



Radio Imagination

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CLOCKSHOP PRESENTS

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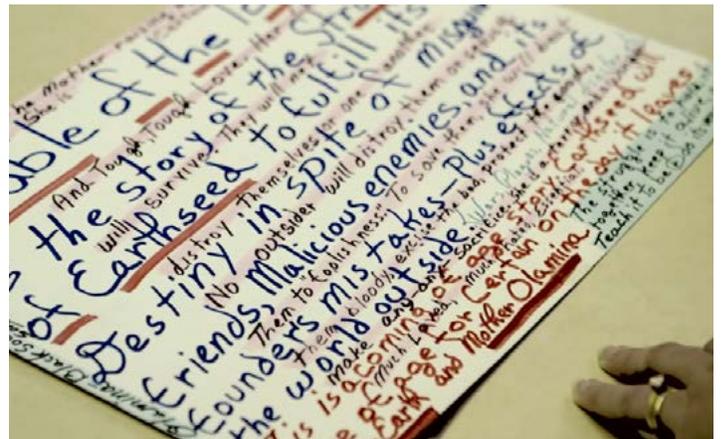
RADIO IMAGINATION: Artists and Writers in the Archive of Octavia E. Butler

Cultural institutions citywide join Clockshop in a yearlong celebration of the life and work of science fiction writer Octavia E. Butler

FEBRUARY 2016–JANUARY 2017



Octavia E. Butler, 1984, photo by Patti Perret



The Octavia E. Butler Papers at The Huntington Library

LOS ANGELES, CA (JANUARY 27, 2016)

The Los Angeles-based arts nonprofit Clockshop announces the launch of *Radio Imagination*, a citywide collaboration of artistic and public programs that celebrate the life and work of Pasadena science fiction writer Octavia E. Butler (1947–2006). Organized by Clockshop, *Radio Imagination* is a yearlong series of performances, film screenings, and literary events. At the center of the program are 10 commissions by 12 contemporary artists and writers that explore the Octavia E. Butler Papers at The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens.

Clockshop Director Julia Meltzer said, “Recognition of Butler’s influence across artistic disciplines, and her contribution to the Los Angeles cultural landscape is long overdue. Our hope is that *Radio Imagination* will bridge Butler’s groundbreaking fiction with contemporary conversations about the future of Los Angeles.” The series will span 2016, the tenth anniversary of the writer’s death.

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“I have the kind of imagination that hears. I think of it as radio imagination.” —Octavia E. Butler



Octavia E. Butler broke ground as an African American woman writing science fiction—a genre dominated by white men. With black female protagonists, radical notions of kinship and family, and a keen understanding of power dynamics, Butler’s writing revamped the conventions of the science fiction genre. Ultimately, her work suggested new ways of thinking and new models of working for a generation of writers and artists to come.



Forming an unprecedented collaboration with Clockshop, The Huntington Library invited *Radio Imagination* artists and writers to work in the Butler archive. The Octavia E. Butler archive at The Huntington Library consists of 8,000 individually cataloged items and more than 80 boxes of additional ephemera. Materials range from Butler’s very first short stories, written at the age of 12, to manuscripts, photographs, and a collection of inspirational quotes.

ARMORY



Radio Imagination will include work in drawing, photography, installation, film, performance, and sound by contemporary artists. These works will premiere in an exhibition at Armory Center for the Arts opening October 1, 2016, and running through January 7, 2017. Participating artists include: **Laylah Ali, Lauren Halsey, Malik Gaines and Alexandro Segade, Mendi + Keith Obadike, Connie Samaras, and Cauleen Smith.** The exhibition opening will be marked by a free outdoor performance by **Malik Gaines and Alexandro Segade**, who will collaborate with vocalists and musicians to develop a new multimedia choral work.



New works of poetry and creative nonfiction will be written by authors **Tisa Bryant, Lynell George, Robin Coste Lewis, and Fred Moten.** These literary projects will range from a posthumous interview with Butler to visual texts that incorporate images from the archive.



In addition to these commissions, *Radio Imagination* includes film screenings, panel discussions, musical performances, and readings co-presented with the following organizations: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens; Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West; Armory Center for the Arts; ALOUD, presented by the Library Foundation of Los Angeles; Octavia E. Butler Legacy Network; REDCAT; Pasadena City College; and the Women’s Center for Creative Work. Additional programs and partners will be announced as confirmed.

