BLACK STAR*

Spring 2018



Editor's Letter

"If it is true that it is what we run from that chases us, then The Color Purple (this color that is always a surprise but is everywhere in nature) is the book that ran me down while I sat with my back to it in a field." --Alice Walker, *The Color Purple (1982)*

Purple is exactly that: a surprise. A purple flower is like a bit of spring bursting from a field of winter; a purple dress, a season. Black Star is the collective which ran me down in the quad. Everything about this organization gives me words, especially on a psychologically violent campus such as Emory. The first I knew of Emory was through Black Star, the first friend I made was Ashley Graham, our former Editor in Chief (2017). I can wholeheartedly say Black Star bridged my transition as a transfer student. This is my hope for the years to come.

In keeping with the role Black Star has held in the Black community, as a consistent voice, I can only hope that our readers find in this issue words they couldn't find themselves. The theme of this semester is Black Art, which was interpreted in as many ways as it registered with our staff. If I could, I'd color the whole issue purple. It seems, as people of color, that our voices, too, are "always a surprise but [are] everywhere in nature." While we continue to bear witness to the plunder of Black bodies, and we struggle to be heard, I am wrestling with the colors of my voice: Is it blue? Is it black? Is it purple? Perhaps Stephon Clark was so Black he shone Blue, and the officers were after his voice. McCraney captures this in the words: "In the moonlight, Black boys look blue," *Moonlight, (2017)*. Blue is a primary color. Nothing can be mixed to create it. You can lighten or darken it, but if you mix it with red then you will have purple. When they spilled Stephon's blood, I imagine he turned purple. He must've resembled the iconic *Moonlight (2017)* image. I pray he, and all other Black folk robbed for their color rest in Blues. When reading this Spring 2018 issue, I implore you to consider the purple. This is how we matter. *This is what it is to be in song.*

In Light & Love,

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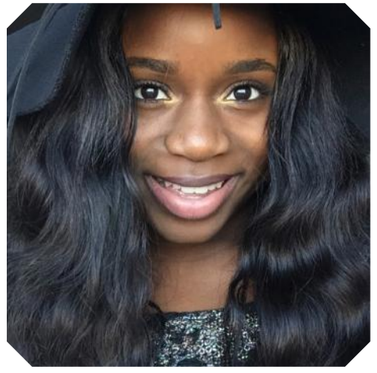
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THE DEFINITIONS* RELEASE

By Monet Timmons

Black students celebrated their melanin and the writing of their peers in the Oxford Road building for the release of Black Star Magazine's Fall 2017 Definitions issue. Guests and staff writers came dressed to impress enjoying refreshments and music while looking at the magazine. Many students enjoyed seeing themselves featured as either writers, models, or both as they viewed the final version of their work. Posters of previous and the current issue hung on the walls of the building, reminding students of their hard work and contribution to the magazine.

The theme of the Fall 2017 Black Star Magazine Issue is "Definitions". More specifically, the issue seeks to understand the ways in which students identify and redefine themselves along with how they describe their Blackness. With the theme of Definitions in mind, the publication included articles on how culture, sexuality, style, the African Diaspora, and experiences at Emory University define who these writers are.

Students ranging in writing and publication experience worked on their articles and photography for the magazine since the beginning of Fall 2017 while simultaneously producing content for the Black Star Magazine website. Although most students are returning to Black Star Magazine, for a portion of this year's staff, this is students' first time on staff and writing for publication.

This release party, held on February 3rd, differed from previous release parties in that it included a guest speaker, Emory alumni and former Editor in Chief of Black Star Magazine, Hugh Hunter. Hunter is best known for the rules and traditions he implemented while Editor in Chief that are still used today in Black Star Magazine. He also created the website we still use today for online publication, blackstarmag.com. Hunter spoke about



his time at Emory as a young Black man and how certain experiences in engaging with Black Emory in their Definitions year define who he is today. He also shared some advice with students on how to navigate their time here at Emory and transitioning beyond the university.

Another important aspect of the release was the open-mic portion where students gathered to recite their original poems. Some of the poets included members of Black Star's staff such as Minyon Jenkins and Kira Tucker who both performed poems celebrating their identities as Black women.

"Our struggles do not define us. We define the struggle," reiterated current Editor in Chief and 4th year in the college Christell Victoria Roach. "Defining ourselves is a process."

The magazine release party reminded students why spaces and literary outlets are so crucial for students of color, especially at a predominately white institution. The gathering allowed current writers of the magazine to continue a legacy started long ago and to continue providing an outlet for the voiceless. As we move forward with future issues and articles, we will always remember the importance of Definitions.



Tracy K. Smith: U.S. Poet Laureate at Emory

by Kira Tucker

Last June, the Library of Congress announced Tracy K. Smith as the twenty-second U.S. Poet Laureate. This honor is given to one outstanding poet every year, whose job is to "raise the national consciousness to a greater appreciation of the reading and writing of poetry," according to the L.O.C. website. Seeing yet another beacon of **#blackgirlmagic** spotlighted on the national stage spoke to me as an aspiring author and educator myself.

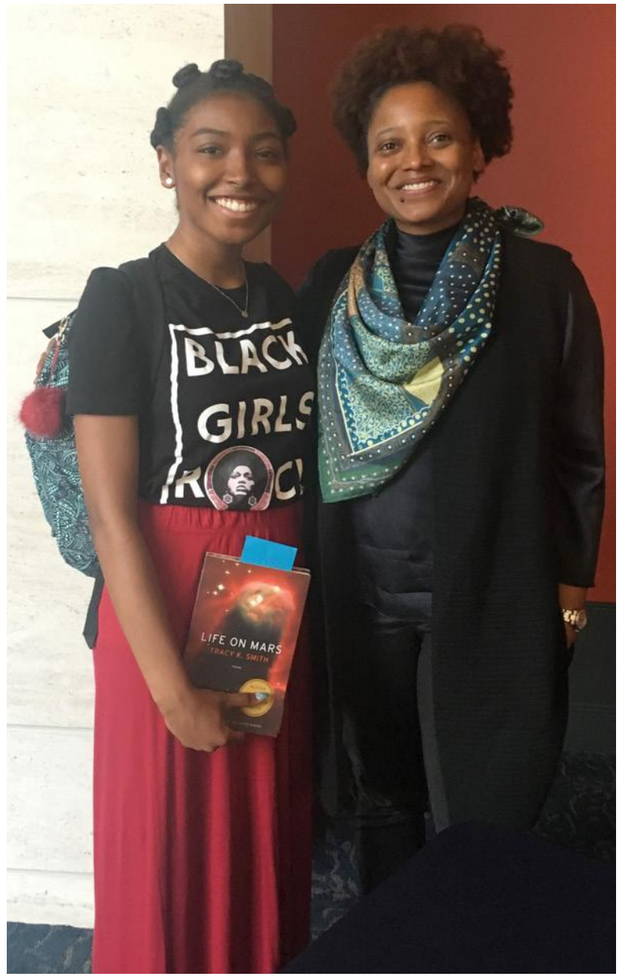
Upon hearing this amazing announcement, I took to my social media platforms to share a front-page news article featuring Smith's beaming face and the caption "role model alert." I never knew that, nearly eight months later, my virtual fangirling would become an unbelievable reality in February, when Smith would grace Emory with her talents.

