

# Abdu Ali

Baltimore, MD / [info@abduali.com](mailto:info@abduali.com) / Instagram @Abdu\_\_Ali

## Education

2014 BA in English: Creative Writing, University Of Baltimore, Baltimore, MD

## Artist Bio

Abdu Ali is an American avant-garde musician, writer, cultural worker, and multidisciplinary artist. Their music is an idiosyncratic blend of punk, jazz, Baltimore club music, and rap that has graced stages across the U.S. and Europe. Through their energetic visceral performances, spiritualizing audiences, they have been anointed as a cosmic, punk, and soulful tempest on stage. Ali's art practice spans across sound, dialogue, literary text, and performance. Their works often interrogate ideas of race, gender, and sexuality that often manifests as poetic interrogations of identity. Their work has been seen to promote liberation from oppressive ideologies and systems. Unapologetically black, gay, & queer, Abdu Ali's work is bold, raw, and most importantly life-affirming.

Ali has performed at MoMa Ps1, The Carnegie Museum of Art, The Baltimore Museum of Art, The Kennedy Center, Red Bull Music Festival, and the DC National Mall. Ali has been highlighted by the NY Times, NPR, The Fader, Les InRocks, and Tracks Arte TV. Ali has been a recipient of The Contemporary: Grit Fund 2; a 2018 Ruby Artist Grant; 2019 Best Artist Award by The LGBTQ Commission of Baltimore City, Baltimore Magazine 2019 Best Artist, was invited to the Black Artists Retreat 2019 hosted by Theaster Gates, and have held residencies at 2018 Red Bull Music Academy Bass Camp & 2018 Pioneer Works. Ali's writing has been published in Art Papers Magazine, PIN-UP Magazine, and Nijournal. Ali is also the founder of Kahlon, an iconic underground party that radicalized the artistic climate and made space for marginalized musicians in Baltimore. Kahlon ended in 2017 and in 2019 Ali, birthed as they lay; a Baltimore-based curatorial art initiative that uproots space for questioning and dreaming through digital media, programming and exhibitions.

## Selected Group Exhibitions

2019 Mickalene Thomas: *A Moment's Pleasure*, Baltimore Museum of Art

## Awards & Grants

- 2020 Best Art Platform Award for as they lay presented by Baltimore Magazine
- 2019 Best Artist of 2019 given by Baltimore City LGBTQ Affairs & Commission
- 2018 Ruby Artist Project Grant given by the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance
- 2016 Best Live Act given by Baltimore City Paper for "Best Of"  
Best Party for Kahlon given by Baltimore Magazine  
Grit Fund, the Contemporary Museum, Baltimore, grant for Kahlon
- 2014 Best Party for Kahlon given by Baltimore City Paper for "Best Of"  
Best Renaissance Man given by Baltimore City Paper for "Best Of"

## Residencies & Retreats

- 2019 Black Artists Retreat hosted by Theaster Gates
- 2018 Music Residency at Pioneer Works, Brooklyn, NY  
Baltimore Artist Retreat by The Deutsch Foundation  
Bonnaroo Bass Camp by Red Bull Music Academy

## Curatorial/Cultural Work

- 2019 as they lay
- 2017 *Proximity to Dead Skin*, EMP Collective, Baltimore, MD

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- Brown Paper Zine Fair*, Eubie Blake Center, Baltimore, MD
- 2016 Kahlon: Mini Music Fest, The Crown, Baltimore, MD  
Multimedia Presentation, *I'm Alive*, The Crown, Baltimore, MD  
(2015 - 2016) Music and Civic Engagement showcase, EarthseedxEarthseed, Baltimore, MD  
Multimedia Community Block party, *People 4 People*, Baltimore, MD  
Multimedia Presentation, *The Ointment*, Signal Gallery, Brooklyn, NY  
Reading Exhibition, *Scriptures, The Word; Activating Text as Liberation*, Otion Front Studio, Brooklyn, NY
- 2014 (2014 - 2017) Music and Art Show Series, Kahlon, Baltimore, MD

## Media Work

- 2017 Podcast, drumBOOTY, Founder and Host, Baltimore, MD

## Lectures/Panels/Workshops

- 2019 Panel, *Become Again: Affirming Spaces*, hosted by Curatorial Practice MFA at Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD  
Music Production Workshop, *Pushing Into The Future of Club Music*, hosted by VANs, Washington, D.C.
- 2017 Artist Talk, *In Conversation with Abdu Ali*, hosted by the Institute for Diversity in the Arts at Stanford University, Stanford, CA  
Artist Talk, *Get Out of Town - Presenting Your Work Beyond Baltimore!*, hosted by Artists U, Downtown Cultural Center, Baltimore, MD
- 2016 Panel, *People of Color in DIY*, MacRock Festival, Harrisonburg, VA
- 2015 Panel, *Bridging the Gap of Disparities in the Baltimore Art Scene* hosted by Art-Part'heid, Baltimore, MD  
Presentation, *Do The Right Thing*, for The Maryland Film Festival, Baltimore, MD  
Lecture, *Organizing, Race, Queer identity, for Visibility SAAB Lecture Series*, BB Gallery, Baltimore, MD
- 2014 Panel, *Baltimore City Paper Presents: Blade Runner*, Baltimore, MD

