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## Black Leadership zine

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BLACK LEADERSHIP



A ZINE PROJECT BY

Aleem A. / Hunter R. / Gabriella C.

POL 296R

GRAPHICS, CLIP-ART AND RENDERS DRAWN BY  
GABRIELLA C.



# Table of Contents

Page 1 ...	Introduction
Page 2-3 ...	Clyde Simien / HR
Page 4-5 ...	Misty Copeland / HR
Page 6-7 ...	John Lewis / AA
Page 7-8 ...	The Syracuse 8 / AA
Page 9-10 ...	Art in Protest / GC
Page 11-12 ...	Afrofuturism / GC

# Introduction

Leadership takes forms in different ways where the art of languages whispers subjectivity.

This zine project takes various definitions of leadership and presents it through different lens of a political United States.



# Clyde Simien: An Example of Black Leadership

by Hunter Richard

Strong examples and representation of black leadership can be found all around us. However, based on the lack of recognition they can have within society, we should take more time to acknowledge those black leaders who have an impact in our own communities. An example of someone who I believe to be a perfect model of both black leadership and excellence in my community is my uncle, Clyde Simien, an attorney at law. Since the year of 1987, Mr. Simien has been a founding partner in his law firm called Simien & Minix. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting from the University of Southwestern Louisiana, which is now known as the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. He, then, furthered his education and graduated from Southern University Law Center as a member of the Moot Court Board and an Editor of the Southern University Law Review. Following law school, Simien got a job as a law clerk in the 16th Judicial District Court for Richard Haik which consisted of St. Martin, St. Mary, and Iberia Parishes. With the responsibility of prosecuting all juvenile matters in St. Martin Parish, he served as an Assistant District Attorney for 21 years in the 16th Judicial District. Throughout the years, my uncle Clyde Simien has proven to be an excellent representation of black leadership, and I see him as such a positive influence for other young Black men and women to aspire for goals they wish to achieve. With his approval, I conducted a short interview with my uncle, asking him questions around the idea of race within our political systems, and how that has affected his experiences as a Black man in a predominately white field of work. He was able to give me insight on the many hardships he faced, while also expressing how those events shaped him into the man he is today.

**Richard:** What inspired you to want to become an attorney?

**Simien:** One of my biggest role models was Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. and even though he was not an attorney, he advocated for the disadvantaged and I was inspired to be like him in that capacity. I also came to know that becoming an attorney I could help a multitude of people from all walks of life.

**Richard:** How was your college experience, and what expectations did you have for yourself during this time?

**Simien:** My college experience molded me into the man I am today. I along with some of my friends founded the Black Progressive Students Association (BPS) while I attended the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (Known then as University of Southwestern Louisiana). I noticed how the retention rate of minority students was very low because of them not being able to make the grades to stay in college. Our program set up tutoring for minority students and mentored students who struggled academically. The program still exists today.

**Richard:** What obstacles, if any, have you faced in your predominantly white field of work?

**Simien:** I could write a book on this subject but the main obstacle would be not being given the chance as my white counterparts had. After I graduated law school and passed the bar exam I sent over a 100 resumes with very little interest from employers even though I graduated 5th in my class. I eventually got a law clerk position 1 hour away from where I lived. Immediately I learned that I would have to work three times as hard to achieve the goals I set for myself.

**Richard:** In your own words, what is black excellence and what does it mean to you?

**Simien:** Black Excellence means always striving for the best in your actions and paving the way for the next generation by setting examples in your career, with your family and in your community.

What are your views on the topic of race within American political development?

**Simien:** I strongly believe that minorities are at a disadvantage in the American political world, we do not have the same support system as the other individuals.

**Richard:** What work can be done to possibly improve the current state of our political system?

**Simien:** In our state new boundaries were drawn for minority districts so that we could have Judges, Senators and Representatives that represent us. This has been very impactful for these districts.

**Richard:** Are there any policies that you strongly agree or disagree with that concern the topic of race?

**Simien:** My thoughts are everyone should be given a fair chance period and that race should not be a factor. However in today's society this is not the case.

**Richard:** Do you feel any pressure to be a role model for other young black men, and do you see yourself as a good representation of black leadership within your community?

**Simien:** I do not feel any pressure to be a role model for other young black men in my community, I feel this is a duty and a moral obligation to be a good human being for others to see. Although I have a thriving law practice and I am also a developer, I mentor several young men. This is something I will continue to do as I want to help as many people as I can.

