

AFRO-TECH

AND THE FUTURE OF RE-INVENTION

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and the Future of Re-Invention

HMKV, Dortmund, until 22 April 2018

curated by Inke Arns & Fabian Saavedra-Lara

www.hmkv.de



The exhibition *Afro-Tech and the Future of Re-Invention* puts Afrofuturism in dialogue with alternative technological solutions and imaginations. The speculative narratives unfolding in the artworks on display are confronted with actual inventions from maker scenes in different African countries. This creates a double shift of perspective: While the artworks project decidedly African and diasporic sci-fi visions, the real devices appear as evidence of a technological development that is already underway. The exhibition thus presents Africa as a continent of technological innovation.



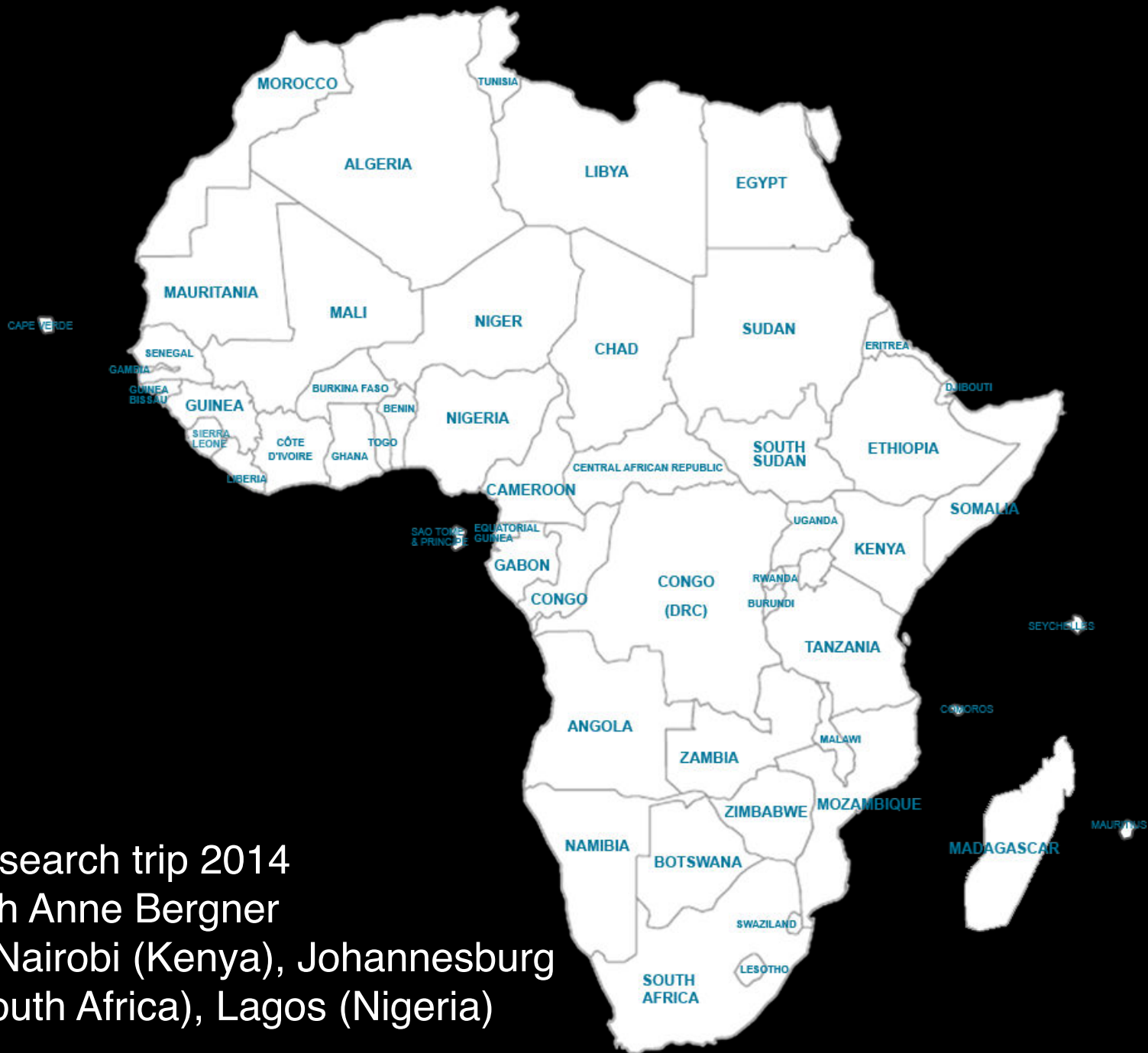
20 artistic positions

Sherif Adel (Egypt)
John Akomfrah (Ghana / Great Britain)
Jean-Pierre Bekolo (Cameroon)
Neïl Beloufa (France)
Frances Bodomo (Ghana / USA)
Drexciya (USA)
Kiluanji Kia Henda (Angola / Portugal)
Louis Henderson (Great Britain)
Jaromil (Italy / Netherlands)
Wanuri Kahiu (Kenya)
Kapwani Kiwanga (Canada / France)
Abu Bakarr Mansaray (Sierra Leone)
Cristina de Middel (Spain)
Fabrice Monteiro (Benin / Senegal)
Wangechi Mutu (Kenya / USA)
The Otolith Group (Great Britain)
RAMMELLZEE (USA)
Tabita Rezaire (France / South Africa)
Simon Rittmeier (Germany)
Soda_Jerk (Australia)

12 tech projects

BRCK (Kenya)
CardioPad (Cameroon)
Chowberry (Nigeria)
CladLight (Kenya)
Educade (South Africa)
GiftedMom (Cameroon)
Juakaliscopes (Kenya)
Kayoola Solar Bus (Uganda)
M-PESA (Kenya)
Robohand (South Africa)
Shiriki Hub (Rwanda)
Uko Wapi (Germany)

- from 22 countries -



Research trip 2014
with Anne Bergner
to Nairobi (Kenya), Johannesburg
(South Africa), Lagos (Nigeria)



First logo 2014
developed by Anne Bergner

Afro-Tech - in Johannesburg, Lagos and in Nairobi (11-24 April 2014)

Afro-Tech and the Future of Re-invention is a research project by Hartware MedienKunstVerein (HMKV) which looks at the use, the adaptation and (re-)invention of (new) technologies in three African countries. The subtitle reads: Alternative Technological Energies and Intelligences in Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria.

Researchers: Anne Bergner and Inke Arns



Ethan Zuckerman: 'Africa's hackers are today's world-class tech innovators'
