

SEPT 25
THROUGH
27

11TH ANNUAL
KHEM
FEST 2025



KHEM FEST GAME JAM SEPT. 25
(HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS)
WAKANDA BALL SEPT. 26
(SPECIAL GUEST INVITE)
KHEM FEST SEPT. 27
KHEM ANIMATION FILM FESTIVAL

TICKETS ARE LIMITED
**GET YOUR
TICKETS
TODAY**

CITYPLEX-12 NEWARK
360-394 SPRINGFIELD AVE.
NEWARK, NEW JERSEY 07103



FRAME BY FRAME - OUR STORY UNFOLDS





Programming

Hop no Saturday, September 27, 202

Festival Schedule

Time	Gallery	Theater 5 (Shaq Theater) Main Stage	Theater 6 KAFF Stage	Theater 7 Immersive Stage	Hallway
9:00 am - 10:30 am	Vendor Set-Up				
10:30 am - 5:00 pm	Registration				
11:00 am - 11:55 am	Welcome				
11:00 am - 7:15 pm	Khem Fest Marketplace Sounds powered by: Beats by J				
12:00 pm - 12:55 pm	Steam Lab : Vibranium Alchemy: Afrofuturist Slime Lab Brick by Sacred Brick: Afrofuturist Architecture with LEGO	Kemetic Yoga: Movement as Cosmic Technology	KAFF SELECTS Block BLUE Ancestral Whispers: Legends For The Next Generation (G)	KAFF Immersive: Virtual Reality Film Screening	Voice Over Workshop: Breathing Life into Animated Characters
1:00 pm - 1:55 pm	Steam Lab: Vibranium Alchemy: Afrofuturist Slime Lab	Creative Arts in AI: Ethical Tools for the Next Generation	Warrior's Grace: Afrofuturist Martial Arts Demo	Comic Book Writing Masterclass: Crafting Our Heroes' Journey	
2:00 pm - 2:55 pm	Beyond The Cape: Tier Your Favorite Black Characters + Rewrite The Canon	Game Jam: Codes of the Ancestor Showcase	KAFF SELECTS Block PURPLE Cyber Soul Rebels: A New Genesis (PG-13)	Adapt or Ascend: Turning Your Novel into Animation (Teddy Ninja Case Study)	

	Steam Lab: Ancestral Blueprints: 3D Printing Afrofutures				
3:00 pm - 3:55 pm	Beyond The Cape: Tier Your Favorite Black Characters + Rewrite The Canon Steam Lab: Brick by Sacred Brick: Afrofuturist Architecture with LEGO Ancestral Blueprints: 3D Printing Afrofutures	Mixed Reality, Real Impact: How VR/AR Are Changing Our World		KAFF Immersive: Virtual Reality Film Screening	Voice Over Workshop: Breathing Life into Animated Characters
4:00 pm - 4:55 pm	Beyond The Cape: Tier Your Favorite Black Characters + Rewrite The Canon	Black Women Level Up: Conquering the \$200B Gaming Industry	KAFF SELECTS Block GOLD Echoes Of The Ancients: Visions & Vessels (PG-13)	KAFF Immersive: Virtual Reality Film Screening	
5:00 pm - 5:55 pm	Steam Lab: Ancestral Blueprints: 3D Printing Afrofutures	KAFF Creator Roundtable: Animating Our Galaxy	Cosmic Couture: Afrofuturist Cosplay Parade & Competition	Women Invest in Women: The \$250K Creator Fund	
6:00 pm - 6:55 pm		Khem Animation Film Festival (KAFF) Awards Ceremony			
7:00 pm - 7:15 pm	Khem Fest Volunteer Recognition				
KAFF mission is to promote public awareness of animation and the opportunities for minorities within the profession.					



2025 Programming

Saturday, September 27, 2025

Festival Schedule

11:00 AM - 7:15 PM

KHEM FEST MARKETPLACE

Sounds powered by: Beats by J | Taylor Entertainment

Gallery

11:30 AM - 11:55 PM

WELCOME TO THE 11th ANNUAL KHEM FEST / 8th ANNUAL KHEM ANIMATION FILM FESTIVAL (KAFF)

Gallery

Opening the Gateway

Bashir Muhammad Ptah Akinyele (Historian/Professor)

[Legion of Boom Marching Band](#)

Founder: **Naseed Gifted** (Educator, Creative Director of Black Star Creative Collective)

12:00 PM - 3:55 PM

COMIC CREATION STATION: DRAW YOUR HERO'S ODYSSEY

Gallery

Bring your comic heroes to life at our very own Comic Creation Station. We cannot wait to see the comic books you all create.

