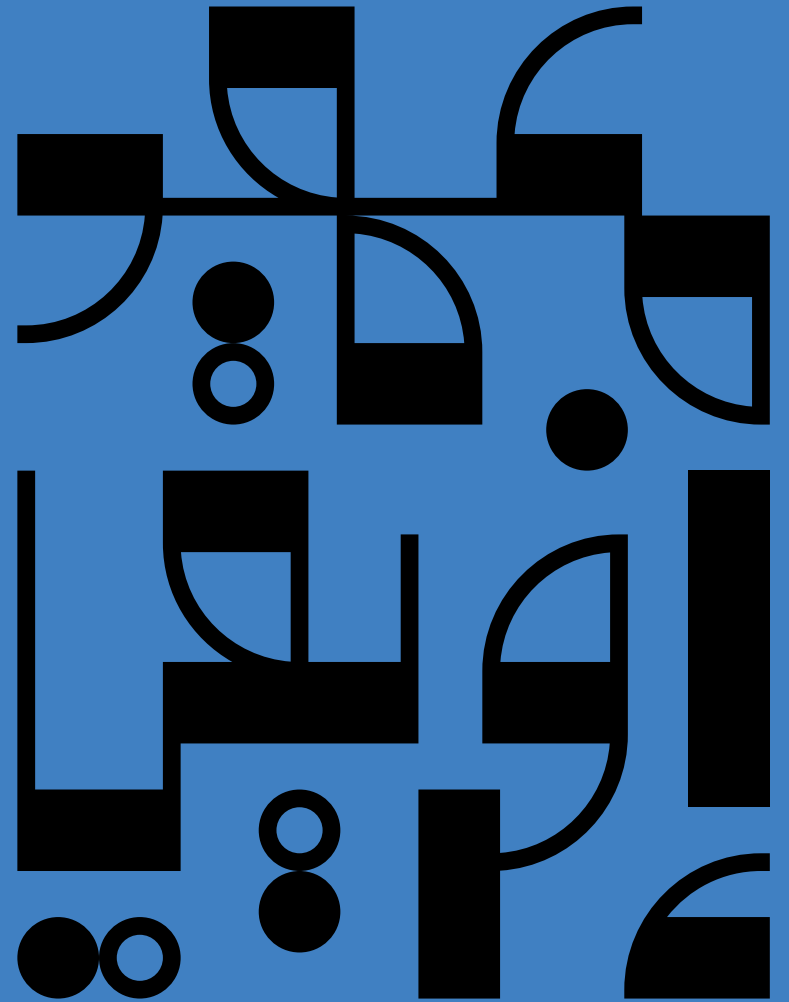


ISSUE NO. 2

FALL 2019 - SPRING 2021



THE AFRICA INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

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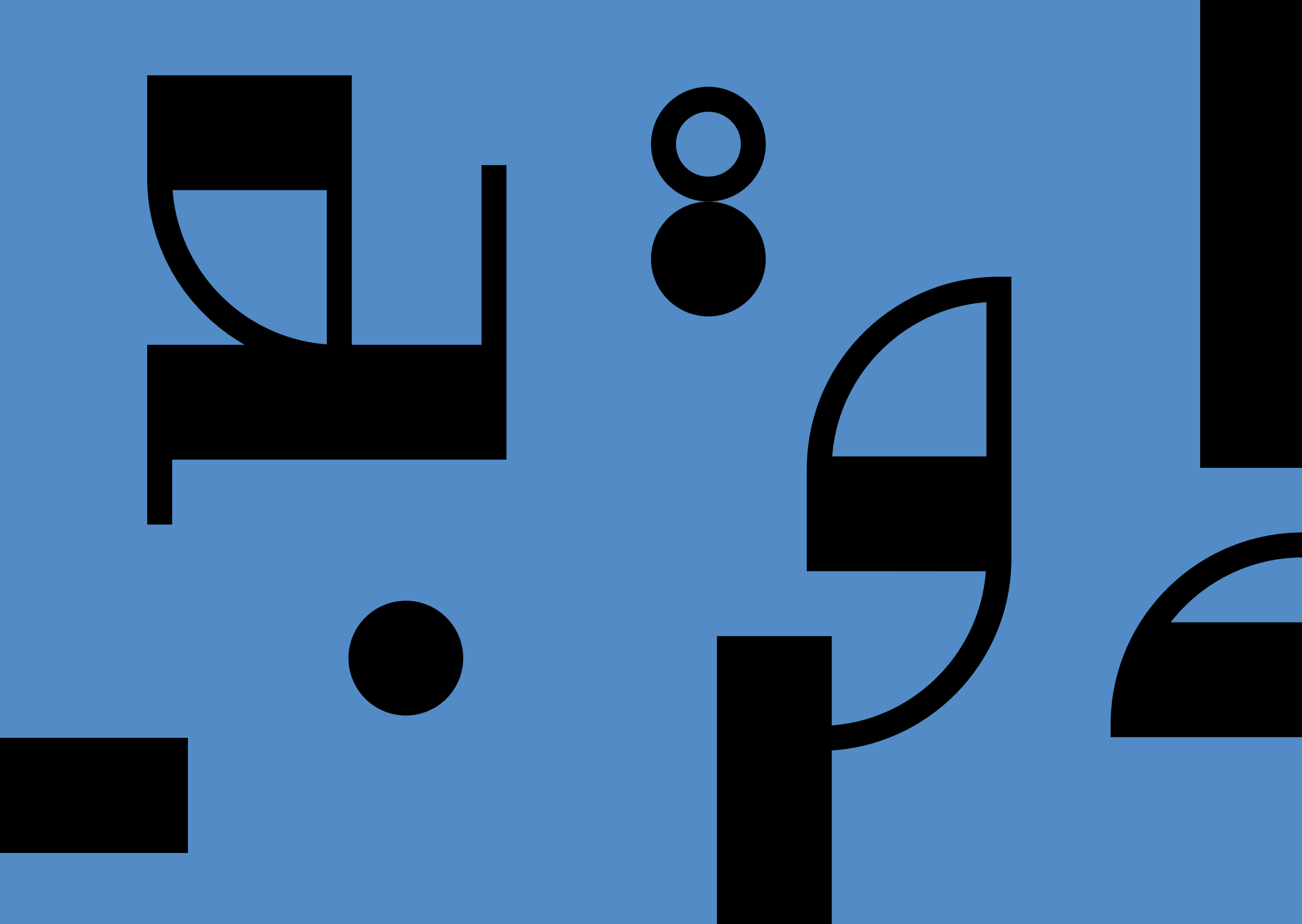
FALL 2019 – SPRING 2021

SHARJAH, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

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PRESIDENT & DIRECTOR



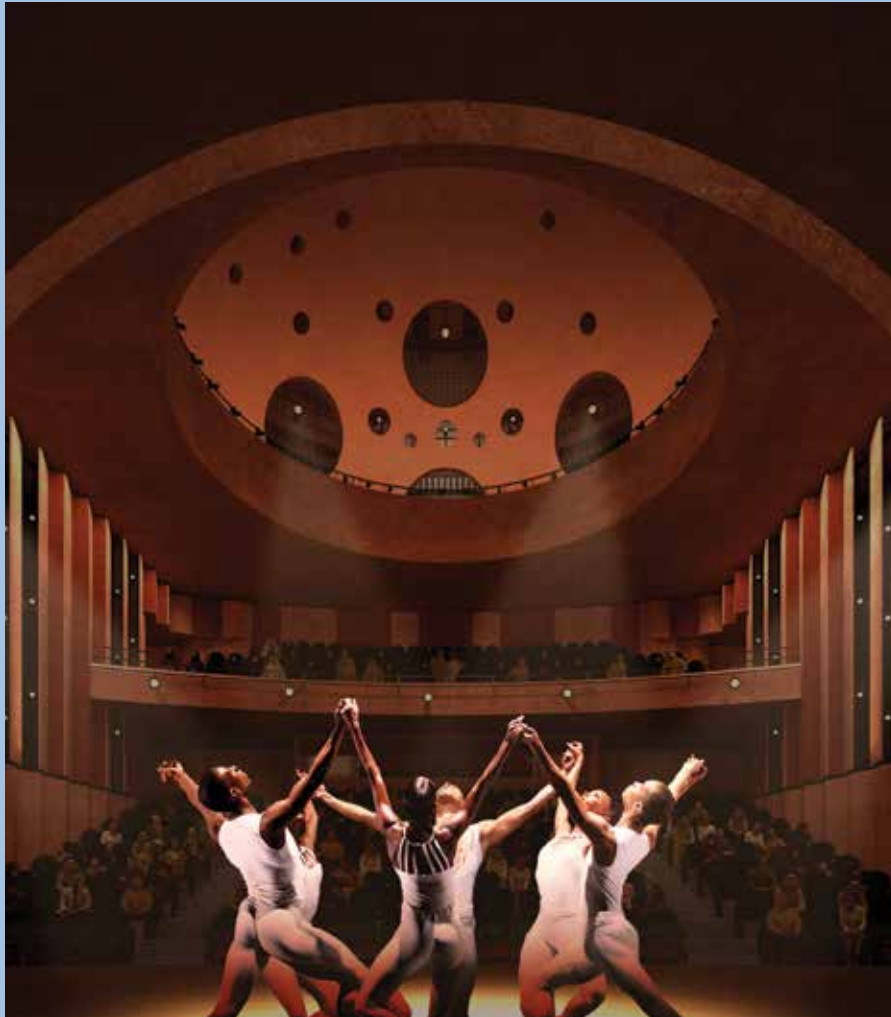
Hoor Al Qasimi is the President of The Africa Institute. She also serves as President and Director of Sharjah Art Foundation, is a curator and practising artist who received her BFA from the Slade School of Fine Art, London (2002), a Diploma in Painting from the Royal Academy of Arts, London (2005) and an MA in Curating Contemporary Art from the Royal College of Art, London (2008). In 2003, she was appointed curator of Sharjah Biennial 6 and has since continued as the Biennial Director. Al Qasimi serves on the Board of Directors for MoMA PS1, New York; KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; Ashkal Alwan, Beirut and Darat Al Funun, Amman. She is President of the International Biennial Association; Chair of the Advisory Board for the College of Art and Design, University of Sharjah and member of the Advisory Board for Khoj International Artists' Association, New Delhi. She is currently a member of the Prince Claus Award Committee (2016–current) and served as a member of the jury for the Bonnefanten Award for Contemporary Art (2018).



Salah M. Hassan is the Director of The Africa Institute, Sharjah, UAE. Hassan is the Goldwin Smith Professor and Director of the Institute for Comparative Modernities, and Professor of Art History and Visual Culture in the Africana Studies and Research Center, and the Department of History of Art and Visual Studies, Cornell University, Ithaca, US. Hassan is an art critic, curator, and founding editor of *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art*. He authored, edited and co-edited several books including *Ibrahim El Salahi: A Visionary Modernist* (Museum for African Art and Tate Modern, 2012, 2013), *Darfur and the Crisis of Governance: A Critical Reader* (Cornell University Press, 2009), *Diaspora, Memory, Place* (Prestel Publishing, 2008), *Unpacking Europe* (NAi Publishers, 2001) and *Authentic/ Ex-Centric* (Forum for African Arts, 2001). Hassan has curated several exhibitions including major ones at the Venice and Dakar Biennales, and most recently *The Khartoum School: The Making of the Modern Art Movement in Sudan (1945–Present)*, and *The Egyptian Surrealists: When Art Becomes Liberty (1938–1965)* sponsored by the Sharjah Art Foundation and which opened in Sharjah and Cairo (2016). Hassan was the Madeleine Haas Russell Visiting Professor in African and Afro-American Studies, Brandeis University, Boston, US (2016–2017). He is the recipient of several grants and awards including the J. Paul Getty Postdoctoral Fellowship in Art History and the Humanities, and the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Andy Warhol Foundation, and Sharjah Art Foundation.

CAMPUS ANNOUNCEMENT

THE AFRICA INSTITUTE PRESENTS DAVID ADJAYE CAMPUS DESIGN



The Africa Institute has commissioned Adjaye Associates to design its new campus in downtown Sharjah. Beginning in 2023, the Institute will welcome its inaugural class of M.A. and Ph.D. students in the field of African and African diaspora studies and launch certificate programs in African languages, helping shape the next generation of leaders in the field. Resulting from a two-year collaboration to ensure the architecture advances the Institute's multifaceted mission, the new Sir David Adjaye-designed campus will allow the Institute to significantly expand its programming in all these areas.

Designed by David Adjaye, the architecture creates an enclosed campus with four wings between four and seven stories each. Connected by a series of open-air interior courtyards and punctuated by large overhangs which produce shade and relief from solar heat, the low carbon concrete structure enhances the desert typology which requires a sensitive and contextual response. The open-air courtyards span the first and ground floors are punctuated by water features and native planters which improve air circulation and provide natural cooling.

The 31,882-square-meter (343,175-square-foot) campus will include spaces of differing character and scale for classes and seminars as well as a research library and climatized archive facility, flexible auditorium and performance space, a restaurant and café, and a bookstore. Entryways on each of its four façades will welcome the public and connect The Africa Institute with surrounding institutions and public walkways. The Africa Institute is also commissioning artists to create site-specific installations throughout its public spaces, which will be announced at a later date. The campus is scheduled for completion in 2023.







FACULTY ANNOUNCEMENT

CAA 2021'S DISTINGUISHED SCHOLAR: DR. SALAH M. HASSAN

The Africa Institute's Director, Dr. Salah M. Hassan, has been recognized as CAA 2021's Distinguished Scholar. The 109th CAA Annual Conference highlighted his career and provided an opportunity for dialogue between and among colleagues. The session's panel included Dr. Hassan and Chika Okeke-Agulu (Princeton University), Elizabeth Giorgis (University of Addis Ababa) and Iftikhar Dadi (Cornell University). Watch the session's panel on theafricainstitute.org.

Salah M. Hassan is the Goldwin Smith Professor of African and African Diaspora Art History and Visual Culture in the Department of Africana Studies and Research Center, as well as in the Department of History of Art and Visual Studies, and also serves as Director of the Institute for Comparative Modernities at Cornell University, Ithaca, USA. Hassan is also the Director of The Africa Institute, Sharjah, UAE. Hassan served as Professor of History of Art in African and African American Studies and Fine Art at Brandeis University, where he previously awarded the Madeleine Haas Russell Professorship in the Departments of African and Afro-American Studies and Fine Arts (2016-2017).

Emery Kalema

Assistant Professor of African History – Starting July 2022

Emery Kalema is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow in Studies in Historical Trauma and Transformation at Stellenbosch University, South Africa, and a Summer Program in Social Science Fellow (2018-2019) at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton University, New Jersey, USA. He holds a PhD in History from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa (2017).

His research interests include power and politics, body and embodiment, violence, memory, trauma and suffering, as well as the postcolony. He is currently working on a book project, based on his doctoral dissertation, tentatively entitled, “Violence and Memory: The Mulele ‘Rebellion’ in Postcolonial Congo”. The book is an exploration of suffering caused by the Mulele rebellion (1963-1968), the reproduction of suffering across time and its inscription in the imaginary of the survivors. It is also about power, its meaning and its intersection with memory and suffering. Kalema will be conducting a set of philosophical reflections around the theme Memory as Freedom and Right upon completion of his current book project.

Kalema’s publications include “‘The Mulele ‘Rebellion’, Congolese Political Regimes, and the Politics of Forgetting” in *Cahiers d’Etudes Africaines* (2018), “Scars, Marked Bodies, and Suffering: The Mulele ‘Rebellion’ in Postcolonial Congo” in *Journal of African History* (2018), “Religion et médecine au Congo: pratiques et savoirs des assistants médicaux ‘indigènes’ issus de Kisantu (Fomulac) et de leurs patients (1937-1960)” in Vincent Viaene, Bram Cleys & Jan De Maeyer (eds) and *Religion, Colonization and Decolonization in Congo, 1885-1960*, by Leuven University Press (2018).

Françoise Vergès

Professor of Political Science – Starting January 2022

Françoise Vergès is a political scientist by training and a well-known scholar and public intellectual. She has worked as a journalist in France. She lived in Algeria and Mexico before eventually settling in the USA where she obtained her BA from San Diego State University, California, USA (1989). She received her MA, Ph.D. in Political Theory from University of California, Berkeley in 1990 and 1995 respectively. She has taught at Sussex University and Goldsmiths College, London, and has been an invited professor at University of California, Berkeley and Brown University.

Vergès has done extensive research on postcolonial theory, creolization, psychoanalysis, slavery and the economy of predation.

Her publications include *The Wombs of Women: Race, Capital, Feminism* published by Duke University Press (2020) and *A Decolonial Feminism* by Pluto Press (2021).

Amy Niang

Associate Professor of Political Science

Amy Niang joins The Africa Institute as an Associate Professor in Political Science. Her research interests are broadly centered around (1) the history of state formation and sovereignty (2) Africa's International relations and (3) the history of geopolitics.

Her work has been published in journals such as *International Relations; Alternatives; Politics; African Studies; African Economic History, Journal of Ritual Studies* and in many edited collections. She is the author of *The Postcolonial African State in Transition: Stateness and Modes of Sovereignty* (2018); co-editor (with Baz Lecocq) of *Identités sahéliennes en temps de crise: histoires, enjeux et perspectives* (2019) and *Researching Peacebuilding in Africa: Reflections on Theory, Fieldwork and Context* (with Ismail Rashid, 2020).

Prior to her current position, she taught at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, the Mohammed VI Polytechnic University in Rabat, and has also held visiting positions and fellowships at the University of Sao Paulo, Princeton University, the University of Halle-Wittenberg, the University of Michigan, the Institute of Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) amongst many other institutions. Niang holds a BA in International Relations (2005) and a MA in Political Economy from the University of Tsukuba (2007) and a PhD in Politics and International Relations from the University of Edinburgh (2011).

Binyam Sisay Mendisu

Associate Professor of African Languages and Linguistics

Binyam Sisay Mendisu completed his PhD in Linguistics from the University of Oslo in 2008. Between 2008 and 2016, he taught full-time at Addis Ababa University (AAU) as an Assistant and later associate professor. As a founding Dean of Humanities (2010-2012) at AAU, Mendisu initiated and ran series of multidisciplinary and critical discussions dubbed 'Conversations on Humanities'.

As an education specialist at UNESCO-IICBA, his work focused on providing technical backstopping for teacher policy development in Uganda, the Seychelles, Burundi, Malawi and Mozambique, and leading projects and initiatives on mother tongue and early childhood education.

He has initiated and served as a project leader of an international project 'Linguistic Capacity Building: Tools for Inclusive Development of Ethiopia' (2014-2016), which was supported by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). Mendisu is a member of the Global Young Academy (GYA) since 2017 and he is an inaugural fellow of the African Science Leadership Program (ASLP) at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. Currently, he sits on the Steering Committee of ASLP and serves as one of the facilitators of the program. Moreover, he is a member of the 2021 Letten Prize Committee that recognizes the contribution of one early career researcher globally who is able to exemplify how global human development challenges can be solved through research.

Mendisu's research considers language as an archive of local knowledge and memory.

His publications include *Multilingual Ethiopia: Linguistic Challenges and Capacity Building Efforts* published by University of Oslo (2016), "Ethiopian Linguistics at the Dawn of the 21st Century" in *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* (2009), *Restoring African studies to its linguistic identity: reflections on Ethiopian studies* published in *Social Dynamics*,

"What is in a Term? A Historical and Linguistic Examination of the Revolutionary Terminology – yiwdem 'let it be demolished' in Amharic 1974-1977" in *Journal of Northeast African Studies* (2013) alongside Abdu Ahmed Ali and Aquilina Mawadza, and *Amharic-English/English-Amharic Dictionary and Phrasebook* published by Hippocrene Books (2018).

Elizabeth W. Giorgis

Associate Professor of Art History, Theory and Criticism

Elizabeth W. Giorgis received her PhD in the History of Art and Visual Studies from Cornell University in 2010 and her Masters in Museum Studies from New York University in 2004. She is a member of the editorial board for *Transition Magazine*, *North East African Studies (NEAS)* and for *Ethiopian Journal of Social Sciences (EJSS)*. She is an advisory editorial board member for *Journal for Critical African Studies*, *Callaloo Art* and contributing editor for *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East (CSSAAME)*.

She is a recipient of several fellowships including The Ali Mazrui Senior Fellowship for Global African Studies at The Africa Institute, Distinguished Visiting Scholar at Brown University, a visiting professor at the Academy of Fine Art in Vienna and a fellow at the Rockefeller Bellagio Center Academic Writing Resident Fellows Program. *Modernist Art in Ethiopia* (2019, Ohio University Press) was shortlisted for the African Studies Association UK Fage and Oliver Prize for outstanding and original scholarship on Africa. It was also a finalist for the African Studies Association Best Book Prize (formerly known as the Melville J. Herskovits prize). It won the African Studies Association's 2020 Bethwell A. Ogbot Book Prize as the best book on East African Studies.

She has curated several exhibitions at the Modern Art Museum: Gebre Kristos Desta Center, more recently, the works of Danish Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson. She has also participated in several international conferences and public lectures. In January 2019, she served as convener for the first African Humanities Initiative called *Africa as Concept*:

Decolonization, Emancipation and Freedom that was sponsored by the Mellon Foundation and the Consortium of the Humanities, Centers and Institutes (CHCI).

Giorgis's current research is focused on Ethiopian women's aesthetic in the wider politics of exclusion. Her book, *Modernist Art in Ethiopia*—published by Ohio University Press—was released in February 2019. It is the first comprehensive monographic study of Ethiopian visual modernism within a broader social and intellectual history.

Her publications include *Unheard Voices: Contestations Over Representation* published by London's School of Oriental and African Studies (2020), "Skunder Boghossian: A Brief Introduction to the Man and the Artist," *Callaloo* 40 (2017), *World of Malls: Architecture of Consumption*, Hatje Cantz Verlag (2016), *Art Academy of Vienna, Time Sensitive Activity: The Works of Olafur Eliasson*, published by Addis Ababa's Central Publishers (2016), and *Modernist Art in Ethiopia* printed by Ohio University Press (2019).

Surafel Wondimu Abebe

Assistant Professor of Performance Studies and Theory

Abebe studied Literature (BA) and Cultural Studies (MA) at Addis Ababa University (AAU) (2010). He served at AAU as a lecturer, researcher, and Deputy Dean of Humanities. He continued working with AAU as an assistant professor at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Center for African Studies, and College of Performing and Visual Arts after he completed his PhD in Performance Historiography at the University of Minnesota (2018). He is also a board member of a multi-genre online journal, *AGITATE*, at the University of Minnesota.

Abebe uses academia, performance, and media as sites of cultural politics from which to interrogate representational practices. Abebe engages with sedimented embodied historiographies in order to understand what it means to be human in the here and now. Currently, he is working on his book project, which studies the ways in which Ethiopian female performers maneuver and reinvent spaces of empires, revolutions, and neoliberal globalization. He is currently working on forthcoming publications.

POSTDOCTORAL AND SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAM

Ali A. Mazrui Senior Fellows in Global African Studies

The Africa Institute will welcome three scholars as senior fellows in the Ali A. Mazrui Senior Fellows in Global African Studies.

Ahmad Sikainga

Ahmad Sikainga is a professor of African History at the Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, USA. His academic interests embrace the study of Africa, the African Diaspora, and the Middle East with a focus on slavery, labor, urban history, and popular culture. The geographical focus of Sikainga's research is the Sudan, the Nile Valley, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf.

His publications include *Sudan Defense Force: Origin and Role, 1925-1955* (1983), *Western Bahr al-Ghazal under British Rule, 1898-1956* (1991), *Slaves into Workers: Emancipation and Labor in Colonial Sudan* (1996), *City of Steel and Fire: A Social History of Atbara, Sudan's Railway Town, 1906-1984* (2002). He co-edited *Africa and World War II* (Cambridge, 2015), *Post-conflict Reconstruction in Africa* (2006), and *Civil War in the Sudan, 1983-1989* (1993). In addition, Sikainga has published dozens of articles and book chapters. His research was supported by fellowships and grants from such institutions as the Andrew Mellon Fellowship at Harvard University, National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, the American Philosophical Society, the J. William Fulbright program, and the Social Science Research Council, just to name a few. Sikainga is currently working on two book projects: *Free and Unfree Labor in a Changing Economy: Slavery, Oil, and Wage Labor in Qatar* examines the link between slavery, the oil industry, and wage labor in Qatar from the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries, and *Slavery, Ethnicity. The second projected, titled Identity, and the Development of Popular Culture in Contemporary Sudan* explores the role of former slaves, their descendants, immigrants,

and other subaltern groups in the development of distinct styles of music, dance, and fashion that have shaped Sudanese urban popular culture.