By Ethan Zuckerman, 26 November 2012

<http://www.wired.co.uk/magazine/archive/2012/11/ideas-bank/africas-hackers-are-todays-world-class-tech-innovators>

Ethan Zuckerman is an American media scholar, blogger, and Internet activist. He is the director of the MIT Center for Civic Media.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethan_Zuckerman



A porridge making machine by a Malawian inventor, triggered by an SMS

WhiteAfrican (Erik Hershman)

Where Africa and Technology Collide!

Hardware Hacking Garages: hardware and accessories innovation

<http://whiteafrican.com/2010/11/15/hardware-hacking-garages-hardware-and-accessories-innovation/>

Timbuktu Chronicles - Emeka Okafor's blog
<http://timbuktuchronicles.blogspot.de/2012/11/africas-hackers-are-todays-world-class.html>



"A view of Africa and Africans with a focus on entrepreneurship, innovation, technology, practical remedies and other self sustaining activities."..... Emeka Okafor

Emeka Okafor is an entrepreneur and venture catalyst who lives in New York City. He is the curator of Maker Faire Africa. He was the director for TED Global 2007 that took place in Arusha, Tanzania. Other associations include TED fellowships and the Africa Innovation Foundation. His interests include sustainable technologies in the developing world and paradigm breaking technologies in general. His blog, Timbuktu Chronicles seeks to spur dialogue in areas of entrepreneurship, technology and the scientific method as it impacts Africa.

No sitting


MAKER FAIRE
AFRICA

TO BE A MAKER IS NOT A DAY JOB

2012

NOVEMBER 5TH AND 6TH

LAGOS

2012

HORN BEFORE OVERTAKING

From the FAQ:

What are you looking for? What do you hope to find?

We are looking for interesting, experimental, weird stuff: New approaches to using, adapting and (re-)inventing (new) technologies in Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria. We are interested in "people doing strange things with technology/electricity/software". Those who are not contending themselves with corporate solutions designed for the global North and who, out of this dissatisfaction, are starting to develop their own solutions. These can help solving everyday problems or deal with highly specialized issues. In short: We are looking for advanced - in the sense of inventiveness and vision – approaches that expand the path to a truly diverse and rich global (computer) culture beyond the horizon of prefabricated products.

