



African Film Festival and Electronic Arts Intermix Present:



Digital Africa

November 11-25, 2003

Tuesday - Saturday, 10 am - 6 pm

Opening Reception

Tuesday, November 11, 6-8pm

Artists' Talk introduced by Okwui Enwezor

Saturday, November 15, 2pm



Electronic Arts Intermix ([EAI](#))

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Exhibition Curators: Mahen Bonetti and Prerana Reddy

African Film Festival (AFF) and Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI) are pleased to present an exhibition of media works by contemporary African artists working with video and computer technologies. "Digital Africa" features artists **Ingrid Mwangi** (Kenya/Germany) with her partner **Robert Hutter**, **Theo Eshetu** (Ethiopia/Italy), **Mawuli Afatsiawo** (Ghana), and **Mendi + Keith Obadike** (US/Nigeria). The exhibition includes multimedia and projection installations, single-channel video, and an interactive Internet project.

The five works in "Digital Africa" present a provocative range of visions that articulate notions of cultural dialogue in a digital world, including the effect of digital and communications technologies in creating/shaping an African diaspora consciousness or identity; how race and color are represented or fashioned by or through digital technologies; the interplay between traditional and digital materials in African art; exploring how ritual, rhythm, and oral traditions are transformed in the digital realm.

For more than ten years, AFF has been presenting the cultural vibrancy and diversity of African film. As an expansion of this mission, AFF ventures into the realm of video art through a collaboration with EAI. Since 1971, EAI has supported the diverse visions and creative voices of experimental media artists and provided access to their works. This exhibition furthers EAI's mission as a resource for video art and interactive media.

Works in Exhibition

Mawuli Afatsiawo, **Man in a Box**, 2000, 5 minutes, color, sound. Single-channel Video.

Mawuli Afatsiawo, **On a journey...**, 2001, 6 minutes, color, sound. Single-channel Video.

Theo Eshetu, **Brave New World**, 2000. Multi-media and Video Installation.

Ingrid Mwangi and Robert Hutter, **Within a Shadow Lies What Will Fall**, 2003. Two-channel Video Installation.

About the Artists

Ingrid Mwangi and Robert Hutter. Ingrid Mwangi works in a range of media, including video, installation, photography and performance art. Her works confront issues of race, identity and gender. Often using her body as subject, Mwangi explores her physicality, as well as issues of blackness and heritage, in relation to sociopolitical systems. She investigates identity in the context of personal experience and cultural positions on the foreign and 'exotic.' Robert Hutter's work centers around the body as an interface between self and society, using computer and performance techniques to investigate such themes as the virtual body.

Ingrid Mwangi was born in 1975 in Nairobi, Kenya. Robert Hutter was born in 1964 in Ludwigshafen, Germany. They both received New Artistic Media degrees from the University of Fine Arts Saar, Saarbrücken, and have received scholarships from the Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes, and residency scholarships of the Rhineland-Palatinate studio at the Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris. Mwangi's work has been shown at the Museum for African Art, NY and the Bienal de Sao Paulo, amongst others. They've collaborated on works for several exhibitions including: *Next Flag 1*, The Casino Luxembourg Forum of Contemporary Art; *Exhibition of Video Works by Ingrid Mwangi and Robert Hutter*, Center of Contemporary Art of East Africa, GoDown Arts Center, Nairobi; and *A Fiction of Authenticity: Contemporary Africa Abroad*, Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis. Mwangi and Hutter live in Ludwigshafen, Germany.

Theo Eshetu has worked in media art since 1982, creating installations, video art works, and television documentaries. As a videomaker, he explores the expressive capabilities of the medium and the manipulation of the language of television. Exploring themes and imagery from anthropology, art history, scientific research, and religious iconography, he attempts to define how electronic media shapes identity and perception. World cultures, particularly the relationship of African and European cultures, often inform Eshetu's work.