Upon meeting this acclaimed author, I knew I had made no mistake including her in my personal role model repertoire. There's so much to admire about Smith—a Pulitzer prize-winning poet, two-time Ivy League graduate, professor and director of Creative Writing at Princeton University, Academy of American Poets fellow, member of the Dark Room Collective, mother of three and natural hair goddess.

She embodies the roles of scholar-artist, blacktivist, and poet-historian, as she advocates compassion and seeks to preserve historical truth in her rich work.

She embodies the roles of scholar-artist, blacktivist, and poet-historian, as she advocates compassion and seeks to preserve historical truth in her rich work. One poem of hers that particularly resonates with me is "Wade in the Water," in which Smith recounts her experience at a Geechee/Gullah ring shout along the Georgia coast:

One of the women greeted me.
I love you, she said. She didn't
Know me, but I believed her,
And a terrible new ache
Rolled over in my chest,
Like in a room where the drapes
Have been swept back. I love you,
I love you, as she continued
Down the hall past other strangers,
Each feeling pierced suddenly
By pillars of heavy light.
I love you, throughout
The performance, in every
Handclap, every stomp.
I love you in the rusted iron
Chains someone was made
To drag until love let them be
Unclasped and left empty
In the center of the ring.
I love you in the water
Where they pretended to wade,
Singing that old blood-deep song
That dragged us to those banks
And cast us in. I love you,
The angles of it scraping at
Each throat, shouldering past
The swirling dust motes
In those beams of light
That whatever we now knew
We could let ourselves feel, knew
To climb. O Woods—O Dogs—
O Tree—O Gun—O Girl, run—
O Miraculous Many Gone—
O Lord—O Lord—O Lord—
Is this love the trouble you promised?



Smith read this piece at her main Emory event, a public reading and book signing in the jam-packed Schwartz Center of Performing Arts. This poem, the title poem of her latest collection, set the stage by kicking off the reading evoking resonances of Black spirituals. For her, this poem reveals "the deep sense of gratitude that comes out of even the darkest chapters of African-American history." Here she explores the depth of love and divinity buried within our very DNA. In this poem, like much of her other work, she strives to invite readers into a sacred space that few have witnessed or experienced. In doing so, she immortalizes these traditions in our collective cultural memory.

Many of Smith's poems delve into essential questions about the human experience through works such as "**The Universe is a House Party**" and "**The Opposite of War**" and "**What Fear Is**" in her three poetry collections: *Life on Mars, Duende, and The Body's Question*. Smith said that she views empathy as "a side-effect of poetry," often using persona poems to unearth voices long forced into silence and to call upon readers to view the world through another set of eyes. She gives voice to slave families praying for their emancipation, a chorus of Civil War veterans petitioning the government for pension, Black Lives Matter demonstrators protesting murder of civilians by police, among others. In doing so, she explores "compassion as a way of being with each other" in ways that few have ventured to articulate.

Emory's English and Creative Writing department held a colloquium for Smith during the week of her public reading, where students were afforded the invaluable opportunity of a round-table discussion with Smith and program director Dr. Jericho Brown. There, Smith spoke about her Poet Laureate role as one that surpasses her position as a national government appointee.

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"She knows we're talking about the trouble she made…"

On Remembering Mari Evans, a *Celebration*

By Christell Victoria Roach

These lines from Mari Evans' poem "The Rebel" describe the intention and the success of the event:

Curiosity
seekers …
coming to see
if I
am really
Dead …
or just
trying to make
Trouble …

"There is no place on this planet, no ground, no air, no sanctuary, no wharf, no hermitage, no refuge, no time, like… when Black poets descend on an unsuspecting space and it becomes…" Although Nikkey Finney's words are speaking about a Black writing retreat held yearly by Cave Canem, these words rather appropriately capture the space made out of the Robert W. Woodruff Library's Jones Room on a Wednesday night. Poets who held the roles of researchers, scholars, students, activists, and mentors filled the room.

We know that the history of a people lies in the members of a body. We know that Mari Evans hosted a body. We see what she did with the head, the heart… Just over a week ago generations of Black Arts Movement artists and scholars congregated to collectively stir Mari Evans' legacy, to imprint her into the few hours of "The Rebel: In Celebration of Mari Evans." Opening the night were student poets such as Kira Tucker (C20), Daquon Wilson (C21), and Maya Mitchell (Spelman C18) who conjured Evans' voice into the space by reading her poems.

Dr. Joanne Gabin, Dr. Althea Tait, and Dr. Bettie Parker Smith sat on a panel led by poet Dr. Opal Moore. The room was filled with poetry. From Evans' poems to haikus used to introduce the panelists, this was entirely a poetic gathering. There was music, too. A jazz backdrop filled with songs by artists like Evans' friend Wes Montgomery grew soft in the shadow of conversation and reunions. In this gathering sat years of relationships, both familial and those cherished by old friends.





Top left: *Photo of Dr. Joanne Gabbin, Dr. Althea Tait, and Dr. Bettie Parker Smith*

Top right: *Photo of Kira Tucker*

Bottom left: *Photo of Christell Victoria Roach*

Bottom Right: *Charmaine Bonner (left), Dr. Althea Tait (right) hold photos donated to the Rose Library by Dr. Bettye Parker Smith (center)*





Dr. Joanne Gabin began the panel discussion in the way she knew best to remember Mari. She spoke about the day. Gabin and Evans shared many phone calls to do this very ritual. There is something about following a sequence of events that situates you. Gabin situated the audience in the current national dialogue, by opening up conversation on Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Repeatedly, Gabin said "Mari would say…" and she shared words derived from years of an experienced relationship.

The purpose of this event was to honor Evans, and to bring attention to the fact that Emory University's Stewart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library now has Evans' papers. To have a poet in file is to have a body in preservation. Evans' papers were enlivened as many of the individuals she corresponded with were in the room. Dr. Gloria Wade Gayles and Dr. Bettye Park Smith are among the many voices in Mari Evans papers. These voices are still writing, singing, speaking. To attend this event was to watch an archive breathe with the life of its host again. Mari Evans was loved, and is dearly missed. This is a given. However, the power of her legacy is undying.

