



BE.BOP 2012. BLACK EUROPE BODY POLITICS

EDITED BY ALANNA LOCKWARD AND WALTER MIGNOLO



ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS

Friday, May 4th

10:00–11:00 – SCREENING OF WORKS BY JEANNETE EHLERS, INGRIDMWANGIROBERTHUTTER, TERESA MARÍA DÍAZ NERIO, EMEKA UDEMBA AND TRACEY MOFFATT

11:30–13:30 – BLACK EUROPE AND DECOLONIAL (DIASPORIC) AESTHETICS

Alanna Lockward, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin – Walter Mignolo, Duke University – IngridMwangiRobertHutter, Artist. Moderator: Rolando Vázquez, Roosevelt Academy

14:15–16:30 – BLACK EUROPE, CITIZENSHIP AND THE DECOLONIAL OPTION

Manuela Boatca, Freie Universität Berlin – Gabriele Dietze, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin – Artwell Cain, Director Ninsee (National Institute for the Study of Dutch Slavery and its Legacy) – Rolando Vázquez, Roosevelt Academy. Moderator: Walter Mignolo

16:45–18:00 – OPEN MIC

Moderator: Robbie Shilliam, Queen Mary University, London and Alanna Lockward, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin

Saturday, May 5th

09:30–11:30 – SCREENINGS OF WORKS BY JEAN-MARIE TENO, SUMUGAN SIVANESAN AND WILLIAM KENTRIDGE

11:45–13:45 – COLONIAL AMNESIA I. CONNECTING ENSLAVEMENT LEGACIES BEFORE AND AFTER THE TRIANGULAR TRADE IN SCANDINAVIA

Simmi Dullay, Independent scholar – Jeannette Ehlers, Artist – Ylva Habel, Södertörn University. Moderator: Alanna Lockward

14:30–16:30 – COLONIAL AMNESIA II. RES NULLIUS, THE BERLIN-CONGO CONFERENCE AND THE HERERO-NAMA GENOCIDE

José Manuel Barreto, Goldsmiths College London – Ulrike Hamann, Goethe University Frankfurt. David Olusoga, Author. Moderator: Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, Director of Savvy Contemporary

16:30–18:00 – OPEN MIC

Moderator: Michael Küppers-Adebisi, Director of AFROTAK TV cyberNomads and Teresa María Díaz Nerio, Artist

Sunday, May 6th

10:30–11:00 – SCREENING OF WORK BY AFROTAKT TV CYBERNOMADS

11:00– 13:00 – BLACKNESS, SISTERHOOD AND CITIZENSHIP IN THE SOCIETY OF THE SPECTACLE

Teresa María Díaz Nerio, Artist – Grada Kilomba, Author – Rozena Maart, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal – Minna Salami, Writer/Blogger. Moderator: Robbie Shilliam, Queen Mary University, London

14:00–15:30 – BLACKNESS, BROTHERHOOD AND CITIZENSHIP IN THE SOCIETY OF THE SPECTACLE

Quinsy Gario, Artist – Michael Küppers-Adebisi, Director of AFROTAK TV cyberNomads – Robbie Shilliam, Queen Mary University, London. Moderator: Ylva Habel, Stockholm University

15:30–16:00 – Open Mic

Moderator: Walter Mignolo and IngridMwangiRobertHutter

17:00 – SCREENING OF TOXI/1952) BY ROBERT A. STEMMLE, IN COLLABORATION WITH AFRICAENIR, HACKESCHE HÖFE KINO FOLLOWED BY RECEPTION

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Le Malentendu Colonial, 78:00:00, sound, 2004. (Prof. Kangué Ewane). Courtesy of Les Films du Raphia.
Jean-Marie Teno

DECOLONIAL AISTHESIS AND OTHER OPTIONS RELATED TO AESTHETICS

by Walter D. Mignolo



I see four emerging trajectories or options in the artistic domains today that deviate from the original path that defined and characterized the concept “art” and its relations to other spheres of life (economy, authority, gender, sexuality, knowledge, “race”) since the Eighteenth Century. This original path, which in reality was nothing but an option, appeared for a while as the only “truth” about art and aesthetics. I would like to preface the four emerging trajectories by outlining how “aesthetics” became a philosophical discourse responsible not only for establishing a certain criteria that (still) regulates “taste” but also for classifying different populations around the world who, according to Kant’s conceptualization, were not apt to sense and understand the beautiful and the sublime. All “civilizing missions” after him were built in such beliefs. These constructed parameters, the sense of the beautiful and the sublime as well the invention of “art” as a philosophical category, and its articulation within a broader philosophical aesthetics, were all components of a point of departure and a respective set of intentions that created a peculiar category: “Similar but different.” The oxymoron “similar but different” is intentional. It is a consequence of the imperial and colonial epistemic, aesthetic, religious and ontological difference invented by Western theology, secular philosophy and science.

The Eighteenth Century established a break in the history of Western thinking and sensing. While *Poiesis* was dominant through the Renaissance it was *Art* that during the Enlightenment was added and differentiated. Until then, the word “art” referred to the skill a person must had in order to do something.

Poiesis originally meant “to make.” For that reason any “maker”, who was not God, received the name of “poet.” Thus, the etymology of “art” in Latin is similar to that of “poiesis”, but until the 18th Century “art” was not connected to the conceptual requirements that made of certain kind of poiesis, a “tragedy” and/or a “comedy” as it was conceived by Aristotle’s in his *Poetics*. Two of those requirements, interrelated of course, were mimesis and catharsis: the final goal was catharsis which was meant to be achieved through mimesis, that is, the imitation of life situations to touch certain cords in the spectator. To depart from “*Poiesis*” and “art” as “making” is not enough for an endeavour to be acknowledged as a work of poetry or a work of art. “Making” needed to be related to “sensing” and Aristotle expanded sensing to the domain of “catharsis”. In the Eighteenth Century, sensing was instead related to “taste and beauty”, as established by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten and Immanuel Kant.

Through the Renaissance and up to the Eighteenth Century, *poiesis* was the equivalent of what became *aesthetics* during the Enlightenment and after. Aesthetics, as a discursive strategy, needed to be anchored in a different medium, and the concept of “art” came to the rescue. “Art” that originally meant “to make” became “art as aesthetics and aesthetics as art.” Which means that “to make” was associated with values attached to the beautiful and the sublime. At the same time, “literature” was taking the place of “poetry.” Gotthold Ephraim Lessing’s *Laocoon* (1766) did one of the first attempts to deal with the separation between poetry (art with words) and painting (what we call today “visual arts” and previously were “fine arts”).

From the Enlightenment to the end of the 20th Century, the story is well known. Art became a powerful medium to shape the senses of modern subjects in Europe and, because Europe

was becoming the economic and political centre of the world, European art and aesthetics touched Non-European actors, institutions and knowledges all over the world. These actors had to deal with European arts and aesthetics in a way that differed from the one of those European actors (“artists and philosophers”) who themselves did not have to get involved with non-European ways of world-making (art) and thinking about world-making (philosophy). For the former, the question became whether to accept, assimilate, reject, integrate or appropriate European arts and philosophical aesthetics into their own histories, ways of living and sensing. For Europeans, the rest of the world (following Kant’s evaluation) did not reach the state of producing art or literature/narratives but what they produced was considered “arts-crafts” and “myths”. These classifications, to which Kant contributed significantly, served to legitimize the “superiority” of European arts and aesthetics.

By the first decade of the 21st Century, the situation began to change drastically parallel to the radical changes in the world’s disorder and its further reordering. Obviously, the four emerging trajectories mentioned at the beginning are being built in relation to the existing modern paradigms from the Eighteenth to the end of the 20th Century of what can be called “traditional aesthetics.” It is certain that “traditional modern aesthetics” will continue to exist in the lives of many for several years before it becomes a stifled memory in museums all over the world, preserving, for those who would still be interested, how the West systematically constructed its epistemic “supremacy” for 250 years since the Enlightenment, and 250 years before that, during the Renaissance. I will call the classical aesthetic trajectory since Baumgarten and Kant until the end of the Twentieth Century the “modern and postmodern” aesthetics in art practices and art histories.

This is how I see the way in which the classical tradition of modern and postmodern aesthetics is being eroded today by these four options that although go beyond aesthetics, impinge on aesthetics as well:

1) The market options. Art has become one of the most distinguished commodities. The value of art is the value of the market: all values that have characterized arts in the recent past (aesthetics, innovation, nationalism, artistic schools, periods, etc.) are subsumed and surrogated to market values;

2) Next to the market value of art is the tendency to maintain the artistic and intellectual values within a discourse that underlines the “novelty” not in the Western timeline but in the identification of common artistic discourses around the globe and the denial of identities. This is the altermodern option. The altermodern options are parallel to the market value options. They both inoculate artistic practices from any type of identity politics and impose the “neutrality” of values that respond to the dynamics of the market value;

3) Confronting and contrasting with these two options we found the De-Westernization of art. That is, a perspective where the value of art is not that of the market or that of the global commonality of artistic discourses and techniques, but artistic practices that aim at delinking from the imperial hegemony of Western artistic values. I will give two examples: the forthcoming Sharjah Biennale 2013 and the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha;

4) The fourth option is the decolonial option, of which **BE.BOP 2012. BLACK EUROPE BODY POLITICS** is an example.