## Published Writings

- 2018 Poetry, *A Chipping Hammer*, Niijournal, London, UK  
Poetry, *I Know How God Speaks*, Niijournal, London, UK  
Op - Ed, *Body Play*, Art Papers Magazine
- 2016 Essay, *Looking for Black Art in Baltimore Conversations With Joyce J. Scott & Theresa Chromati*, Art Papers Magazine  
Review, *As the Ocean Tells Me So*, Queen Mob's Tea House
- 2015 Op - Ed, *Why We Mad Tho?*, Afropunk  
Op - Ed, *Keep Movin': Abdu Ali talks about moving back to Baltimore*, Baltimore City Paper  
Nonfiction, *Slapped Up*, Baltimore City Paper  
Blog Series, *QTIPOCs On The Block*, True Laurels
- 2013 Poetry, *Dissolution*, Welter Magazine
- 2012 Poetry, *Untitled*, Welter Magazine

## Music Projects

- 2019 *FIYAH!!!*
- 2016 *Mongo*

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2014 Infinity Epiphanies  
ALREADY

2013 Push & Slay

2012 Invictos

## Selected Musical Performances

- 2018 DJ Performance, *United States of Bass*, Red Bull Music, Philadelphia, PA  
Music Performance, *Art After Hours: Afropolitanism*, Baltimore Museum of Art, Balt, MD  
Music Performance, *Session Sundays*, MoMa PS1, Queens, NY  
Music Performance, *Millennium Stage Series*, Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C.
- 2017 Music Performance, Génériq Festival, Mulhouse, France  
Music Performance, Hip Hopsession at Pôle Etudiant, Nantes, France  
Music Performance for Subbacultcha Magazine at s105, Amsterdam, Netherlands  
Music Performance, Borealis Festival, Bergen, Norway
- 2016 Music Performance, *I'm Alive*, The Atlanta Contemporary Art Center, Atlanta, GA  
Reading, *Tender FM x BALTI GURLS*, The Crown, Baltimore, MD  
Music Performance, *Renne Fayre*, Reed College, Portland, Oregon  
Music Performance, *Summer Music Series, Holding SpaceS*, Sculpture Center, Queens, NY  
Music Performance, *You Are Here (Trouble Maze)*, Knockdown Center, Queens, NY  
Music Performance, Southern Fried Queer Festival, EyeDrum Gallery, Atlanta, Georgia
- 2015 Music Performance, Via Fest, Pittsburgh, PA  
Performance Art, *Borders, Boundaries, & Barricades* presented by LabBodies, Gallery CA, Baltimore, MD

## Selected Readings

- 2018 *Final Fantasy*, Friends and Lovers, Brooklyn, NY
- 2017 *Papi & Chill x Papi Juice*, Black Flamingo, Brooklyn, NY  
*Multiple Sides of the Bed x Submerge 2017: Break Time*, MINKA BK, Brooklyn, NY

## Selected Abdu Ali Press

- Baltimore Sun: [Mining Baltimore's past and present, Abdu Ali releases album of "Fiyah!!!"](#) (2019)
- [New York Times Style Magazine: Why Baltimore Persists to be A Culture Beacon](#) (2019)
- [New York Times: The Changing Sound of Baltimore](#) (2018)
- [Out Magazine: Abdu Ali; The Queer Artist Fighting to Give Baltimore Club Music a Spotlight](#) (2017)
- [Marc Steiner Show: 3 Dot Zine and Kahlon: Abdu Ali and Devin N. Morris](#) (2017)
- [Baltimore Sun: Best Dance Party](#) (2017)
- [Baltimore City Paper: Kahlon's Cut Up Series returns with audio-visual exhibition](#) (2017)
- [A Party in Baltimore Bridges the Scene's Racial Divide](#) (2016)
- [Capital Sound DC: Kahlon: The Cut Up Series - Baltimore's Most Diverse Dance Party](#) (2016)
- [Bullet Media: A Party in Baltimore Bridges the Scene's Racial Divide](#) (2015)
- [Spark Magazine: Abdu Ali is Building Baltimore from The Bottom Up](#) (2015)
- [Myspace: Artist of Day](#) (2016)
- [Teen Vogue: Coolest Queers on The Internet](#) (2016)
- [The Fader: Abdu Ali Debuts Mongo](#) (2016)

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- Impose Magazine: ABDU ALI, FREDDIE GRAY, COPS, SUPERHEROES, AND ANTI-HEROES (2016)
- TIU Magazine: ABDU ALI ES MÚSICA PARA LA NUEVA RESISTENCIA (2016)
- Les InRocks: Abdu Ali, rappeur queer de Baltimore à découvrir absolument (2016)