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**UMASS HOSTS APRIL ARTS FESTIVAL IN CONJUNCTION WITH REMAPPING
BLACK GERMANY CONFERENCE**

AMHERST, Mass. – The University of Massachusetts Amherst will host an arts festival in conjunction with the upcoming conference “Remapping Black Germany: New Perspectives on Afro-German History, Politics, and Culture.” Events include a film series, musical performances, and art exhibitions to be held throughout April, sponsored by a number of Five College programs.

The film series comprises prizewinning films directed by Oliver Hardt (“Black Germany”), Angelina Maccarone (“Everything will be Fine”), and Branwen Okpako (“Valley of the Innocent” and “Dirt for Dinner”). Okpako will be present for a special pre-conference screening of her 2003 film “Valley of the Innocent” on April 20. This film provides a complex portrayal of a coming to terms with the East German past. The protagonist’s memories of her experiences of racism as the only mixed-race child in her foster home also become a way to explore the impact of the East German state apparatus on her family. Okpako’s film “Dirt for Dinner,” which will be screened on April 27, won the Bavarian documentary film prize The Young Lion as well as the First Prize at the Dubrovnik Documentary Film Festival in 2001. The films are screened Thursdays at 6 pm in Herter 227; admission is free.

The art opening and reception for an exhibition that includes oil paintings by Daniel Kojó Schrade and video art by Ingrid Mwangi will be held on Friday, April 21 from 4:00 – 7:00 pm in the Hampden Art Gallery at UMass, Southwest residential area. Beginning at 7:30 pm, Olumide Popoola will perform her spoken word poetry accompanied by local jazz pianist Eugene Uman. Popoola’s work draws on African storytelling, hip hop, and jazz to thematize a range of topics from contemporary political issues and challenges of national identity to healing and experiences of space. Following Popoola, Frankfurt singer-songwriter and rapper Chima will also give an acoustic performance as part of the conference, accompanied by local jazz guitarist Jeff Cashen.

The exhibitions by Schrade and Mwangi will continue throughout the conference at Hampden gallery; after the conference they will move to the Wheeler Art Gallery at UMass. On Saturday, April 22 Chima, Okpako, Popoola, and Schrade will participate in an artists’ roundtable addressing issues around Afro-German artistic production and aesthetics. The roundtable will take place in Isenberg SOM 127.

The arts festival is held in conjunction with “Remapping Black Germany: New Perspectives on Afro-German History, Politics and Culture.” This conference, which also will take place in Isenberg, grows out of a two-year ongoing research project on Black German Studies sponsored by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation with matching money from the

University of Massachusetts. From April 21-23, 2006, renowned U.S. and European scholars will gather to present papers on many aspects of the Afro-German experience. All conference events are free and open to the public. For more information, please see the website at <http://www.umass.edu/germanic/remapping>.

**Remapping Black Germany:
New Perspectives on Afro-German History, Politics and Culture
Arts Festival
University of Massachusetts Amherst
21-23 April, 2006
<http://www.umass.edu/germanic/remapping>**

Schedule
special pre-conference screening:

Thursday, 20 April, 6pm

Tal der Ahnungslosen / Valley of the Innocent (2003, d. Branwen Okpako)

Shortly before her 40th birthday, police officer Eva Meyer is transferred from Frankfurt to Dresden. Eva was raised in an orphanage in Dresden, so the return forces her to deal with her past. With dazed curiosity she begins a quest for her parents. She is anxious and, at the same time, afraid about what she will discover. Eva starts looking in her former orphanage and in the "Stasi Archives," where information from the East-German secret police is held. A puzzle starts to unfold in front of her as she slowly puts the information about her parents together. Her birth was the result of a one-night stand her mother Helga had with one of her husband's students, a Kenyan student named Shepard....

German with English subtitles

Director Branwen Okpako will introduce her film and hold a Q&A session after the screening

21 April – 23 April

Hampden Gallery, Southwest Residential Area

Paintings by Daniel Kojo Schrade

Video works by Ingrid Mwangi

Friday, 21 April, 4:00 - 7:00 pm

Hampden Gallery, Southwest Residential Area

Art Opening and Reception (Daniel Kojo Schrade / Ingrid Mwangi)

Friday, 21 April, 7:30 – 9:30 pm

Olumide Popoola (spoken-word poetry), accompanied by jazz pianist **Eugene Uman**
Chima (acoustic performance)

Saturday 22 April, 8:30 pm

Artists' Roundtable

Branwin Okpako, Olumide Popoola, Daniel Kojo Schrade

23 April

Wheeler Art Gallery

Paintings by Daniel Kojo Schrade

Video works by Ingrid Mwangi

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