**Richard:** If there are any other stories or experiences you would like to share, feel free to share them. If not, we're all done here!

**Simien:** I would say that I have been blessed throughout my life. I have parents who instilled morals and values into me and have supported me my entire life. My wife and children inspire me to continue on the path that God has given me. I have a spiritual life that has blossomed and continues to be an integral part of my daily routine. I plan to give my knowledge to others in hopes that it helps them avoid pitfalls.





# Misty Copeland: The Activist

by Hunter Richard  
photos Rosalie O'Conner

<http://www.bloomburg.com/news/article/2021-01-13/misty-copeland-on-how-mae-informs-the-art-and-her-activism>  
<http://foxnews.com/2021/01/13/misty-copeland-activism-2021-01-13/103889>  
<http://foxnews.com/2021/01/13/misty-copeland-activism-2021-01-13/103889>

Misty Copeland, known for being the first black female principal dancer for the American Ballet Theater, has quickly become a role model for young black girls, represented as a strong black woman who can achieve her dreams within white institutions. She has also been labeled as an activist, as she openly speaks on her political views and the disparities, she, and other Black people face within society. In her memoir, "Life in Motion: An Unlikely Ballerina", she expresses the struggles she encountered in the ballet world as a young black girl, including discussions she had about the sanctity of Black Girl Magic and the Black Lives Matter movements with former President Obama. Despite Copeland being perceived as different in her field of work for most of her life, she used her negative experiences as fuel to succeed in environments that worked against her.

In the year of 1982, Misty Copeland was born in Kansas City, but grew up in San Pedro, California with her single mother and five siblings. She struggled as a child having to grow up homeless and constantly moving between different motel rooms or staying with friends. However, she found joy in the art of ballet at the age of thirteen, which is a late age to start ballet training. Despite the hardships she faced in the ballet world, she recalls her training being a positive experience for her when she was a child. In her new children's book "Bunheads", Copeland mentions her first ballet instructor, Cindy Bradley, as someone who "always saw beauty of students who may not have fit the stereotypical look of a ballet dancer." Her ballet teacher was a main reason for why Copeland was able to have such a positive experience before she moved to New York just four years later. After years of hard work and determination, she became a part of the American Ballet Theater on June 30, 2015 and represents people of color succeeding in white institutions. Although Copeland becoming the first black female principal dancer in ABT is beyond a huge accomplishment to achieve, it comes with a lot of responsibility and pressure. However, she has taken on the responsibility, and it shows through her activism and public statements made on her political standpoints.

Misty Copeland became an ambassador for the athletic brand Under Armour in the year of 2014, as they were impressed with her abilities and believed she would be a good representation for their brand. Although her experience during her partnership with Under Armour was positive overall, she did not support all statements that have been made by their company. In 2017, the CEO of Under Armour, Kevin Plank, wrote statements that spoke positively on President Trump's "pro-business" stance, stating, "To have such a pro-business president is something that is a real asset for the country... People can really grab that opportunity." Plank also responded to questions about the Trump Administration's dedication to building the wall along, stating, "He wants to build things. He wants to make bold decisions and be really decisive." Copeland responded to his remarks through a statement made in an Instagram post, sharing her strong disapproval of Plank's views.

In her post, she mentions holding a private conversation with Plank to discuss his statements and expects for him to release a public statement reflecting on the remarks made about his support of the Trump Administration. Although it is unclear why Copeland's partnership with Under Armour ended in 2019, some believe it may have to do with the remarks made by Kevin Plank. When asked about her departure from company a year later in an interview, Copeland wanted to make it clear that, as a Black athlete and an ambassador for Under Armour, she did not agree with the beliefs of President Trump. However, the company has since continued to support Copeland after their separation, stating how she was a phenomenal partner and are excited to see what else she accomplishes.

Misty Copeland's activism and political stances can be seen through the relationship she has with The Obamas, as she has visited with them on multiple occasions and sees them as an inspiration. In 2015, she discussed the difficulty that came with being the only African American in almost every environment of classical ballet with former President Obama, and the weight she bares from this racial indifference. On the other hand, Copeland expresses, "...but it's also allowed me to have this fire inside me that I don't know I would have if I wasn't in this field... Having a platform and voice to be seen by people beyond the classical ballet world has really been my power, showing it's possible to have any skin complexion, to have a healthy body image." She feels as though both her and The Obamas have commonality in being a positive influence for those who are different within these predominately white institutions. She continues this idea, stating, "I feel like that's what we stand for, and that's what we should represent: acceptance and diversity and progression."

