

BAM 2019 Winter/Spring Season

BAM and The Black Comics Collective will host its second Black Comix Expo, celebrating comic writers and illustrators of color, on February 10

Highlights of the free, day-long expo include an immersive Afro-Feminism VR experience, an Afrofuturista panel discussion, and a superhero cosplay showcase

BAM Peter Jay Sharp Building (30 Lafayette Ave)

Sun, Feb 10, 11am—5pm

Free (admission on a first-come, first-seated basis starting at 11am)

Brooklyn, NY/January 10, 2019—Brooklyn Academy of Music's (BAM) Black Comix Expo returns for a dynamic showcase of work by comic writers and illustrators of color, on February 10. The expo brings together comic book artists, creators, and fans for a free, day-long program that celebrates diversity, inclusion, and representation in the science fiction and fantasy genres. Co-presented by The Black Comics Collective, the expo will take over BAM's Peter Jay Sharp building, featuring over 20 comic exhibitors, an immersive Afro-Feminism VR installation, an Afrofuturista panel discussion with local and national artists, a children's art workshop, and a superhero cosplay showcase for fans of all ages.

"We are thrilled to once again partner with the Black Comics Collective to showcase the work and artistry of Black comic creators. This year's presentation celebrates Black Girl Magic and the amazing range of Black female writers, illustrators, and academics who are a part of an 'imagine it, create it' environment creating their own comics, movements, and digital art," said BAM Director of Community Programs, Government and Community Affairs, **Schawannah Wright**. "Last year's expo set the bar very high, and those who attended know they can expect a full day of activities, a great line-up and an overall incredible experience."

"In the year since the cultural zeitgeist that was Marvel's Black Panther, the wildly diverse and talented underground indie comics community has gained new exposure and attracted new audiences. The Black Comix Expo is an essential catalyst in this movement to amplify the visibility of comic creators of color and we are proud to partner with BAM for a second year to bring this dynamic cultural experience to Brooklyn," said Creative Director and Founder of The Black Comics Collective, **Deirdre Hollman**

This year's expo will explore Afrofuturism and Black Feminism with highlights including an immersive VR exploration of women of color's experience through the lens of technology, society, and culture. *NeuroSpeculative Afro-Feminism*, an award-winning VR platform, transports visitors into a NeuroCosmetology lab, a reimagined Black hair

BAM COMMUNICATIONS
718.636.4129
PRESS@BAM.ORG
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BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC
PETER JAY SHARP BUILDING
30 LAFAYETTE AVENUE
BROOKLYN, NY 11217—1486

salon placing the user into a Black woman's body giving a glimpse into a speculative future of Black women pioneering brain research through the culturally specific ritual of haircare.

The day's events will also include a panel discussion—*Afrofuturista: Representations of Black Women in Sci-Fi*—centered on the social impact of the Black female presence in speculative fiction. The panel includes Brooklyn-based neuroscientist and creative director **Ashley Baccus-Clark**, Brooklyn-based Afrofuturistic artist **Sheeba Maya**, Chicago-based artist and illustrator **Ashley A. Woods**, and New Orleans native, poet, and Afrofuturistic playwright **Melanie Marie Goodreaux** as moderator. In addition to the panel discussion, the Black Comix Expo will feature the freshest new work by local and national comic exhibitors of color, special Black Comix-themed children's art workshops, and the popular superhero cosplay showcase for superheroes of all ages.

About the Panelists

Ashley Baccus-Clark is a Brooklyn-based multidisciplinary artist who uses new media and storytelling to explore themes of deep learning, cognition, memory, trauma, and systems of belief. Clark is the director of research at Hyphen-Labs where she leads an international team of engineers, scientists, architects, and artists creating at the intersection of art and emerging technology. Hyphen-Labs created NeuroSpeculative Afro-Feminism (NSAF) an award-winning three-part digital narrative that sits at the intersection of product design, virtual reality, and neuroscience; Inspired by the lack of multidimensional representations of Black women in technology, the NSAF products range from sunblock for traveling through the multiverse to earrings embedded with cameras that offer protection and visibility. The VR experience is set in a Neurocosmetology lab where Black women are pioneering techniques of brain optimization and cognitive enhancement. The immersive experience is among the first to explore the neurological and physiological impact of showing images of empowered Black women, as well as content made for and by women of color.