Abdul Mohammed Hussein Sheriff

Abdul Sheriff was born and educated in Zanzibar, and completed his bachelors and master's degrees at the University of California in Los Angeles in 1966. He went on to receive his PhD from the School of Oriental & African Studies (SOAS), University of London in 1971.

Abdul Sheriff taught history at the University of Dar es Salaam from 1969-1991, served as Advisor & Principal Curator of the Zanzibar Museums from 1993-2005, and as Executive Director of the Zanzibar Indian Ocean Research Institute from 2007 until 2012. He also served as Chairman and Member of the Presidential Committees on the State University of Zanzibar from 1995 until 2002, and Chairman of the Zanzibar Constitutional Forum from 2012 until 2014 and Delegate to the Tanzanian Constituent Assembly in 2014.

Abdul Sheriff has published several books, including *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar* (1987), and *The Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean – Cosmopolitanism, Culture & Islam* (2010); edited *History & Conservation of Zanzibar Stone Town* (1995); and co-edited *Zanzibar Under Colonial Rule* (1991), *The Indian Ocean: Oceanic Connections & the Creation of New Societies* (2014), and *Transition from Slavery in Zanzibar & Mauritius*, (2017), as well numerous scholarly articles. His current research interests are on Zanzibar, the Swahili culture, and the Indian Ocean.

Naminata Diabate

Naminata Diabate is associate professor of comparative literature at Cornell University. She is a member of the core faculty in Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (FGSS), and affiliated faculty in Romance Studies; Africana Studies and Research Center (ASRC); Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Studies; Performing and Media Arts; and Visual Studies. Diabate holds a PhD in Comparative Literature with dual concentrations in African Diaspora Studies and Women's and Gender Studies from the University at Texas at Austin (2011).

A scholar of African and African diaspora studies and sexuality and gender studies with linguistic expertise in Malinké, French, English, Nouchi, Spanish, and Latin, her work seeks to redefine how we understand specific forms of embodied agency in the neoliberal present in global Africa. Diabate engages multiple sites, including novels of 20th and 21st centuries, online and social media, pictorial arts, film, journalism, and oral traditions from Africa, black America, Afro-Hispanic America, and the French Antilles. Her most recent provocations of defiant disrobing, erotic pleasure, and the impact of Internet media on queerness have appeared in her book, *Naked Agency: Genital Cursing and Biopolitics in Africa* (Duke University Press, 2020), peer-reviewed journals, and collections of essays, such as *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art, Research in African Literatures, African Literature Today (ALT), Interventions, Routledge Handbook of African Literature, and Fieldwork in the Humanities*.

In addition to her interventions in the conventional academic channels, Diabate contributes regularly to several media outlets, including newspapers, women's magazines, and podcasts. Recently, she wrote for the women's magazine *Voix/Voie de Femme* in Côte d'Ivoire, PBS's *Academic Minute*, *The New Books in Women's History* podcast, and the *South African Podcast* series, *Sound Africa*. Diabate's forthcoming work will appear in *African Studies Review*, *The Journal African Literature Association (JALA)* and the edited volume, *New Visions in African and African Diaspora Studies*. Currently, she is working on two monographs, "The Problem of Pleasure in Global Africa" and "Digital Insurgencies and Bodily Domains."

FATEMA MERNISSI POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW IN SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES

Netsanet Gebremichael

Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University

Netsanet Gebremichael holds a PhD in interdisciplinary Social Studies from Makerere Institute of Social Research, Makerere University Uganda in 2019. She is currently an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University.

Netsanet's recent published academic articles include *Travel Writing as an Empirical Mode of Knowing: A Methodological Critique of James Bruce's Travels and Adventures in Abyssinia*, in *MISR Review*, *Ambivalent memories of imperial legacies: Asmara as 'beautiful' and 'segregationist' from Ethiopia* *Journal of Cultural Studies*, and *PPPs in Ethiopia: The New Frontier*. In *Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era*.

She has recently concluded a three-year research project entitled: "Womanhood" as a category of struggle and lives: *Chronicling Ethiopian Women's experience and "The Women Question" in Ethiopian Student Movement 1950-78*, which was funded by SOAS, University of London, as part of the *Parliament for People Research Grant*. The research output included a multimedia art exhibition co-curated by Netsanet, titled in Amharic ቅብሎሽ that featured archival materials, oral life histories, photographs, video, and print textile installations along with documentary film screening. The exhibition illuminated the voices and lives of women who actively participated in the *Ethiopian Students Movement (1950-1978)* at The *Gebrekirstos Desta Center for The Modern Art* museum, Addis Ababa University on display from May - June 2021.

CURRENT/UPCOMING PROGRAM

GLOBAL GHANA

September 2021 - May 2022



The pattern in the design is inspired by the 'Fathia Fata Nkrumah/Fathia Befits Nkrumah' kente weave.

The second edition of The Africa Institute's annual country-focused program to be presented in Sharjah, UAE and Accra, Ghana in 2021-22, convened by leading scholars Akosua Adomako Ampofo, Jean Allman, Carina Ray, and Joseph Oduro-Frimpong.

The Africa Institute announced Global Ghana, the second edition of its 'country-focused season'—an annual initiative exploring one African country or African diaspora community through a range of scholarly and public programs. Global Ghana is organized by The Africa Institute in collaboration with leading scholars Akosua Adomako Ampofo, Jean Allman, Carina Ray, and Joseph Oduro-Frimpong.

Global Ghana will include a two-part interdisciplinary scholarly conference beginning with Global Ghana: Sites of Departure/Sites of Return held in Sharjah, followed by Global Ghana: In Search of Africa's Black Star, held in Accra. The multidisciplinary program will also include a film festival, a series of musical performances, a staged theatrical performance, and an exhibition showcasing dynamic work by contemporary Ghanaian artists. The season will be launched with a keynote lecture and press conference in Fall 2021, followed by a musical performance.

The Africa Institute created this annual series to highlight the complex history of the African world while also providing a forum for creatively engaging its present and imagining new futures. Inaugurated in 2019-20 with Ethiopia: Modern Nation/Ancient Roots, the country-focused season is an integral part of The Africa Institute's year-round work to develop and support original scholarship and programming that expands understanding of African and African diaspora studies among the academic community and the broader public.

The Africa Institute's Ghana-focused season aims to critically and creatively engage Ghana's history and contemporary condition. Pushing beyond conventional narratives that oversimplify the nation's profound significance to its citizens, continental neighbors, and the larger African diaspora, the season seeks to reveal the complex and contested forces that have shaped Ghana, past and present.

GLOBAL GHANA: SITES OF DEPARTURE/SITES OF RETURN

Sharjah, UAE | Spring 2022

The first part of the two-part conference Global Ghana: Sites of Departure/Sites of Return, held in Sharjah in Spring 2022, will examine the ways in which Ghana has emerged over the last century as a focal point of diasporic engagement beginning with early 20th-century ‘Back to Africa’ movements, followed by Pan-Africanism, anticolonial liberation movements, and more recently, with heritage tourism. One of the focal points of the conference will be Ghana’s efforts to cultivate and curate diasporic engagement among African-descended people in the diaspora and Ghanaians living abroad through the recent “Year of Return” and “Beyond the Return” campaigns.

The season will push beyond Ghana’s Atlantic world connections to open a wider field of enquiry about Ghana’s relations with the Arab world, and examinations of the past, present, and future of Afro-Arab relations. Global Ghana: Sites of Departure/Sites of Return seeks to welcome and engage audiences in Sharjah and throughout the UAE with compelling and thoughtfully developed dialogue.

GLOBAL GHANA: IN SEARCH OF AFRICA’S BLACK STAR

Accra, Ghana | Spring 2022

Held in Accra, Global Ghana: In Search of Africa’s Black Star will explore the multiplicity of meanings that have been and continue to be invested in Ghana as a beacon of African emancipation, African unity, and continental innovation. The program aims to eschew racially essentialist interpretations of the Black Star in favor of diverse perspectives informed by Ghana’s complex history—from Ghana’s role in the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the 17th and 18th centuries to its place as one of the most significant sites for Afro-Arab solidarity in the 20th century.

Deep historical perspectives will inform the program’s consideration of how younger generations in Ghana today are reimagining what and who constitutes the Black Star nation and its possible futures through a range of different media, including visual and performing arts. To this end, the two-part scholarly conference will be complemented by a dynamic range of musical, theatrical, and film performances and an exhibition of contemporary Ghanaian art.

Additional information on the participants and schedule for Global Ghana: Sites of Departure/Sites of Return and Global Ghana: In Search of Africa’s Black Star will be announced in the coming months.

The health and safety of guests and participants are of utmost priority to The Africa Institute. The Institute will continue to monitor developments on COVID-19 and the program will be subject to modification depending on how the pandemic evolves and travel is impacted.

CO-CONVENER BIOGRAPHIES



Akosua Adomako Ampofo is Professor of African and Gender Studies at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana (UG). Adomako Ampofo is President of the African Studies Association of Africa; an honorary Professor at the Centre for African Studies at the University of Birmingham; and a Fellow of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences. An activist scholar, Adomako Ampofo's areas of interest include African knowledge systems, higher education, race and identity politics, gender relations, masculinities, and popular culture. In her current work on Blackmasculinities, she explores the shifting nature of identities among young men in Africa and the diaspora.

Adomako Ampofo is the Editor-in-Chief of Contemporary Journal of African Studies and Co-Editor of Critical Investigations into Humanitarianism in Africa blog. She serves on the board of several organizations including the U.S African Studies Association; The Center for the Advancement of Scholarship, University of Pretoria; Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, University of Bayreuth, of which she is Chairperson; Perivoli Africa Research Centre, University of Bristol; and the Institute for Humanities in Africa, HUMA, University of Cape Town. Adomako Ampofo's work has been variously recognized by, among others, the Fulbright Scholar Program and the Sociologists for Women and Society (SWS), which awarded her the Feminist Activism Award.



Jean Allman is the J.H. Hexter Professor in the Humanities and Professor of African and African American Studies at Washington University in St. Louis, where she directs the Center for the Humanities. Allman's research and published work engages 19th- and 20th-century African history, with a geographic focus on Ghana and thematic interests in gender, colonialism, decolonization, and the racial politics of knowledge production. Her work has been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, Fulbright-Hays, the Social Science Research Council, and the Mellon Foundation. She was the President of the Ghana Studies Council (now Association) from 1992-1998; has served on the Board of Directors of both the African Studies Association (USA) and the Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora; and was the President of the African Studies Association in 2018.

She is the author of *The Quills of the Porcupine: Asante Nationalism in an Emergent Ghana*, "I Will Not Eat Stone": A Women's History of Colonial Asante (with Victoria Tashjian), and *Tongnaab: The History of a West African God* (with John Parker) and has edited several collections, including *Fashioning Africa: Power and the Politics of Dress*. Allman co-edits the *New African Histories* book series at Ohio University Press, and her work has

also appeared in a range of journals, including the *Journal of African History*, *Africa, Gender and History*, *Journal of Women's History*, *History Workshop Journal*, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, *African Studies Review*, *American Historical Review*, and *Souls*.



Carina Ray is the H. Coplan Chair of Social Sciences and Associate Professor of African and African American Studies at Brandeis University, where she also serves as Director of Faculty Mentoring. A scholar of race and sexuality, comparative colonialisms and nationalisms, migration and maritime history, print cultures, bodily aesthetics, and the relationship between race, ethnicity, and political power, Ray's research focuses on Ghana and its diasporas, while also branching out to include a long-term oral history project documenting the experiences of Cubans who served in Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia.

She is the author of *Crossing the Color Line: Race, Sex, and the Contested Politics of Colonialism in Ghana*, winner of the American Historical Association's 2016 Wesley-Logan Book Prize; the African Studies Association's 2017 Aidoo-Snyder Book Prize; and finalist for the United Kingdom African Studies Association's Fage and Oliver Book Prize. Her work has also appeared in *Gender and History*; *PMLA*; *American Historical Review*; and *Journal of*

West African History, among others. She is a series co-editor of *New African Histories* (Ohio University Press) and *African Identities* (Cambridge University Press), and recently completed a three-year term as editor of *Ghana Studies* and as a member of the Board of Editors for *The American Historical Review*.



Joseph Oduro-Frimpong is a media anthropologist and Director of the Center for African Popular Culture at Ashesi University. He received his PhD from the Department of Anthropology at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale (2012) and also holds degrees in Information Studies (University of Ghana, Legon) and Human Communication (Central Michigan University). He is an American Council of Learned Societies/African Humanities Program Fellow. He has held postdoctoral fellowships at Rhodes University and at the University of Cape Town.

Widely published, his research has appeared in respected journals, including *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, *International Journal of Communication*, and *African Studies Review*, and in a number of edited volumes, including *Popular Culture in Africa: The Episteme of Everyday Life and Taking African Cartoons Seriously: Politics, Satire, and Culture*.

SENIOR & POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM



The Africa Institute announces launch of new senior & postdoctoral research fellowship program. New fellowships named in honor of Okwui Enwezor, Ali A. Mazrui and Fatema Mernissi awarded to Surafel Wondimu Abebe, Elizabeth W. Giorgis and Nidhi Mahajan, with additional senior fellowship awarded to Dagmawi Woubshet.

In early 2020, The Africa Institute announced the inaugural group of fellowships awarded through its new Research Fellowships Program. Conceived as a research-based think-tank and a postgraduate studies institution, the Institute will offer both masters and PhD programs dedicated to training a new generation of critical thinkers in African and African diaspora studies and evolving a new model for academic research, teaching and documentation in the field.

In advancement of these goals, The Africa Institute has inaugurated a senior fellowship named in honor of the esteemed late professor of African studies Ali A. Mazrui as well as two postdoctoral fellowships named for scholar, curator and art critic Okwui Enwezor and for world-renowned Moroccan scholar Fatema Mernissi.

The inaugural cohort of fellows consists of



Okwui Enwezor Postdoctoral Fellow in Visual Culture, Performance Studies and Critical Humanities

Surafel Wondimu Abebe Assistant Professor, Centre for African Studies and College of Performing and Visual Arts at Addis Ababa University



Ali A. Mazrui Senior Fellow in Global African Studies

Elizabeth W. Giorgis Associate Professor of Art History, Criticism and Theory in the College of Performing and Visual Art and the Center for African and Asian Studies at Addis Ababa University



Fatema Mernissi Postdoctoral Fellow in Social and Cultural Studies

Nidhi Mahajan Assistant Professor in Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz



Senior Fellow

Dagmawi Woubshet Ahuja Family Presidential Associate Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania

The Africa Institute Research Fellowships Program provides the opportunity for both junior and senior scholars of African and African diaspora studies to focus on a research project and participate in ongoing scholarly and intellectual activities during their term at the Institute. The program also grants fellows the opportunity to interact with scholars and academics in their area of research with the aim of enriching their scholarly experiences and future projects.

To read more information about The Africa Institute's Research Fellowship Program, and to learn more about the fellows, visit theafricainstitute.org.

GLOBAL AFRICA TRANSLATION FELLOWSHIP

As part of its African Languages and Translation Program, The Africa Institute announces the Global Africa Translation Fellowship. The fellowship welcomes applications from across the global South for a grant of up to \$5,000 to complete translations of works from the African continent and its diaspora, into English or Arabic. This is a non-residential fellowship which allows the recipient scholar to complete the work outside of The Africa Institute (Sharjah, UAE). The aim of the fellowship is to make important texts in African and African Diaspora studies accessible to wider readership across the world.

The fellowship provides funding in the range of \$1,000 to \$5,000, depending on the quality and breadth of the project. Selected projects may be retranslations of old, classic texts, or previously untranslated works, collections of poetry, prose, or critical theory. The project may be a work-in-progress, or a new project feasible for completion within the timeframe of the grant.

Deadline for applications is October 15, 2021.

All applications will be reviewed by the The Africa Institute's faculty and research fellows. Recipients will be chosen based on quality of the proposal, and the demonstrated capacity of the applicant to complete the project.

Applications must include:

- A two-page CV/résumé including institutional affiliation, educational qualifications, including highest degree received, and key publications/works produced
- A two-page narrative explaining the translation to be undertaken during the fellowship period, an explanation of the importance of the work, a justification for a re-translation, if applicable, and proposed dates of completion. The project may be a work-in-progress, or a new project that fits within the timeframe of the grant.
- A four-five page (double-spaced) sample of the original text(s) and translation.

An explanation of the work's copyright status: If the work is not in the public domain, please include a copy of the copyright notice from the original text, and a letter from the copyright holder stating that English language rights to the work are available.

Submitted applications must include statement, sample, copyright status (if applicable), and CV, in that order into a single PDF file. Name the file with the applicant's name in this format: LASTNAME-FIRSTNAME.pdf. Use the same name in the email subject heading LASTNAME-FIRSTNAME application and send PDF as an email attachment to translation@theafricainstitute.org.

The awardees for the 2021 The Global Africa Translation Fellowship are:



Reem Abou-El-Fadl is a Senior Lecturer in Comparative Politics of the Middle East at SOAS University of London. Her work explores the politics of nationalism, protest, and transnational solidarity in Middle East and Afro-Asian spaces. Her book, *Foreign Policy as Nation Making: Turkey and Egypt in the Cold War* was published by Cambridge University Press in 2019. She is the editor of *Revolutionary Egypt: Connecting Domestic and International Struggles* (Routledge, 2015), and co-editor of the *Jadaliyya Egypt* page. She translates from Arabic and Turkish frequently in her research.



Adil Babikir is a Sudanese translator and copywriter based in the UAE. His published translations include *Mansi: a Rare Man in his Own Way* by Tayeb Salih (Banipal Books, 2020); *Modern Sudanese Poetry: an Anthology* (University of Nebraska Press, 2019); *The Jungo: Stakes of the Earth*, a novel by Abdelaziz Baraka Sakin (Africa World Press, USA, 2015); *Literary Sudans: an Anthology of Literature from Sudan and South Sudan*, (Red Sea Press, USA, 2016); *Summer Maze*, a collection of short stories by Leila Aboulela, translated to Arabic (Dar al-Musawarrat, Khartoum, 2017). Babikir is a contributing editor of *Banipal Magazine*. Some of his translations appeared in *Banipal*, *The Guardian*, *Al-Doha* magazine, and *Jalada Africa*. His forthcoming works include a collection of Sudanese short novels and a book on the legendary Bedouin poet al-Hardallo.



Clareta Holsey has received a Jane Mead Fellowship for her poetry thesis and a Global Africa Translation Fellowship from the Africa Institute in Sharjah. Her poetry and creative non-fiction have appeared in *New Delta Review*, *The Columbia Review*, *Eclectica Magazine*, *PromptPress*, on *poets.org*, and elsewhere. A book of her ekphrastic poems—inspired by the artwork of Malcolm Corley and written in collaboration with fellow poets Jorrell Watkins, DJ Savarese, and Lateef McLeod—will be published by *PromptPress* in fall 2021. Also in the fall, she will pursue an MFA in Literary Translation at the University of Iowa. A recent graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, she is a Production Editor at Copper Canyon Press.

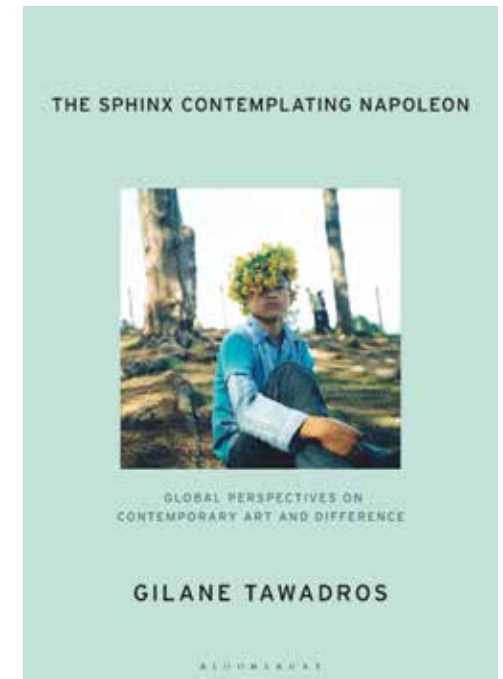


David Shook is a poet and translator as well as the founding editor of *Phoneme Media*, now an imprint of *Deep Vellum Publishing*. They have translated over 15 books, including Mario Bellatin's *Beauty Salon*, Jorge Eduardo Eielson's *Room in Rome*, a finalist for both the National Translation Award and PEN Prize for Poetry in Translation, and Conceição Lima's forthcoming selected poems, for which they received a National Endowment for the Arts Translation Fellowship. Shook has edited special features on literature from Burundi and Equatorial Guinea, for *Words Without Borders* and *World Literature Today* respectively, translated Obi's *Nightmare*, the first ever graphic novel from Equatorial Guinea, and published the first-ever literary translation from the Lingala, Richard Ali A Mutu's *Mr. Fix-It*. Current translation projects include the poetry and fiction of Cabo Verdean experimentalist President Jorge Carlos Fonseca.

2019 - 2021 IN REVIEW

BOOK CONVERSATIONS

The Africa Institute presented its series, Book Conversations, launched summer 2021. The program aims to highlight new books by African and Africanist authors in the fields of humanities, arts and social sciences.



THE SPHINX CONTEMPLATING NAPOLEON: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE ON CONTEMPORARY ART AND DIFFERENCE

On May 19, 2021, curator and author of the book *The Sphinx Contemplating Napoleon: Global Perspective on Contemporary Art and Difference*, Gilane Tawadros, was joined by Sarat Maharaj, Professor of Visual Art and Knowledge Systems at Malmö Art Academy, Sweden, to discuss her new book. This conversation was moderated by The Africa Institute Director, Salah M. Hassan, and was held on Zoom.

Book Synopsis

Anchored in artistic practice, this vibrant collection of essays and writings spans a period from 1992-2017 and the work of leading artists such as Adel Abdessemed, Richard Avedon, Sonia Boyce, Frank Bowling, Omer Fast, Mona Hatoum, Susan Hiller, Alfredo Jaar, Glenn Ligon and Shen Yuan. A key figure in British and international art, Gilane Tawadros draws difference to the surface, recuperating it as a potentially radical frame through which to understand contemporary art and the everyday world. Playing with forms of writing, from critical analyses to fictional narratives, the book functions as a practice-based meditation on how to write about contemporary art.

Author

Gilane Tawadros

Gilane is a writer, curator and the chief executive at DACS. She was the founding Director of the Institute of International Visual Arts (Iniva) in London, chaired by Professor Stuart Hall, which, over a decade, achieved an international reputation as a ground-breaking cultural agency at the leading edge of artistic and cultural debates nationally and internationally. She has curated numerous exhibitions and has written extensively on contemporary art. In 2012, she was the first art historian to be appointed to the prestigious Blanche, Edith and Irving Laurie Chair in Women's Studies, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. Gilane is a Trustee and Vice-Chair of the Stuart Hall Foundation. She is a Trustee of the Stuart Croft Foundation, a member of the Whitechapel Art Gallery Editorial Board and serves on the Board of European Visual Arts (EVA) and on the Intellectual Property Office's (IPO) Copyright Advisory Panel. In July 2020, Gilane was a speaker at The Africa Institute's John Akomfrah Film Screening and Talk program.

Sarat Maharaj

Sarat Maharaj was born in South Africa and educated there as well as in the UK. Dr. Maharaj is a writer and curator. He was a co-curator of documenta11 and he curated retinal .optical. visual.conceptual at Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, in 2002, with Richard Hamilton and Eicke Bonk. Dr. Maharaj was also co-curator of Farewell to Postcolonialism, Guangzhou, in 2008, and Art, Knowledge and Politics, at the 29th Bienal de São Paulo in 2010. He was Chief Curator of the 2011 Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary Art, Pandemonium: Art in a Time of Creativity Fever, and a peer advisor to the Sharjah Biennial 11 in 2013.