Born in London in 1958, Eshetu spent part of his childhood in Ethiopia. In 1981 he received his degree in Communication Design from the North East London Polytechnic. His work has been shown at the Institute of Contemporary Art, London; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Rome; the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Nice; the 2nd Video Biennial of Fukui, Japan, and at festivals such as the Venice Film Festival; London Film Festival; International Festival of Film on Art, Montreal; and other venues throughout the world. He received prizes at the Berlin Video Festival; the International African Film Festival, Milan; and the Festival dei Due Mondi, Spoleto, Italy, among others. He has taught video and communications in numerous universities, art colleges, and film schools in Italy. In 1987, he formed White Light, a production company with which he has produced numerous documentaries for television. Eshetu lives in Rome.

Mawuli Afatsiawo has worked in video art since 1997, exploring issues of identity, racism, Africa's colonial history, and globalization. Afatsiawo uses the video medium as a tool for challenging cultural perceptions. His works often integrate images of everyday life in Ghana with performance elements, in which he uses his own body as subject and metaphor. In his poetic and often metaphysical visions, Afatsiawo links personal experience and memory with African heritage, rituals and history to confront larger political and cultural realities.

Afatsiawo was born in Ghana in 1974. He was educated for some years in London and then returned to Ghana, where he graduated in Fine Arts at the College of Art, UST, of Kumasi in 1999. His work has been shown at the Studio Museum, New York; the 2nd edition of the Liverpool Biennial; the 25th edition of the Bienal de São Paulo; the African Pavilion of the EXPO 2000, Hannover, Germany; the ifa Gallery, Bonn, Germany; the Pan African Theatre Festival of Cape Coast, Ghana, and in several other exhibitions in Germany and Ghana. He is also creative director of an advertising production agency in Accra, Ghana. Afatsiawo lives in Accra, Ghana.

Mendi + Keith Obadike. The real life of new media artists Mendi + Keith Obadike is like a Phillip K. Dick story starring Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis with a laptop and a dial-up connection. Their interdisciplinary art practice includes video and sound art, music CDs and textbased Internet projects. Exploring the implications of social and cultural systems in relation to blackness and identity, they have investigated sex toys, the commodification of race, and the visualization of untold stories as disappearing hypertext.

Keith Obadike was born in Nashville, Tennessee in 1973 and graduated in Fine Art from North Carolina Central University. He is presently studying Sound Design at Yale. Mendi Obadike was born in Palo Alto, California in 1973 and graduated in English from Spelman College. She is presently studying Literature at Duke and teaching at Wesleyan. Their work has been shown at the Studio Museum, New York; MIT/List Visual Art Center, Boston and the International Center of Photography, New York, among other venues. Their public projects include the African Diaspora Film Series at the Center for Documentary Studies, Durham, North Carolina and *To Conserve a Legacy: American Art from Historically Black Colleges and Universities*. They launched their Internet opera *The Sour Thunder* at Yale. Awards include the John Hope Franklin Documentary Award, the Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship in Humanistic Studies and the Franklin Furnace Performance Art Award. They live in Connecticut.

This exhibition has been made possible through support from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Arts. Additional support was provided by Experimental Television Center's Presentation Fund / NYSCA, Italian Cultural Institute, Goethe Institut, 57 Main Street Wine Company, and The Maritime Hotel.

About African Film Festival (www.africanfilmny.org)

AFF is a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit arts organization established in 1990. AFF's mission is to share the vision of African media-makers with audiences in the United States and throughout the world. AFF was founded with the belief that the incomplete, and often distorted perceptions of African people and culture, can best be altered by presenting the viewpoints of Africans themselves, through film and video. AFF's programs include: The Annual New York African Film Festival; a ten-city National Traveling Series of African Cinema; International Programs in Brazil and Jamaica; Young Adult Education Program; and its Outdoor Screening Series.

About Electronic Arts Intermix (www.eai.org)

Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI) is a nonprofit media arts organization that is one of the world's leading resources for video art and interactive media. EAI's core program is the international distribution of a major collection of new and historical media works by artists. Founded in 1971, EAI also offers a video preservation program, a screening room, extensive online resources, special exhibitions, and equipment access. EAI supports the diverse voices and visions of media artists within an educational and cultural context.

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