

CODESRIA, the African Guild of Filmmakers and the Pan African Film & Television Festival (FESPACO): 'Emergence' on Screen and on Stage

27-28 February, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

CODESRIA's Programme on Humanities seeks to foster work in the Humanities and engender conversations between scholars in the Humanities and the Social Sciences on themes of interest to the Council with the goal of producing insights that often escape lenses peculiar to any one of these two fields of knowledge. The organization of a workshop on the sidelines of the bi-annual Pan-Africa Film and Television Festival, FESPACO in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso has for years served as an opportunity for CODESRIA and its partners to assemble scholars, artists and practitioners to discuss burning themes in African film and theater. For the 2017 workshop, CODESRIA in partnership with *la Guilde Africaine des Réalisateur et Producteurs* and the Pan African Film & Television Festival (FESPACO), is pleased to announce a two-day workshop on "Emergence' on Screen and on Stage." The workshop will be held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on the 27th and 28th of February 2017 and is an important follow-up to the last one held under the theme "From Stage to Screen: Interface between African Theatre and Film" on the 28th February and 1st March 2015.

CODESRIA invites artists, scholars and practitioners to reflect on the trope of emergence on screen and on stage in Africa. 'Emergence' has come to dominate discussions of political economy in Africa. Whether styled as the various '*plan [s]emergeant*' that are bandied about in many francophone countries or dressed in other slogans like 'A better Ghana,' the 'Cameroon of Greater Achievements' or the 'African renaissance' for example, the idea of rising out of an abyss into a place and time of glory has come to play multiple roles in African life. 'Emergence' and its synonyms have become integral parts of the struggle over the (re)-presentation, definition, governance, dominance, exploitation and 'development' of the continent in ways that recall the storied history of 'emancipation' and 'liberation' in an earlier era. It has been a defining theme for Pan-Africanism in literature since Casely Hayford's *Ethiopia Unbound* (1911).

The idea of emergence is also integral to African film and theater as a favored leitmotif around which stories are created and performed. The spouse emerging from an abusive marriage, the student

finally emerging from a period of scholarly mediocrity, the former house-help emerging from a life of poverty and hardship, the community finally freeing itself from the oppressive tyrant and the poor society attaining the heights of wealth all embody the idea of the shedding of shackles to achieve better states of being.

On another level, talk of the rise of film industries often captured in the terms Nollywood, Ghallywood, and ever new '...woods' is common, and parallels pervasive discourses concerning our national and continental creative economy.

On screen or on stage, understood here to include that of national and international politics, the imagination and performance of 'emergence' raises certain questions that participants in the 2017 workshop are invited to explore:

- How is the end point of the process of emergence understood and portrayed? What are the conceptions of the good life, the good place and the good time that we can distil from the staging of 'emergence' on screen and on stage in Africa?



- To what extent does the imagination and performance of emergence include a fabrication of a point of departure through an exercise in historical revisionism that permits the future to stand out as a distinct quantitative and qualitative improvement on the past and the present? In what ways are points of departure in the voyage of emergence imagined and performed on screen and on stage in Africa?
 - How is the process of change imagined and performed on screen and on stage in Africa?
 - What is the role and impact of religion, especially new religious movements, in the performance of emergence on screen and on stage in Africa?
 - What are the parallels between the performance of emergence on screen and on stage by actors and performances of emergence on the state/ stage of national and international politics by policy makers, political actors, NGOs, and civil society?
 - What insights can the performance of emergence on stage and on film hold for discourses on emergence in political economic life in Africa?
- Artists, scholars, film and theatre practitioners interested in participating in the workshop are invited to send papers of 5000 to 5500 words and a CV with full contact details including email addresses and phone numbers to CODESRIA no later than December 27. All documents

should be sent in Word format by email to humanities.programme@codesria.sn. Please use the subject line 'CODESRIA@FESPACO WORKSHOP 2017' when sending your email.

Humanities Programme

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