A group of people at a convention. In the foreground, a person wears a large, detailed mask with horns and a blue face. Next to them is a woman in a purple mesh top and shiny purple skirt. To her right is a man in a black t-shirt and cap, also wearing a lanyard. On the far right, a person is in a full-body black and silver futuristic suit. Other people are visible in the background, some wearing lanyards. The setting appears to be an indoor event space with warm lighting.

Wakandacon is a **3-day Afrofuturistic convention** that speaks directly to issues being faced within the Black diaspora, with a strong focus on **art, community, technology, and self-expression.**



Play Wakandacon Recap (1:00 minutes)

CLICK TO PLAY VIDEO

Fandoms surrounding popular cultural products and technology can be incredibly toxic. People of color (women included) must resign themselves to **harassment or worse** in order to participate or celebrate their interests.

“A lot of black gamers are called derogatory terms because of how they sound. They don't have to do anything but sound black. A black person may not be called a n****r to their face, but they can almost guarantee it will happen in virtuality.”

Dr. Gray, Assistant Professor at Eastern Kentucky University's School of Justice Studies



Outside of anonymous virtual spaces, live fandom events **are not safer** or more considerate to the concerns of people of color and women.



“It shouldn’t be a given that people are going to say nasty things about how ‘dirty’ black cosplayers look in a costume or how it’s ‘ruined’ by their skin color.”

Mic/Krissy Victory, 2017

Photo credit: Krissy Victory

Despite this, people of color and women continue to flock to popular culture, **embracing everything** from comics to movies to video games in record-breaking numbers.

Image credit: **Marvel Comics**

Market research shows that 46.67% of Comic Fans are Female.

The Comics Beat, 2014

African American and Hispanic youth ages 8–18 spend more time with video games on average than White youth.

Kaiser Family Foundation, 2017



Even with a marketplace of existing entertainment products and events, fans remain hungry for **something new** that celebrates their identities alongside their various interests.

Fans self-identify as “**super fans**” of 3.2 different pop culture categories on average, like Sci-Fi, fantasy, genre movies, and gaming.

Eventbrite, 2014



Wakandacon is Afrofuturism.

A cultural aesthetic that connects the black diaspora with their forgotten African ancestry while looking ahead to a future filled with

arts, science and technology

as seen through a black lens.





We were inspired to create something more than a fandom convention. An event not just about art, culture, tech, and self-expression, but also about dreams, aspirations, and **authentic representation** in mainstream media.

Wakandacon chosen as one of the Chicago's top entertainment stories of 2018!

