

Session at VAD "African Connections" (Leipzig, 27–30 Jun 18)

Leipzig, Jun 27–30, 2018

Deadline: Nov 30, 2017

vad-africanconnections.de

Kristin Kastner

Call for Papers

African Connections

Conference of the African Studies Association in Germany (VAD e.V.)

Leipzig, 27 - 30 June 2018

Session:

Material Morphosis: Trajectories, connectivities and transformations in fashion and design

While phenomena of metamorphosis have been associated with predominantly negative connotations within a European frame of reference (namely as mere imitation, deceit, or substitute), they also point towards another meaning, revealing a principle that stresses the significance of materiality as 'sujet'. Recently, techniques such as sampling have put forth new interpretations of such creative transferrals. Thus, material metamorphoses frequently happen to be also media metamorphoses.

The focus on substance and materialities seems to relate to African notions of classification – material is recognised here as both textile fabric and oral transmission of 'matter': objects are often classified according to certain characteristics of materiality and semantics and not only to their formal qualities. The ideational and non-material can become attached to the material, whereas in other contexts certain materialities or matter are reserved for privileged groups or persons.

Since precolonial times, fabrics as objects of transcontinental and transregional trade and exchange play a crucial role in the making and strengthening of social ties and, thus, of status and identities. The importance of material is also reflected in contemporary fashion and design where global belonging as well as local situatedness are claimed. The conscious choice of materials and techniques of labels like, for example, Xuly Bët, Laduma, or Black Coffee, refers to the material expression of a (Pan-)African and decolonial legacy, both critically and playfully.

In contemporary design and art, material morphoses find expression in processes of modernization, democratization, nobilitation, and re-evaluation; they also relate to material innovation and new manufacturing techniques as well as to miniaturizations (reductions, compressions, condensations) found in architecture and furniture design.

We suggest that the analytical lens of material morphosis (Stoffwechsel) can foster new perspectives when examining cultures of materiality, further exploring the 'dense materiality' (Sylvanus

2016) of cloth as a social skin, material object, or an archive or when tracing 'matter' within their regional and transcontinental entanglements in the past, present, and future. We invite papers that examine material morphosis and sensuous materiality within their temporal and spatial context.

Convenors:

Kerstin Pinther (LMU University, Munich), Alexandra Weigand (LMU University, Munich), Kristin Kastner (LMU University, Munich)

Submit paper proposal:

All paper proposals (maximum 250 words) must be submitted by email directly to the panel convenors by 30 November 2017. Proposals will be provisionally accepted or rejected until 31 January 2018.

<http://vad-africanconnections.de/panels>

Reference:

CFP: Session at VAD "African Connections" (Leipzig, 27-30 Jun 18). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 30, 2017 (accessed Mar 20, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/16594>>.