

Moving to the beat of their own drum: Black (Subculture) Lives Matter

Sherri Kolade | Michigan Chronicle :

Nothing is off-limits when it comes to challenging stereotypes and celebrating non-mainstream areas that Black folk have been blazing a trail in for decades

They are found in every part of society if you just know where to look.

However, counterculture and subculture Black people are often hidden in plain sight and not always front and center in mainstream media.

Yet in the celebration of all things Blackness, the unique elements of cultures within a culture can bring a greater sense of solidarity in movements while bringing the ever-important message home that not all Black folks look or act the same.

From Afrofuturism — a movement that features futuristic or science fiction-style elements while dropping elements of Black history and culture — think Black Panther or Janelle Monáe to even non-mainstream spirituality, nothing is off-limits when it comes to challenging stereotypes and celebrating the non-mainstream areas that Black folk have been blazing a trail in for decades.

In the book “[Assembling a Black Counter Culture](#),” writer and musician DeForrest Brown Jr. delves into the origins of techno music in Detroit and elsewhere, and he shines a light on the history and analysis of techno (and similar electronic music like house and electro) and explaining showing how the genre has been cultivated over time by a Black American musical sensibility.

Brown goes back to Detroit’s 1980s techno scene to delve into this genre’s unique history from a Black theoretical perspective, according to his book that connects the dots between movements in Black electronic music while surviving the status quo created by mainstream America.

Decades later in the here and the now, many have noted how even the [Black Lives Matter](#) movement is a counterculture in some pockets of society, according to national reports.

In a book titled “[Black Futures](#),” authors Kimberly Drew and Jenna Wortham delved into how Black people are not only not a monolith but a whole experience that cannot be contained on pages. They wanted to find out, “What does it mean to be Black and alive right now?”

“We sought to make sense of our unique paradox: We have never been more empowered and yet, in many ways are still so disenfranchised,” they noted in their book. “Blackness is infinite — a single book cannot attempt to contain the multitude and multiverse.... we are in a continuum of those who came before and those who will come after.”

The book also celebrates the strides Black people have made today and in yesteryear.

“This is not an art book, this is not a scholarly journal; this book is a series of guideposts for current and future generations who may be curious about what our generation has been creating during a time defined by social-cultural economic and ecological revolution,” the authors noted.

Detroit resident and social media influencer Ashanti (Om Shanti) Barber, 31, [told the Michigan Chronicle previously](#) that she is doing things her way when it comes to carving out a lane for herself in the [spirituality and wellness world](#) as a rising TikTok and Instagram influencer. She teaches her followers on the history and meaning behind various spiritual practices that can be traced back to ancient African faith and religion, according to a press release. To her surprise, many people took to her messages. Barber added it took her “quite a while” to put herself out there and say, “This is who I am and this is what I do. I never knew there was a thirst for authentic knowledge.”

With nearly 85,000 followers on TikTok and over 28,000 followers on Instagram, Barber continues to build a strong presence on social media that her followers look to for credible advice in a space that’s becoming increasingly popular.

“I’m not going to lie — I thought I was a weirdo, so to speak,” she said. “I was widely accepted. [People] really, really quickly took to me.”

For Brittani Hodges, 28, of Royal Oak, who attended diverse Troy High School and moves to the beat of her own drum, she said that she has lived her experiences as a Black teenager learning to celebrate her Blackness while championing others in the different social circles she hung in.

“A lot of cultures went to that school,” she said adding that she bounced around friend groups and was always “intrigued by other people.”

“I never wanted to just stick to like one group ... I just was having fun with each group,” she said adding that growing up, she is interested in anime and Japanese culture.

“I was taking Japanese for two years in high school, then it was mainly focused on the Asian culture I found fascinating as far as fashion, the language...stuff like that,” she said, adding that her parents introduced her and her siblings to Asian food, African food and other foods. “My dad played a huge part in opening us up to different cultures in that aspect as well.”

Hodges, who runs a bridal makeup business, Beautifully Flawed, (@hodgesxbrittani) said that she hopes to venture to Japan one day and enjoy the culture in a more immersive way. She encourages other people to explore life to the fullest and celebrate their uniqueness and Blackness.

“Just have the confidence to do what your heart says to do,” she said. “It’s okay to be curious and venture out and explore.... We all have our journey of figuring out who we are and that looks differently to each person.”

This [post](#) was originally published on [Michigan Chronicle](#).