

FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS

Mon Oct 7 | 8:30 pm |

Jack H. Skirball Series

\$10.00 [members \$8.00]

The Black Radical Imagination

Program Curated by Amir George and Erin Christovale

Presented following a recent U.S. tour and an installation in Basel, Switzerland, *The Black Radical Imagination* is a visually rich collection of shorts—from video art to experimental and narrative films—inspired by a futurist aesthetic that explores issues of identity in our post-modern society. The program features *Golden Chain* (2013) by Adebukola Bodunrin and Ezra Clayton Daniels; *Afronauts* (2012) by Cristina De Middel; *Mae's Journal* (2013) by Amir George; *Quiescence Interrupted... Adumbrate* (2013) by Anansi Knowbody; *Split Ends, I Feel Wonderful* (2012) by CalArts alumnus Akosua Adoma Owusu; *Reifying Desire 2* (2012) by Jacolby Satterwhite; and *The Changing Same* (2001) by Cauleen Smith, whose experimental work was presented at REDCAT last spring. In addition, *Pumzi* (2009) by Wanuri Kahiu is screened as part of the evening.

In person: curators Amir George and Erin Christovale.

"I believe the Black Radical Imagination is a carefully selected body of work inquiring and responding to what it means to be black in the 21st century. Through the labor of several upcoming artists from the US and internationally these visions are maneuvered and crafted with the aid of technology. Encased in a futurist aesthetic these artists claim themselves as individuals re-appropriating their own stories while simultaneously creating within the entity of the African Diaspora. The vibrancy and electric energy of each story provides enquiries and responses on race, double consciousness, nationalism and queerness. All of these themes are set in the pieces to challenge the ideas of imaginative-stagnancy in the black community and to further the progression of creation." – CCH Pounder

Program

Cristina De Middel: ***Afronauts***

(Spain, digital, 2012, 4:30 min)

In 1964, still living the dream of her recently gained independence, Zambia started a space program that would put the first African on the moon catching up the USA and the Soviet Union in the space race. This ambitious program was the brainchild of schoolteacher Edward Makuka, who was also responsible for getting the necessary funding. Only a few optimists supported the project, and financial aid never came; the United Nations declined their support, and one of the astronauts, a 16 year-old girl, got pregnant and had to quit.

Jacolby Satterwhite: ***Reifying Desire 2***

(USA, digital, 2012, 8:30 min)

The second installment in a six-part series, *Reifying Desire 2* is a surrealist creation myth that stems from Satterwhite's ongoing collaboration with his mother. He writes: "*Reifying Desire 1-6* will use 230 3-D modeled versions of my mother's drawings, my body, and animated figures. The intersection of the disparate disciplines including dance performance, drawing, and digital media acts as an exquisite corpse strategy for guiding the storyline."

Amir George: ***Mae's Journal***

(USA, digital, 2013, 12:20 min)

Mae's Journal is a chronicle of the historic space mission of Mae Jemison in 1992. Through six fictional journal entries Mae's journey is recreated through live action reenactments and actual footage of the STS-47 voyage.

Akosua Adoma Owusu: ***Split Ends, I Feel Wonderful***

(USA, digital, 2012, 5 min)

A woman attaches a hairpiece, black women in hair salons get their hair plaited; and a woman models on a yellow turban. Eccentric hairstyles reveal the roots of Afro hair in which activist Angela Davis becomes involved. Manipulating and re-positioning found footage as subject matter, the film observes the latest fad in hairstyles of the 1970s among African Americans in New York City. It takes us to the time of "Black is Beautiful" and to a symbol of African pride.

Cauleen Smith: ***The Changing Same***

(USA, digital, 2001, 9:24 min)

An Alien is sent to earth to investigate the "incubators." She discovers that she is replacing a rogue agent and starts to question her mission as relationships become intimate.

Anansi Knowbody ***Quiescence Interrupted... Adumbrate***

(USA, digital, 2013, 6 min)

The piece is an introduction... part of a work in progress. The starring character, Buddah, is a regular guy with very irregular dreams that some might perceive as nightmares... The intent is to play on the ideas of distraction, disruption, fear, and premonition... the relativity of dream. The hope is to generate interest through technique and mystery.

Adebukola Bodunrin & Ezra Clayton Daniels: ***Golden Chain***

(USA, digital, 2013, 6:10 min)

The African Woman: mother of civilization, yet a historically overlooked member of contemporary global society. She finds herself now in a distant, not-impossible future. A Nigerian space station in a remote nook of the solar system orbits a pinpoint of matter so dense it cannot exist on Earth. It is a recreation of the birth of the universe itself, contained for the purpose of study, and overseen by Yetunde, chief science engineer on the space station Eko. This animation is the story of an archetype come full circle. Blending afro-futurist motifs with hard science fiction, the film creates a world at once fantastical, yet entirely plausible, in order to ask the question: "Where will we go, given where we came from?"

Wanuri Kahiu: ***Pumzi***

(Kenya, digital, 2009, 22 min)

Set in a post-apocalyptic world in which water scarcity has extinguished life above ground, *Pumzi* follows one scientist's quest to investigate the possibility of germinating seeds beyond the confines of her repressive subterranean Nairobi culture. Nature is extinct. The outside is dead. One day Asha receives a box in the mail containing soil, and the old seed she plants in it immediately starts germinating. She appeals to the governing body, the Maitu Council, to be granted permission to investigate the possibility of life on the outside, but is denied an exit visa.