As a Mellon Fellow researching Mari Evans for some time now, this event was nothing short of church. It was as if each speaker gave a hard-hitting sermon and the audience partook in this form of communion. After huddling over Mari Evans' poems with my mentor, Dr. Jericho Brown, and leafing through files of Evans' papers with Charmaine Bonner, Project Archivist at the Rose Library – the most rewarding part of this program was the engagement. From the moment the first guest arrived, there entered laughter, and song. It was truly a celebration of life.

A lineage established itself from Mari, to the speakers, ultimately reaching the audience. Black women scholars filled the room. This is a testament to her legacy. Her community, and those who aspire to be academics and artists gathered together. While Mari is in her poems, in the people she knew and loved, she is acutely present in the materials of the archive. This entire event was built upon it. Consider her papers a recipe. Speaker by speaker we cooked up her legacy, conjured her. Mari was in the laughter and the stillness.

Call it a **Celebration.**



Alijosie Aldrich Harding, Willie Mays Jackson, Dr. Gloria Wade Gayles in the backdrop as Dr. Bettye Parker Smith embraces Eric Phemster, Mari Evans' grandson

Celebration (1993)

I will bring you a whole person
and you will bring me a whole person
and we will have us twice as much
of love and everything

I be bringing a whole heart
and while it do have nicks and
dents and scars,
that only make me lay it down
more careful-like
An you be bringing a whole heart
a little chipped and rusty an'
sometime skip a beat but
still an' all you bringing polish too
and look like you intend
to make it shine

And we be brinigng, each of us
the music of ourselves to wrap
the other in

Forgiving clarities
Soft as a choir's last
lingering note our
personal blend

I will be bringing you someone whole
and you will be bringing me someone whole
and we be twice as strong
and we be twice as true
and we will have twice as much
of love
and everything

—Mari Evans



Past, Present, and Future – In My White Tee

By Daquon Wilson

A little over a week ago one of my poems, *State of Emergency*, was published in *The Best Teen Writing 2017* by the Scholastic Arts & Writing Awards. Every year, they hold a contest, open now, for 7th-12th grade students to showcase their work on a grand stage. Those who earn awards on the national level are eligible to be published in the yearly publication of *The Best Teen Writing*. Poetry has had a big impact on my life and, in my opinion, helped me to get into Emory. Poetry has also been a great asset to my transition to life here at Emory, so I wanted to explore and bring awareness to the poetry scene around Emory. My journey first brought me to my Intro to Poetry Writing professor, Dr. Michael Marberry. Dr. Marberry is a visiting fellow in the Department of Creative Writing. I wanted to get his perspective as someone who has taught poetry in many different environments to see if there really is something special about Emory's poetry scene. Here is an excerpt of our conversation:

[Daquon] You've taught in many different places and Atlanta has a very rich arts culture from even Emory's campus to the many different arts groups poetry groups. Even outside of that many times there are spoken word open-mic nights all around Atlanta—do you feel that having that sort of cultural atmosphere helps impact students to think more creatively and be more engaged to creative writing type classes?

[Dr. Marberry] Absolutely. Yeah. No, atmosphere been in it. I've only been in Atlanta slightly longer than I've been at Emory so I'm still learning the city too. But you know I can't speak to the other arts though I know they exist here in Atlanta the other day I was over on the campus and they'd been filming for one of the Marvel movies or something like that which you don't see in a lot of other campuses but as far as poetry goes Atlanta has so much going on. I mean you mentioned like the spoken word open mics. The people that we have working here and the reading series that we have here you know like nearby schools Agnes Scott has a great reading series. Georgia Tech their Poetry at Tech reading series is one of the best in the nation, GSU. I mean there's so many opportunities to participate in poetry and the art to experience it and to learn from that you know I mean I think that if someone's interested in poetry, in particular, Atlanta's a great close to be. At least, it seems that way to me and I do think that that again, I like to imagine that that rubs off on the students. When you live in a place where art and poetry is taken seriously and valued, I think that translates into the classroom because students take it seriously and they value it because they see it outside the classroom too.

Hearing Dr. Marberry talk about the atmosphere made me remember Atlanta's history, specifically in the time of the Black Arts Movement. Colleges were at the forefront of this artistic movement and I thought who better to explain that history than someone who instructs my Black Arts Movement course, Dr. Nagueyalti Warren.

[Daquon] In regard to Atlanta's history in terms of being a Arts one of the arts capitals especially with the black in regards to the Black Arts Movement how do you feel that the nature and tradition of Atlanta being such an arts atmosphere has an effect on things like poetry at Emory.



[Dr. Warren] Interesting question. You know I think that there have been ebbs and flows. And I think that during the 60s and 70s part of the Black Arts Movement that certainly. It had an effect on Emory And Emory students and the formation, in 1971, of the Black studies department and so forth. Today, Im not so sure that the kind of cross seating that took place during those times is still happening. I know that there is a large push for poetry at Georgia Tech. I know that when Natasha Tretheway and Kevin Young were here. You know the. formation and the foundation of the Phillis Wheatley chair and bringing black poets to campus was something. In terms of the student movement and how students are engaged in poetry and in writing it ebbs and it flows. I know when the students organized, The fire this time, there was a poetry in that. Large workshops and student AUC getting together with students here and doing big poetry workshops I'm not sure that that's going on at this point. At some point, it did. In 2012, there were students on campus, matter of fact, one of the student leaders is doing a MFA at the University of Alabama now where they did poetry slams and contest and so forth. So, it depends on students leadership and just where they are, you'd be the perfect person to start that up again.

[Daquon] And so you being a teacher for the freshman seminar the Black Arts Movement and also teaching a class about black women's poetry, Why do you think it's important for especially students to sort of learn about poetry, the history behind it, and the political and cultural concepts, that come through poetry especially in such a nearby environment.

[Dr. Warren] Because there isn't another way to receive it. I mean many students when they think of our history they think about names and dates and are like "boring." The poetry is an installation of the culture in and of itself. With the history and the music and the political message all in one so I think its a wonderful way for students to learn Not only creative things, but their own history.

[Daquon] And final question for you is what do you see for the poetry scene in at Emory or what do you hope are your hopes for. What do you hope that it grows to or develops into.

[Dr. Warren] Oh I hope the the Creative Writing department. grows. And I know that Jericho is working hard to bring exciting people, poets, to campus. To recruit and replace those people that we lost. And that student will take the initiative to have their own poetry slam, and poetry contests, and poetry journal.

Since the first day I met her, Dr. Warren has been telling me how much I need to take a class under Jericho Brown. When presented with this project, I thought it would be the perfect time to pick his brain, especially with his expertise in the subject being the head of the Creative Writing Department.

[Daquon] So my first question is so far what has your experience been like with poetry at Emory and with Emory being so close to Atlanta poetry scene in Atlanta?

