

# SF CAMERAWORK

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### SF Camerawork Online Panel Discussion Explores the Visual Expression of Afro-Spirituality and Black Joy

**What:** Online Panel Discussion - *Towards Eternal: Reflections on Black Futurity & Imagining* - Panel Talk with Nykelle DeVivo, Mikael Owunna, and Ra Malika Imhotep

**When:** Tuesday, January 18, 2022 from 6 - 7:30 pm PST  
Program is Free. Register [here](#).

Join SF Camerawork for an online conversation with FORECAST 2021 Juror's Choice Award-winner **Nykelle DeVivo**, photographic artist **Mikael Owunna**, and scholar **Ra Malika Imhotep** to discuss their work in the context of Black futurity. Afrofuturism is a cultural aesthetic that uses fantasy and science-fiction to explore the African-American experience as it reconnects with the black diaspora, ancestral spiritualism and history. The Panel is organized in conjunction with SF Camerawork's FORECAST2021 on view in a pop-up exhibition through January 8 at Minnesota Street Project, Gallery 211, 1275 Minnesota Street, San Francisco, CA 94103 and ongoing online at <https://sfcamerawork.org/forecast-2021> through May 1, 2022. FORECAST2021 Artists: Katina Alexopoulos, Trent Bozeman, Nykelle DeVivo (Juror's Choice Award Winner), Christian K. Lee, Jamie Robertson and Ashley Ross.



## Panelists:

Portland based artist **Nykelle DeVivo** uses photography as language to understand their evolving sense of self. Their artistic voice is articulated through the referencing of histories of Afro-spiritualism and the expression of Black queer joy. Photographing ethereal bodies of light, sensual self portraits and quiet moments of prayer, DeVivo's images act as a portal between timeless states of being and the physical world they inhabit. Nykelle DeVivo studied critical theory & photography at the San Francisco Art Institute, they have been included in group shows across the country, have assisted journalists on projects for *The New York Times*, *The California Sunday Magazine* and more and have been published in articles such as *Aint-Bad* and *I-D*.

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*SF Camerawork - Presenting provocative new ideas and directions in photography since 1974.*

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**Mikael Owunna** is a queer Nigerian American multi-media artist, filmmaker, and engineer. Exploring the intersections of visual media with engineering, optics, Blackness, and African cosmologies, his work seeks to elucidate an emancipatory vision of possibility that pushes people beyond all boundaries, restrictions, and frontiers.

Owunna's work has been exhibited across Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America and been collected by institutions such as the Nasher Museum of Art; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Equal Justice Initiative; Duke University Pratt School of Engineering; and National Taiwan Museum. His work has also been featured in media ranging from the New York Times to CNN, NPR, VICE, and The Guardian. He has lectured at venues including Harvard Law School, World Press Photo (Netherlands), Tate Modern (UK), and TEDx. Owunna has published two monographs: *Limitless Africans* (FotoEvidence, 2019) and *Cosmologies* (ClampArt, 2021). Owunna's multi-media practice includes film, and in 2021 he directed the dance film *Obi Mbu (The Primordial House): An Igbo Creation Myth* with Marques Redd. Owunna's work has been commissioned for major public art installations by organizations including the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Foundation, Contemporary Art Museum Raleigh, Pittsburgh International Airport, and Orange Barrel Media. Owunna is represented by [ClampArt, New York](#).

**Moderator:**

**Ra Malika Imhotep** is a Black feminist writer and performance artist from Atlanta, Georgia currently pursuing a PhD in African Diaspora Studies and New Media Studies from the University of California. As a scholar and cultural worker, Ra is invested in exploring relationships between queer Black femininities, Black vernacular cultures, and the performance of labor. As a steward of Black Studies and Black feminist thought, Ra dreams, organizes, and facilitates spaces of critical reflection and embodied spiritual-political education. Ra is co-author of *The Black Feminist Study Theory Atlas* and author of *gossypiin* (Red Hen Press, Spring 2022). They are also a co-convenor of *The Church of Black Feminist Thought* and a member of The Black Aesthetic curatorial collective.