12:00 PM - 3:55 PM

WAKANDA WRITING/TATTOOS, HIEROGLYPHICS (MEDU NTR)

Gallery

Time to embrace culture with the help of Wakanda-inspired tattoos and hieroglyphics. Get your tattoo done now!

12:00 PM - 12:55 PM

KEMETIC YOGA: MOVEMENT AS COSMIC TECHNOLOGY

Main Stage (Theater 5) | ShaQ Theater

Activate your Sekhem (life force) through postures from Temple walls – align your vessel for creative abundance.

JoJo Abenaavi Wright (Founder of Abenaavi Arts, Architect Microsoft)



12:00 PM – 12:55 PM

KHEM ANIMATION FILM FESTIVAL SELECTIONS powered by Black Star Creative Collective

KAFF Stage (Theater 6)

Film Block BLUE: ANCESTRAL WHISPERS: LEGENDS FOR THE NEXT GENERATION (G)

Birdy Man (2:06)

On the pier, a man noticed a seagull interested in his fries, so he began teasing it with the food. During the teasing, they both accidentally hit a glass pane and swapped bodies. The man, now in the seagull's body, wanted to get his own body back, but the seagull, in human form, retained its seagull habits and started running wildly. Struggling to adapt to his new body, the man-as-seagull set out to reclaim his original form. Eventually, they successfully swapped back to their original bodies using the glass of a lighthouse. Relieved, yet careless in his joy, the man fell from the lighthouse and, landing on a transparent kayak, accidentally made contact with a fish and swapped bodies once again.

Anni Zhang, Director (Newberry, FL)

Best Animated Short

Metal Flower (9:54)

One day, the robot making 'fake flowers' with metal encounters 'a real flower' for the first time.

Seoyun Kim, Director (Korea)

Best Student Film (College)

Ancestral Intervention (3:00)

Packed with humor and heart, 'Ancestral Intervention' follows the story of Malaika as she tries to enjoy a date with her boyfriend despite the constant meddling of the ghost of her strong-willed, traditional grandmother. With a clash of old vs. new, this vibrant story delivers laughs, warmth, and a fresh take on generational values.

Michelle Muli, Director (Kenya)

Best Student Film (College)

A Syrian in Swabia (11:40)

An animated documentary short film about the people from the cultural region of South Central Germany. Through the eyes of two native Swabians the film explores the typical and abundant stereotypes about their people. We also get to hear from two adoptive Swabians: another German from North Rhine Westphalia and a Syrian refugee living in Swabia since 2015. The film is delivered in a mix of English, German and some Swabian dialect. This is a film about identity, belonging, and the remarkable adaptability of the human spirit.

Clari del Pilar Woler, Director (Germany)

Best Story

**Lemon Geo (3:25)**

This educational film explores the Eno River in North Carolina in an episode of the fictional children's TV show Lemon Geo. A cartoon lemon narrator takes viewers on a journey exploring the reptiles of the Eno, including turtles, snakes, and lizards.

Carlota Hermer, Director (Brooklyn, NY)
Best Student Film (College)

Food ConnoiSewer (2:49)

In the heart of the Big Apple, a street-smart, hunger-driven rat, with an appetite as big as his ambition, sneaks into his favorite food truck for a tasty treat. But uh-oh, the vendor is onto him like cheese on crackers! A narrow escape down a manhole plunges him into the clutches of a hungry crocodile. Cue the chase scene! Through the twists and turns of the croc's lair, the rat, with a zip tie and a plan as crafty as a New York pickpocket, tries to broker a truce. But alas, the plan unravels. With clever schemes, newfound freedom, and a dash of street justice, this tale promises excitement and adventure, showing that even the most unlikely allies can change each other's lives forever.

Tiffany Chen & Audrey Hong, Director (Sarasota, FL)

Hot! (2:11)

A penguin mom and her daughter were driving to an amusement park in hot Florida. The daughter felt too hot and asked her mom if she could make the AC colder, but her mom said no. The daughter tried to endure the heat, but it became too much. She decided to adjust the AC herself. Her mom got angry that she didn't listen and raised the temperature again. This back-and-forth caused the mom to break the AC.

Julie Liao, Director (Sarasota, FL)
Best Film 3D Short

Mystic Ties (4:34)

A lonely ghost living in an abandoned house in the woods becomes friends with an energetic fox. When hunting season begins, the fox is in danger, but can the ghost help him survive?

David Michael Bender, Director (Birch Run, MI)
Best Student Film (College)

Shepherd game trailer (1:27)

Shepherds is a 3D co-op action-adventure game that blends musical puzzle-solving gameplay. Players control the shepherd girl Zoe and the magical wolf Kin, cleverly using their individual mastery of musical melodies and unique movement styles to solve puzzles across various adventure levels. Ultimately, they will delve into a shepherd's temple at the heart of an active volcano to find a way to prevent the vengeful spirit, Black Dragon, from laying their island to waste.

