African Studies

SPOTLIGHT ON
AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES

The African Perspectives series publishes the highest quality and most innovative research from scholars based in and beyond Africa. We seek exemplary work that unsettles conventions of Africanist scholarship. Our remit spans disciplinary approaches from anthropology to politics to public health, qualitative to quantitative methods, and thematic interests from musicology and literary studies to development and urban planning. The series privileges work grounded in field research in any of the countries of Africa and publishes studies by both well-established and emerging scholars. Monographs that offer imaginative solutions to contemporary social, cultural, technological, and environmental problems are especially welcome.

Series editors Kelly Askew, Laura Fair, and Anne Pitcher are building upon the University of Michigan’s distinctive position in the field of African studies, as exemplified by the Department of Afroamerican and African Studies and the African Studies Center, wherein interdisciplinary and international research clusters in the humanities, social sciences, and STEM disciplines have flourished.
Aso Ebi
Dress, Fashion, Visual Culture, and Urban Cosmopolitanism in West Africa

The Nigerian and West African practice of aso ebi fashion invokes notions of wealth and group dynamics in social gatherings. Okechukwu Nwafor’s volume *Aso Ebi* investigates the practice in the cosmopolitan urban setting of Lagos, and argues that the visual and consumerist hype typical of the late capitalist system feeds this unique fashion practice. The book suggests that dress, fashion, aso ebi, and photography engender a new visual culture that largely reflects the economics of mundane living. Nwafor examines the practice’s societal dilemma, whereby the solidarity of aso ebi is dismissed by many as an ephemeral transaction.

**Okechukwu Nwafor** is Professor of Art History at the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria, and Research Fellow in the Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan.

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Elites and the Politics of Accountability in Africa

*Elites and the Politics of Accountability in Africa* examines the ways that accountability offers an effective interpretive lens to the social, cultural, and institutional struggles of both the elites and ordinary citizens in Africa. Each chapter investigates questions of power, its public deliberation, and its negotiation in Africa by studying elites through the framework of accountability. The book enters conversations about political subjectivity and agency, especially from ongoing struggles around identities and belonging, as well as representation and legitimacy. Who speaks to whom? And on whose behalf do they speak?

**Wale Adebanwi** is Rhodes Professor of Race Relations and Director of African Studies Centre, University of Oxford.

**Rogers Orock** is Lecturer, Department of Anthropology, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.
Filtering Histories
The Photographic Bureaucracy in Mozambique, 1960 to Recent Times

*Filtering Histories: The Photographic Bureaucracy in Mozambique, 1960 to Recent Times* tells a history of photography alongside state formation to understand the process of decolonization and state development after colonial rule. At the center of analysis are an array of photographic and illustrated materials from Mozambique, South Africa, Portugal, and Italy. Thompson recreates through oral histories and archival research the procedures and regulations that engulfed the practice and circulation of photography. If photographers and media bureaucracy were proactive in placing images of Mozambique in international news, Mozambicans were agents of self-representation, especially when it came to appearing or disappearing before the camera lens.

**Drew A. Thompson** is Assistant Professor of Historical and Africana Studies and Director of Africana Studies, Bard College.

The Black and White Rainbow
Reconciliation, Opposition, and Nation-Building in Democratic South Africa

Nation-building imperatives compel citizens to focus on what makes them similar and what binds them together, forgetting what makes them different. Democratic institution building, on the other hand, requires fostering opposition through conducting multiparty elections and encouraging debate. Based on ethnographic and interview-based fieldwork conducted in 2012–13, *The Black and White Rainbow* explores various themes of nation- and democracy-building, including the emotional and banal content of symbols of the post-apartheid state, the ways that gender and race condition nascent nationalism, the public performance of nationalism and other group-based identities, integration and sharing of space, language diversity, and the role of democratic functioning including party politics and modes of opposition.

**Carolyn Holmes** is Assistant Professor of Political Science and Public Administration at Mississippi State University.
Textile Ascendancies
Aesthetics, Production, and Trade in Northern Nigeria

Until this century, Northern Nigeria was a major center of textile production and trade. *Textile Ascendancies: Aesthetics, Production, and Trade in Northern Nigeria* examines this dramatic change in textile aesthetics, technologies, and social values in order to explain the extraordinary shift in textile demand, production, and trade.

Textile Ascendancies provides information for the study of the demise of textile manufacturing outside Nigeria. The book also suggests the conundrum considered by George Orwell concerning the benefits and disadvantages of “mechanical progress,” and digital progress, for human existence.

Elisha P. Renne is Professor Emerita of Anthropology and Afroamerican and African Studies, University of Michigan.

Salihu Maiwada is Professor of Industrial Design, Ahmadu Bello University.

