

NOVEMBER 25-28 » 1010 WEISER HALL (UNLESS NOTED)  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, ANN ARBOR

U-M/WISER MELLON WORKSHOP 2018

THE FILMIC AND  
THE PHOTOGRAPHIC

# African Visual Cultures

There is a rich and growing literature in African Studies that critically assesses both past and present generations of photography and film in Africa. This workshop will bring together a range of scholars working on these and other contemporary issues in the field of African visual cultures.



# Schedule of Events

## SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 25

4:00-5:00 pm » Exhibit Tour: *Beyond Borders: Global Africa*. For presenters only.  
Reception follows at 5:30 pm  
(UMMA, 525 S State St)

7:00 pm » Film Screening: *The Vibrancy of Silence*. (Michigan Theater. 603 E Liberty St)

## MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26

8:30 am » Breakfast

9:00 am » Welcome Remarks  
ANDRIES COETZEE, University of Michigan; and  
PAMILA GUPTA, University of the Witwatersrand

9:15-11:15 am » African Creators of New Styles,  
Looks, and Subjectivities in Photography and Film

FEDERICA ANGELUCCI, Stevenson Gallery  
*Territory and Identity: A Conversation on  
the Work of Mame-Diarra Niang and Zanele  
Muholi*

Following on the tradition established by the likes of Rotimi Fani-Kayode and Samuel Fosso, artists employing lens-based media have recently shown a renewed interest in portraiture, and self-portraiture in particular. One of the most prominent examples of this trajectory is the work of Zanele Muholi. With the series *Somnyama Ngonyama*, Muholi encourages the viewer to question perceptions of race and gender roles. Their carefully staged self-portraits reference personal experience, historical events, and contemporary debates. Mame-Diarra Niang, on the other hand, favours the notion of territory as opposed to that of identity: hers is a self-portrait in which the body is present in a very abstract form, if not altogether absent. In her vision the territory that each individual constructs for him/herself becomes the map to trace how one relates to the inner and outer worlds. The paper will discuss these different approaches.

FRIEDA EKOTTO, University of Michigan  
*Reprendre: Poetic Images by African Women  
Filmmakers*

African women filmmakers are producing powerful and poetic images showing a different

Africa. Whether they concentrate on political issues, female sexualities, historical memory, domestic violence, or other social, political and economical issues, their images are changing the vision of Africa. These women directors are also deciding on which kind of image they wish to circulate within the continent and outside of it. In this way they are shaping a different future for Africa. For these African women filmmakers, it is impossible to distinguish their work and the phenomenon: those represent a whole, with the image of the artists both subject and object of their work. For these women filmmakers, Africa could not exist without the participation of the woman. The images these women produce invoke the myriad tiny histories that might be written — not as some unique autobiography, but as an engagement with the necessity of placing themselves in history and history on and in themselves: they are inscribing themselves in the becoming of Africa, in that future. Thus, to take again their history in “the colonial library” would be quite simply to rewrite it, to put it in images from oneself in order to make it lead to the history of woman in the African continent.

LITHEKO MODISANE, University of Cape  
Town

*Searching for Ken Gampu Across the  
Screen(s): A Life –Writing Experiment*

Contemporary scholarship on South African film has yet to address the participation of black actors in film production, exhibition, and publicity. The reason for this absence may be related to black actors’ marginal positioning in film production as they did not have principal writing, directorial, and producerly roles — competences that generally guide scholarly attention to films. However, the actors’ interpretive roles in the films, their memories and experiences, and the contradictions of their participation in colonial films and beyond, form part of an unexplored archive in South African film culture. In this paper, I focus on Ken Gampu’s life in the cinema. Gampu was a well-known South African actor and also the first black actor from that country to succeed in Hollywood. I offer an experimental methodology of life-writing that I have called ‘cinematic biography’. To this end I identify and map a selection of characters that Gampu portrayed in the early part of his career as a



film actor. I offer analyses of these characters against and alongside Gampu's life, in order to illuminate his experiences in the cinema. I show that the cinematic lives of the marginalized and colonized actors, harbor critical potential in enriching the critical perspectives on the cinema and cinematic cultures in South Africa and beyond.

