

## Curating the End of the World

**Curating the End of the World** is an online multimedia, multi-genre Black speculative pop-up exhibition in collaboration with Afroflux, Afro\_Futures UK, The Afrofuturist Affair, Black Kirby, NubiaMancy, Kaos Network, Blerd City, Octavia Butler Legacy Network, Zion Network and others looking at the concerns of Black people address across the world through their own speculative lense in response to existential threats. Africa and its Diaspora have to deal with the existential threats of climate change, global pandemic(s), poor governance, transhumanism, and an accelerating, technologically driven economic system on the verge of collapse. Once collected the curated exhibition with its various components will be on view the first week in April, 2020.

During the last major global pandemic often referred to as the Spanish Flu, there was widespread devastation locally and globally, however, the fact that, in certain instances, people of African descent were less impacted did not end the practice of biologically attributing inferiority or racist treatment to the indigenous inhabitants, African Diaspora and Africans. Furthermore, smaller outbreaks such as Ebola reinforced racial stereotypes of Africa and its people. Finally this behavior was reflected in the emergence of the H.I.V. epidemic and its origins (Hunt, 1994). This treatment has long had a history tied to racism, slavery, miscegenation and colonialism (Curson, 2006; Gamble, 2010; Naranjo, 1992; Patterson, 1983; Phillips, 1984). In the wake of the pandemic, the Pan African scholar W.E.B. Du Bois outlined this behavior in his speculative work “The Comet,” a chapter in his book *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil*, published in the wake of the pandemic in 1920.

Black speculative art is a creative, aesthetic practice that seeks to interpret, engage, design, or alter reality for the re-imagination of the past, the contested present, and act as a catalyst for the future (Anderson, 2016). Second wave Afrofuturism or Afrofuturism 2.0, and the Black Speculative Arts Movement are indebted to previous movements like the Black Arts Movement (BAM), Négritude, The Harlem Renaissance, AfriCOBRA, African liberation movements, and other continental and diasporic African speculative movements. Our understanding of the multi-dimensionality of the Black experience, the good and the bad, the respectable and the undesirable are explored.

We see our curatorial work as a reinvigoration of the Black/African political imagination in the following areas to include and not limited to: Africanfuturism, Afrofuturism, Black Sci-Fi, Ethno-Gothic. Magical Realism, The Black Fantastic, scenario and forecasting, Philosophy and Religion, Digital Humanities, and Applied Science. Current issues concerning human and technological obsolescence, time, futurity, and economic and

ecological forecasting are what plagues our collective consciousness during this time of crisis. Black bodies have been integral to the emergence of modern capitalism, science, medical practices and cultural assemblages, but little attention has been paid to Black health, precarity, and other threats within the context of Black futures and existential risk. **Curating The End Of The World** aims to address this absence through a mix of new and existing works of site-specific, participatory drawing, painting, photography, collage, sculpture, and performance. Utilizing BSAM's international network and partners, our specific focus is to showcase through art, theory and praxis the relationship between science, anti-blackness, and Black bodies in science fiction, technology and public health. As such, **Curating The End Of The World** is consistent with BSAM's mission in that it demonstrates how art can be a point of departure for engaging and possibly transforming socio-political issues facing Africa and the African Diaspora in the areas of politics, governance, science, technology, and the environment. Finally, this exhibition will serve as a creative, experimental, and educational impetus to explore the growing corpus of work surrounding the nexus between systemic change, health, environmental justice, and contemporary Black artistic/creative production.

### **Sponsoring organizations and participants**

#### **Australia:**

Nkosi Lessey (BSAM -Sydney)

#### **Barbados:**

Shawn Alleyne (Zion Network)

#### **Cameroon:**

Nkolo Ntyam (BSAM- Yaounde)

#### **Canada:**

Quentin VerCetty (BSAM Canada)

Dae Nneka (BSAM Canada - Vancouver/ AfroVanConnect)

Pharoah Freeman (BSAM Canada - Montreal/ One Full Circle)

Jade Byard Peek (BSAM Canada - Halifax)

Asante Massawa (NubiaMancy / BSAM Canada - Toronto)