Within the past couple years, Copeland has only continued to further her progress in having more open conversations about the lack of diversity and discrimination that people of color experience in white institutions, specifically those concerning classical ballet. She continues this thought by mentioning how she's seen black girls get fired or discriminated against simply because of their skin complexion.

For Copeland to try and make a positive difference in the ballet world, she chose to take on the responsibility of having more discussions about race in these institutions. Following the tragic murder of George Floyd, Copeland, for the first time, felt comfortable enough to hold open conversations about race and be heard by her peers. She brings up the fact that all the stories told through the art of ballet are old, white American stories that have nothing to do with people of color. She hopes that these conversations can help people to acknowledge the disparities people of color, especially African Americans, face in the world of classical ballet, and promote the idea of telling new stories that highlight people of color. Ultimately, Copeland's goal in her activism is to create a positive impact and possibly change people's lives, which is a goal that she has and will continue to accomplish in years to come.





# John Lewis: Selma to Montgomery

by Alcem A.



Up until his death in the year 2020, John Lewis served as a member of the United States House of Representatives. In his life, he became a member of the Democratic Party and was elected to Congress in the late 1980s. He has the distinction of serving no less than 17 terms in the House of Representatives. He was the representative of most of Atlanta and the long length of his services towards his country ensured that he was given the title of dean in relation to Georgia's 5th congressional delegation. He has also managed to serve as the Chief Deputy Whip and the Senior Chief Deputy Whip of the Democratic Party. Due to his services, he has been bestowed with a number of awards, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom but his greatest service to the nation remains his participation in the Selma to Montgomery marches wherein he led the first of the three marches.

First of all, it is important to understand how Lewis was able to become a symbol of African American success in the United States. It is obvious that the reason for Lewis's success pertains to his leadership qualities, which ensured that he was able to climb to the highest level of success in a country stifled with racial discrimination. Lewis's leadership abilities were apparent in his early life and education wherein he was determined to become a preacher to the point that he would preach to the chickens found on his farm. Recalling his childhood, Lewis said that he had very few books in his house. He says, "I remember in 1956 when I was 16 years old, going down to the public library, trying to get library cards, and we were told that the libraries were whites-only and not for coloreds" (Dwyer). His leadership abilities are apparent in his determination to get himself educated and to protect his community. In order to achieve this goal, he became a part of the Nashville Student Movement wherein he organized sit-ins against racial discrimination. Later on, he joined the Freedom Riders in order to go to New Orleans and protest against racial discrimination by questioning the policies of Southern states.

It is these leadership abilities that were reflected in the Selma to Montgomery march which was organized by Lewis. In these marches, Lewis depicts a determination to fight for black rights, no matter the cost to his personal self. This is reflected in the first of the three Selma to Montgomery marches where Lewis urged African Americans to participate in the marches because he believed in the mass mobilization of people (John Lewis). As Lewis was a member of the Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee (SNCC), he became a part of these marches due to the fact that he, via the SNCC, was responsible for providing logistics to the marchers such as wide-area telephone services and most critically, the help of the Medical Committee on Human Rights. This depicts how Lewis was not only committed to fighting for black rights but also that he was committed to safeguarding the lives of the African American community. Moreover, the events of the Bloody Sunday that followed led to an abhorrent treatment of all African Americans including Lewis. During the police crackdown on the protestors, Lewis suffered from a fracture to the skull (John Lewis), an injury so severe that he had to carry its scars for the rest of his life which shows his commitment toward protecting black rights.

Other leadership abilities of Lewis that were obvious during the Selma to Montgomery marches include his intelligence, his perception, and determination. In terms of intelligence, Lewis was smart enough to notice the impact of mass mobilization and thus he urged his fellow African Americans to gather together in order to fight for their rights. Moreover, he knew how to motivate people which is apparent when he writes "This is one more example of the inhuman, animal-like treatment of the Negro people of Selma, Alabama. This nation has always come to the aid of people in foreign lands who are gripped by a reign of tyranny. Can this nation do less for the people of Selma?" ("Civil Rights Movement History & Timeline (Selma & the March to Montgomery)"). As far as perception is concerned, he was perceptive enough to notice the distress and hopelessness of the black community and thus he urged them to not give up hope. He was also determined to fight for black rights during these marches as he not only organized the marches but led them himself. After the arrests of fellow protestors, he led the protests of the Bloody Sunday himself, knowing that they could prove to be dangerous to his person.