**OKOME ONOOKOME**, University of Alberta  
*Reading the Nollywood Image*

Although quite an interesting body of work on Nollywood has been offered to the scholarly public lately, I will argue that there is still the need to understand this visual practice as it is, not as it should or ought to be. My primary concern in this matter is to think through the affective turn of the image of Nollywood and to show how it is different and peculiar to itself, not to something else. What this might be and what a penetrative analysis of this image might offer to the field of Nollywood and indeed to popular African cinema, is the debate that I would like to attend to in this presentation. What, for example, might a reading that goes beyond the so-called "animist world" of the Nollywood film tell us about this visual practice and the audience that gives its assent so enthusiastically?

**RICHARD VOKES**, University of Western Australia  
*The Chairman and the Paparazzi (Uganda)*

What does it mean to describe certain kinds of photography as 'official', in the digital age? In the past, scholars tried to define administrative photography as a distinct genre of representation. If such a definition ever made sense (something which is now debated), it certainly does not hold in our current media-saturated times. Instead, then, this paper attempts to define official photography in a non-representational sense, as a set of relationships between government employees and commercial photographers. Based on ethnographic research carried out with local government institutions and a cadre of 'paparazzi' in South-western Uganda, this paper will argue that the technologies and practices of photography produce particular kinds of patronage relations, ones that may be especially potent in their social effects.

Discussant: **KELLY ASKEW**, University of Michigan

**11:30 am-12:15 pm** » Interlude & Coffee Break.  
Exhibit on View: "Seedtimes" by **OMAR BADSHA**, Artist and Photographer (5th Floor Gallery)

The photographs are a selection from Badsha's book *Seedtimes*, a retrospective of his work from over four decades as an activist documentary photographer working primarily in South Africa, but also including photo-essays on India, Ethiopia, and Denmark.

**12:30 - 2:00 pm** » Lunch (Room 455, 4th Floor)

**2:00-3:45 pm** » African Images at the Core of Social/Political/Religious Entanglements, Synergy and Community Networks

**NALUWEMBE BINAISA**, University College London

*Architectures of Fear and Aspiration in Nigeria: Visuality, Representations and Claims-making*

The concept 'architecture of fear' (Azoulay) draws our attention to the deployment of photographs as 'image events' that concretize narratives of states' legitimacy. The current 'migration crisis' within Africa and Europe offers a point of focus to explore competing contradictory narratives of fear and aspiration that manifest at the state and personal level. This paper draws on ethnographic fieldwork in Nigeria with a focus on photographs in a range of media to explore the dialectic of visual regimes and regimes of power from a Southern perspective. The discussion seeks to understand the liveliness of the 'image event' as a core infrastructure that demarcates boundaries of belonging and alienation. As governments are called upon to patrol potential migration from Africa, these visual artefacts simultaneously reveal the instability within borders, as those who were the previously alien, tolerated, polluting black brown bodies 'cross over' claiming place and visibility. Understanding these self-reinforcing mechanisms can help reveal the entrenched fault lines that undergird policies whose failure is witnessed through the multiple graveyards in the sea and desert.



**LAURA FAIR**, Michigan State University  
*From the Screen to the Street: Cinematic Images and the Creation of Communities in Tanzania*

This paper explores the numerous ways Tanzanians utilized and appropriated cinematic images to craft communities and visually signal social and political stances, from the 1950s through the 1980s. It also argues for fuller appreciation of the methodological value of personal photo-albums as a means of looking into Africans' pasts, as well as the power of utilizing innocuous topics like fashion to get people talking about deeper social and political transformations.

