



**NYU | STEINHARDT**  
80 WASHINGTON SQUARE EAST

## **Assembling a Black Counter Culture**

DeForrest Brown, Jr. and Ytasha L. Womack

Conversation and listening Session

November 14, 2022 | 7pm (Doors open at 6:30 pm)

Please join 80WSE Gallery for a conversation celebrating DeForrest Brown, Jr.'s *Assembling a Black Counter Culture*, which presents a comprehensive account of techno with a focus on the history of Black experiences in industrialized labor systems—repositioning the genre as a unique form of Black musical and cultural production. The discussion and listening session will feature Brown and author, filmmaker, dancer, and independent scholar, Ytasha L. Womack on the history, present, and (Afro)future of techno and the genre's capacity for world building.

Released in August by Primary Information, Brown's debut book *Assembling a Black Counter Culture* traces the genealogy and current developments in techno, locating its origins in the 1980s in the historically emblematic city of Detroit and the broader landscape of Black musical forms. Reaching back from the transatlantic slave trade to Emancipation, the Industrial Revolution, and the Great Migration from the rural South to the industrialized North, Brown details an extended history of techno, following the groundbreaking work of key early players like The Belleville Three, the multimedia output of *Underground Resistance* and the myth-science of Drexciya. Brown draws parallels between movements in Black electronic music and Afrofuturist, speculative, and Afrodiasporic practices to imagine a world-building sonic fiction and futurity embodied in techno.

Brown is joined by Ytasha L. Womack, whose writing and artistic practice is deeply informed by Afrofuturism. She is the author of a critical history of Afrofuturism across film, visual arts, science fiction, music, and technology, as well as the time travel sci-fi series *Rayla Universe*, which traces the journey of a third generation citizen of Planet Hope, a former Earth colony that has claimed its independence, among many other publications.

Doors will open at 6:30 pm and attendance is on a first-come basis. The conversation will begin promptly at 7:00 pm and is free. 80WSE Gallery is located at 80 Washington Square East (between West 4th Street and Washington Place).

For more information, please contact Jon Huron at [jlh403@nyu.edu](mailto:jlh403@nyu.edu).

DeForrest Brown, Jr. is an Alabama-raised rhythm analyst, writer, and representative of the Make Techno Black Again campaign. As Speaker Music, he channels the African American modernist tradition of rhythm and soul music as an intellectual site and sound of generational trauma. On Juneteenth of 2020, he released the album *Black Nationalist Sonic Weaponry* on Planet Mu. His written work explores the links between the Black experience in industrialized labor systems and Black innovation in electronic music, and has appeared in *Artforum*, *Triple Canopy*, *NPR*, *CTM Festival*, *Mixmag*, among many others. He has performed or presented work at *Haus der Kulturen der Welt*, Berlin; *Camden Arts Centre*, UK; *Unsound Festival*, Krakow; *Sónar*, Barcelona; *Issue Project Room*, New York; and elsewhere. *Assembling a Black Counter Culture* is Brown's debut book.

Ytasha L. Womack is the author of the critically acclaimed book, *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci Fi & Fantasy Culture* (2013). An author, filmmaker, independent scholar, and dance therapist, she lectures and creates experiences in Afrofuturism and the imagination around the world. She co-curated the Afrofuturism Festival at Carnegie Hall in 2022 and was an artist-in-residence at Black Rock Senegal. Other works include *Rayla 2212*, *A Spaceship in Bronzeville*, and the upcoming books *The Afrofuturist Experience* and the graphic novel *Blak Kube*. She also directed the dance film *A Love Letter to the Ancestors from Chicago* (2021), and wrote the romantic comedy *Couples Night*. Ytasha is a Chicago native and loves all things house music and tea.

Primary Information is a non-profit organization founded in 2006 to publish artists' books and writings. The organization's programming advances the often-intertwined relationship between artists' books and arts' activism, creating a platform for historically marginalized artistic communities and practices. Primary Information facilitates intergenerational dialogue through the simultaneous publication of new and archival books, providing a new audience for out-of-print works and historical context for contemporary artists.

#### 80WSE Gallery

Founded in 1974, 80 Washington Square East, NYU is a not-for-profit gallery presenting contemporary and historical exhibitions. The gallery exhibits in two further locations, at Broadway Windows at Broadway and East 10th Street, and Washington Square Windows.