Between 1980 and 2005, he was Professor of History and Theory of Art at Goldsmiths, University of London. Dr. Maharaj was also the first Rudolf Arnheim Professor, Humboldt University, Berlin (2001-02) and Research Fellow at the Jan Van Eyck Akademie, Maastricht (1999-2001).

A HISTORY OF ARAB GRAPHIC DESIGN

On June 1, 2021, The Africa Institute hosted Professor Bahia Shehab and Haytham Nawar, the authors of the book *A History of Arab Graphic Design* in conversation with the Director Salah M. Hassan to discuss their new book. The talk was held on Zoom.

Book Synopsis

Arab graphic design emerged in the early twentieth century out of a need to influence, and give expression to, the far-reaching economic, social, and political changes that were taking place in the Arab world at the time. But graphic design as a formally recognized genre of visual art only came into its own in the region in the twenty-first century and, to date, there has been no published study on the subject to speak of. *A History of Arab Graphic Design* traces the people and events that were integral to the shaping of a field of graphic design in the Arab world. Examining the work of over eighty key designers from Morocco to Iraq and covering the period from pre-1900 to the end of the twentieth century, Bahia Shehab and Haytham Nawar chart the development of design in the region, beginning with Islamic art and Arabic calligraphy, and their impact on Arab visual culture, through to the digital revolution and the arrival of the Internet. They look at how cinema, economic prosperity, and political and cultural events gave birth to and shaped the founders of Arab graphic design. Highlighting the work of key designers and stunningly illustrated with over 600 color images, *A History of Arab Graphic Design* is an invaluable resource tool for graphic designers, one which, it is hoped, will place Arab visual culture and design on the map of a thriving international design discourse.

Authors

Bahia Shehab

Bahia Shehab is a professor of design and founder of the graphic design program at The American University in Cairo. Her work has been exhibited in museums, galleries and streets around the world. She has received a number of international recognitions and awards, which include the BBC 100 Women list, a TED Senior fellowship, a Bellagio fellowship, and a Prince Claus Award. She is the first Arab woman to receive the UNESCO-Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture. Shehab holds a PhD from Leiden University in The Netherlands and is the founding director of TypeLab@AUC. Her publications include *You Can Crush the Flowers: A Visual Memoir of the Egyptian Revolution* (2021), *At The Corner of a Dream* (2019), *A Thousand Times NO* (2010) and the co-authored award winning book *A History of Arab Graphic Design* (2020).

Haytham Nawar

Haytham Nawar is a practicing artist and designer, as well as a scholar in the fields of art and design. He has built his professional and academic career over the past two decades simultaneously fulfilling the different roles. He is Associate Professor of design and the Chair of the department of the arts at the American University in Cairo. Nawar is also the founding director of Cairotronica, Cairo International Electronic and New Media Arts Festival, Egypt. His most recent publications are *Language of tomorrow: Towards a Multicultural Visual Communication System in a Post-Human Era* and the co-authored book *A History of Arab Graphic Design*.



SCHOLARLY AND CULTURAL COUNTRY-FOCUSED SEASON ETHIOPIA: MODERN NATION - ANCIENT ROOTS

October 2019 – May 2020



As part of its annual public programming, The Africa Institute planned to organize a season of scholarly, cultural and artistic activities in various media and genres that focused on one country from the African continent, or one of the African diaspora communities worldwide (North and South America, Europe, The Middle East, Caribbean, Asia among others). The goal of this series of country focused activities was to highlight the complex history of the African world, its present, and its future predicament. Through such series, The AI aimed to bring to the fore the complex history of the continent, its peoples, cultures and civilizations on a global scale.

For the academic year (2019- 2020), The AI focused on Ethiopia as the first in this series of seasons. To accomplish such objective, The AI commissioned three leading Ethiopian scholars, Elizabeth W. Giorgis (Addis Ababa University); Surafel Wondemu (Addis Ababa University); and Dagmawi Woubshet (University of Pennsylvania) to draft a detailed program for the season on Ethiopia. The proposed program included the following activities: (1) a two-part interdisciplinary scholarly conference, titled Ethiopia: Modern Nation/Ancient Roots organized as a collaboration between The Africa Institute, Sharjah, UAE and the College of Performing and Visual Art and the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University that was planned to be inaugurated in Sharjah, UAE in March 2020, with the second part taking place in Addis Ababa in May 2020; (2) a film festival; (3) a staged theatrical performance based on a play by late Ethiopian playwright Tsegaye Gebre Medhin; (4) a series of musical performances; and (5) an art exhibition by contemporary Ethiopian artist Aïda Muluneh. The Ethiopia Season was inaugurated in mid-October 2019, with a major lecture followed by a musical concert of a major Ethiopian band, and was initially planned to run through May 2020.

The major goal of this Ethiopia-focused season was to shed a new light on Ethiopia's history and contemporary condition, while also considering its contributions to current debates on modernity and the postcolonial condition. There is much in Ethiopia's history that audiences in the Arab and Islamic world will find inspiring considering the early history of Islam and its unique relationship with Ethiopia where early converts to Islam sought refuge in the land of Abyssinia. The proposed conference Ethiopia: Modern Nation - Ancient Roots was hoped to investigate the history of Ethiopia, its racial diversity, rich cultural heritage and contribution to the project of modernity in Africa. It was also hoped to explore the concept of Ethiopianism and the ways in which Ethiopia's image as a sovereign black nation influenced and came to dominate debates about Pan-Africanism and Afrocentrism.

Unfortunately, the two-part scholarly conference was postponed following the precautionary measures imposed by the United Arab Emirates government to curb the outbreak of COVID-19. The two-part conference and the remaining filmic and theatrical performances were replaced by a series of virtual programs organized by the institute to raise awareness on the challenge of COVID-19 in Africa; alongside an online screening program that was driven by the educational mission of the collaborating institutions as a contribution to the understanding, through film and art, of the recent protest movement across the globe against anti-black racism. It also explored the African and Black intellectual traditions through the contributions of specific figures to critical theory and the humanities.

The art exhibition by contemporary Ethiopian artist Aïda Muluneh was also first held virtually, before it had opened to the public on July 2020. The two-part scholarly conference had been redesigned in the form of an International Web Conference which consisted of twelve sessions arranged across six days from 17 to 25 October 2020.

CONVENERS



Elizabeth Giorgis is Associate Professor of Art History, Criticism and Theory in the College of Performing and Visual Art and the Center for African Studies, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. She is also Director, Modern Art Museum Gebre Kristos Desta Center, Addis Ababa University. She served as Dean of the College of Performing and Visual Art and as Director of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies of Addis Ababa University. Her book *Modernist Art in Ethiopia* (Ohio University Press, 2019), is the first comprehensive monographic study of Ethiopian visual modernism within a broader social and intellectual history of Ethiopia. She is also the editor and author of several publications. She has curated several exhibitions at the Modern Art Museum, Gebre Kristos Desta Center, more recently an exhibition of Julie Mehretu's work titled *Julie, the Addis Show*, and the exhibition *Time Sensitive Activity* by Danish Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson. She has organised major international conferences in Addis Ababa, most recently *Africa as Concept and Method: Decolonisation, Emancipation, Freedom* and also participated in several public lectures, recently at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, US.



Dagmawi Woubshet is the Ahuja Family Presidential Associate Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania, and works at the intersections of African- American, LGBTQ, and African studies. He is the author of *The Calendar of Loss: Race, Sexuality, and Mourning in the Early Era of AIDS* (2015), and co-editor of *Ethiopia: Literature, Art, & Culture* (2010), a special issue of *Callaloo*. His essays have appeared in several publications including *Transition*, *The Atlantic*, and *NKA: A Journal of Contemporary African Art*. In 2016, he curated *Julie Mehretu: The Addis Show* at the Modern Art Museum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. He is currently completing a book on James Baldwin's late style.



Surafel Wondima Abebe is a public-intellectual who uses academia, performance, and media as sites of cultural politics from which to interrogate representational practices. He has worked with the National Theatre in Addis Ababa and other cultural institutions in Ethiopia as an actor, playwright and director, and recently co-founded a new local television station called ASHAM. He obtained a degree in English Literature minoring in Political Science and International Relations from Addis Ababa University, and received his MA in Cultural Studies at the same university, where he served as a lecturer and Assistant Dean in Humanities. He completed his Ph.D. in Performance Historiography at The University of Minnesota, minoring in Comparative Literature. Abebe works as a researcher at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, where he also serves as an Assistant Professor at the Centre for African Studies and College of Performing and Visual Arts. He is a board member of a multi-genre online journal, *AGITATE*, at the University of Minnesota and a research associate at the Visual Identities in Art and Design (VIAD) at the University of Johannesburg. Questioning the inadequacy of Ethiopian exceptionalism, which valorizes the country's 'uncolonized' position, Abebe engages with sedimented and embodied historiographies in order to understand what it means to be human in the here-and-now.

His current book project considers how performing Ethiopian female bodies engage with spaces, and maneuver within progressive, imperial (local and colonial), socialist, and neoliberal temporalities of the 20th and 21st centuries.

ETHIOPIA SEASON PROGRAM

October 2019 – May 2020



SEASON OPENING

LECTURE AND PRESS CONFERENCE ON ETHIOPIA HISTORY

October, 11, 2019 | 06:00 PM

Elizabeth Giorgis

*Re-imagining Modernism: A Critical Account of Ethiopian
Modernism's Colonial and Post-Colonial Imaginary*

Synopsis

While contemporary theories of African modernism have grounded signification and representation in wider constellations of colonial consciousness and relations, certainly Ethiopia's unique historical condition warrants fresh lines of inquiry to surmise how Ethiopians negotiated their "independent" status through and against the colonial arrangements that shaped the historical, cultural and material realities of their African counterparts. Ethiopia is indeed, unlike other African countries where the larger implications of colonizer/colonized relations created a fundamental rupture in the history of the colonized and where colonial imagination defined the colonized as incorrigibly 'Other.' The enigmatic engagement of cultural producers with the colonial legacy and its related politics convey no single explanation of the complexities that incited the range of Ethiopian modernism and the characterization of its meaning and making. Consequently, this presentation aimed to interrogate these paradoxes and contradictions as they emerged in artistic and intellectual thought in the course of modernism's history.

Dagmawi Woubshet

The Ethiopian Diaspora

Synopsis

One of the major developments in recent Ethiopian history is the formation of an Ethiopian diaspora, since the 1970s dispersed all over the world—from the United States to the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia to South Africa. How Ethiopians living abroad contend with new national identities and cultures, and more broadly the new experience of diaspora, was the focus of this presentation.

Surafel Wondemu

Decolonial Embodied Historiography

Synopsis

This presentation focused on Ethiopian historiography. Its primary premise had been what has come to be known as “Ethiopian exceptionalism,” which does not only hinder critical discussion on the Semitic thesis which exiles Ethiopian studies from Pan-African studies but also disavows any meaningful engagement with history as a discipline and profession. Following W.E.B Du Bois and engaging with Hegel’s philosophy of history, that positions Ethiopia in an ambivalent space (neither in Africa nor in Europe), this presentation demonstrated the coloniality of Ethiopian historiography and its attendant epistemic shortcomings. As a critical intervention, decolonial historiography accounts and calls for transnational dialectical relations in order to understand how functions of ethnicity, race, class and religion have significant implication to social mobility and societal limitations.



Music Performance

ALEMAYEHU AND BAND (FEAT. BETHLEHEM BEKELE)

October, 11, 2019 | 08:00 PM

October, 12, 2019 | 09:30 PM

Vocalists

Alemayehu Eshete

The band featured Alemayehu Eshete who is an Ethiopian vocalist active since the 1960s and known for his unique style of singing. Alemayehu's talent was early recognized by Addis Ababa's famous Police Orchestra who invited the young singer to join. He had his first hit in 1961 before moving on to form the Alem-Girma Band with another Ethiopian influential arranger Girma Beyene. Over the course of 15 years, Alemayehu has released some 30 singles gaining fame in his home country, as well as Europe and North America. Currently, Alemayehu Eshete holds a weekly performance with some of the seasoned musicians in Addis Ababa.

Bethlehem Bekele

Bethlehem Bekele rose to become one of the best among female artists who emerged in the past decade on the Ethiopian music scene. Bethlehem started out her music career singing mainly the songs of Ethiopian diva Aster Aweke. Bethlehem's repertoire encompasses a wide range of the Ethiopian classics with her deep knowhow of the authentic traditional vocal styles as well as contemporary singing styles. Bethlehem Bekele released her debut album in 2012 entitled "Ras Neh". Among her original hits Abejehu and Kurat Firhat remain to be Ethiopians' favorite.

The Band

The band was comprised of some of the best experienced performers in Addis Ababa performing classic Ethiopian instrumental jazz and originals. The band was accompanied by legendary Ethiopian singer



From left to right: Henock Temesgen (bass), Alemayehu Eshete (vocalist), Nathaniel Tesemma (drums), Girum Mezmur (guitar).

Alemayehu Eshete who performed some of his best music since the 1970's to today and Bethlehem Bekele who performed some of her original music and covered a wide range of Ethiopian female repertoire.

IMAGING ETHIOPIA: FILM FESTIVAL

Compared to a long and robust history of literary, visual, and performing arts, film in Ethiopia is a recent cultural development. While famous cinema houses like Empire and Ambassador in Addis Ababa were built during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie, and albeit under heavy censorship, continued during the Derg years, they screened almost exclusively foreign films. It is only in the last twenty years that an Ethiopian film industry has come into existence, making films made by Ethiopians for Ethiopians a popular art form. Ethiopian films are now screened not only in various cinemas in the country's major cities, they are also widely distributed on dvd domestically and abroad for the Ethiopian diaspora market. Moreover, there have been a number of films made by diaspora Ethiopians that have enjoyed critical acclaim and recognition. A filmmaker like Haile Gerima, for example, is considered not only one of the most important Ethiopian filmmakers, but also a pioneering independent black filmmaker in the United States. With this film series, our aim was to show the range of contemporary Ethiopian films—features, documentaries, shorts—which stood out for their remarkable aesthetic quality as well as their penetrating analysis of Ethiopian political and cultural life. Among the pressing themes these films asked us to consider included: the divide between rural and urban Ethiopia; the demands for gender equality; the turbulent years of the Ethiopian revolution; and the experience of diaspora, all of which are themes that resonate deeply in our contemporary world.

TEZA

October, 26, 2019 | 06:00 PM

Director: Haile Gerima

Year: 2008

Duration: 140 mins

Country: Ethiopia and Germany

Language: Amharic and English with English subtitles

Synopsis

Teza, set in Ethiopia and Germany, chronicles the return of the African intellectual Anberber to his country of birth during the repressive Marxist regime of Haile Mariam Mengistu and the recognition of his own displacement and powerlessness at the dissolution of his people's humanity and social values. After Anberber spends several years in Germany studying medicine, he returns to Ethiopia only to find the country of his youth replaced by turmoil. His dream of using his craft to improve the health of Ethiopians is squashed by a military junta that uses scientists for their own political ends. Seeking the comfort of his countryside home, Anberber finds no shelter from violence. The solace that the memories of his youth provide is quickly replaced by the competing forces of the military and rebelling factions. Anberber must determine if he can bear the strain or piece together a life from the fragments that lay around him.

Biography

Haile Gerima is a renowned independent filmmaker and professor of film at Howard University in Washington, D.C. Born and raised in Ethiopia, Gerima emigrated to the United States in 1967. He studied acting in Chicago before entering the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television, where his exposure to Latin American films inspired him to mine his own cultural legacy. After completing his thesis film, *Bush Mama* (1975), Gerima received international acclaim with *Harvest: 3000 Years* (1976), an Ethiopian drama that won the Grand Prize at the Locarno film festival. After the award-winning *Ashes & Embers* (1982) and the documentaries *Wilmington 10—U.S. A* (1978) and *After Winter: Sterling Brown* (1985), Gerima filmed his epic, *Sankofa* (1993), one of the first feature films to represent American slavery. In 1996, Gerima founded the Sankofa Video and Bookstore in Washington, DC., a cultural and intellectual space that offers opportunities for self-expression, interaction, discussion and analysis through community events such as film screenings, book signings, scholar forums and artist showcases. Gerima continues to distribute and promote his own films, including his most recent festival success, *Teza* (2008), which won the Jury and Best Screenplay awards at the Venice Film Festival.

LAMB

November, 23, 2019 | 06:00 PM

Director: Yared Zeleke

Year: 2015

Duration: 94 mins

Country: Ethiopia

Language: Amharic with English and Arabic subtitles

Synopsis

When Ephraim, an Ethiopian boy, is sent from his homeland to live with distant relatives, he takes his beloved sheep with him. One day, his uncle announces that he will have to sacrifice his sheep for the upcoming religious feast, but Ephraim is ready to do anything to save his only friend and return home.

Biography

Yared Zeleke, who was born in Ethiopia, worked for a number of NGOs in the United States, Ethiopia, Namibia, and Norway, before embarking on a directing career. Yared has written, produced, directed and edited several short documentaries and fiction shorts. He has also worked with the director Joshua Atesh Litle on the documentary *The Furious Force of Rhymes*, which received a number of awards. In 2015, Yared completed his first feature-length movie, *Lamb*, filmed on the high plateau of northern Ethiopia.

DIFRET

November, 30, 2019 | 06:00 PM

Director: Zeresenay Mehari

Year: 2014

Duration: 99 mins

Country: Ethiopia

Language: Amharic with English and Arabic subtitles

Synopsis

From executive producer Angelina Jolie Pitt comes the award-winning drama *DIFRET*, based on the inspirational true story of a young Ethiopian girl and a tenacious lawyer embroiled in a life-or-death clash between cultural traditions and their country's advancement of equal rights. When 14-year-old Hirut is abducted in her rural village's tradition of kidnapping women for marriage, she fights back, accidentally killing her captor and intended husband. Local law demands a death sentence for Hirut, but Meaza, a tough and passionate lawyer from a women's legal aid practice, steps in to fight for her. With both Hirut's life and the future of the practice at stake the two women must make their case for self-defense against one of Ethiopia's oldest and most deeply-rooted traditions. *DIFRET* paints a portrait of a country in a time of great transformation and the brave individuals ready to help shape it.

Biography

Zeresenay Berhane Mehari is an award-winning writer/director with over a decade of experience making films. Born and raised in Ethiopia, Mehari moved to the U.S. to attend film school. He founded Haile Addis Pictures to produce his first narrative feature film, *Difret*. He has a bachelor of arts degree from USC's School of Cinematic Arts.

AÏDA MULUNEH'S HOMEBOUND: A JOURNEY IN PHOTOGRAPHY

June 2020



This exhibition was conceived in two parts. It was originally planned to open on March 23, 2020, but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The first part Homebound: A Journey in Photography was curated by Salah M. Hassan with Sataan Al-Hassan as associate curator. The exhibition chronicles Aïda Muluneh's journey as an artist and a photojournalist, and her multiple contributions to imaging and image-making in photographic-based works since her return to her homeland Ethiopia in 2007, after years of living, studying and practising in North America. The exhibition focused on a select number of works produced by the artist as series with thematic foci that exemplify Muluneh's interest in several issues that range from history, identity, politics, home, and the current environmental and climate crisis. The works in this series represent stylized figures set for the most part against a flat background. The figural compositions overall are executed in bold colours and are set against a vastly flat background. Although Muluneh's work is photo-based, the artist's intervention with the medium has transformed these figures and their setting into painterly canvases that references a visual vocabulary echoing identifiably Ethiopian and Pan-African visual cultures and symbols. The exhibition also included a selection of Muluneh's earlier photojournalistic work, when she served as a photographer for the American daily newspaper The Washington Post.

Visibly detected in Muluneh's photojournalistic works are her keen interest in composition and close-up portraiture, which she has combined with innovative use of wide lenses. These traits have certainly anticipated the variety of styles and themes which she continues to explore in her latest work. The second part, Addis Foto Fest: Nine Years Survey was curated by the artist Aïda Muluneh reflecting on her journey as a founder and director of Addis Foto Fest (AFF) which she established in 2010 in Addis Ababa. AFF is a biennial festival of photography organized by Desta for Africa Creative Consulting PLC. AFF is the first and only international photography festival in East Africa. Moreover, it has become a testimony to her pioneering institution-building efforts. AFF has served not only as a biennial of African photography and a global destination and base for 14 collaboration between artists, but also a training ground for younger talent from Ethiopia and Africa at large. The exhibition included a selection of photographic works reflecting the history and evolution of modern and contemporary Ethiopian photography, in addition to a selection of works by other African contemporary photographers, who have been exhibited and/or commissioned as part of AFF activities.



Curators

AÏDA MULNEH'S HOMEBOUND: A JOURNEY IN PHOTOGRAPHY

Salah M Hassan

Director, The Africa Institute, Sharjah, and Goldwin Smith Professor and Director of the Institute for Comparative Modernities.

Sataan Al Hassan

Associate Curator and Head of Research, Programming and Publications, The Africa Institute

ADDIS FOTO FEST: NINE YEARS SURVEY

Aïda Muluneh

Artist, Founder and Director of Addis Foto Fest

Biography of Artist

Born in Ethiopia in 1974, Aïda Muluneh left the country at a young age and spent an itinerant childhood between Yemen and England. After several years in a boarding school in Cyprus, she finally settled in Canada in 1985. In 2000, she graduated with a degree from the Communication Department with a major in Film from Howard University in Washington D.C. After graduation she worked as a photojournalist at the Washington Post, however her work can be found in several international publications. Also, as an exhibiting artist, Aïda's work has been shown in South Africa, Mali, Senegal, Egypt, Canada, United States of America, France, Germany, England, China, to name a few countries. A collection of her images can be found in the permanent collection at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art, Hood Museum and the Museum of Biblical Art in the United States. She is the 2007 recipient of the European Union Prize in the Rencontres Africaines de la Photographie, in Bamako, Mali, the 2010 winner of the CRAF International Award of Photography in Spilimbergo, Italy, and a 2018 CatchLight Fellow in San Francisco, USA. As one of the leading experts on photography from Africa, she has been a jury member on several photography competitions most notably the Sony World Photography Awards 2017 and the World Press Photo Contest 2017. She has also been on various panel discussions on photography in events such as African Union cultural summit, Art Basel and Tedx/Johannesburg. Moreover, she currently serves as a Canon Ambassador. Aïda is the founder and director of the Addis Foto Fest (AFF), the first international photography festival in East Africa hosted since 2010 in the city of Addis Ababa. She continues to educate, curate and develop cultural projects with local and international institutions through her company DESTA (Developing and Educating Society Through Art) For Africa Creative Consulting PLC (DFA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

ARTIST TALK - AÏDA MULUNEH

June 24, 2020 | 06:00 PM



The Artist Talk was set on Wednesday, June 24, 2020 at 8:00 PM (UAE time) as a live webinar featuring Ethiopian artist Aïda Muluneh, in conversation with curator Salah Hassan to discuss her work and her engagement with Addis Foto Fest.

This event followed the successful launch of the virtual tour of Aïda Muluneh's exhibition HomeBound: A Journey in Photography on June 2020 at the Sharjah Art Museum, which was organized as a collaboration with the Sharjah Art Foundation, and The Africa Institute.

Scholarly Web Conference ETHIOPIA: MODERN NATION - ANCIENT ROOTS

Ethiopia: Modern Nation - Ancient Roots called for a range of interdisciplinary scholars to consider issues of Ethiopian modernity within a national and international context. In many areas including, but not limited to, Ethiopia's image as a sovereign black nation influenced and came to dominate debates on movements that ranged from Pan-Africanism to Afrocentrism in the twentieth century. The conference aimed to bring forth a transnational epistemological paradigm that can shed light on the current political, cultural and intellectual complexities of Africa's oldest independent nation-state.