**SUSAN LEVINE**, University of Cape Town  
*Reading Inxeba (The Wound): Culture, Censorship, and Sexuality in South Africa*

*Inxeba* (The Wound) is the first film to be banned in South Africa since 1994's landmark political upheaval of the legal legitimacy of apartheid. Vocal outrage on social media sites by traditional leaders and male Xhosa cadres emerged even before the release of this internationally acclaimed film. Early criticism followed *Inxeba*'s provocative trailer, which reveals a homosexual storyline set against a male circumcision ritual in the mountains. Heated positions about these twin social taboos, namely the representation of a ritual meant to be kept outside the purview of the media and the alleged western practice of homosexuality, call into question the relationship between culture, censorship, and sexuality in post-apartheid South Africa. As a means to navigate the tension between the multiple, entangled, and shifting concerns of LGBTI activists, traditional leaders and healers, decolonial theorists, actors and media critics, this paper offers a reading of *Inxeba* that foregrounds the slow burn of the enduring tropes of tradition and modernity in Africa. The paper's theoretical moorings draw in part from the perlocutionary force of language, which refers to the ways in which an action or state of mind is brought about by the utterance of words. Also known as perlocutionary effect, I draw on this linguistic model to frame the work of visual culture to bring about, or trigger, myriad forms of contestation and re-framings of social institutions. By enacting this visual force in conversation with Brian Massumi's 'figuration of affect', the paper describes how *Inxeba*, and cinema more generally, produces

diffuse emotional worlds that punctuate post-colonial Africa.

**HLONIPHA MOKOENA**, University of the Witwatersrand  
*Visualising Policing and Policemen: Photographs of Zulu Policemen*

*"The clothing was at first the same as that worn by the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police, viz., brown corduroy jacket and breeches, black leather boots coming nearly to the knee and buckled down the side, and a leather peaked cap with a white cover. It was a stinking uniform, however, which caused the men to be nicknamed "The Snuffs," but anything in the shape of uniform was hard to get in the colony at the time. Afterwards, as more suitable uniform was obtained, the men began to put on a little "side" when walking out, and the then Governor said to me one day: 'Your men swagger too much. We don't want swashbucklers.' To that I replied: 'If you knew the difficulty I have had to make them forget the name of 'Snuffs' and instil a little swagger into them, you wouldn't wish to see it reduced.' A little later on another Governor said, with reference to his orderly at Government House: 'I wish you wouldn't send a prince in disguise as my orderly, for he looks so spick and span that I am almost ashamed of my own get-up whenever I pass him'" (Holt, viii).*

The quotes in this passage point to the obvious relationship that exists between a uniform and behaviour— the "flotsam and jetsam" of the colony is transformed into princely countenance by an appropriate and socially accepted uniform. Beyond this obvious "functionalization" of the uniforms, as Roland Barthes would put it, the statement also tells us something about the pedigree of the Corps— it borrowed its uniform from the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police. This lineage of one colonial force copying or learning from another has important implications for understanding how notions of proper dress traveled from place to place.

Discussant: **OKECHUKWU NWAFOR** (2018 UMAPS Scholar), Nnamdi Azikiwe University

**3:45 - 4:00 pm** » Coffee Break

**4:00-5:15 pm** » Vernacular Photography in Distinct African Locations: The Materiality and Mobility of Images



**TAMSYN ADAMS**, Leiden University  
*Working the Image: Visual Apprenticeship,  
'Object Lessons' and Self-Representation in  
The Farmer's Weekly*

*The Farmer's Weekly* was first launched in May 1911, almost exactly a year after the Union of South Africa was established. Conceived of as a specialist magazine—written largely by and for farmers—it rapidly established a readership across South Africa and surrounding countries, earning itself the epithet “the farmer's Bible”. I focus on photographs published in *The Farmer's Weekly* over the course of four decades, accompanying letters and articles written by Temple Fyvie, a farmer based in what is colloquially known as the Natal Midlands. Viewed in relation to his writing, these circulating images provide a way of exploring practical processes of knowledge exchange, identification, and belonging amongst South Africa's white farmers during the period of the Union. They also highlight an entanglement with other contemporary concerns— questions of race and ethnicity, colonial nationalism, ideas of 'progressive farming,' and the perceived 'degeneration' believed to occur in colonial contexts. I further relate these images back to the collection of family photographs in which I first encountered them, which includes the physical counterparts of published photographs, and evidence of Fyvie's working process and correspondence.

