

## **AFRICAN CINEMA: June 8 – July 6, 2005. Dakar, Senegal**

### PROJECT SUMMARY

The focus of the NEH Summer Institute in Dakar, Senegal, West Africa is AFRICAN CINEMA. It is scheduled to take place from June 8 to July 6, 2005, and it is open to US College and University faculty in the humanities and social sciences. Faculty from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), Hispanic Serving (HSI) and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU) are also particularly encouraged to apply.

### SCOPE, CONTENT AND APPROACH OF THE INSTITUTE

The Institute surveys the history, theories, aesthetics and criticism of African cinema from 1960 to the present. It examines the relationship between cinema and other forms of creative practice in Africa, in particular, African literature and African oral traditions. It also explores the significance and use of African cinema in African human, cultural and social development. The Institute will be organized and conducted primarily on the basis of seminars, film screenings and discussions. These are complemented by group lunches and dinners and guided visits to various academic and film-related institutions and other historical sites in and around Dakar. In addition, the schedule allocates time to allow individual participants to view films not on the workshop screening schedule, to consult individually with filmmakers, scholars and others, and to engage the Dakar and the general Senegambian context on their own terms.

Topics to be covered in the institute include the following:

- *Overview of Contemporary Africa within a Historical Perspective.*
- *Cinema in Africa: Overview and History*
- *Cinema, Oral Traditions, Literature and the other Arts in Africa: The Dynamics of Exchange.*
- *African Cinema: Theories, Aesthetics and Approaches.*
- *African and African American Independent Cinema in Comparative Perspective: Theories, Aesthetics and Approaches.*
- *Focus on Ousmane Sembene*
- *Negotiating Tradition and Modernity in Cinema.*
- *Cinema in the West Africa sub-region: Themes, Styles and Issues*
- *Gender and Creative Practice: Gender, Culture and Change in Contemporary African Societies.*
- *Gender, Culture and Change: Female Creative Voices.*

- *Writers and Filmmakers: What Relationships?*
- *Cinema in Southern Africa: Trends and Tendencies.*
- *African Cinema and Traditional Texts: What Relationships?*
- *New Global Africa: History, Memory and Emerging Identities.*
- *The State and Directions of Humanities and Social Science Studies and Research in Africa Today: Intersections and What Role for Cinema and the Creative Arts*

We will explore these topics through presentations by scholars and writers followed by discussions, and screenings of selected films and post-screening discussions with filmmakers.

### STRUCTURE OF THE INSTITUTE

The Institute will run for four weeks, from June 8 to July 6, 2005, and participants are required to stay for the entire duration of the Institute. **Attendance and participation at all sessions is mandatory.** We will be based at the West African Research Center (WARC) at Fann-Residence in Dakar, a few miles from the Hotel Ngor Diarama where all participants will be lodged. Some sessions will also be held at the hotel itself. The West African Research Center is part of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC), and it has a good track record of hosting similar projects from the US. Our experience there in 2001, when we conducted a workshop on African Cinema for HBCU teachers was quite pleasant.

Generally, the Institute will meet five days a week (especially in weeks 2 and 3) Monday to Friday. Morning sessions start at 10:00 AM and end at 12:30, followed by lunch from 12:30 to 2:45. Afternoon sessions run from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM. Evenings are generally free, but there are some evenings with organized group activities such as film screenings at the hotel or in a local theater, group dinners and other typically Senegalese cultural outings that we call "Soirée Sénégalaise." Dakar is a vibrant city with lots of cultural events, and the project directors will recommend appropriate and interesting ones for interested participants. Weekends are also generally free, but we have scheduled one Saturday for an all-day visit to Gorée Island and one Sunday for an all-day trip to the Pink Lake and the seaside home of filmmaker Moussa Sène Absa at Popenguine. Participants will have the option to undertake excursions on their own to the charming city of Saint Louis, the first capital of Senegal, or the Petite Cote with its wonderful beaches or Juffure in The Gambia, the ancestral home of Alex Haley.

Institute sessions will generally alternate between seminars led by scholars, film screenings followed by discussions with filmmakers and writers, and guided visits to various academic and film-related institutions and other historical sites in and around Dakar. Some of the seminars will also feature a panel discussion by selected Institute faculty following the presentation of the lead scholar.