There is much in Ethiopia's cultural and political identity that contemporary audiences will find inspiring. For instance, while the colonial thesis argues that Africa is singularly the invention of European colonialism, the non-colonial thesis in Ethiopian scholarship sees Ethiopia through the lens of exceptionalism, that Ethiopia which was never colonized, is in rather than of Africa. Yet, Ethiopia has been a symbol of pride for black people in the African continent and its global diaspora. As the late African American scholar William Scott had stated, "By the last half of the previous century it had become a mostly dead and dismissed doctrine, but the biblically based ideology of race deliverance and destiny now known as Ethiopianism had inspired black people belonging to Protestant faiths in parts of the African diaspora for almost 250 years." Ethiopianism has a long history which Scott chronologically enumerated as: Proto-Ethiopianism 1700–1800, Institutionalized Ethiopianism 1800–1830, Classical Ethiopianism 1830–1865, Post-Emancipation Ethiopianism 1865–1915, New Negro Ethiopianism 1915–1930, Messianic Ethiopianism 1930–1945 and Modern Ethiopianism 1945–Present.

The late African American scholar, W. E. B. Du Bois had taken a keen interest in developing a productive relationship between Ethiopians and African Americans as Ethiopia represented for him the desire for decolonization and Pan- Africanist consciousness. By integrating the history of the Nile Valley civilizations into the Ethiopian past, Du Bois had attempted to incorporate Ethiopia into the broader field of Black/ Africana studies. Most importantly, DuBois did not have an esoteric

reading of the historical relations that took place in the Nile Valley. Rather, he posits the Nile Valley as, what Fikru Gebrekidan calls, “civilizational crossroads.” DuBois wrote the following in 1915: “The intercourse of Africa with Arabia and other parts of Asia has been so close and long- continued that it is impossible to-day to disentangle the blood relationships.” Unfortunately, the field of Ethiopian studies did not live up to Du Bois’ vision of Black/Africana studies and modern historians have cut the history of the Nile Valley away from the history of Africa dismissing any connection between the two.

As much as it helps to debunk Eurocentric assumptions that place Ethiopia/Africa in the zone of passivity and to relocate Ethiopian studies in black studies, the DuBoisian perspective, particularly the earlier parlance, can serve as a mode of thinking to study Ethiopia as a crossroad that accounts for its peoples’ historical material relations with the rest of Africa, the black diaspora, the Arab world, and Asia, notwithstanding their vexed relation with the West.

Indeed, the process by which Ethiopian political identity became intertwined with the political identity of continental Africa was spearheaded by Emperor Haile Selassie, and a handful of Ethiopian diplomats who acclimated Ethiopia’s educated classes with Pan-African consciousness and ideology. However, even with the establishment of the Organization of the African Unity (OAU)– currently known as The African Union (AU)– in 1963 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia’s transcendent and temporal relationship to people of African descent was and continues to be ambiguous. Most importantly, assumptions about Ethiopia as a nation and with distinct identity continue to operate within an insular statist historiography that engages history and culture without the theoretically eclectic and interdisciplinary currents of colonial studies. This perspective has not only sterilized intellectual discussions and research but also impoverished political practice.

The absence of a Pan-Africanist vision and a presence of a colonial political domination have indeed complicated the Ethiopian quest for a modern postcolonial identity. Still the tumultuous political history of

Ethiopia in the 20th and 21st centuries has also produced knowledge that speaks, albeit obliquely, to the historical, political and ethical problems of the effects of colonialism. For instance, in visual arts and literature contemporary artists and writers have inspired as well as mobilized vigorous inquiries into the lives and experiences of Ethiopians as products of complex histories of power relations. Their concern about the urban revolution that has affected millions of lives, for example, questions Ethiopian urbanism’s strategy of privilege and exclusion, as well as its long-term implications. The works of Michael Tsegaye, Helen Zeru and Berhanu Ashagrie, as well as writers like Bewketu Seyoum and Shimelis Bensa, among many contemporary artists and writers, feature forms of dominance and exclusion in the context of urbanism. Certainly, these types of political concerns have also resonated among musicians and performers generating an important resource to critiques of inequalities and to call of equality and social justice.

In the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries, Ethiopians have also experienced an unprecedented level of migration and have created new diasporas that have shaped how Ethiopians at home and abroad have imagined themselves and forged new identifications. Ethiopians now have large diasporic communities in North America, Europe, in addition to a sizable population in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, a population that is contending with pressing contemporary questions of migration, race, and citizenship. Concerns arose in relations to such condition have influenced the work of diaspora Ethiopian artists such as novelists Dinaw Mengestu, Maaza Mengiste or filmmakers such as Haile Gerima and Yemane Demissie, who have provided us with narratives that put in relief the record number of Ethiopians who have left their country in the last half century. This new body of work opened up a critical space to think through questions of diaspora from the vantage of Ethiopian studies, and to think about the Ethiopian diaspora from the vantage point of Africana studies.

This conference, therefore, aimed to investigate the history of Ethiopia in and of itself, and its complex relationship to the histories of the African continent, the wider African diaspora, and the world at large.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

October, 17, 2020 | 5:30 PM – 6:00 PM (GST)

Hoor Al Qasimi - Curator, President, Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah

Salah M. Hassan - Director, The Africa Institute, Sharjah, and Goldwin Smith Professor and Director of the Institute for Comparative Modernities, Cornell University, USA

Elizabeth W. Giorgis - Associate Professor of Art History, Criticism and Theory in the College of Performing and Visual Art and the Center for African Studies, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

Dagmawi Woubshet - Ahuja Family Presidential Associate Professor of English, University of Pennsylvania, USA

Surafel Wondimu Abebe - Assistant Professor at the Centre for African Studies and Researcher at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

Session 1

EXCEPTIONALISM AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF ETHIOPIA

October, 17, 2020 | 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM (GST)

Moderator & Discussant:

Tibebe Eshete - Pocock Family Distinguished Visiting Assistant Professor of History, The College of Wooster, Ohio, USA

Historicizing the Present: Contesting Culture and Power in Contemporary Ethiopia

Fouad Makki - Associate Professor of Development Sociology, Cornell University, Ithaca, USA

This paper sought to explore contestations over history and memory in contemporary Ethiopia. Central to this contestation was the very meaning of Ethiopia itself, its identity as an 'imperial' or 'national' formation, and the implications of each for how relations between culture and power, state and citizen were conceived and imagined. The immediate catalyst for this was a particular crisis of state legitimacy and the unprecedented expansion of the public sphere facilitated by newly proliferating media of communication. In this highly charged conjuncture, where the connections between past, present, and future were being reconfigured, the boundaries between popular and professional histories - and the place of particular peoples within them - were also shifting. In this sense, the political urgency and anxiety of the current moment have turned the past into a particularly contested site of identity formation, a way of rooting oneself in an uncertain and rapidly changing present.

Epistemic and Material Violence: Unsettling Ethiopian Exceptionalisms

Surafel Wondimu Abebe - Assistant Professor at the Centre for African Studies and Researcher at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

Many Ethiopians, particularly those who have accumulated discursive and material privileges from the hegemonic narratives of exceptionalism, posit the country as *biriyeye* (unique) for manifold reasons. It is a reality that Ethiopian exceptionalism is a multipronged and/or paradoxical narrative that has shaped global-local social relations as the historical material conditions shaped it. However, it is time to uncover the claim and any imposition of homogeneity on the subject of Ethiopian exceptionalism. Drawing and building on Mahmood Mamdani's theorization of South Africa's exceptionalist discourse, the paper asked: what other realities have been glossed over and what other questions we are not asking due to the metanarrative of *biriyeyewa* (the Unique) Ethiopia? In particular, the paper posed this query: how does Ethiopian historiography account for its general neglect of the discussion of the theoretical and methodological issues embedded in history writing,

while at the same time, the current political predicament and Pan-Ethiopian and ethnonationalist discourses have been profoundly affected by the colonial/modern rationality, progress, and science? Informed by a critical historiographic and methodological sensibility, the discussion will contrapuntally read the history of the present along with certain happenings of the beginning of the twentieth century. One of the exceptionalist narratives revolves around Ethiopia's (Adwa) victory over the Italian colonial power. Such narratives helped many Ethiopians to construct their identity as people of the only uncolonized country in Africa. However, there were Ethiopian intellectuals who questioned their country's independence in the wake of the victory of Adwa (1896). In so doing, those intellectuals unsettled the epistemic and material workings of colonialism and the coloniality of power. Nevertheless, the act of making and unmaking exceptional Ethiopia unfolds in the twenty-first century without accounting for the old and new mechanisms of the raced-gendered-sexed global capital.

Beyond Exceptionalism: Interrogating the Entangled Making of Modern Ethiopia

Shimelis Bonsa Gulema - Associate Professor of Modern African History and Politics, SUNY Stony Brook University, New York, USA

'Exceptionalism' was a foundational notion that shaped Ethiopia's 'national' psychology, the nature of the Ethiopian state, the conduct of politics and diplomacy, and not least the production of knowledge. The 'paradigm of difference,' which organized discourses about Ethiopia, within and outside of the country, operates at various levels of othering, using material and cultural progress as criteria. This narrative of singularity, which Ethiopia had a part in creating and sustaining, fragmented the polity, alienated the country, and mystified the understanding of it. While underscoring the significance of the notion, this paper sought to shift analysis of Ethiopia's purported exceptionalism or independence, which is incomplete, or its dependence, which is largely incoherent, to its ambivalence – its simultaneous embrace and rejection of the West and its modernity – and its entangled development as a result of its complicated historical location. Injecting

coloniality and global capital into the discussion of the making of modern Ethiopia is crucial. Complicating the discussion by recognizing the specificities of the Ethiopian experience is equally essential. This paper used contemporary debates about Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital, to interrogate the effects and limits of the notion of exceptionalism.

Reading Afework's Tobbiya, Troubling the Ethiopian (Imagi)nation
Serawit Bekele Debele - Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Germany

Hailing it as Ethiopia's contemporary foundational myth, Yonas Admasu posits that Tobbiya picks off from where Kebrä Nägäst leaves us and yet radically departs from it. One of the manifestations of its departure is that Ethiopia is imagined in Tobbiya as one in which its "diverse" communities live in harmony, albeit under the hegemonic Orthodox Christian rubric. In an attempt to push the limits of diversity (and/or interrogate the notion), this presentation did a close (re) reading of Tobbiya. It asked: what does it look like to read Tobbiya– and through it, the idea of Ethiopia-in the lenses of gender and sexuality? By foregrounding the female protagonist Tobbiya as an iconoclast, this presentation "troubles" historiography. In this usage, to trouble means to center gender and sexuality-aspects that seem to be off-center- and thereby unsettle the heteropatriarchal (imagi)nation and discourses that feed it.

Keynote 1

ETHIOPIA: SYMBOL OF BLACK DIGNITY AND INDEPENDENCE

October, 17, 2020 | 8:15 PM – 9:15 PM (GST)

Bahru Zewde - Emeritus Professor of History, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

On 1 March 1896, Ethiopian forces led by Emperor Menelik achieved a historic victory over Italian colonial incursion at the Battle of Adwa. That victory put an end to Italian colonial aspirations over Ethiopia and ensured the continued existence of Ethiopia as an independent sovereign state. Moreover, it was one of the factors that inspired the Pan-Africanist movement, which held its first congress in 1900. When Fascist Italy once again invaded Ethiopia in 1935 intending to erase the shameful memory of Adwa, that act galvanized the black world around Ethiopia as few other events have done before or since. The wave of solidarity for Ethiopia that the Fascist invasion provoked has been likened to the anti-apartheid movement of the second half of the twentieth century. Not only were there various fund-raising events, but thousands of volunteers expressed their readiness to fight on the side of Ethiopia.

After Ethiopia's liberation from Fascist Italian occupation in 1941, Emperor Haile Selassie began to play a prominent role in African affairs by initiating a policy of awarding scholarships to students from other African countries and acting as a mediator between the two camps who had contrasting visions of continental unity. This mediatory role resulted in the holding of a summit in Addis Ababa in May 1963, which culminated in the birth of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), upgraded into the African Union (AU) in 2002.

While Ethiopia was celebrated and venerated abroad, some critical local Ethiopian voices began to rise as early as the first decade of the twentieth century. Reformist intellectuals started to voice concern that Ethiopia's independence would be short-lived if it were not accompanied by modernity. They recommended a host of reforms ranging from the institutionalization of governance to the expansion of education and the assurance of social justice. The gentle prodding of these pioneers of change was amplified by the Ethiopian student movement in the 1960s and 1970s, which argued stridently for revolution rather than reform. The outcome was the Ethiopian Revolution of 1974, which opened a new chapter in Ethiopian history and its relations with Africa.

Session 2

ETHIOPIA AND THE BLACK DIASPORIC IMAGINATION

October 18, 2020 | 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM (GST)

Moderator & Discussant:

Salah M. Hassan - Director, The Africa Institute, Sharjah, and Goldwin Smith Professor and Director of the Institute for Comparative Modernities, Cornell University, USA

Unmarked Treasure: Du Bois and his 1930 "Memorandum" to the Ethiopian Government

Fikru Negash Gebrekidan - Associate Professor of History, St. Thomas University, Fredericton, Canada

In August 1930, W. E. B. Du Bois met with two Ethiopian government representatives at his NAACP office in New York City. This paper analyzed the follow-up document to that encounter. In an eight-page letter to the Ethiopian visitors, which the NAACP host referred to as "A Memorandum," Du Bois provided a development policy blueprint. It was the first time that an American reader of Ethiopian events came up with political and economic recommendations. This paper argued that a critical reappraisal of this little-known document is in order on various grounds. First, the document shows how much Du Bois's vision of the Ethiopian renaissance mirrored his earlier model of black self-uptlift, namely the infusion of the "talented tenth" into a Pan-African development scheme. Second, in the document, Du Bois not only acquaints the Ethiopian government with the emergent spirit of Pan-Africanism, but his broad remarks about the underlying anti-colonial sentiments in India, China, and Japan can also be read as an anticipation of future South-South relations. Third, Du Bois's lukewarm tone toward the Lake Tana dam construction, which the Ethiopian government was to finance with loans from Western banks, can be appreciated as an early warning against the slippery slope of neocolonial dependency. Finally, in terms of more concrete and immediate results, the document can be

further studied whether its recommendations had any practical bearing on Ethiopian economic and political reforms of the early 1930s, such as the government's indefinite suspension of the Lake Tana dam project.

"Running to Paradise" Is a Personal Narrative of a Journey to Lalibela, Ethiopia

Ishion Hutchinson - Associate Professor, Graduate Writing Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, USA

Ethiopia: paradise, homeland. That is how Rastafarians in Jamaica since the 1930s have imagined it—the landscape to be redeemed as the most sacred counter to slavery's dispossession, very much in direct contradistinction from West Africa, the origin point of the majority of slaves. What does it mean then to arrive in Ethiopia, specifically to one of its most sacred sites, Lalibela, with such a heritage? The traveler finds the lived encounter with the redemptive landscape, its distant geography with its ancient and contemporary history and its rituals to be a heightened form of remembrance; a blurring of homes, and discovers, indeed, what Naipaul once wrote, "all landscapes are in the end only in the imagination; to be faced with the reality is to start again."

Martial Ethiopianism in Verse

Nadia Nurhussein - Associate Professor, English and Africana Studies, Johns Hopkins Krieger School of Arts and Sciences, Baltimore, Maryland, USA

I argue in this paper that the paradox of imperial Ethiopianism—that is, a reverential attitude toward the Ethiopian regal line existing side by side but at odds with a democratic and collective approach to black solidarity—runs throughout African American poetry of the 1930s dealing with Ethiopia. Poets as varied as J. Harvey L. Baxter, Melvin B. Tolson, and countless others wrote verse intended as calls to action, encouraging readers to rally in support of the Ethiopian cause, but they often did so through the praising of exemplary regal icons despite ostensibly fighting for justice and equality. In many cases, these regal icons of the 1930s were depicted in their roles as soldiers. The title of this

talk gestures toward this ideological perspective: a pan-African/black nationalist perspective filtered through the bifocal lenses of militarism and imperialism.

Session 3

TUMULTUOUS TIMES: ETHIOPIA REVOLUTION AND DERG YEARS

October 18, 2020 | 8:15 PM – 10:15 PM (UAE Time)

Moderator & Discussant:

Shimelis Bonsa Gulema - Associate Professor of Modern African History and Politics, Stony Brook University, New York, USA

Revolution as Art, Art as Revolution

Donald L. Donham - Distinguished Research Professor of Anthropology, University of California, Davis, USA

Perhaps the most important recent development in Ethiopian Studies is the efflorescence of new work in the humanities and arts. This paper attempted to tie together these new developments with older work in cultural anthropology and history. It intended to focus on a series of related concepts—the modern, modernist, modernity—that recur in both new and older works. To some extent, the paper returned to issues raised by the author's book, *Marxist Modern*, published in 1999, based on fieldwork in southern Ethiopia during the 1970s and 80s. There were a few things that were done differently and explaining those allowed the consideration of some broad patterns in Ethiopian history and beyond. The crucial pattern that the paper emphasized is the historical feeling of "being behind," of living in exhausted times.

The quest for an alternative, for the "modern," seems often to develop out of this structure of feeling. But it represents by no means a clear rejection of the past. Rather, the modern comes entangled with other concerns like "tradition" and even the "anti-modern." To understand these entanglements, the paper suggested that we turn to Russian

literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope—a particular binding of space and time in discourse that establishes the shape of a narrative, in this case, the narrative of the nation. Modern chronotopes typically look across space to discover a livelier future, to uncover some secret of progress, and they interact with other ways of representing space-time.

The stakes of art and social revolution are, of course, vastly different. However, what the paper suggested is that both share certain commonalities such that looking at one may inform the other.

The Ethiopian Revolution as Rupture or Continuity?

Elleni Centime Zeleke - Assistant Professor of African Studies, Columbia University, New York, USA

How can we name the historical processes that have led to contemporary political forms in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa? Was the Ethiopian revolution of 1974 an aberration or part of the process of creating the modern Ethiopian nation-state that began with Minilik in the late 19th century? Is the Ethiopian nation-state the continuity of something ancient or new? This paper argued that the questions posed by the Ethiopian student movement of the 1960s and 1970s and that led to the Ethiopian revolution of 1974 must be understood as part of the process of making sense of the scramble for Africa—a process that affected so-called independent Ethiopia as it did the formally colonized.

Popular Youth Self-Activity and the Criminalization of Urban Space in Addis Ababa: 1974

Semeneh Ayalew Asfaw - Researcher at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

In its attempt to monopolize “change,” the Derg started a vigorous campaign of criminalizing urban spaces in the months following June 1974. When the Derg seized state power in September, by deposing Haile Selassie I, it stepped up its assault on youth self-activity beyond attacking organized political activity and by targeting cultural life and

public spaces, especially of the youth. Through the criminalization of urban space, what the Derg did was assail the cultural bulwark of rebel young sensibility and subjecthood. That was done particularly through the control of the superfluous energies of the unwaged youth—the unemployed, vagrants, students, sex workers, and such urban young subjects. The aim was to contain the young and recalcitrant elements of the Addis Ababa society. Criminalizing urban space would continue to be the hallmark of Derg's strategy of social control and the most characteristic means by which it enforced the tacit cooperation of the urban populace. The urban protest movement of the Ethiopian revolution carried mainly through organized petitioning and strike actions in the five months between February and June declined in the months after. In this moment, the section that was too difficult to contain for the Derg were the unwaged youth and school students who shared the same physical spaces of the city and had common social ties—the shay betoch, khat chews, and shebeens that were the public sites where the young—laborers, coolies, school students, vagrants, beer brewers, and sex workers confluence. Frequenting bars and shay betoch, chewing khat, violating curfews, operating drinking parlors, as well as theft and other petty crimes were all targets of the Derg's puritanical cleanup state action.

Film Screening + Talk

SPACIAL AND OTHER MEMORIES: MESKEL SQUARE'S CONTRIBUTION

October 19, 2020 | 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM (GST)

Salem Mekuria - Filmmaker and Professor Emeritus, Wellesley College, Massachusetts, USA

**Dagmawi Woubshet - Ahuja Family Presidential Associate
Professor of English, University of Pennsylvania, USA**

Square Stories Trilogy

Director: Salem Mekuria

Format: triptych video installation

Year: 2010 – 2019

Duration: 75 mins

Country: Ethiopia

Language: Amharic with English subtitles

Synopsis

Square Stories Trilogy presents, on three screens, a vivid representation of the ongoing contention for the soul of Maskal Square in the heart of Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa.

Over the last two decades Addis Ababa has been undergoing a massive and rapid modernization process. In addition to the endless high rises sprouting throughout the city and displacing millions from their traditional neighborhoods, a light rail transit system is another huge project that has become the hallmark of intrusion in the life of Maskal Square. The massive concrete structures supporting this elevated rail are challenging the Square's history and its uses as a popular place of sports training and exercise, and for large gatherings, whether for protest against or official show of power by the rulers.

Maskal Square being the largest, and only, public square in the country, it has captured my imagination since the time the military regime expanded it into a prominent and iconic space for display of political and power performance. It is a dynamic and ever-evolving locus where past traditions and present mores collide. From monarchy through military dictatorship and most recently one-party democracy, it has witnessed Ethiopia's rulers rise and fall. Using very simple and light equipment, designed not to attract attention, I have observed and captured scenes at Maskal Square since 2005. The three-channel format enables the multivalent sounds, sights, and histories of the Square, personal and collective, to meet, overlap, and intersect without ever being unified into a single narrative. The triptych also calls to mind the artistic reference

to the Holy Trinity, an important aspect of the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian tradition in which I was raised.

The Square Stories Trilogy showcases the history and uses of the Square beginning with its earliest occupants at the turn of the twentieth century and ending with completion of the light rail system that took over the Square in the twenty first century. This space has refused to hide or erase the histories it has witnessed while at the same time serving as the locus for the ongoing modernization effort.

Square Stories Epilogue concludes the Trilogy. The light rail system has arrived and forever changed life in the Square. Vivid blue buses displace youth playing football; St. Estefanos' church vanishes behind the elevated train's platform; the iconic podium that was the symbol of Mengistu's reign of terror disappears behind the trains tracks; the Red Terror Martyrs' Museum is blanketed by romantic and action film posters; and bright orange balloon arches take over the runners' steep gymnasium.

Square Stories Too (2014) opens with the sounds of Muslim prayer celebrating the birth of Mohammad as it rings over three-screen with early morning aerial shots of the cityscape. The timeless ritual is soon disrupted—overpowered by the sounds of construction, cars, and the 2012 funeral procession for Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, who had led Ethiopia since 1991. This interruption highlights the new transformation that the Square was undergoing at the time of filming. The insistent construction sounds heighten the overcrowded cacophony of the taxi stands, the crazy traffic patterns, and the towering concrete structures that dwarf the pedestrians who crisscross this space. It features street sweepers, mostly women, who battle all day long the dust, scorching sun, the pouring rain and the unruly traffic to keep the Square clean. The dissonance of the modernization effort is magnified by the images of the women who labor to keep this space clean using household brooms. Square Stories (2010) initiates the discussion of Maskal Square as a place where everything big and small takes place. It features its multiple and fragmentary histories, exemplified by its name that changed as

frequently as the ruling powers, and showed it as a site of official ceremonial events, as a place of protests and sports, and as a location for commemoration where two museums offer corporealized narratives of the city and the nation.

Ye Wonz Maibel: Deluge

Director: Salem Mekuria

Year: 1997

Duration: 61 mins

Country: Ethiopia

Language: Amharic with English and Arabic subtitles

Synopsis

Ye Wonz Maibel: Deluge is a personal visual meditation on history, conflict and the roads to reconciliation. It is a tale of love and betrayal, of idealism and the lure of power. It is a memorial to a brother who disappeared and a best friend, executed. It is a story of the Ethiopian students, their “Revolution” and its aftermath – a brutal military dictatorship.

Biography

Salem Mekuria is the director of Mekuria Productions, an independent film production company established in 1987. She is a professor emerita after teaching for twenty-four years in the Art Department at Wellesley College, Massachusetts. She splits her residence between Ethiopia and the United States. Since 1987, she has been an independent writer, producer, director, videographer, and a video installation artist. Her award-winning documentary films and video installations feature Ethiopian subjects and have been shown internationally.

