

D A V I S
M U S E U M A N D
C U L T U R A L
C E N T E R

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE April 5, 2006
Media Contact: Nina J. Berger
617-971-9340, NinaJBerger@hotmail.com
Barbara Levitov, 781-283-2034, blevitov@wellesley.edu

**AFRO-FUTURISM FESTIVAL
FROM THE MOTHERSHIP TO THE MOTHERLAND,
THE SECOND GENERATION**

APRIL 26-30, 2006

Wellesley, Mass. — The Davis Museum and Cultural Center at Wellesley College will be presenting an **Afro-Futurism Festival: From the Mothership to the Motherland, the Second Generation**, April 26-30, 2006 – a four-day event featuring a symposium, lectures and films exploring futurist themes in black cultural production and the ways in which technological innovation is changing the face of black art and culture. All events are free and open to the general public.

Science fiction, fantasy and technology combine in Afro-Futurism, a vibrant literary and cultural mix created by an African-American and African Diaspora subculture exploring the black experience and finding new strategies to deconstruct racism and classism. This emerging movement critiques not only the present-day dilemmas of people of color and re-examines the historical events of the past, but also looks into the possibilities of the future.

The festival is organized by Genevieve Hyacinthe, the Davis Museum's adjunct curator of African Art, in conjunction with the Wellesley African Students Association (WASA).

AFRO-FUTURISM FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

**April 26 Wednesday 7:30 – 10:30 pm
Symposium**

Symposium participants:

•African Art and Technology Scholar **Sheila Petty**, Department of Media Production and Studies at the University of Regina, Canada and author of "Transforming Spaces:

African Computer-Based Narratives” will speak on “Insurgent Acts: Navigating Africa in Black Digital Aesthetics.”

•**George Lewis**, Edwin H. Case Professor of Music, Columbia University, member of the pioneering Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) since 1971 and former music curator for The Kitchen, an avant-garde performance space in New York City. Lewis, a MacArthur Fellow, is an acclaimed improvising trombonist and composer known for his innovative uses of technology, including computer-based multimedia installations.

A short reception will precede the presentations.

9:30 pm **FILM SHORTS** including ***Afro@Digital (Congo/France, 2003)*** by **Balufu Bakupa-Kanyinda**; and ***The Station (Eki) (USA/Japan, 1999)*** by **Aaron Woolfolk**, in which an African-American man waiting for a train in rural Japan experiences some moments of lost-translations and shared laughs.

April 27 Thursday 7:30 -10:30 pm
The Mothership Connection, New Orbits?
Lectures & Screening

Discussion of Afro-Futurism with musicians and artists including:

•**Martin Brody**, sound composer for the Afro-Futurism classic film, *Brother from Another Planet* (1984), and Catherine Mills Davis Professor of Music, Wellesley College, is a pianist and specialist in electronic music and music theory. Martin will be discussing his work on “Brother” as well as such Afro-Futurism music artists as Sun-Ra, George Clinton and Bernie Worrell.

•**Albert Chimedza**, a specialist in mbira (a traditional instrument from Zimbabwe), is the director of the Gonanombe Mbira Centre in Harare, Zimbabwe. A political activist and filmmaker, Chimedza will conduct a mbira demonstration and speak on his efforts regarding the promotion of traditional African music.

•**Fatimah Tuggar**, acclaimed visual artist based in Nigeria and New York, will speak about her work in the Afro-Futurist tradition. A special feature of her presentation will be a screening of her video, *Fusion Cuisine* (Nigeria/USA, 2001).

•**Dineo Bopape**, an emerging performance and video artist from South Africa, will discuss her autobiographical work interrogating issues of displacement and memory.

9:30 pm **FILM: *Stranger: Bernie Worrell on Earth (USA, 2005)*** by **Philip Di Fiore**
Music as we know it would not exist without Bernie Worrell. While he lives in virtual anonymity in the Boston area he has been compared to Beethoven, Charlie Parker and Jimi Hendrix. If they lived today would they be in danger of fading from the book of musical history? Winner of Best Short Documentary at the 2005 San Francisco Independent Film Festival and Best Foreign Film at the 2005 Thessaloniki Documentary Festival in Greece.

10 pm **FILM SHORTS**

April 28 Friday 6:30 - 11 pm **Motherland, Imaging Africa's Future and African Fantasy** **Conversation & Screening**

Artist talk on the intersections between Afro-Futurism and Afro-Fantasy followed by films addressing ideas of African future and fantasy, with a welcome by Wellesley African Students Association (WASA) film selection committee.

