Black Techno Music in Detroit

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Alia Benabdellah is a graduate student from France, where she is doing a PhD in Human Geography dedicated to Detroit Black techno music at the university of Bordeaux-Montaigne. She has always been fascinated by African-American culture and the cultural productions of the African diaspora and worked on Afrofuturism for her last year of Master degree at the university of Paris Sorbonne Nouvelle. Alia is a Georges Lurcy fellow and a visiting student researcher in the African-American studies department of Wayne State University for 2016/2017.

Techno music was created in the Black community of Detroit in the early 1980’s. It then spread around the world to form one of the most powerful cultural movements of the end of the century. I chose to work on the city of Detroit and its Black Techno Music for my PhD in Human Geography at the university of Bordeaux-Montaigne, France two years ago, and I am now spending the year doing research in the African-American studies department of Wayne State. My research aims to re-affirm the link between techno music and the tremendous musical heritage of Detroit. It also deals with the geography of techno music in the city with reflexion around how to map music, and focuses on one particular Detroit techno collective, Underground Resistance. This work finds its theoretical anchorage in several disciplines including radical and feminist geography as well as popular music studies and urban sociology. All these topics will be discussed during the talk with an emphasis on Detroit techno music history.