#### **Germany**

Natasha A. Kelly (BSAM-Berlin)

#### **Kenya:**

Helen Alumbe (BSAM-Nairobi)

Christine Shikami Kubayi (BSAM- Nairobi)

**Nigeria**

Emmanuel Nwani (BSAM Nigeria-Lagos)

Judith Ejiofor (BSAM Nigeria-Lagos)

**South Africa:**

Michael Shakib Bhatch (BSAM- Cape Town)

**Senegal:**

Mame Bougoma Diene

**Uganda:**

Dilman Dila (Kampala)

**United Kingdom:**

Juice Aleem (Afroflux-Birmingham)

Applz Sanra (Afroflux-Birmingham)

Ifeoma Okoye (Afro\_Futures UK- London)

**United States:**

Reynaldo Anderson (BSAM- Saint Louis)

Stacey Robinson (BSAM)

John Jennings (BSAM)

InnerGy (BSAM- Saint Louis)

Tara Betts (BSAM-Chicago)

Ben Caldwell (Kaos Network- Los Angeles)

Duane Deterville (BSAM-Oakland Maroons)

Clairesa Clay (Blerd City- New York)

Toneisha Taylor (BSAM-Houston)

Ayana Jamieson (Octavia Butler Legacy Network)

Ebony Utley (Cal-State Long Beach)

Black Quantum Futurism (Philadelphia)

---

Our current societal condition is transforming everyday, as we tend to be last considered, underserved, however, we are responsible for providing practical applications of Afrofuturism. We must stay ahead of it and become adaptable to these new and daily changes. Though it is important to speculate, and theorize a habitable existence on Sun Ra's, and Stevie Wonder's Saturn we must provide practicality in all things speculative, and imaginative for the existence of our people as we venture beyond the 400 year mark of survival in the Western world. We can use Hip Hop as an example of cultural survival. Born in NYC, much of the South Bronx was

literally burned down in an effort to displace its Black and Brown residents. Out of this very real dystopia, Hip-Hop was born, and 40 years later has become the world's leading music. Innovators did this by utilizing the need for Peace, Love Unity, and Joy. But in this, was rooted the 5-elements of Hip-Hop which became a type of spirituality, and code of ethics through mastered creativity, all through the arts. The arts in this time must lead the way.

Octavia Butler's 'Parable' series, Walter Mosley's 'Futureland', and Robert Kirkman's 'Walking Dead', to name a few, have speculatively forecasted these times. For those of us who are creative, this is where our work kicks in, in providing innovative ways for creating from our space. We are already seeing an increase of virtual classroom visits, art gallery tours, free concerts, exercise classes, teaching tutorials, etc. The digital cannot be our divide in these new times. Let's be vigilant in our own navigations of the virtual world, making sure to learn new presentation platforms that will allow us to not fall behind and out of sight.

### **Examples of practicality must include:**

#### **Lesson Plans**

Home-based education is now part of the movement. Professors/teachers, teaching 9-12, Undergrad/Graduate classes will be looking for online based materials to teach while schools are closed. Parents will also be looking for materials for homeschooling their children. Don't be surprised if many parents become homeschoolers in the next few years as working conditions are changing, therefore allowing parents to work more efficiently from home. Let's consider a 16-week syllabus for teachers to utilize in this time. We can make the materials, reading, etc. simple enough for parents and teachers unfamiliar with home based teaching to utilize. Once completed we can post our completed syllabus on the BSAM website, E-Blasts, Social Media platforms, etc. as a free downloadable document. Black and White images can also be included for a free downloadable coloring book for parents and teachers. Included in this BSAM package should be a 16 week bibliography of reading which should be already available in the form of ebook. Making leaving the safety of home unnecessary.

#### **Home based Workout plans and Health Eating**

As some gyms are now closing there's a temptation to venture into unsafe workout environments. We can include free workout plans involving little to no weights, high resistance training, and online resources as part of a health and wellness package. We can also include healthy recipes in the form of a 2 week-30 day cookbook.

