

Newsletter #3 (Summer 2015)

Dear Reader,

With most of the BA-fellows away on research – and maybe this newsletter will not find you at your desk, either – the home of the Bayreuth Academy at the foot of Wagner's Green Hill is left nearly deserted. We take this opportunity to take a breath, recall some events of the past semester and prepare for the upcoming ones in autumn and winter of 2015/16.

Wherever you are – we wish you all the best and hope you enjoy reading our newsletter!

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Future Africa and Beyond – Public Lecture Series



During the Summer Semester, the Academy invited a wide range of prominent scholars from all over the world to share ideas and knowledge with the interested public at the University of Bayreuth.

While the disciplinary background of the guests varied from sociology, history, anthropology to philosophy, they all discussed the overarching theme of the series

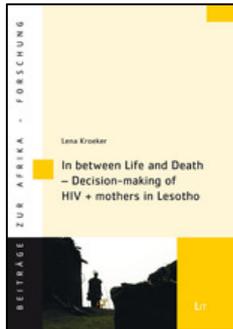
and of the Academy's current research – future and its conceptualisations in Africa and beyond (pictures show Aleida Assmann and Jeffrey Alexander).

All of the talks were followed by discussions and offered fruitful stimuli not only for the work of the Members and Fellows of the Bayreuth Academy, but also for exchanges with interested colleagues from the University.

You can find an overview of all the guests and their topics on our [website](#).



New Books by Members of the Bayreuth Academy



Dr. Lena Kroeker (2015): *In between Life and Death - Decision making of HIV+Mothers in Lesotho*, LIT-Verlag.

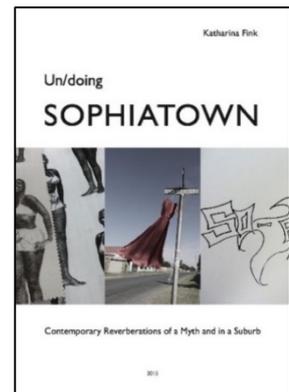
After having been tested HIV-positive during pregnancy, mothers in Lesotho envision to see a healthy child growing up, however, the medical program to prevent HIV-transmission clashes with various social norms. Mother and Child are in an uncertain social and medical state 'between life and death'.

The author now pursues research in our [Sub-project 3 "Middle Classes on the Rise" on social security](#).

Dr. Katharina Fink (2015): *Un/doing Sophiatown. Contemporary reverberations of a myth and in a suburb*.

Sophiatown, the iconic suburb in Johannesburg, has been at the heart of many narratives around identity and belonging. Sceptical of both concepts mentioned, this book investigates the multiple meanings which Sophiatown – both as a myth and a suburb – holds for various people in the present and for the future. The book also sheds light on numerous cultural projects and exhibitions.

And it shares some lessons about museology and artistic interventions, which are of relevance for the author's current work in [Sub-project 5 "Revolution 3.0"](#).



Sybille Bauriedl (2015): *Wörterbuch Klimadebatte* (to be published November), Transcript.

Was etwa ist eine „klimaneutrale Entwicklung“ und ist diese auch sozial neutral? Warum gibt es „Klimaflüchtlinge“ nur in Entwicklungsländern, wo Klimawandel doch ein globales Problem ist?

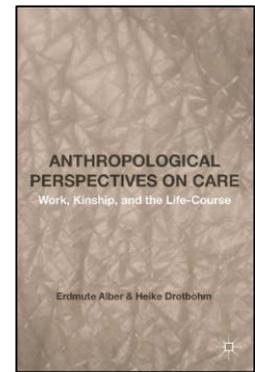
Im »Wörterbuch Klimadebatte« stellen Expert_innen des Klimadiskurses aus Sozial-, Politik- und Kulturwissenschaften über 40 Schlüsselbegriffe zur Diskussion und geben damit eine Anleitung zur kritischen Reflexion von Potenzialen und Problemen der aktuellen Klimapolitik.

The author now pursues research in our [Sub-project 2 „Visions of Nature“](#).

