

*Blacktronika :*

*Afrofuturism in Electronic Music MUS 19*

A course by King Britt

Afrofuturism has been a trending topic for the past 5+ years and has no signs of slowing down. A term coined in '93 by Mark Dery in his paper, *Black to the Future*, to describe the lens that many black people worldwide, have used to visualize their relationship to the African Diaspora. The lens is one of science fiction, technology and futurism.

Many of us have been aligned with this way of visualizing the world, long before the term's creation. It has been a way to think about how to shift the paradigm of our future and not just a watered down idea of escapism.

Through this process, many artists of color, in all creative mediums, have always pushed the boundaries of the available technology. As a leader in this movement, I have always used music technology as a tool of my creative expression. As an educator and curator, I have made it a point to bring light to many of my influences and heroes that may or may not be known in the musical histories. One of my first steps into bringing light to many of these innovators, was

***Moondance: A Night in the Afrofuture*** at MoMA PS1 in 2014. A full day of performances and lectures, featuring many at the forefront of the movement,

including Dr Alondra Nelson, Hank Shocklee, Ursula Rucker, the late Ras G and more.

In this course, ***Blacktronika : Afrofuturism in Electronic Music*** (the word Blacktronika comes from an Afrofuturist series in the early 2000's in London), we will explore the lineage of many of the groundbreaking black, electronic artists who have been integral but overlooked in the development & commodification of house, techno, drum & bass and experimental music. These musics were developed with sociopolitical movements at the foundation of the sounds. These ideals have been lost as the genres became popular through the appropriation of sonic structures. EDM and European techno, owe everything to Detroit but most of those artists have never heard of Jeff Mills, Underground Resistance or Juan Atkins.

I will structure the class, discussing the technology available at the time, the sociopolitical movements happening and the tipping point at which the music broke into global phenomena. I will start in the 70's.

I also will create a series of guest speakers throughout the course to come in for workshops and performances (either here or at The Loft and various venues on campus).