

#### References

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#### Biography of the Artists

Black Quantum Futurism is an interdisciplinary creative practice between Camae Ayewa and Rasheedah Phillips that weaves quantum physics, afrofuturism, and Afrodiasporic concepts of time, ritual, text, and sound to present innovative works and tools offering practical ways to escape negative temporal loops, oppression vortexes, and the digital matrix. BQF has created a number of community-based projects, performances, experimental music projects, installations, workshops, books, short films, zines, including the award-winning Community Futures Lab. BQF Collective is a 2018 Solitude x ZKM VWeb Resident, 2017 Center for Emerging Visual Artists Fellow, a 2017 Pew Fellow, 2016 A Blade of Grass Fellow, and a 2015 artist-in-residence at West Philadelphia Neighborhood Time Exchange. The Collective has presented, exhibited, or performed at Red Bull Arts NY, Serpentine Gallery Pavilion, Philadelphia Art Museum Perelman Building, MOMA PS1, Bergen Kunsthall, Le Gaité Lyrique, MOFO Festival, and more. BQF Collective frequently collaborates with other Black Futurists Joy KMT, Irreversible Entanglements, Thomas Stanley, and Metropolarity to produce literature, present workshops, lectures, and performances.

#### Acknowledgements

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Squeaky Wheel is located on Haudenosaunee land and honors the sovereignty of the Six Nations—Mohawk, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Seneca, and Tuscarora. This acknowledgement does not rectify the on-going violence of settler colonialism, but is rather meant to cultivate an unsettling awareness of its persistence, towards building reconciliation.

# BLACK QUANTUM FUTURISM

ON THE EDGE OF THE BUSH /  
A LONG WALK INTO THE UNKNOWN

Opening January 25, 2019, 7–9pm

On view through April 20, 2019,  
Tue–Sat, 12–5pm

Free and open to the public

Squeaky  
Wheel

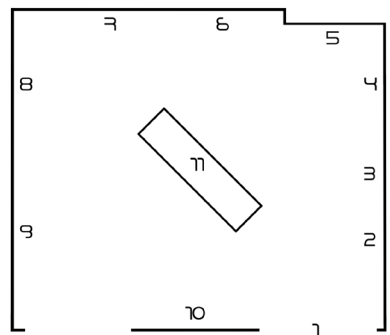
How can one examine the unknown? How is this unknown shaped by its temporal realities? How does one resist, recover, when facing the erasure of memory? This may involve a reinvestigation and uncovering of hidden histories, and a hacking into future histories where we may have already been erased.

Utilizing collage, video, text, and sound installations, this exhibition by Philadelphia-based Black Quantum Futurism (Camae Ayewa aka Moor Mother, and Rasheedah Phillips aka The Afrofuturist Affair) draws from quantum physics, speculative fiction, and Black/Afro-diasporan cultural traditions of observing time and space. The works aim to break free into the unknown futures of past selves, and to honor the ritual casualties and philosophies of Black ancestry, culture, and spirit.

The exhibition features a newly commissioned essay by Rasheedah Phillips.

### Public Programs

- January 25, 7:30pm | Opening event: Conversation between Camae Ayewa, Rasheedah Phillips, and Ineil Quaran
- February 9, 2–5pm | Futurism Now: Limitless Hope through Speculative Fiction: Discussion and Creative Writing Workshop, led by Black Magnolias (Marielle Smith & Richmond Wills)
- April 5, 7pm | Worldline O Timeline: Screening of John Akom-frah's *The Last Angel of History*, and work by Amanda Strong, Black Quantum Futurism & Bryan Oliver Green, and Dana McKnight
- April 22, 6:30pm @ Center for the Arts, University at Buffalo | PLASMA: Camae Ayewa



### Works in Exhibition

1. *Temporal Technologies*, 13 min, digital audio, 2017
2. *Black Space Agency*, mixed media, 2018
3. *BlackVomxnTemporal*, website on ipad, www.blackwomxntemporal.net , 2018
4. *Black Bodies as Conductors of Gravity*, video by Adrian Jackson, 2 min, digital video, 2016
5. Left to Right: *Quantum Error Correcting Code* (5 min, 2019), *Temporal Atonement* (15 min, 2016), *Message 1* (5 min, 2016), digital audio on telephone receivers.
6. *Time Travel Experiments*, video by Bob Sweeney, 9 min, digital video, 2017
7. *ASUNRA SUNYA SIFR*, video by Bryan Oliver Green, 16 min, digital video, 2016
8. *THAT WHICH CANNOT NOT BE | The Resurrection of Potter's Field*, video by Bob Sweeney, 3 min, digital video, 2017
9. *Dismantling the Masters Clocks series and Ladies with Hats from Analog Fluids*, mixed media, 2015—ongoing
10. *Sharswood Experiments*, digital video, 4 min, 2016
11. *Black Quantum Futurism: Various Ephemera*, various media

