



Working Group
“Multiple Futures through Time”
(Winter 2013-14)

Outline

The Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies, currently concentrating its research on the topic “Future Africa – Visions in Time”, is happy to announce its second international and interdisciplinary Working Group. During the Winter Semester 2013-14, it will discuss “Multiple Futures through Time”, to address the great diversity of conceptualisations of ‘future’ in Africa, in African diasporas, and in other parts of the world. In a systematic and comparative perspective it will explore how these notions are shaped by, and have shaped in turn, different historical contexts. The debates within this Working Group will develop new insights into how and why such ideas change through time and how they relate to each other through transfer, memory, and references. The aim of the Working Group is to advance research and debates on the diversity and changeability of “future” drawing on a wide range of disciplines and approaches. It will provide space for innovative encounters. The Working Group is facilitated by one of the Academy’s five Sub-Projects, titled “Narratives of the Future in Modern African History”.

The Working Group will meet on a regular basis between November 21st, 2013, and January 30th, 2013-14 (with a break during the Christmas holidays). Peaks of Working Group activity will be two 2-day Workshops, to be held in Bayreuth on December 12th and 13th, and on January 16th and 17th. The sessions and workshops of the Working Group will bring together a number of specially-invited Guest Fellows from a large variety of disciplines, countries, and institutions, and the researchers of the Bayreuth Academy itself.

Discussions in the Working Group will revolve around a set of at least four broad questions:

- How did ideas, practices and representations of ‘future’ change over time? How do or did they change in specific periods and contexts?
- How can we categorise and periodise visions of ‘future’, and how does its diversity and changeability challenge us to rethink our disciplinary or regional perspectives?
- Which temporal, social, political, logical and aesthetical dichotomies are involved in concepts of ‘future’? To what extent are they related to historical, biographical, communicative or environmental processes?
- To what extent are (or were) earlier concepts, practices and representations of ‘future’ included in more recent concepts and on which conditions? To what extent are such concepts of ‘future’ transferred across social, cultural or regional boundaries?