It can be said that John Lewis is a symbol of black leadership and that his services to the nation are apparent in his participation in the Selma to Montgomery marches. While Lewis has been awarded many honors due to his countless services to the nation, he became a symbol of African American success via his determination and willingness to step up in leadership roles. As a young student, he joined the SNCC to fight for the rights of black people and continued on as an adult. In the Selma to Montgomery marches, he depicted a fierce protectiveness over his community and provided them with the logistics necessary for marching. Also, he showed a willingness to put his own life at risk while depicting the traits of intelligence, perception, and determination. Thus, Lewis depicts that it is possible to be a successful African American in this country if one depicts morality and courage in tough times.



# The Syracuse 8

by Alcom A.

Black American history is so complicated that many Black communities tend to struggle morally, culturally, and politically. Within this culture, there have been accomplishments. The past of the United States is littered with examples of black people standing up for human rights that what is right and what is wrong in the past and conquering the ground despite the peaks and troughs they encountered along the way. Countless blacks have developed the phrase "black excellence" to describe outstanding groups and individuals who promote a favorable image of the black culture and ethnicity. This word has been ingrained in mainstream black communities, used to spotlight, and praise the achievements of the African On social networking sites and in major media outlets, there is a strong presence of the American community. It's a Black community celebration of achievement. Its goal, meanwhile, is far broader than merely celebrating individual accomplishments. Black greatness is a mentality accompanied by behaviors that demonstrate tenacity and leadership. The ultimate goal of these efforts is to help the African American society.

Several black personalities and leadership have made significant contributions to the black population. In many respects, these black Americans were able to break down obstacles by sharing their intellectual, psychological, and ideological perspectives on the situation of racial minorities with a larger audience. Syracuse 8 is one of the most notable events in racial issues. The Syracuse 8 stood up to injustice and were penalized as a result of their actions. Nine African American football players opposed Syracuse University's discriminatory practices in 1970. They were mistakenly dubbed the Syracuse 8 by the media, who were unaware that another injured player was involved in the movement (Davis & Christopher, 2016). The nine were never officially penalized, but as a consequence of their resistance, none of them were ever able to realize their once-fanciful dreams of playing professional football.

On September 26, 1970, the Syracuse University football team entered the competition for the Orange's home opener with nine excellent players clearly missing from the lineup. These nine black guys were not on the stadium because they had decided to boycott Syracuse University's football team till its racial abuse of players was addressed.

Davis, Christopher R. "Leveling the Playing Field: The Story of the Syracuse 8 by David Marc," *Journal of Sport History* 43.3 (2016): 358-359.

King, La'Carra J. "Black history is not American history: Toward a framework of Black historical consciousness." *Social Education* 54.6 (2020): 323-341.

Marc, David. *Leveling the Playing Field: The Story of the Syracuse 8*. Syracuse University Press, 2015.

The nine protesting teammates, who were erroneously dubbed the Syracuse 8, paid a high personal price for their cause (Davis & Christopher, 2016). Greg Allen, Richard Bulls, John Godbolt, Dana Harrell, John Lobon, Clarence "Bucky" McGill, A. Alif Muhammad, Duane Walker, and Ron Womack made significant contributions to Syracuse University that resulted in numerous much-needed improvements.

Beginning in the fall of 1968, a handful of black football players on the squad voiced their worries about race prejudice on the squad. Racism in the formation of the team's active board and road games protocols, the use of racial epithets by the assistant coaches, race inequities in disciplinary measures, and a lack of professional assistance and competent medical treatment for all athletes were among the complaints stated by these athletes. Despite frequent pleas by these athletes to employ a black associate football coach, Coach Ben Schwartzwalder resisted till the University administration forced him to do so.

Nine black footballers organized a boycotting of spring football training in April 1970. Following many discussions with Chancellor Corbally and other University officials, expectations were low and animosity grew. The boycotted footballers declined to accept a pledge of allegiance that blamed them for the dispute. Their four major demands were to have equal access to university tutoring as their white peers, to receive proper medical care for all of their team members, to have beginning stances based solely on significance, and to racially incorporate the assistant coaches, which had been all-white for over seventy years. Advocates turned out for Syracuse's opening game against Kansas in the fall of that year (Marc & David 2015). Protestors threw rocks at police, who shot stun grenades into the throng, but the protests stayed calm till fighting began on Marshall Avenue.