In a nutshell, I will be arguing that a) through the concept of aesthetics, Western philosophy colonized aisthesis in the name of modernity (e.g., establishing norms to distinguish, within its own history, the concept “art” from other “similar and different” expressions (popular art, folklore, art-crafts) and b) this distinction played the role of a deflected mirror image towards the non-European world. If Western philosophy colonized aisthesis (sensing) and “art” was the instrument to carry on this goal, decolonizing aesthetics means to liberate aisthesis. Liberating aisthesis implies decolonizing knowledge (the control and management of aesthetics by Western philosophy, art history and art criticism) and decolonizing being (the control of subjectivity by means of the control of knowledge). In this regard, there is a point of intersection between dewesternization and decolonization of aesthetics: the need to delink from the mono-culture of modernity, postmodernity and altermodernity in the domain of “art,” and “aesthetics,” their conceptualizations and their histories. In different ways, both options delink also from the stock market value of art. Although dewesternizing art and aesthetics is being done on sound economic foundations, the goal is the politics of heritage rather than the politics of capital accumulation. It is the politics of wealthy states, or so-called “emerging economies” (China, India, Qatar, Kuwait). The decolonial option operates, instead, in the sphere of the political society which is marginal in relation to the control of the economy (market value) and the control of the State (politics of heritage based on economic wealth).

Last but not least, the previous outline was not constructed from a perspective “outside” the trajectories and options that I mentioned. First, I say “trajectories and options” because if I say only “option” it appears as something fixed, without movement, without a genealogy and a future orientation. And if I say “trajectory” only, it appears as if it was a movement without a goal. Secondly, my outline presupposes the decolonial option as a locus of enunciation. By making this clear, I also make two additional claims: a) each of the trajectories is an option and claims about the rightfulness, truthfulness or superiority of any of these options is unwarranted; b) the decolonial option is not the “best without parenthesis”, for the decolonial option claims precisely that “best or preferable” without parenthesis is unwarranted in a world in which every “true” and “preferable” option is always in parenthesis. This doesn’t mean “cultural relativism” and “everything goes.” It means that the struggle is a struggle among options and it is only as an option that the emerging (as well as the classical) non-decolonial options have to generate their analysis in order to sustain their claim to the values they promote (values are relative to options as they do not fall from the sky) and their claims on their role and place in the definition of “art” within the framework of global social interactions.

There is nothing beyond coexisting options. The decolonial is one among the four emerging options, confronting the canonical one—the modern/postmodern option. The market and altermodern options are departing from it. The dewesternizing and decolonial options are delinking from it. However, the decolonial option is so far the only one committed to advancing the arguments outlined here (s. Decolonial Aesthetics Manifesto at the end of this publication and also: <http://www.criticallegalthinking.com/2011/10/12/in-commemoration-october-12-1492-manifesto-of-decolonial-aesthetics-2/>).

■ **Walter D. Mignolo** is William H. Wannamaker Distinguished Professor and Director of the Center for Global Studies and the Humanities at Duke University. He is Visiting Fellow at the Advanced Institute for Cross-Disciplinary Studies, at the City University of Hong Kong (January–June 2012). Among his major works are *The Darker Side of The Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality and Colonization* (1995) and *Local histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledge and Border Thinking* (2000). *The Idea of Latin America* (2005) received the Frantz Fanon Award from the Caribbean Philosophical Association in 2006. *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* was just released in December of 2011.



Black Half – Half Black, , 1997, 2 C-prints, 34 cm x 42 cm, courtesy of the artist and Art Labour Archives.
IngridMwangiRobertHutter

DECOLONIAL DIASPORIC AESTHETICS: BLACK GERMAN BODY POLITICS

by Alanna Lockward

The Decolonial Option questions the very notion of “universality” and “civilization”, or rather “the universality of civilization”. The rhetoric of “modernity” and “progress”, key words to justify Western expansion, always carries a secret weapon, which is articulated through dispossession, exploitation and ultimately, genocide: coloniality. By exposing the notion of inseparability between modernity and coloniality, decolonial thinkers state that there is no such thing as an “autonomous European *Sonderweg*” of modernity. The colonial and its exploited, dispossessed, enslaved and exterminated subjects have always played a crucial role in creating, defining and literally “feeding” modernity.

Decolonial Aesthetics refers to ongoing artistic practices responding and delinking from coloniality., the darker side of modernity and imperial globalization. coloniality. This concept emerged from the work of the collective modernity/coloniality¹. As the Decolonial Aesthetics Manifesto states:

“[this theoretical approach] seeks to recognize and open options for liberating the senses. This is the terrain where artists around the world are contesting the legacies of modernity and its re-incarnations in post-modern and altermodern aesthetics.”²

I have conceptualized the Diasporic as a specific approach to Decolonial Aesthetics with the aim of theorizing artistic practices in the context of the Black and African Diaspora in Europe today. It is my intention to address the singularity of Black experience in Europe within the wider scope of this field. Some of these practices are a byproduct of the transatlantic trade of enslaved people from the African continent, as it is the case of those works created from the perspective of the Caribbean, the US and Latin America. Decolonial Diasporic Aesthetics also focuses on discourses from the African Diaspora not directly related to the trans-Atlantic trade but which challenge and dismantle the very notions of “primitiveness”, “ethnicity”, “tribalism”, “animism” and so on. Racism, grounded on such (dis) qualifications made the category of less-human an extremely profitable commercial strategy. The colonization of the African continent after the Berlin-Congo Conference 1884–1885 designated the legitimacy (or not) of Black citizenship. This understanding is “valid” in Europe until today.

Citizenship has been proclaimed to be a “universal” right for all *white*, Christian and Western individuals and it is inextricably connected to the concept of “civilization” (a word derived from Latin, *civitas* and plural *civitates* the social body of citizens living in the *urbis*), which at the same time permeates normative paradigms of artistic practices and aesthetics in mainstream theory and curatorial perspectives. A good example of this state-of-affairs is articulated in the evaluation of the Documenta 12 by one of its curators, Roger Buergel, published in a brief newspaper clip:

The rainy summer was responsible for taking away the excitement of Documenta 12 that finished last Sunday, according to exhibition director, Roger Buergel: ‘The life outside the exhibition halls could not flourish. This meant that the ideal atmosphere, the liveliness could not be nurtured’. The arts need warmth: ‘This is why Greece is the origin of civilization and Africa that of mankind.’ (Der Tagesspiegel, 24.09.07. p 25).

How do current notions of the African continent respond to very specific moments of European commercial enterprises and how has philosophy served the purposes of colonization and genocide? My hypothesis is that this could have only taken place through silencing the achievements of African cultures and the systematic “primitivization” of all African peoples. Artists working within Decolonial Diasporic Aesthetics have consistently challenged these notions sometimes using the reduction to absurdity through mimicry, the juxtaposition of different levels of meaning on a single plane and also very often quoting once again those common assumptions (which have become an invisible “norm” by the pure force of reiteration) revealing their deeper and twisted purposes.

It is crucial to point out that Hegel made his epistemic division of Africa⁴ at the same time that the first German protestant colonizing mission was established in the continent (1829). In this sense, we could interpret his *Philosophy of History* (which consists of transcriptions of his lectures at the University of Berlin and was published posthumously, in 1837, six years after his death) was indeed a very effective public relations campaign in favour of European colonization.

In my master thesis *Schwarz-Black-Afro. Widerspiegelung eines Wortfeldes im Tagesspiegel*. (2004-2006) [*Schwarz-Black-Afro. Counter-reflections of a word field in the Daily Mirror*], for which I critically selected one hundred articles from the mainstream German newspaper Der Tagesspiegel, I have found these Hegelian paradigms reproduced constantly. Black German citizenship is systematically denied by means of silencing its mere existence. In this sense, I have conceptualized it as the “Silenced Diaspora”. This category is meant to expand the scope of Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s (1995) *Silencing the Past. Power and the Production of History*. In Trouillot’s research, the Haitian Revolution is exposed as an inconceivable achievement of (decolonial) history which has been therefore systematically silenced from its beginning until today. I transport the notion of Silencing that is prevalent in most white (Christian, male) Euro-(North)American accounts of all accomplishments and realities of Black Peoples to the specific situation of the Silenced Diaspora. The Silencing of the Black German Diaspora in German mediatic and linguistic contexts is an example supporting my argument. This strategic terminology intervention is not meant to substitute the self-naming of the Black Community in Germany, which remains as the only legitimate reference of a historical re-existence.

Only through the groundbreaking contributions of Black-German and Black Diaspora activists in Germany, and more recently in relation to the press (Noah Sow 2009, Lockward 2006/2010, and the online media-watch portal der braune mob), the first ideas on a perception of a Silenced Diaspora in a white hegemonic context can be found. There are also recent theoretical approaches to the same phenomenon of Silencing by Black European scholars. Grada Kilomba (2008) has made a powerful intervention in her book *Plantation Memories. Episodes of Every Day Racism*, from which the following paragraph is extracted:

“Once confronted with the collective secrets of racist oppression and the pieces of that very dirty history, the white subject commonly argues: ‘not to know...’, ‘not to understand...’, ‘not to remember...’, or ‘not to believe...’. These are expressions of this process of repression by which the subject resists making the unconscious information conscious; that is, one wants to make the known unknown [silencing]. Repression [silencing] is, in this sense, the defense by which the ego controls and exercises censorship of what is instigated as an ‘unpleasant’ truth. They say they do not know! But if I know, they too have to know as we co-exist in the same scenario. They say they have never heard of it! But how come, if we have been speaking it since 500 years. Five hundred years is such a long time. What do they want to know? And what do they want to hear?” P. 33. [The brackets are mine].