Chicago Sun-Times, December 2018



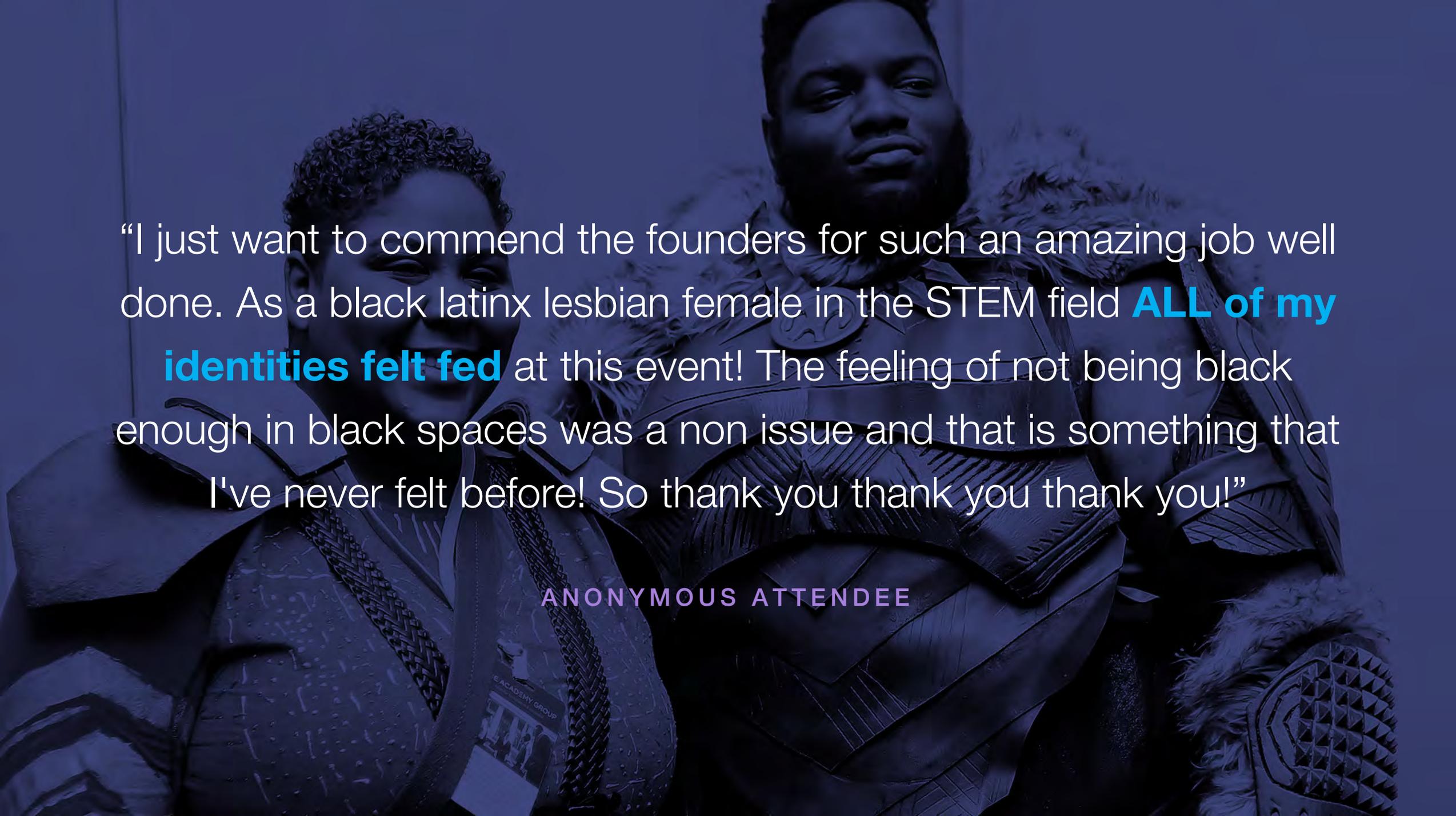
WAKANDACON

"Wakandacon started as a tentative, nerdy idea: how can black people make Wakanda, the utopian advanced African nation where Black Panther takes place, real?"

"By the convention's end, that idea had blossomed into something all nerds have searched for, at one point or another, but that black fans have rarely been able to truly enjoy: a space where you can love what you love fiercely alongside people who look like you and share that passion — **a place to belong.**"

Devon Maloney at **THE VERGE**, "How the First Wakandacon Escaped the Fan Convention Curse"





“I just want to commend the founders for such an amazing job well done. As a black latinx lesbian female in the STEM field **ALL of my identities felt fed** at this event! The feeling of not being black enough in black spaces was a non issue and that is something that I've never felt before! So thank you thank you thank you!”

ANONYMOUS ATTENDEE



"It's so weird going to a con and seeing so many people with... hair like you... Skin like you... Not giving you weird looks. I don't feel like an outsider. **I need more of this.**"

Mikki Kendall, Chicago Reader

"Amazing! Just the feel of home. Something that was ours. Freeing! **It was like a convention, block party, and cultural event all in one**, but it was ours!"

Anonymous Attendee



Exciting Panels
& Workshops



Vibrant Small-Business
Marketplace



Amazing Cosplay & Afro-Fashion



Video Gaming
& Tournaments



The Wakandacon
Codeathon



Networking &
Meet and Greet



After-Parties &
Special Events

“I asked my teenager if he would come back next year, and he said ‘absolutely.’”

“I’m very appreciative of the people who took the risk to do this, **and the people who put this together are leaders in our culture.**”

Van Jones, CNN host and former advisor to President Obama



Our team is comprised of entrepreneurs, producers, designers, creatives, and architects of culture.



David Barthwell

Founder & Branding/Creative



Ali Barthwell

Co-Founder & Outreach



Matt Barthwell

Co-Founder & Logistics



Lisa Beasley

Producer & Media



Taylor Witten

Producer & Strategic Partnerships

Glowing Media Coverage

“[Wakandacon was] something all nerds have searched for, at one point or another, but that black fans have rarely been able to truly enjoy...**a place to belong.**”

THE VERGE

“Wakandacon is a space for Black people to **look past the present and into our future.**”

COMPLEX

“This is an opportunity a lot of people didn’t have when I was growing up, to see us celebrated in a positive light. **My son gets to see strong, positive images.**”

**CHICAGO
SUN * TIMES**

“[Wakandacon] was all about a healthy **black community** interacting with and celebrating the things that they had in common and the things that made them unique.”

