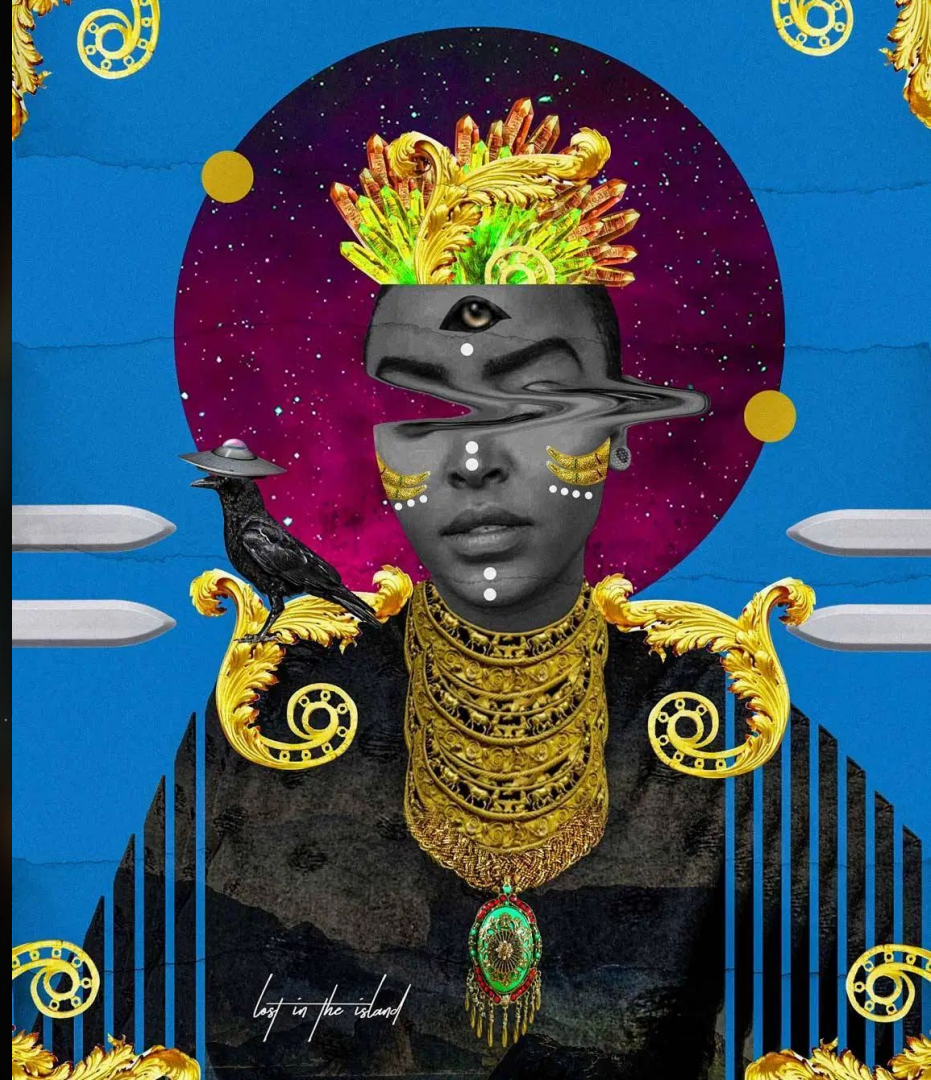


Kaylan Michel is a self-taught designer and artist, based in Montreal, focusing on fierce and beautiful portrait collages in the style of Afrofuturism. Her mixed media approach uses all manner of objects and visual metaphors, coalescing into a distinctive, hyper-vibrant style.

She works under the moniker Lost in the Island, and was inspired by a range of post-modernism artists, but also pop culture references, and her own African heritage. We love the mixed media approach, using flowers, flying saucers, cat eyes and more to create such distinctive and rich detailed art.