Haoyun Zhang, Director (California)
Animated Game Trailer

**The Secret Recipe (3:07)**

A girl undergoes an imaginary journey when she is making cookies.

Xinyu Liu, Director (China)

Best Student Film (College)

Total RunTime: (44:13)

12:00 PM - 12:55 PM

KAFF IMMERSIVE: VIRTUAL REALITY FILM SCREENING

Immersive Stage (Theater 7)

Strap in for a VR journey through KAFF's elite selections – experience animation that surrounds, heals, and revolutionizes.

Ancestral Intervention (3:00)

Packed with humor and heart, 'Ancestral Intervention' follows the story of Malaika as she tries to enjoy a date with her boyfriend despite the constant meddling of the ghost of her strong-willed, traditional grandmother. With a clash of old vs. new, this vibrant story delivers laughs, warmth, and a fresh take on generational values.

Michelle Muli, Director (Kenya)

Best Student Film (College)

Blacklisted (8:48)

In a world where everyone is labeled a terrorist, autistic computer hacker turned assassin, Nat Cummings a/k/a P.B.Soldier (Tobias Truvillion), must navigate a society on the brink of collapse to uncover the truth and fight for his redemption.

Naseed Gifted & Jazyl Homavazir, Director (Newark, NJ & India)

Best Animation

Woke (1:26)

An African American artist killed by a police officer is brought back to life by his goth Dr. Frankenstein-Esq sister.

Don Frederick Dixon, Director (USA)

Best Animated Short



12:00 PM - 1:55 PM

VOICE OVER WORKSHOP: BREATHING LIFE INTO ANIMATED CHARACTERS

Hallway

Legendary actors teach vocal alchemy: Transform your voice into A.I. deities, space rebels, and orisha-inspired heroes.

Dayveonne Bussey (Voice Actor/Film Producer, Director of Khem Animation Film Festival)

HB Gibson (Voice Actor)

12:00 PM - 1:55 PM

KHEM FEST STEAM LAB

VIBRANIUM ALCHEMY: AFROFUTURIST SLIME LAB

Gallery

Engineer programmable "vibranium" slime using thermochromic pigments & biodegradable glitter - explore polymer science while creating your own Wakandan-inspired energy source.

Wahab Ashraf (Professor: Science Park/Rutgers University)

12:00 PM - 12:55 PM

KHEM FEST STEAM LAB

BRICK BY SACRED BRICK: AFROFUTURIST ARCHITECTURE WITH LEGO

Gallery

Design solar-powered smart villages and cosmic temples using fractal geometries from Great Zimbabwe, Nubian pyramids, & Wakandan vibranium tech. Collaborative build challenge for all ages - where ancestral algorithms meet modular innovation.

1:00 PM - 1:55 PM

CREATIVE ARTS IN AI: ETHICAL TOOLS FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

Main Stage (Theater 5) | ShaQ Theater

Exploring bias-free AI art platforms to co-create visionary narratives – learn how Black creators harness AI as a justice-centered storytelling tool.

JoJo Abenaavi Wright (Founder of Abenaavi Arts, Architect, Microsoft)

Malik Whitaker (Artist, Educator)



1:00 PM - 1:55 PM

WARRIOR'S GRACE: AFROFUTURIST MARTIAL ARTS DEMO

KAFF Stage (Theater 6)

Kupigana Ngumi Moyo Kazi masters & sci-fi choreographers showcase combat as storytelling – how fight scenes encode liberation theology.

Mrithi Mfundishi Khalil Maasi (CEO of Pan African Martial Arts Federation)

1:00 PM - 1:55 PM

COMIC BOOK WRITING MASTERCLASS: CRAFTING OUR HEROES' JOURNEY powered by The Office of Comprehensive Community Education (O.C.C.E.)

Immersive Stage (Theater 7)

Structure your graphic novel with pro writers: Develop mythos-rich characters who defy tropes and wield ancestral power.

Yumy Odom (President of ECBACC)

Akinseye Brown (Vice President of ECBACC)

2:00 PM - 2:55 PM

GAME JAM: CODES OF THE ANCESTOR SHOWCASE

Main Stage (Theater 5) | ShaQ Theater

High School students debut Afrofuturist games fusing Adinkra symbology with Godot – witness S.T.E.A.M. innovation born in 24 hours!

