

## PRESS RELEASE

### Afrofuturism:

Artists on Three Continents Explore “Black to the Future”

**February 3 - 28, 2014**

**Goethe-Institut Washington  
812 7<sup>th</sup> St. NW  
Washington, DC 20001**

[www.goethe.de/washington](http://www.goethe.de/washington)

(Washington, DC, January 27, 2014) – The exhibition *Afrofuturism: Artists on Three Continents Explore “Black to the Future”*, on display at the Goethe-Institut Washington February 4 - 28, 2014, presents three artists - from Germany, Ghana and the United States - who use the lens of fiction to address issues of alienation and otherness. They travel through space and time to explore identity and reexamine the past. The exhibition opens on Tuesday, February 4 with two of the artists and a concert featuring Tony award-winning playwrights/composers Stew and Heidi Rodewald. A related program of short films and a panel discussion takes place on Monday, February 3.

These events are organized in cooperation with the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution

*Afrofuturism*, a term coined in the early 1990s, addresses themes and concerns of the African diaspora using elements of science fiction and magic realism to critique the loss and disinheritance of the past while exploring aspirations for the future. While this artistic phenomenon, which is present in both Europe and the United States, expresses “black” culture in a discourse with the “white” world, Afrofuturism holds potential to bring the minority experience in general to life in new ways.

#### **Monday, February 3, 6:30 pm: Short Films and Panel Discussion**

*Pumzi*, a Kenyan science-fiction piece by Wanuri Kahiu, and two films about Drexciya: the British *Hydra Decapita* and Simon Rittmeier’s film *Drexciya*, about European refugees to Africa. Followed by a panel discussion with artists **Daniel Kojo Schrade** and **Adejoke Tugbiyele**, performing artist **OluShola A. Cole**, and **Naima J. Keith**, Curator of the show *The Shadows took Shape*, The Studio Museum in Harlem. Moderated by **Karen E. Milbourne**, Curator, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution  
No charge. RSVP to [www.goetheinstitutwashington.eventbrite.com](http://www.goetheinstitutwashington.eventbrite.com)



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Smithsonian  
National Museum of African Art

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**Tuesday, February 4, 6 - 8:30 pm: Opening Reception for “Afrofuturism: Artists on Three Continents Explore ‘Black to the Future’”**

With artists **Daniel Kojo Schrade** and **Adejoke Tugbiyele**, and Baltimore-based performing artist **OluShola A. Cole**.

OluShola A. Cole is a performing artist based in Baltimore. Her creative journey has been enriched with classical training and influenced by renowned artists such as house dance legend Marjory Smarth, West African dancer and drummer Aly Tatchol Camarar, vocalist Bobby McFerrin, and hip-hop pioneer Rennie Harris.

Followed by a concert at 7:30 pm with Tony award-winning playwrights/composers/musicians **Stew** and **Heidi Rodewald**, whose comedy-drama rock musical *Passing Strange* appeared on Broadway in 2008 and was made into a film by Spike Lee. The story is about a young African American's artistic journey of self-discovery in Europe.

No charge. RSVP to [www.goetheinstitutwashington.eventbrite.com](http://www.goetheinstitutwashington.eventbrite.com)

The exhibition is on display through February 28. Gallery hours: M-Th 9-5; F 9-3

About the Artists and the Works:



**Daniel Kojo Schrade**  
(Germany and Amherst, MA)

**Afronauts**

**Daniel Kojo Schrade** (b. 1967) is a German-born artist and associate professor of art at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts. He studied in Germany and Spain, and received an MFA from the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich, Germany. His painting series *Afronauts* features dislocated characters who create and control their own image spaces, where they claim the power to

define themselves. Schrade's work includes textual elements in a cycle entitled "Brother Beethoven", a series he started in 1999. Schrade was a Copeland Fellow at Amherst College and has received various grants and awards. His paintings and installations have been presented internationally and are in various permanent collections.



**Bernard Akoi-Jackson**  
(Ghana, Africa)

**Cos 90 ≠ 0: From Absurdity into Nihilism and Back: Something is Definitely Gained**

**Bernard Akoi-Jackson** (b. 1979) is a Ghanaian artist and writer who uses a wide range of media and working methods to produce paintings, poetry, murals, photography and video works, installations, and dances. His work tracks the development of contemporary art

and visual culture in Ghana and Africa. His photography series *Cos 90 ≠ 0: From Absurdity into Nihilism and Back: Something is Definitely Gained* alludes to the lost wax process used in textile and indigenous brass casting industries. Playfully interrogating ideas of loss and disinheritance, he argues that “something may be lost in one culture and/or be gained in another.” Akoi-Jackson has initiated and participated in numerous international workshops and group shows, and has written several exhibition catalogue essays and commentaries on contemporary Ghanaian artists.



**Adejoke Tugbiyele**  
**(Brooklyn, NY)**  
**AfroOdyssey IV (2014)**

**Adejoke Tugbiyele** (b. 1977) is an American artist. She studied at The New Jersey Institute of Architecture and received an MFA in sculpture from Maryland Institute College of Art. Her sculptural pieces, made of items such as perforated metal drains and palm stems repurposed from West African brooms, seek to understand the origins, present state and the future of the war between body and spirit. One of her films from "AfroOdyssey", a series of short films that look at art, sexuality and spirituality from a futuristic perspective by experimenting with light, sound and movement through dance, will also be on display. Her work is part of the permanent collection of the Newark Museum and has been on exhibit at the Jewish Museum of New York, the Museum of Arts and Design,

The Museum of Biblical Art, The Reginald F. Lewis Museum, and The United Nations.

This series of events has been prepared in conjunction with Georgetown University's interdisciplinary conference "Performing Blackness in the Transatlantic World: Germany, Race, Intermediality", taking place at the Goethe-Institut February 27-March 1. The conference features lectures, roundtables, public screenings, and performances with guests including Daniel Kojo Schrade and filmmaker Branwen Okpako.

#### **About the Goethe-Institut:**

Mutual understanding among nations by promoting international cultural dialogue: this is the ambitious mission of the Goethe-Institut. On behalf of the Federal Republic of Germany, cultural institutes around the world provide cultural programs, language courses, support to educators, and up-to-date information on Germany in the context of Europe.

Founded in 1990, Goethe-Institut Washington, DC is a center for German culture and language. From its location in the lively Downtown, the Goethe-Institut Washington reaches out to both individuals and organizations in the community, bridging the past, present, and future with a variety of high-quality events.

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