(<https://tutsplus.com/authors/kaylan-michael>)

Kaylan Michael



Kaylan Michael



Kaylan Michael



Lina Iris Viktor

Lina Iris Viktor, a British-Liberian artist in New York who paints queenly self-portraits with a futuristic edge, picked up the thread. “The internet democratized the playing field,” she said. “Now the voices you hear are authentically ours. Instead of everybody else telling you stories, explaining to you what our work is about, *we* are telling you what it’s about.”

Syzygy



Saya Woolfalk

Watch YouTube Video:
What world do you want to live in? | Saya
Woolfalk | TEDxKCWomen



Mythological, folkloric worlds form the basis of Saya Woolfalk's multimedia installations, which blend science fiction, metaphysics, anthropology, and genetics to explore perceptions of the present and future. In the "No Place" series, the artist imagines a fictional, futuristic universe. Inhabited by different classes of creatures who seek to disrupt hierarchies and systems of representation, "No Place" is inspired by ethnographic theories and anthropological satire. This macrocosmic civilization reminds viewers of the diversity of our own world and the relativity of our reality. Each of Woolfalk's installations builds on previous works and sculpts a mythology extracted from an essential truth. Her art is rooted in a playful aesthetic inspired by Roland Barthes's *Mythologies*, metamorphosis in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and contemporary Afrofuturist artists such as Jacolby Satterwhite.

(<https://www.artsy.net/artwork/saya-woolfalk-rosetta-stone-of-empathic-movement-and-biology>)