JoJo Abenaavi Wright (Founder of Abenaavi Arts, Architect, Microsoft)

2:00 PM - 3:55 PM

BEYOND THE CAPE: TIER YOUR FAVORITE BLACK CHARACTERS + REWRITE THE CANON

Gallery

Who is the best Black Comic Character? Who would win? Make sure to vote for your best Black superheroes on our Character Tier. Debate on who is the best hero and why. Rewrite the canon and make it your own!



2:00 PM – 2:55 PM

KHEM ANIMATION FILM FESTIVAL SELECTIONS powered by Black Star Creative Collective

KAFF Stage (Theater 6)

Film Block PURPLE: CYBER SOUL REBELS: A NEW GENESIS (PG-13)

Ole (5:30)

A 3D animated short film about grief, love and forgiveness.

Coping with his father's death, Ole takes himself into a vivid daydreaming moment, where he can finally forgive his father.

Ambrozie Pura, Director (Norway)

Best Animated Short

Ana Morphose (10:00)

A little girl reads herself to sleep. As she dozes off, the physical world starts melting into an alternate reality where the contents of a book rule over the laws of physics.

Ana has to escape being swallowed by the overwhelming accumulation of printed knowledge and find her own space in a world where nothing is what it seems.

Joao Rodrigues, Director (Portugal)

Best Animated Short

Celestial (7:51)

The grim reaper tries to take a sick child from her hospital bed, but her mother won't let her go.

Vicky Xie, Director (Los Angeles, CA)

Best Design

Coercive Charity (4:51)

"Coercive charity" refers to situations where individuals or organizations are pressured or forced to give money, time, or resources under social, political, or legal pressure, rather than out of free will or genuine generosity.

Amir Vafaei, Director (Iran)

Best Music

Foam Memory (1:27)

A young boy explores a mysterious, magical world where he encounters an unexpected reunion with his mother.

Mingwei Ma & Christina Fu, Director (China)

Best Student Film (College)

**I am Duck (12:30)**

Dumped out into a desert, an oblivious duck plunges headlong into a quest for bread, or something more.

Nick Zweig, Director (New York, NY)

Best Animated Short

It Will Pass Away (5:08)

After the end of a relationship that went nowhere, a woman's complex emotions seem to be amplified, and in the midst of insomnia she feels she can touch the many subtle voices...

Nan Yao, Director (China)

Best Student Film (College)

Wasteland (3:03)

Ember is a young adult currently living in a cooped up Rv with her friend Hazel. Ember constantly thinks back to a tragedy that occurred years ago at a carnival that's supposedly been condemned. She receives a text from another one of her friends, Auburn. Auburn claims that he and his brother found a creepy looking place in the woods that seems like it's been abandoned for years. Wanting to take her mind off things, Ember decides to go with Hazel to meet up with Auburn and check it out.

Giancarlo Castano, Director (Winter Garden, FL)

Best Animation Short

Total RunTime: (50:20)

2:00 PM - 2:55 PM

ADAPT OR ASCEND: TURNING YOUR NOVEL INTO ANIMATION (TEDDY NINJA CASE STUDY)

Immersive Stage (Theater 7)

The "Flashbang Universe" team decodes how award-winning Black literature becomes streaming gold – with exclusive previews!

Rorie Still

M'Shai Writes Sci-Fi

Z-Best

Tha Gata Neggra

Omar Clifton

Peace



2:00 PM - 2:55 PM

KHEM FEST STEAM LAB

ANCESTRAL BLUEPRINTS: 3D PRINTING AFROFUTURES powered by Digi2U

Gallery

Hands-on workshop where attendees design & print wearable Afrofuturist artifacts using ancestral symbols – merging ancient wisdom with cutting-edge fabrication.

Justice Cerami (Founder of Digi2U)

2:00 PM - 4:55 PM

BEYOND THE CAPE: TIER YOUR FAVORITE BLACK CHARACTERS + REWRITE THE CANON

Gallery

Rank heroes/ villains from film, comics & gaming in real-time tiers (S to C) - then collaborate with writers to redesign underused characters using Afrofuturist lenses.

3:00 PM - 3:55 PM

COMMUNITY ART PIECE

Gallery

Join our community and be part of the "Community Art Piece." Make sure to leave your mark at this year's Khem Fest.

3:00 PM - 3:55 PM

MIXED REALITY, REAL IMPACT: HOW VR/AR ARE CHANGING OUR WORLD

Main Stage (Theater 5) | ShaQ Theater

Live demo of Extended Reality (VR/AR) tech crafting Afrofuturist environments – step into realms where Sankofa meets cybernetics.

