

Some audiences said *The Burial of Kojo* was like a dream.



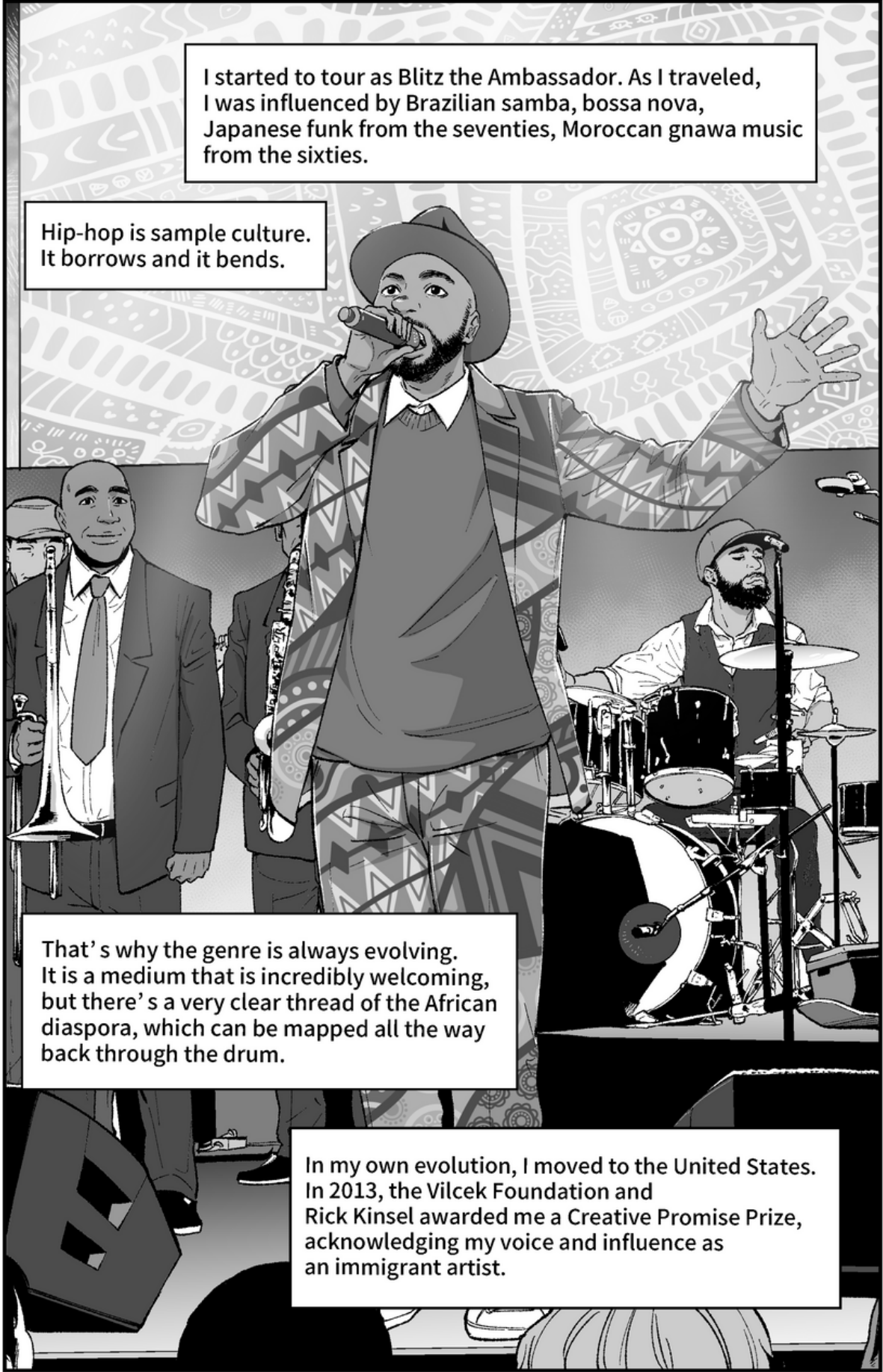
Blitz Bazawule
2013 Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise in Contemporary Music



That film was born from stories I heard in my boyhood in Ghana. When the power went out, we would beg my grandmother to tell us stories about the raven, the shape-shifter...



...my first encounter with the imaginative world.