**OKECHUKWU NWAFOR** (2018 UMAPS Scholar), Nnamdi Azikiwe University  
*Family Albums, Funeral Brochures, and High Visibility in Southern Eastern Nigeria*

In recent times photographs have become increasingly ubiquitous in South Eastern Nigerian funerals. This ubiquity can be seen from the manner in which the photographs of the deceased constitute themselves into objects of performance in funerals. The same photographs of the dead trigger an excavation of historical family album, hitherto hidden from public view, inserted inside the funeral brochures. Most funerals are accompanied by invitation cards imprinted with the photograph of the dead. Almost every funeral comes with gifts inscribed with a photograph of the dead. Every funeral also comes with a poster bearing many photos of the dead, ranging from miniature to life sized and above life sized, mounted on strategic locations before the day of the burial. Having attended numerous

funerals over the past seven years and studied various aspects of photographic manifestations through interviews, ethnographic surveys, archival studies, among others, I argue that in 'Igbo' funerals photographs have appeared as ubiquitous images that help individuals to articulate alternative visual imaginations of wealth, beauty, self-hoods, and elegance. In this paper, I suggest that funerals in the Igbo region of South Eastern Nigeria have become a compelling territory for identifying emergent aspects of vernacular modernities seen through the mobility and transformation of the photograph into a ubiquitous object of taste, honor, and prestige.

**PAMILA GUPTA**, University of the Witwatersrand  
*Moving Still: Bicycles in Ranchhod Oza's Photographs of 1950s Stone Town (Zanzibar)*

Stone Town's busy streets in the 1950s became a set for photographer Ranchhod Oza, proprietor of Capital Art Studio (1930-1983). I was aesthetically drawn to the numerous bicycles portrayed in these images, just as it appears that Oza too was drawn to them 70 years earlier. The more I looked at bicycles, the more I honed in on these photographs from the larger archive and started to create taxonomies of bicycle images. Nor are these bicycles simply a sign of Zanzibari modernity, an accoutrement that projects a fantasy of advancement via technological things. Instead, they reflect very much the materiality of daily life in Stone Town. Some bicycles carry people, others carry piles of things, while still others appear as stage props, sitting at the edges of the frame, leaning up against walls while waiting (im)patiently for their owners to return. Yet in all these Oza images, they are moving still, ready to wind down another street, to reach another chosen destination. What can these bicycles say about Oza's photographs, following Dyer (2005) who reads content for cohering style? Does the rounded shape of their tires only reflect a compositional choice to offset the square-ness of the surrounding buildings? Can these bicycles potentially speak to Zanzibar's placeness as a cosmopolitan Indian Ocean port city, including the circulation of people and things, particularly during its heyday of the 1950s?

Discussant: **PATRICIA HAYES**, University of the Western Cape



5:15 - 6:30 pm » Dinner

6:30-8:30 pm » Photography Workshop  
"Picturing Idi Amin: Planning For a New  
Exhibition at the National Museum of Uganda"  
(Room 555—optional session)

DEREK PETERSON, University of Michigan;  
and RICHARD VOKES, University of Western  
Australia

## TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27

9:00 am » Breakfast

9:30-11:30 am » Appropriation, Synthesis,  
Interpretation of the Filmic and the Photographic  
From Beyond Africa