From the FAQ:

Can you give concrete examples?

Yes, let's get practical. We're interested in what's happening, e.g., at the Maker Faire Africa (Lagos 2012), at FabLabs, Hardware Hacking Garages, Robotics Labs. DIY stuff. We read about a porridge making machine by a Malawian inventor, triggered by an SMS, about the Urine Powered Generator invented by four Nigerian teenage girls („1 liter of urine gives you 6 hours of electricity“), about the Flying Donkey Challenge, and about Ushahidi's BRCK back up generator for the Internet.



Why not
an ice-cold
Coke?

open happiness

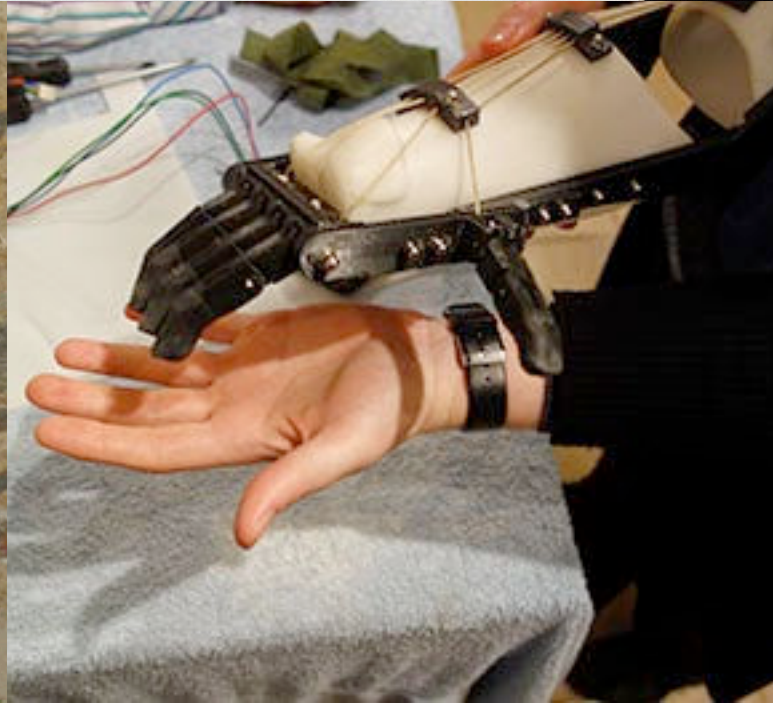
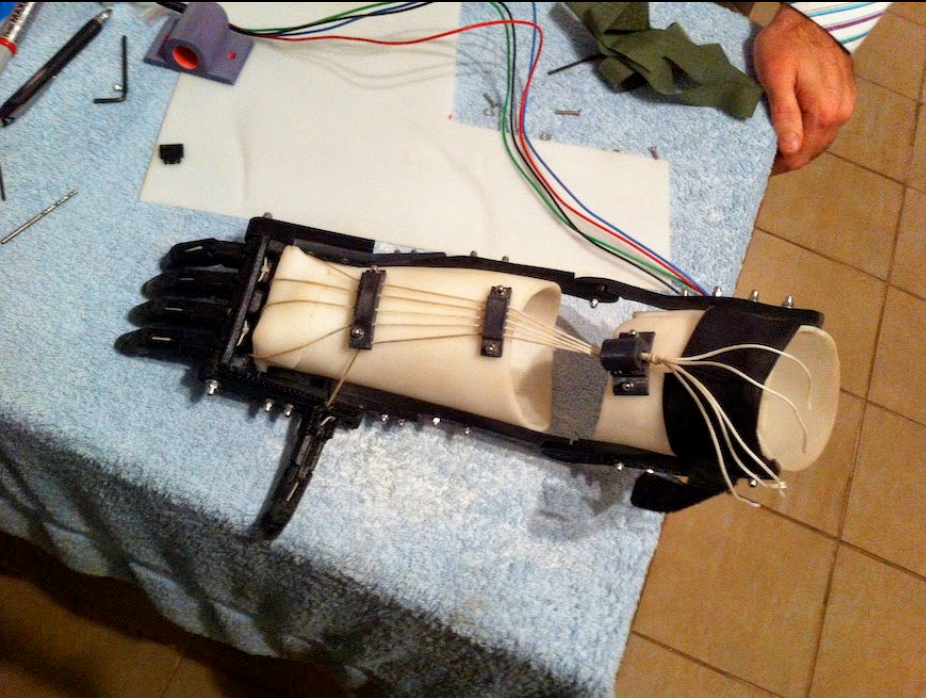
Coca-Cola