John Robinson (CEO of Gotta Go Gaming LLC)



3:00 PM - 3:55 PM

KHEM FEST STEAM LAB

BRICK BY SACRED BRICK: AFROFUTURIST ARCHITECTURE WITH LEGO

Gallery

Design solar-powered smart villages and cosmic temples using fractal geometries from Great Zimbabwe, Nubian pyramids & wakandan vibranium tech. Collaborative build challenge for all ages - where ancestral algorithms meet modular innovation.

3:00 PM - 3:55 PM

KAFF IMMERSIVE: VIRTUAL REALITY FILM SCREENING

Immersive Stage (Theater 7)

Strap in for a VR journey through KAFF's elite selections – experience animation that surrounds, heals, and revolutionizes.

Ancestral Intervention (3:00)

Packed with humor and heart, 'Ancestral Intervention' follows the story of Malaika as she tries to enjoy a date with her boyfriend despite the constant meddling of the ghost of her strong-willed, traditional grandmother. With a clash of old vs. new, this vibrant story delivers laughs, warmth, and a fresh take on generational values.

Michelle Muli, Director (Kenya)

Best Student Film (College)

Blacklisted (8:48)

In a world where everyone is labeled a terrorist, autistic computer hacker turned assassin, Nat Cummings a/k/a P.B.Soldier (Tobias Truvillion), must navigate a society on the brink of collapse to uncover the truth and fight for his redemption.

Naseed Gifted & Jazyl Homavazir, Director (Newark, NJ & India)

Best Animation

Woke (1:26)

An African American artist killed by a police officer is brought back to life by his goth Dr. Frankenstein-Esq sister.

Don Frederick Dixon, Director (USA)

Best Animated Short



3:00 PM - 4:55 PM

VOICE OVER WORKSHOP: BREATHING LIFE INTO ANIMATED CHARACTERS

Hallway

Legendary actors teach vocal alchemy: Transform your voice into A.I. deities, space rebels, and orisha-inspired heroes.

Dayveonne Bussey (Voice Actor/Film Producer, Director of Khem Animation Film Festival)

HB Gibson (Voice Actor)

4:00 PM - 4:55 PM

BLACK WOMEN LEVEL UP: CONQUERING THE \$200B GAMING INDUSTRY

Main Stage (Theater 5) | ShaQ Theater

Join us for an exclusive session with a recruiter from Xbox Gaming who will offer expert guidance on landing interviews in the gaming industry. While she is not hiring for specific roles at Microsoft, she will provide valuable insights into the recruitment process and personalized feedback on your materials. Bring your resume! Have a link to your digital portfolio ready! Whether you're just starting out or looking to level up your career, this is a great opportunity to get direct advice from someone in the field.

Venesha Morris (Recruiter, XBox/Microsoft)

4:00 PM – 4:55 PM

KHEM ANIMATION FILM FESTIVAL SELECTIONS powered by Black Star Creative Collective

KAFF Stage (Theater 6)

Film Block GOLD: ECHOES OF THE ANCIENTS: VISIONS & VESSELS (PG-13)

The Maze (2:02)

A man tries to escape a maze that's overlooked by giant rat scientists, all while a spider tracks him down.

Josh Pyun, Director (Tenafly, NJ)

Best Animated Short

Take a Drag (6:52)

"Take a Drag" is a short animation which illustrates the pervasive negative impact of media on individuals and society.

Amir Vafaei, Director (Iran)

Best Sound

**The Demon King (10:55)**

Deep in the Demon realm, King Raysen has observed the beings of earth with interest for many years.

He can tell by the energy forces crackling in the atmosphere that a new threat is afoot. He has long had his eye on the young Amatsu and Neo, watching them grow into strong young heroes. As they grow in strength, he worries that his days will be numbered if he fails to cut them down before they grow too powerful.

Jonathan Alcantara Tavaréz, Director (Perth Amboy, NJ)
Best Student Film (High School)

Virus (10:51)

In the futuristic world of highly advanced technology, human beings are transformed into mechanical lifeforms. A deadly electronic virus suddenly breaks out and the entire mechanical civilisation is on the verge of destruction.

Yufeng WANG, Director (China)
Best Film, 3D Short

Woke (1:26)

An African American artist killed by a police officer is brought back to life by his goth Dr. Frankenstein-Esq sister.

Don Frederick Dixon, Director (USA)
Best Animated Short

A Tale of the Stolen Peach (16:24)

Mr. Fox rides on performing the trick of stolen peaches from heaven, breaks phantom spells with illusions, and soothe the ghosts trapped in an illusionary world in a deserted village.

Jiaguo WANG, Director (China)

Blacklisted (8:48)

In a world where everyone is labeled a terrorist, autistic computer hacker turned assassin, Nat Cummings a/k/a P.B.Soldier (Tobias Truvillion), must navigate a society on the brink of collapse to uncover the truth and fight for his redemption.