CHARLES AMBLER, University of Texas at El Paso  
*Celluloid Freedom*

Africa's nationalists came of age during the Golden Age of cinema in Africa. From the 1940s into the 1960s, as activists formed political movements, movie theaters proliferated and thousands of Africans became ardent fans of the products of Hollywood dream factories. Kwame Nkrumah famously advocated for a decolonized African cinema, and as part of a larger assault on the power of Western media denounced American movies as Cold War propaganda that shaped the thinking of unsophisticated African audiences. In his student days in New York he lost at least one girl friend because of his lack of interest in (and money to pay for) movies and other forms of popular entertainment. If a number of nationalist leaders displayed a puritanical distaste for popular amusements, the relatively little we know about the composition of film audiences suggests that many activists were cramming into cinemas in Lagos, Accra, Johannesburg, and many other African towns and cities. "Celluloid Freedom" represents a speculative exploration, ranging across the continent, of the cultural and intellectual interplay between the cumulative experience of film-going and the aspirations that drove nationalist organization and activism.

PETER J. BLOOM, University of California,  
Santa Barbara  
*Africa and its Diaspora as Photographic  
Fetish: New Media Market Aesthetics of  
Fashion and Speculative Art Markets*

This paper addresses the speculative context of branding contemporary art photography in relation to African bodies allied with an aesthetics of African art and fashion photography. The starting point is a recent exhibition opening and fashion show featuring a young South Africa-born photographer, Kristin-Lee Moolman, who developed the concept of the show, *Soft Criminal*, with two rising London-based fashion photography stylists, Ibrahim Kamara and Gareth Wrighton. The fashion event format is well known, but the reference to congeries of African and diasporic iconography is worthy of greater scrutiny as it attempts to connect underground aesthetics, sexual deviance, and mask-like ceremonial figuration without great specificity or coherency. It relies upon commodified spectacle in its prismatic context for 'African' forms. Further, it is a context informed by social media platforms, particularly Instagram, that is related to a context for financial speculation and contemporary art market media aesthetics. Discussion of the format for this event and its staging serves as the basis for further reflection on contemporary African art markets as a form of appropriation within the sphere of social media platforms via Hans Belting (2013), Pierre Bourdieu (1994), Isabelle Graw (2009), among others.

KENNETH HARROW, Michigan State  
University

*How Can African Filmmakers Go Beyond  
Africa? Or, What is an African Filmmaker?*

This paper will explore the widely divergent practices of three African filmmakers whose identity and location place them in spaces where the current vocabulary of global, Afropolitan, or diaspora fails to do justice to their filmic and photographic practices. To get at this question we can consider the widely divergent work of John Akomfrah, Andrew Dosunmu, and Chinese Anyaene. The former is a highly regarded film-essayist whose intellectual, poetic style places him among the most respected of British auteurs. Dosunmu, who had a highly successful career as photographer and director of music videos in the United States, turned to filmmaking, and a directed well-received noir and family dramas centered on Nigerian ex-patriates in New York. Anyaene, also Nigerian, is best known for her 2010 critically acclaimed picture, *Ijé: The Journey*, a film that might be dubbed neo-Nollywood with its melodramatic plot, and use



of the famous Nollywood actress Genevieve Njaja. All three directors can be viewed as having training in the U.S. or U.K., and yet are seen as representative of film associated with Africa. This paper will ask how that association might be understood given three films, Akomfrah's *Nine Muses*, Donsunmu's *Mother of George*, and Anyaene's *Ijé: The Journey*.

**BOUKARY SAWADOGO**, City College of New York

*African Screen Media in Harlem*

The predominantly francophone West African immigrant enclaves in Harlem are not only the subject of image productions, but also the target audience of African film exhibitions that are regularly held in the neighborhood. The images (both still and filmic) serve as a link to the homeland and as a way for subsequent immigrant generations to negotiate African identity and culture in a foreign space. The selected images not only underline the importance of Harlem as a character or background in African imagination, but they also showcase the importance of visual cultures in the construction of diasporic communities there. This paper looks at the ways in which images (both still and filmic) can be used to read the African presence in Harlem, and the broadening definition of African visual cultures.