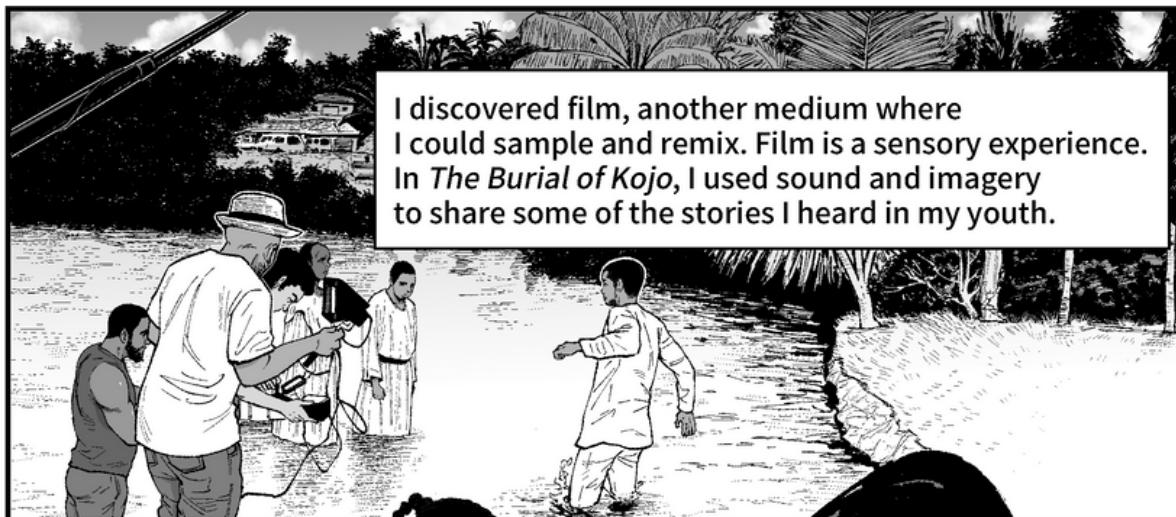


I started to tour as Blitz the Ambassador. As I traveled, I was influenced by Brazilian samba, bossa nova, Japanese funk from the seventies, Moroccan gnawa music from the sixties.