 **CHICAGO
READER**

“Wakandacon represented a space where **black entrepreneurs, scientists, gamers, activists, and creatives** could come together, learn from each other, and work towards building a community.”

 **AV CLUB**

“Panels, poetry readings, and, of course, cosplay, all inspired by the record-setting superhero flick Black Panther. **Think Comic-Con for the black nerd set**—with more depth.”

CHICAGO
MAGAZINE

Hundreds of millions of impressions worldwide, including:

[The Verge \(featured homepage\)](#)

[Ebony](#)

[HYPEBEAST](#)

[SYFY](#)

[Blavity](#)

[Black Enterprise](#)

[Chicago Tribune](#)

[Chicago Sun-Times](#)

[The A.V. Club](#)

[The Urban Twist](#)

[ABC7 Chicago](#)

[ESPN: The Undefeated](#)

[Complex](#)

[CNN Entertainment](#)

[Chicago Magazine](#)

[WGN TV](#)

[FOX32 Chicago](#)

[WVON 1690AM](#)

[Chicago Reader](#)

[The Mary Sue](#)

[Essence](#)

[Block Club Chicago](#)

[The Seattle Medium](#)

[Chicago Redeye](#)

[Nerdist](#)

[WBEZ Radio Worldview](#)

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[B96 Radio](#)

[Philly Tribune](#)

[TheGrio](#)

[EURweb](#)

[MovieFone](#)

[Krypton Radio](#)

[Windy City Times](#)

[Face2Face Africa](#)

[Vocalo Morning](#)

[WCIU TV](#)

And more...

The Inaugural Wakandacon: 2,500 Happy Attendees

Strong Focus on Topics Geared Towards Women

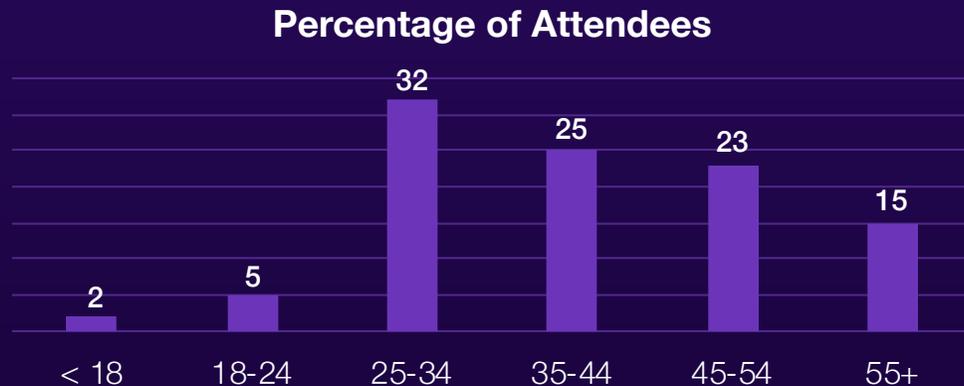


“It was really **powerful seeing a lot of women entrepreneurs** and finding out their businesses weren’t that far away from me.”

“As a **black Latinx lesbian female in the STEM field**, ALL of my identities felt welcome at Wakandacon!”

“I loved the centering on the **experiences of Black Women & Femmes.**”

Wide Range of Age Representation Across Attendees



High Attendee Satisfaction with Wakandacon

Q: How likely are you to attend Wakandacon next year?



“Thank you for putting this together - really and truly. Seeing so much **Black beauty, glory, and unity** in one space **had me in tears.** I am already planning on saving money for the next one!”

“I loved this event so much! It was such an **inclusive Black space**, especially for the black ‘nerd’ or ‘geek.’ Thank you for **creating this space** for us.”

ANNOUNCING

Wakandacon 2019

July 26-28, 2019

Hyatt Regency McCormick Place
2233 S Martin Luther King Jr Drive,
Chicago, IL 60616

We project an attendance across the
entire weekend of 6,000 – 8,000.
The Digital Livestream provides additional exposure.



PASSPORT



WAKANDAFOREVER

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