

Event Outline

Event Title: The Future of Black: The Advent of 21st Century Second-wave Afrofuturism Poetry

Event Description: Afrofuturism has experienced a second-wave in the 21st century mainstream propelled by the success of the 2018 blockbuster film *Marvel's Black Panther*. This panel explores the impact of this second wave on Afrofuturism poetry. Panelists featured in a new poetry anthology on Afrofuturism, black comics, and superhero culture discuss how their poetry contributes to second-wave Afrofuturism along with insights to Afrofuturism poetry as a sustainable genre and defining it for future generations.

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Event Organizer & Moderator: Len Lawson

Dr. Len Lawson (he/him) is the author of *Chime* (Get Fresh Books, 2019) and the chapbook *Before the Night Wakes You* (Finishing Line Press, 2017). He is also editor of *Hand in Hand: Poets Respond to Race* (Muddy Ford Press, 2017) and *The Future of Black: Afrofuturism and Black Comics Poetry* (Blair Press, 2021).

Event Participants:

Cynthia Manick (she/her) is the author of *Blue Hallelujahs* (Black Lawrence, 2016), editor of *Soul Sister Revue: A Poetry Comp.* (Jamii, 2019) and *The Future of Black: Afrofuturism, Black Comics, & Superhero Poetry* (Blair Publishing, 2021). She is the founder of the quarterly reading series Soul Sister Revue.

Tim Seibles (he/him) has published several collections of poetry, including *Buffalo Head Solos*, *Fast Animal*--a finalist for the National Book Award in 2012--and, most recently, *One Turn Around The Sun*. His new & selected collection, *Voodoo Libretto*, will be released in January 2022. He lives in Virginia.

Teri Ellen Cross Davis (she/her) is the author of *a more perfect Union*, 2019 Journal/ Charles B. Wheeler Poetry Prize winner and *Haint*, a 2017 Ohioana Poetry Book award winner. She's a Cave Canem fellow, a Black Ladies Brunch Collective member, and Poetry Coordinator for the Folger Shakespeare Library in D.C.

Steven Leyva (he/him) was born in New Orleans, Louisiana and raised in Houston, Texas. His poems have appeared in *Nashville Review*, *jubilat*, *Vinyl*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *Best American Poetry 2020*. He is a Cave Canem fellow and author of *The Understudy's Handbook*, winner of the Jean Feldman Poetry Prize.

Opening Remarks:

Thank you for joining us during this exciting panel about the explosion of Afrofuturism into the mainstream, including amongst the poetry community. This panel features contributors to the 2021 poetry anthology *The Future of Black: Afrofuturism, Black Comics, and Superhero Poetry*, published by Blair Press. We have on the panel today two editors of the anthology Dr. Len Lawson and Cynthia Manick as well as contributors and incredible poets Tim Seibles, Teri Ellen Cross Davis, and Steven Leyva. The inception of this anthology came from a desire to infuse Afrofuturism and black comics poetry into the conversation already occupied by film, music, and scholarship on the subjects. The objective was to unlock conversations involving members of the African diaspora in spaces of science fiction, technology, and future iterations of blackness in comics, film, music, and literature. You will hear each poet's understanding of the role their work plays in continuing the Afrofuturism tradition that began with such figures as Sun Ra in poetry, film, and music of the 1970's and Mark Dery in scholarship during the 1990's. Each poet will also read their work from *The Future of Black*. We hope you will enjoy the poetry and discussion from these terrific poets, and we hope to field questions from our audience briefly to end our session.