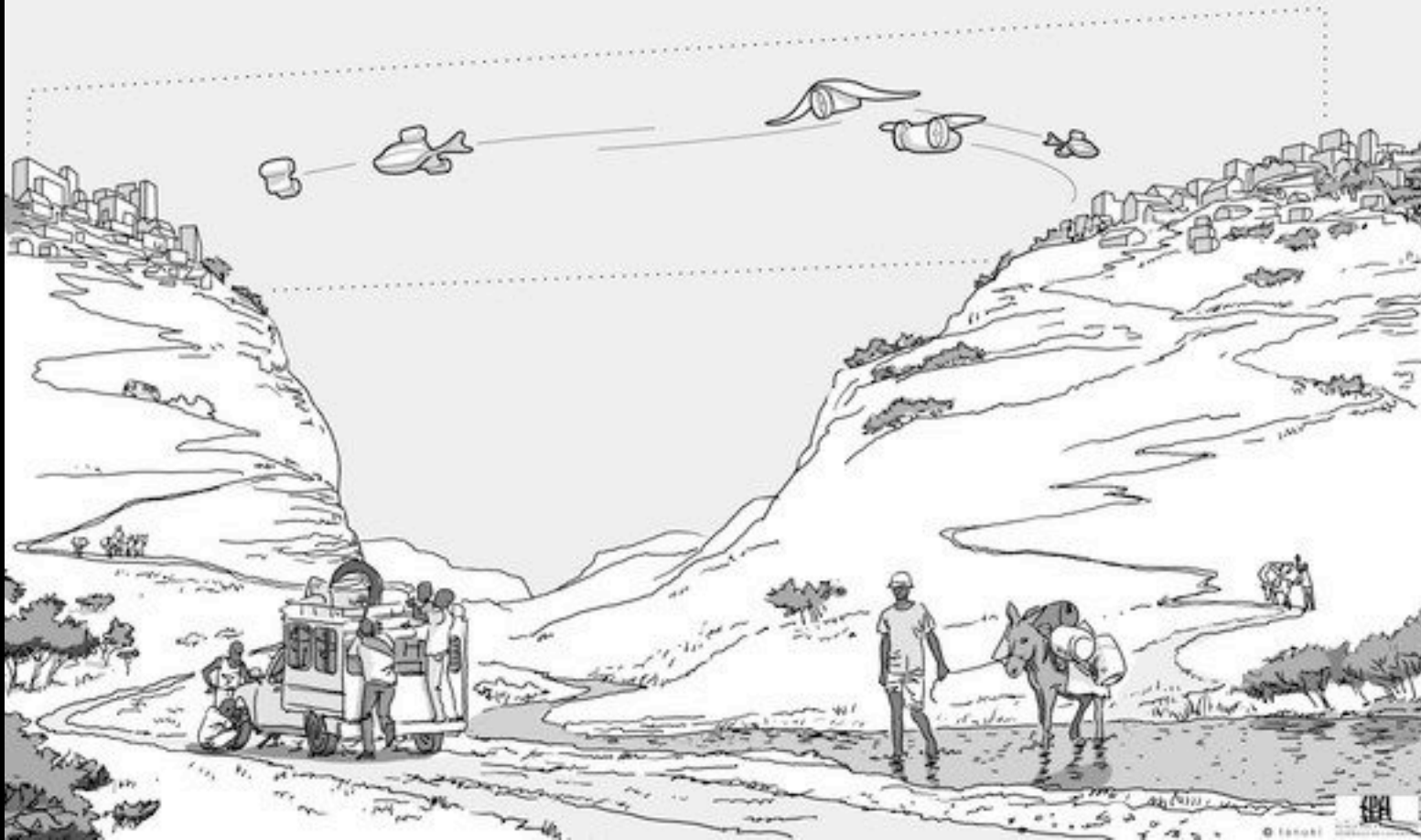


BRCK (Kenya), ca. 2014

BRCK is the name of a team of software developers in Nairobi, Kenya, that manufacture devices suitable for everyday use for the establishing of local networks and connection with the Internet for the African market. One of these devices, for example, is a server that can operate for a certain period of time without electricity. The idea behind the company is to provide hardware that addresses the needs of users in Africa, where, for example, there are often problems with power failures and maintaining stable Internet connections.