The required reading for the Institute will consist of essays and articles on the topics identified, and these will be compiled in a reader that will be sent to all selected participants in advance. In addition, there will be a list of recommended readings that will be posted on our website. Selected participants will be required to do the mandatory reading before arrival in Dakar, and they will be encouraged also to read as many of the recommended texts as possible. The films on the schedule will be screened during the sessions in Dakar. However, we urge all selected participants to take advantage of the resources on the Internet dealing with African Cinema and African Studies. On our website, we will provide links to access these resources.

We are aware of the fact that we will have a group of participants with diverse backgrounds and different levels of exposure to and experience with African Cinema and African Studies. Thus, we plan to conduct the Institute in ways that will enable a solid, usable introduction to those first timers, on the one hand, and an enhanced understanding for the ones with prior experience and exposure, on the other. We are confident that we shall all bring our disciplinary and area expertise to bear productively on our discussions

#### INSTITUTE FACULTY

The faculty of the institute is composed of prominent scholars, filmmakers, writers and artists from the United States, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Nigeria, Cameroon and Burkina Faso. **Mbye Cham**, a professor of literature and cinema at Howard University and **Manthia Diawara**, professor of comparative literature and cinema, Director of the Institute of African American Affairs and documentary filmmaker, will co-direct the Institute. Other members of the faculty include noted film scholar and literary/cultural essayist and Professor at the Gallatin School and in Africana Studies at NYU, **Clyde Taylor**; **Samba Gadjigo**, Professor of French at Mount Holyoke College and the biographer of Ousmane Sembène; historian and cultural critic **Boubacar Barry** of Université Cheick Anta Diop, literary scholar **Ousmane Sène**, also of Université Cheick Anta Diop of Dakar; **Siga Fatima Jagne-Jallow**, an expert in Women's Studies, Feminist, Cultural, Critical, and Post Colonial Theories; and **Fatou Sow**, currently with the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) in Paris and a leading figure in Senegalese cultural studies with acclaimed expertise in oral traditions and written literatures. We also have **Adebayo Olukoshi**, Director of the Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA).

Acclaimed filmmakers and writers, with whom we have had wonderful working relationships in the past, are also on the faculty of the institute. We are glad to welcome back renowned Senegalese directors **Moussa Sene Absa**, **Ben Diogaye Beye**, **Mansour Sora Wade**, **Khady Sylla** and a new multimedia talent, **Fatou Kande-Senghor**. Award winning Burkinabe director **Gaston Kaboré** will also spend an exciting four days with us. Rounding up this distinguished group are **Boubacar Boris Diop**, world renowned Senegalese novelist who has worked closely with many Senegalese film directors, and art critic and scholar, **Koyo Kouoh** from Cameroon.

### INSTITUTE LOCATION

The Institute will take place in Dakar at the West African Research Center (WARC) at Fann-Residence in Dakar, a few miles from the Hotel Ngor Diarama where all participants will be lodged. The Ngor Diarama is a three star hotel located next to the beach near the Leopold Senghor International Airport. It has a long history of hosting international conferences and meetings of professional societies from all over the world. There is a beach in front of the hotel. It also has a swimming pool and tennis court, restaurants and bars, and all the rooms are fully air conditioned. We shall be shuttling between the hotel and WARC. Some of the sessions of the institute will take place in this hotel, while others will be held at the WARC and, possibly, at the Gorée Institute on historic Gorée Island. Both Ngor Diarama and WARC are well equipped with facilities to handle the needs of the Institute. Internet access is available at both places as well as in various cafés around the city.

Dakar as a location provides participants many opportunities to immerse themselves deeply into a particular cultural, social, intellectual and human context of African Cinema in ways that will produce a better understanding and appreciation of the intrinsic properties of African cinema, its challenges, its reception by the Senegalese, as well as its role and importance in social development and change. Dakar is home to a large number of filmmakers, writers, scholars, artists and institutions from Africa and other parts of the world, and participants will have the opportunity to meet and engage many of these on many occasions. Thus, we will benefit from the broadest spectrum of expertise and skills in the humanities and social sciences, in general, and film and the creative arts, in particular, in Africa today. Additionally, by engaging the culture and people of Senegal and Dakar first-hand, participants will be equipped with the kind of cross-cultural and inter-cultural perspectives, information and skills that will enhance their teaching and work on Africa. Each institute participant or group will be required to work on and produce a curriculum plan that incorporates materials from the institute.

