

Short-term fellowships in Bayreuth (Germany) for a Working Group on “Conceptualising Future. Current Debates in Regional and Systematic Research”

“Future Africa – Visions in Change” is the first research theme of the newly opened Academy of Advanced African Studies at the University of Bayreuth (see www.bayreuth-academy.uni-bayreuth.de). This project is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. It focuses on conceptualisations of Future as generated, represented and analysed in Africa and African Diasporas that are of global relevance and interest for systematic and comparative perspectives. The “Bayreuth Academy”, as it is called for short, thus engages with a topic that has gained fresh interest in recent academic and public debates. Although visions of Future have, throughout the centuries, been generated around the globe, the West has tended to dominate such visions. More recently, however, new dialogues are being generated that entangle different visions of Future at a wider scale, paying more attention to “non-Western” experiences and imaginations of Future, thus sparking as well as promoting, a renewed attention to this topic.

For its first international Working Group (May to July 2013), the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies invites Fellows who are devoted to current debates about Future and who are interested to share them with each other and with researchers based in the Academy itself. The aim of this Working Group is to review pertinent debates over a wide range of disciplines and to provide an opportunity for innovative encounters between them. Fellows of the Working Group should pursue at least one of the following four questions:

- Which approaches, paradigms and controversies in current debates are particularly innovative and interesting for a better understanding of Future and its embeddedness in time – not with a view to prognosis, but as vision, projection or representation?
- How and by whom are projections of Future discussed and represented outside the *white* West, notably in the Global South and its diasporas? Which experiences, values and agencies do they address, perform or subvert?
- To what extent and in what ways have “Southern” perspectives entered mainstream debates about future in the “West”?
- What is the theoretical or conceptual thrust of new debates about Future? Is the famous “spatial turn”, for instance, currently giving way to a “temporal turn” which, similar to the former, will help to deconstruct discourses of time and futurity and hence subvert rigid divisions in knowledge – including those the “area studies” have been built on?

All scholars wishing to contribute – senior or junior, domestic or international – are invited to submit an application for a Fellowship in the Working Group for a period of normally one month, between May and July 2013. Innovative encounters are envisaged between debates that are often confined to individual disciplines, such as History, Philosophy, Anthropology, Geo-Sciences, Physics, Religious Studies, Literary and Cultural Studies, Linguistics, Art Studies; or to different fields of practice: Cultural cooperation, Literature and Arts, Futurology, Politics These encounters and discussions are expected to materialize in a series of academic and public events and publications during the Working Group period. They will advise and stimulate ongoing research projects on the topic in the Bayreuth Academy which are just in their starting phase and whose teams will also take part in the Working Group. They may also inspire new collaborations and projects in Bayreuth or elsewhere.

Applications should be submitted **until February 26th**, 2013 to bayreuth.academy@uni-bayreuth.de and be accompanied by a CV and a brief statement to which particular debates about future the applicant proposes to contribute, and under which regional, disciplinary, or practical angles.