Naseed Gifted & Jazyl Homavazir, Director (Newark, NJ & India)
Best Animation

Total RunTime: (40:56)



4:00 PM - 4:55 PM

KAFF IMMERSIVE: VIRTUAL REALITY FILM SCREENING

Immersive Stage (Theater 7)

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Ancestral Intervention (3:00)

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Michelle Muli, Director (Kenya)

Best Student Film (College)

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In a world where everyone is labeled a terrorist, autistic computer hacker turned assassin, Nat Cummings a/k/a P.B.Soldier (Tobias Truvillion), must navigate a society on the brink of collapse to uncover the truth and fight for his redemption.

Naseed Gifted & Jazyl Homavazir, Director (Newark, NJ & India)

Best Animation

Woke (1:26)

An African American artist killed by a police officer is brought back to life by his goth Dr. Frankenstein-Esq sister.

Don Frederick Dixon, Director (USA)

Best Animated Short

5:00 PM - 5:55 PM

KHEM FEST STEAM LAB

ANCESTRAL BLUEPRINTS: 3D PRINTING AFROFUTURES powered by Digi2U

Gallery

Hands-on workshop where attendees design & print wearable Afrofuturist artifacts using ancestral symbols – merging ancient wisdom with cutting-edge fabrication.

Justice Cerami (Founder of Digi2U)



5:00 PM - 5:55 PM

KAFF CREATOR ROUNDTABLE: ANIMATING OUR GALAXY

Main Stage (Theater 5) | ShaQ Theater

Directors behind 2025's most groundbreaking animated shorts reveal their creative pipelines – from sketchbook to screen.

KAFF 2025 Directors

5:00 PM - 5:55 PM

COSMIC COUTURE: AFROFUTURIST COSPLAY PARADE & COMPETITION

KAFF Stage (Theater 6)

Strut your original designs celebrating Diasporic tech-gods and cyber-queens – prize for "Most Visionary Ensemble"!

Peace Moore (Host, Master of Ceremonies)

5:00 PM - 5:55 PM

WOMEN INVEST IN WOMEN: THE \$250K CREATOR FUND

Immersive Stage (Theater 7)

Angel investors and Entrepreneurs reveal how Black women fund gaming studios & animation ventures – and how YOU can obtain government funding.

6:00 PM - 6:55 PM

8TH ANNUAL KHEM ANIMATION FILM FESTIVAL AWARDS CEREMONY

ShaQ Theater (Theater 5)

Featuring 25 films from 15 different countries.

Awards and Prizes for the following categories: Best Animated Short, Best Film, 2D (Short), Best Film, 3D (Short), Best Student Film: High School/College (Short), Best Story, Best Sound, Best Music and Best Design.

7:00 PM – 7:15 PM

KHEM FEST VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

Gallery

Celebrating all of the people that assisted in making the 9th Annual Khem Fest and 6th Annual Khem Animation Film Festival a tremendous success.



Areas of Focus

S.T.E.A.M. & Tech Innovation

1. Ancestral Blueprints: 3D Printing Afrofutures

Hands-on workshop where attendees design & print wearable Afrofuturist artifacts using ancestral symbols – merging ancient wisdom with cutting-edge fabrication. Powered by:

Operation Grow

2. Creative Arts in AI: Ethical Tools for the Next Generation

*Exploring bias-free AI art platforms to co-create visionary narratives – learn how Black creators harness AI as a justice-centered storytelling tool. Facilitator: **Jojo Abenaavi Wright***

3. Mixed Reality, Real Impact: How VR/AR Are Changing Our World

Live demo of Extended Reality (VR/AR) tech crafting Afrofuturist environments – step into realms where Sankofa meets cybernetics.

*Facilitator: **John Robinson**, C.E.O. Gotta Go Gaming, LLC.*

4. Brick by Sacred Brick: Afrofuturist Architecture with LEGO

*Design solar-powered smart villages and cosmic temples using fractal geometries from Great Zimbabwe, Nubian pyramids & wakandan vibranium tech. Collaborative build challenge for all ages - where ancestral algorithms meet modular innovation. Powered by **Operation Grow***

5. Vibranium Alchemy: Afrofuturist Slime Lab

Engineer programmable “vibranium” slime using thermochromic pigments & biodegradable glitter - explore polymer science while creating your own Wakandan inspired energy source.

*Facilitator: Professor **Wahab Ashraf***

Gaming Focus

6. Black Women Level Up: Conquering the \$200B Gaming Industry

Join us for an exclusive session with a recruiter from Xbox Gaming who will offer expert guidance on landing interviews in the gaming industry. While she's not hiring for specific roles at Microsoft, she'll provide valuable insights into the recruitment process and personalized feedback on your materials. Bring your resume! Have a link to your digital portfolio ready! Whether you're just starting out or looking to level up your career, this is a great opportunity to get direct advice from someone in the field.