“Roads! Where we’re going we don’t need roads!”—Back to the Future

Flying Donkey Contest (2014)

J.M. Ledgard, "A Radical But Possible Plan to Connect African Nations With Cargo Drones", Wired, 22 Sep 2014, <https://www.wired.com/2014/09/cargo-drones-in-africa/>



Left: The Urine Powered Generator at the Maker Faire Africa Lagos 2012



Right: Three of the four school girls of Doregos Academy (Lagos) who invented the Urine Powered Generator, first presented at the Maker Faire Africa Lagos 2012. 1 liter of urine gives you 6 hours of electricity. The inventors are Duro-Aina Adebola, Akindele Abiola, Faleke Oluwatoyin and Bello Eniola (next to Inke is their chemistry teacher).

Some ideas resulting from the research trip

- Africa: „Next level“ – it's not about about „catching up“ – there is a serious lack of material/physical infrastructure – it's rather about directly jumping to the „next level“
- Project: Countering the usual stereotypes about Africa: poverty, hunger, corrupt regimes
→ by presenting Africa as the continent of technological innovation





AFRO-TECH



DJ Spooky
Critic / DJ



Greg Tate
Writer



John Akomfrah
The Last Angel of History
1995

We're going to Mars!

WITH A SPACEGIRL, TWO CATS AND A MISSIONARY

By EDWARD MAKUKA NKOLOSO

Director of his own "Academy of Sciences and Space

Technology"

I SEE the Zambia of the future as a space-age Zambia, more advanced than Russia or America. In fact, in my Academy of Sciences our thinking is already six or seven years ahead of both powers.

It is unlucky for Lusaka that I did not have the chance to run for mayor. If I had been elected, the capital city of Zambia would quickly have been another Paris, if not another New York.

If I had been mayor, Matern, Kamwala and Chilenge suburbs would quickly have been filled with flats and skyscrapers. Old houses would have vanished.

But never mind, we will have our Paris yet.

If I had had my way Zambia would have been born with the blast of the academy's rocket being launched into space. But the Independence Celebrations Committee said that would terrify the guests and possibly the whole population. I think they were worried about the dust and noise.

CREW READY

It's a great pity. All is ready at our secret headquarters in a valley about seven miles from Lusaka. The rocket could have been launched from the Independence Stadium and Zambia would have conquered Mars only a few days after independence. Yes, that's where we plan to go — Mars.

We have been studying the planet through telescopes at our headquarters and are now certain Mars is populated by primitive natives.

Our rocket crew is ready.

Specially trained spacegirl Matha Mwambwa, two cats (also specially

trained) and a missionary will be launched in our first rocket.

But I have warned the missionary he must not force Christianity on the people in Mars if they do not want it.

One other difficulty has been holding us up. UNESCO has not replied to our request for £7,000,000, and we need that money for our rocket programme. Then we can lead world science.

I feel the Zambian Government should help now if we are to become controllers of the Seventh Heaven of interstellar space. The Government must pass strong bills to deal with the satanic plots of our enemies.

I have known for a long time that Russian spies are operating in Zambia. Yes, and American spies are all over the town too.

They are all trying to capture Matha and my cats. They want our space secrets.

These people must be dealt with immediately after independence if I am to keep my Space lead. Detention without trial for all spies is what we need.

Otherwise I am happy with the Government, but it must encourage youngsters to join the academy.

At the moment they have knocked down my academy building in Matern. That is not good. I hope they build modern flats in its place to provide more offices for us.

The capital of the new scientific Zambia must look beautiful. People from afar must not see a slum as the capital of the world's greatest scientific state.

Zambians are inferior to no men in science technology. My space plans will surely be carried out.