[Prof. Brown] Yeah. Yeah I love it here. You know Emory is its own community as it relates to poetry but it's a community that can attract poets to it. Many people all over the city who are all over the metro area love poetry come here to see our reading. You know I think there's a really vibrant exchange and interchange between or I should say among our students who take various kinds of workshops. So I think. We feel. I think Emory poetry scene sort of stands as a beacon. But I think there are other beacons and I think all together all these beacon make for one great big life. One great big light. I mean to say throughout the city you know. The work in an open mic and spoken word being done at Java Monkey and through the people who are part of the community and part of that thing is very necessary because they feed into what we're doing. Hopefully we feed into what they're doing. The Poetry at Tech events at Georgia Tech are the same thing you know that there something that we have to have because we have to have something in every part of the city that moves around. Recently Agnes Scott has hired a poet named Kamilah Aisha Moon who is teaching there full time now. So I think you know what we're what we do at Emory is what I think of as our part and that part we play has to be the part we play has to be great for us but it also has to be great because you play a part you're contributing to the whole thing. So what we do we do for our students. But in a way we do it for the future. We do it for the city. We do it for the South and we do it for the way people think about poetry all over the world. At least that's my hope.

[Daquon] So personally being head of the creative writing department have you seen student poets growth or have you seen how poetry or creative writing has really had an impact on students?

[Prof. Brown] Yeah. You know in terms of publication we've had students who are now getting published in magazines just prestigious as Poetry Magazine, as well as The Best American Poetry and these, are undergrads, so these are huge feats for undergraduate poets. There are other publications, there are other prizes, and there are opportunities that are coming to our poets. That are a sort of thing you would see on a resume or on a CV. But I think the most important change is what I experience in the classroom is watching students' faces light up when they come across an idea in poetry that sort of matches something that they were thinking about something else that the poetry itself makes other parts of life make sense and that when you have poetry as a vocation the more you grow in it the better you are at it the more you see that growth in yourself. And as a teacher I can sort of see that my students feel this they understand and they know "oh I'm better at this than I was last semester or last year." And that's actually the growth that is most important to me, although it's nothing you can measure. I mean it's only a feeling and it's hard to measure feelings.

[Daquon] Right and you've sort of gone into this before but just like to expound upon it, what are your hopes for the poetry scene at Emory moving forward?

[Prof. Brown] Well. I mean that's pretty large. I'd like us to have a Fellows program where we're attracting recent PhD and MFA graduates in poetry. We already have a program where we have one fiction writer and one poet who come here to teach for two consecutive years. I'd like expanding that here. I'd like more poets teaching at the intro level who are who have their finger on the pulse of what is going on in American poetry because they are younger people. And I'd like that to happen for fiction as well. And I'd like for our faculty to become more robust so that we can actually grow our program. I think you know the more we have majors the more we can use faculty to support those majors. I'd like to see our university our program known to the MFA programs as the place where when our students apply those who read those applications understand that they're dealing with somebody they're probably going to have to accept into their program because I'd like for people who graduate with a creative writing major at Emory who then, and many of them many of them won't, but those that do apply to MFA programs I want that to be an automatic yes because their work is just that good because we've done some training in that area. That's what I would like to see in the future.

[Daquon] And sort of as my final question Is there anything else you want to let the audience know about poetry or creative writing at Emory whether it be advice for maybe students who are interested in or sort of a call to action for students who are already in the creative writing field just like different things that you want to see from them or different things that people who may not be as outgoing with their work sort of how they can get involved?

[Prof. Brown] I think it's a good idea I think a lot of times people are intimidated or afraid to do things that they haven't done before. But the truth is that we don't get good at anything until we fail at it. The thing everything anybody ever wanted to do they did very poorly the first time they did it but that didn't. That doesn't mean that they stop trying to do it. Everybody I know who ever wanted to drive wasn't very good at it the time and they tried to drive but they still went back and tried to drive. And I think that it would be a good idea for our students to approach the arts in that way and creative writing in particular in that way and that we approached it with a certain kind of a certain kind of idea and that which is playful that where we can have a good time does indeed intersect with that that is very serious that which we can take seriously. And I think If students are interested in creative writing that should take a workshop. And they should try to have a good time while they take the workshop and they should also take it very seriously. Often students think of their creative writing classes as their opportunity for a basket weaving course. And I think that's really too bad when you take my class and trying to figure out why you have D in your basket weaving course. So I think you have to take it seriously as you would any other class. But I also think it asks you to be a little free, it asks you to create your own sense of what you want poetry to look like and I think it's a good idea to start thinking about that. What you want a poem to do what you want the art in your life to look like.

It was great to talk to professors with such a rich breadth of subjects related to poetry, but they each emphasized the importance of students in the poetry scene. They all want students to get more engaged with poetry and really take leadership of the scene or beacon that is at Emory. Because of this, I wanted to get student opinions of how poetry affects life at Emory, especially because we are the current poets and/or future leaders of the poetry scene.

[Daquon] So, my first question is sort of give a background [i.e.] your name and your year and your interest in poetry?



[Emily] Ok, my name is Emily Gardin. I'm a first year. And I'm from Waterbridge, CT, but I was born in Panama. I think I started to love poetry maybe my freshman year of high school perhaps. I think in middle school was still that awkward phrase for me and I didn't know how to properly communicate. So when I got to my freshman year I kind of used writing as like a self-defense mechanism so like I just love to write and escape from the world.

[Daquon] So you talk about poetry as a form of escape or self-defense, how do you see poetry as a part of your life here at Emory, or being that you're a freshman, so far how has poetry affected you if in any way?

[Emily] Ooh definitely! So as I came here I haven't been able to write as much as I like, but there's so much beauty just on campus. I feel like people or just like a building so I've always had like an idea of things I want to write about being at Emory [and] being in Atlanta, so I've been, in my head, been trying to find ways to write poems about that and I feel like everybody I meet is so nice to the point where like it's just a good way, I can just write from people if that makes sense.

[Daquon] I definitely understand that. And so being that Emory is one of the few schools that have a major in Creative Writing, and you can do stuff like poetry writing, screenplay writing, et. Cetera, do you feel that you're going to take advantage of some of the Introduction to Poetry or poetry in general classes here at Emory?