Erdmute Alber and Heike Drotbohm (2015): *Anthropological Perspectives on Care - Work, Kinship, and the Life-Course* (to be published September), Palgrave.

A growing amount of literature focuses on the intersection between work, gender, ethnicity, affect, and mobility regimes. In view of this growing field of literature, Anthropological Perspectives on Care looks at the notion of care from an anthropological perspective.

Erdmute Alber is a leader of [Sub-project 3 "Middle Classes on the Rise"](#), and Heike Drotbohm has been a Fellow of the Bayreuth Academy in Summer 2014.



ALA Conference - for the first time in Europe

From 2 to 6 June, the 41st annual conference of the African Literature Association, and the 5th BIGSAS Festival of African and African-Diasporic Literatures took place, united by delving into "African Futures and Beyond - Visions in Transition".

The African Literature Association met for the first time in Europe and more than 400 participants found their way to Bayreuth, including many renowned writers such as Teju Cole (Nigeria/USA, see image) Ama Ata Aidoo (Ghana), Bernadine Evaristo (UK), Noah Sow (Germany), Wole Soyinka (Nigeria) and Binyawanga Wainina (Kenya).

The convenors (Prof. Susan Arndt, Prof. Ute Fendler, and Nadja Ofuatey-Alazard) invited the participants and the interested public to talk and think about African-American-European encounters. Europe's dissipation of African futures was scrutinized, yet Future Africa was at the centre of the conference's attention. Future Africa, here, meant both: the future of Africa and its diasporas as well as African(-diasporic) contributions to the futures that matter in Africa and beyond - globally indeed.



You can find some press articles (among them a whole page in FAZ) and more information on the ALA on our [website](#) and on www.ala2015.com.

"Campus erleben" - Bringing back the future

On a sunny weekend in July, the University of Bayreuth celebrated 40 years of existence - with the appropriate youthfulness attached to it. Social events ranged from a ballroom dance reception to a party of professors spinning records. Equally festive, the multitude of research done at University of

Bayreuth was presented in a massive public event: "Campus erleben" which translates to "experience the campus".

As one of the innovative research centres at the university, the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies was part of the event with two projects. More orientated towards the arts, an initiative by Prof. Susan Arndt and Dr. Katharina Fink of the research teams working on narratives and images of



future, presented a day of encounters with "afrofuturistic poetics" with works by previous Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies Fellow Kae Sun (Toronto) as well as by poet and scholar Philipp Khabo Koepsell (Berlin).

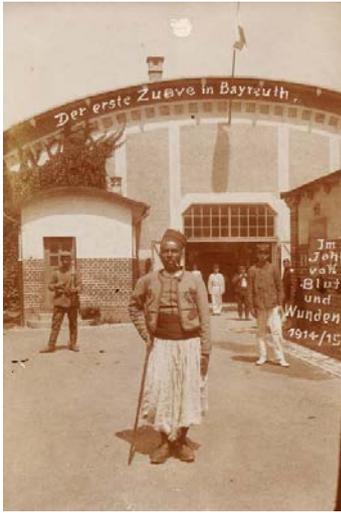
Kae Sun's contribution, which presented a work-in-progress of an artist collective's contribution in the Academy Exhibition which will open in November 2015, played with the temporality of be/longing. In a split-screen installation, the story of two people and their affectedness, which is dominated by structural time, forcing planned futures to be reshaped in the light of uncertainty. A very timely piece of art in the context of the global discourse around migration; particularly how it unfolds in the African-European constellation.

The work of Philipp Khabo Koepsell, as presented in Bayreuth, fuses the format of a magazine with that of a movement: Afrofuturism is the driving force; in the words of the editor, poet and thinker "(...) not only as an expression of creative energy, not only because newer, more progressive images of Black life are necessary but because this multitude of visions and ways of being has always existed". "The Afropean Contemporary" as magazine and platform is both an archival project of Black publications in the German context but also an homage to the catalytic entry points into past and very active futures, which the fusion of different aesthetics provides.

You can find Philipp Khabo Koepsell's "The Afropean Contemporary Literatur- und Gesellschaftsmagazin" on www.epubli.de/shop/buch/45094.