In order to build an introductory argument for the conceptualization of Decolonial Diasporic Aesthetics in the context of the Silenced Diaspora, the work of IngridMwangiRobertHutter⁵ is a case in point. Formed by a Kenyan-German woman and a white German man that have merged as a single artistic entity since 2003, their performances, video-art, photography and installations address the silencing of Black German identity and Germany’s colonial legacy in the African continent in current historiography and mediatic (white Western Christian European) accounts.

Taking a global stand on the Hegelian constructions of an undifferentiated identity for all the countries of the African continent in which Germany played and still plays a crucial role and that is constantly reproduced in academic texts, popular culture, the media and everyday language, their work reflects the long journey of recognition between the white and Black subject participating in this creative experience. On the one hand, the Black female body is the constant by which the rule of Othering is established; while the white male body appears only on rare occasions. This is quite evident in the piece used as the cover of this publication, *Thing*, (2007). *Wearing the Object of Contemplation*, of the same year, evokes the solution of a riddle. After the first piece that used the resource of exposing the skin to the sun with the intervention of a stencilled pattern (*Static Drift*, 2001), a coming of terms came into place and the white subject reflects on and literally projects his own colonizing constructions and practices on his own body, in a manner that is neither patronizing/patriarchal, or responds to the demands of white guilt.

Another example of how this colonizing mess is contested appears poignantly in *Resolution of Lies* (2008), a poetic equation, not surprisingly found in Nature, indeed... We can hear the sound of silence in this image. Its powerful self-explanatory ‘nature’, its iconographic stamina and self-referentiality might also be a trap of our own senses. The reproduction of the continental shape on a rock that seems to have captured by pure chance the residues of a red deluge, conveys the notion of a never ending randomized algorithm of questions, of possibilities, historical, biographical, cosmic, physical, textual, visual, and, and, and... How do we know that this image was taken in the African continent, for example? Is this question relevant at all? What are the truths that remain hidden in the white supremacist constructions of the African continent? What remains Silenced in these constructions? Could Silencing become a methodological translation of lies, of (deliberate) omissions? I argue that not only white Germany was born in Namibia (El Tayeb 2001), but also that the current construction “Africa” was invented by Hegel (Taiwo 1997) and legally prescribed in Germany during the Berlin Congo Conference 1884-1885. How is it possible that such historical facts remain “unknown” in white supremacist Germany? How to analyse works and narratives that have been systematically silenced and connect their challenging counter-discourses in a meaningful way? How to theorize on the body politics and the precariousness of Black Diaspora cultural production and specifically those pertaining to the sphere of women, as Audre Lorde⁶ explains to us? The road is already opened by pioneering thinkers and creators as Lorde and MwangiHutter, they are one of the many sources of my inspiration for Decolonial Diasporic Aesthetics.

¹ It had its first manifestations in a volume edited by Zulma Palermo (2009), in Argentina, with the participation of Colombian intellectual, artist and activist, Adolfo Albán-Achinte who used the term around 2003 and also coined “re-existence” in 2010.

Mignolo, Walter. *Aisthesis Decolonial*. Calle 14, No. 4, Marzo 2010.

Palermo, Zulma [Ed.] 2009. *Arte y estética en la encrucijada descolonial*. Preface by Walter Mignolo. Buenos Aires: Editorial del Signo.

² <http://transnationaldecolonialinstitute.wordpress.com/decolonial-aesthetics/>

³ One of the most suitable conceptualizations of the African Diaspora for the purpose of this first approach is to be found in a thorough essay of Agustín Lao Montes:

“If the world-historical field that we now call the African diaspora, as a condition of dispersal and as a process of displacement is founded on forms of violence and terror that are central to modernity, it also signifies a cosmopolitan project of articulating the diverse histories of African peoples while creating translocal intellectual/cultural currents and political movements.”

Lao Montes, Agustín 2007: Hilos Descoloniales. Trans-Localizando los espacios de la Diáspora Africana. Tabula Rasa. Bogotá Colombia, No. 7: 47-79, julio-diciembre 2007:55

⁴ Africa proper, as far as history goes back, has remained—for all purposes of connection with the rest of the world—shut up; it is the gold-land compressed within itself, the land of childhood, which lying beyond the day of history, is enveloped in the dark mantle of night. Its isolated character originates, not merely in its tropical nature, but essentially in its geographical condition.

Hegel, G. W., 1837. *The Philosophy of History*, p. 1.

⁵ Official site of IngridMwangiRobertHutter: <http://www.ingridmwangiroberthutter.com>

⁶ *“Over the last few years, writing a novel on tight finances, I came to appreciate the enormous differences in the material demands between poetry and prose. As we reclaim our literature, poetry has been the major voice of poor, working class, and Colored women. [...]. The actual requirements to produce the visual arts also help determine, along class lines, whose art is whose.”*

Loorde, Audre 1984: *Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference*. In: *Sister Outsider*, Los Angeles: Freedom, PP. 114-123.

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<http://web.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v1/4/2>.

Alanna Lockward is an author, critic and independent curator specialized in time-based undertakings. In 1988, she was appointed Director of International Affairs at Museo de Arte Moderno in Santo Domingo. She is the founding director of Art Labour Archives, a cultural platform and agency responsible for producing situation-specific art events and exhibitions since 1997 in the US, the Caribbean, Europe and the African continent. She is chief editor of VideoArtWorld online magazine and general manager of the Transnational Decolonial Institute. She obtained her Licentiate at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Xochimilco on communications science, and her MA at the Institute for Art in Context of the University of the Arts Berlin. Her unique approach to transdisciplinary knowledge-production engaging visual arts, decolonial theory and Black feminism has been part of her lectures and presentations at different institutions such as the Humboldt University Berlin, Transart Institute, the Roosevelt Academy-Utrecht University, Ninsee (National Institute for the Study of Dutch Slavery and its Legacies), Dutch Art Institute, Goldsmiths University of London, University of Warwick, the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal and the 11 Havana Biennial, among others. She has been awarded by the Danish Arts Council, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Allianz Kulturstiftung.

DECOLONIAL THOUGHT AND THE EXTERIORITY OF MODERNITY

by Rolando Vázquez

This paper investigates the relation between *decolonial thought* and modernity. First we ask how is modernity conceived from the perspective of *decolonial thought*. As it has been shown by Quijano (2000) modernity cannot be understood without coloniality. The notion of coloniality articulates the relation of modernity with its exteriority. In other words, to recognize that *coloniality* is constitutive of modernity is also to recognize the importance of understanding modernity's relation to its exteriority (Dussel, 2011). And this thinking of modernity in relation to its exteriority is already a decolonial move, in it modernity ceases to be represented as a totality or a series of totalities and becomes associated to a history of processes of negation and expulsion that made possible its hegemony, and more specifically, which made possible the 'universal' pretensions of the 'West'.

The decolonial conception of modernity, as historically determined and deprived of its universal validity claims, opens the possibility of configuring forms of doing research that pay close attention to its coloniality and its exteriority. In this vein, the essay suggests some approximations towards a decolonial method of research, or what we could call, *decolonial strategies of investigation*. These decolonial strategies of investigation are presented in relation to three different moments of critique: the modern, the colonial and the decolonial. The modern looks at the mechanisms and processes of incorporation, appropriation and representation that configure modernity as the totality of the real. The colonial moment looks at the mechanisms of disavowal, of oblivion, of externalization that constitute the coloniality of modernity, the negation of the other and its nullification (Santos, 2006). Finally, the decolonial moment of the critique looks for the movements from the outside of modernity that are bringing into question the mechanisms of incorporation and externalization of modern hegemony.

The final part of the paper offers some reflections on how modernity appears under the light of decolonial thought, particularly when facing the question of its exteriority. From a decolonial perspective modernity is deprived of its semblance of totality and hence from its universal validity claims. By opening the possibility of thinking in relation with the outside of modernity, *Decolonial thought* contributes to the epistemic struggle that seeks, not to negate modernity, but to humble it in order to make visible the diversity of movements that are opening decolonial horizons.