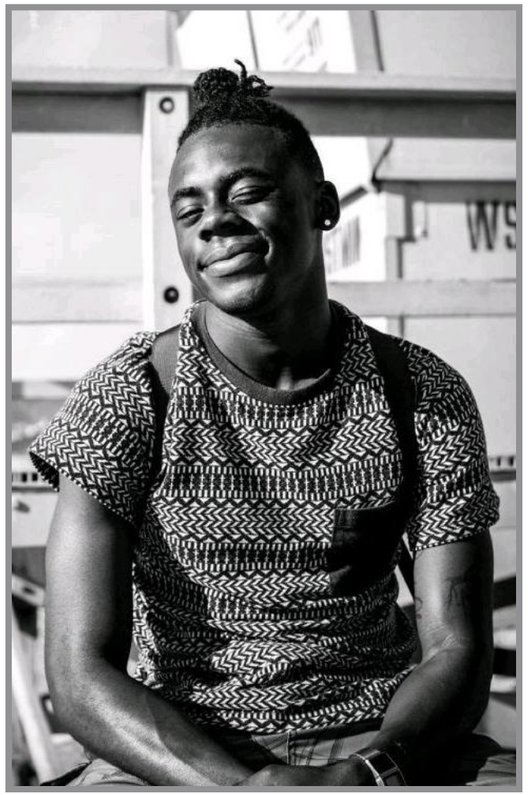
[Emily] Definitely! Applying to this school, I did apply as English and Creative Writing, the dual program I showed interest in that. I definitely do love Creative Writing and I know a lot of people do not offer that, so when I was applying to schools, it was a very huge factor. And I just love the liberal arts feel of Emory, so I'm very excited to take like poetry classes, fiction writing, narrative writing. I'm excited to just explore the options I have in the Creative Writing and English field.

[Daquon] My final question for you is how do you see poetry at Emory going forward? What are some of your hopes that the poetry scene would be like or what do you want to give to the poetry scene?

[Emily] I think I did hear that Emory had a spoken word night and I would love to see more of that. I would love to go to a spoken word night even if I don't contribute just hearing other peoples' work would be so amazing and very like a different experience.

The next and final person I interviewed was Christian Blount.

[Daquon] First, just give a basic introduction to yourself and your poetry background.



[Christian] My name is Christian Blount and I am a Creative Writing and Linguistics major in the class of 2020. My poetry background is in erotica and black consciousness.

[Daquon] What has your experience been like in the poetry scene at Emory/in Atlanta, if any?

[Christian] It's been hard, yet I've noticed that budding boldly is the best way to go. You have to be unapologetic when your work is erotica and black consciousness. But since this is a white school my work isn't always received well from those who are not black, but everyone says it's good nonetheless.



[Daquon] How do you think the poetry scene at Emory can improve?

[Christian] I always feel like Emory loves to sell its diversity as inclusivity...but that's not always the case, and that blends into themes or actions of artists on campus. But helping Emory actually be inclusive can definitely help the poetry scene. But then again Emory could encourage students to keep being unapologetic about their artwork.

It was after conducting all of these interviews that things began to click. All of the professors were talking about how they wished more students were involved in poetry and that students should take poetry seriously.

From the student perspective, we would love to be more involved and have more poetry events, but can we really? There's this dichotomy between being inclusive to a wide audience and keeping your artistic integrity and being unapologetically yourself.

Poetry is not a spectator sport. It requires engagement whether it's writing, responding, or even just thinking about being said. There are some poets whose work can be seen as a little more inclusive like Emily. When you're talking about environments or escapism, it doesn't usually have implications as something like Christian's being that black consciousness can get very political.

Many times when poets write from their hearts they step on toes and hurt feeling, myself included.

Poetry has a history of being raw and not that inclusive.

I think the biggest thing, however, stems from something said in my interview with Jericho Brown: "What you want a poem to do what you want the art in your life to look like?"

As members of the poetry scene we control the future of poetry not only at Emory but also America as a whole. Eventually, the poetry scene at Emory has to come to a decision on what they want poetry to do and look like.

Do we want poetry to bring people together and spare all feeling? Do we want our poetry to tackle major issues and bring awareness to institutional flaws by pulling no punches? Or is there any way we can do both?



"BEING FROM WAKANDA WASN'T COOL IN '97"

BY JESSICA ISIBOR
INSPIRED BY @evelynfromtheinternets

"So now it's cool to be from Wakanda?", a question that has been floating around since Black Panther was released. This touches on a sensitive topic concerning what it means to be Black, which leads to the bigger picture of what Wakanda really stands for. First and foremost, I am sure that we can all agree that Black Panther was a great film that meshed together **#Blackgirlmagic** and **#Melaninpoppin** into one cinematic masterpiece for all to enjoy. When viewed through a slightly more critical lens, one cannot help but ask what Wakanda means for Black folks and whether it represents something tangible and attainable or whether it is no more than a utopic dreamland.

First of all, storming North Dekalb's AMC as a Black Emory collective, adorned in our finest Ankara, Kente, and Dashiki prints produced a Black Panther viewing experience like no other. Whether it was the bellowing laughs at Kilmonger's infamous "Heeyyy Aunty!" or the collective cringe at Forest Whitaker's (a.k.a. Zuri's) "African" accent, seeing my peers in all their melanated glory enjoying this film as a group was one for the books.

Now onto the main question of this article: "So now it's cool to be from Wakanda?" Being an African, growing up in America, this question definitely resonates with me. Seeing someone throw on a Dashiki, cross their arms over their chest, and name their first-born child T'Challa doesn't necessarily throw me over the edge, but it does make me reminisce on a time when pride in Africa was not so "cool", when Kente prom dresses and foreign names garnered insults rather than intrigue. However, in saying this, one must also recognize that owning Wakanda is a form of embracing inclusivity amongst Black people throughout the Diaspora. This is something that we, as Black people, were not afforded (due to the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, colonization, etc.). So is it now "cool" to be from Wakanda? Yes, if Wakanda means Africa, being African has been lit even before people recognized it. However, what is even cooler is the fact that this film displays the potential of Black people through our African lineage while touching on the age-old topic of Africans vs. African-Americans. It does so in efforts to show that the homeland, whether near or distant, unifies Black people through a collective imagination that transcends direct descent and proximity. All in all, the moral of the story is, whether it's Jollof or Jambalaya, it's all rice!

Photocreds: "Black Panther Cast" (Marvel Studios)

black boy blues

by aaron campbell

alone
before a shadow
of sun, sky sad as blues
lost in the coming darkness
of night—he veers beyond.

his frail body stands,
relaxes, shoulders back,
arms rested at the sides,
you can almost feel
what he feels, but you won't.

The boy is black.
The boy is queer.
this black boy is
but a silhouette
when surrounded by blues,

blues which silence,
that are deadly, that hide
in the presence of others.

this black boy desires
an unbroken body.