### Works in the Window Gallery

- *Psychics and Number Runners*, 3 min, digital audio, 2019
- *Spell*, white vinyl on wall, 2019
- *Untitled poem* by Camae Ayewa, print, 2019
- *Black Quantum Futurism: Promotional Videos and Commercials*, 12 min, digital video, 2015—2019

### Activating Retrocurrences and Reverse Time-Bindings in the Quantum Now(s)

By Rasheedah Phillips

#### Dissolving the Classical Arrow of Time

*“The future enters into us, in order to transform itself in us, long before it happens.”* — Poet Rainer Maria Rilke (1904)

*“The quantum principle shows that there is a sense in which what the observer will do in the future defines what happens in the past.”* — Physicist John Wheeler (1977)

For many of us, the indoctrination of mechanical, linear, clock time begins at a young age. In school, we are taught to plot major events, world history, and our own lives onto a straight line that runs horizontally from past to present to future, with time coming from behind us and moving forward. Linear time as embodied by the standard timeline represents “an irreversible progression of moments, yielding cardinal conceptions of past, present, and future, as well as duration.” (Greenhouse, 1996).

On this progressive time-on-a-straight-line – a “geometric connection between... two end points” – you can only understand information flowing in a forward, causal direction, where cause and effect are neatly isolated into their respective temporal binaries moving time forward in lock-step manner. On the classical level/time scale, an event’s effect can never precede its cause: there is a built in limitation of light as an information medium “moving” one second by one second into the container of the future. The container is usually pre-determined by a calendar date and/or clock time. The arrow of time presumes an arrow of progress that itself presumes a direction pointed straight ahead, one that we always need to be on the right side of. As one writer observes: “the notion of progress is indeed closely allied to hegemony, since it is defined by those in power: the change they bring is, of course, portrayed as a change for the better.” (Perkins, 2001).

The arrow of time, foreclosed from reversing its course, creates the conditions that cement us into the present, which is why many people cannot perceive or interpret future information until they arrive into it, except as *deja vus* and dreams that are forgotten upon waking. We fail to see the portents of the future because the future collapses upon interaction with the present/relative past. Science and social reality has convinced us that the future has no bearing upon our present actions, or that our relative present actions have no bearing upon the past.

#### Reclaiming Black and Afrodiasporic Temporalities (CP Time)

*“Each society formulates its own understandings of different kinds of temporality, and, in fact, contains varieties of temporal understanding that differ from the dominant interpretations, sometimes consciously articulated as forms of resistance, sometimes subverted and shameful.”* — Writer Maureen Perkins (2001)

Exploiting quantum properties of time and temporality offers additional possibilities outside the limitations of Western linear time. On a quantum, non-linear spatial-temporal orientation, all modes and dimensions of time have endless degrees of freedom for interaction. For example, experiments testing pairs of photons show that one photon from the pair knows in advance what its twin photon would do in the future, while other experiments have shown that quantum particles display a feature called retrocausality, where particles can reach back in time to influence the properties of that particle (or another particle) in the past, even before the experimenter made their choice. In other words, a decision made in the present can influence something in the past. (Lanza, 2010; Zyga, 2017).

African and Afrodiasporan temporalities and traditions of time share many parallels with quantum principles: the past intermingles with the present, interwoven with the future(s). Time in these traditions is alive, dynamic, and textured. Past and future variables can be held in superposition, existing in their infinite states of possibility, open to influence, collapsed into reality, and uncoupled back into superposition at will. The roles and practices of the Afro-indigenous griot provide an example of the use of temporal technologies that allow various dimensions of time to be alive, open to influence, and entangled:

*“Griots are considered historians, but not in the same way an occidental academic treats history. An academic seeks proven facts, inside archives and books. The griot, has a more dynamic role not reduced to the telling of past stories but as both transmitter of the past and witness and transformer of the present, focusing more on values and relationships than on proven facts and dates. Genealogy alone gives credibility to the story and the griots perception of time responds more to the “hourglass effect” where the beginning and end (or birth and death) are the focus and not the middle. By his stories he creates a contemporary reading of the past, a mixing of old and new values. If one takes the notions of history and literature into a more general category of “interpretations of the past” then the griot emerges as a time-binder, linking past to present. Micro-history, genealogy as proof, values and social structures, and a time binding function are the 4 traits of griots as historians.”* — Composer & Researcher Daniel Santos Diébaté, 2014

If one repositions their temporal lens, one may meaningfully disrupt progressive linear notions of time, and actively, radically create visions of non-local future(s), quantum nows, and unpredictable pasts for marginalized Black people who are typically denied access to creative control over their own temporal modes and timescapes. While we know Western linear time to be an outmoded, ill-paced, oppressive, and clunky technology that may eventually be supplanted by quantum realities, it is impractical to expect immediate or equitable recompense with Afrodiasporan ancestral time consciousness and practices for Afro-descendant peoples. It is practical to continue to develop, share and fortify temporal practices and ethics consistent with our experiences as diasporic, displaced Africans living in communities that have largely assimilated into a linear, progressive time-construct that leaves us consistently behind.

