

**CFP: Afrofuturism in Aural and Visual Cultures (VAD, Bayreuth,**

**11-14 Jun 14)**

Bayreuth, June 11 - 14, 2014

Deadline: Nov 17, 2013

20 years after - Afrofuturism in Aural and Visual Cultures

Panel at next year's biannual conference of the VAD (African Studies Association in Germany) from June 11th to 14th 2014 in Bayreuth

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In the mid 1990s, when Mark Dery, Kodwo Eshun and other scholars coined the term 'Afrofuturism' referring to a widespread futuristic imagery in music, literature and visual arts, they focused on an aesthetic mainly established in the African diaspora. Although not an established or neatly defined label or genre, an Afrofuturist 'canon'

was quickly established, which included mostly African American jazz, soul and hip hop musicians, like Sun Ra, Funkadelic, Earth, Wind and Fire, Africa Bambaata and even the techno act Drexciya among many others. Borrowing from Science Fiction, futuristic aesthetics, cybercultures and popular fantasy, Afrofuturist arts may manifest dreams of some distant idealised future. At the same time - however futuristic they may appear - many cultural products express a longing for a past, which can be described as nostalgic, romantic or 'retro-futuristic' glances back to a better time. Some works - as for example by visual artist Ellen Gallagher - reflect on the history of slavery, on the experience of dehumanisation; other works deliberately merge futurist aesthetics with Afrocentrist fantasies of a glorious African (often ancient Egyptian) past. The hype may have been over, the aesthetics, however, has since spread to the continent and broader issues and new Afrofuturistic images evolved. Artists like Fatimah Tuggar, Kapwani Kiwanga and many others combine influences of and reflections on the history and the current situation of present day Africa and the Black Atlantic.

Looking at music, the visual arts and cultures, this panel focuses on the various expressions of Afrofuturisms and asks whether these serve as utopia, or maybe less grandiose, as 'moments of freedom'. We invite papers from all artistic fields (music, art, architecture, literature, theatre, film, fashion etc.) that reflect on the notion and influence of Afrofuturism. Contributions may include discussions of the role of artists in creating an Afrofuturist imagery, of writers (scholarly or

otherwise) canonizing Afrocentrism, they could offer a comparative approach to iconographic elements (or possibly even an iconography) of Afrofuturism. Papers may discuss the reception of Afrofuturistic images in society (or different societies), they may reflect on the history of the Future (i.e. what do artists with yesterday's Afrofuturism), they may look at the relationship of futuristic and mytho-historic imagery in Africa and its

diaspora. Finally, papers may focus on the double character of Afrofuturism as "cultural resistance to racism and a way to articulate alternative racial futures" (Ferrara

2012) - and may ask how Afrofuturism for instance relates to discourses on 'post black' arts.

Please send your abstract until November 17th 2013 to the following

addresses: [dorschh@uni-mainz.de](mailto:dorschh@uni-mainz.de); [kerstin.pinther@fu-berlin.de](mailto:kerstin.pinther@fu-berlin.de) and [vad.bayreuth2014@gmail.com](mailto:vad.bayreuth2014@gmail.com)

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