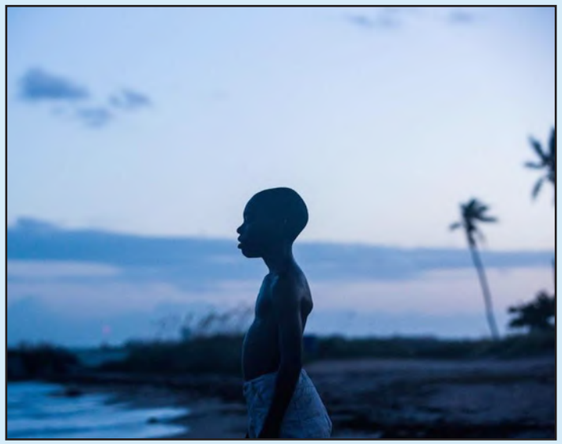
beyond,
the black boy
stares at the water
breaking at his feet
we call this brave.

but that boy is not
here.
the blue waves
do not allow
it.

he lives in
the deep,
where the water
dances with the air,
where the air comforts
the sun
and where the sky
kisses children like this
one. but not him.
he won't make it there.

he will fade like
shadow,
turn a cold, so black
we'll call him blue.
This invisible boy—

brightless and bare:
boys like him don't
often reach for dawn,
they break
instead.



-still from *Moonlight, (2017)*

EMORY UNDERGROUND: A FEW BLACK ARTISTS

BY LAUREN WEEMS AND KRYSTAL EIMUNJEZE

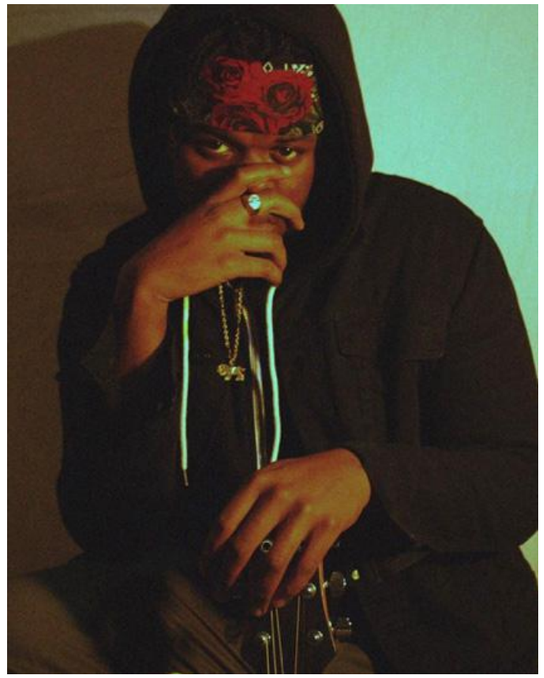
The arts scene at Emory is a fairly underground operation. Most students are often unaware of the resources available to them in places such as the Visual Arts building, where students can rent cameras, hi-tech equipment, and use green screens as well as places such as the fourth floor media library where students have access to software such as Adobe Photoshop and Logic Pro X.

Similar to its resources, Emory is riddled with budding artists, writers, musicians, creators and more. These creatives are working both on and off campus to showcase their talents and defeat the notion that the arts is nonexistent at Emory. Check out these mini-interviews highlighting some of the brightest visionaries on campus!

Name: **KOS**
Stage Name: **WHOISKOS**
Year: **JUNIOR**

How would you describe yourself as an artist and how would you describe your art?

"As an artist I consider myself to be a free-spirited 'lone child,' meaning I am one of those artists who immerses themselves in their creativity and feels the most comfortable in this space. My art, to sum it up in a phrase, is Neo-Funk/Soul. But at the end of the day, that's all just perspective. Everything comes from within so the people can choose how they wish to describe it."





What inspired you to do art?

"Life and all the pain and joy that comes with it inspired me to do music."

You can support the artist at: https://soundcloud.com/whoiskos



Name: **MARSHALL CRAYTON**
Stage Name: **JAY KING THE POET**
Year: **JUNIOR**

How would you describe yourself as an artist and how would you describe your art?

"I describe my art as highlighting the intersections of Black and queer identities, and trying to evoke that same sort of investigation in others. As an artist, I think my job is to try to make people think about and feel things differently, and I try my best to put that into all of my work."

What inspired you to do art?

"I was inspired to do art from a very young age. I was drawn to poetry in my fourth grade English classes, and I started writing short stories in 6th grade. I wanted to write something that could be as influential as Harry Potter but also as profound as Maya Angelou's works. That sort of combined in my head in the avenue of Spoken Word poetry and I just ran with it. But Maya Angelou as a person was really my inspiration for starting."

Do you have a quote to live by?

"My therapist always told me that 'It's not my job to change the world,' but I always responded with 'that doesn't mean I shouldn't try.' That has become my kind of motto in my work."

You can support the artist at: http://jaykingtheartist.blogspot.com

Name: **MICHAEL OCRAN**
Year: **JUNIOR**

How would you describe yourself as an artist and how would you describe your art?

"I don't have a theme behind my art. I just really liked drawing and it grew with me but comic and street artists like Robert Crumb and Keith Haring are big influences."

What inspired you to do art?

"I guess my first influence was watching anime and trying to beat my friends at who could draw better in class. I also found myself doodling in class. I guess it helped me focus because I always had an issue with eye contact or tracking a speaker. I never took drawing seriously until like sophomore year of college when I sold my first piece."

Do you have a quote to live by?

"I don't have a go-to quote I live by, but the first thing that came to my mind was 'Suck my dick White America.'" - Tyler Okonma

You can support the artist at: https://www.instagram.com/mikeolab







Name: **KYRA O'KELLEY**
Year: **JUNIOR**

How would you describe yourself as an artist and how would you describe your art?

I would say that I'm an artist that's constantly striving for perfection (or as close to it as I can get). I like to do really techinical pieces and illustrations with a lot of detail. It's so gratifying to push yourself creatively and come up with pieces that you're proud of, and that's a feeling that I'm always trying to chase. My roots are in abstract art, with these crazy patterns, and hyperrealism. It's controlled chaos.

What inspired you to do art?

Some of my earliest memories are of me drawing and painting while my cousins played outside, art's just been such a huge part of my life. Eventually I figured out that I wanna do this for real, so I'm just running with it and chasing that dream.

Do you have a quote to live by?

What is the point of being alive if you don't at least try to do something remarkable? - John Green

You can support the artist at: https://www.instagram.com/ksoanimation

Black Abroad: Home is a State of Mind

by Adama Kamara



After 5 weeks of being a student in Switzerland, I finally took my first trip outside of the country a few weeks ago. It was a week-long excursion with my study abroad program to Belgium and France. This trip was more wonderful than I could have anticipated, chockfull of museums, countless hours of acquainting myself with remarkable new cities, and entirely too many pastries to count. Despite my pleasure in doing all of the things and visiting all of the places that had occupied my mind for all of the time leading up to the trip, as the week was coming to a close, I kept finding myself thinking -and even saying aloud- I can't wait to be home. The strangest part was not that I wanted to leave the grandeur that was Paris and Brussels but rather that by home, I meant Switzerland, a country I had only known for just a little over a month.

