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## **MEGASCOPE LAUNCHES HIGHLY ANTICIPATED FIRST PUBLISHING LIST FROM CURATOR JOHN JENNINGS**

**The official Megascope logo and advisory board, featuring celebrated voices in the academic and literary world, is also established**



**New York, NY – February 2020** – The celebrated imprint **Abrams ComicArts** is launching its first publishing list from **Megascope**, the new line of graphic novels curated by **John Jennings**. Jennings is an award-winning and *New York Times* bestselling comics creator and illustrator of graphic novel adaptations of Octavia E. Butler’s *Kindred* and *Parable of the Sower*. Megascope was first announced in 2018, and the inaugural publishing list will have two titles: ***After the Rain*** (October 27, 2020; Hardcover) by **Nnedi Okorafor**, adapted by **John Jennings** and illustrated by **David Brame**, and ***The Heavy*** (January 19, 2021; Hardcover) by **Shawn Martinbrough**.

“When W.E.B. DuBois created the idea of the megascope in the short story *The Princess Steel* (1909), I wonder if he would ever have dreamed that he was giving us a gift of not just one future but myriad futures. The megascope functions as a lens through which so many unheard voices can be heard. I am so honored and excited to present this first slate of books that we have lovingly curated. It’s a very robust, diverse, extraordinary collection of narratives that, I hope, will foster conversation, celebration, and connection,” says Jennings. “The book is an empathy machine and ABRAMS has dedicated so much of its existence to making cutting-edge, well-designed, beautiful books for everyone. I am humbled by the talent and dedication that Abrams ComicArts has poured into this line of books. My hope is that our audience will see themselves and their commonalities with others in these graphic messages from the minds and hands of some of the most amazing creators working in graphic fiction today.”



*After the Rain* is a graphic novel adaptation of award-winning author Nnedi Okorafor's short story "On the Road," a supernatural drama that takes place in a small Nigerian town during a violent storm. Okorafor ranks among the most acclaimed speculative-fiction authors currently writing—she is the recipient of the Hugo, Nebula, World Fantasy, and Locus Awards. John Jennings and David Brame's graphic novel collaboration uses bold art and colors to powerfully tell this tale of African diaspora, identity, and destiny, bringing the story to life for Okorafor fans and new readers alike.

In *The Heavy*, acclaimed writer-illustrator Shawn Martinbrough tells the hard-hitting story of Charles "Dukes" Duchamps, a New York-based debt collector with a love for jazz and a loss that has haunted him for years. Martinbrough is a critically acclaimed creator whose projects for DC Comics, Marvel Comics, Dark Horse Comics, and Image Comics include *Batman: Detective Comics*, *Luke Cage Noir*, *Black Panther*, *Hellboy*, and *Thief of Thieves*. Martinbrough has also cocreated characters featured in the films *Deadpool* and *Justice League*. *The Heavy* is an original contemporary noir-themed graphic novel about rivals, revenge, and redemption.

In addition to the first list of books, Megascope has also revealed its new logo and its official advisory board. The board members are some of the most celebrated scholars and comics professionals in media, literature, comics studies, and other related fields. The advisory board's duties are to help recommend relevant narratives for adaptation, help design educational supplements, recommend new comics creators, and to make sure the Megascope line stays true to standards of appropriate representation of ideas and characters relative to the parameters of the graphic novels.

### **Megascope Advisory Board:**

Frederick Luis Aldama , PhD—The Ohio State University and SOL-CON  
Kinitra Brooks, PhD—Michigan State University  
Stanford Carpenter, PhD—Black & Brown Comix Arts Festival and Pocket Con  
Julian Chambliss, PhD—Michigan State University  
JC Cloutier, PhD—University of Pennsylvania  
Rachelle Cruz—University of California, Riverside  
Damian Duffy, PhD—University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Henry Louis Gates Jr., PhD—Harvard University  
Frances Gateward, PhD—California State University, Northridge  
Jonathan Gray, PhD—John Jay College of Criminal Justice  
Fox Harrell , PhD—Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Kathleen McClancy, PhD—Texas State University and Comic Arts Conference  
Organizer  
Susana Morris , PhD—Georgia Tech  
Adilifu Nama, PhD—Loyola Marymount University  
Ricardo Padilla—Latino Comics Expo and SOL-CON  
Darieck Scott, PhD—University of California, Berkeley  
Matt Silady—California College of the Arts, Director of MFA in Comics  
Sherryl Vint, PhD—University of California, Riverside  
Rebecca Wanzo, PhD—Washington University in St. Louis  
Deborah Whaley, PhD—University of Iowa  
Qiana Whitted, PhD—University of South Carolina  
Daniel Yezbick PhD—St. Louis Community College

In keeping with the mission to publish books that visualize new diverse narratives through the comics medium, forthcoming titles from the Megascopel list include:

***Black Star*** by Eric Glover, illustrated by Arielle Jovellanos  
***Blak Kube*** by Ytasha Womack, illustrated by Tanna Tucker  
***The Count*** by Ayize Jama Everett, illustrated by Tristan Roach  
***Dark Fear: Framing Emmett Till*** by Christopher Benson, illustrated by Eric Battle  
***Death's Day*** by Daniel José Older and Baba Malik Duncan, illustrated by Chuck  
"Dragonblack" Collins  
***The Eight-Fold Path*** by Steven Barnes and Charles Johnson, illustrated by Bryan  
Christopher Moss  
***The Keeper*** by Tananarive Due and Steven Barnes, illustrated by Marco Finnegan  
***The Resurrectionists*** by Ho Che Anderson, illustrated by Jeremy Love

#### **ABOUT THE CURATOR**

John Jennings is professor of media and cultural studies at the University of California, Riverside, and was previously a 2016 Nasir Jones Hiphop Fellow with the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research at Harvard University. His work centers around intersectional narratives regarding identity politics and popular media. He is the cofounder/organizer of numerous comics festivals around the country (including the Schomburg Center's Annual Black Comic Book Festival in Harlem) and has been involved in many critically acclaimed and award-winning books as illustrator, editor, and writer, including the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *Kindred: A Graphic Novel Adaptation* (with Damian Duffy), the Eisner Award-winning academic anthology *The Blacker the Ink: Constructions of Black Identity in Comics and Sequential Art*, and, most recently, *Parable of the Sower: A Graphic Novel Adaptation*. Jennings lives in Riverside, California.



Founded in 1949, ABRAMS was the first company in the United States to specialize in publishing art and illustrated books. The company continues to publish critically acclaimed and bestselling works in the areas of art, photography, cooking, craft, comics, interior and garden design, entertainment, fashion, and popular culture as well as narrative non-fiction and new works of fiction for adults; children's books ranging from middle grade to young adult fiction to picture books to board books. ABRAMS creates and distributes brilliantly designed books with the highest production values under the following imprints: Abrams; Abrams ComicArts; Abrams Image; Abrams Press; The Overlook Press; Abrams Books for Young Readers; Amulet Books; Abrams Appleseed; and a gift and stationery line, Abrams Noterie. ABRAMS also distributes books for 5 Continents Editions, Booth-Clibborn Editions, Cameron + Company, Alain Ducasse Édition, Getty Publications, Ludion, The Museum of Modern Art, Obvious State, SelfMadeHero, Tate Publishing, V&A Publishing, and The Vendome Press.