Jackie Robinson Arts & Humanities Lecture Series

Radio Imagination is made possible with support from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts, the Philip and Muriel Berman Foundation, the Pasadena Art Alliance, and the WHH Foundation.





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PROGRAM SCHEDULE

CURRENT SCHEDULE

Radio Imagination Launch Party

Saturday, February 27, 2016, 8pm / *FREE with RSVP*
Clockshop

Join Clockshop for a night of celebration to kick off *Radio Imagination*. Music by DJ Lynnée Denise, hors d'oeuvres by elysian, cocktails by Mark Hendrix, and salutes from writers and artists. The evening will open with a call-and-response Earthseed ritual. Organized in collaboration with the Octavia E. Butler Legacy Network.

Octavia E. Butler's Los Angeles

Thursday, March 10, 2016, 7:15pm / *FREE with RSVP*
Los Angeles Public Library Mark Taper Auditorium

Writer Tisa Bryant moderates a conversation on Butler's legacy and the dystopic Los Angeles that she often described in her short stories and novels. Panelists include filmmaker Ben Caldwell, Octavia E. Butler Legacy Network founder Ayana A. H. Jamieson, poet Douglas Kearney, and writer Nisi Shawl. *Octavia E. Butler's Los Angeles* is hosted by ALOUD, presented by the Library Foundation of Los Angeles.

Shaping the Universe: Octavia E. Butler and Activism

Thursday April 21, 2016, 7pm / *FREE with RSVP*
Westerbeck Recital Hall, Center for the Arts at Pasadena City College
Award winning writers Steven Barnes, Lisa Bolekaja, and Tananarive Due will join in an intimate conversation on the relationship between activism, science fiction, and the work of Octavia E. Butler.

Writers Premiere New Works

Saturday April 23, 2016, 7:30pm / *\$5 Suggested Donation*
Clockshop
Writers Tisa Bryant, Lynell George, Robin Coste Lewis, and Fred Moten will premiere new works of poetry and creative nonfiction commissioned for *Radio Imagination*, followed by a Q&A.

Devil Girl From Mars (1954)

Saturday, June 4, 2016, 7:30pm / *\$10*
Clockshop
A screening of the British cult classic *Devil Girl from Mars* (1954), followed by a discussion with Claire L. Evans and Claire Phillips about feminism in science fiction and the sci-fi climate of Butler's childhood and early career. Butler often cited *Devil Girl from Mars* as her anti-muse; after watching it as a child, she was sure she could write a better story.

Many Suns

Monday, June 20, 2016, 7pm / *\$5 Suggested Donation*
Bowtie Project
An outdoor evening of Butler-inspired programs presented by the Women's Center for Creative Work on the eve of the longest day of the year.

Radio Imagination: The Exhibition

October 1, 2016–January 7, 2017
Opening: Saturday, October 1, 2016, 6:00pm / *FREE*
Armory Center for the Arts

This exhibition will premiere new work by Laylah Ali, Lauren Halsey, Mendi + Keith Obadike, Connie Samaras, and Cauleen Smith. Commissioned and curated by Clockshop, these works were created in response to the Octavia E. Butler papers.

Star Choir

Saturday, October 1, 2016, 6pm / *FREE*
Levitt Pavilion, Pasadena Memorial Park

Malik Gaines and Alexandro Segade will collaborate with vocalists and musicians to create a new live multimedia choral performance based on texts drawn from Butler's novels and archive. The performance will coincide with the opening of *Radio Imagination* at Armory Center for the Arts. Three performances tandem with exhibit.

Xenogenesis Suite: A Musical Tribute to Octavia E. Butler

Thursday, October 27, 2016, 7:30pm / *Tickets available at the Huntington Rothenberg Hall at the Huntington Library*
Composed by Nicole Mitchell, *Xenogenesis Suite* highlights a journey into otherworldly experiences inspired by the award winning science fiction author and Afro-Futurist, Octavia E. Butler.

Radical Reproduction

Thursday, November 3, 2016, 7pm / *FREE with RSVP*
The Huntington Library
Philosopher Amy Kind and scholar Shelley S. Streeby discuss notions of family and radical reproduction as represented in Butler's writing with special focus on the short story "Bloodchild."