A detailed inquiry was undertaken by the Panel on Claims of Institutional Racism in the Football Team, which was formed by Corbally in the autumn. "Racial prejudice in the Syracuse University Football Program is authentic, prolonged, primarily unintended, and maintained and complex unknowingly by so many ways of acting prevalent in United states athletic competition and long-standing at Syracuse University," (Marc & David 2015) the panel found in a report published on December 10, 1970. The report proposed adjustments to Syracuse University sports, which Chancellor Corbally supported, after determining the athletic department "had shown an unnecessary lack of compassion" and was unduly contemptuous of complaints voiced by black athletes on the team.

Allen, Bulls, Godbolt, Harrell, Lobon, McGill, Muhammad, Walker, and Womack took a brave stance that resulted in actual change at Syracuse University. The University realized that the Syracuse 8's actions were justifiable, and that the reforms they campaigned for were necessary (Davis & Christopher, 2016). The Syracuse 8 was awarded the Chancellor's Medal for Extraordinary Courage by Syracuse University in 2006, in recognition of their achievements. Despite being permitted to return to the university and squad, the most of the nine players never performed for Syracuse again. Furthermore, none of the players have ever played a down in the NFL, despite the fact that several of them were considered top prospects before the protests. Their football careers were jeopardized as a result of it. The Syracuse 8 put their careers on hold for the greater good.





# Art in Protest

by Gabriella Carrera  
photography by Graham  
Kilmer



Lo Harris - @loharris\_art



Art is a language that never had its limits when it comes to communicating various messages. Art exists to help people communicate with one's emotions or through each other—other art exists to respond to others, or things in the world around them, and some art exists simply because creativity does not need a reason to exist. In the context of Leadership and Art within the Black Lives Matter movement, art fills out these many characteristics, but most of all—is created to serve as a response to the issues and contexts surrounding the black community.



Danielle Coke - @ohhappydani



In contrast, how do art and leadership hold each other up? While it is true that art can be timeless without its creator, the creators of the piece typically lead a movement. Leadership though, can have a more specific meaning, quite often translating to a position that acts in moving or pursuing change.

By making this art, no matter the form it takes—is taking an initiative that can count as leadership, and that kind of art inspires others to follow suit, especially because no two pieces are quite like each other.



A study conducted by Vance and Potash had stated that many of the art created for BLM and or by BLM can fit into 6 categories, which each category represented by a theme: social change, identity affirmation, root problems, pleas/aspirations, emotions and in more recent times, COVID-related fears, and emotions.

Art is not an uncommon way that people cope with the traumas of the world, and some of the following, are artists listed are very well known for responding and acting to BLM within the context of the United States.

Danielle Coke is probably not an unfamiliar name to those who frequent the internet, especially Instagram. She is a black artist based in Atlanta, Georgia. Coke claims that much of her work is based in social justice, faith and even to the smallest details that surround self-care. The following piece highlights Coke's activism through her art, more specifically concerning the nature of black youth being perceived as a threat and are often victims of police brutality.

Her work isn't limited to just what she is able to share on Instagram though, much of what she creates can be bought on her online store. The themes throughout her work promote social justice and equality for all, and proof that art isn't just limited through physical mediums.

The nature of social media causes news to spread fast and allows for an audience to grow to a size and amplify said reaction. The news and focus on the death of George Floyd shook a nation and highlighted the realities behind police brutality. The events that followed included more than just protest in conversation but protest through art. The rage, the fear and anger and the grief followed more than just the circles of Minneapolis, Minnesota. It took to the courts, and people portrayed a response through art.

The following is another piece from Instagram, this time, an illustrator by the name of Lo Harris. Her art is a drawing of a black woman, particularly a protester, raising their fist. Above her, is the word "JUSTICE" in all capital letters and in a bold black that pops against the mustard yellow background. Without the proper context, one could be confused as to what Harris means in their art,

In a similar fashion, here is another piece of art by Harris concerning protests and the search for justice. There is no caption to provide the right words that portray Harris' state of mind, but despite the simplicity of this piece—one can tell what she thinks, and many others. "WE. WANT. JUSTICE." Three words assigned to three protestors, each one taking a home on their signs. While one stands incomplete without the other, together they form a sentence that shows strength in numbers; a cause that fairs better when it unites many. This message alone, is a sign of leadership that takes form in the art that Harris shares with those willing to listen and those wanting change.