**LILY SAINT**, Wesleyan University

*Popular Film and Black Spectatorship at the Midcentury in South Africa*

This talk explores how cinematic representations of foreign places, ideas, objects, and people beyond apartheid's geographic and ideological ken, positioned films—and specifically popular American Hollywood films—as harbingers of alternatives to apartheid's social organization and logic. It focuses on the reception of the films that were most popular even though they depicted people and places at a considerable remove from everyday black South African life. Indeed it was this distance itself, between the images, narratives, and lives depicted in these films and the lives of black South African viewers, which activated various forms of ethical response. In South Africa's physical cinematic spaces, affective, material, and intellectual encounters with American films distorted and reshaped the practices of identification necessitated by apartheid's political and aesthetic exigencies. In consequence, the social and aesthetic experience of watching movies was also one

that restructured the parameters of ethical being. As Peter Abrahams put it in his memoir, "[m]orals were fashioned [at the bioscope]," not just in the extra-cinematic space outside.

Discussant: **CORINNE KRATZ**, Emory University

12:00-1:30pm » Lunch

1:45-3:00 pm » Archival Preservation, (Re)interpretation, Recuperation, Collection and Digitization

**BIANCA VAN LAUN**, University of the Western Cape

*Bureaucratically Missing: Capital Punishment, Exhumations and the Afterlives of State Documents and Photographs*

For many of the families of those hanged by the apartheid state in South Africa during the 1960s, their bodies remained missing and missed. Judicial executions, and the corpses they produced, were hidden entirely from the scrutiny of the public and press. As the apartheid state claimed and maintained control over the bodies of these condemned prisoners—both in life and death— families were prohibited from viewing the corpse or attending the burial. This paper examines the ways in which the prisoner files, documents, and photographs produced through the bureaucratic procedures that processed prisoners to death on the gallows, have been reclaimed and repurposed by post-apartheid nation building and memorialisation projects. Under the auspices of the Gallows Memorialisation Project, bureaucratic records and photographs have been recovered from the apartheid state archives, reinterpreted, and placed into different and new 'presentational circumstances' that desire to overturn their original oppressive logic. However, as the documents and photographs are used to fix the identities of particular individuals that the Project seeks to commemorate, the logic that drives their reproduction in the new configurations and contexts seems to replicate the bureaucratic rationality that produced them. In replicating the bureaucratic rationality that produced them, the biographical subject is unable to escape this logic and remains missing.



**PATRICIA HAYES**, University of the Western Cape

*The ZAPU Photographer: Exiled and Contingent Histories*

Zenzo Nkobi acted as the official photographer for Joshua Nkomo, President of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). ZAPU was based in Zambia after the banning of the nationalist organisation in Rhodesia in 1963. This paper takes up the question of a nationalist photographer, as it were, and how the modes of documenting presidentialism in newly-independent African states from the 1960s might have shaped Nkobi's influences. While Mozambican photographer Kok Nam produced a 'political sublime' through his visionary portraiture of Samora Machel, Nkobi's work is geared more towards creating a sense of government in exile and visually cuing Nkomo for state leadership. Among the photographs taken by Nkobi are pictures of education camps in Zambia during official visits by Nkomo with accompanying foreign delegations. On such occasions it appears that the youthful camp recruits prepared 'cultural performances' for the visitors. Photographs, however, frequently go beyond necessity and offer a sense of the contingent, through "accidents, the uncertain, the aleatory ... in and through encounters, traces, and surprise" (Hunt 2016: 4). The paper directs attention to these aspects of the camp photographs, as well as the spectral implications of the deterioration of Nkobi's negatives.

**CANDICE JANSEN**, University of the Witwatersrand

*Making Contact, Feeling Identity: Ernest Cole & the Photographic Proof*

Presented here is a contact sheet. Framed within it are negatives made by the South African photographer, Ernest Cole. Some exposures are known, having been published in his first and last book, *The House of Bondage* (1967). Others are not. Pictures in this contact sheet run along other pictures of apartheid life. They are pictures of unknown origin. We know they were made in South Africa, but that is all. Or is it? What can be said of this contact sheet, which is here revealed as being comprised of fabricated images? Images that are recognised as evidence, yet are known without identity.