*Facilitator: **Venesha Morris**, Recruiter, Xbox*



7. Game Jam: Codes of the Ancestors Showcase

High School students debut Afrofuturist games fusing Adinkra symbology with Godot – witness S.T.E.A.M. innovation born in 24 hours! Facilitator: **Jojo Abenaavi Wright**

Animation & Film

8. Khem Animation Film Festival (KAFF) SELECTS

Film Block 1 (BLUE) : **ANCESTRAL WHISPERS: LEGENDS FOR THE NEXT GENERATION (G)**

Film Block 2 (PURPLE): **CYBER SOUL REBELS: A NEW GENESIS (PG-13)**

Film Block 3 (GOLD): **ECHOES OF THE ANCIENTS: VISIONS & VESSELS (PG-13)**

9. KAFF Creator Roundtable: Animating Our Galaxy

Directors behind 2025's most groundbreaking animated shorts reveal their creative pipelines – from sketchbook to screen.

10. Adapt or Ascend: Turning Your Novel into Animation (Teddy Ninja Case Study)

The "Flashbang Universe" team decodes how award-winning Black literature becomes streaming gold – with exclusive previews! Facilitator: **Rorie Still**

11. KAFF Immersive: Virtual Reality Film Screening

Strap in for a VR journey through KAFF's elite selections – experience animation that surrounds, heals, and revolutionizes. powered by Channel 97

12. Khem Animation Film Fest (KAFF) Awards Ceremony

Awards and Prizes for the following categories: Best Animated Short, Best Film, 2D (Short), Best Film, 3D (Short), Best Student Film: High School/College (Short), Best Story, Best Sound, Best Music and Best Design.

Comics & Storytelling

13. Comic Book Writing Masterclass: Crafting Our Heroes' Journey Powered by: Newark Office of Comprehensive Community Education (OCCE)

Structure your graphic novel with pro writers: Develop mythos-rich characters who defy tropes and wield ancestral power. Facilitators: **Yumy Odom and Akinseye Brown**



14. Comic Creation Station: Draw Your Hero's Odyssey

Design a 3-panel Afrofuturist comic strip using pre-printed templates & digital tools. Keep your masterpiece or add it to our collective "Khem Fest 2025 Anthology" mural!

*Facilitator: **Suliman Onque**, Owner of On-Q Comics*

Embodied Arts & Community

15. Kemetic Yoga: Movement as Cosmic Technology

*Activate your Sekhem (life force) through postures from Temple walls – align your vessel for creative abundance. Facilitator: **Jojo Abenaavi Wright**, Founder of Abenaavi Arts, Architect Microsoft*

16. Warrior's Grace: Afrofuturist Martial Arts Demo

*Kupigana Ngumi Moyo Kazi masters & sci-fi choreographers showcase combat as storytelling – how fight scenes encode liberation theology. Facilitator: **Mrithi Mfundishi Khalil Maasi**, CEO of Pan African Martial Arts Federation*

17. Cosmic Couture: Afrofuturist Cosplay Parade & Competition

*Strut your original designs celebrating Diasporic tech-gods and cyber-queens – prize for "Most Visionary Ensemble"! Facilitator: **Peace Moore***

18. KHEM Graffiti

*The Khem community comes together develop some ancient glyphs. Facilitator: **Victor Enoch***

19. Wakanda Writing

*Learn how write in Wakandan also you will have an opportunity to get Medu NTR (Hieroglyphics), Wakandan or Adinkra body temporary tattoos. Powered by: **Operation Grow***

Voice Acting & Investment

20. Voice Over Workshop: Breathing Life into Animated Characters

*Legendary actors teach vocal alchemy: Transform your voice into A.I. deities, space rebels, and orisha-inspired heroes. Facilitated by: **Dayveonne Bussey and HB Gibson**,*

21. Women Invest in Women: The \$250K Creator Fund

*Angel investors and Entrepreneurs reveal how Black women fund gaming studios & animation ventures – and how YOU can obtain government funding. Facilitated by: **Kwamara Thompson***



22. Beyond the Cape: Tier Your Favorite Black Characters + Rewrite the Canon

Rank heroes/ villains from film, comics & gaming in real-time tiers (S to C) - then collaborate with writers to redesign underused characters using Afrofuturist lenses.

23. KHEM FEST Volunteer Recognition

Celebrating all of the people that assisted in making the 11th Annual Khem Fest and Khem Animation Film Festival (KAFF) a tremendous success.