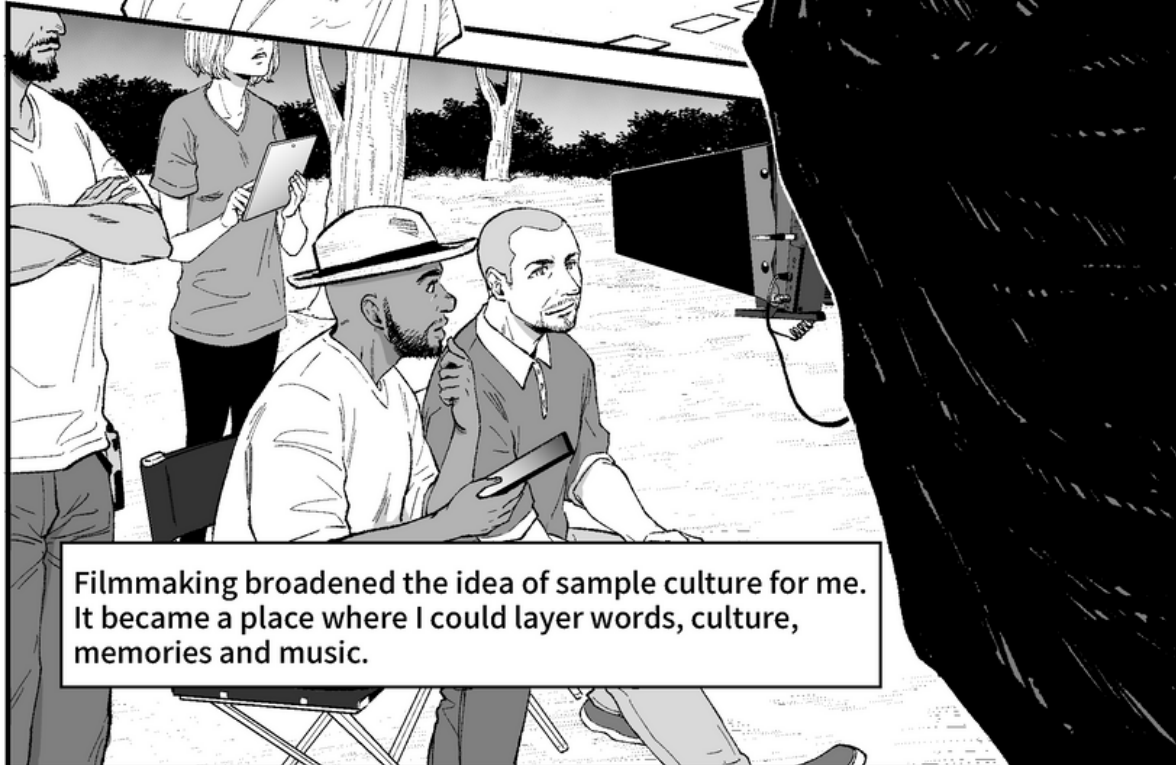
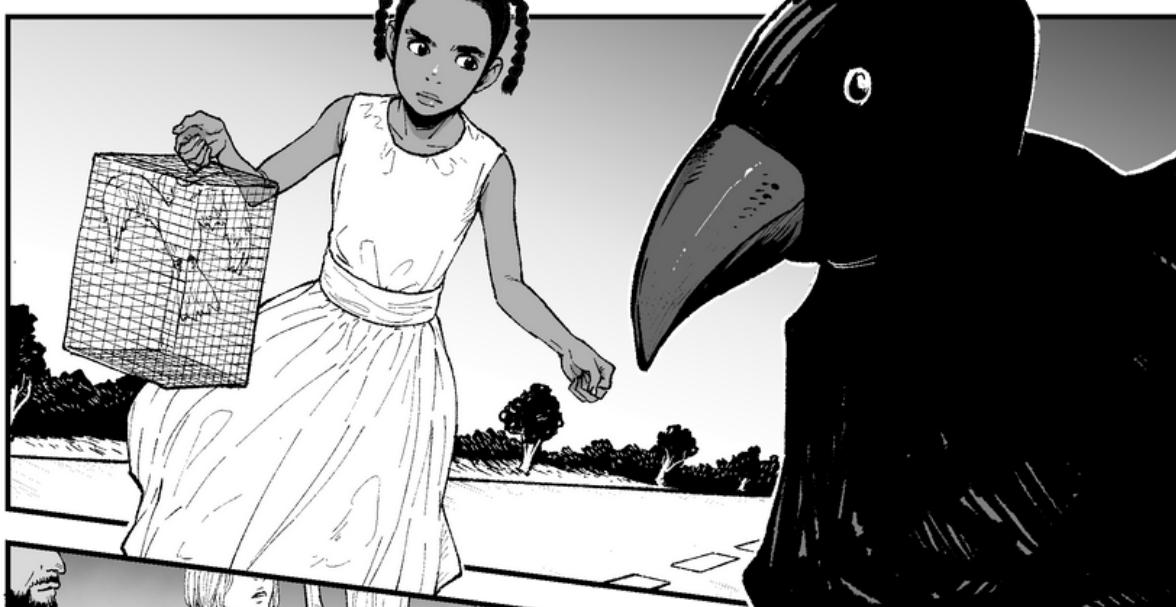
Hip-hop is sample culture. It borrows and it bends.

That's why the genre is always evolving. It is a medium that is incredibly welcoming, but there's a very clear thread of the African diaspora, which can be mapped all the way back through the drum.

In my own evolution, I moved to the United States. In 2013, the Vilcek Foundation and Rick Kinsel awarded me a Creative Promise Prize, acknowledging my voice and influence as an immigrant artist.



I discovered film, another medium where I could sample and remix. Film is a sensory experience. In *The Burial of Kojo*, I used sound and imagery to share some of the stories I heard in my youth.



Filmmaking broadened the idea of sample culture for me. It became a place where I could layer words, culture, memories and music.

Filmmaking expanded the possibilities for my artistry: as a writer, as a filmmaker, as a visual artist, and as a musician.

...through my novel *The Scent of Burnt Flowers*...



Through my work on *The Color Purple* and Beyoncé's *Black Is King*.



...and through paintings like those in my series, *A Moment in Time*.



With each new medium, rediscovering the power of sample culture.

The ability to use art to tell stories that bring people together across cultures.