FILM: *Cinderella of the Cape Flats* (South Africa, 2004) by Jane Kennedy, depicts the everyday life of working class coloured women in the garment district of the windswept flats around Cape Town who toil anonymously to make clothes so that other women can look beautiful.

FILM: *Hot Wax* (South Africa, 2004) by Andrea Spitz documents the story of Ivy, a black woman who runs a beauty salon and negotiates the cultural and racial divides separating her from her white clientele.

April 29 Saturday 6:30 - 11 pm **Pictures from the Motherland**

Films on Africa concerning travel, fantasy, and reflections on the future.

FILM: *Walking Backwards* (Ghana, 2004) by Caroline Deeds. After fifteen years, the filmmaker returns to her homeland Ghana, to unravel a story she was told as a child about the Apollo 11 moon landing and how it was recorded in Ghana. The Apollo 11 story is an allegory for different ways of seeing the world, and *Walking Backwards* takes this story as a starting point for a lyrical journey through modern Ghana to understand what independence means.

FILM: *Bye, Bye Africa* (Chad, 1999), by Mahamat-Saleh Haroun, the director casts himself -- or more precisely, a fictionalized version of himself -- as the central character in a "documentary" which looks at the challenges to the filmmaking process in Africa.

FILM: *The Hero* (Angola, 2005), by Zeze Gamboa, is the grand prizewinner in Sundance's World Dramatic Competition category. The film depicts the triumphant and at times tragic story of several characters living in war-torn, Angola, including "Vitoria, the Hero" who has lost his leg in combat.

April 30 Sunday 11 am - 2 pm ***** AFRO-FUTURISM FAMILY DAY ***** **A fun-filled day of family-friendly participatory events and films**

11 am A presentation by Albert Chimedza, filmmaker, musician, mbira maker, and promoter of mbira through his Gonanombe Mbira Centre in Harare, Zimbabwe. Albert will lecture on his practice and footage of his mbira performance will be aired.

12 pm Mbira instrument and traditional African diaspora drum workshop for families led by Albert Chimedza and Kera Washington, Wellesley College Music Department, and Director of Yanvaloo, Wellesley's Afro-Haitian drum ensemble.

2 pm **FILM: *Kirikou and the Sorceress (animation) (France, 1998) by Michel Ocelot***, appropriate for families, students and adults. This animated film exquisitely recounts the tale of tiny Kirikou -- a clever, courageous little boy born in an African village in which Karaba the Sorceress has placed a terrible curse -- as he sets out on a quest to free his village of the curse and find out the secret of why Karaba is so wicked. This film speaks to the child within us all who yearns to express and defend the best in others and ourselves. Kirikou's stunning visuals are accented by a traditional music soundtrack by African music giant Youssou N' Dour.

April 30 Sunday 3 - 7pm
Pictures from the Motherland II

Film programming on African films concerning travel, fantasy and Africa's future - real and/or imagined.

FILM: *The Golden Ball (Guinea/France, 1992)* by Cheik Doukoure, follows the dream of a boy skilled at soccer named Bandian, who uses witchcraft and magic as part of his effort to become a champion soccer player in Guinea and eventually overseas in France.

Funded by Amy Sommer '87 and the Kathryn Wasserman Davis '28 Fund for World Cultures and Leadership.

Co-sponsored by the Departments of Africana Studies, Art and Music, as well as Davis Museum and Cultural Center and Wellesley African Students Association.

Davis Museum and Cultural Center hours and information

The Davis Museum is open Tues–Sat, 11am-5pm, Wed until 8pm, and Sun noon-4pm, closed Mondays and holidays. Admission is free. The Center is located on the Wellesley College campus at 106 Central Street in Wellesley, Massachusetts. Parking is free and available in the lot behind the museum. Additional parking is available in the Davis Parking Facility.

For docent tour information, please call 781-283-3382. The museum's Collins Café, recognized for its innovative cuisine, offers a fresh menu daily and is open weekdays until 3:30pm. The museum, Collins Café and Collins Cinema are wheelchair accessible and wheelchairs are available for use in the Museum without charge. Special needs may be accommodated by contacting the Director of Disability Services, Jim Wice at 781-283-2434 or at jwice@wellesley.edu.

For information call 781-283-2051 or visit www.davismuseum.wellesley.edu

FREE ADMISSION. FREE PARKING.

MEDIA NOTE: For more information, digital images, or to set up an interview with Genevieve Hyacinthe, please contact Nina J. Berger at 617.971.9340, ninajberger@hotmail.com; or Barbara Levitov at 781-283-2034, blevitov@wellesley.edu.