Let it Be Known

Monday, November 28, 2016, 8pm / *\$11*
REDCAT
Let it Be Known is a collection of experimental short films that explores the confluence of intersectionality and speculative fiction. The program includes works by Adebukola (Buki) Bodunrin and Ezra Clayton Daniels, Wura-Natasha Ogunji, Jamilah Sabur, Suné Woods, and others to be announced. Curated by Erin Christovale.

Octavia E. Butler Legacy Tour

Sunday, December 4, 2016, 11am / *\$25*
Starting at Armory Center for the Arts
Scholar and founder of the Octavia E. Butler Legacy Network Ayana A. H. Jamieson will lead a bus tour through Butler's hometown of Pasadena. Stops will include Butler's former home, her gravesite, and other locations key to Butler's biography and writing. The Tour will begin and end at the *Radio Imagination* exhibition at Armory Center for the Arts.



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“There’s nothing new under the sun,
but there are many suns.”
—Octavia E. Butler

OCTAVIA E. BUTLER

Octavia Estelle Butler was born June 22, 1947 in Pasadena, California. After earning an Associate’s degree from Pasadena City College in 1968, she enrolled at California State University, Los Angeles and later took writing courses through UCLA Extension. At the Screenwriters’ Guild Open Door Program, her writing caught the attention of noted science fiction writer Harlan Ellison, who encouraged Butler to attend the six-week Clarion Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers’ Workshop. There she met writer and later longtime friend Samuel R. Delany. Butler’s first published story “Crossover,” was included in *Clarion*, an anthology of student work.

Over the next half-dozen years, living alone in a modest Los Angeles apartment, Butler supported herself with a series of menial jobs: dishwasher, telemarketer, potato chip inspector. *Patternmaster*, the first novel of her six-volume *Patternist* series, was published in 1976, followed by *Mind of My Mind* in 1977. With the publication of *Kindred* in 1979, Butler was able to support herself as a full-time writer.

Her rise to prominence began in 1984 when she won the Hugo Award for her short story, “Speech Sounds.” In 1985, Butler’s novella “Bloodchild” won a second Hugo, as well as a Nebula Award, and reader awards from the science fiction periodicals *Locus* and *Science Fiction Chronicle*. In the late 1980s she published her *Lilith’s Brood* trilogy (compiled under the title *Xenogenesis*), and then in the 1990s completed the acclaimed *Parable of the Sower* and *Parable of the Talents*.

Butler was the first black woman to achieve international prominence as a science fiction writer, and the first and only writer of science fiction to earn a MacArthur “genius” Fellowship. In 2000, she received a Lifetime Achievement Award from PEN West.

During her last years, Butler continued writing and taught at the Clarion Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers’ Workshop. She moved from Los Angeles to Lake Forest Park in Washington State in 1999, and died there on February 24, 2006 at the age of 58. At the time of her death, Butler had published several acclaimed short stories and twelve bestselling, award-winning novels.

THE OCTAVIA E. BUTLER ARCHIVE AT THE HUNTINGTON LIBRARY

Butler visited The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens as a speaker on several occasions, affording Curator of Literary Manuscripts Sara “Sue” Hodson the opportunity to express interest in Butler’s papers. A shy and private person, Butler included The Huntington bequest in her estate plan.

After Butler’s untimely death in 2006, her papers arrived at The Huntington in two full four-drawer file cabinets and about 35 large cartons. They required intense processing over three years. Butler’s filing systems were haphazard and she kept nearly everything, from abandoned drafts to book contracts to programs from speaking engagements. The phenomenal body of material includes 8,000 individually cataloged items and more than 80 boxes of additional ephemera: notes and research materials for more than a dozen novels, numerous short stories and essays, as well as correspondence, ephemera, and commonplace books.

CLOCKSHOP

Clockshop is a multifaceted non-profit arts organization that works at the intersection of cultural production, politics, and urban space, bringing people together to explore the strange particularities of Los Angeles and beyond. The organization curates conversations and screenings, and produces projects by contemporary visual and performing artists. Clockshop is known for its unique collaboration with California State Parks, the Bowtie Project, through which the organization executes artist projects, campouts, and student field trips on an 18-acre post-industrial piece of land adjacent to the LA River. Clockshop was founded by artist Julia Meltzer in 2004.

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