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The Week Ahead | Art

The Future Is African

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Afrofuturism, a genre that mixes science fiction with the culture, history and politics of the African diaspora, is as old as Sun Ra's 1974 film "Space Is the Place" and as new as Janelle Monáe's latest album. If you've been following artists like Wangechi Mutu, Sanford Biggers or Robert Pruitt, you probably already know that it's driving a lot of contemporary art. "The Shadows Took Shape," opening Thursday at the Studio Museum in Harlem, cements the trend with work by 29 artists, including the three mentioned above.

It will include 10 new commissions, among them wearable sculptures by the Kenyan artist Cyrus Kabiru that look like goggles and are made with scrap metal, glass beads and plastic bottle caps. Ms. Mutu will show a new video based on the East African myth of the nguva, or mermaid, and the artists William Cordova, Nyeema Morgan, and Otabenga Jones & Associates will collaborate on a huge wooden structure that looks a little like a hovering spaceship. And, naturally, the curators will pay tribute to Sun Ra, with a sampling of his drawings, prints and liner notes. (Through March 9, 144 West 125th Street, 212-864-4500, studiomuseum.org.)