

Iconographies of Utopia in Africa (Lisbon, 26–28 Jun 13)

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Panel:

Revolution 3.0: iconographies of utopia in Africa and its diaspora

This panel investigates the emergence of images as imaginations of futures. As seismographers of radical shifts within societies, images often anticipate changes before they appear in the political and social discourse. Revolutions as epitomes of social change produce visual figurations in art, film and popular cultures.

Africa is rarely discussed with a perspective on revolution and utopia in the sense of positive powerful concepts of futures. We argue that the investigation of visual archives of African revolutions may provide knowledge about appearance and trajectories of dynamic icons and the 'agency' of images (Gell 1998). Their affiliations and clusters in different media provide a deeper understanding of projections of futures and their relation to the past. If revolutions aim at something new, a "concrete utopia" (Bloch 1985), this has to be reflected in images as well. New images, we argue, can only emerge in the field of aesthetics, where imaginations of utopian space and time (Rancière 2006) are possible. Art emerges not as a tool for propaganda, but as powerful element of social and aesthetic discourse.

We invite interdisciplinary perspectives from literature, cinema and art studies, visual anthropology and cultural studies. We ask for different projections of the future from Africa and how these imaginations are traceable in art, film, and popcultures. How are they related to historical moments: revolutions, independences and the aftermaths? How can they (re-)define historical events? How can new images, imaginations, concepts of future be generated? How do aesthetic practice and politics relate in situations of change?

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<http://www.nomadit.co.uk/ecas/ecas2013/panels.php5?PanelID=2081>

Reference:

CFP: Iconographies of Utopia in Africa (Lisbon, 26-28 Jun 13). In: ArtHist.net, Dec 12, 2012 (accessed Jul 2, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/4362>>.