

SEPT 27, 2021: Zoom Panel Event

Parable Path: Pathways to Acorn - Collaboratively Building Community

Join us for this multidisciplinary conversation around Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower* and our exploration on how to build liberated and equitable communities, now and in the future. This event features a world-renowned panel of creative thinkers, graphic artists, writers, and performing artists who will expand our minds around the impact of Afrofuturism, its evolving legacy, and our pursuits to eliminate anti-Blackness in all aspects of American society.

Moderator: Stacey Robinson

Panelists: Toshi Reagon, adrienne maree brown, John Jennings, and Damian Duffy

Stacey Robinson



Stacey Robinson is Assistant Professor of Graphic Design at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He was a 2019-2020 Nasir Jones Hiphop Fellow at The Hutchins Center for African & African American Research at Harvard University and completed his Master of Fine Arts degree at the University at Buffalo. For the last few years, he has traveled internationally discussing the complexities decolonized future spaces. As one half of the collaborative team “Black Kirby” with artist John Jennings, Stacey creates graphic novels, gallery exhibitions, lectures, and workshops that use world-building strategies to imagine new worlds inspired by design, hip hop, the arts and sciences, and diasporic African belief systems. His latest graphic novels are *I Am Alfonso Jones*, written by Tony Medina (2017) and available from Lee & Low Books, and *Across the Tracks: Remembering Greenwood, Black Wall Street, and the Tulsa Race Massacre* written by Alverne Ball (2021) and available from Abrams Books.

Toshi Reagon



Photo credit: Desdemona Burgin

Toshi Reagon is a talented, versatile singer, composer, musician, curator, and producer with a profound ear for sonic Americana--from folk to funk, from blues to rock. While her expansive career has landed her comfortably in residence at Carnegie Hall, the Paris Opera House, and

Madison Square Garden, you can just as easily find Toshi turning out a music festival, intimate venue, or local club. Toshi knows the power of song to focus, unite and mobilize people. Recent projects include The Blues Project in collaboration with Michelle Dorrance and Dorrance Dance, the self-released recording SPIRITLAND, Octavia's Parables Podcast with adrienne maree brown, and the opera Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower*. She is a 2015 Ford Foundation Art of Change Fellow, a 2018 United States Artist Fellow, 2021 APAP Award for Merit in the Performing Arts, and a 2021 recipient of the Herb Alpert Award In The Arts. <https://toshireagon.com/>

adrienne maree brown



Photo credit: Anjali Pinto

adrienne maree brown is the writer-in-residence at the Emergent Strategy Ideation Institute, and author of *Holding Change: The Way of Emergent Strategy Facilitation and Mediation*, *We Will Not Cancel Us and Other Dreams of Transformative Justice*, *Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good*, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds* and the co-editor of *Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction from Social Justice Movements* and *How to Get Stupid White Men Out of Office*. She is the cohost of the *How to Survive the End of the World*, *Octavia's Parables* and *Emergent Strategy* podcasts. adrienne is rooted in Detroit.

John Jennings



John Jennings is a professor, author, graphic novelist, curator, Harvard Fellow, New York Times Bestseller, 2018 Eisner Winner, and all-around champion of Black culture. As Professor of Media and Cultural Studies at the University of California at Riverside (UCR), Jennings examines the visual culture of race in various media forms including film, illustrated fiction, and comics and graphic novels. He is also the director of Abrams ComicArts imprint Megascope, which publishes graphic novels focused on the experiences of people of color. His research interests include the visual culture of Hip Hop, Afrofuturism and politics, Visual Literacy, Horror, and the EthnoGothic, and Speculative Design and its applications to visual rhetoric. Jennings is co-editor of the 2016 Eisner Award-winning collection *The Blacker the Ink: Constructions of Black Identity in Comics and Sequential Art* (Rutgers) and co-founder/organizer of The Schomburg Center's Black Comic Book Festival in Harlem. He is co-founder and organizer of the MLK NorCal's Black Comix Arts Festival in San Francisco and also SOL-CON: The Brown and Black Comix Expo at the Ohio State University. Jennings received an MA in Art Education in 1995 from UIUC and subsequently the

MFA in Graphic Design in 1997. He was also faculty for eight years at UIUC in the School of Art + Design.

Damian Duffy



Damian Duffy is a cartoonist, scholar, writer, curator, lecturer, teacher, and a Glyph Comics, Eisner Comics, and Bram Stoker Award-winning, #1 *New York Times* bestselling graphic novelist. He holds an MS and PhD in Library and Information Sciences from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where he teaches courses on computers and culture, and social media and global change.