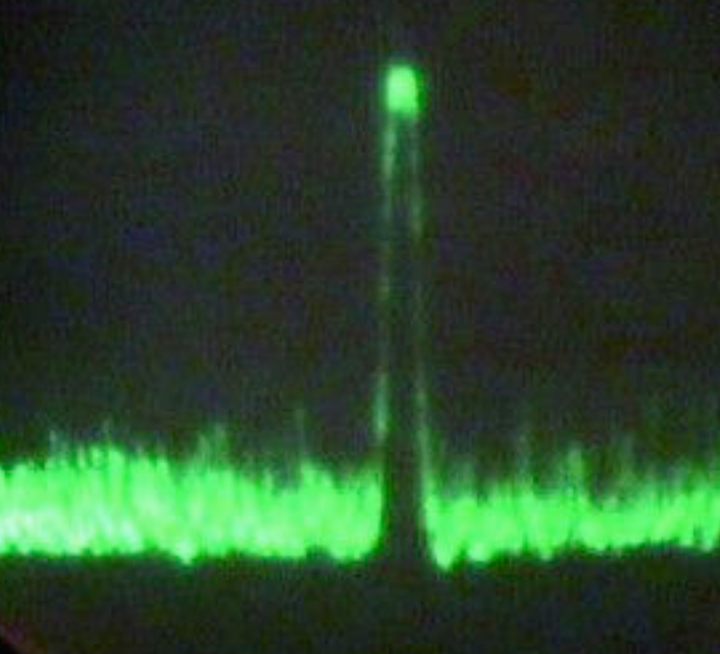
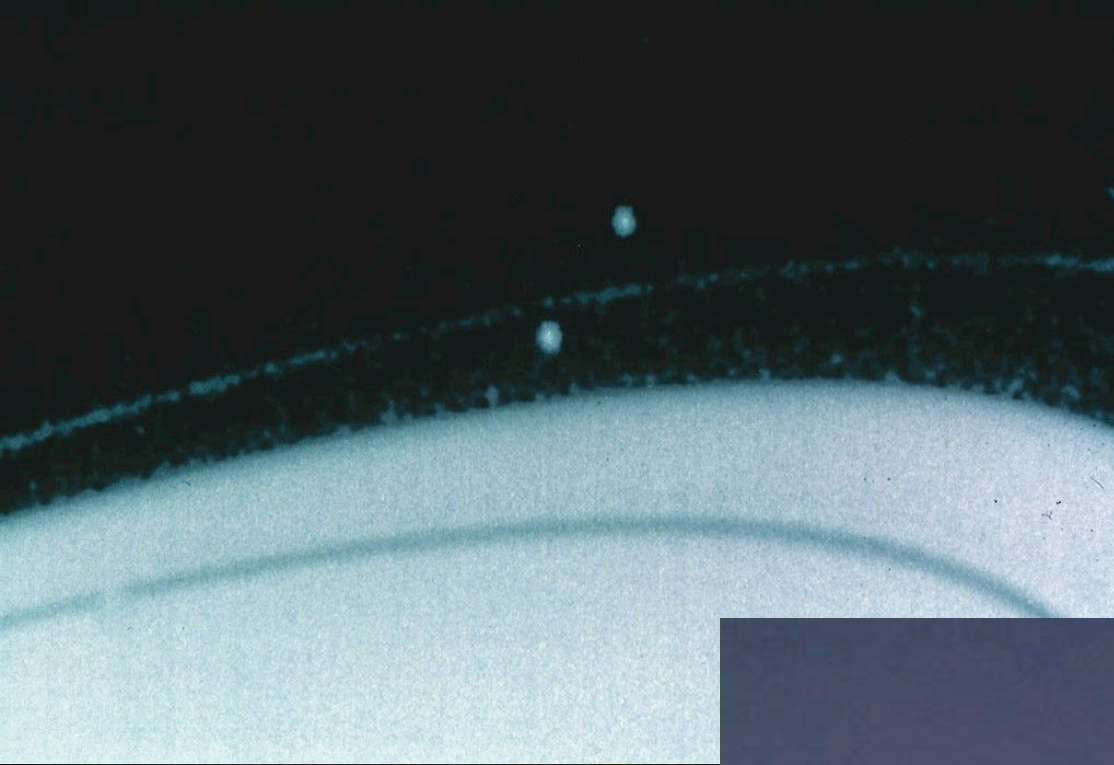
NKOLOSO and escort . . . "All we need is a £7,000,000 grant from Unesco"

Frances Bodomo
Afronauts
2014



Kiluanji Kia Henda, Icarus 13 – The First Journey to the Sun, 2007

Kapwani Kiwanga
Sun Ra Repatriation Project
2009





Soda_Jerk
Astro Black
2007 - today





Tabita Rezaire
Deep Down Tidal
2017



Simon Rittmeier, Drexciya, 2012, 28:30 Min.



Jean-Pierre Bekolo, Naked Reality, 2016, 62 Min.