Gender, Separatist Politics, and Embodied Nationalism in Cameroon

*Gender, Separatist Politics, and Embodied Nationalism in Cameroon* illuminates how issues of ideal womanhood shaped the Anglophone Cameroonian nationalist movement in the first decade of independence in Cameroon, a west-central African country. Drawing upon history, political science, gender studies, and feminist epistemologies, the book examines how formally educated women sought to protect the cultural values and the self-determination of the Anglophone Cameroonian state as Francophone Cameroon prepared to dismantle the federal republic.

Jacqueline-Bethel Tchouta Mouguoé is Assistant Professor of Gender & Sexuality in African Cultural Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
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Performance and the Afterlives of Injustice

In the aftermath of state-perpetrated injustice, a façade of peace can suddenly give way, and in South Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo, post-apartheid and postcolonial framings of change have exceeded their limits. *Performance and the Afterlives of Injustice* reveals how the voices and visions of artists can help us see what otherwise evades perception. The book considers key works by contemporary performing artists Brett Bailey, Faustin Linyekula, Gregory Maqoma, Mamela Nyamza, Robyn Orlin, Jay Pather, and Sello Pesa, artists imagining new forms and helping audiences see the contemporary moment as it is: an important intervention in countries long predicated on denial.

**Catherine M. Cole** is Professor of English and Dance and Divisional Dean of the Arts at the University of Washington.

Prismatic Performances

*Queer South Africa and the Fragmentation of the Rainbow Nation*

At his 1994 inauguration, South African president Nelson Mandela announced the “Rainbow Nation, at peace with itself and the world.” This national rainbow notably extended beyond the bounds of racial coexistence and reconciliation to include “sexual orientation” as a protected category in the Bill of Rights. Yet despite the promise of equality and dignity, the new government’s alliance with neoliberal interests and the devastation of the AIDS epidemic left South Africa an increasingly unequal society.

*Prismatic Performances* focuses on the queer embodiments that both reveal and animate the gaps between South Africa’s self-image and its lived realities. As the sheen of the New South Africa began to fade, these performances revealed the inadequacy and, indeed, the violence, of the Rainbow Nation as an aspirational metaphor.

**April Sizemore-Barber** is Assistant Professor of the Practice in Women’s and Gender Studies at Georgetown University.
Resisting Europe
Practices of Contestation in the Mediterranean Middle East

Resisting Europe conceptualizes the foreign policies of Europe toward the states in its immediate southern “neighborhood” as semi-imperial attempts to turn these states into Europe’s southern buffer zone, or borderlands. This book examines the diverse modalities by which states in the Mediterranean Middle East and North Africa (MENA) reject, resist, challenge, modify, or entirely change European policies and preferences and provides rich empirical evidence of these contestation practices in the fields of migration and border control, banking and finance, democracy promotion, and telecommunications.

**Raffaella A. Del Sarto** is Associate Professor of Middle East Studies at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), SAIS Europe.

**Simone Tholens** is Senior Lecturer in International Relations at Cardiff University and Co-Director of the Centre for Conflict, Security and Societies (CCSS).

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Shaping the Future of Power
Knowledge Production and Network-Building in China-Africa Relations

China’s rise to power is one of the biggest questions in International Relations theory (IRT) and foreign policy circles. Although power has been a core concept of IRT for a long time, the faces and mechanisms of power as it relates to Chinese foreign policymaking has changed the contours of that debate. This book shows that foreign policy encounters between rising powers and Global South states do not necessarily exhibit the same logics, behaviors, or investment strategies of Euro-American hegemons. Shaping the Future of Power probes the types of power mechanisms that build, diffuse, and project China’s power in Africa.

**Lina Benabdallah** is Assistant Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Wake Forest University.
Of Vagabonds and Fellow Travellers
African Diaspora Literary Culture and the Cultural Cold War

*Of Vagabonds and Fellow Travelers* recovers the history of the writers, artists, and intellectuals of the African diaspora who, witnessing a transition to an American-dominated capitalist world-system during the Cold War, offered searing critiques of burgeoning U.S. hegemony. Cedric R. Tolliver traces this history through an analysis of signal events and texts where African diaspora literary culture intersects with the wider cultural Cold War, from the First Congress of Black Writers and Artists organized by Francophone intellectuals in September 1956 to the reverberations among African American writers and activists to the assassination of Patrice Lumumba.

**Cedric R. Tolliver** is Associate Professor of English, University of Houston.

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Mugabe
A Life of Power and Violence

Mugabe’s story is Zimbabwe’s—from the post-independence hopes of idealism and reconciliation to electoral victory, the successful intervention in the international politics of Southern Africa, and the resistance to South Africa’s policy of apartheid. But a darker picture emerged early with the savage crushing of the Matabeleland rising, the elimination of political opponents, growing corruption, and disastrous intervention in the Congo war, all worsened by drought and the HIV/AIDS crisis. Chan’s highly revealing biography, based on close personal knowledge of Zimbabwe, depicts the emergence and eventual downfall of a ruthless and single-minded despot amassing and tightly clinging to political power.

**Stephen Chan** is Professor of World Politics at SOAS, University of London. He received an OBE in 2010 for services to Africa and Higher Education.
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