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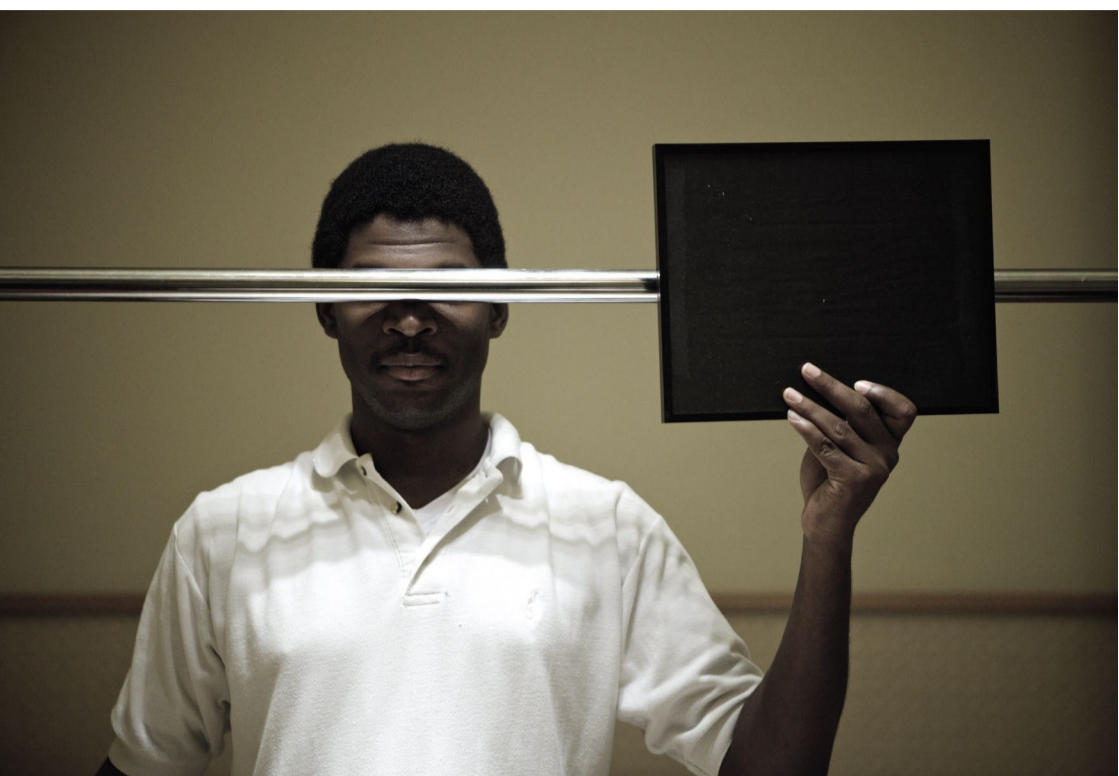
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Rolando Vázquez teaches sociology at the Roosevelt Academy, University College from the University of Utrecht in The Netherlands. Since 2010 he coordinates with Walter Mignolo the Middelburg Decolonial Summer School. With Alanna Lockward and Walter Mignolo he is member of the Executive Board of the Transnational Decolonial Institute. He has written on decolonial thought, critical theory and photography. His Critical Photography project engages photography with decolonial aesthetics.



The Bearable Ordeal of the Collapse of Certainties, 2011, theater & poetry, Photo credit: Brett Russel.
Quinsy Gario

MIGRATION, INTEGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP: SURINAMESE AND ANTILLEANS IN THE NETHERLANDS

by Artwell Cain

Many colonial subjects of the Dutch Kingdom arrived in great numbers to The Netherlands in the period between 1969 to 1990. These were migrants from Surinam and the former Dutch Antillean islands. They were actually leaving the periphery, where they were taught and brainwashed into thinking that living in the centre, meaning The Netherlands, will somehow lead to their upward social mobility. This was a story well told and as such internalized. These colonial subjects were bent on migrating to Europe to participate and have a share in the wealth and welfare of the 'mother country'. Obviously, individuals and groups had their specific reasons to migrate, however, two of the most fundamental reasons were the search for better education opportunities and living standards, which were to be attained for themselves and their offsprings.

The massive migration from Surinam also had to do with ethnic segmentation and segregation. Many thought that the impeding independence of the Republic of Surinam, in 1975, would stimulate ethnic disorder. In the case of the islands formally known as Dutch Antilles (Curacao, Aruba, Saint Martin, Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius) the entitlement to being Dutch was different. Individuals from these islands still carry the Dutch nationality, their migration has been more of an educational and social economical nature. The oil companies Shell and Esso, which were large employers on the islands of Curacao and Aruba, respectively, closed their doors around 1985 and left the islands. During this peak period of massive migration, Surinamese actors carried the Dutch nationality, but since 1980 they are required to get a visa. In spite of this, the vast majority of Surinamese have the Dutch nationality today .

These arrivals were not seen or experienced by the European Dutch as an incentive of better things to come but rather as a hindrance to progress and a cradle for future social problems. In the wake of their arrival official and informal calls went out to get them "integrated" as soon as possible into the Dutch society. Paradoxically, this "integration" was more geared at forcing them to become similar to the European Dutch than providing them with the space and available tools to become rightful citizens. Very soon this group was problematized as a threat to law and order in the Dutch society. Many politicians, the media personnel and professional members of the integration industry claimed that the evolving social problems were engrossed in the failure of the integration policy.

My thesis is that an "integration" and citizenship policy that flung together post colonial migrants and labor migrants from the Mediterranean area into one single category, generally referred to as allochthonous, was a recipe for the strained relationship between being an allochthonous and a proper citizen. This in itself was a reason for the failure of this policy. In addition, there were no attempts made at redressing the systematic and structural framework of domination of the white Dutch hegemonic society which prevents the accomplishment of the social mobility ambitions of these colonial subjects.

Artwell Cain obtained his PhD in 2007 at the University of Tilburg. From 1991 – 2000 he directed the Foundation for the Furtherance of the Well-being of Antilleans and Arubans at Rotterdam. Cain edited "Tula slave rebellion in Curacao" (2009) and has published extensively on citizenship, the aftermath of trans -Atlantic slavery and social mobility. Currently, he directs NiNsee (National institute of Dutch Slavery Past and Legacy).

In the wake of the French Revolution, the granting of citizenship as the basis for the universal equality of political and social rights in a modern social order was not only understood as an expression of liberty (i.e., the opposite of slavery), but also as the mark of civilization. As such, citizenship was, however, to be acquired as the result of a civilizing process – that is, gradually. In the immediate aftermath of the revolution, citizenship rights were therefore only granted to male property-owners, whose ability to pay taxes and military tribute, and thus contribute to the maintenance of social order, qualified them as “active citizens”. Women, foreigners, and children were in turn defined as “passive citizens” and denied all political rights. The constitution of 1793 consequently extended active citizenship to all adult males, thus leaving women to derive their membership in the social community from their relationship to men. The institutionalization of the division between private and public spheres, habitually considered a characteristic of the specifically modern form of social organization, is thereby revealed to have been closely associated with the gendering of economic roles upon which the state-propagated, bourgeois family model was based. In turn, in the French colony of St. Domingue, where the slave revolution resulted in the abolition of slavery in 1794, skin color took precedence over property as a criterion for the granting of citizenship. Since not all whites were property-owners, but relatively many free “mulattos” were, the colonial assembly included the former in the right to vote even before this was accomplished in continental France, but excluded both slaves and “mulattos” from franchise after a series of heated debates. By relegating women, children, former slaves, and foreigners in the past of the civilizing process that adult men had supposedly accomplished, the implementation of universal principles was thus already creating its own particularisms.

Against this historical background, the paper argues that, since the emergence of Western European nation-states in the Nineteenth Century, national identity, institutionalized as citizenship, has been the main mechanism ensuring the maintenance of the high inequality between rich and poor countries. Drawing on recent legal and sociological scholarship that conceptualizes national citizenship as a form of inherited property and provides empirical data for the claim that it remains the main determinant of a person’s position within the world inequality structure today, the paper takes issue with the conventional sociological understanding of modern social arrangements as defined by achieved characteristics. Instead, citizenship as ascribed characteristic is presented as a particularistic, yet nevertheless modern strategy of Western rule, which ensured the relative social and political inclusion of the populations of Western European nation-states, yet at the same time accounted for the selective exclusion of the colonized and/or non-European populations from the same social and political rights throughout recent history.

Manuela Boatcă is Professor of Sociology at the Freie Universität Berlin. She studied English and German philology at the Universities of Bucharest, Bonn, and Cologne, and sociology at the University of Eichstätt, Boston College, and the MIT. She is author of *“From Neoevolutionism to World-Systems Analysis. The Romanian Theory of ‘Forms without Substance’ in Light of Modern Debates on Social Change”*, 2003, and co-editor of *“Decolonizing European Sociology. Transdisciplinary Approaches”* (with E. Gutiérrez-Rodríguez and S. Costa), 2010.

UPROOTINGS AND BELONGINGS. MAPPING THE BLACK BODY IN A SCANDINAVIAN EXILE

by Simmi Dullay

This contribution departs from my own family experience during our Denmark exile after 1978, with brief intervals from when I was four until I was eighteen; and spending a year in Tanzania in the early eighties at the ANC Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College, until we returned ‘home’ to South Africa, in 1992. Based on an auto-ethnographic methodology, focussing on Gramsci’s notion of the personal as political, I draw from personal trajectories around the Black body in Europe and from the political junctions in social interplays than more often than not carry almost intangible histories of coloniality and/or liberation.

Upon our return ‘home’, I experienced a second uprooting and began to explore the ruptures surrounding us mainly through visual images, which allowed me to ‘draw’ (playing on its double meaning) the continents together onto the singular space of this medium. Revisiting letters, photographs, reflections and memories a new tapestry began to emerge, mapping a very different world than that of the linear metanarratives of “universality”. My contribution will contest current notions of “exile” by means of offering my own antidotes against conventional, pacifying, postcolonial discourses surrounding exile and belonging. Scandinavian, and especially Danish colonization, stretches from a part of India, the African West Coast, the Caribbean, Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands. At an earlier time, the Danish/Viking conquests extended over southern Sweden, Finland, Norway, England, Ireland and parts of Scotland. Current forms of coloniality involve the Black European Diaspora living in Scandinavia as well. To uncover these often hidden trajectories of enslavement, I am proposing a visual and transtextual juxtaposition of academic memorabilia and alternative knowledge productions that will conjure the invisibility of different moments and dimensions of uprooting and belonging.

Simmi Dullay is an independent Tricontinental cultural producer. She obtained her MFA Cum Laude at Durban University of Technology, in 2010. She investigates exile as a tool for personal and social transformation using a variety of interdisciplinary methods based on visual methodologies, Black consciousness, decolonization praxis, auto-ethnography & memory work. Her research draws productively on art, cultural & gender studies, critical philosophy and sociology. Dullay teaches at the University of Kwa Zulu Natal on Education, Social Justice and Diversity as well as on Philosophy and Sociology in Education. She also lectures at the University of South Africa (UNISA).

