

Afro-Futurism

An Odyssey into Black Futures

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Abstract

Zines can be used in the library as a method of outreach. They are a non-traditional medium to engage and educate users about library resources and other related topics. In an effort to support zine making as research, pedagogy, and creation at the University of Missouri- Kansas City, the Digital Scholarship Services department in Miller Nichols Library has begun to be the main support of zine creation and dissemination.

This particular zine was made to support a book display on Afro-Futurism for Black History Month in 2026. Afro-Futurism was coined by scholar Mark Dery, and was defined at that time as “African-American signification that appropriates images of technology and a prosthetically enhanced future” (180). Thinking about black futures through the lens of science fiction, history, and liberation, this movement has become a strong creative outlet for artists and scholars of all kinds. Mixed with ideas and aesthetics on astronomy, technology, and traditional African diaspora, Afro-Futurism provides a glimpse into imagined futures for black people through an expanded critical and creative lens.

Functioning as a vehicle for library patrons to learn more about this movement, this zine focuses on resources that patrons can access through library resources. It is not meant to completely encapsulate the genre; it serves as an introduction through cultural touchstones. This zine was created digitally using Canva, using graphics and other openly-licensed images from Wikimedia Commons. Copies were printed and distributed at the book display throughout February 2026.

In addition to this informative resource, the display also included a create-your-own zine station. At this station, patrons practiced making zines and were notified of the other Zine related events happening throughout the library.

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