As I've gotten older I've found that my definition of home has shifted, it has become more fluid. Home no longer means the house where I grew up as it did for the 18 years of my life before I left for college. Although this "home" is the most familiar of all the places I have lived, it no longer brings me the same comfort it once did. My bed doesn't feel quite as welcoming and my house seems somehow smaller, stagnant and unable to adjust to my growth. And though I've spent the majority of the last two years living at Emory, I can hardly call those dorms -so temporary and so accustomed to having people shift in and out of them like clockwork- home either. So now, I catch myself calling, Switzerland, this place in which I've lived for no longer than it took me to get my Swiss visa, home.



In spite of this, one of the challenges I've faced while living here has been feeling just a little out of place. I've gotten into a routine and made wonderful new friends but I can't help feeling the slight strain of not understanding the language or the culture as much as I would if I'd actually grown up here; the feeling of always being just a beat behind on a song that everyone else in the room seems to know by heart. At the same time, I sense myself becoming a bit more detached from my friends and family in The States, too many thousands of miles away to truly stay connected to all of the things that normally ground me. The discomfort is subtle and doesn't overshadow the experiences I've had, but the sensation of being an outsider in the place where I live, was one I couldn't shake. That is until I left.

Leaving Switzerland and then being subject to the feeling of wanting to return, spurred the shocking realization that it had, over the course of a few weeks, become home-y. But with this realization came an awareness that in only a matter of time, I'll be leaving, and my newfound comfort here will eventually come to an end. Though bittersweet, I've come to embrace the idea of accepting my contentment in this new place while simultaneously preparing myself for having to leave in the perceivable future. With this, I'm beginning to understand that my conception of home is not just fluid. Home can also transcend a physical place, as I once thought of it as. As I grow, and travel, and find myself in places I had never imagined myself before, I see that home is a state of mind; anywhere in the world could be home as long as I feel at peace.



Spotlighting the Black Girl Magic in Clementina Nyarko

By Imani Brooks

Know it or not we have already met a future president of Ghana, Clementina Nyarko. Our current African Students Association (ASA) president has always been excited by politics and has a refreshing view on how politics inspire change. As a Political Science major and African Studies minor, her ambitious nature makes her an obvious candidate to take over the world someday. Her collegiate experience has pushed her in this direction. How did this passionate Ghanaian queen start at her journey of Black Girl Magic at Emory?

Clementina was born and raised in the Bronx. She is very proud of her Ghanaian roots, making every effort to connect to them. Like by living in Ghana for 3 years growing up and then through a 6-month study abroad program. The very real reason she came to Emory was because they funded her education #reparations. And, she has definitely shaped her Emory career to get the most out of it.



Since the 5th grade, Clementina knew she would study Political Science in college because she always enjoyed debate. Adding to that major, she connected her passion for the African continent to her Emory academics with an International Relations concentration and an African Studies minor. Throughout her four years, she has enjoyed the intersectionality of her classes in the College that comes from IDS and cross-listed courses.

Over the years, Clementina has been engaged in many ways on campus from working in the Schwartz Center for three years to student organizations. One fond experience she has as a first year was being super involved with the Model UN team. She served as the Outreach Chair and was able to establish Model UN teams at various intercity schools. As a student from such schools, she enjoyed the opportunity to give back through one of her long-time passions. Flash forward to her senior year, she is finishing her term as ASA president. Besides a successful Taste of Africa, her goal for the past year was to create a safe space for first years and to cultivate a friendlier environment for all students to escape from the stressful Emory lifestyle. Additionally, she has prioritized opening up the organization to be more inclusive of students through the whole African Diaspora. She hopes that the next executive board continues to build upon those goals. As someone who has worked with ASA, I am confident her legacy will be built upon. She is a phenomenal leader after all.

Her goal for the past year was to create a safe space for first years and to cultivate a friendlier environment for all students to escape from the stressful Emory lifestyle.

As someone so involved in Black Emory, Clementina has a positive view of our community. By attending and planning different events for us, she has seen that there is never a dull moment. She feels as if there is always someone doing something, always some issue to talk about, always something to be petty about. People uplift each other for the most part and that heartening affect can be seen in the different initiatives we start and our willingness to help each other. As she reflects on her time in Black Emory, she definitely recognizes a clear sense of community that has been central to her collegiate experience.

In the future, Clementina would love if there was more collaboration between organizations in Black Emory. She sees such beauty in and potential with programs like The Linkup Series because they bring together all types of people within our community. She also wants us to make more connections with schools and things outside of Emory. That does make sense as we are in a city that could easily be defined as the Black Mecca. There has been some effort to take advantage of the wonderful city we go to school in, but Clementina sees Black Emory flourishing exponentially by reaching out more intentionally.

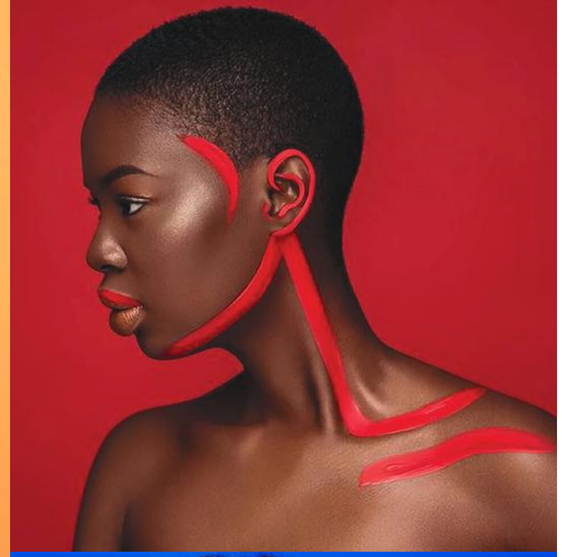
Clementina has enjoyed exploring Atlanta while being a student at Emory. When she first got here, she felt stuck on campus or limited to shuttles for getting off campus. As she became more comfortable at Emory, she has found her favorite spots to eat in Atlanta. She visits Ike's Café and Grill all the time. If she is craving chicken and waffles, she'll stop by 5 Church Atlanta. But, for the best grits ever, her spot is Le Petite Marche. She appreciates the beautiful weather Atlanta allows sometimes and the excitement she feels seeing so many shades of melanin once she steps off campus. Clementina sees "lit and successful" culture of Atlanta as very encouraging and an inspiration for her life after Emory.

Before her presidential inauguration, Clementina plans to travel a lot upon graduation. Two days after graduation, she is going back to Ghana for a few months. Part of her time will be spent working with the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition as a research fellow. After that, Clementina is considering another fellowship to continue traveling during her gap year. She is nervous but excited, as anyone would be, about being on her own.

While I might not be able to vote for Clementina in 2048, I definitely view her as a role model for how to live fully comfortable in yourself and for how to go after what you want. Despite any obstacle Emory might have thrown at her as a student of color, she will be graduating in May and moving on to the bigger and better thing she wants. I hope I can say the same in 2020.