Travel, lodging and Institute activities have been worked out carefully by the project directors, the local coordinator in Dakar and our travel agent who successfully worked with us in 2001 when we did an NEH-supported workshop on African Cinema in Dakar. We will travel to Dakar on South African Airways from New York's JFK Airport. The group will depart Wednesday, June 8 and return from Dakar on Wednesday, July 6, 2005.

The Canadian Embassy in Dakar has developed a rather comprehensive and very useful website on Dakar, and we would like to share with you the address, should you want to find out more about the city of Dakar. <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/dakar/guide-en.asp# 33>. There is a link to this address on our website as well.

### STIPEND

NEH provides a stipend of \$3000.00 to each selected participant to help cover travel and living expenses in Dakar. We have worked out a package of \$2850.00 for air travel from New York and accommodation (double occupancy) for the period of the institute. When selected, we will ask each participant to authorize Howard University to withhold the amount of \$2850.00 from their stipend for the purpose of travel and accommodation costs. A check for the remaining \$150.00 will be mailed to each participant before departure.

Travel to and from New York, meals and incidentals will be the responsibility of the selected participants. Like most hotels in big cities, food at Ngor Diarama can be relatively expensive; however, there are many reasonably priced and good Senegalese, French, Italian, Chinese, Middle Eastern and other international restaurants and eateries in the vicinity of the hotel and in the city itself. Taxis are available around the clock and depending on your skills at negotiation, they can be relatively inexpensive. VISA is the most commonly accepted credit card, although some will take others. ATMs are also available around the city and, in some cases, you can use your local bank card (with Cirrus or PLUS) to withdraw money in local currency directly from your personal checking account. Viva globalization! We would like to encourage participants to seek additional funding from their institutions to help cover these expenses.

### INSURANCE AND MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Selected participants will be responsible for all costs related to medical and other such needs while in Dakar. While we do not anticipate any major health problems, other than the usual African variety of 'Montezuma's Revenge', we want to stress the need to check with your insurance provider to make sure of the extent of coverage. It is highly recommended that participants take out an emergency medical evacuation policy, should this not be included in their current coverage. Dakar has excellent private medical facilities and professionals and we will work with the US Embassy in case the need arises. Selected participants will be required to consult with their doctors and public health professionals prior to departure to find out what vaccinations are required. At the moment, the only vaccination required is Yellow Fever. We will keep track of these on our part and will post the announcements on our website. Malaria is still an issue in Senegal, so participants should make sure they have the proper anti-malaria tablets at least three weeks prior to departure.

We hope you will strongly consider joining us for this very exciting and productive intellectual and cultural summer in Dakar.

## APPLICATION

The Institute is designed to have an impact on the curricula of the participants' institutions, as well as the participants themselves by enabling them a) to create new courses from the materials, knowledge and experience gained in the Institute, b) to incorporate these materials into courses they are already teaching and c) to enhance their own scholarly and research work in African Studies and the humanities. As such, each participant or group of participants will be required to work on and produce a syllabus that incorporates materials from the institute. Applicants should, therefore, make sure they identify areas of personal research interest and/or curriculum development that they intend to work on in the course of the Institute. This syllabus will be submitted to the project directors no later than October 30, 2005 for inclusion in the final report to NEH.

The most important part of the application package is the essay that must be submitted as part of the complete application. This essay should be no more than four pages (double spaced). It should include any personal and academic information that is relevant; reasons for applying to the particular project; your interest, both intellectual and personal, in the topic; qualifications to do the work of the project and make a contribution to it; what you hope to accomplish by participation, including any individual research and writing projects; and the relation of the study to your teaching.

You will find on this website our "Dear Colleague" letter along with the general "Application Information and Instructions" and an Application Cover Sheet from NEH. The **deadline** for submitting the complete application is **MARCH 1, 2005**. Awards will be announced April 1, 2005. Send three (3) **HARD COPIES** (no e-mail submissions, please) of the full application package to:

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Address all e-mail inquiries to [Africancinema@howard.edu](mailto:Africancinema@howard.edu). You can also visit our website (under construction) for additional details on the Institute Daily Schedule, Reading List, Films, Bios of Institute Faculty, Links to other web resources and other relevant information. Best wishes and we look forward to hearing from you.

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