

# Afropean Mimicry & Mockery in Theatre, Performance & Visual Arts II 28.10. – 1.11.2015

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Featuring theatre, performance, video, literature and music, the second edition of Afropean Mimicry & Mockery is dedicated to the relationship between Africa and Europe, particularly from an African perspective: in his masterpiece *Le Socle des Vertiges* (The Foundation of Vertigo), Congolese author, director and actor Dieudonné Niangouna deals with growing up in the midst of a civil war, ways of handling this experience and the simultaneous need to participate in the reinvention of a social and public order. Another focus lies on the "dissection" of whiteness. In what ways are relationships of power and the gaze connected? Where and by whom are Western points of view called into question? Artist Simone Dede Ayivi explores such issues in *Performing Back*.

As a production platform Afropean Mimicry & Mockery – funded by the TURN Fund of the German Federal Cultural Foundation – provides residencies and work-spaces and supports the development of new productions. This year's residents Martin Ambara and Boyzie Cekwana will be presenting insights into their current projects.

A one-day research atelier presents artistic and academic projects on questions of representation, affirmation and subversion, and the exhibition *Facing the Mockery* shows selected positions by Sam Hopkins, Yves Sambu, Simon Rittmeier and Otieno Gomba. The band *Algiers* provides the festival soundtrack with a mix of gospel and punk in a highly political concert on Friday evening.

*Facing the Mockery*

Exhibition with works by Sam Hopkins (Nairobi), Simon Rittmeier (Paris), Yves Sambu (Kinshasa) and Otieno Gomba (Nairobi)

Can you use the centuries-old objects of an ethnographic collection to make an aerobics video? Is drinking schnapps and dancing on the graves of former colonial rulers a political

stance? Is faking European NGO logos art? And if so, who is actually mocking whom and why? The exhibition Facing the Mockery presents four artists and their ironic, subversive and irreverent approach to African-European relations.

Simon Rittmeier's short film is inspired by the Afrofuturist myth of the place Drexciya, a "Black Atlantis". Europe has long since sunk and a young trafficker is trying to bring European refugees across the Mediterranean in boats in the hope of a better life in Africa. One day his boat sinks and he is stranded on the African coast as the only survivor. Alone, he makes his way to the nearest big city - Drexciya.

Congolese artist Yves Sambu is also interested in reversing the situation. His photo series Vanité Apparente shows a group of young sapeurs presenting their latest dandyish creations in the dilapidated French colonial cemetery in Gombe. They pose and dance on the graves in a way that is far more than an irreverent fashion show.

In *Aerobics made in Africa*, Otieno Gomba plays with expectations and role clichés. During his residency at the Iwalewahaus Bayreuth, where he critically examined the ethnographic collection, he produced a charmingly amateurish dance video. In it, he still wears the prescribed white gloves of the (European) archivist, but otherwise throws all scientific correctness overboard.



Kenya Navy Sick Bay\_01\_Installation Image\_2015\_(c)Hopkins-7

Sam Hopkins approaches the field of imitation and mockery in the form of a collection of real and fictitious NGO logos. In his home city of Nairobi, the "capital of NGOs", he not only addresses an obvious aid industry, but also a seemingly internationally valid visual code of neediness. Hopkins also presents Kenya Navy Sick Bay, an archive of around 300 hand-carved stamps from Kenya, ranging from "receipt of payment" to "sick note". The function of these stamps, which at first glance appear to be official, is often unclear, as is the reason why they remained with the stamp maker and were not sold. Were they possibly only intended for single use anyway? Or is there something wrong with them - from a technical, legal or artistic point of view? Taken as a whole, the archive shows a section of a British-influenced administration and at the same time an apparently everyday strategy of appropriation and displacement of this system.



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