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Northern Commons Launches *Diverse Futures*, a Speaker Series on Imagination and the Future of Care

Monthly series opens July 15 with Afrofuturist author T. Aaron Cisco

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Northern Commons, located in Lowertown St. Paul, is a new kind of gathering place for shared meaning-making through conversation, contemplation, creativity, and the simple act of being present with each other. They are launching *Diverse Futures: Visions of Care in a Complex World*, a five-month speaker series featuring writers, thinkers, and artists sharing their visions of what a more just, caring, and diverse future could look like. Presentations take place on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m., beginning July 15, 2026, at Northern Commons, 308 E Prince St, Suite 246, St. Paul.

The inaugural presentation, *Who Broke the Future?*, features T. Aaron Cisco, an Amazon-bestselling Afrofuturist author of speculative fiction. The event runs from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. and is open to the public.

Many of us grew up on visions of tomorrow—shaped by stories like *Star Trek* and *Doctor Who*—that felt expansive and full of possibility. And yet, as Cisco shows, those futures left many people out, or included them in ways that never quite felt real. Moving through personal storytelling, readings from their own work, and speculative worldbuilding, they explore how those inherited futures can be reimaged—built on diversity as a foundation, not a feature, and on care as something practiced rather than assumed. The evening closes with open conversation, inviting participants to ask together what it means to repair a fractured future, and what each of us is willing to build differently.

“Imagination opens us. It makes impossible things possible. What can our future be? Imagine with us. Imagine a future where diversity is embraced. Imagine a future of caring for each other and our planet. We are very excited to have T. Aaron Cisco joining us to kick off this series.”

— **Patrick Stein, Northern Commons**

Cisco is the author of more than two dozen published novels, novellas, op-eds, and essays, including the *Land of Bone* trilogy, *Black Nerd Blue Box: The Wibbly Wobbly Memoirs of a Lonely Whovian*, and most recently *The Hex Worker Diaries*. He is a

recipient of the MN Society of Professional Journalists Page One Award, has been recognized as one of the Ten Black Change-Makers Influencing the Twin Cities Arts Scene, and is featured on Hennepin County Libraries' Minnesota Black Authors list.

The *Diverse Futures* series continues on the third Wednesday of each month through November. All presentations begin at 7:00 p.m. at Northern Commons. The following is the tentative schedule for the entire series:

- **Jul 15, 2026** — T. Aaron Cisco, *Who Broke the Future?*
- **Aug 19, 2026** — Scott Keever, *Folk Music As Catalyst To A Diverse Future*
- **Sep 16, 2026** — Jennifer Luciani, *Expansive Kinship*
- **Oct 21, 2026** — Patrick Stein, *Life Before JumpNet*
- **Nov 18, 2026** — Martin Law, *Fugitive Futures*

To reserve a spot or learn more about the series, visit us at <https://northerncommons.space/projects/diverse-futures.html>.

About Northern Commons

Northern Commons is a community gathering space in Lowertown, downtown Saint Paul, dedicated to relational and peer-led programming. Through events, workshops, and speaker series, Northern Commons cultivates connection, curiosity, and collaborative inquiry across disciplines and communities. Learn more at <https://northerncommons.space/>.

Update 2026-06-03: added Patrick Stein's pronouns.