

## Arts

## Schaeffar Library unveils Stacey Robinson installation artist

By **Emily Bobruff** and **Helen Zhao** - Apr 13, 2017

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On Friday, March 31, Assistant Professor of Graphic Design at the University of Illinois Stacey Robinson brought his art collection on Afrofuturism to Schaeffer Library. The artist also held a discussion in Schaeffer in order to achieve a greater understanding of his collection. The goal of Robinson's collection is to speculate what free black futures could look like. In his collection titled "Branding the AfroFuture," Robinson depicts "Black Utopias." This is the fifth artist to be featured in Schaeffer Library's Art Installation Series.

The installation will be displayed for a year. Robinson started the discussion with the question, "Have you ever thought about Black future?" Robinson believes that poverty and failure will be the future if people never stop to think about the future, which was one of the reasons he came up with the imaginary world for the black future. The artist explained that he hates to be politically correct, and that this is expressed through his work. Walking into the first floor of library, the first scene you will see is a collection of posters with plenty of vivid colors hanging on the walls and the columns.

In addition, the columns themselves are painted with big metal wheels. Robinson explained that the machinery elements (the big wheels drawn on the columns) are used to symbolize the power and survivability of black people and black culture. In his art installation "Branding the AfroFuture," Robinson created an imaginary "Black Utopia World," which confronts the present of the black community extending from colonial trauma. Robinson spoke of the distance that we still need to overcome to reach racial equality.

As an example, Robinson asked the audience to research Black Wall Street. Black Wall Street was a failed project that was destroyed by whites, crushing an attempt at socioeconomic advancement within the black community. Robinson's work questions whether black safe spaces are in existence and how to escape the white patriarchy that makes up society's rules. "My artwork is just a starting off point of the imaginary future," explained Robinson.

The artist also demonstrated how he tried to build up and integrate black culture in his utopian world, which, according to Robinson, contrasts with the destroyed culture in our current colonial space. One way that Robinson's message comes across in his work is through color theory. Robinson defined color theory as "the science of using color to copy nature," which he uses to attract his audience like a hip hop beat attracts listeners.

The colors red, green, black and yellow are used throughout his work to represent the African flag, and the colors red, white and blue are used to represent colonialism. Color theory helps make Robinson's work more palatable, especially for those who may not initially understand its importance. Robinson's work is a collective proposal of ideas and necessary change in the way our society thinks about race. The greater purpose of his work is to create an honest conversation about race in our country.

The use of collage in his work is to allow for specific connections to events and ideas within our society that create racial ideas. Robinson mentioned in the reception that his uncle had a great impact on his artwork. His uncle's story of black history inspired him to learn about the pain caused by colonialism and create a better world for black people in his graphic designs. Robinson explained that he not only has a love of drawing, but he also has a general appreciation of visual arts. "It's like propaganda," he added. Robison concluded his discussion by stating that, "I don't care if you like my work or not, I know it's dope, so just condition yourself to be dope."

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