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Black Magic At The White House, 2009, 03:46, sound, courtesy of the artist and Art Labour Archives.
 Jeannette Ehlers

INVULNERABLE BUT TOUCHY: WHITE GOVERNMENTALITY, "RACE" AND THE AFFECTIVE ECONOMIES OF THE POST-POLITICAL IN SWEDISH MEDIA DISCOURSE ON THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVERY

by Ylva Habel

As Ghassan Hage, Paul Gilroy, Sara Ahmed and Wendy Brown have argued, white neoliberal discourse around "race" is increasingly displaced from political to cultural arenas, where claims to tolerance and cultural vulnerability become instrumental in the processes of managing multiculturalism and difference in postcolonial Western society. In this context, caring and worrying for the future and well-being of the nation entails a racialized distribution of individualized states and dispositions linked to the problematics of entitlement and belonging: white people worry, care about and express hope for the future of the nation – and experience registers of pain, fear and hate in the threatening presence of the Other. Hage argues that there is a certain inverted logic of power relations to this claim to vulnerability, marginality, and innocence. Those in power imagine themselves to be in weak and radical opposition to leftist "political correctness", and represent themselves as being in imminent danger.

In contrast to such high-strung affectivities, Swedish cultural investments in white political innocence are grounded in collectively held images of being historically exempted from racializing processes. Several Swedish scholars, such as Katarina Mattsson, Mekonnen Tesfahuney, and Lena Sawyer have claimed that Sweden imagines itself as a race-less, tolerant country, purportedly less affected by postcolonial relations than other nations – by virtue of its welfare politics, and its egalitarian principles. In recent years, this positioning has been defined as Nordic exceptionalism. Taking my point of departure in this serene discourse, tinged by white governmentality, I am interested in discussing how racialized difference is thematized in the recent year's debates around the repeated surfacing of playful approaches to the Transatlantic slavery. What affective levels of engagement are involved in these games, and how do they contribute to orchestrating responses on the public arena?

Ylva Habel is Assistant Professor in Media and Communications Studies at Södertörn University. She finished her dissertation in 2002, *Modern Media, Modern Audiences: Mass Media and Social Engineering in the 1930s Swedish Welfare State*. Habel's current research project, "Dandified globetrotters: La SAPE's spatialized fashion practices" revolves around the assertive presence of the Congolese fashion movement La SAPE (La Société des Ambianceurs et des Personnes Élégantes) in Paris and other European metropolises.

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Hommage à Sara Bartman, 2007,
04.00, no sound, courtesy of the
artist and Art Labour Archives.
Teresa María Díaz Nerio

Black Memory/White Amnesia: German Colonial Legacies and the African Diaspora

by Fatima El -Tayeb



This paper explores the positionality of Black Europeans (and Afro-Germans in particular) within both the context of the African diaspora and the united Europe. Black European communities are shaped by the particular European link between racialization, colonialism and migration as much as by the larger Black Atlantic constellation produced by racial slavery and the Enlightenment placing of Blacks as anti-human. However, continental European developments have been largely absent from theoretical debates within Africana Studies, largely due to the continent's supposedly secondary role in the central theme of the African diaspora: the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The focus on the latter necessarily defines diasporic populations who have entered the West through different trajectories, such as colonialism, as less representative of the Black Atlantic experience. I argue that the non-normative elements of the Black European experience can be used to complicate and challenge existing binaries and blind spots and to decenter the U.S. diaspora experience exactly through applying its theorizations to the European context. I will do so through an analysis of Afro-German activism around the nations' colonial past and its after effects.

Fatima El-Tayeb is Associate Professor of Literature and Ethnic Studies and associate director of Critical Gender Studies at the University of California, San Diego. She is the author of two books, *European Others. Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe* (University of Minnesota Press 2011) and *Schwarze Deutsche. Rasse und nationale Identität, 1890-1933* (Black Germans. Race and National Identity, 1890-1933, Campus 2001), as well as of a number of articles on the interactions of "race", gender, sexuality, and nation, most recently "'Gays Who Cannot Properly be Gay'. Queer Muslims in the Neoliberal European City", *European Journal of Women's Studies* (forthcoming 2012) and, "The Forces of Creolization'. Colorblindness and Visible Minorities in the New Europe", in Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shi (eds), *The Creolization of Theory* (Duke University Press 2011).

Before coming to the US, she lived in Germany and the Netherlands where she was active in Black feminist, migrant, and queer of color organizations. She is also co-author of the movie *Alles wird gut/ Everything will be fine* (Germany 1997).



A Children's Book of War, A [Not So] Secret War. *Terra Nullius and the Permanent State of Exception*, 1:46, sound, 2010. Courtesy of the Artist and The Momentum Collection.

Sumugan Sivanesan

DUALA – CONFRONTATIONS OF “RES NULLIUS”

by Ulrike Hamann

During their colonial invasions the Germans faced a constant amount of resistance that was not only armed, like in the Herero-Nama-war, but that contested the alleged German power of definition in a discursive way. This kind of counter arguing can be exemplified by the political conflict around the planned segregation of Duala-City in Cameroon. Over four years, from 1910 to 1914, the Duala people fought within the German parliament and in Duala against the dispossession of their land and the segregation of their city along a ‘color line’. During this struggle, the Duala people, represented by the elected spokesman Duala Manga Bell, questioned the notion of both *res nullius* and *sovereignty*. Following the lines of argument of the Duala protest notes to the segregation plan, it is my aim to highlight the Duala perspective on the German-Duala treaties of 1884 as well as their revision of these documents after twenty-five years of German colonial rule. I argue that the reserved land rights that the Duala managed to include into the “protectorate treaties” logically excavated the notion of *res nullius*. The authors of the protest notes¹ evoked the full text “res nullius cedit occupanti” of the Roman *Codex Iustinianus*, which was not written into the final statement of the Berlin Africa-Conference (1884-1885) and thus referred to the origin of this legal construct in ancient Rome. Therefore, so I will argue, the Duala authors circumvent the *res nullius*-modification of the Berlin Africa-Conference, which demands that a society must have a European nation-state model of government and political organization in order to be accepted as sovereign with the rights of self-determination. The vicious colonial conundrum “res nullius according to the law of nations” (Völkerrecht) granted none of the African polities the sovereignty over their land and social and political organization.

The Duala representatives implied that the recognition of the German colonial government depended on their own approval. If the Germans failed, what they did in the eyes of the Duala, to fulfill a just government following the interest of all people of Duala, German ‘right’ to exercise power was no longer acknowledged by them. Furthermore, the authors of these protest notes did not consider themselves as colonial objects, but as subjects in the sense of citizens, demanding their legal rights.

In their perspective, the colonial power relations remained unstable and dependent on the approval of the ‘colonized’. In addition, they were able to prove that the Duala treaty-signatories never gave up their sovereignty and therefore their land could not be treated as *res nullius*.

Their analysis of German conduct of government dismantled its ‘legitimacy’ and provoked a violent reaction. The architect of the segregation, Herrmann Röhm, accused two of the representatives – Rudolf Duala Manga Bell and Ngoso Din, his secretary and the emissary of the Duala people – with high treason. Governor Karl Ebermeyer ordered their execution on September 18th, 1914, in Duala. Against the colonial Government’s expectations, these political murders did not end the resistance of the Duala’s peoples. In contrast – they took arms against the Germans and led the British troops into their territory.

¹ Even though the protest notes may have been written by Duala Manga Bell they were presented, discussed and got their approval at the Ngondo – the General Assembly of the representatives of all Duala lineages.

■ **Ulrike Hamann** is currently writing a dissertation at the University of Frankfurt/Main about the resistance against racism during the German colonial period in the African continent. She is a member of the Junior Research Group “Transnational Genealogies” and the Frankfurt Research Center for Postcolonial Studies.



Dancing with the Star, 2011, 11:46, no sound, courtesy of the artist and Art Labour Archives.
Emeka Udemba

BLACK EUROPE AS BLACK FLESH

by Rozena Maart



The Black body in Europe was historically one of military prowess, as recorded by Shakespeare in *Othello*, one of power and conquest as in the domination of Spain and Portugal as one nation, and Sicily by the Moors from the 8th until the 12th century, one of allure as was evidenced by paintings depicting women in Art of the period, where the message of the hidden and the forbidden also reads as a warning of secrecy and deceit, one of interpreter and helper to the British Empire during its period of usurpation and conquest in Africa, and one of pornography of the poor--the postcard depiction European women were privileged to enjoy, as German, British and Dutch Empires carved itself into Africa, writing to sweethearts and posting pictures of colonized, naked Black women's bodies, displayed in activities that reinforced the image of the native as nature, with her navel and her nipple, on bleached cardboard paper. White feminists have refused to politicize their own duplication of such actions, adorning the walls of Women's Studies corridors with pictures of Black women in the field, babies hanging from our breasts, hair covered in peasantry piety while reserving their bodies for more morally justified measures like marriage, motherhood and mortgages.

This presentation shall examine how Africa came to be the contested territory within the discourse of the European and the non-European, the hyphenated existence where the hyphen as bar stands as prohibition to the notion of European, by drawing on Black Consciousness, historical discourses, Derrida and deconstruction and psychoanalysis.