This contact sheet helps make a turn from overlooking proofs as documents of negatives, to imagining contact sheets as also cutting visual forms that both fabricate and also are themselves fabrications. As this contact sheet suggests, these images make contact, cut, and figure identity to fabricate the photographic event, which in this instance was apartheid South Africa that was not just a legal-political system, but also visual practice, a place that Cole has called, "a land of signs."

Discussant: **PAMILA GUPTA**, University of the Witwatersrand

**3:00 - 3:15 pm** » Coffee & Tea Break

**3:30 - 5:30 pm** » Archival Preservation, (Re)interpretation, Recuperation, Collection and Digitization (*continued*)

**OMAR BADSHA**, Artist and Photographer  
*Afrapix Comrades with Cameras and the Anti-apartheid Struggle in the 1980's*

The presentation will examine the interplay of race and class in a pivotal moment in South African history, the role of activist photographers, the alternative media, and its impact on the emergence of cultural movements and the popular uprisings against the apartheid state.

This paper argues that: a) one cannot understand the role of Afrapix, without first understanding the impact of race access to resources, skills, and what people photographed and how they dealt with issues of representation; and b) one also cannot understand the impact of Afrapix on social documentary or activist photography without also examining the relationship between Afrapix the collective and photographers outside of Afrapix.

**PHINDEZWA MNYAKA**, University of the Western Cape  
*Reflections on History Writing Through Daniel Morolong's Photographs on the East London Coastline, c. 1950-1970*

Drawing from Mikhail Bakhtin's (1981) notion of the chronotope in relation to representations of space in literature, Margaret Cohen (2006) maps out the sea, river, coasts, and islands in fiction as particular kinds of chronotopes



of the sea that are at once geographies and topoi. She argues that, among these, the shore is that place where "boundaries are tested, only to be re-affirmed rather than dissolved" (p.661). Taking a cue from her work, I consider the implications of taking seriously the ecological aspects of Daniel Kgomo Morolong's photographs taken on East London (South Africa) beaches in the middle of the 20th century. All these display black men and women in pursuit of leisure in the period of intensified racial segregation in the city. I suggest that such photographs collectively encapsulate the poetics of the shoreline in its liminality and fluidity. This, in turn, has implications for history writing, requiring modes of engagement attentive to mobility and contingency.

**JAMIE MONSON**, Michigan State University  
*Visualizing "TAZARA Stories"*

The film *TAZARA Stories* documents the working lives of Tanzanians and Zambians who participated in the construction and operation of China's largest cold war development project in Africa. The film combines oral interviews with historical footage of railway construction to tell the story of TAZARA through the perspectives of those who built and operated it. From the internationalist solidarities of post-independence through the era of liberalization and market reform, TAZARA's railway workers not only narrate the history of their own lives, but also the histories of their nations in changing global economic contexts.

The film incorporates visual materials such as photographs as well as material objects that were kept in worker personal collections in Tanzania, Zambia, and China. The archival footage of railway construction is interwoven throughout the film with images of these material objects, including footage of workers sharing these objects in their homes and workplaces. My longer term plan is to co-publish the film, a book, and a digital archive of these materials together so that they may be used interactively in teaching and research.

**DREW THOMPSON**, Bard College  
*Coloring Histories of Black Surveillance and*

### *Protest: The Story of Polaroid in the United States and Africa*

My book uses archival research and oral interviews to investigate how black communities in the United States and Southern Africa used Polaroids from the 1960s to recent times and how such use influenced individual and collective notions of protest, state surveillance, and practices of self-representation. The Polaroid Corporation introduced important innovations to its instant cameras just as the Civil Rights Movement and decolonization wars in the United States and Africa respectively entered into new stages. Popular struggles against white separatist rule in Southern Africa attracted the attention of black Americans and civil rights activists, many of whom boycotted Polaroid for its South African business dealings. Despite their social functions, Polaroids were of little use in documenting the protest rallies and boycotts that activists participated in. Besides framing the Polaroid as a Euro-American phenomena, recent literature leaves unattended the ways in which black American and African populations understood photography as a racist medium and yet aspired to be photographed. I will explore the culture of taking images that black American and African communities associated with the Polaroid, and how Polaroids influenced how these communities viewed not only images of the Civil Rights and anti-apartheid movements but also their understandings of the correlation between color photography and surveillance.