We hold out hope for disrupting the temporal prison of the here-now, to allow access to pasts and futures with the same privileges as the present. Your point from the present can itself be a reference point for determining what both the past and future look like, as well as a point of departure from which possible action can take place. Feedback from the future(s) must guide the development of quantum nows and plural pasts, towards a deepening of Colored People’s Time, and towards a reclamation of healthier, communal temporalities. The island of Willow Springs in Gloria Naylor’s novel *Mama Day* (1988) is one example of a communally-generated, non-linear, Black womanist temporality where the future emerges into the past by way of omens, prophecies, and symbols, while the past is a space of open possibility, speculation, and active revision by multiple generations of people situated in the relative future. The outside world’s attempts to gentrify both the physical and temporal landscapes of Willow Grove is met with fierce and radical resistance from the residents and the island itself.

#### Retrocurrences and Reverse Time-Binding

In previous work, Black Quantum Futurism developed the notion of retrocurrences: an event whose influence or effect is not discrete and timebound—it extends in all possible directions and encompasses all possible time modes. We use retrocurrences to investigate how memory waves spread across time and space, reaching backward in time and forward in time, simultaneously, to include everything that has happened, could happen, could have happened, and will happen, and all the permutations therein. This dynamic event process takes on features and characteristics reminiscent of quantum matter, where time is reversible and information can flow in both directions, much like the flow of information within Octavia Butler’s novel *Kindred* (1979), and the layered and entangled temporalities etched upon Dana’s movement on the timeline as she travels back and forth between her home in 1976 and a pre-Civil War Maryland plantation.

I would also like to advance here the notion of reverse time-binding. Merriam-Webster defines time-binding as “the characteristically human activity of transmitting experience from one generation to another especially through the use of symbols.” The Black Quantum Futurist proposes “reverse time-binding” to specifically describe the process that is amplifying and transmitting symbols and signals from the future(s) backward into time. Much as it is the role of the griot to reach back into the past to pull it forward and link it to the present, Black futurists must play a role in transmitting the future(s) backward to support information flow through the entangled temporal networks necessary to sustain Black communal temporalities. In my 2017 short graphic novelette *The Telescoping Effect Pt. 1*, I demonstrate such a reverse time-binding between 2019; the racial terror during the Red Summer of 1919 that left scores of Black people lynched and maimed, and the solar eclipse of 1919 confirming the theory of relativity and revolutionizing the way the [Western] world regards space

and time. To speak of a backward casting/reverse time-binding is to offer a small concession to the timeline which we find ourselves on, hitched to the arrow of progress, speeding one second by one second forward. Reverse time-binding uses quantum physics and ancient Afrodiasporan temporal technologies to open up access to those spatial-temporal regions that the hegemonic classical progress narrative has displaced us from.

Below please find a set of rituals for activating retrocurrences and reverse time-bindings in the quantum now(s).

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**Ritual for Retrocurrences**

Memory, prehistoric memory, has no time. - Author Toni Morrison (1987)

Outside of time, the journey has already happened and hasn’t happened yet.

Within that liminality lies all of the space-time needed to create an experience or an event.

You must traverse the terrain to know it - you create time by your own pacing and rhythms, that become entangled with others.

Let your imagination lead you, it knows everything you don’t know yet and can’t be aware of as our common reality unfolds linearly.

Listen to your body deeply - it holds the time and memory of all your mothers and grandmothers before and they have been everywhere you will be and have been and so there is never a wrong place or time for you.

Allow time to emerge from its timeless degrees of freedom, and take up as much space within the moment as desired and needed, stretching it out and filling it up to accommodate you.

**Shadow of the Black Hole//Reverse Time-Binding Ritual**

“Shadows (like other holes) can survive the destruction of their originators. Consider a tree that is constantly illuminated as it petrifies into stone. The stone continues the shadow begun by the tree.” - Philosopher Roy Sorensen (2008)

Our own shadows mimic the shadow of a black hole.

The shadow is the keeper of memories and possibilities, actively recording every moment it is with you, using the light emanating off the body like a camera.

It also captures the alternate world/possibility of any choice not chosen.

Some shadow worlds can be trapped/captured in the form of events, and tapped into for brief moments of time. The “matter” of our body is merely the hologram between the shadow and the light.

The shadow self records and mirrors your every action. In the mirror it is amplified. You can tap into that recording, if you find the shadow memory.

Activate the shadow as the time machine of the self. Use the shadow to retrieve hidden information lost at the point of space-time collapse.

If you jump all the way through the black hole and reached the other side, would you be turned inside out? Could you start all over?

What symbols would you send back to communicate with past selves, what would penetrate the veil of the motionless present? ●