Dr. Rozena Maart is an Associate Professor and Head of Gender Studies at the University of Kwa Zulu Natal. Her work as a feminist scholars examines relationships between and among Black Consciousness, Political Philosophy and Psychoanalysis. She is also an award-winning writer of fiction and her books have made the top ten list in South Africa and in Canada. Prof. Maart was nominated to the "Women of the Year" award at age 24 for her work in the area of violence against women and for starting, with four women the first Black feminist organisation, Women Against Repression in Cape Town, South Africa in 1986.



Germany is one of the countries in which a public consciousness about the crimes of the past is more advanced. For more than sixty years Germany has dealt with the dark side of its history by an examination of Nazi atrocities, a process that it is often called *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. A similar practice of remembering and analyzing the past has been advanced in relation to the crimes committed under the communist regime of East Germany. Such a collective ‘soul-searching’ process has effects in the self-conception of the nation, its main rationale being that of functioning as a warning about something that happened and should not, and cannot, happen again. Yet, a similar attempt at reaching a truthful account of the events has not been made in relation to the brutalities carried out by the German Empire during the times of the Second Reich. The killing of hundreds of thousands of human beings in German East Africa, today’s Tanzania, and the genocide of the Herero and Nama in German South-West Africa, today’s Namibia, remain unknown, hidden or forgotten. This is not only the case of Germany, but it is also a common feature in all modern and contemporary colonial powers. Which is the extent and depth, if any, of the consciousness of the peoples of Germany, Spain, Portugal, Great Britain, Holland, France, Belgium, Italy, the USA and China about the barbarism and crimes committed alongside of centuries of modern imperialism in America, Africa and Asia?

The genocide of the Herero and Nama must be examined within a wider scope of European genocide-denial practices. Karl Korsch, Sven Lindqvist and Enzo Traverso find in colonial genocides an antecedent to the European Holocaust. Korsch wrote that ‘the novelty of totalitarian politics in this respect is simply that the Nazis have extended to ‘civilised’ European peoples the methods hitherto reserved for the ‘natives’ and ‘savages’ living outside so-called civilisation’. For Lindqvist, the fantasies of white superiority and of extermination of the ‘lesser races’ that informed European colonial policy in Nineteenth Century culminated in ‘Europe’s own Holocaust’. For Traverso, the implementation of the tactics and ideology of imperialism by the Nazis would allow us to think of the Second World War as ‘a war of conquest and extermination’ and as ‘a colonial war within Europe’. Although dismissed recently by mainstream historians, this genealogical relation can also be predicated about the Genocide of the Herero and Nama. A number of similarities and connections can be found between the genocides in Germany and in Namibia: the techniques of repression and extermination, among them mass killings, concentration camps, forced labor or slavery, rape of girls and women; the making of medical experiments; personal connections, as some officers played an important role in both genocides; and the ideology of racial superiority, lebensraum, social Darwinism and the policy of annihilation.

José-Manuel Barreto is currently a Visiting Fellow at the Unit for Global Justice, Goldsmiths College, University of London. His research gravitates around the history and theory of human rights in the context of modern colonialism and genocide. He is interested in retrieving the Third-World tradition of human rights that has roots as far back as the Fifteenth Century in the experience of the Conquest of America, developing a critique of Eurocentrism and taking the insights of Decolonial Theory to the field of human rights. His research also addresses questions about the relation between the ‘turn to emotions’ and the human rights culture, the ‘affective operations of arts’ and about how to defend human rights telling stories. His recent work includes the book *Human Rights from a Third World Perspective: Critique, History and International Law* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, forthcoming 2012).

DIVERSITY IN ADVERSITY

by Grada Kilomba



Every semester, on the very first day of my seminar, I play a quiz with my students. We first count how many people are in the room in order to see how many of us will be able to answer the questions. I start by asking very simple questions such as: What was the Berlin Conference of 1884–5? Which African countries were colonised by Germany? How many years did German colonisation over the continent of Africa last? I conclude with more specific questions, such as: Who was Queen Nzinga and which role did she play on the struggle against European colonisation? Who wrote *Black Skin, White Masks*? Who was May Ayim?

Not surprisingly, most of the white students are unable to answer the questions, while the Black students answer most of them successfully. Suddenly, those whose knowledge has been hidden, become visible, while those who have been over-represented become unnoticed and invisible. Those who are usually silent start speaking, while those who always speak become silent. Silent, not because they cannot articulate their voices or tongues, but rather because they do not possess the knowledge.

This exercise makes us understand how the concepts of knowledge and the idea of what scholarship or science is, are intrinsically linked with power and racial authority. What knowledge is being acknowledged as such? And what knowledge is not? Who is acknowledged to have the knowledge? And who is not? And who can teach knowledge? And who cannot? Who is at the centre? And who remains outside, at the margins? So, who can indeed speak in the academy? And who cannot?

Academia is not a neutral location. This is a white space where Black people have been denied the privilege to speak. Historically, this is a space where we have been voiceless, a space we could not enter. Here, white scholars have developed theoretical discourses which formally constructed us as the inferior Other – placing Africans in absolute subordination to the white subject. We were made the objects, but we have rarely been the subjects.

This position of object, which we commonly occupy, does not indicate a lack of resistance or of interest, as it is commonly believed, but rather a lack of access to representation by Blacks themselves. It is not that we have not been speaking; but rather that our voices – through a system of racism – have been systematically disqualified as valid knowledge; or else represented by whites, who ironically become the ‘experts’ of ourselves. Either way, we are locked in a violent colonial hierarchy.

(This text is an extract from the publication *Plantation Memories. Episodes of Everyday Racism* (2008). Münster: Unrast Verlag. Reproduced with permission of the author.)

Grada Kilomba is a writer, researcher and psychologist born in Lisbon with origins in the West African islands of Sao Tomé e Príncipe. Having studied clinical psychology and psychoanalysis in Lisbon, she is living and working in Berlin, where she researches and writes within the area of cultural studies. She focuses predominantly on psychoanalysis, slavery, colonialism, trauma and memory. Among others, she is the co-editor of the book *Mythen, Masken and Subjekte: Kritische Weißseinerforschung in Deutschland* (Unrast 2005) and the author of *Plantation Memories: Episodes of Everyday Racism* (Unrast 2008).

In order to deconstruct the positioning of women of Caribbean origin, specifically from the Greater Antilles Spanish-speaking islands, in present day European cities, I wish to analyze the way in which “mix-raced” women have been somehow compelled to take upon themselves the stereotypes created during colonial times, of ‘la mulata’ and ‘la mamita’. This will be done from a Caribbeancentric perspective, approaching the racialized stereotypes and oversexualization of Caribbean female bodies in the mass media during the first half of the 20th Century. Caribbean women, such as the famous Rumberas of the Golden Age of Mexican Cinema, and the representation of ‘mulatas’ and ‘mamitas’ in Cuban and Puerto Rican television is the point of departure of these arguments. Many of these so-called vedettes were extraordinarily gifted performers who apart from representing the “exotic/primitive”- “African” and “mulata” also contributed to the deconstruction of Blackness. Some of them, mostly Cuban, were light-skinned “mix-raced” women who challenged racialization in their lyrics, as in the case of Rita Montaner in the film *Negro es mi color* 1951 (Black is my color) where she acts in brownface as the rejected mother of a light-skinned singer. Montaner, with her amazing voice, sings about racial discrimination while her daughter, Mexican actress Marga López, is forced to don brownface and interpret “Alma Negra” (Black Soul).

Mexico became an interesting case in point as the Cuban presence in the Rumbera Cinema testifies on these challenging self-representations as in the case of wonderful Mexican singers like Toña la Negra interpreting *Oración Caribe* (Caribbean Prayer) where she sings ‘*piEDAD, piEDAD para el que sufre*’ (piety, piety for the one that suffers), implying the suffering of Black people. Noticeably, the self-affirmation character of these songs establishes the type of agency that these women had with regards to communicating their positionality on racializing issues. Yet, the popular images of Caribbean women as oversexualized ‘mulatas’ or undersexualized maids ‘mamitas’ and their self-representation as “Rumberas” enacting the “primitive” “African” ancestry in film and television productions of the 40’s and 50’s, have contributed to cement these stereotypes not only in foreign audiences but also in local ones. My hypothesis is that these roles are so ingrained in the Caribbean women’s view of themselves that it greatly affects their choice of social performance. In turn, these stereotypes are being taken for granted by white Europeans, which in the long run contributes to perpetuate the misrepresentation of Caribbean women and in this regard prevents their accessibility to other spheres of life in the West.

Teresa María Díaz Nerio is a Dominican visual and performance artist and researcher living in Amsterdam. She graduated as a Bachelor in Fine Arts from the Gerrit Rietveld Academie (2007) and received her Master in Fine Arts from the Dutch Art Institute (2009). She does research often focused on subjects informed by the history of colonial and neocolonial invasions in the Global South challenging the hegemonic Eurocentric and US centric notions of who is who and what is what.

FASHIONING WOMANHOOD IN AFRICA THROUGH THE 20TH CENTURY - THE CULTURE AND POLITICS OF DRESS

by Minna Salami

Not for the first time but nevertheless significantly, African fashion is again at a historical juncture marked by an increased international consumption of what the continent has to offer style-wise. This time around the African fashion revolution is coming at an age where the terms ‘ethical’ and ‘sustainable’ have become closely linked with the fashion industry. What other elements of African fashion are closely tied to ethics, society and to citizenship?

I examine hidden historical, cultural and political content that lurks beneath fashion with a photographic journey through each decade where gender politics was played out on the fashion of women sometimes by women for women’s advantage, and sometimes as part of attempts to maintain patriarchal equilibrium by controlling they way women dress.