#### **Movie Streaming List**

This project should include a list of movies, and the streaming platforms available for "edutainment" via the Afrofuture. I.e. David Kirkman's 'Icon' and 'Static' We should take full advantage of the library systems free "e" system.

#### **Future Exhibition Proposal**

Our practical approach to speculative futures will be a template for people collectively moving forward. Archival spaces are providing virtual access for free. We should take advantage of their ability and need to be relevant, and cutting edge by keeping programming and visitation free for the community. BSAM will be a forerunner of practical thought in these spaces. Therefore, this completed document and syllabus will be available for all universities looking to create a new Afrofuturism exhibition with all materials included. Subsequently this will be a completed proposal for curators. With the mission statement and artist statements in hand for efficient understanding of materials needed for curators to construct their own documents and gather funding.

**'Curating the End of the World' Submissions can be:**

Flash Fiction

Music and Sound

Performance and Storytelling

Essays or Thinkpieces up to 1,000 words in length

Digital Humanities

Short Film

Visual Art/Digital art

Choreopoem or poetry

Zine

Spiritual Expression

Martial/ Survival Expression

Speculative lesson plan

Send submissions by April 10, 2020 to: [curatingtheend@gmail.com](mailto:curatingtheend@gmail.com)

**Note: In the subject section of your email indicate which area you are submitting, ie. "short film" or "Zine"**

**References:**

Anderson, R. (2016). Afrofuturism 2.0 & The Black speculative arts movement: Notes on a manifesto. *Obsidian*, 42(1/2), 228-236.

Curson, P., & McCracken, K. (2006). An Australian perspective of the 1918–1919 influenza pandemic. *New South Wales public health bulletin*, 17(8), 103-107.

Gamble, V. N. (2010). "There Wasn't a Lot of Comforts in Those Days:" African Americans, Public Health, and the 1918 Influenza Epidemic. *Public Health Reports*, 125(3\_suppl), 113-122.

Hunt, C. W. (1994). Racism and Aids: African Origin Theories of HIV-1. *explor ethn stud*, 17(2), 155-175.

Naranjo, P. (1992, September). Epidemic hecatomb in the New World. In *Allergy and Asthma Proceedings* (Vol. 13, No. 5, p. 237). OceanSide Publications.

Patterson, K. D. (1983). The influenza epidemic of 1918–19 in the Gold Coast. *The Journal of African History*, 24(4), 485-502.

Phillips, H. (1984). *Black October: The impact of the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918 on South Africa* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Cape Town).

### **Sources (2015-2020):**

Anderson R., Jennings J. (2018). *Cosmic Underground: A Grimoire of Black Speculative Discontent*. Eds. Cedar Grove.

Anderson R., Jones, C. (2015). *Afrofuturism 2.0: The Rise of Astro-Blackness*. Eds. Lexington Books.

Anderson R., Fluker C. (2019). *The Black Speculative Arts Movement: Black Futurity, Art+Design*. Eds. Lexington Books.

Chude-Sokei, L. (2015). *The sound of culture: diaspora and black technopoetics*. Wesleyan University Press.

Commander, M. D. (2017). *Afro-Atlantic Flight: Speculative Returns and the Black Fantastic*. Duke University Press.

Gateward, F., Jennings J. (2017). The Blacker the Ink: Constructions of Black Identity in Comics and Sequential Art. *Studies in Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Literature*

Jones, E. L. (2016). *Medicine and Ethics in Black Women's Speculative Fiction*. Springer.

Lavender III, I. (2019). *Afrofuturism Rising: The Literary Prehistory of a Movement*. The Ohio State University Press.

Thomas, S. R. (2016). And So Shaped The World. *Obsidian*, 42(1/2), 3-10.

Steinskog, E. (2017). *Afrofuturism and black sound studies: culture, technology, and things to come*. Springer.

Van Veen T. & Anderson. R. (2018). Eds. Future Movements: Black Lives, Black Politics, and Black Futures TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies, vol. 39..

### **Journal of Future Studies**

<https://jfsdigital.org/articles-and-essays/vol-24-no-2-december-2019/introduction-to-the-special-issue-when-is-wakanda-afrofuturism-and-dark-speculative-futurity/>.