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**UMASS AMHERST TO HOST CONFERENCE ON AFRO-GERMAN
HISTORY, POLITICS AND CULTURE**

AMHERST, Mass. – The University of Massachusetts Amherst will host the conference “Remapping Black Germany. New Perspectives on Afro-German History, Politics, and Culture” from April 21-23.

The conference will explore topics such as race and colonialism in Germany, as well as the black presence in the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, the Cold War and contemporary Germany. The discussions arise from a larger project of recovering the black presence in Germany, which has given rise to black German studies as an area of research. Black men and women have lived in Germany since the Middle Ages. In the modern era, black German history encompasses the movement and settlement of subjects from Germany’s African colonies, the occupation of the Rhineland after World War by French colonial troops, resulting in the birth of hundreds of Afro-German children, and the traumatic experience of racial terror during National Socialism. After World War II, the black diaspora in Germany was affected by the division of the nation and took quite different routes in the East and the West. These disparate and fragmented origins long created a barrier to the recognition of the commonalities among black Germans as subjects of their own history and historiography.

The conference involves members of the Black German Studies project, a cooperation between the University of Massachusetts Amherst and the University of Mainz, Germany. The project, which will also include collecting oral histories of black Germans, is funded by grants of approximately \$42,000 from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Germany, together with matching funds from the provost at the UMass Amherst.

Beginning in the early 1980s, black Germans have not only begun to form a new black German cultural movement but also to rewrite German history from a black perspective. Since its inauguration, the project of recovering the black presence in Germany has given rise to range of methodological approaches to black German Studies. This interdisciplinary and transnational field not only contributes to black diaspora and German Studies, but also provides new ways of thinking about the process of modern racial formation.

A series of cultural events, including musical performances, spoken word poetry, and art exhibitions will be held in conjunction with the conference; all events are free and open to the public. Performers include Olumide Popoola, whose spoken word poetry 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. Singer-songwriter

Patrice, whose unique blend of trip hop, reggae, and blues has been called a “musical metissage” will provide an acoustic performance. Oil paintings by Daniel Kojo Schrade will also be on display in the Hampden and Wheeler galleries at UMass. The artists will be present for a roundtable during the conference.

All events are free and open to the public. Attendees are welcome to join the conference participants for meals but are asked to contact Tobias Nagl by April 15th.

Additional support for the conference is being provided by the vice provost for research, dean of the graduate school, dean of Humanities and Fine Arts, Afro-American studies, Alumni Association, anthropology, DEFA Film Library, English, Fine Arts Center, Germanic languages and literatures, Hampden Gallery, Interdisciplinary Seminar in the Humanities and Fine Arts, modern European studies, women’s studies, all at UMass Amherst; Diversity office, European studies and German studies at Amherst College; Multicultural affairs, Hampshire College; African-American and African studies, critical social thought and German studies, Mount Holyoke College; German studies, theatre, Smith College; Five Colleges, Inc., Goethe Institut Boston and the Max Kade Foundation.

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For more information, visit www.umass.edu/germanic/remapping/

**Re-Mapping Black Germany. New Perspectives on Afro-German
History, Politics, and Culture**

Conference Events:

Friday, April 21, Hampden Gallery/Southwest Residential Area

4-7 p.m. Art opening and reception. Paintings by Daniel Kojo Schrade and video works by Ingrid Mwangi

7:30-9:30 p.m. Performances by Olumide Popoola (spoken-word poetry) and Patrice (acoustic reggae/neo-soul)

Saturday, April 22, 137 Isenberg School of Management

9- 10:30 a.m., **Race and Modernity**

Fred Moten (University of Southern California), "Black Kant (Pronounced Cant)"

Robert Bernasconi (University of Memphis), "After the Invention of Race: Racial Discourse in Germany from Kant to National Socialism"

10:45-12:15, **Race, Colonialism, and Imperial Germany**

Andrew Zimmerman (George Washington University), "Bismarck Bell and Booker T. Washington in the Black Atlantic's Berlin"

Sara Pugach (Ohio State University), "A Case of Mistaken Identity: Africans, Germans, and Definitions of Blackness in the Kaiserreich"

2-3:45 p.m, **The Black Presence in the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich**

Christian Rogowski (Amherst College), "Black Voices on the Black Horror on the Rhine?"

Tobias Nagl (UMass Amherst), "Afro-Germanic Doublings: Fragments, History, Identity"

Maria Diedrich (Universitat Munster), "Black Others? African Americans and Black Germans in the Reich"

4-6:30, **Blackness in Two Germanies**

Heide Fehrenbach (Northern Illinois University), "Black Occupation Children and the Devolution of the Nazi Racial State"

Randolph Ochsmann (Universitat Mainz), "German Brown Babies in the Fifties: Personal Accounts"

Peggy Piesche (Universitat Mainz) "Relocating 'Race': The GDR and its 'Other'- Black Images in Visual Culture"

Jason Owens (South Dakota State University) "Namibia's 'GDR Kids' from Cadres to Catalysts"

8:30 p.m, **Artists' roundtable**

Patrice (Bart-Williams), Olumide Popoola, Daniel Kojo Schrade

Sunday, April 23, 137 Isenberg School of Management 137

9-10:30 a.m., **Race and the Visual Archive**

Tina Campt (Duke University), "Capturing the Black German Subject: Race and Gender in the Visual Archive"

Jurgen Heinrichs (Seton Hall University), "Against Race: The Universal Aesthetics of Marc Brandenburg"

10:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m. **Black Diasporic Thought and Contemporary Germany**

Alexander Weheliye (Northwestern University), "A Volk to Come: Black Germans and the African Diaspora"

Nicola Laure al-Samarai (TU Berlin), "History, Theory, Experience: Diasporic Perspectives in Black German Thought"

2-3:45 p.m., **Black Diasporic Thought and Contemporary Germany**

Damani Partridge (University of Michigan), "Travelling Through the 'Black' Body and Finding the German Nation"

Michelle Wright (University of Minnesota), "Blackness and Its Discontents: Modernity and the Afro-German"

Fatima El-Tayeb (University of California at San Diego), "Queering Ethnicity? Beyond the Black Paradigm"