Multiple and an often-contradictory implication of ‘fashioning’ processes will be identified alongside compatibilities with ideas of citizenship. Feature highlights of women such as Miriam Makeba whose fashion in a revolutionary sense sought to reinforce political views, to examples of the controlling of women’s lives through ‘fashioning’ codes, as in the case of Betty Kaunda whose miniskirt caused political outrage in the 1960s, to *Sharia* law and the burka in 1990s Nigeria, to the recent Malawian ban on women wearing trousers will explore links between the traditional, the colonial and gender.

Fashion in Africa has been used in both exciting and disturbing ways. My aim is to incorporate into our social and political memory ideas of citizenship and womanhood through fashion.

Minna Salami African feminist blogger, independent writer and social commentator on African feminism, pop culture, fashion, & “race” and editor of multiple award-nominated *MsAfropolitan.com*, Founder of *The MsAfropolitan Boutique* and *HuffPo* blogger.

Apart from editing one of the most popular African feminist-orientated blogs on the internet, www.msafropolitan.com, Minna Salami’s writing and commentary has been featured on CNN.com, The Guardian, Arise Magazine and Clutch Magazine to name a few. She is a Huffington Post columnist and the author of a collection of poems. She has spoken at the Southbank Centre, University of Warwick, the V&A museum, channel 4, The Africa Centre and VoxAfrica amongst others.

Minna is the founder of the *MsAfropolitan Boutique*, an online shop launched as a tribute to the African Women’s Decade 2010 – 2020, selling design made by women of African heritage. She sees fashion as both aesthetically and socially relevant. She is a curator of African fashion at venues such as the V&A Museum & Saatchi Gallery showcasing couture from some of Africa’s largest fashion houses such as Tiffany Amber, Jewel by Lisa and Bunmi Koko. Minna is an MA student in Gender Studies at SOAS University where she is completing research on African feminism and African women’s history. With her blog, her online shop, her public profile and her research, Minna is committed to bringing to the forefront topics that are relevant to women of African heritage.



Other, 2009, 07:00, sound, courtesy of the artist and The Momentum Collection.
Tracey Moffatt

KESKIDEE AROHA: TRANSLATION ON THE COLONIAL STAGE

by Robbie Shilliam

My presentation will focus on the 1979 tour by the London-based Black theatre group, Keskidee, of Maori and Pasifika communities in Aotearoa, New Zealand. The organizers of the tour, a local collective called Keskidee Aroha, were community and political activists who had, in the 1970s, agitated both for civil rights and Treaty reparations. By the end of the decade, increased racism and social inequalities led these activists to pursue cultural paths other than the strictly political in order to preserve and deepen the struggle. Art was seen as a battleground through which to tackle dehumanization and entrench the feelings and demands for self-determination in a context wherein political struggles over civil rights had by and large failed. The Keskidee Aroha organizers hoped that the tour would catalyse these new struggles as Black Consciousness and Rastafari conversed with indigenous pasts and presents. Keskidee Aroha demonstrates the importance of the relationship between art, citizenship and “race”, and the malleability of the identifier **Black** as a catalyst for struggles over social justice.

The nature of inter-cultural, multicultural and cross-cultural performance have now been debated in some depth in theatre studies, and the assumption that cultural exchange occurs amongst equals has been roundly critiqued. To this end, some scholars have focused upon the historically colonial character of cultural circulation wherein the exoticised and primitivised aesthetics and narratives of non-Western worlds are unequally exchanged, appropriated, commodified and assimilated by Western artists and institutions so as to give value-added to extant imperial art forms. However, these debates over translation in the arts tend to assume that the colonial economy of cultural exchange is defined by a relation between two main protagonists: those positioned in the imperial centre and those in the colonial (or quasi-colonial) periphery. Arguments that owe much to Said’s critique of Orientalism fit comfortably into this framework: the speaking, authoritative West constructs a multiplicity of mute exotic Others for the purpose of valorising its own distinctiveness.

However, because the Orientalist critique frames the protagonists of the colonial drama as the colonizing self and colonized Other, it runs the risk of muting and pacifying cultural projects of self-determination that have been predicated upon inter-cultural relations that exceed the colonial binary of self/Other. The weight of the colonial stage upon which such relations have taken place still rests upon foundations constructed by the imperial centres. But this does not mean that the dramas have to directly address the personifications of these foundations. Keskidee Aroha was a project of cultural self-determination that reached across the colonial stage from (post-)colonized Africa and the Black Americas via the imperial entrepôt of London to Aotearoa NZ. It was predicated upon a dialogue between (post-)colonized subjects over their conditions and, if about the imperial foundations, it was not addressed directly or primarily to the colonizers or their descendants.

Robbie Shilliam is Senior Lecturer in International Relations at Queen Mary College, University of London. He has written on trans-Atlantic slavery, Black Power and Rastafari in a number of academic fora. He has also worked on retrieving the importance of anti-colonial thought for contemporary understandings of international politics. Prior to Queen Mary, Robbie taught at Victoria University of Wellington in Aotearoa, New Zealand. During this time, Robbie has worked with various activists and communities to retrieve the connections and linkages between the struggles of the African Diaspora and Indigenous peoples of the South Pacific.



In colonial Acts of crime against humanity German archives were filled with African human skulls. In 2011, finally a Namibian delegation traveled to Germany to return home 20 of these African remains of the First European Genocide (1904 – 1908) of the 20th Century. Simultaneously, documentation, contextualization & decolonization turn into neo-liberation metaphors & perspectives, guerilla tactics and media-warfare. Powered by diasporic bank-accounts of nomadic knowledge – AFROTAK TV cyberNomads as Social Media Activists OCCUPY the arena of cultural lobbying, marketing &/or propaganda. Neo-colonial 20th & 21st Century power interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan & Libya off balanced the global social equilibrium & the thirst for freedom & justice in Africa. But necessities of survival re/unite the fragmented histories. And hacked identity-papers & passwords provide the software for the 2.1 - Castle of Europe – Millenium-ReMIX. Worldwide economic exploitation hits Greece like a virus & the architecture of Western canons of knowledge, memory & identity collapse like the towers of Babylon. (See Adetoun Küppers-Adebisi: “Knowledge Archives, Social Networks & Artistic Media Resistance as Knowledge Management Strategy.” (<http://www.afrotak.com>))

■ **Michael Küppers-Adebisi (a.k.a. Sun Leegba Love a.k.a. Black Hyperion)** works for AFROTAK TV cyberNomads – The 1st Black German Media, Culture & Education Archives since 2001. In 1996, he was the 1st Afro-German lyrical ambassador for the Goethe-Institute New York. For the African Diaspora in Germany he modernized Social Media Activism. In cooperation with the Office for Civic Education of the Government he realized African Media Conferences at Goethe Institute, Heinrich-Böll-Foundation & House of World Cultures. He initiated May Ayim Award – The 1st Black German International Literature Award and was honored by the UNESCO as “German Project for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade & its Abolition.” Other Media & Culture Awards: ADLER Entrepreneurship Award – African Youth Foundation 2005/ Best Practice Award – German Government Alliance Democracy & Tolerance 2008/ Best Practice Award – Council for Democracy & Tolerance of the Senate of Berlin 2009/ Publisher, Author, Filmmaker, Playwright on AfroEurope: Lost Tribes of Africa 1995/ Death of the White Grandfather 1999/ The Kidnapping 2001/ TheBlackBook & May Ayim Award 2004/ Music-Revolts, Migration & Politics 2011.

DECOLONIAL AESTHETICS MANIFESTO



A transmodern world has emerged, reconfiguring the past 500 hundred years of coloniality and its aftermath, modernity, postmodernity and altermodernity. A remarkable feature of this transformation is the creativity in/from the Non-Western world and its political consequences—-independent thoughts and decolonial freedoms in all spheres of life. Decoloniality of knowledge and being, two concepts that have been introduced by the working group modernity-coloniality since 1998 (http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grupo_modernidad/colonialidad) are encountering the decoloniality of aesthetics in order to join different genealogies of re-existence in artistic practices all over the world.

Transnational identities-*in*-politics have inspired a planetary revolution in knowledge and sensibility. The creativity of visual and aural artists, thinkers, curators and artifices of the written word have affirmed the existence of multiple and transnational identities, reaffirming themselves in their confrontation with global imperial tendencies to homogenize and to erase differences. The affirmation of identities is tantamount with the homogenizing tendencies of globalization which are celebrated by altermodernity as the ‘universality’ of artistic practices. This notion chastises the magnificent diversity of human creative potential and its different traditions; it perennially aims at appropriating differences instead of celebrating them.

Decolonial aesthetics, in particular, and decoloniality in general have joined the liberation of sensing and sensibilities trapped by modernity and its darker side: coloniality. Decoloniality endorses interculturality, (which has been conceptualized by organized communities) and delinks from multiculturalism (which has been conceptualized and implemented by the State). Muculturalism promotes identity politics, while interculturality promotes transnational identities-*in*-politics. Multiculturalism is managed by the State and some affiliated NGO’s, whereas interculturality is enacted by the communities in the process of delinking from the imaginary of the State and of multiculturalism. Interculturality promotes the re-creation of identities that were either denied or acknowledged first but in the end were silenced by the discourse of modernity, postmodernity and now altermodernity. Interculturality is the celebration by border dwellers of being together in and beyond the border. Decolonial transmodern aesthetics is intercultural, inter-epistemic, inter-political, inter-aesthetical and inter-spiritual but always from perspectives of the global south and the former-Eastern Europe.