The Ornate Black Face: The Art in Makeup

by Danielle McKee

Photography credits to @moshoodat and @islandboiphotography

Dripping with honey tinted shine, coated in the color of vermillion, my brown face is caked to the max! This cake is not the dusty, line settled, mask of grimy foundation that one might imagine, but the glowing halo of blending and shine. From highlighter to lip gloss, many of us know the elation of perfect application. The contoured face, chiseled to perfection, brings out our strong features and lays a canvas for the show. A well-done brow gives lift and frame to the grace of our temples. My shimmering eyelids don't just shine, they beam, bronze metal fading into a chocolate crease, iced at the top with a dust of gold highlighter. This crafted design is nothing to be ashamed of; my cake face is beautiful and sweet. Makeup is truly what you want it to be. While some people stick to a few coats of mascara and the simple sweep of tinted balm, others go ham with the glitter cut crease and dark lip. Do you boo! When it comes to the face, this is your sacred space, and the power is in your hands. Like any other accessory, makeup is meant to adorn your face with whatever you deem to be pleasing. Whether it's bright purples and pinks or demure earthy browns, good technique and creativity are sure to create a look! While many brands are quite late to the party in creating cosmetics that cater to women of color, there is still a plethora of possibility when it comes to decorating your face. Here are 3 must-try looks to achieve a melanated goddess glow!

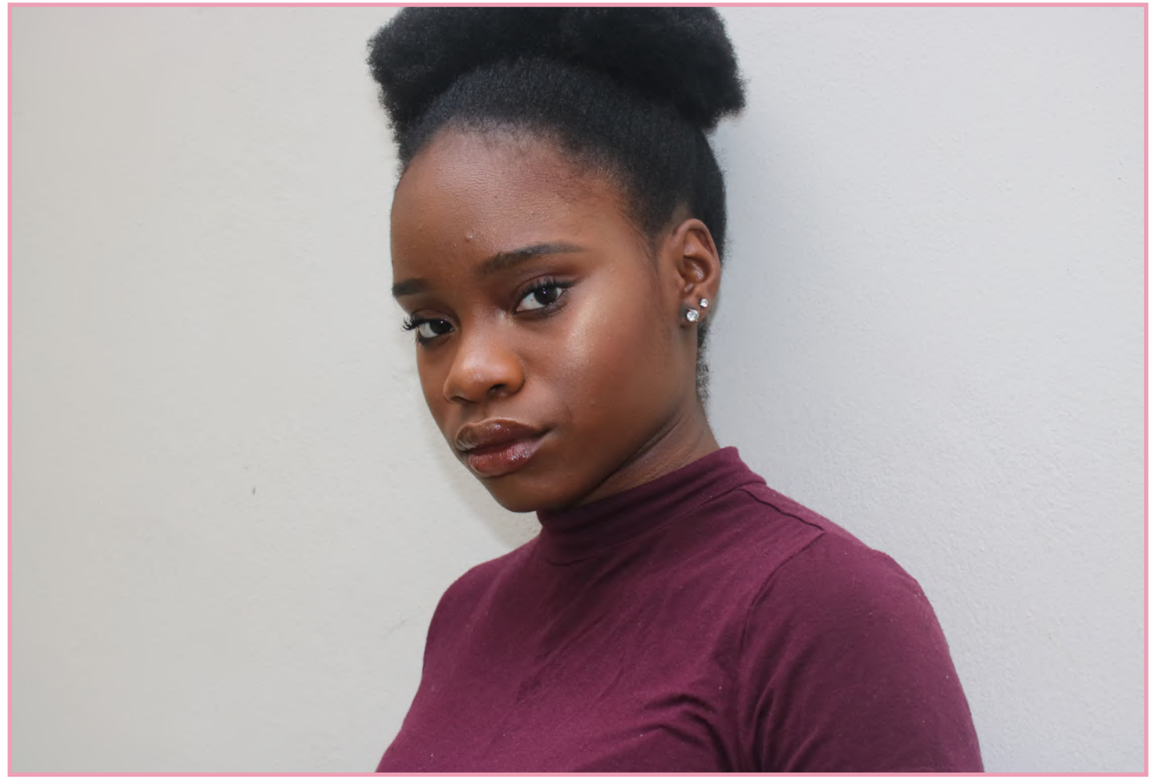
Monochromatic Haze This look may seem daunting at first, but it can be as wearable as you want! The monochromatic haze is centered around blending colors of the same family across your eyes, cheeks, and lips. This can be done with minimal products like a cream blush or a full makeup collection, with eye shadow, blush, and lip stain. Start off with the base you desire, a primed and moisturized bare face or a full foundation and brows. Take your colored powder of choice and blend it in sweeping motions throughout the crease of your eye socket. Swirling the color up and back towards the temples will give your eyes a lift and provide a more sensual appeal. Be sure to be light handed for less impact and use more color for vibrancy. Use the throwback technique of draping, sweeping the blush from the contour of your cheekbones back to your temples, to really tie the look together. Finish off with a matching lip color and stunt on them hoes!





Feline Fierceness!

A feline look is all about the smolder. Create rich shadows or even sharp lines to rim and define your eyes. Tools like graphic pens, liquid liners, pencils, or black shadow work well for this look to keep it as dark and sexy as possible. If you prefer a cleaner look, stick with liquid liner or use a concealer to define beneath the edges. Pencil is the easiest route with simple control, so you can lie out a base line then blend it in with a small brush. Add black shadow on top to make it darker, or blend with a clean brush to diffuse the color. Make sure to make your lashes as dramatic as possible, piling on the mascara or the falsies for extra effect. Pair the dark eye with a neutral lip for a softer look, or pair this look with a bright lip color to get the bold effect.



Pure Nude Glow!

When it comes to richly melanated skin, the possibilities of glow are endless! Our skin mimics the natural radiance of the sun when enhanced with light reflecting powders, liquids, and creams. This look gives you that magnificent luminosity while enhancing your natural features. Wear a lightweight base that gives you sufficient coverage without looking heavy, and don't be afraid to amp up the shine. Swirl highlighter at the tops from the top of your cheekbone up into the brow bone, being sure to grace the area of your arch with the same generosity. Apply to the inner corners of your eyes, your cupid's bow, and even your chin for a cohesive all over shine. Adding fluttery lashes and a soft neutral gloss will complement this look beautifully, making it an easily wearable yet glam face.

As you explore the realm of makeup, remember that there are no strict rules when it comes to your face. Makeup is an art form used to ornament the canvas of our bodies. This art is what YOU make it, so use it to fit your style, needs, and desires. Anything can be inspiration, from the people around you to the things you see in nature. Try out a look that is as bold and beautiful as you, or stick to what makes you feel comfortable. Either way, embrace the paint for the ornate face!