Discussant: **HOLONIPHA MOKOENA**, University of the Witwatersrand

**5:30-6:00 pm** » Short Film: *The Art of Healing- A Portrait of Lizette Chirime*

**RUI ASSUBUJI**, Photographer, Filmmaker and Researcher

**7:00 pm** » Dinner (Michigan Executive Dining Room, 710 East University Avenue)

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28TH**

**9:00-11:00 am** » Breakfast & working meeting



# Speakers Bios

**TAMSYN ADAMS** is currently completing her PhD through the University of Leiden, and lives in Johannesburg. Her research focuses on a collection of her own family's photographs as a way of exploring white South African subjectivity during the period of the Union of South Africa.

**CHARLES AMBLER** is professor of history and dean of the Graduate School at the University of Texas at El Paso. He has recently co-edited *A Companion to African History* (2018) and *Drugs in Africa* (2014). He is the author of a number of articles on mass media and popular culture in Africa including "Popular Films and Colonial Audiences," published in *The American Historical Review*. In 2010 he was President of the African Studies Association.

**FEDERICA ANGELUCCI** is one of the senior partners at Stevenson, Cape Town and Johannesburg, where she focuses on the photographic program. Since joining the gallery in 2007 she has edited monographs and curated solo exhibitions for the photographers represented by the gallery, together with curating the group shows *After A* (Atri, 2010) and *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* (Cape Town, 2011).

**RUI ASSUBUJI** is a photographer and researcher on visual histories of Mozambique. His academic base is the University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

**OMAR BADSHA** is a South African documentary photographer, artist, political and trade union activist and an historian.

**NALUWEMBE BINAISA** is a research associate at University College London working on the project: 'Citizens of Photography, the Camera and the Political Imagination' with in-depth fieldwork in Nigeria. Naluwembe is an interdisciplinary scholar whose research focuses on urban Africa and phenomena such as photography, mobile telephony, and mobilities to explore across time and space the linkages to transnational socio-economic, political, and cultural dynamics.

**PETER J. BLOOM** is associate professor and vice chair in the department of film and media studies at the University of California,

Santa Barbara. His recent work has focused on film and radio in late colonial Ghana and Malaya. He has published extensively on British Malaya, French, and Belgian colonial media including *French Colonial Documentary* (2007), *Frenchness and the African Diaspora* (co-editor, 2009), and *Modernization as Spectacle in Africa* (co-editor, 2014), among other publications.

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"The Filmic and the Photographic: African Visual Cultures" is the ninth installment of the program "Joining Theory and Empiricism in the Remaking of the African Humanities: A Transcontinental Collaboration," the interdisciplinary research and teaching partnership between the ASC and WiSER. Funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the program aims to foster and strengthen innovative research in the humanities and closely affiliated fields in the social sciences with the objective of building a transcontinental community of scholars who addresses ambitious theoretical questions that resonate with local, regional, and global experiences.

#### **ABOUT THE AFRICAN HERITAGE AND HUMANITIES INITIATIVE**

African Heritage Initiative (AHI) supports research related to the arts, humanities, and interpretive social sciences, which highlights the dynamic, contested process by which African cultures and histories are made.

#### **ABOUT THE AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER**

The African Studies Center (ASC) at the University of Michigan provides strategic guidance and coordination for Africa-related education, research, and training activities on campus, and promotes opportunities for collaboration with African partners on the continent. ASC is a member of the International Institute at the University of Michigan.