Massive migration from the former Eastern Europe and the global south to former-Western Europe (today European Union) and to the United States have transformed the subjects of coloniality into active agents of decolonial delinking. “We are here because you were there” is the reversal of the rhetoric of modernity; transnational identities-*in*-politics are a consequence of this reversal, it challenges the self-proclaimed imperial right to name and create (constructed and artificial) identities by means either of silencing or trivialization.

The embodied daily life experience in decolonial processes within the matrix of modernity defeats the solitude and the search for order that permeates the fears of postmodern and altermodern industrial societies. Decoloniality and decolonial aesthetics are instrumental in confronting a world overflowed with commodities and ‘information’ that invade the living space of ‘consumers’ and confine their creative and imaginative potential.

Within different genealogies of re-existence ‘artists’ have been questioning the role and the name that have been assigned to them. They are aware of the confinement that Euro-centered concepts of arts and aesthetics have imposed on them. They have engaged in transnati-

onal identities-*in*-politics, revamping identities that have been discredited in modern systems of classification and their invention of racial, sexual, national, linguistic, religious and economic hierarchies. They have removed the veil from the hidden histories of colonialism and have rearticulated these narratives in some spaces of modernity such as the white cube and its affiliated branches. They are dwelling in the borders, sensing in the borders, doing in the borders, they have been the propellers of decolonial transmodern thinking and aesthetics. Decolonial transmodernities and aesthetics have been delinking from all talks and beliefs of universalism, new or old, and in doing so have been promoting a pluriversalism that rejects all claims to a truth without quotation marks. In this regard, decolonial transmodernity has endorsed identities-*in*-politics and challenged identity politics and the self-proclaimed universality of altermodernity.

Creative practitioners, activist and thinkers continue to nourish the global flow of decoloniality towards a transmodern and pluriversal world. They confront and traverse the divide of the colonial and imperial difference invented and controlled by modernity, dismantling it, and working towards “living in harmony and in plenitude” in a variety of languages and decolonial histories. The worlds emerging with decolonial and transmodern political societies have art and aesthetics as a fundamental source.

These artists are operating in what can be seen as the conceptual legacies of the **Bandung Conference** (1955). The **Bandung Conference** united 29 Asian and African countries, and was followed by the formation of the **Non-Aligned Movement**, in 1961, which included former Eastern Europe and Latin America. The legacy of the **Bandung Conference** was the possibility of imagining other worlds beyond capitalism and/or communism, to engage in the search and building of **a third way**, neither capitalist nor communist, but **decolonial**. Today this conceptual legacy has been taken beyond the sphere of the state to understand creative forms of re-existence and autonomy in the borders of the modern/colonial world. The decolonial metaphor a “world in which many worlds would co-exist” implies pluriversality as a planetary project and demands the contribution of different notions of how an emerging global political society should feel, smell and look like. Decolonizing aesthetics to liberate aisthesis has already been happening in all spheres of knowledge-production. We have been witnessing a continuation of epistemic shifts in the disciplines and the arts that have furthered the process of decolonization within and beyond the key elements of the colonial matrix of power.

The goal of decolonial thinking and doing is to continue re-inscribing, embodying and dignifying those ways of living, thinking and sensing that were violently devalued or demonized by colonial, imperial and interventionist agendas as well as by postmodern and altermodern internal critique.

Alanna Lockward, Rolando Vásquez, Teresa María Díaz Nerio, Marina Grzinić, Michelle Eistrup, Tanja Ostojic, Dalida María Benfield, Raúl Moarquench Ferrera Balanquet, Pedro Lasch, Néstor Maldonado Torres, Ovidiu Tichindeleanu, Walter Mignolo.

Sunday, May 22nd, 2011

SYNOPSIS AND BIOGRAPHIES

Session 1, May 4th

In *Black Magic At The White House*, 2009 (3:46,sound), Ehlers performs a Vodoun dance in Marienborg, official summer residency of Denmark’s Prime Minister, an old building with strong connection to the trans-Atlantic trade.

In *Three Steps of Story*, 2009 (3:35), Ehlers dances a waltz in the big hall where rebellious governor Peter von Scholten scandalized the white citizens by inviting “free Negroes” to the ball. He proclaimed the emancipation of the enslaved of St. Croix in 1848.

■ **Jeannette Ehlers** studied at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts and The Funen Academy of Fine Arts. Her works explores the Danish slave trade and colonialism worldwide through digitally manipulated photographs and video installations.

In *Wild Life*, 1998 (01:33, sound), *Neger*, 999 (4:16, sound), and *Masked*, 2000 (5:16, no sound), Mwangi transforms herself into beastly images that derive from the discriminatory imagination of the West. By becoming first a roaring caged animal in *Wild Life*, and a minimalistic self locked “haired” entity in *Neger* and *Masked*, Mwangi’s videos blend beautiful images with the edge of brutality embedded in racial stereotypes (By: Laurie Ann Farrel).

■ **Ingrid Mwangi** and her husband **Robert Hutter** work together as video, photography and performance artists. They came to consider their practice as inseparable, „one artist two bodies“, and thus exhibit under their combined names.

Hommage à Sara Bartman, 2007 (4:00), elucidates the life and afterlife of a South African Khoisan woman who was exhibited in Europe at the beginning of the 19th century. Sara Bartman’s iconic status is a consequence of the well-documented “legitimate” scientific and voyeuristic rape of her body. For **Teresa María Díaz Nerio**’s biography s. p. 29.

Dancing with the Star, 2011 (11:46, no sound), explores the conceptual twists and political context related to issues of tradition, religion and gender. Emeka Udemba studied Art Education at the University of Lagos, Nigeria. His artistic practice focuses on the use of installations, video, photography, drawing and painting used as complementary to each other. His works focuses mainly on communication in the social and political sphere.

■ **Emeka Udemba** studied Art Education at the University of Lagos, Nigeria. His artistic practice focuses on the use of installations, video, photography, drawing and painting used as complementary to each other. His works focuses mainly on communication in the social and political sphere.

In *Other*, 2009 (7:00, sound), Moffatt explores the ways in which societies define so-called minorities as the Other, using film collage to elicit poignant and insightful understandings of stereotypes and cultural attitudes.

■ **Tracey Moffatt** is highly regarded for her formal and stylistic experimentation in film, photography and video, her work draws on history of cinema, art and photography as well as popular culture and her own childhood memories and fantasies. She studied visual communication at the Queensland college of Art.

Session 2, May 5th

Le Malentendu Colonial, 2004 (78:00:00, sound), is a film that looks at Christian evangelism as the forerunner of European colonialism in Africa, indeed, as the ideological model for the relationship between North and South today.

■ **Jean- Marie Teno** studied audiovisual communication and worked as a film critic for *Bwana Magazine* and as chief editor at France 3. He produces his own films with the company *Les Films du Raphia*.

A Children's Book of War, Terra Nullius and the Permanent State of Exception, 2010 (1:46, sound), presents how one interpretation of international law has it that people can prove their sovereignty by their ability to make and maintain laws, and their ability to declare war.

■ **Sumugan Sivanesan** is an anti-disciplinary artist. He is a member of the weather group_U, an experimental documentary collective focused on indigenous-non-indigenous exchange and collaboration. He lectures Experimental Film and Video at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales.

In *Black Box/Chambre Noire*, 2005 (22:00, sound), the development of visual technologies and the history of colonialism intersect through Kentridge's reflection on the history of the German genocide of the Herero and Nama in German Southwest Africa (now Namibia) in 1904.

■ **William Kentridge** is a South African artist best known for his prints, drawings, and animated films. Aspects of social injustice that have transpired over the years in South Africa have often acted as fodder for his pieces.

Session 3, May 6th

Best Practice, culture and integration, sound, 2010. AFROTAK TV cyberNomads, the Black German Social Media, Culture and Education Network, was set up in 2001 to document the exchange of socio-cultural communities of the Black German Diaspora reaching out to global transatlantic networks. For **Michael Küppers-Adebisi's** biography s. p. 33.

Quinsy Gario is a spoken word performer and is currently following the MA program Comparative Women's Studies in Culture and Politics at the Gender Studies Department of the University of Utrecht. He makes art under the banner of *NON EMPLOYEES*.

Final screening followed by reception in partnership with **AfricAvenir 5:00 p.m. Hackesche Höfe Kino**

Toxi, 1952 (89:00:00, sound), As one of the first and most successful films to directly tackle the problem of "race" in post-fascist Germany, *Toxi* arguably has been instrumental in the (re)construction of the German nation as exclusively white.

■ **Robert Adolf Stemmle (1903 – 1974)** was a German screenwriter and film director. He wrote for 86 films between 1932 and 1967. He also directed 46 films between 1934 and 1970.

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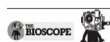
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José Manuel Barreto, Manuela Boatca, Artwell Cain, Teresa Díaz Nerio, Gabriele Dietze, Simmi Dullay, Elvira Dyangani Ossé, Jeannette Ehlers, Fatima El Tayeb, Heide Fehrenbach, Quinsy Gario, Ylva Habel, Ulrike Hamann, Grada Kilomba, William Kentridge, Michael Küppers-Adebisi, Rozena Maart, Tracey Moffatt, IngridMwangiRobertHutter, David Olusoga, Minna Salami, Robbie Shilliam, Sumugan Sivanesan, Bonaventure Soh Ndiukung, Robert A. Stemmle †, Jean-Marie Teno, Emeka Udemba, Rolando Vázquez.

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