Film Screening + Talk

THE MODERN ARCHIVE

October 19, 2020 | 7:30 PM – 8:30 PM (GST)

Yemane Demissie - Professor, New York University, USA

Takele Merid - Director of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

Elizabeth W. Giorgis - Associate Professor of Art History, Criticism and Theory in the College of Performing and Visual Art and the Center for African Studies, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

Twilight Revelations: Episodes in the Life and Times of Emperor Haile Selassie

May, 01, 2020 | 06:00 PM

Director: Yemane Demissie

Year: 2009

Duration: 58 mins

Country: Ethiopia

Language: Amharic with English and Arabic subtitles

Synopsis

Twilight Revelations: Episodes in the Life & Times of Emperor Haile Selassie explores and analyzes watershed events during the reign of the Ethiopian emperor. Using a wealth of archival footage and photographs, the film reexamines the imperial administration through the eyes of numerous individuals who played important roles in the monarchy. The featured witnesses include attorneys, ministers of education, information and planning, a general, a Supreme Court justice, members of the royal family, the Emperor's favorite pilot, parliamentarians, high-ranking civil servants, and members of the imperial household. The observations and narratives of these individuals shed new light on the personality, leadership style and humanity of the last and final Ethiopian emperor.

Biography

Yemane Demissie teaches film, television and documentary production, writing and cinema studies classes at NYU's Maurice Kanbar Institute of Film & Television. Prior to his move to New York, Yemane taught writing, directing and producing classes at the USC School of Cinematic Arts and UCLA Extension. An independent writer, producer, and director, Yemane has received numerous awards for his work including the John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, the Berlin Prize, the Locarno Film Festival Production Grant, the AFI Filmmaker's Grant, the Fonds Sud Writing Grant, and the California Arts Council Artists Fellowship. He has also been invited to several residences including the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center, the MacDowell Colony, Civitella Ranieri, Yaddo, the Bogliasco Foundation, and the Dora Maar House.

Session 4

ARTIST FOCUS: A DIALOGUE WITH JULIE MEHRETU

October 21, 2020 | 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM (GST)

Julie Mehretu - Artist

**Dagmawi Woubshet - Ahuja Family Presidential Associate
Professor of English, University of Pennsylvania, USA**

**Elizabeth W. Giorgis - Associate Professor of Art History,
Criticism and Theory in the College of Performing and Visual
Art and the Center for African Studies, Addis Ababa University,
Ethiopia**

Moderator & Discussant:

Salah M. Hassan - Director, The Africa Institute, Sharjah, and Goldwin Smith Professor and Director of the Institute for Comparative Modernities, Cornell University, USA



Session 5

THE STATE OF VISUAL ART IN ETHIOPIA: A ROUNDTABLE

October 21, 2020 | 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM (GST)

**Aïda Muluneh - Artist, Founder and Director of Addis Foto Fest
Raymond Silverman - Professor, History of Art, African Studies
and Museum Studies, University of Michigan, USA**

Helen Zeru Araya - Artist

Moderator & Discussant:

Salah M. Hassan - Director, The Africa Institute, Sharjah, and Goldwin Smith Professor and Director of the Institute for Comparative Modernities, Cornell University, USA

Session 6

WRITING ETHIOPIA: IDENTITY AND THE LITERARY IMAGINATION

October 24, 2020 | 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM (GST)

Moderator & Discussant:

Elizabeth W. Giorgis - Associate Professor of Art History, Criticism and Theory in the College of Performing and Visual Art and the Center for African Studies, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

Beyond the Pilgrimage: The Social and Political Dynamics of Kulubi's (1973) Contemporary Ethiopia

Luleadey Tadesse Worku - Senior Writing Specialist, Qatar University, Doha, Qatar

The overall goal of this study was to examine the portrayal of contemporary Ethiopia in the historical novel, *Kulubi* (1973) by Edmond P. Murray. Undoubtedly, the genesis of the 1974 Ethiopian revolution and its aftermath is one of the most frequently evoked historical phenomena in the history of modern Ethiopia. The constituents of the revolution – its political, social, and cultural milieu seem to hold a continuing fascination for both historical studies and fictional representations. The ongoing use of the period as a source of inspiration for the plethora of writings in various genres is hence indicative of its particular relevance for the present-day socio-political discourse. To adduce fictional writings as invaluable sources that provide critical insights into the period they depict is thus to emancipate literature from the restrictive theoretical boundaries of 'art for art's sake' and endow it with archival vitality. Accordingly, the primary significance of this study rests in drawing conclusions about the dominant attributes of Ethiopians and the socio-political realities of the time, as depicted in *Kulubi*. Especially relevant to this study is the spatiotemporal significance of the celebration of St. Gabriel at *Kulubi* is given in revealing the social and political facets of Ethiopia and in forming an Ethiopian microcosm. The novel's attempt to bring together its rather socially incompatible characters in one space,

most of whom are modeled after prominent Ethiopian personalities, not only makes it veritably peculiar but also interesting. Overall, as the analysis showed, long-held prejudices of one ethnic group against the other, a repressive political culture, and discordant faith practices emerge as dominant features of Ethiopians in general. At the same time, the strong female agency is emphasized as a significantly positive attribute of Ethiopian women in that particular era.

The Sensible Death of 'Gudu' Kassa

Girma Tesfaw Fantaye - Journalist and Writer

Ethiopia has a long history of writing traditions. From the earliest periods of the Sabeen, Geez, and Greek stone inscriptions to the present-day vernacular texts, it cultivates a remarkable history of writings. The main attributes of Ethiopian writings were ecclesiastical in contents. Ethiopian writers of the 20th century were very burdened with the yoke of modernizing and re-imaging their 'old' country. Of the literary works of the 20th century of Ethiopia, there is one book, by Haddis Alemayehu, that epitomizes the aspiration of the few vocal and powerful members of the intelligentsia. It is the modern Ethiopian classic, *Fiker Eske Mekabir* (Love unto Crypt), and its leading protagonist 'Gudu' Kassa ('Gudu' is translated as The Weird). One metaphorically can declare the past century is the era of 'Gudu Kassa.' *Fiker Eske Mekabir* portrayed a decaying social and political order of traditional Ethiopia, tacitly called upon the destruction of the old order through its protagonist 'Gudu' Kassa (The Weird). 'Gudu' Kassa lived in self-imposed isolation among the traditional polity he abhorred while enjoying all the privileges. As Mesay Kebede observed, "...nowhere do we see him creating wealth by his work." He talked of lofty ideals and of new (alien) knowledge and insights, overlooking the complexity of the society and its experiences he was living in.

Figuratively speaking, there is a resemblance between 'Gudu Kassa' and the so-called early modernizers of the 20s, the revolutionaries of the 60s and 70s of Ethiopia, of their diagnosis of the problems of the country, and their prescriptions for the chronic.

Music and Conflict Transformation: The Ethiopian Experience

Ezra Abate Yimam - Dean of the College of Performing and Visual Arts, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

Music is a primarily molding system of human life. Music-making is a special kind of social action, which can have significant consequences for other actions. Music is not only reflexive; it is also generative, both as a cultural system and as human capability, the creation of new music should contain values and power structures that are representative of a newly formed social group. Moreover, it is an effective means of propagating and reinforcing these new shared values through the performing and teaching of the new music. Music did seem to have some traceable reflexive influence on group cultural identities that could theoretically be included in a conflict transformation scenario, a majority of conflict transformation authors claim that long-term successful conflict transformation requires an acceptance of divergent cultural identities or the creation of a new shared cultural identity. Music traditionally in Ethiopia is used for different occasions, warriors used songs of Azmaries to encourage their fighters in the war front, and it brings diverse groups of people into one. The paper explored the use of music in transforming conflicts. Different music materials were analyzed by implying qualitative data analysis. The findings of this study reveal that music could be used as a conflict transformation instrument, especially to reach the grass-root level, and it is a practical resource to build shared cultural identity; because it represents the values and power structures of the societies from which it originated.

The Wife's Tale

Aida Edemariam - Author and Journalist

First published in 2018, Aida Edemariam's *The Wife's Tale* is an extraordinary book that will help in opening up new narratives about women's histories. The book is based on Aida's 60-hour long conversation with her grandmother, Yetemegnu Mekonnen (Nannye), that spans 20 years. By situating her grandmother as a central agent, Aida

tells a story that transcends the authority of the official archive, and its assumption to singular and credible knowledge.

Edemariam talked about *The Wife's Tale* and how Ethiopia is written in this extraordinary story.

Session 7

MODERNITY AND MEMORY: ETHIOPIA'S HISTORIES

October 24, 2020 | 8:15 PM – 10:15 PM (GST)

Moderator & Discussant:

Surafel Wondimu Abebe - Assistant Professor at the Centre for African Studies and Researcher at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

Women's Reminiscences as Retrospective Openings: Women's Voices on and about the Ethiopian Student Movement

Netsanet Gebremichael Weldesenbet - Researcher, Institute of Ethiopian Studies in Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

This paper examined the ways in which Ethiopian Women tell a story of the Ethiopian Student Movement and the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution. By examining women's retrospective engagement in novels, creative films and non-literary genres namely memoirs, documentaries, oral interviews, blog posts, and academic writings, the paper first presented the ways in which the Ethiopian Student Movement is retrospectively described and analyzed in the works of Konjit Berhan, Hiwot Tefera, Meaza Mengiste, Salem Mekuria, Alem Desta, Genet Zewde, Elizabeth Wolde Giorgis, and Elleni Centime Zelleke. Their accounts were read in this study as a form of carving out a discursive space for a new kind of narrative about the Ethiopian Student Movement and the Ethiopian Revolution. These accounts narrate women's role in the movement, raise questions about the place women were given in

narratives (accounts) of the Ethiopian Student Movement and the Ethiopian Revolution. The paper argued that these acts of retrospective reminiscences by women writers, academics, and artists illuminate how memory or acts of remembering are in and of themselves itineraries of contemporary intellectual and political accounts of the past linked to the present- through pending questions from the past. It also argued that retrospective accounts, as illustrated in these works, create a new kind of opening through new tropes of descriptions, analyses, and critique. It is this re-engagement with the Ethiopian Student Movement and the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution from the perspective of Women's voices that this paper conceptualized as retrospective openings.

*Concepts in Moments of Political Openings in Ethiopia:
A Genealogical Reading of Progress from Belts'gena /Prosperity to
Seletané/Civilization*

**Yonas Ashine (PhD) - Assistant Professor of Political Science and
International Relations, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia**

The Ethiopian project of modernity, not to say modernization, have produced numerous historical episodes. Ruptures, contingencies, and discontinuities define and separate each historical and conceptual episode from the other. Often "sudden conceptual shifts" differentiated one from the other, though each shift also signifies a moment of political openings. This project is about sudden conceptual shifts and the emergence of new political terms and articulations in political opportunities in Ethiopia. By grounding on the contemporary politics of transition and political opportunity in Ethiopia, and its local, regional and global conditions, the study explored the emergence of belts'gena or 'prosperity' as a new political concept. The study inquired "prosperity's" conditions of local and global possibility and its rhetorical power in heralding new historical episode in Ethiopia. The study dwelled on two analytical explorations: first, it conducted an ethnographic contextual study of the emergence of prosperity as a key political concept and explored its discursive meaning focusing on the political economy it informs. Second by genealogical reading of the emergence of other similar concepts such as lemat and seletané (development and

civilization) in the early 20th century; lemat and zemäna (development and modernization) in the liberation period, and lemat and edegät in the revolution period, it comparatively explored how conceptual shifts and emergence and their respective political contexts played out in heralding new politics, rupture, and discontinuities.

Session 8

DIASPORIC ETHIOPIA: MIGRATION AND EXILE

October 25, 2020 | 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM (GST)

Moderator & Discussant:

Dagmawi Woubshet - Ahuja Family Presidential Associate Professor of English, University of Pennsylvania, USA

'Ahun Lene' - The Praxis Between Agency and Discipline in Ethiopian Women's Repeated Migrations to the Middle East

Sehin Teferra - Founder of Setaweet Movement, PhD Gender Studies, SOAS, London, UK

One of the first actions taken by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed during the early days of the Political Reform process was traveling to Middle Eastern countries to negotiate the release of numerous Ethiopian citizens serving prison sentences for overstaying their permits. Despite the headline-grabbing stunts of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the political reform—often painful and confusing—has not addressed Ethiopians' international migration and exile in a meaningful way. Ethiopian women and men continue to migrate in large numbers, legally and illegally. The International Organization for Migration estimates that around 1000 Ethiopian women travel to the Middle East every day with Saudi Arabia as the most common destination. Although there is much talk in international aid circles around trafficking and 'modern-day slavery,' most of the migration undertaken by Ethiopian women is voluntary, based on what Bina Fernandez terms 'the will to change.' Migrant women continue to travel to the Middle East in large numbers, despite

widespread awareness of the dangers and the ill-treatment of Ethiopian women by their employers, and some make several trips in order to fulfill their ambitions and goals for a better life for themselves and their families.

In this panel on Diasporic Ethiopia: Migration and Exile, the paper argued that Ethiopian women navigate their stay in their host countries, and often make repeat trips to the Middle East by applying personal agency and self-discipline, which come together in the form of performed docility as articulated by Saba Mahmood. The analysis engaged with the Foucauldian notion of discipline, which Ethiopian migrant women self-apply to survive in their roles as marginalized, Othered, and often invisible ‘housemaids.’ The title of the author’s talk – ‘Ahun Lene’ translates from Amharic as ‘This time, for me,’ and it is a quote by a returnee migrant in Wollo, Northern Ethiopia, who was planning a second trip to the United Arab Emirates in 2016. The respondent explained that she is planning a trip to make money ‘this time for me’ as her previous stay, difficult as it was, earned her enough money to make a difference in the lives of her immediate family. Other respondents in the research explained that repeat migrants fare better because they know how to dress, behave, and speak, in an example of self-discipline, preformed docility and personal agency.

Ethiopian Labor Migration to the Gulf Countries: Motivations, Recent Trends, and Policies

Asnake Kefale - Associate Professor, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

The rate of Ethiopia’s international migration (0.7%) is lower than the sub-Saharan African average (2.5%). There has been, however, a significant rise in outward migration from Ethiopia in recent years. The dominant cause is economic—the desire to have better economic opportunities abroad. The country has a high annual rate of population growth (2.36%). The country’s population structure, which is highly dominated by youth, also contributes to the growing trend of outward

migration. In addition to socioeconomic issues (demographic pressures and unemployment), political instability, violence, and conflict all lead to outward migration.

This paper focused on Ethiopian labor migration to the Arab Gulf countries. The migration is both irregular (undocumented) and regular (documented). The paper examined four interrelated issues: (1) motivations for migration to the Gulf countries (2) historical and recent trends in migration (3) socioeconomic impacts of migration and (4) implication of migration policies. First, the motivations for outward migration from Ethiopia are examined by the proverbial push and pull factors. Some of the major push factors that were examined in the paper include poverty, cultural and attitudinal factors, peer and family pressure, unemployment and landlessness, low wages, and advances in information and communication technologies. On the other hand, the pull factors included social, political, and economic factors. Second, historical and recent trends in Ethiopia’s outward migration were examined. Among other things, this part historicized labor migration from Ethiopia to the Arab Gulf countries and considered recent developments. It, moreover, briefly discussed the distinction between irregular/regular migration and its routes. Third, the paper considered socioeconomic and gender impacts of migration. Fourth, the paper examined the impacts of policies that have been adopted by the Ethiopian government to contain irregular/illegal migration and also regularize labor migration to the gulf countries.

Narrating migrant stories, whose perspective?

Dagmawi Yimer - Filmmaker and co-founder, Archivio delle Memorie Migranti (Migrant Memory Archive)

“Our films predominantly reflect on people who become identified as immigrants rather than emigrants.”

The view of the immigrant, engaged in narrating migrant stories still lacks a certain perspective: in fact, the artist is conditioned by the audience to whom those stories are addressed. The artist mainly neglects

the audience from which he/she comes from: the African audience. For some years now I have been developing a strong feeling that forces me to look back to that audience which my works don't necessarily aim to reach. The migrant filmmaker is absorbed by the entire process: from the idealisation of the subject, to the production and distribution, it strongly depends on the audience to whom the films are addressed. This question comes from my previous film making experiences as well as from observing many African filmmakers operating in Europe. Our films predominantly frame immigrants and not emigrants, twisting the whole perspective and the focus of the stories.

Va-Pensiero (Walking Stories)

Saturday, January 11 | 06:00 PM

Director: Dagmawi Yimer

Year: 2013

Duration: 56 mins

Language: Amharic and Italian with English subtitles

Synopsis

Va' Pensiero – Walking stories is an interwoven account of two racist attacks in Milan and Florence and the victims' painful attempts to piece the fragments of their lives back together. In central Milan, Mohamed Ba, a 50-year-old Senegalese griot (bard), actor and teacher and resident in Italy for 14 years, is knifed in broad daylight on May 31, 2009. In Florence, residents Mor e Cheikj, also immigrants from Senegal, are beaten on December 31, 2011 whilst working in the San Lorenzo market. This powerful account brings together the overlapping stories of the three protagonists' ordeal and their enduring hope of building a life in Italy, despite the fear and uncertainty of suddenly being plunged back to the moment of the attacks by one look or gesture. The director Dagmawi Yimer, a refugee from Ethiopia, shows us what violence looks like through the eyes of the victim.

Biography

'Dag' was born and grew up in Addis Ababa. He left his country after the 2005 post-election unrest in which hundreds of young people were killed and put in jail. After a long journey across the Libyan desert and the Mediterranean, he came ashore on the island of Lampedusa on 30 July 2006. In Rome, after having participated in a video-making workshop in 2007, he co-authored the film *Il deserto e il mare* (The desert and the sea) along with 5 other migrants. Subsequently he was co-director with Andrea Segre and Riccardo Biadene for the 2008 documentary film *Come un uomo sulla terra* (Like a man on earth). He shot the documentary *C.A.R.A. ITALIA* (Dear Italy) in 2009 and *Soltanto il mare* (Nothing but the sea) in 2011, along with several other short films. In 2011 he coordinated the collective film project *Benvenuti in Italia* (Welcome to Italy), and directed one of the five episodes. He has been living in Verona for the last couple of years with Chiara and their daughter Ester.

Keynote 2

BEYOND EXCEPTIONALISM: ETHIOPIA IN THE HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

October 25, 2020 | 7:15 PM – 8:15 PM (GST)

Adom Getachew - Neubauer Family Assistant Professor of Political Science and the College, University of Chicago, USA

Ethiopia's standing as the only African country to escape colonialism has long established its position as the exemplary and exceptional state at the center of Black internationalist and Pan-Africanist thought. Yet this mode of exceptionalism can also be particularizing in ways that undermine comparative analysis and theorizing of Ethiopia in relation to the African world. In this essay, I examine Ethiopia's relationship to and position within the League from 1923 to 1935 with the aim of illustrating how Ethiopia's international position illuminates key features of colonial



domination, especially the racialization of sovereignty. Through this analysis, I suggest a way to read the exception for the ways its illuminates in stark form the general experience of colonial domination.

BIOGRAPHIES

Adom Getachew is the Neubauer Family Assistant Professor of Political Science and the College at the University of Chicago. She is a political theorist with research interests in the history of political thought, theories of race and empire, and postcolonial political theory. Her work focuses on the intellectual and political histories of Africa and the Caribbean. Her first book, *Worldmaking After Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination*, reconstructs an account of self-determination offered in the political thought of Black Atlantic anticolonial nationalists during the height of decolonization in the twentieth century. Adom holds a joint PhD in Political Science and African-American Studies from Yale University. She is on the faculty board of the Pozen Center for Human Rights, a fellow at the Chicago Center for Contemporary Theory, and a faculty affiliate at the Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture.

Aïda Edemariam is an Ethiopian-Canadian journalist based in the UK, who has worked in New York, Toronto and London. She was formerly deputy review and books editor of the Canadian National Post, and is now a senior feature writer and editor at The Guardian in the UK. She lives in Oxford. Her memoir about her Ethiopian grandmother, *The Wife's Tale: A Personal History*, won the Ondaatje Prize in 2019.

Aïda Muluneh Born in Ethiopia in 1974, Aïda Muluneh left the country at a young age and spent an itinerant childhood between Yemen and England. After several years in a boarding school in Cyprus, she finally

settled in Canada in 1985. In 2000, she graduated with a degree from the Communication Department with a major in Film from Howard University in Washington D.C. After graduation she worked as a photojournalist at the Washington Post, however her work can be found in several international publications. Also, as an exhibiting artist, Aïda's work has been shown in South Africa, Mali, Senegal, Egypt, Canada, United States of America, France, Germany, England, China, to name a few countries. A collection of her images can be found in the permanent collection at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art, Hood Museum and the Museum of Biblical Art in the United States. She is the 2007 recipient of the European Union Prize in the Rencontres Africaines de la Photographie, in Bamako, Mali, the 2010 winner of the CRAF International Award of Photography in Spilimbergo, Italy, and a 2018 CatchLight Fellow in San Francisco, USA. As one of the leading experts on photography from Africa, she has been a jury member on several photography competitions most notably the Sony World Photography Awards 2017 and the World Press Photo Contest 2017. She has also been on various panel discussions on photography in events such as African Union cultural summit, Art Basel and Tedx/Johannesburg. Moreover, she currently serves as a Canon Ambassador. Aïda is the founder and director of the Addis Foto Fest (AFF), the first international photography festival in East Africa hosted since 2010 in the city of Addis Ababa. She continues to educate, curate and develop cultural projects with local and international

institutions through her company DESTA (Developing and Educating Society Through Art) For Africa Creative Consulting PLC (DFA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Asnake Kefale holds a PhD in Political Science, Leiden University, The Netherlands. He is Associate Professor of Political Science at Addis Ababa University. His research interests include migration, international relations of the Horn of Africa, federalism and conflict management, and development policies and practices. Some of his recent publications include *Shoats and Smart Phones: Cross-border trading in the Ethio-Somaliland Corridor*, DIIS Working Paper 2019:7. Copenhagen: Danish Institute of International Studies (2019); *Federalism and Regional Politics in Africa*, Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics. (29 Jul. 2019); *Shopping for Ideas to Unlock Africa's Economic Potential*, Africa Review of Books, Volume 14, no. 1 (2018); *Remittance and Household Socio-Economic Well-Being: The Case of Ethiopian Labor Migrants to the Republic of South Africa and the Middle East*, A. Kefale and Z. Mohammed. Addis Ababa: Forum for Social Studies (FSS), (2018); *Ethiopian Labor Migration to the Gulf and South Africa*, A. Kefale, and Z. Mohammed. Addis Ababa, Forum for Social Studies (FSS), (2016); *Regional organizations and security governance: a comparative assessment of IGAD and ASEAN*, Working Paper, 1/2015. London School of Economics and Political Science, Global South Unit, London, UK (2015); *Ethnic Decentralization and the Challenges of Inclusive Governance in Multiethnic Cities: The Case of Dire Dawa, Ethiopia*,

Regional and Federal Studies, Vol. 24, No. 5 (2014); *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Ethiopia: A Comparative Regional Study*, London: Routledge (2013/2018).

Bahru Zewde currently Emeritus Professor of History at Addis Ababa University, is a Founding Fellow of the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences and Fellow of the African Academy of Sciences. He was formerly Chair of the Department of History and Director of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies at Addis Ababa University and Executive Director of the Forum for Social Studies, a think tank based in Addis Ababa, and Principal Vice President of the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences. He has also served as Vice President of the Association of African Historians and Resident Vice President of the sub-regional research network, Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), and as Editor of its journal, *Eastern Africa Social Science Research Review*. In addition to serving as Editor of the *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* for 15 years, he was a member of the International Advisory Board of the *Journal of African History* and founding Editor of the *Africa Review of Books*. He is the recipient of numerous awards and Fellowships, including ones from the British Academy, Japan Foundation, the Institute of Advanced Study (Wissenschaftskolleg) in Berlin and Humboldt University. His major publications in English include *A History of Modern Ethiopia 1855-1991* (2001); *Pioneers of Change in Ethiopia: The Reformist Intellectuals of the Early Twentieth Century* (2002); *Society, State, and History: Selected Essays* (2008); and *The Quest for*

Socialist Utopia: The Ethiopian Student Movement c. 1960-1974 (2014).

