Event Spotlight:
Hip Hop and the Poetics of Protest

On Monday, March 15th, Dr. Derik Smith and Kaylyn Wright talked about protest music and the "poetics of protest." During this conversation, they discussed the background and historical context to hip hop, as well as their own personal connections to the genre and movement. They also spoke about how artists often express themselves through this art style.

Dr. Derik Smith is a Professor at Claremont McKenna. His work focuses on American literary culture, addressing African American poetry and intellectual history, as well as the connection between critical race studies and the Baha’i Faith. Kaylyn 'Kay' Wright is a fourth-year Psychology major, at Pitzer. He founded the student-run record label Live Your Best Life (LYBL) Records, which won the Pitzer Leadership Award for Intercultural Understanding in 2020.
Congrats Graduate!

Fred Zucule Pomona

What is your thesis about?

My thesis titled Sexual Disorientations: Rotimi Fani-Kayode’s Fugitive Aesthetics takes inspiration from scholars like Christina Sharpe and Tina Campt to locate and describe the acts of fugitively and strategies of refusal in the portraiture of Rotimi Fani-Kayode. It ultimately the work of Black/Queer/Diaspora in re-imagining transatlantic paths and futures through Black, African, homosexual photography.

What was your favorite 5C memory?

The Sankofa! Festival was definitely the highlight of being at the 5Cs. It was a night where the Black communities across the 5Cs and Claremont just vibed together, communed with food, performance and each other. Organizing that night gave me a sense of purpose: to pursue the potential of art to create community and spark critical conversations.

Piece of advice you have for incoming freshmen?

A problem told is a problem half-solved. You don't have to go through it alone.

What are your plans post-graduation or hopes for the future?

I will be studying at Cambridge university, pursuing a MPhil in Film and Screen Studies in the upcoming academic year. Additionally, I hope to continue working on my podcast - Afrikan Digitz.
What are your plans post-graduation or hopes for the future?

I am currently in the process of applying to jobs, more specifically in the legal and non-profit sectors. I am also looking into some research and post-bac fellowship opportunities. I hope to enroll in a dual J.D.-Ph.D. grad program in a year or two. I am considering applying to Fulbright next year and plan to use my gap year(s) to prepare my applications.

What was your favorite 5C memory?

The annual marathon of events during Black History Month comes to mind first. I always loved Black Out Day which was an annual event held on the 1st day of February when Black students, faculty, and staff from across the 5Cs were invited to wear all Black and celebrate the beginning of Black History Month together. Being able to eat, dance, and just take up space with Black students is such a precious and memorable experience for me.

Piece of advice you have for incoming freshmen?

Don’t ever forget that you belong and deserve to be here. You are not here by chance or by luck but by virtue of your hard work and talent. It is easy, as underrepresented students, to experience imposter syndrome and believe that we are not meant to be here. I advise you to seek out community spaces and affinity groups early on so that you can establish a support network of professors, students, and CLORGs that reflect your identities and share your lived experiences. They will serve as a constant reminder that you do, in fact, deserve to be here and to take up space unapologetically. These institutions are lucky to have you, not the other way around.
What was your thesis about and what was the process like writing it?

My thesis was entitled “The Legacies of Maroon Resistance: Black Fugitivity as a Performance of Freedom” and investigated how Maroons, enslaved Africans who escaped their plantations and established their own self-sufficient independent communities, have identified flight and fugitivity as an important avenue through which Black people can move from bondage to freedom. I first started pursuing this research during my sophomore year of college through the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship, a national program that supports and funds undergraduate scholarship from students of underrepresented backgrounds, because I felt that the significant histories and contributions of these communities had been neglected and erased from the national public memory for far too long. In my two years as a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow, I received intensive training in research methodology, scholarly writing, and presentation skills which I have applied to my thesis process over this last year. This three-year project was an arduous journey but it has taught me exactly what it takes to do the important work of uplifting the narratives and voices of those who have been silenced. I give all thanks to MMUF as well as my cohort, professors, family, and friends for sustaining me through it all.
What are your plans post-graduation or hopes for the future?

Post grad plans are to live my BEST life and work with a youth organization called Sadie Nash Leadership Project as a Site Leader this summer. My hopes for the future are to have my own farm where I have a lot of plants and veggies, and have a huge at home library where folks can come and read books and have political education meet ups and slam poetry in my garden backyard.

What was your favorite 5C memory?

My favorite 5C memory was my entire first year of college. I truly had a blast with my friends and enjoyed my time to the fullest.

Piece of advice you have for incoming freshmen?

Get off campus as much as possible and go to LA to eat great food. Also don’t sleep on Pomona!
Describe Chiugo in 5 words
Amazonian, galvanizing, whimsical, multi-hyphenate, soft-hearted

What is your biggest passion?
I’m a multi-hyphenate with talents and passions that span drawing, modeling, digital art, photography, dance, writing, etc. Most importantly, I’m someone who aims to use these talents to help myself and those around me reach self-actualization. I list multiple passions because I’m of the philosophy that we don’t have to confine ourselves to one sole expertise. Humans are far too complex to only explore one passion for the rest of their lives or to even categorize one as their largest passion.

