

The Black Arts Movement Poetry BroadSides as presented by students at Columbia College Chicago

coordinated by

D. Denenge Akpem

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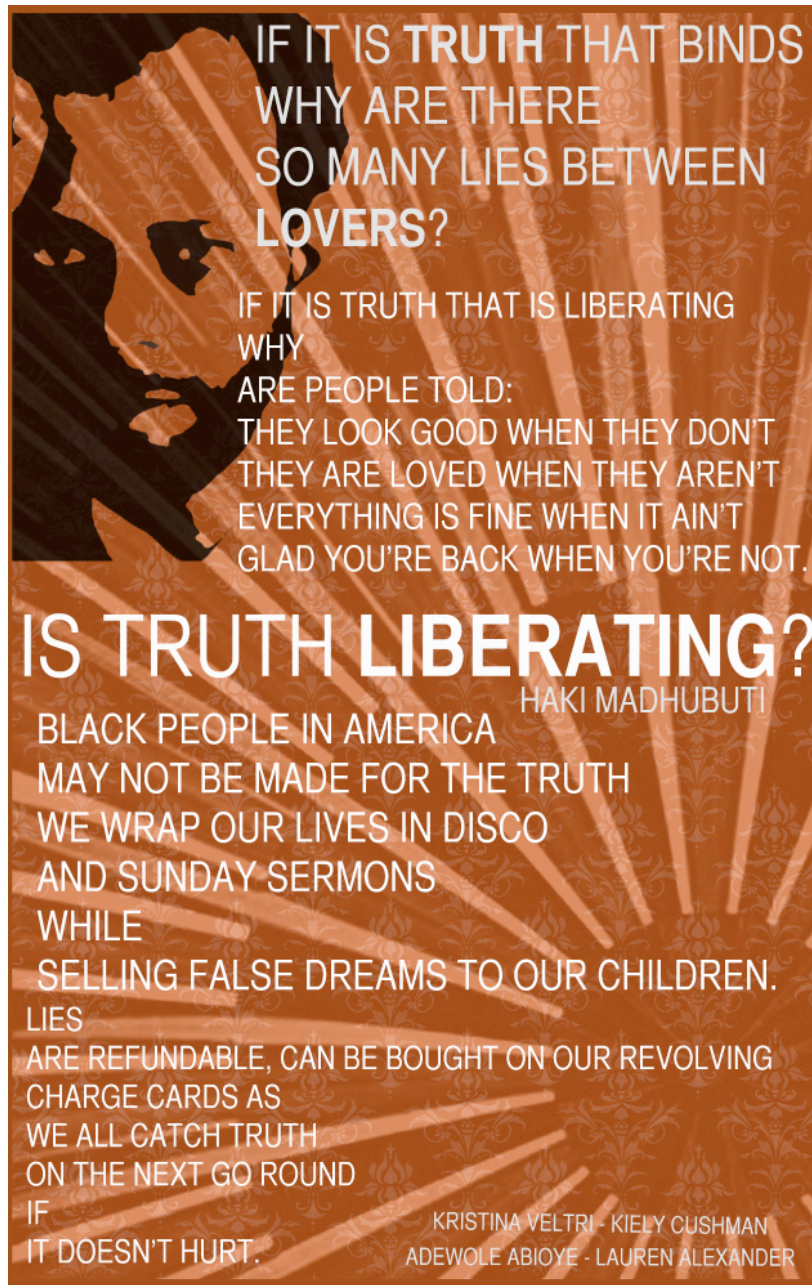
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D. Denenge Akpem is an Afro-Futurist space sculptor, performance artist, designer, writer, and educator who meticulously constructs fantastical Afri-sci-fi narratives comprised of multi-media environments inhabited by hybrid creatures as critical representations of identity and beauty. She creates interactive spaces to interrogate stereotypes, titillate the senses, and empower those who experience them to shape their own futures, rooted in Sun Ra's transformational legacy and asking "Who controls the future?" Her practice is concerned with issues of incarceration and liberation, both physical and metaphoric; social justice; the use of ritual as an act of revolution and transformation; and environmental consciousness. For the last fifteen years, her award-winning work has bridged the disciplines of interior design, site-specific sculpture, public art practice, and science fiction. She considers her work Afro-Futurist and sees Afro-Futurism as a creative theory, rooted in history and African cosmologies, that uses pieces of the past, both technological and analog, to design the future. As an engaged creative practice, Afro-Futurism moves people to consider new possibilities for themselves, their communities, the world, and the universe.

Akpem holds an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a BA from Smith College and is the recipient of awards and commissions including most recently a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship for the Institute on Black Aesthetics and Sacred Systems for which she joined leaders in the field as a scholar and a presenter on Afro-Futurism.

Project Description

Each semester, students in my Black Arts Movement courses create poetry broadsides featuring the work of Nikki Giovanni. In Spring 2012, teams collaboratively created broadsides that were printed large-scale, focused specifically on Chicago Black Arts Movement poets as part of the Black Arts Movement contribution to Wabash Arts Corridor, a project of the 2011-12 Critical Encounters "Rights, Radicals, and Revolution" Series, that aimed to involve the Columbia College Chicago community in activating historic south loop Wabash Street. These were displayed during the annual college-wide Manifest Arts Festival at Area, Inc. architectural firm, and the students presented them with readings of the featured poems at street level. We offer this selection of broadsides in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Black Arts Movement and in honor of the many artists in every medium who shaped this most revolutionary of movements.



Broadside featuring "Is Truth Liberating?" by Haki Madhubuti. By Kristina Veltri, Kiely Cushman, Adewole Abioye, and Lauren Alexander. Designed and performed for Black Arts Movement with D. Denenge Akpem for Wabash Arts Corridor and Critical Encounters "Rights, Radicals, and Revolutions"



Broadside featuring "Me" by Sam Greenlee. By Ashley Wallon, T.C. Liggins, Shaneice Bell, Jonathan Ellzey, and Ebonee Williams. Designed and performed for Black Arts Movement with D. Denenge Akpem for Wabash Arts Corridor and Critical Encounters "Rights, Radicals, and Revolutions.