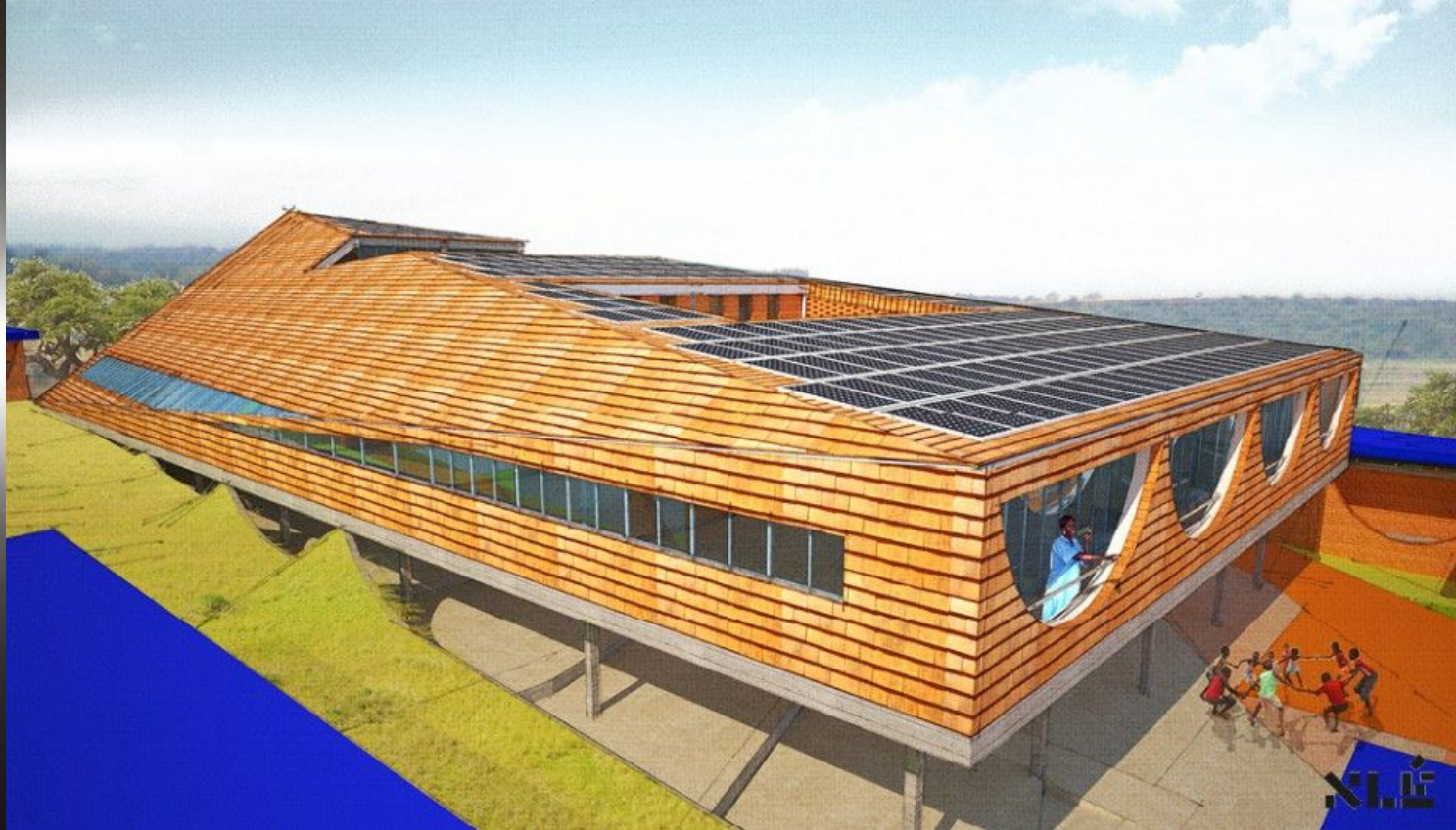
Kunlé Adeyemi



Kunlé Adeyemi is an architect, designer and development researcher whose works are internationally recognized for innovation and originality. He is the founder and principal of NLÉ – an architecture, design and urbanism practice founded in 2010, for innovating cities and communities.

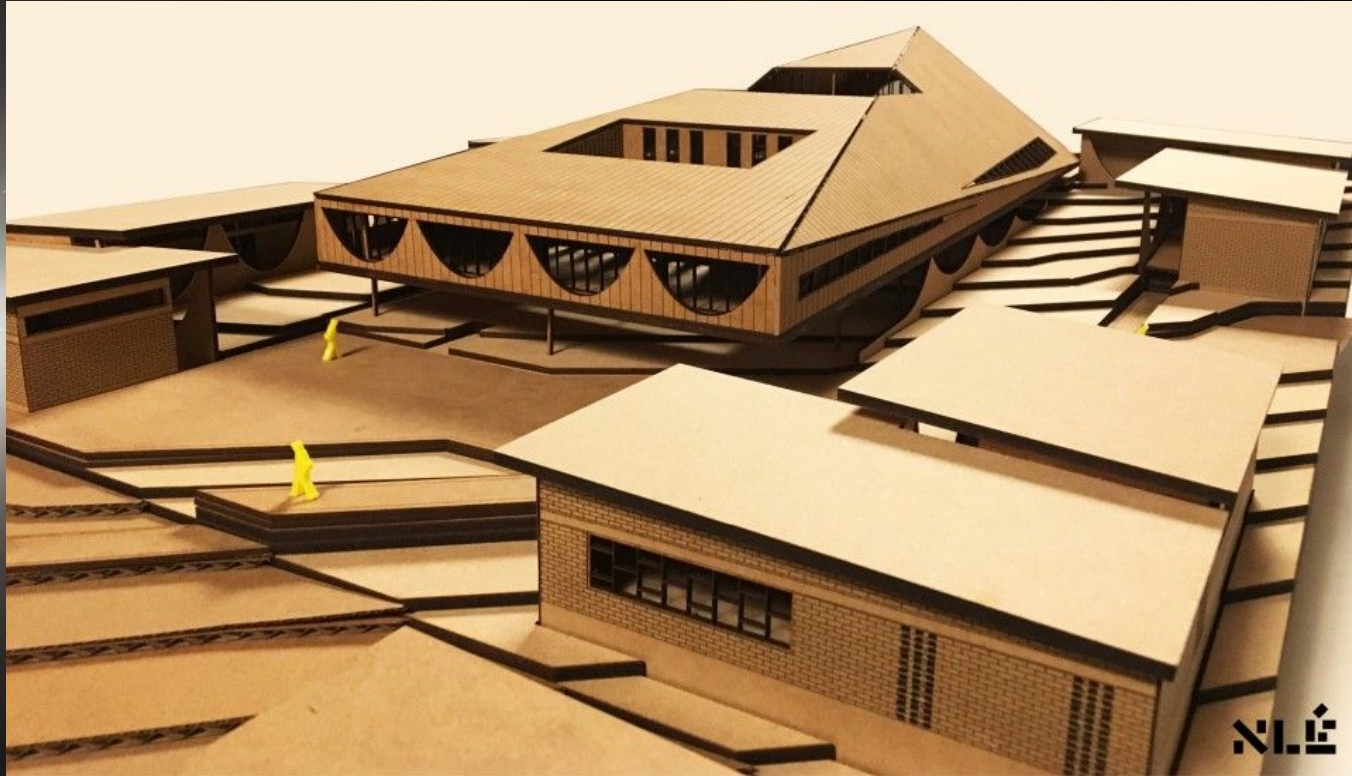
(<http://www.nleworks.com/team-member/kunle-adeyemi/>)