To answer the question directly, though, the passion that is most apparent to others because that’s the passion I first discovered and freely shared is fashion. Just the art of design and producing wearable art is breathtaking. I love it and share it so freely because fashion teaches empathy, sympathy, self-confidence, self-accountability, and, as cliché as it sounds, love in the form of acceptance as trends and styles differ across cultures. The art embraces the nuances of humanity, that there lay more to a person inside of the clothing one dons. Fashion gifts the ability to receive the history hidden behind a human being—this in and of itself is a breathtaking art: to be able to convey even a minute part of oneself via cloth, a solid and external form—a form to which I am eternally indebted. A magnanimous love, the start of my artistic afflatus.

What are your plans after you graduate?
I’m planning on joining the LYBL Records team as their head marketer! They are a new-aged ethereum-based record label start-up founded by Kay Wright and Ralph Zamora from Pitzer. I’ll be in charge of advertising and hopefully, you’ll all see me on Forbes 30 Under 30 Arts and Culture as a leading Chief Marketing Officer. But since it’ll take us some time to launch, I am desperately seeking freelance modeling, photo editing, photography, or social media work, or a marketing internship. Either way, the larger plan is to have a fulfilling, art-filled, love-filled life. :)}
How did you get into fashion and content creation?

I wouldn’t even say that I got into fashion because I never left it. It has always been a part of me. As a kid, I started forming my idea of what style was, what fashion was by drawing clothes I saw on tv that I fancied. I also loved “dress-up games” where I was the master of my imaginary closet and could decide to don that leather jacket I have always wanted or the draping sapphire earrings I saw on TV. Though I was enthralled with this new pretend world I stumbled upon, I grew unsatisfied with the selections presented to me on the world wide web. To mitigate my newfound artistic plight, my 8-year-old self: equipped with a racing mind, crayons, and printer paper embarked on a new journey: fashion design. The vigor with which I spent my summers filling 2-inch binders bursting with my sketches mirrored a crazed scientist vehemently whipping, pouring, testing their creations. 8-year-old me drew inspiration from the eclectic TV shows that defined my childhood as well as from my mind’s wonderings: Can I add a knee-length slit to the dress I saw Joan from the show Girlfriends glide in? Will emerald green sleeves complement the blue shirt I saw Sharon from Braceface traverse teenagedom in? I found my answers with each filled binder. I found this art that is fashion.

I also owe my love for fashion to my mom. She was always dripped out, closet full of clothes and shoes. Thankfully, she made it a habit of asking me if I liked pieces of clothing she bought me, and those questions gave me the foundations to think about what pieces I liked on myself, what was in at the time that I could see on myself thus cultivating my style. As I got older, though, she stopped buying me clothes, cuz drip she was buyin’ me was truly not immaculate, and I would tell her that--bless her heart.

As far as content creation, I’ve always been artistically inclined and when Instagram launched when I was in middle school, I found a way to share my talents with the world. I wanted to connect with people and share myself because of my extroversion. My focus recalibrated to marrying cultivating communitas with my passion for fashion and artistic creation. Instagram presented a vehicle for this conjoining of passions; it helped me tap into a medium I never conceptualized myself practicing: modeling. With each perfectly edited Instagram post depicting me modeling my curated outfits, my devotion to the art of fashion grew palpable to all who viewed my work. Through my displays, I gained a modeling, editing, and photo retouching collaboration with Jil Dever, a luxury slow fashion scarf brand. Determined to discover more mediums to express my love for fashion curation, I stumbled upon photography. I leveraged my experience with Jil Dever and flourishing Instagram account to gain a photography internship at Scripps’ marketing and communications office. The marketing office combined with my work for Jil Dever aided in giving me the experience needed to have brands reach out to me/accept my content creation collaboration requests. And now I’m here!
Congrats Graduate!

Digital Media with Iishe Davis!

How did you get into digital arts/media

I've always been interested in art since I was a child. I remember spending my time drawing portraits in my sketchbook, painting in Microsoft paint, or making "high fashion" doll outfits from plastic materials, at one point, I remember getting into knitting and crocheting. I started getting into digital art after taking marketing & computer science courses in high school. I think college made it more accessible to do digital art because didn't have the necessary software and technology to pursue it. My creativity comes out in various forms; I'm always finding new ways to learn and create art. It also helps that I come from a family that has a deep appreciation for the arts.

What kind of services do you provide?

I started doing commissions about three years ago, I'm so glad that my friends pushed me to pursue these opportunities and make myself known as an artist. I love being tagged under posts for job opportunities or seeing my work shared on social media. I've been commissioned to make logos, stickers, character designs, art prints, and create digital illustrations. I plan on taking more commissions soon! You can follow my art account on Instagram @iishedavis, Twitter: @iishedraws or email: iishe.davis@outlook.com. My website: iishedavis.com

Piece of advice you have for incoming freshmen?