Dagmawi Yimer was born and grew up in Addis Ababa. He left his country after the 2005 post-election unrest in which hundreds of young people were killed and put in prison. After a long journey across the Libyan desert and the Mediterranean, he came ashore on the island of Lampedusa on 30th July 2006. In Rome, after participating in a video workshop in 2007, he co-authored the film *Il deserto e il mare* (The desert and the sea) along with five other migrants. Subsequently he co-directed the 2008 documentary film *Come un uomo sulla terra* (Like a man on earth). He shot the documentary *C.A.R.A. ITALIA* (Dear Italy, 2009) and *Soltanto il mare* (Nothing but the sea, 2011), along with several other short films, coordinated the collective film project *Benvenuti in Italia* (Welcome to Italy, 2011), and a documentary titled *Va' pensiero* (Walking stories, 2013). He directed the film *Asmat-Names* (2015). Dagmawi is the co-founder and vice president of the Archivio delle Memorie Migranti (Migrant Memory Archive). He also teaches a course in schools and universities on "visual story telling" and "migration and cinema".

Donald L. Donham is Distinguished Research Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Davis. Among others, his books include *Marxist Modern: An Ethnographic History of the Ethiopian Revolution*; *Violence in a Time of Liberation: Murder and Ethnicity at a South African Gold Mine*, 1994; and *The Erotics of History: An Atlantic African Example*.

Elleni Centime Zeleke is Assistant Professor of African Studies in the Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies at Columbia University in New York (<https://mesaas.columbia.edu/>). Elleni was born in Ethiopia and raised in Toronto, Guyana, and Barbados. Trained at the Graduate Program in Social and Political Thought at York University (Toronto), her research interests include vernacular politics in the Horn of Africa, Critical Theory, the Frankfurt School, and the problem of constituting Africa as an object of study. Elleni's first book is titled *Ethiopia In Theory: Revolution and Knowledge Production, 1964-2016*. The *Historical-Materialism Book Series* published the hardcover at Brill in the fall of 2019. Haymarket Books will also publish a paperback version. *Ethiopia In Theory* asks: what does it mean to write today about the appropriation and indigenization of Marxist and mainstream social science ideas in an Ethiopian and African context; and, importantly, what does the archive of revolutionary thought in Africa teach us about the practice of critical theory more generally? Elleni's work has also appeared in the *Journal of NorthEast African Studies* and *Callaloo: A Journal of African Diaspora Arts and Letters*. She teaches courses on the Horn of Africa, African Political Thought, Critical Theory, and Histories of Capitalism.

Ezra Abate Yimam (1961) was born in Jimma, Ethiopia. He graduated from the Yared School of Music, majoring in Piano studies. He also acquired an MA in Music Pedagogy, piano, and composition from Plovdiv Music Academy in Bulgaria, an

MA in Curriculum and Instruction, and an MA in Regional and Local Development Studies from Addis Ababa University. He received his Ph.D. in Peace and Security Studies. Abate is the current Dean of the College of Performing and Visual Arts at Addis Ababa University. He also plays at concerts and piano bars. His research interests include music, education, conflict, and peacebuilding.

Fikru Negash Gebrekidan

received his PhD from Michigan State University in 2001 in African History, in African American History and Comparative Black History. Since 2003 he has been teaching history at St. Thomas University in Fredericton, Canada, where he now holds the rank of associate professor. Subjects which he regularly teaches include Africa, genocide, race and racism, slavery, historiography, and disability. He is the author of *Bond without Blood: A History of Ethiopian and New World Black Relations, 1896-1991* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2005). Other publications have appeared in *Northeast African Studies*, *African Studies Review*, *International Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, *Callaloo*, and the *Palgrave Handbook of Colonial and Postcolonial African History*. His latest publication is entitled *Pan-Africanist in the Court: W. E. B. Du Bois and his Vision of Ethiopian Internationalism*, forthcoming in the *Routledge Handbook of Pan-Africanism*.

Fouad Makki is Associate Professor of Development Sociology and Director of the Polson Institute for Global Development at Cornell University. He teaches and writes in the fields of historical sociology,

political economy, and social theory. His publications on Ethiopia include, "Empire and Modernity: Dynastic Centralization and Official Nationalism in Late Imperial Ethiopia," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 24:2 (2011); "Long-Distance Trade and State Formation in Northeast Africa," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 24:2 (2011); "Development by Dispossession: Terra Nullius and the Social-Ecology of New Enclosures in Ethiopia," *Rural Sociology* 79:1 (2014); and "The Ethiopian Revolution: A World-Historical Perspective," in A. Anievas and K. Matin (eds.) *Historical Sociology and World History: Uneven and Combined Development over the Longue Durée* (2016).

Girma T. Fantaye is an Ethiopian writer and former print journalist based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In 2007 Girma co-founded Ethiopia's leading political weekly newspaper, *Addis Neger*, which was shut down in 2010 due to government pressure. As a result, Girma fled Ethiopia to live in exile in Uganda. While in exile, he published a collection of poetry titled *Yetefachewun Ketema Hasesa* (The Quest for the Lost City) and the *Novel SelfMeda* (Translated as *Field of Queue*) in Amharic. Also, he was a fellow at John S. Knight Fellowship at Stanford University in the USA in 2011/12.

Girma returned to his country in January 2019 after years of exile. His new novel 'Yenigat Wof Tiri' (The Call of an Early Bird), will be published in June 2020, and he is also a contributing writer for the *Addis Ababa Noir* (Akashic Books) published in June 2020, New York.

Helen Zeru Araya was born in Addis Ababa in 1987. She studied economics at Bahir Dar University before enrolling at Addis Ababa University of Fine Art where she achieved her BFA in 2008. After her graduation, she studied photography for a year with DESTA for Africa foundation. Helen is an active member of Netsa Art Village, she also works as a studio artist, a freelance photographer, and is an art-therapist for several local NGO's. Helen works with photography, video art, performance, painting, and charcoal drawings. Her works often start out as reflections of personal and emotional themes, and end up entering broader social contexts which touch on relevant and pressing issues in society.

She received a Master of Arts (Art Praxis) from the Dutch Art Institute in 2017 and Bachelor of Fine Art from the Alle school of Arts and Design in 2008

Ishion Hutchinson was born in Port Antonio, Jamaica. He is the author of two poetry collections: *Far District* and *House of Lords and Commons*. He is the recipient of the National Book Critics Circle Award for Poetry, a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Joseph Brodsky Rome Prize, the Whiting Writers Award, the PEN/Joyce Osterweil Award, the Windham-Campbell Prize for Poetry and the American Academy of Arts and Letters Award in Literature, among others. He is a contributing editor to the literary journals *The Common and Tongue: A Journal of Writing & Art* and teaches in the graduate writing program at Cornell University.

Julie Mehretu (1970) is a world-renowned painter, born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, who lives and works between New York City and Berlin. She holds a Master of Fine Art with honors from The Rhode Island School of Design in 1997. Mehretu is a recipient of many awards, including The MacArthur Award (2005) and the US Department of State Medal of Arts Award (2015). She has exhibited extensively in international and national solo and group exhibitions and is represented in public and private collections around the world. Her recent projects include completing two large-scale paintings for the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Atrium in September 2017, entitled *HOWL eon* (I, II). Her recent exhibitions include the Venice Biennale (2019) and a mid-career survey at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, which travels to The Whitney Museum of American Art in New York (2020), High Museum in Atlanta (2020), and The Walker Art Center in Minneapolis (2021). She is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and is represented by Marian Goodman Gallery, New York.

Luleadey T. Worku has a PhD and a Master's degree in English Literature from Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. She taught different courses, including English Literature and English language courses in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature at Addis Ababa University (2007-2014). She joined Qatar University in 2015 as a Writing Specialist and is currently working as a Senior Writing Specialist in the Section of Writing and Language Support. Her research interests include Orientalism, Post-colonialism,

and African Literature in English, with a particular focus on Ethiopian literature.

Nadia Nurhussein is Associate Professor of English and Africana Studies, specializing in African American literature and culture. She is the author of *Black Land: Imperial Ethiopianism and African America* (Princeton University Press, 2019) and *Rhetorics of Literacy: The Cultivation of American Dialect Poetry* (The Ohio State University Press, 2013). In 2004, Nadia completed her PhD in English at the University of California at Berkeley. Nadia received fellowships from the Ford Foundation, the Beinecke Library at Yale University, and the American Council of Learned Societies. Prior to arriving at Johns Hopkins, Prof. Nurhussein taught in the English department at Mount Holyoke College from 2004 - 2005 and then at the University of Massachusetts in Boston from 2005 - 2016.

Netsanet Gebremichael holds a PhD in Social Studies from Makerere University Uganda. She is a researcher at Addis Ababa University at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies. She holds an MA degree in Contemporary Cultural Studies from the Institute of Ethiopian Studies at Addis Ababa University, and has served as Directress of Addis Ababa University Gender office for two years.

Raymond Silverman is a professor of History of Art, African Studies, and Museum Studies at the University of Michigan, he is also a historian of the visual cultures of Africa. Professor Silverman's research

and writing explore historical and contemporary visual practices in Ethiopia and Ghana as well as museum and heritage discourse in Africa. Silverman's recent work focuses on the visual culture of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. His publications include, *Museum as Process: Translating Local and Global Knowledges* (2015), *Painting Ethiopia: The Life and Work of Qes Adamu Tesfaw* (2005), *Ethiopia: Traditions of Creativity* (1999), and the soon to be published, *Ethiopian Church Art: Painters, Patrons and Purveyors: Contemporary Ethiopian Church Art and National Museums in Africa: Reflections on Memory, Identity and the Politics of Heritage*.

Salem Mekuria is an award-winning writer, director, videographer, and producer of independent films and video art installations. After teaching as a Professor of Art for twenty-four years, she recently retired from Wellesley College. She has received many prestigious fellowships and honors. Her body of work to date includes four documentary films and five video installations dealing with Ethiopian history and contemporary subjects of African American history. Her work has received wide recognition and enthusiastic critical responses. Her films have garnered numerous awards and been shown all over the world, from Japan to India to Africa to Europe and North and South America. Many of these films have long shelf lives and are still being used in schools and libraries, and across many platforms. Mekuria sees her work as an avenue to get her audiences to actively perform their thinking through the issues in new and exciting ways.

Sehin Teferra is the founder of the Setaweet Movement, an Ethiopian feminist network that works for gender equality and justice. Setaweet Movement works to articulate Ethiopian feminism and to question normative masculinities and femininities through public dialogues, research, and activism. Setaweet's latest project is *Alegnta*, a hotline for survivors of sexual violence. Sehin represents Setaweet on the Advisory Board of the President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and she is a member of the Destiny Ethiopia initiative that aims to reshape Ethiopian politics.

Sehin obtained a PhD in Gender Studies from SOAS, University of London, in 2015. A Mo Ibrahim Scholar, Sehin has authored, most recently, a chapter in *Feminist Parenting: Perspectives from Africa and Beyond* (Demeter Press, 2019).

Semeneh Ayalew Asfaw is a researcher at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies at Addis Ababa University. He is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Cape Town in the Department of Political Studies at the Faculty of Humanities. His research interests include the study of revolutions, social and cultural change in urban space, modernity, popular protests, and popular culture. He researched and published on areas ranging from music and social history, political consciousness, the formation of political identities, and city-making in Ethiopia. His works have historical and spatial focus.

Serawit B. Debele is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity. She is based in Germany, where she completed her PhD in 2015. She is the author of the book *Locating Politics in Ethiopia's Irreecha Ritual*. Her current research focuses on religion, gender, and the politics of sexual desire in Ethiopia. Gulema Abstract

Shimelis Bonga Having previously taught at Addis Ababa University, Shimelis Bonga Gulema subsequently joined the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), where he completed his doctoral studies. Currently, he is associate professor of modern African history and politics at Stony Brook University, New York. Dr. Gulema had conducted years of research on such themes as transnational ideologies, practices, and identities in both colonial and post-colonial contexts and published a monograph and many book chapters and articles along these lines. His recent work is a book he co-edited entitled *The Horn of Africa and Italy: Colonial, Postcolonial, and Transnational Cultural Encounters* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2018). Presently, he is working on the publication of his lengthy book manuscript on the relationship between city, state, and society in modern Ethiopia.

Takele Merid is Assistant Professor of Social Anthropology and Director of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies of Addis Ababa University. He graduated from Addis Ababa University with a BA Degree in History in 2004. After graduation, he worked as a researcher of Heritage Expert for the Federal Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ethiopia. He

also graduated with a Master of Art in Indigenous Cultural Studies from Addis Ababa University in 2007. Then, in June 2016, he earned his Ph.D. in Social Anthropology. In March 2008, he was employed by the Institute of Ethiopian Studies of Addis Ababa University. Regarding Academic Responsibilities, to date, he has supervised several MA and BA projects that students do as a requirement for their graduation. He teaches courses such as Political Anthropology, Globalization, Tourism and Culture Change, and Gender and Power, all in the Department of Anthropology, Addis Ababa University. Dr. Takele has several publications on many themes of his discipline.

Furthermore, Dr. Takele was a research fellow of the University of Bath Spa, United Kingdom, and currently a research fellow of Hamburg University, Germany. His research priorities are anthropological approaches to livelihood changes, marginalized communities, and climate change perceptions. He is also interested in indigenous ecological knowledge and climate change influences. He has several research works related to the above themes.

Tibebe Eshete is currently a visiting professor at Michigan State University, where he teaches various levels of African history. He grew up in Harar, Ethiopia, and received his B.A in History from Haile Selassie I University, Addis Ababa (1971-1979), his M.A in history from Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa (1985-1989), and his Ph.D. in History from Michigan State University, East Lansing,

Spring 2005. Dr. Eshete taught at Asmara University and Addis Ababa University, before moving to the United States where he taught at Missouri State University, Calvin College, and Whitworth University. He is the author of *The Evangelical Movement in Ethiopia: Resistance and Resilience* (Baylor University: 2009); *The Silent Revolution: The Role of Community Development in Reducing the Demand for Small Arms* (Geneva: World Vision Int., 2000); *The Evangelical Movement in Ethiopia: Resistance and resilience* (Baylor University, 2009); *Jijiga: the history of a Strategic Town in the Horn of Africa, 1891 to the present* (Tsehi Publisher, 2014); and *Guzoye: Redirection* (Addis Ababa: Raei/SIM Publishers, 2015). Dr. Eshete's research interests include conflict studies, social movement, Contemporary/new religious movements in Africa, Politics, and religion, and intellectual history.

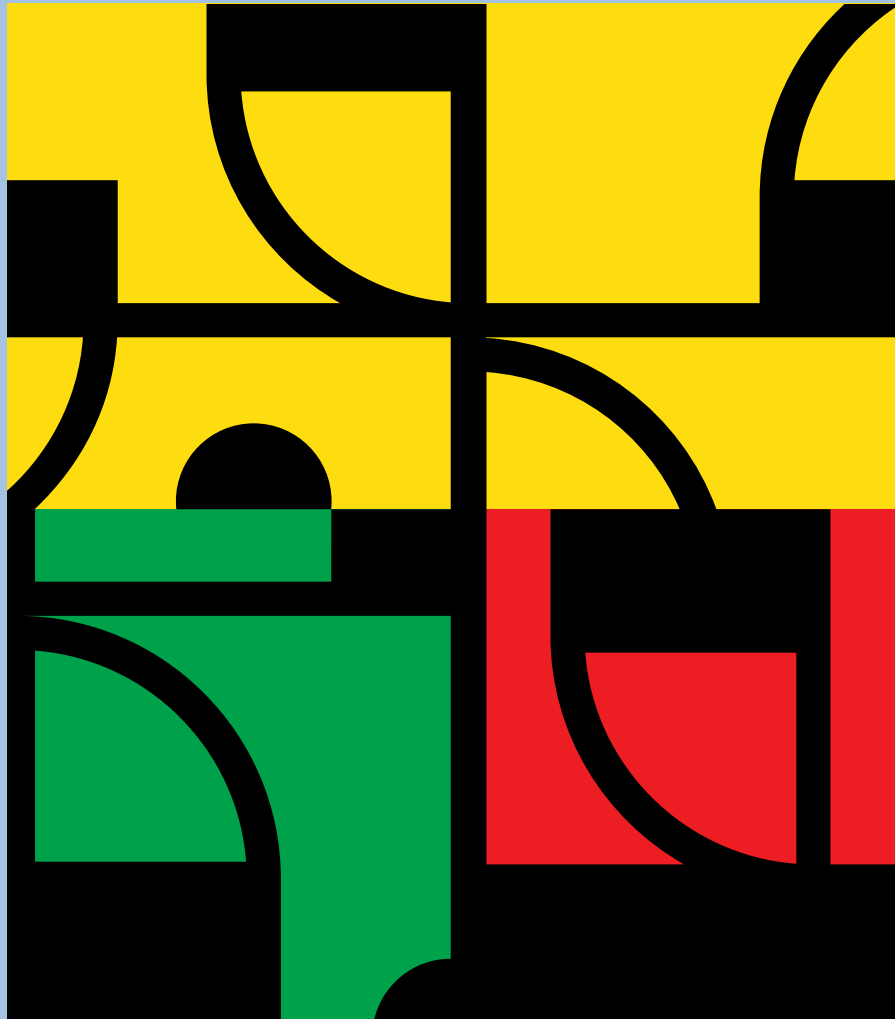
Yemane Demissie is an educator and an award-winning filmmaker whose work includes two narrative features, *Tumult* and *Dead Weight* and two feature documentaries, *Twilight Revelations: Episodes in the life & Times of Emperor Haile Selassie* and *Asni*. Presently, Yemane is in postproduction for *The Quantum Leapers: Ethiopia 1916-1975*, a social history documentary series about the Emperor Haile Selassie era. Yemane is a full professor at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and a recipient of a Guggenheim and Berlin Prize fellowships and residencies at Bellagio, MacDowell, Yaddo, Civitella, and Dora Maar.

Yonas Ashine

Yonas Ashine is an Assistant Professor of Political Science and International Relations at Addis Ababa University. He earned his PhD in interdisciplinary Social Studies from Makerere Institute of Social Studies, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda. His research interests include political theory and historical and comparative politics of state-society relations in Africa and from Africa. Yonas is now serving as an associate dean for the undergraduate program at the College of Social Science, AAU.

SUDAN CULTURAL PROGRAM

13-14 December 2019



The Africa Institute organized a series of events that focused on Sudanese literature, music, and cinema. The program took place over the course of two days at the Africa Hall and included a Book Discussion event on a new book edited and translated by Adil Babikir, a music performance by leading Sudanese singer, Mohammed El Amin, and a screening of award-winning film 'Talking About Trees', directed by Suhaib Gasembari, followed by a panel discussion with the Sudanese Film Club (actors from the film) and Dr. Yousif Aydabi, Cultural Advisor, HH Dr. Sultan Al-Qasimi Center of Gulf Studies.

Book Discussion & Short Film Screening *MODERN SUDANESE POETRY (2019)*

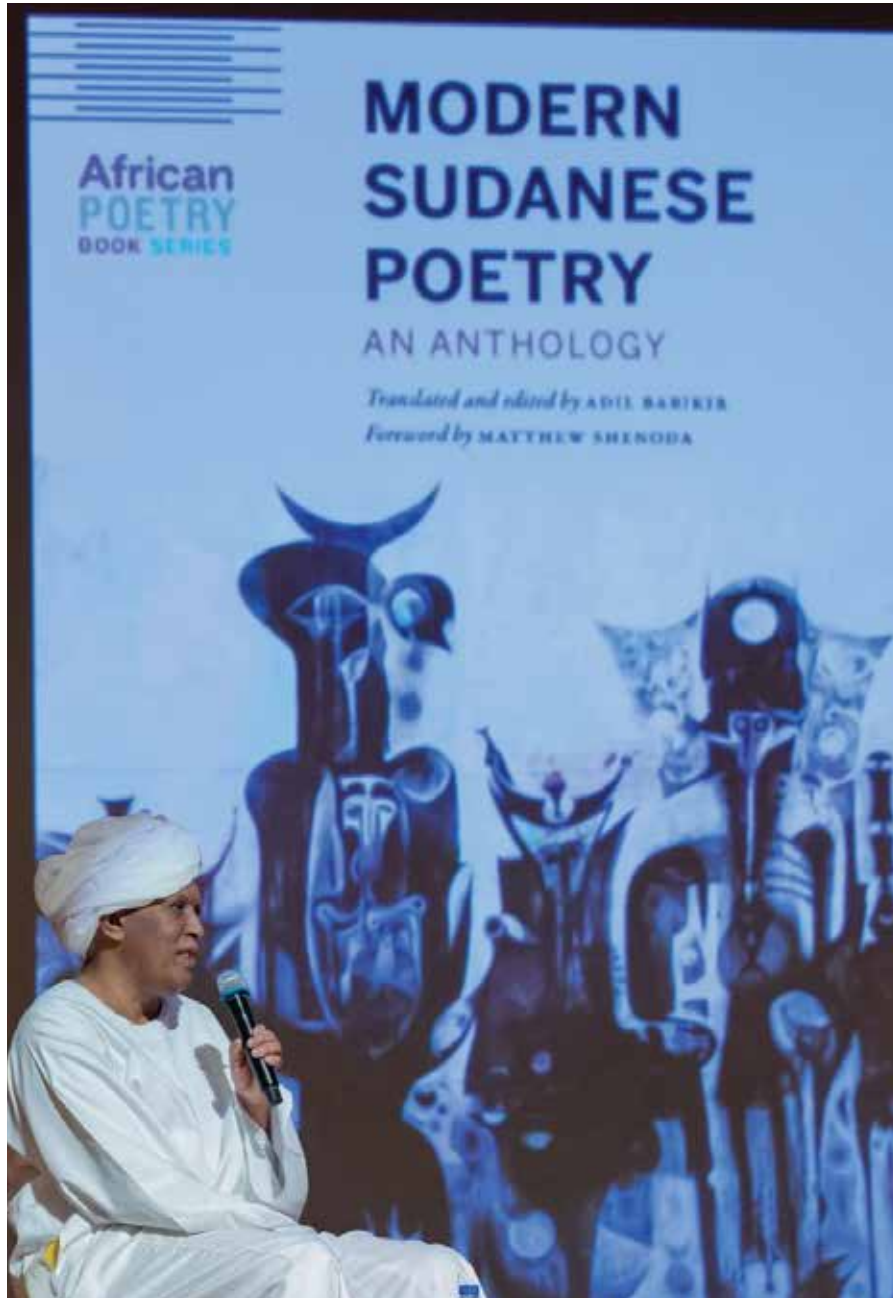
BY ADIL BABIKIR

December, 13, 2019 | 06:00 PM

About the book

Spanning more than six decades of Sudan's post-independence history, this collection features work by some of Sudan's most renowned modern poets, largely unknown in the United States. Adil Babikir's extensive introduction provides a conceptual framework to help the English reader understand the cultural context. Translated from Arabic, the collection addresses a wide range of themes—identity, love, politics, Sufism, patriotism, war, and philosophy—capturing the evolution of Sudan's modern history and cultural intersections. Modern Sudanese Poetry features voices as diverse as the country's ethnic, cultural, and natural composition. By bringing these voices together, Babikir provides a glimpse of Sudan's poetry scene as well as the country's modern history and post-independence trajectory.

The translator and editor of the book is Adil Babikir. He was joined by two people to discuss and review the book; Kamal Elgizouli and Mustafa Adam.



Adil Babikir at the Africa Hall, 2019

Biographies

Adil Babikir

Adil Babikir is a translator and an Arabic content manager at Mubadala Investment Company in Abu Dhabi. He was born in Sudan where he attended the University of Khartoum and graduated in 1976. He then worked for years in Sudan News Agency before joining the American News Agency's office in Saudi Arabia. He has translated several works including *Mansi: A Rare Man in His Own Way* by Tayeb Salih, and *The Jungo: Stakes of the Earth* by Abdelaziz Baraka Sakin. He has also translated a combination of short stories published in a book titled *Literary Sudans: An Anthology of Literature from Sudan and South Sudan*.