Louis Henderson, *Lettres du Voyant*, 2013, 40:00 Min.



Fabrice Monteiro, The Prophecy, 2016



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More stuff

Travel Blog

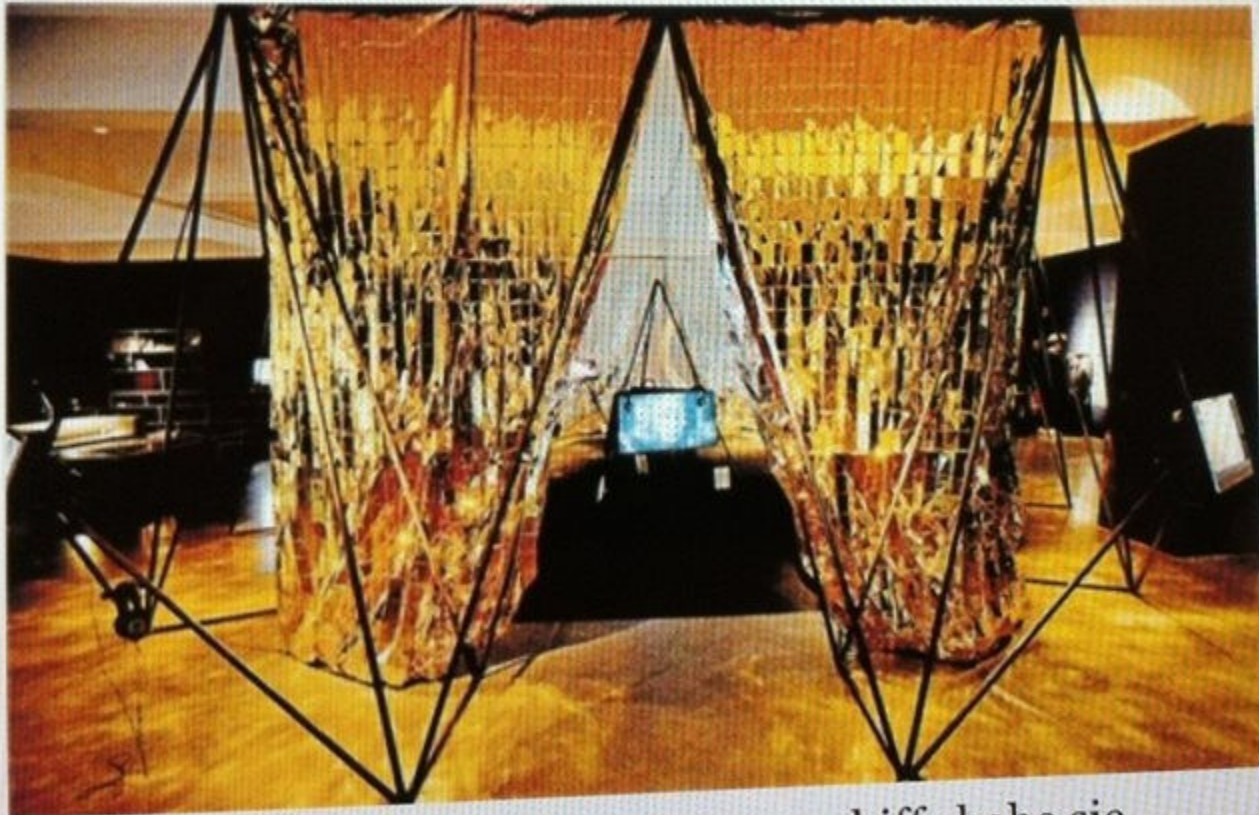
<http://hmkv-dortmund.blogspot.de>

Video „Afro-Tech and the Future of Re-
Invention“, 3:30 Min.

<https://vimeo.com/241168042>

Fremdes Gold

Erstens: Afrika hat viel mit uns in Dortmund zu tun, denn wir sind eine Welt. Zweitens: Das, was wir über Afrika denken, ist falsch oder unzureichend. Drittens: Das ändert sich jetzt im HMKV.



An das Energiezentrum eines Raumschiffs habe sie gedacht, als sie dieses glänzende Zelt für die Mitte der

Film screening

Jean-Pierre Bekolo, Naked Reality, 2016,
62:00 Min.

Simon Rittmeier, Drexciya, 2012,
28:30 Min.

Louis Henderson, Lettres du Voyant, 2013,
40:00 Min.

Thanks!

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www.inkearns.de