And now, art and leadership in the literal sense. In the community of Milwaukee, artist Sam Alford and other local artists unveiled a giant mural with many Black Leaders throughout the United States. An important part to highlight about this piece is that it was revealed during the 80th day of protest concerning the death of George Floyd. Much like the previously mentioned pieces, there is nothing complex or surreal to try and understand about the mural. Painted and paint sprayed, to the finest of features, the complexity of this piece really lies in the stylization, but the message stands still. Powerful leaders are memorialized on a community that praises them through the art the community came together for.



# Afrofuturism

Explored by  
Gabriella Carrera

Art takes many forms and isn't just characterized to the mediums it can take but the genres and themes it can tackle. Out of those genres lies Afrofuturism; and like Black Lives Matter, is a movement and idea that combines futuristic elements and science fiction characteristics. Afrofuturism can take forms through literature, art and even music. Scholars have stated that Afrofuturism also for the exploration and imagining of a redefined Black experience and others have claimed it to be "an imaginative artistic movement has a sankofic quality. [The] West African term and symbol emphasizes the power of heritage and ancestral connective tissue to ensure that Black people can claim an empowered future" (EllaMaria Ray, The Art & Politics of Afrofuturism).

Although a relatively new aesthetic, seeing as the concept had only received a title in the 90's, the idea of Afrofuturism runs in themes and reactions that have stood the test of time for quite some time. An example that comes to mind is Black Panther. Black Panther is a Marvel property that first debuted in a Fantastic Four Comic back in 1966, and eventually became what it is now, especially given the popularity more modern interpretations have taken. In the past, Black Panther did not carry the same themes of Afrofuturism as it stands now with its adaptation to live-action thanks to Disney's MCU.



Hanchey, Jerma N. "Desire and the Politics of Africanfuturism." *Worldwide Studies in Communication*, vol. 43, no. 2, May 2020, pp. 000-000. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1080/07491499.2020.1745589.

We have already talked about the 2018 Black Panther film boosting the popularity of Afrofuturism, and there is a chance you might be interesting in checking out the some of the comic sources that star the titular character. Some include Don McGregor's Black Panther that ran between *Jungle Action's* #6 to #24 issues and the Jack Kirby editions. However, the most notable stories surrounding Black Panther is known to be *Black Panther vs The Klan*, which is especially interesting considering that T'Challa's country of origin is rather isolated. Seeing him interact with not only US policy but the social norms that reinforce these policies is quite interesting, especially through the lens of a leader like himself.

Another, possibly more recognizable example would be through Janelle Monae's works—more specifically her music and what it responds to. Dirty Computer stands in a dystopian, futuristic setting that has more alike to our modern world than we would like to think. Much of Monae's works already tell a story, especially about her identity and what it means in the changing world. In Dirty Computer, Monae states that much of her talk about robots and android can be traced back to how she views identities in the US. For instance, as it stands—Monae identifies as a queer black woman, both of which are minorities within the US. Having these kinds of identities and existing always happens to be on the topic of politics and policy making because of the constant struggle to protest. While Monae had only come out in 2018, her identity always seemed to be in conversation with US and US policy for as long as she can remember. Even with the legality of gay marriage in 2015, there is still many policies that threaten the lives of many LGBT persons, so watching Monae critique this through her works

It is through her art and how it takes form through Afrofuturism that Monae can vocalize what she wants through musical activism, and thus is a leader in her own right and how she responds to movements around her. After all, a big theme of Afrofuturism is the escape of discrimination and exploring a society without that discrimination. Monae's works also allows for a conversation between feminism and Afrofuturism. Once again, Afrofuturism is not limited in how it shares its themes and messages, it can be used in many kinds of mediums. Books and literary based genres are known to be the biggest canvases in which Afrofuturism is explored in, though not always limited to.

Lagoon by Nnedi Okorafor is another excellent piece about the evolution of society when humans come into contact with aliens. There have been a few academic pieces surrounding the nature of this work—especially when it comes to analyzing the nature of feminism within the narrative and how it interacts with Afrofuturism.

Rather than recommending a specific work, I think I would rather recommend a specific author. Octavia Butler has been a novelist who's been writing since the 70's and has gained major popularity ever since there was proper term established for Afrofuturism. Some of her works include *Parable of the Sower* and *Kindred*. Not only are these a staple in Afrofuturism but they are a staple in understanding American dynamics through a Black historical context and reimagining them through the prose that Butler offers her readers.

There is never a right way to tell a story: there are simply preferences that an audience has when consuming these stories, the same way there are preferences an author has when they decide how they tell a story. In the case of Afrofuturism though, leadership and its portrayal have always been essential to how these stories respond to the societies that they are responding to, and the policies that may shape them.