2025 Vendors List

ThaGataNegrra #12
Black Star Creative Collective #10
PBS STEAM #11
Ashley Taylor #13
Orb's Eye Board Games #14
Rorie Still #20
EarthTone Kingdom #21
Digi2u
Looking Glass Graphics
Phenomenal Books #28
Suliman Onque/ On-Q Comics #27
DiasporaCon #26
Kurt Bollers #25
Adhim DeVeaux #24
William Cooper #23
Newark Office of Comprehensive Community Education (OCCE) #18 & 19
Gotta Go Gaming #17
Game Jam #15 & 16
ECBACC #20



Acknowledgements:

First and foremost, we would like to thank the Creator for making all things possible. Thank you to the fans of black animation, gaming and comics, for allowing us to create this experience. **Frank Gonzalez**, of Cityplex-12 Newark, **The Honorable Mayor Ras J. Baraka**, City of Newark. **Dr. Sharnee Brown** and my mother **Gwen**. We could not have done this without you. The Khem Fest Planning Committee (**Dayveonne Bussey, Peace, Jacqueline Bussey, Sharonda Allen, JoJo Abenaavi Wright, Tia Hanks, Rafeeza Shahabudeen, Ivie Medina, Victor Enoch, Shakira Hogan, Jacob Rose, Amir Billups, Justice, Dilettante Bass, Khaalis Finney, Bakari & Layla**) for their countless hours of work. Thank you to **Bashir Muhammad Ptah Akinyele** for leading the libation. Thank you to the student volunteers from **Science Park High School**, Phocused Black Star Media Interns (**Ivie, Marcus, Miles, Rihanna, Sandy, Damiano, and Zachary**) and the volunteers for being a great help in making the 11th Annual Khem Fest a tremendous success. The founders of Khem Fest, **Naseed Gifted**, Creative Director of Black Star Creative Collective and **Emeka Chiedu**, Vice President of PBS STEAM for putting children first by organizing an event that provides exposure to the comic industry and assisting everyone in "Unlocking the Hero within". Our sponsors are **Prudential Community Grants, Newark Office of Comprehensive Community Education, Newark Office of Film and TV, Black Star Creative Collective, PBS Media, PBS STEAM, Abenaavi Arts, Operation Grow, IGDA NJIT, NBSE-NJIT, NJIT Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), Temple of Hip Hop, Ancient African Formula, Cityplex-12 Newark, Source of Knowledge Bookstore, Looking Glass Graphics, First Kiss Event Planning, FYREBRND, THINK MEDIA & Digi2u**. Our vendors and business owners, we could not have done this without you: **DaVonne Salley, Lamont Porterfield, Georgette Bradshaw, Aminata Dukuray, Marco Hall, Ashley Taylor, EarthTone Kingdom, Keith Atkins, Jaja Bolden, Kurt Bollers, Adhim DeVeaux and William Cooper**; to the extremely talented **BEATS BY J (Jalen Taylor), DJ FAUZI, LMNOP** for headlining our event. Our panelists/presenters (**Legion of Boom, Bashir Akinyele, John Robinson, Rorie Still, Omar Clifton, ThaGataNeggra, Z-Best, M'Shai Writes Sci-Fi, Khalil Maasi, Wahab Ashraf, Kwamara Thompson, Venesha Morris, Yumy Odom, HB Gibson and Akinseye Brown**) for donating their time and energy to make this festival dynamic, and **Sharonda Allen & Peace**, for being the Mistress & Master of Ceremonies and taking our festival to the next level. We have a relentless focus on aspiring the next generation of creators/young engineers to pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (S.T.E.M.). Last but not least, we would like to thank all of you for experiencing the 11th Annual Khem Fest with us. We look forward to you joining us again next year.

Khem Fest Planning Committee:

Dayveonne Bussey
Sharonda Allen
Rafeeza Shahabudeen
Shakira Hogan
Justice
Source of Knowledge (Masani & Patrice)
Layla G.

Peace Moore
JoJo Abenaavi Wright
Ivie Medina
Jacob Rosa
Dilettante Bass
Rihanna Bryce

Jacqueline Bussey
Tia Hanks
Victor Enok Gavilanes
Amir Billups
Khaalis Finney
Bakari G.
Zachary Ament

-With Extreme Gratitude

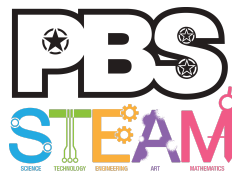
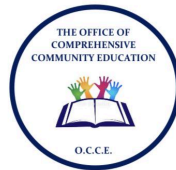
Naseed Gifted

Black Star Creative Collective

"The best way to predict the future is to create it."



SPONSORS



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