1. Start your thesis spring of junior year.
2. Get that academic accommodation ASAP.
3. Surround yourself with people that care for you and wish to see you succeed. Don’t put up with anything less than that.
4. Don’t be afraid to put yourself out there as an artist, and definitely try to collab with other artists at the 5Cs.
What was your thesis about?

I completed a short, digital graphic novel featuring an Afro-witch. The story is about a witch whose mission is to retrieve a valuable family heirloom, a necklace that was stolen by her ex-girlfriend and sold off to the ex’s boss—a powerful, and dangerous collector & trader. I wanted to create a Afrofuturist fantastical story while exploring ancestral bloodlines as a form of resistance against white supremacy, colonial constructs, and patriarchy.

What are your plans after you graduate?

I'm most likely going to open up my own art shop to sell stickers, illustrations, and physical art prints. Will be spending my time experimenting with new art mediums, softwares, styles, etc (animation, game design, etc.). Career wise, probably work as a UX designer, animator, or something within advertising. It would be cool to do a artist residency in another country. I hope to reunite with my family outside of the US and get a visa. Maybe become a chef on the side, garden, and care for my cat...I have so many plans. My immediate post grad plan is to pop a bottle of champagne, sleep, cry tears of joy, celebrate being a graduate.
Why’d you major in Africana?

I decided to major in Africana Studies because I was really excited to have the opportunity to formally center Blackness in my education, especially since my schooling up until college was very neglectful of global Black experiences and history. I’m also a Psychology major and I’ve found that I really enjoy learning these subjects in tandem with one another.

What have you been doing on your LOA?

During my leave of absence I have been trying practice yoga regularly which helps to keep my body and mind healthy. I’m very happy that I was able to find a job working with children on the Autism spectrum as a Registered Behavior Technician. I recently completed the National Black Doula Association’s birth doula training and I’m currently looking for mentorship opportunities to continue my learning in that field. I’ve been keeping pretty busy, most my time is taken up by the puppy my roommate and I adopted together. Her name is Mango!

What do you hope to be able to do research-wise once back on campus?

I look forward to researching Black birth workers once back on campus. In my doula training we learned a bit about birth and it’s relationship to sexual trauma and healing. That’s a topic I would definitely like to explore further.

What do you miss the most about campus life?

I miss all the unexpected run-ins with my friends and professors on campus!
Kiya Henderson
PO '22

Why did you decide to major in Africana studies

As a pre-med student, I had a strong belief that I needed to major in science in order to go to medical school. Although many faculty members told me this was not the case, I didn’t want to go outside the status quo. During my first year, I stuck to my plan to be a STEM major, but I was very unhappy because I knew that wasn’t what I was really passionate about. During the fall semester of my second year, I took Intro to Africana Studies with Professor Soliman and immediately knew that I belonged in the Africana Studies Department. I plan to implement the knowledge I learn during my time at Pomona during my medical career.

How did this past year affect you?

This last year has challenged me in many ways but has also allowed me to learn a lot about myself. Although Zoom classes are very draining, my professors have been accommodating and understanding. Clubs and organizations that I am a part of, like Pomona Science Scholars and BAPs, have still found ways to create community in the new normal of online communication. Outside of school, I have been able to focus on my mental health and spending time with family, while obeying COVID guidelines, of course :).

Do you have any summer plans? What are you looking forward to for the future?

I am currently still trying to solidify my summer plans, but hopefully, I will be doing biomedical research. For the future, I am, like everyone else, looking forward to a return to some sort of normalcy. Additionally, I am looking forward to returning to campus to see friends and deepen those bonds.
# List of Opportunities

## Fellowships

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<td>Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship</td>
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<td>BigTen Academic Alliance Smithsonian Fellowship</td>
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<td>APA's Summer Science Fellowship</td>
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<td>Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program</td>
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## Scholarships

### International & Domestic

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<td>Fulbright Scholarship</td>
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## Research

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<td>Summer Research Early Identification Program (SR-EIP)</td>
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<td>Annual OBSA Black Intersections Conference</td>
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<td>Montgomery Summer Research Diversity Fellowships in Law and Social Science</td>
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## Internships

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<td>National Museum of African Art Internships</td>
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<td>LOC Junior Fellows Summer Internship Program</td>
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<td>James E. Webb Internship</td>
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Upcoming Events

Summer 2021

all featured times are in PST

May 14th 1pm

OBSA Presents
2021 Black Graduation

Register for Zoom Link:
linktr.ee/obsaclaremont

June 19th

OBSA Presents
Juneteenth: 2nd Annual Pan African Graduation Celebration

FMI: Read OBSA From Home [semi]
Weekly for April 27 at