The second initiative of the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies literally presented an archaeology of past futures. Guided by Prof. Achim von Oppen, BA's director and leader of [Sub-project 1 "Beyond Europe"](#), and Bayreuth Academy-staff member Florens Eckert, a team of students dug deep into the history of the University as a locality.

Doing so, they uncovered traces of African prisoners of war, captured by Bayreuth troops in France a hundred years ago, who had been interned in a POW camp established on the military grounds on which, much later, the Main Campus of Bayreuth University was to be built. Taking this as a starting point for an exhibition in the Lounge of the Humanities Building on Campus, they pointed out the surprising connections between Africa and Bayreuth during the First World War from a variety of angles.



North African prisoner of war in 1915, in front of the riding arena of the 6th Bavarian Chevauleger in Bayreuth;
© Bernd-Mayer-Foundation,
City Archive Bayreuth

From the involvement of Bayreuth cavalry in what was then the colony of “German Southwest Africa” (today’s Namibia) to the sufferings of civilians on both continents, from monuments and ceremonies to commemorate the War to the parallel revolts and new hopes arising from it on both sides, the exhibition tried to show that the Africa and Bayreuth, their pasts and their views of the future, have been entangled for much longer than the past 40 years.

In this way, both Bayreuth Academy contributions to “Campus Erleben!” did provide space to engage with the public around questions of “Future Africa and Beyond”. The interest by and the conversations with a larger public on this Saturday showed that there is an urgent need for more dialogues like these; not only to present research in an accessible format but also to engage with the scarce popular knowledge about our topic.

The exhibition will soon be on display in the premises of the Bayreuth Academy (Hugo-Rüdel-Str. 10), we keep you updated!

Guests of Working Group E

[Working Group E “Future as Commodity and In\(ter\)vention – Narration, Knowledge and Technology”](#) welcomed as guests in Summer 2015:

Prof. Anne Adams, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

Prof. Hakim Adi, Chichester University, London

Dr. Kien Nghi Ha, Berlin

Ingrid LaFleur, Detroit

Deborah Nyangulu, University of Münster

Abdi Osman, University of Toronto

Moses Serubiri, Kampala

Paul D. Miller aka DJ Spooky, New York

Dr. Charles Ngiewih Teke, Munich

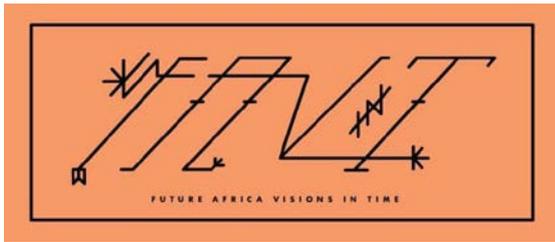
Prof. Rinaldo Walcott, University of Toronto

For a list of all guests and their respective research focus have a look on our [website](#).

Save the Date: Opening of the BA-Exhibition with a Vernissage on 7th November

The exhibition “FAVT: Future Africa Visions in Time” explores diverse areas of research and debates generated by the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies since its inception in 2013. The exhibition content derives from discursive collaborations between invited international artists and resident researchers within the Academy, resulting in innovative conceptual research that traverses aesthetic and scientific approaches. Positions generated through this collaborative process also question the results and processes of academic research by aesthetically complicating them.

Through intensive conversations, artworks and conceptual positions were developed that critically engage with, reflect on, interpret, imagine, intervene into, disturb, translate or anticipate the concepts of the Academy's current general theme "Future Africa: Visions in Time", cutting across its five sub-projects: "Beyond Europe: Narratives of the Future in Modern African History", "Visions of Nature Concepts of Appropriating and Conserving Nature", "Middle Classes on the Rise: Concepts of the future among freedom, consumption, tradition and moral", "Concepts of Future in Mediaspaces" and "Revolution 3.0 – Iconographies of social utopia".



Vernissage: 7 November 2015, 7pm at Iwalewahaus Bayreuth

For all news and activities, please follow the exhibition's [blog](#) or visit our [website](#).

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