

Artistic Practice as Scholarship:

bla(CK)mau Xperience

Combining their artistic strengths and creative pursuits together, bla(CK)mau conjures sonic spells, vast visualizations, and entrancing events. Their work is steeped in Blackness in all its identities at all times and seeks to explore the realm of placemaking for Black folks. This digital art piece, the *bla(CK)mau Xperience*, is a sound and video collage experiment consisting of previously created works, new sonics, and bla(CK)mau-isms. This work imagines their character on a journey through time and space where she crosses paths with others on the narrow path. The soundtrack of the experience plays as we join her in experiencing something new in a funkier time and space.

References

- A Tribe Called Quest. "Check the Rhime." *The Low End Theory* (1991, Jive Records).
- George Clinton. "Atomic Dog (Instrumental)." *Atomic Dog* (1982, Capitol Records).
- Various Artists. "Black Theater (Barbara Ann Teer)." *Black Drama* (1973, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings).

Collaborators

Kamau "DJ Kamaumau" Grantham, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, who finds solace in creating music and art. Born and raised in Buffalo, NY, Grantham spent most of his adult life in NYC. He grew up watching his mother draw with colored chalk and listening to his father play soul and jazz records. Using his background as a DJ, Grantham creates digital collages grounded in music, science fiction, and film to celebrate the Black body and center it within visual worlds he finds aesthetically pleasing. Through his art, he aims to celebrate the humanity and beauty in Black people and to inspire others to create.

Christopher "DJ CK" Kinson, Ph.D., is a proud Albany, GA native and a Teaching Assistant Professor in the Department of Statistics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. As a former NSF Graduate Research Fellow, he values diversity in STEM and challenges new students through curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking to advocate for themselves in their

own education. As a DJ and music producer, his musical inclinations are immediately recognized as Black diasporic music from the past, contemporary pop, and futuristic sonics. On his radio program, *The Blackest Hour*, he takes listeners on a journey to and from the dance floor with his uniquely crafted blends and mixes.

Stacey A. “BLACKSTAR” Robinson, MFA, born in Albany, NY is an Associate Professor of Graphic Design at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The influence of science fiction, Black liberation politics, and comic books influenced Stacey’s artistic practice. He moved to NYC the day that Tupac died, and the next day became an intern for Milestone Media Inc. a Black-owned comic book company that influenced many of today’s comic creators. Soon after he interned at *Black Enterprise* magazine, and *Acclaim Comics*. He received a full scholarship and the Arthur Schomburg Fellowship to attend the University at Buffalo in 2013, where he began to theorize his practice. Currently, Robinson teaches graphic design and illustration.