Kamal Elgizouli

Kamal Elgizouli is a Sudanese lawyer and commissioner of oaths. He attended the University of Kiev where he received a Master's Degree in International Law together with a Diploma in Translation. He published four collections of poems and numerous books and scientific articles in various journals, magazines and periodicals in Sudan, Damascus, and Cairo. Kamal is also a human rights activist and a former Secretary General of the Sudanese Writers Union.

Mustafa Adam

Mustafa Adam is a Sudanese university lecturer of English language, working now in the United Arab Emirates. He studied at the University of Khartoum where he has obtained an MA in English Literature specializing in the theatre of the Noble Laureate Harold Pinter. Mustafa Adam is interested in the theatre and poetry of Wole Soyinka as well. He also studied at Manchester University where he obtained an MA degree in Linguistics. He is interested in literary criticism and translation and published a number of translations of Sudanese and Arabic poetry and short stories into English, including the great poem of M. Abdel Hai: "Return to Sinnar" and Mahmoud Darweesh: "Exile: a Dense Fog at the Bridge"; together with the translation of a number of poems from English into Arabic, including poems by Edwin Muir Dylan Thomas, and Wole Soyinka among others.

Music Performance

MOHAMMED EL AMIN

December, 13, 2019 | 08:00 PM

Mohamed El Amin was born on February 20, 1945 in Sudan, where he studied elementary education at Wad Madani Eastern Elementary School in Al Jazirah State. His passion for music and singing strengthened his relationship with the Blue Nile musical band leading him to study musical notation with the musician Mohammad Adam Al-Mansoori. Mohamed El Amin participated in many music festivals in the Arab world, Europe, and the United States of America, in particular Algeria's First Cultural Festival, the World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow, Arts and Music Festival in the Netherlands, and many other festivals in Germany. He also participated in the festival of The Capital of Arab Culture both in Qatar in 2010, and in Manama in 2014. He played in China in the company of Chinese musicians, a performance that was broadcasted on the Chinese television. Mohamed El Amin received many music awards and honours in particular the Medal of Literature and Arts from the Presidency of the Republic, an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Niles in 2010, the Medal of Merit in the anniversary of Sudan's independence in 2014, the European Union Medal in 2016, and many other honours and decorations inside and outside Sudan.



Mohammed El Amin Performance at the Africa Hall, 2019

Film Screening & Panel Discussion

TALKING ABOUT TREES

December, 14, 2019 | 06:00 PM

Director: Suhaib Gasmelbari

Year: 2019

Duration: 93 mins

Country: Sudan

Language: Arabic with English subtitles

Synopsis

Suleiman and three further members of the ‘Sudanese Film Club’ have decided to revive an old cinema. They are united not only by their love of cinema and their passionate desire to restore old film stock and draw attention to Sudanese film history once more, but also by the fact that they have all enjoyed a film education in exile. Tirelessly, they try to get the cinema’s owners on their side and make the place operational again, but repeatedly find themselves up against considerable resistance. In the meantime, they sit together and talk about the past – including their experiences of persecution and even torture as oppositional artists. They also read out old letters written while in exile and dream of a Sudan in which art and intellectual thought can be free. ‘We are smarter than them, but not as strong,’ is how they unanimously summarize their situation. It is in laconic moments such as these that the viewer is able to perceive the friendship, as well as the bond and ideological solidarity that exists in the struggle for common ideals.

The film was followed by a panel discussion between the four members of the Sudanese Film Group, who are Ibrahim Shaddad, Manar Al Hilo, Suleiman Mohamed Ibrahim, and Altayeb Madhi, and Dr. Yousif Aydabi, Advisor at the Dr. Sultan Al Qasimi Center for Gulf Studies.

Biographies

Director

Suhaib Gasmelbari Mustafa was born in 1979 in Sudan, where he lived until the age of 16. He attended Cinema Studies in France at the University Paris VIII and has worked as a freelance cameraman and editor, collaborating with journalists to direct reports for Al Qarra, Al Jazeera and France 24. He has written and directed multiple short films, both fiction and documentary. ‘Talking About Trees’ is his first feature film. Suhaib Gasmelbari is also a researcher and was able to find precious lost Sudanese films and took part in saving and digitizing them through his work.

Sudanese Film Group

The Sudanese Film Group (SFG) is a noncommercial, voluntary, cultural group, founded in April of 1989. It is registered with the federal ministry of culture in Sudan. The SFG strives for cinema to be produced and spectated in the Sudanese cultural sphere, and the group hopes to achieve this goal through the production and screening of films, as well as spreading of the cinema awareness, capacity building and training in filmmaking. In all its activities, the SFG follows a communal and creative work model that is artistically and ethically bound committed to knowledge and experience sharing, objectivity and mastery. The SFG is also abide by the principles of democracy, accountability and transparency.

Dr. Yousif Aydabi

Dr. Yousif Aydabi graduated with a specialization in comparative theatre and film studies in Sudan. He has held various professional positions in cultural planning and management in the fields of education, journalism and publishing. A Critic and Editor, he has published several books on poetry, cinema and art.



The Sudanese Film Group at the Africa Hall. From left to right: Suleiman Mohamed Ibrahim, Altayeb Madhi, Dr Yousif Aydabi, Ibrahim Shaddad, Manar Al Hilo

YOUSSEF CHAHINE FILM PROGRAM

January-February 2020



In collaboration with Hind Mezaina, The Africa Institute organized a film program on Youssef Chahine's semi-autobiographical Alexandria Trilogy. The Trilogy included his films *Iskindiria ... Leh? / Alexandria ... Why?* (1978), *Hadouta Masriya / An Egyptian Story* (1982) and *Iskendereya Kaman We Kaman / Alexandria Again and Forever* (1989). The screening of the Alexandria Trilogy was an opportunity to examine Chahine's filmmaking career during the 1970's and 1980's and to compare them to his earlier films, in the context of his personal history and the social and historical settings of the films and Egypt and the Arab region at the time.

All screenings were held at the Africa Hall.

About Youssef Chahine (1926 - 2008)

Youssef Chahine is widely considered the leading pioneer of film-making in Egypt and the Middle East. With a distinctive brand of cinema and a truth-seeking lens, Youssef Chahine has time and time again focused on intricate topics seldom discussed before in Egyptian cinema and never presented with such honesty. Since 1950, when he released his first film, and until his very last movie, Chahine's lens has mirrored the upheavals in Egyptian society, from the British occupation, to the post-monarchical rule under Nasser, to the rise of political Islamism and the ever-changing relation between the Arab and Western worlds. At their core, his movies sought to connect with the world at large. On the 25th of January of 1926, Chahine was born to a lawyer father of Lebanese descent and a Greek mother in Alexandria, a city that represented an ideal of fusions of creeds and cultures, and embraced amalgams between different ideologies and art movements, giving it its own unique character and a place at the forefront of theatre and film arts. As a son of this open maritime city, Chahine learnt early on about the rest of the world. This gave him a unique platform to penetrate the international film festivals circuit and quickly establish himself, amongst western critics, as one of the greatest film makers in the world.

About Hind Mezaina

Hind Mezaina is an artist, freelance writer and film programmer. She curates film screenings for Louvre Abu Dhabi and has programmed film screenings for Sharjah Art Foundation, NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery and National Pavilion UAE – La Biennale di Venezia. She is also the founder of theculturist.com and co-founded and co-hosts Tea with Culture podcast.

ALEXANDRIA..WHY? (ISKINDEREYA..LEH?)

Saturday, January 25 | 06:00 PM

Director: Youssef Chahine

Year: 1978

Duration: 120 mins

Country: Egypt

Language: Arabic with English subtitles

Synopsis

Alexandria..Why? marked a radical, newly introspective turn in Chahine's active career, a sharp departure from his Fifties musicals and melodramas and his later epics and political films. The first of a semi-autobiographical tetralogy, entitled "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," Alexandria..Why? focuses on a precocious adolescent whose dreams and colorful attempts to become an actor unfold against the vivid backdrop of Alexandria during World War II. A rich cast inspires Chahine's young thespian hero with a wealth of dramatic sub-plots – at turns hilarious and touching – about wartime life. The autobiographical nature and nostalgic flavour of Alexandria..Why? make it one of Chahine's most accessible works, a charming and entertaining film that also delivers a potently subversive and impassioned anti-war message. (Harvard Film Archive)

AN EGYPTIAN STORY (HADOUTA MASRIYA)

Saturday, February 8 | 06:00 PM

Director: Hadouta Masriya

Year: 1982

Duration: 125 mins

Country: Egypt

Language: Arabic with English subtitles

Synopsis

The sequel to the autobiographically inspired *Alexandria, Why?* *An Egyptian Story* covers the beginning of Chahine's career up to his open-heart surgery in 1973. Chahine plays his alter ego Yehia, who gains international fame in Europe only to discover that, as in Egypt, film is as much commerce as it is art. The section of the film dealing with Chahine's heart attack and surgery contains two remarkable sequences. In one, Yehia travels to London for the surgery and becomes infatuated with a (male) British cab driver. The other brings the film to a phantasmagoric climax as Yehia, on the operating table, imagines himself forced to justify his life and work before a tribunal in an eccentric sequence inspired by Chaplin, *8-1/2* and *All That Jazz* (Harvard Film Archive).

ALEXANDRIA AGAIN AND FOREVER (ISKENDEREYA KAMAN WE KAMAN)

Saturday, February 15 | 06:00 PM

Director: Hadouta Masriya

Year: 1989

Duration: 105 mins

Country: Egypt

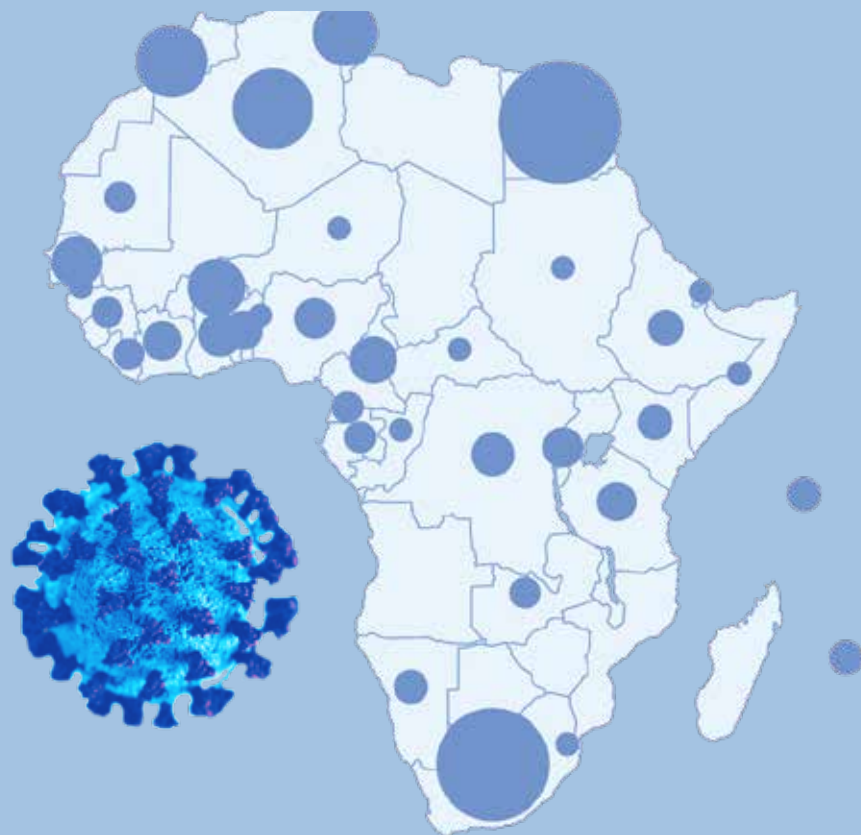
Language: Arabic with English subtitles

Synopsis

The third installment in Chahine's quartet of autobiographical films finds the director's work stalled by a strike. During the interruption in filming, Chahine reminisces about a past relationship with one of his actors while finding himself gradually drawn to an actress.

The intimacy between director and performer is depicted symbolically, in a tender dance number clearly in homage to the Hollywood musical and set on a snow – covered street in Berlin during a film festival. A masterful amalgam of realism and fantasy, *Alexandria Again and Forever* is Chahine's paean to the power of imagination and the artist (Harvard Film Archive)

AFRICA AND THE CHALLENGE OF COVID-19 WEBINAR SERIES



AFRICA AND THE CHALLENGE OF COVID-19: EAST AFRICA

May 12, 2020 | 09:00 PM

The Africa Institute, Sharjah, organized a series of webinars to discuss the effects of COVID-19 on Africa and the steps African nations have been taking to tackle the spread of the pandemic. The first of these webinars featured two leading health experts; Dr. Muntaser El Tayeb Ibrahim, Director of Institute of Endemic Diseases, University of Khartoum, Sudan, and Dr. Dawit Wondimagegn, Chief Executive Director, College of Health Sciences, Addis Ababa University and Professor of Psychiatry, in a conversation that was moderated by Salah M. Hassan, Director of The Africa Institute, Sharjah and Professor, Cornell University. This webinar was co-organized with The Institute for Comparative Modernities, Cornell University.

Issues that were discussed included: What measures were in place to tackle the spread of the virus; how the population was responding to such measures; and the challenges African nations have been facing considering the expected spread of the virus vis-à-vis the current health infrastructure and the economic crisis; and what were the appropriate actions that African countries should have undertaken to confront such circumstances.

Panelists

Dr. Muntaser El Tayeb Ibrahim

Director of Institute of Endemic Diseases, Faculty of Medicine, University of Khartoum Sudan and a founding member of the African Society of Human Genetics, and the Sudanese National Academy of Science (SNAS)

Dr. Dawit Wondimagegn

Chief Executive Director of the College of Health Sciences and Vice President of Addis Ababa University, and a specialist in the areas of global mental health, family medicine, medical ethics, psychotherapy knowledge translation, and post-partum depression

Salah M. Hassan (Moderator)

Director of The Africa Institute, Sharjah, UAE, and Professor, Cornell University

AFRICA AND THE CHALLENGE OF COVID-19: WEST AFRICA

June 30, 2020 | 08:00 PM

The Africa Institute, Sharjah, organized a series of webinars to discuss the effects of COVID-19 on Africa and the steps African nations have been taking to tackle the spread of the pandemic. This was the second webinar in the series and focused on the region of West Africa with two leading experts; Dr. Kovana Marcel Loua, Director General, National Institute of Public Health, Conakry, Republic of Guinea, and Dr. Olugbenga Ogedegbe, Professor of Medicine and Population Health, New York University, in a conversation that was moderated by Dr. Siba Grovogui, Professor of International Relations Theory and Law, Cornell University.

This webinar was co-organized with The Institute for Comparative Modernities, Cornell University.

Issues that were discussed included: What measures were in place to tackle the spread of the virus; how the population was responding to such measures; and the challenges African nations have been facing considering the expected spread of the virus vis-à-vis the current health infrastructure and the economic crisis; and what were the appropriate actions that African countries should have undertaken to confront such circumstances.

Panelists**Dr. Kovana Marcel Loua**

Director General, National Institute of Public Health, Conakry, Republic of Guinea

Dr. Olugbenga Ogedegbe

Professor of Medicine and Population Health, New York University

Dr. Siba Grovogui

Professor of International Relations Theory and Law, Cornell University

FILM SCREENING + TALK PROGRAM



Film Screening + Talk **JOHN AKOMFRAH**

The Africa Institute (Sharjah, UAE), in collaboration with the Sharjah Art Foundation (Sharjah, UAE) and the Royal College of Art (London, UK) organized a screening program that focused on three films by the acclaimed Ghanaian-British filmmaker John Akomfrah. The screenings concluded with a webinar featuring the filmmaker.

The program included three of Akomfrah's films; *Handsworth Songs* (1986), *Martin Luther King and the March on Washington* (2013) and *The Stuart Hall Project* (2013). The films were made available for audiences as free livestream for four days via The Africa Institute website starting Saturday, July 18, 2020. The webinar, which was scheduled for Tuesday, July 21, 2020 at 7 PM (GST), hosted director John Akomfrah in a conversation moderated by Hoor Al-Qasimi, President, Sharjah Art Foundation, with Adrian Lahoud, Dean of the School of Architecture, Royal College of Art, London, UK, and Gilane Tawadros, Chief Executive, DACS.

This program of screening was driven by the educational mission of the collaborating institutions as a contribution to the understanding, through film and art, of the recent protest movement across the globe against anti-black racism. It also explored the African and Black intellectual traditions through the contributions of specific figures to critical theory and the humanities, such as the American civil rights leader Martin Luther King, and the Black British intellectual Stuart Hall, as in the case of John Akomfrah's selected films.

Biographies

John Akomfrah

John Akomfrah is a widely respected artist and filmmaker, whose works are characterised by their investigations into memory, postcolonialism, temporality and aesthetics and often explores the experiences of migrant diasporas globally. Akomfrah was a founding member of the influential Black Audio Film Collective, which started in London in 1982 alongside the artists David Lawson and Lina Gopaul, who he still collaborates with today. Their first film, *Handsworth Songs* (1986) explored the events surrounding the 1985 riots in Birmingham and London through a combination of archive footage, still photos and newsreel. The film won several international prizes and established a multi-layered visual style that has become a recognisable motif of Akomfrah's practice. Other works include the three-screen installation *The Unfinished Conversation* (2012), a moving portrait of the cultural theorist Stuart Hall's life and work; *Peripeteia* (2012), an imagined drama visualising the lives of individuals included in two 16th century portraits by Albrecht Dürer and *Mnemosyne* (2010) which exposes the hardship experienced by migrants in the UK.

Adrian Lahoud

Adrian Lahoud is Dean of the School of Architecture at the Royal College of Art London. His work critically examines concepts of scale and shelter in architecture in light of emancipatory urban and environmental struggles, focusing on the Middle East and Africa. He was Research Fellow on the Forensic Architecture project and head of the MA Research Architecture at Goldsmiths University. He has also led urban design programs at the Architectural Association and University College London. Recent exhibits include: *Climate Crimes in The Future Starts Here*, The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 2018; *The Shape of the Eclipse in Let's Talk about the Weather: Art and Ecology in a Time of Crisis*, Sursock Museum, Beirut, 2016; *Secular Cosmologies in the Oslo Architecture Triennale 2016: After Belonging*. Recent publications include: *The Mediterranean: A New Imaginary in New Geographies*,

Harvard University Press; *The Bodele Declaration in Grain, Vapour, Ray: Textures of the Anthropocene*, MIT Press; and *Nomos and Cosmos in Supercommunity*, MIT Press.

Gilane Tawadros

Chief Executive, DACS

Gilane has spent her career in the visual arts. She was the founding Director of the Institute of International Visual Arts (Iniva) in London, chaired by Professor Stuart Hall, which, over a decade, achieved an international reputation as a ground-breaking cultural agency at the leading edge of artistic and cultural debates nationally and internationally.

She has curated numerous exhibitions and has written extensively on contemporary art. She is a Trustee and Vice-Chair of the Stuart Hall Foundation. She is a Trustee of the Stuart Croft Foundation, a member of the Whitechapel Art Gallery Editorial Board and serves on the Board of European Visual Arts (EVA) and on the Intellectual Property Office's (IPO) Copyright Advisory Panel.

HANDSWORTH SONGS

Available for free streaming from
Saturday, July 18 – Tuesday, July 21, 2020

Director: John Akomfrah

Year: 1986

Duration: 59 minutes

Country: United Kingdom

Language: English with Arabic subtitles

Synopsis

A film essay on race and civil disorder in 1980s Britain and the inner-city riots of 1985, Handsworth Songs takes as its point of departure the civil disturbances of September and October 1985 in the Birmingham district of Handsworth and in the urban centres of London. Running throughout the film is the idea that the riots were the outcome of a protracted suppression by British society of black presence. The film portrays civil disorder as an opening onto a secret history of dissatisfaction that is connected to the national drama of industrial decline.

The ‘Songs’ of the title do not reference musicality but instead invoke the idea of documentary as a poetic montage of associations familiar from the British documentary cinema of John Grierson and Humphrey Jennings.

Handsworth Songs won Britain’s most prestigious award for Documentaries the British Film Institute Grierson Award Best Documentary in 1986.

MARTIN LUTHER KING AND THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON

Available for free streaming from
Saturday, July 18 – Tuesday, July 21, 2020

Director: John Akomfrah

Year: 2013

Duration: 60 minutes

Country: United Kingdom

Language: English with Arabic subtitles

Synopsis

The BAFTA Nominated ‘Martin Luther King and The March on Washington’ is the titanic documentary commemorating the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom – one of the largest civil protests in American history. Largely remembered for Martin Luther Jrs., iconic “I Have A Dream” speech, the March was a watershed moment in the American Civil Rights Movement and helped to usher in a sea change in public opinion on race and the Civil Rights Act 1964.

Including interviews from key members of organizational groups, civil rights activists and attendees on the day, such as Senator John Lewis, Clarence B. Jones, Joan Baez, Andrew Young, and many more, ‘The March’ also features stunning, newly unearthed archival footage. ‘The March’ is the emotive story of discrimination, defiance and victory, told by the people who made it happen and whose lives it changed forever.

THE STUART HALL PROJECT

Available for free streaming from
Saturday, July 18 – Tuesday, July 21, 2020

Director: John Akomfrah

Year: 2013

Duration: 95 minutes

Country: United Kingdom

Language: English with Arabic subtitles

Synopsis

‘The Stuart Hall Project’ is the intimate and engaging portrait of Stuart Hall, the Jamaican born public intellectual and co-founder of the New Left Review, whose work in cultural studies profoundly influenced the political landscape and academic landscape. A life lived through the twentieth century’s defining political moments.

Weaving between the musical archeology of Miles Davis and the political narratives of the twentieth century, director John Akomfrah, carefully constructs archival sequences of rare, forgotten and long since seen historical material.

A ground breaking film that pioneers a new archival and sonic approach to forgotten histories, forgotten ideas and the untold stories of the politics of change.

Film Screening + Talk **MANTHIA DIAWARA**

The Africa Institute (Sharjah, UAE), in collaboration with the Sharjah Art Foundation (Sharjah, UAE) and the Royal College of Art (London, UK) organized a screening program that focused on three films by the acclaimed Malian-American professor and filmmaker Manthia Diawara. The screenings concluded with a webinar featuring the filmmaker. The program included three of Diawara’s films; *An Opera of the World* (2017), *Édouard Glissant: One World in Relation* (2009) and *Négritude: A conversation between Senghor and Wole Soyinka* (2015). The films were made available for audiences as free livestream for three days via The Africa Institute website starting Tuesday, July 28, 2020. The webinar, which was scheduled for Thursday, July 30, 2020 at 8:00PM (GST) hosted Manthia Diawara in a conversation moderated by Hoor Al-Qasimi, President, Sharjah Art Foundation and The Africa Institute, with Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, Art Critic and Founder of SAVVY Contemporary Berlin, and Jihan El-Tahri, Writer and Filmmaker. This program of screening was driven by the educational mission of the collaborating institutions as a contribution to the understanding, through film and art, of the recent protest movement across the globe against anti-black racism. It also explored the African and Black intellectual traditions through the contributions of specific figures to critical theory and the humanities, such as Édouard Glissant, Leopold Cedar Senghor, and Wole Soyinka as in the case of Manthia Diawara’s selected films.

Biographies

Manthia Diawara

Manthia Diawara was born in Mali, West Africa. He holds the title of University Professor of the Humanities and Arts at New York University, US. Manthia Diawara is a prolific writer and filmmaker. His essays on art, cinema and politics have appeared in The New York Times Magazine, LA Times, Libération, Mediapart and Artforum. He is the author of two acclaimed memoirs: *In Search of Africa* (Harvard University Press, 2000) and *We Won't Budge: An African in the World* (Basic Books, 2008). He has published several books on African and African-American cinema. Diawara's notable films include: *An Opera of the World* (2017), *Négritude: A Dialogue between Soyinka and Senghor* (2016), *Édouard Glissant, One World in Relation* (2010), *Maison Tropicale* (2008) and *Rough In Reverse* (1995).

Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung

Art Critic and Founder of SAVVY Contemporary Berlin

A Cameroonian independent art curator and biotechnologist. He is founder and artistic director of the art space SAVVY Contemporary Berlin and editor-in-chief of the journal SAVVY Journal for critical texts on contemporary African art. He is Curator at Large for Adam Szymczyk's Documenta 14. His recent curatorial projects include *If You Are So Smart, Why Ain't You Rich? On the Economy of Knowledge*, Marrakech Biennial Satellite, 2014; *Giving Contours to Shadows*, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein n.b.k., Gorki Theater, Gemäldegalerie, SAVVY Contemporary as well as satellites in Dakar, Johannesburg, Nairobi, Marrakesh, 2014, to name a few.

AN OPERA OF THE WORLD

Available for free streaming from
Tuesday, July 28 – Thursday, July 30, 2020

Director: Manthia Diawara

Year: 2017

Duration: 70 minutes

Country: Portugal/USA/Mali

Language: English and French with English and Arabic subtitles

Synopsis

The centerpiece of Manthia Diawara's *An Opera of the World* is a staging of Wasis Diop's *Bintu Were, A Sahel Opera*, filmed on location in Bamako, Mali in 2007– a pioneering work telling the story of migration from West Africa to Europe by combining traditional Malian music with the structure of the Western operatic art form.

Diawara's film serves as a mirror to build an aesthetic and reflexive story, through song and dance, about the current and yet timeless drama of migration between North and South, and the ongoing refugee crises. The film ponders on the realities of cultural encounters through the concepts of métissage and hybridity. The success and limits of fusing African and European perspectives are tested by interlacing performances from the *Bintou Were* opera, past and present archival footage of migrations, classic European arias, and interviews with European and African intellectuals, artists and social activists – including Alexander Kluge, Fatou Diome, Nicole Lapierre and Richard Sennett.

ÉDOUARD GLISSANT: ONE WORLD IN RELATION

Available for free streaming from
Tuesday, July 28 – Thursday, July 30, 2020

Director: Manthia Diawara

Year: 2009

Duration: 48 minutes

Language: French with English and Arabic subtitles

Synopsis

This film chronicles a 2009 series of interviews between the scholar and filmmaker Manthia Diawara and the Martinican author, literary theorist, and philosopher Édouard Glissant. Diawara conducts their conversations on the Queen Mary II in a cross-Atlantic journey from Southampton (U.K.) to Brooklyn (New York) as well as on the island of Martinique. During the discussions, Glissant explores his theoretical and philosophical trajectories, particularly his “theory of relation” which produced the concept of “Tout-monde” and was the genesis of his later work.

NÉGRITUDE: A CONVERSATION BETWEEN SENGHOR AND WOLE SOYINKA

Available for free streaming from
Tuesday, July 28 – Thursday, July 30, 2020

Director: Manthia Diawara

Year: 2015

Duration: 59 minutes

Country: USA/France/Germany/Portugal

Language: French and English with English and Arabic subtitles

Synopsis

This imagined dialogue between Léopold Sédar Senghor, one of the founding fathers of Négritude, and Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka was reconstructed almost entirely from archival materials. It probes the relevance of the concept of Négritude against the views of its many critics, not only to the decolonization and independence movements of the 1950s and 1960s but also to an understanding of the contemporary artistic and political scenes of nationalism, religious intolerance, multiculturalism, the exodus of Africans and other populations from the South, and xenophobic immigration policies in the West.

Film Screening + Talk

JIHAN EL-TAHRI

The Africa Institute (Sharjah, UAE), in collaboration with the Sharjah Art Foundation (Sharjah, UAE) and the Royal College of Art (London, UK) organized a screening program that focused on three films by the acclaimed Egyptian filmmaker Jihan El-Tahri. The screenings concluded with a webinar featuring the filmmaker.

The program included three of El-Tahri's films; *Cuba*, an African Odyssey (2006), *Behind the Rainbow* (2008) and *Tragedy of the Great Lakes* (2000). The films were made available for audiences as free livestream for three days via The Africa Institute website starting Tuesday, August 11, 2020. The webinar, which was scheduled for Thursday, August 13, 2020 at 8:00 PM (GST) hosted film director Jihan El-Tahri in a conversation moderated by Carina Ray, Associate Professor of African and African American Studies at Brandeis University, Brandeis University, with Hlonipha Mokoena, Associate Professor, WiSER, University of Witwatersrand, and António Tomás, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Architecture, University of Johannesburg.

This program of screening was inspired by the educational mission of the three collaborating institutions as a contribution to the understanding, through film and art, of the recent protest movement across the globe against anti-black racism. It also explored the destructive role of colonialism in Africa and the racialized institutional inequalities it created, and in the process, it also explored the axis of solidarity in the eras of decolonization.

Biographies

Jihan El-Tahri

Egyptian-born, French filmmaker, author and news correspondent. She has authored, directed and produced award-winning documentary films, authored books and reported on political conflicts in the Middle East and Africa. Jihan is a Member of the Executive Bureau of FEPACI (Federation of Pan-African Cinema) and Secretary General of The Guild of African Filmmakers in the Diaspora. She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree (with honours) in Political Science and a Master of Arts Degree in Political Science, both from the American University in Cairo. Speaking French, English and Arabic as well as some functional Spanish, Jihan was a correspondent/super stringer for US News & World Report covering the Middle East while residing in France. The main stories covered were: Return of Yasser Arafat to Gaza, Algerian Elections, Madrid Peace Conference, Desert Shield and Desert Storm (Gulf War). Jihan was also the Tunis Special Correspondent for the Washington Post, The Financial Times (London), US News & World Report while in Tunisia. The main stories covered were the PLO, Islamic Movements and Algeria. While living in Egypt, she was the Cairo correspondent for The Sunday Times (London) and correspondent for the Reuters news agency.

Carina Ray

Associate Professor of African and African American Studies at Brandeis University, Brandeis University

Carina Ray is the H. Coplan Chair of Social Sciences and Associate Professor of African and African American Studies at Brandeis University, where she also serves as Director of Faculty Mentoring. A scholar of race and sexuality; comparative colonialisms and nationalisms; migration and maritime history; print cultures; bodily aesthetics, and the relationship between race, ethnicity, and political power, Ray's research continues to focus on Ghana and its diasporas, while also branching out to include a long-term oral history project documenting the experiences of Cubans who served in Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia. She is the author of *Crossing the Color Line: Race, Sex, and the Contested Politics*



of Colonialism in Ghana, winner of the American Historical Association's 2016 Wesley-Logan Book Prize; the African Studies Association's 2017 Aidoo-Snyder Book Prize; and finalist for the United Kingdom African Studies Association's Fage and Oliver Book Prize. Her work has also appeared in *Gender and History*; *PMLA*; *American Historical Review*; and *Journal of West African History*, among others. She is a series editor of *New African Histories* (Ohio University Press) and *African Identities* (Cambridge University Press), and recently completed a three-year term as editor of *Ghana Studies* and as a member of the Board of Editors for *The American Historical Review*.

Hlonipha Mokoena

Associate Professor, WiSER, University of Witwatersrand

Hlonipha Mokoena received her Ph.D. from the University of Cape Town in 2005. From 2006 to 2015 she taught in the Anthropology Department at Columbia University in the City of New York. She is currently an associate professor and researcher at WiSER (Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research) at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Her articles have been published in: *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*; *Journal of Religion in Africa*; *Journal of Southern African Studies*; *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*; *Journal of African History*; *Kronos: Southern African Histories*; *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*; *Image & Text* and *Critical Arts*. She has also written catalogue essays for Zanele Muholi, Mohau Modisakeng, Sabelo Mlangeni, Sam Nhlengethwa and Andrew Tshabangu.

António Tomás

Associate Professor, Graduate School of Architecture, University of Johannesburg

António Tomás is an Angolan anthropologist trained at Columbia University, in New York. His interests range from African nationalism, contemporary politics, and urban theory. He is the author of a biographical study of the African nationalist Amílcar Cabral and is currently finishing a monograph on the capital city of Angola, Luanda, titled *In the Skin of the City: Luanda or the Dialectics of Spatial Transformation* (under contract with Duke University Press). He is an associate professor in the Graduate School of Architecture, at the University of Johannesburg, in South Africa.

THE TRAGEDY OF THE GREAT LAKES

Available for free streaming from
Tuesday, August 11 – Thursday, August 13, 2020

Director: Jihan El-Tahri

Year: 2000

Duration: 100 minutes

Country: France

Language: English with Arabic subtitles

Synopsis

April, 1994. Genocide in Rwanda. 800,000 dead. A catastrophe that upset the balance in the entire region. The Great Lakes region of Africa ended the year with a bloodbath. This documentary shows the intrigues, the dramatic effects, the treasons, the vengeance that prevailed over those years and whose only goal was to maintain or increase each faction's area of influence. In just ten years, the population saw all their hopes vanish: The dream of an Africa in control of its own destiny, alimentary self-sufficiency, the end of interethnic conflicts.

BEHIND THE RAINBOW

Available for free streaming from
Tuesday, August 11 – Thursday, August 13, 2020

Director: Jihan El-Tahri

Year: 2008

Duration: 138 minutes

Country: France and South Africa

Language: English with Arabic subtitles

Synopsis

Against the backdrop of South Africa's 2009 election, which saw Jacob Zuma become the country's third democratically elected president, Behind the Rainbow is a detailed exploration of the evolution of, and internal conflicts within, the ruling African National Congress (ANC), since it first came to power with Nelson Mandela's election in 1994. The film's focus is on the development over the years of the relationship between two of the ANC's most prominent leaders, Thabo Mbeki - who followed Mandela as president and served from 1999 to 2008 - and Jacob Zuma, who was one of the most important commanders of the ANC's armed struggle against the apartheid government. Under Mandela's administration, they loyally labored to build a non-racial state. But in recent years their duel threatened to tear the ANC apart. The film tells their story, one of friendship, comradeship, and eventual bitter personal conflict, with rich archival material and through in-depth interviews with both Mbeki and Zuma, as well as many of their current and former ANC colleagues.



CUBA, AN AFRICAN ODYSSEY

Available for free streaming from
Tuesday, August 11 – Thursday, August 13, 2020

Director: Jihan El-Tahri

Year: 2006

Duration: 190 minutes

Country: Cuba/Congo/Angola

Language: Multilingual with English and Arabic subtitles

Synopsis

This film is the previously untold story of Cuba's support for anti-colonial and anti-Apartheid struggles in the southern part of Africa, highlighting one of the Cold War's most vigorous contests over resources and ideology. The film also highlights the role of Cuba in avenging the assassination of Lumumba in the Congo up to the fall of apartheid in South Africa, where 300,000 Cubans fought alongside African armed resistance movements in Angola, Mozambique and South Africa. On November 23, 2020, and to conclude the three days of live streaming.

CINEMA OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA FILM SERIES

Film Screening + Talk

I'M NOT YOUR NEGRO

Available for free streaming from Saturday,
November 21 – Monday, November 23, 2020

Dagmawi Woubshet - Ahuja Family Presidential Associate Professor of English, and author of the forthcoming book *Here Be Saints: James Baldwin's Late-Style*, Professor Dagmawi Woubshet, will be in conversation with Sataan Al-Hassan, Head of Research, Programming and Publications at The Africa Institute, to discuss the critically acclaimed film *I'm Not Your Negro*, directed by Raoul Peck, and its relevance in today's anti-black racism protests taking place across the world.

Director: Raoul Peck

Year: 2017

Duration: 93 minutes

Country: Switzerland, France, Belgium, USA

Language: English with Arabic subtitles

Filmmaker Raoul Peck envisions the book James Baldwin never finished, *Remember This House*. The result is a radical, up-to-the-minute examination of race in America, using Baldwin's original words, read by Samuel L. Jackson and flood of rich archival material. *I Am Not Your Negro* is a journey into black history that connects the past of the Civil Rights movement to the present of #BlackLivesMatter. It is a film that questions black representation in Hollywood and beyond. And, ultimately, by confronting the deeper connections between the lives and assassination of Medgar Evers, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr., Baldwin and Peck have produced a work that challenges the very definition of what America stands for.



Dagmawi Woubshet

Dagmawi Woubshet is the Ahuja Family Presidential Associate Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania. He works at the intersections of African-American, LGBTQ, and African studies, and is the author of *The Calendar of Loss: Race, Sexuality, and Mourning in the Early Era of AIDS* (2015), and co-editor of *Ethiopia: Literature, Art, & Culture* (2010), a special issue of *Callaloo*. His essays have appeared in several publications, including *Transition*, *The Atlantic*, and *NKA: A Journal of Contemporary African Art*. In 2016, he curated *Julie Mehretu: The Addis Show* at the Modern Art Museum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. He is currently completing a book on James Baldwin's late style.

Sataan Al Hassan

Head of Research, Programming and Publications at The Africa Institute. A research and media professional focused on things related to politics and culture. With ten years of work experience in advertising, marketing, cultural and research institutes, to develop multi-faceted projects from the ground up efficiently. Sataan has a BA majoring in Mass Communication and a minor in Film Studies from the American University of Sharjah and an MSc in Political Theory from the University of Edinburgh.

Film Screening + Talk

IDRISSOU MORA - KPAI FILM PROGRAM

Available for free streaming from Saturday, December 06 – Wednesday, December 09, 2020

The Africa Institute in Sharjah, UAE, was pleased to present two of Idrissou Mora – Kpai's films; *America Street* (2019), *Indochina – Traces of a Mother* (2011). Idrissou Mora-Kpai is Assistant Professor in the Department of Media Arts, Sciences and Studies at Ithaca College and an award-winning filmmaker whose films have been screened world-wide. The films were made available for audiences as free livestream, via the Africa Institute's website, between 6-9 December, 2020.

On the 9th at 7:00 pm (UAE Time), and to conclude the four days of live streaming, film director Idrissou Mora – Kpai had been in conversation with Salah M. Hassan, Director, The Africa Institute.

AMERICA STREET

Available for free streaming from Saturday,
December 06 – Wednesday, December 09, 2020

Director: Idrissou Mora – Kpai

Year: 2019

Duration: 74 minutes

Country: USA

Language: English

Synopsis

On America Street in Charleston's East Side neighborhood, Joe is the owner of a small corner store, the heart of an old but slowly disappearing black community. Almost half of all African-Americans trace their origins back to Charleston, a city that is still haunted by its slave owning past. In the face of the multiple challenges that African Americans face, Joe is determined to stay hopeful and to resist losing his neighborhood to the rising forces of gentrification.

Through the character of Joe, my film examines how African Americans feel marginalized in a once predominantly black city like Charleston and how white supremacy is becoming more pervasive and insidious in America.

INDOCHINA - TRACES OF A MOTHER

Available for free streaming from Saturday,
December 06 – Wednesday, December 09, 2020

Director: Idrissou Mora – Kpai

Year: 2011

Duration: 72 minutes

Country: France/Benin

Language: African languages/ French with English and Arabic Subtitles

Synopsis

Between 1946 and 1954, over 60 000 African soldiers were enlisted to fight the Viet Minh. Pitted against one another by circumstances, these two colonised peoples came into contact and a number of African soldiers took Vietnamese women as wives. Out of these unions, numerous mixed-race children were born. At the end of the war, the colonial army ordered that all the black children be repatriated to Africa, officially to protect them from the Viet Minh. While some children left with their mothers and fathers, others were simply taken away by their fathers, leaving their mothers behind. Abandoned in orphanages, those that had neither mother nor father were put up for mass adoption by African officers, as was the case with Christophe. Christophe long avoided facing the scars and identity complexes left by this abrupt separation from his mother and homeland. By encouraging him to undertake a journey into his own past, the film opens a little-known chapter of the Indochina war.

Biographies

Idrissou Mora - Kpai

Assistant Professor in the Department of Media Arts, Sciences and Studies at Ithaca College, Idrissou is an award-winning filmmaker whose films have been screened world-wide at numerous prestigious festivals, such as Berlin, Rotterdam, Vienna, Milano, Busan, Sheffield, and garnered many international accolades. Born in Benin, West Africa, Idrissou has made a name for himself with his social documentaries tackling post-colonial African societies, African migrations and diasporas. He is a recipient of the prestigious Dutch Prince Claus Award for his artistic achievements dedicated to promote social change in the Global South. Idrissou's most recent film, *America Street* explores the daily struggles of an African-American community in a quickly gentrifying historical black neighborhood in downtown Charleston, South Carolina, just after the 2015 Walter Scott killing. A graduate of the Konrad Wolf Film University of Babelsberg (Germany), Idrissou has been a guest artist and visiting faculty member at Cornell University, Duke University and the University of Pittsburgh.

Carina Ray

Associate Professor of African and African-American Studies and Director of Faculty Mentoring at Brandeis University. Carina is a scholar of race and sexuality; comparative colonialisms and nationalisms; migration and maritime history; and the relationship between race, ethnicity, and political power. Carina's research is primarily focused on Ghana and its diasporas. She is the author of *Crossing the Color Line: Race, Sex, and the Contested Politics of Colonialism in Ghana* (Ohio University Press, 2015), winner of the American Historical Association's Wesley-Logan Book Prize in 2016 and the African Studies Association's Aidoo-Snyder Book Prize in 2017. Her articles have appeared in *Gender and History*, *PMLA*, and *The American Historical Review*, among others. Carina's new book project, a trilogy, engages conceptions of blackness, the body, and human difference, as well as processes of race making and identity transformation across the precolonial, colonial, and post-

independence periods in Ghana. She is also working on an oral history project documenting the experiences of Cubans who served in Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia. She is the editor, with Toyin Falola, of the newly established Cambridge University Press book series, *African Identities*; editor of *Ghana Studies*; and member of the Board of Editors of *The American Historical Review* and *History in Africa*.

Salah M. Hassan

Director of The Africa Institute, Sharjah, UAE. Hassan is the Goldwin Smith Professor and Director of the Institute for Comparative Modernities, and Professor of Art History and Visual Culture in the Africana Studies and Research Center, and the Department of History of Art and Visual Studies, Cornell University, Ithaca, US. Hassan is an art critic, curator, and founding editor of *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art*. He authored, edited and co-edited several books including *Ibrahim El Salahi: A Visionary Modernist* (Museum for African Art and Tate Modern, 2012, 2013), *Darfur and the Crisis of Governance: A Critical Reader* (Cornell University Press, 2009), *Diaspora, Memory, Place* (Prestel Publishing, 2008), *Unpacking Europe* (NAi Publishers, 2001) and *(Forum for African Arts, 2001)*. Hassan has curated several exhibitions including major ones at the Venice and Dakar Biennales, and most recently *The Khartoum School: The Making of the Modern Art Movement in Sudan (1945–Present)*, and *The Egyptian Surrealists: When Art Becomes Liberty (1938–1965)* sponsored by the Sharjah Art Foundation and which opened in Sharjah and Cairo (2016). Hassan was the Madeleine Haas Russell Visiting Professor in African and Afro-American Studies, Brandeis University, Boston, US (2016–2017). He is the recipient of several grants and awards including the J. Paul Getty Postdoctoral Fellowship in Art History and the Humanities, and Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Foundation, Andy Warhol Foundation, and Sharjah Art Foundation.

WRITING AFRICA BOOK SERIES

Produced by The Africa Institute, Writing Africa is a series of short books in the fields of humanities and social sciences related to African and African diaspora studies. The series aims to introduce African culture through various forms of creative expression, including literature, visual culture, theater, music and literary critique. Through a thoughtfully critical and formative lens, the series aims to familiarize readers with the diversity and complexities of African societies, and their histories in relation to the past, present and future. Both in Arabic, the books are available for purchase at the Sharjah Art Foundation gift shop and The Africa Institute offices in Africa Hall.



01

الدرس الإفريقي: المسرح بين الممارسات المحلية والقالب الأوروبي

THE AFRICAN LESSON: THEATRE BETWEEN LOCAL PRACTICES AND EUROPEAN FORM

Year: 2020

Language: Arabic

ISBN: 978-9948-25-212-2

The point of departure, in this brief but succinct study, is the author's conviction that "theatre is not a European particularity," and that in his view, it is a universal "reflection and expression of societal needs." The book deals with this complex issue, starting with the contributions of the pioneers of the Negritude movement through the writings and works of the Martinican poet Aimé Césaire and the Senegalese poet and former president Léopold Sédar Senghor and their experiments in African theatre. The author also offers a brief survey of theatre experimentation in the Arab world, including what became known as "Third world" theatre in the 1960s and 70s, as part of an attempt to build a modernised national theatre in form and content in the midst of the post-colonial contradictions that have previously been touched upon.

This book is part of the work that Dr. Youssef Aidiabi has been involved with as a playwright, literary critic, and poet. These issues were part of his pioneering project in his homeland Sudan during the years prior to his emigration and expatriation to the Gulf and beyond. His was a project to build a "Sudanese" theatre, which he called in his well-known manifesto "Towards a Theatre for All Sudanese People," in which he has embraced the plurality of Sudan's ethnicities and cultures. We at the Africa Institute are honoured to publish this book as the first one in this series.

About the Author

Dr. Yousif Aydabi graduated with a specialization in comparative theatre and film studies in Sudan. He has held various professional positions in cultural planning and management in the fields of education, journalism and publishing. A Critic and Editor, he has published several books on poetry, cinema and art.

02

خلفيات ومداخل لإشكالية الهوية في مشروع الحداثة الشعرية السوداني

BACKGROUND AND APPROACHES TO THE PROBLEMATICS OF IDENTITY IN THE PROJECT OF SUDANESE MODERN POETRY

Year: 2020

Language: Arabic

ISBN: 978-9948-25-212-2

In this book, renowned poet and literary critic Kamal Elgizouli offers a brief history of the evolution of modern and contemporary Sudanese poetry from the beginning of the 20th century until today. The writer does not follow the traditional classification of schools in literary criticism, while only addressing standard Arabic poetry and excluding written in Sudanese colloquial dialect, a project he wishes to pursue separately. In the process, he critically links Sudanese poetic creativity to major political and cultural changes and transformations during the colonial and post-colonial period in Sudan, while also dealing with the issue of Sudanese identity in terms of engaging in the framework of modernity without the condition of freedom.



About the Author

Kamal Elgizouli is a Sudanese lawyer and commissioner for oaths. Kamal studied at Kiev University and obtained a MA in international law as well as a BA in translation. He has published four poetry collections as well as many books and scholarly articles in various magazines and periodicals in Sudan, Damascus, and Cairo. Kamal is also a human rights advocate and has also served as Secretary General of the Sudanese Writers Union.

BEYOND THE DOOR OF NO RETURN: CONFRONTING HIDDEN COLONIAL HISTORIES THROUGH CONTEMPORARY ART

The Africa Institute and Skira

Beyond the Door of No Return represents the first in a series of co-publications between The Africa Institute, and Skira, one of the oldest and leading publishers in the field of art and visual culture.



Authored by Selene Wendt

Co-published by Skira and The Africa Institute

Year: 2021

Language: English

ISBN: 885724560

Beyond the Door of No Return confronts hidden colonial histories through the lens of contemporary art. Drawing on extensive research and her longtime experience as a scholar and curator, Selene Wendt presents and critically investigates artworks by artists such as John Akomfrah, La Vaughn Belle, Manthia Diawara, Jeannette Ehlers, Michelle Eistrup, Sasha Huber, Oceana James, Patricia Kaersenhout, Grada Kilomba, Suchitra Mattai, and Alberta Whittle, providing insight into aspects of colonial history that have been overlooked. As a result, Wendt exposes the long-term effects of colonialism on modern-day societies. As the first in the series of co-publications by the Institute and Skira, *Beyond the Door of No Return* will be published in October 2021.

Beyond the Door of No Return represents the first in a series of co-publications between The Africa Institute, and Skira, one of the oldest and leading publishers in the field of art and visual culture.

For additional information about *Beyond the Door of No Return* and to purchase the book, visit theafricainstitute.org.

About the Author

Selene Wendt is an art historian, independent curator, and writer based in Oslo. Her ongoing curatorial focus is on decoloniality and socially engaged art practices, with emphasis on interdisciplinary projects situated at the intersection between contemporary art, music, and literature.

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