The filmmakers

Adebukola Bodunrin, a native of Toronto, Canada, is a film, video, and installation artist who explores language, culture, and media. In her collage animations, she manipulates film using unorthodox manual and digital techniques in order to produce unexpected cinematic experiences. Bodunrin completed her Master of Fine Arts at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work has been screened or exhibited nationally and internationally at venues that include the Jersey City Museum of Art, the Scope Art Fair, Onion City Film Festival, the Chicago Underground Film Festival and Festival Animator, Poznań, Poland. She lives and works in Chicago.

Cristina De Middel, born in Spain, earned her MFA at the University of Valencia and received her MA in Photography from the University of Oklahoma, but her real training came as a photojournalist. Her first book and film *The Afronauts* (Self-published, 2012), has received critical acclaim and was named by many as one of the "Best Photobooks of 2012." De Middel is currently based in London, UK.

Wanuri Kahiu is a Kenyan film director. She has received several awards and nominations for the films she directed, including awards for Best Director, Best Screenplay and Best Picture at the African Academy Movie Awards in 2009. After graduating from the University of Warwick in 2001. Kahiu enrolled in a Master's Degree in the Directing Program at the School of Film and Television at the University of California, Los Angeles

Anansi Knowbody has worked as a producer, director, camera operator, AD, cinematographer, and editor as well as production designer in everything from narrative productions, commercial video, and experimental shorts. Originally from Jacksonville, Florida, he currently free-lances as a photographer/videographer utilizing skills gained at Columbia College. His work has been featured in numerous film festivals and gallery exhibitions.

Akosua Adoma Owusu is an award-winning filmmaker and artist of Ghanaian descent. She received her BA at the University of Virginia, where she studied prolific filmmaker, Kevin Jerome Everson, and later

her MFA in the School of Film/Video and the School of Art at the California Institute of the Arts. Owusu's short film *Me Broni Ba (My White Baby)* garnered critical acclaim with screenings at over 60 international film festivals including Rotterdam, London Film Festival, Visions du Reel, Silverdocs, and the Cannes Film Festival's Short Film Corner. Shortly after graduating from CalArts, she was the youngest of 42 black conceptual artists included in the group exhibition, *30 Seconds Off an Inch*, at the famed Studio Museum in Harlem, where she also exhibited solo video projects. Her videos have shown at art venues including the Museum of Modern Art, Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin/ Madrid, the National Gallery of Art, Transformer Gallery, BOZAR, LA Freewaves, Vox Populi, Spaces Gallery, and The Luggage Store Gallery. She was also a featured artist at the 56th Robert Flaherty Film Seminar and a Directing Talent at the Berlinale Talent Campus and the Durban Talent Campus in South Africa. Owusu is currently working on her first feature film and won an award at the 2013 African Movie Academy Awards for her short film, *Kwaku Ananse*, which had its North American premiere at the Toronto Film Festival.

Jacolby Satterwhite relocated to New York City where he now lives and works, following earning a MFA from the University of Pennsylvania in 2010. His multi-media works have been exhibited throughout the country, at such venues as The Kitchen, Dash Gallery, White Box Gallery, Exit Art, and the New Museum (New York); Plexus Art Gallery (Louisville, Kentucky); Aljira Center for Contemporary Art (Newark, New Jersey); and others. He has been awarded residencies at the Skowhegan School for Painting and Sculpture in 2009, a Harvest Work Residency from 2010-2011, and a Van Lier Grant from the Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning, Studio LLC program. He was recently featured in Studio Museum of Harlem's Biennale, entitled "Fore" and recently had his first solo show; *Matriarch's Rhapsody*, at the Monya Rowe Gallery in New York.

Cauleen Smith produces multi-channel film and video installations that incorporate sculptural objects and text, drawing from her roots in structuralist filmmaking to afro-futurist narrative strategies. For the past two years, Smith has held consecutive residencies in Chicago at ThreeWalls, the Black Metropolis Research Consortium, and the Experimental Sound Studio. In 2012, Smith installed overlapping

shows at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and ThreeWalls, and was named Outstanding Artist by the National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture. Smith currently teaches as a Visiting Artist at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago while exploring the intersection of art, protest, commerce, and community on Chicago's South Side. Smith received her B.A. from the School of Creative Arts at San Francisco State University and her MFA from UCLA' School of Theater-Television-Film. Smith's experimental, installation and narrative work has shown at The Kitchen, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, as well as film festivals in Milan, London, Paris, and Berlin.

The Curators

Erin Christovale is a Los Angeles filmmaker and programmer. She graduated from the USC Cinematic School of the Arts in 2010 with a B.A. in Critical Studies and is a part of the artist collective, Native Thinghood, which focuses on the promotion of upcoming artists of color.

Amir George is a motion picture artist and film curator from Chicago. His film and video work has been screened in festivals and galleries across the US and Canada, as well as in London. In addition to founding the Cinema Culture, a grassroots film programming organization, George is also programmer in residence at Black Cinema House a cinema space created by Theaster Gates. He studied at Columbia College and now teaches film and video classes to elementary and high school students. He is currently shooting new projects and curating programs.

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<http://betterdays-basel.com/the-black-radical-imagination/>

<http://www.classical917.org/articles/1376242649-Black-Radical-Imagination.html>

<http://vimeo.com/63584572>