NSAF has been shown at Sundance Film Festival, SXSW Film Festival, Tribeca Film Festival, Gray Area Art and Technology Festival, Primer Speculative Futures Conference, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Stony Island Arts Bank and Rebuild Foundation, New Inc: Versions Festival, and *Refinery 29's 29 Rooms*.

Melanie Maria Goodreaux is a poet, playwright, and native of New Orleans. Douglas Turner Ward of the original Negro Ensemble Theater Co. calls her work, "a cornucopia of imaginative theatricality, written with enormous energy and poetic sensibility." Goodreaux's poetry and plays have been featured at the Nuyorican Poets Café, HOWL Festival, Chelsea Playhouse, Elephant Theater in Los Angeles, National Black Arts Festival, Louisiana Jazz and Heritage Foundation Center, MoMA PS 1, and A Gathering of the Tribes. Her work was published in *The Feminist Press*, *The Dream Closet*, and *Word*. Her latest play, *Enough Vo5 for the Universe*, is an Afrofuturist inspired tale of the last three Black women on a dystopian earth in the year 2097 and the comedic carnage that results. Always expanding creatively, the author is currently working on a novel titled *The Book of Bernadine*, featuring a lead heroine that flows through the musicality and misadventures of her hometown New Orleans.

Goodreaux has been mentored by Steve Cannon, the late dramaturg Anthony Saralegui, and Charles E. Drew, Jr. She teaches creative writing and drama with Urban Arts Partnership and Creative Theatrics in New York City.

Sheeba Maya is an illustrator and portrait artist who specializes in realism with a nod to fantasy. Her personal work has grown out of an interest in African mysticism, esoteric wisdom, and extrasensory perception. Her current body of work includes a series of zodiac illustrations. The series is inspired by her love of nature, her fascination with organic patterns, and her love of couture fashion.

Ashley A. Woods, an illustrator, got her start through self-publishing her action-fantasy comic series, *Millennia War*, while attending the International Academy of Design and Technology. After earning her degree in video and animation, she traveled to Kyoto, Japan where she presented her work in a gallery showcase called *Out of Sequence*. After returning to the US, work from her comics were included in the *Black Comix* compilation table top book which was used in college courses at various universities internationally.

About The Black Comics Collective

Founded in 2017 by Afrofuturist educator and cultural producer Deirdre Hollman, The Black Comics Collective is a NYC-based community of Black comics enthusiasts who create and consume stories featuring characters of color. The Black Comics Collective celebrates cultural diversity in comics and seeks to amplify awareness of creators, writers, illustrators, and publishers who are producing independent comics that depict a dynamic range of global Black experiences, aesthetics, and social issues in both earthly and other-worldly realms. The Black Comics Collective convenes Black comic creators and the communities that crave them via its digital platforms and via its live events including meetups, author/illustrator talks, educational presentations, festivals and conventions, exhibitions, film screenings, workshops, and pop-up shops.

For press information, contact Cynthia Tate, ctate@BAM.org or 718.724.8022

Credits

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General Information

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House, BAM Rose Cinemas, and BAMcafé are located in the Peter Jay Sharp building at 30 Lafayette Avenue (between St Felix Street and Ashland Place) in the Fort Greene

neighborhood of Brooklyn. BAM Harvey Theater is located two blocks from the main building at 651 Fulton Street (between Ashland and Rockwell Places). Both locations house Greenlight Bookstore at BAM kiosks. BAM Fisher, located at 321 Ashland Place, is the newest addition to the BAM campus and houses the Judith and Alan Fishman Space and Rita K. Hillman Studio. BAM Rose Cinemas is Brooklyn's only movie house dedicated to first-run independent and foreign film and repertory programming. BAMcafé, operated by Great Performances, offers varied light fare and bar service prior to BAM Howard Gilman Opera House evening performances.

Subway: 2, 3, 4, 5, Q, B to Atlantic Avenue – Barclays Center (2, 3, 4, 5 to Nevins St for Harvey Theater)
D, N, R to Pacific Street; G to Fulton Street; C to Lafayette Avenue

Train: Long Island Railroad to Atlantic Terminal – Barclays Center

Bus: B25, B26, B41, B45, B52, B63, B67 all stop within three blocks of BAM

For ticket information, call BAM Ticket Services at 718.636.4100, or visit BAM.org.

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