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Newsletter of the Bayreuth Academy



The Bayreuth Academy team during its recent Reflection Day (a few members missing on the photo)

The **Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies** is a new Research Center within the Institute of African Studies of the **University of Bayreuth**. During its first phase (2012-2016), "**Future Africa – Visions in Time**" is the theme of its overall research project.

Hello and welcome to the first newsletter of the Bayreuth Academy !

The newsletter will keep you updated on the latest and upcoming research, events and publications of our Academy, including our exciting guest and fellowship scheme. For more information about the Academy itself and our staff, please visit [our website](#).

“Future Africa”: First Academic and Public Events

Since its inception in October 2012, the Bayreuth Academy developed a broad range of activities addressing its general research topic, "Future Africa – Visions in Time".

A series of academic as well as public events started with a solemn opening event held on December 3rd, 2012, with a keynote lecture of Afrofuturist scholar Kodwo Eshun.

Between February and June 2013, all five Sub-projects convened opening workshops or ran panels at the European Conference of African Studies (ECAS) in Lisbon, with national and international partners and guests.

Also in June, Sub-project 4, *Concepts of Future in MediaSpaces*, cooperated with the BIGSAS Literature Festival of African and African-diasporic literatures (convened by Susan Arndt and Nadja Ofuatey-Alazard), dealing with fictional representations of "Future".

From May through July, **Working Group A** of the Bayreuth Academy (the first of six) reviewed current debates on conceptualising future. Bringing together a broad range of disciplines and regions, the Working Group included a total of 20 academic guest fellows from North America, Africa, and Europe. Its discussions culminated in two workshops (in June and July) and in the Bayreuth Academy's Opening Conference (July 4th – 6th, 2013), attended by more than 100 participants from all around the globe.

In the summer term, Henriette Gunkel, together with Kathrin Rothemund, organised a bi-weekly screening of movies that discussed conceptualisations of futures in relation to Science-Fiction films. Susanne Lachenicht and Ute Fendler organized a lecture series on Diasporas contributed to, inter alia, by members of the Bayreuth Academy.

In Berlin, Nadine Siegert and Storm Janse Van Rensburg from Sub-project 5, *Revolution 3.0*, showed the exhibition 'Ghostbusters II: Haunted by Heroes' in cooperation with the SAVVY gallery from 10 August to 10 September. The show featured Kara Lynch, a previous Bayreuth Academy fellow. Katharina Fink presented the show "(In) A Way back Home: Bloke Modisane's writings returning to South Africa" in Sophiatown/Johannesburg, South Africa in October, showcasing for the first time the exile works from Germany of the late Bloke Modisane.

Explorations: Current Research Activities

The semester breaks were particularly active periods of field and documentary research, with Academy staff spreading far and wide, from Africa to Bordeaux and Louisiana.

From July to October 2013, Lena Kroeker and Florian Stoll, visited by Dieter Neubert, carried out the first of three fieldwork phases in Kenya for Sub-project 3, *Middle Classes on the Rise*.

At the same time, Kupakwashe Mtata performed research in Zimbabwe for Sub-project 2, *Visions of Nature*.

From Sub-project 1, *Narratives of the Future*, Christine Whyte researched the 19th century history of missionary and other ideas about the future of Liberia and Sierra Leone in New Orleans, while Annalisa Urbano pursued her work on visions of a Greater Somalia during the decolonization period in archives in the US and in Britain.

Presentations: First Research Findings

First results from research on "Future Africa" were presented at the Academy's own events, mentioned before, and on a number of individual occasions. For instance, from Sub-project 5 *Revolution 3.0*, Stefanie Alisch participated in the music convention of the art programme "The Space Between Us" curated by Marie-Hélène Gutberlet for IfA Gallery at Picnic Records in Berlin. Katharina Fink and Nadine Siegert presented their work at the APELA-conference (Association Pour l'Étude des Littératures Africaines) in Bordeaux.

At the 53. Deutscher Geographentag, in Passau in October, Sybille Bauriedl and Detlef Müller-Mahn from Sub-project 2, *Visions of Nature* held a session on "Adaptation in North-South-Context" with papers on climate-related risks and social vulnerability in Ghana and Ruanda.

From September to November 2013, Henriette Gunkel (Sub-project 4) was appointed as a Visiting Scholar at the Tisch School of the Arts, Performance Studies at NYU in New York, undertaking research on the performance of time and Afrofuturism. She gave various presentations in Germany and in the USA. Peggy Piesche gave presentations at conferences in Amherst, Massachusetts, in Leipzig, in Berlin, and in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

New staff: Welcome!

Corina Buendia, Peggy Piesche, Christine Whyte, Annalisa Urbano, and Sybille Bauriedl have joined the Bayreuth Academy research team since June. You can find out more about them on the website. The academic staff of the Bayreuth Academy, with nine post-doc and two doctoral researchers, is now complete.

Recent Events

- On 21st November, the Academy's **second Working Group (B)**, facilitated by Sub-project 1 "Narratives of the Future in History", will open its debates on "Multiple Futures Through Time". For its start, Ottmar Ette (Professor at Potsdam University; Member of the Advisory Board) will give a lecture on "World Literature / Literatures of the World. The Challenge of TransArea Studies." Until February 2014, the Working Group will meet for a number of sessions, bringing together again a number of invited guest fellows with the researchers at the Academy. Further events, lectures and workshops are also on the agenda.
- **Cinema Africa!**, convened by Ute Fendler and others, and displaying a number of exciting films on African projections of future at the Bayreuth Cineplex, has just closed its gates.
- Academy Fellow Storm Janse Van Rensburg will organise an introduction to PREZI and basic design skills on 21 and 22 November.
- Workshop "Anton Wilhelm Amo between Enlightenment and Slavery. Contexts, Visions and Memory", convened by Sub-project 4, organised by Peggy Piesche and Susan Arndt
- The "Salonkino", organized by Henriette Gunkel and Kathrin Rothmund, will continue this winter term, this time under the title "Movement"

Upcoming events

- Workshop on "Technology, Internet and its Effects on Diaspora, Notions of Race and Conceptions of the Future." held by Sub-project 4 Concepts of Future in MediaSpaces (11 - 13 January, 2014)
- Some members of the Bayreuth Academy will organize a full-time event "**Zukunft Afrika - Ein Lerntag**", 21st February 2014 at the Volkshochschule München.
- Sub-project 3, Middle Classes on the Rise, will organize a panel at the XVIII ISA World Congress of Sociology at Yokohama, Japan (July 2014).
- Several Sub-projects will organize panels at the biannual **Conference of the African Studies Association in Germany (VAD)** on "Future Africa", to be held in Bayreuth in June 2014.

Until next time!

We wish you all the best for a successful Autumn!
Best wishes from everyone at the Academy!

For further information please contact bayreuth.academy@uni-bayreuth.de and our [website](#)



The Bayreuth Academy's home



A stone-built vision of Africa's future:
La Tour de l'Afrique, Bamako (R.Gaudin, Public Domain)

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