Kunlé Adeyemi



BLACK RHINO ACADEMY – SCHOOL HALL | KARATU, TANZANIA | 2014 (CONSTRUCTION STARTS 2020)

Kunlé Adeyemi



BLACK RHINO ACADEMY – SCHOOL HALL | KARATU, TANZANIA | 2014 (CONSTRUCTION STARTS 2020)

Kunlé Adeyemi



YABA PROTOTYPE | LAGOS, NIGERIA | 2011

Bodys Isek Kingelez



Bodys Isek Kingelez made architectural models from paper, cardboard and plastic, integrating in them various ready-made products. Using exclusively manual work, comprised of cutouts, pasting and joining, Kingelez managed to create a futuristic, utopic view of Africa. Kingelez was born in a village, moved to Kinshasa in 1970, and during his early years in the city observed its uncontrolled growth, as it became a wild, chaotic urban space. In 1977, he began building models of fantastic structures that attempted to offer a solution (or as he termed it “redemption”) for Kinshasa’s urban anarchy; in 1992 he began making models of whole cities, some spreading over huge spaces.

(<http://www.africa-tamuseum.org.il/artist/bodys-isek-kingelez/>)

Bodys Isek Kingelez



Ville de Sète 3009. 2000.

Bodys Isek Kingelez



Ville Fantôme. 1996

Bodys Isek Kingelez

"Étoile Rouge Congolaise" (1990). Kingelez projects
visions of a glorious future



Assignment #4: Create Your Future



1.) Discuss various Afrofuturist artists.

How does each artist create their own world for the better? What is the message?

Use the “I See, I Think/Feel and I Wonder” columns when observing the artwork.

What ideas can you generate for your own artwork based on all the Afrofuturist ideas and aesthetics you have seen thus far?

Assignment #4: Create Your Future



2.) Create your own version of an alternate reality or future using elements from your own culture. You may want to mix writing and artmaking to expand on details within this world. What does your world look like? Who are the people in it? How has religion, art, fashion, music, politics, technology, etc changed and/or stayed the same? What is the gap in the history from here to then? Be specific and use your imagination!

Assignment #4: Create Your Future



3.) You may use any medium, but I encourage you to mix mediums. Create as many artworks as you like using the materials available in the classroom, but there must be at least 3 pieces made minimum.

4.) If you need more examples please come see me!

Links

Black Quantum Futurism: <https://www.blackquantumfuturism.com/>

Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/artsyzeal/afrofuturism-visual-art/>

<https://medium.com/nuadox/afrofuturism-when-art-meets-politics-9227751e104b>

<https://www.artsy.net/gene/afrofuturism>

