Featured Events

Center of Pan-African Culture to feature youth production.

The Center of Pan-African Culture announces upcoming children's production, "The Calabash Kids: A Tale of Tanzania" written by Aaron Shepard, directed by Asantewa Sunni-Ali. Youth between the ages of 6 -17 will perform in the production as a part of the Center of Pan-African Culture's Pre-Kwanzaa Celebration in December.
“The Fulani Institute endeavors to engage and expand the knowledge base of youth in the Kent community and its surrounding areas through an offering of academic, cultural, and creative workshops and enrichment activities.”


Enroll in Fulani Institute of Academics and Arts

Participants of the fall 2018 Fulani Institute sessions will hone existent talents and explore theatre arts as an instrument for education and community dialogue. Under the directorship of Dr. Asantewa Sunni-Ali, participants will perform "The Calabash Kids, A Tale of Tanzania" written by Aaron Shepard.

The Calabash Kids is a story about a lonely woman name Shindo from the Chagga tribe of North Tanzania near Mount Kilimanjaro. Shingo prays for children, and her prayers are answered when her calabashes unexpectedly change into children. Shingo learns that her words have more power than she thinks and to appreciate what she has. The final performance will take place at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 8, 2018. The show will be a part of the Center of Pan-African Culture’s Pre-Kwanzaa program which is on the same day.

The Fulani Institute endeavors to engage and expand the knowledge base of youth in the Kent community and its surrounding areas through an offering of academic, cultural, and creative workshops and enrichment activities. Through its bi-weekly sessions the institute co-creates space...
for young people to be affirmed in themselves so that they are prepared to work effectively in their own best interests.

An immediate goal is to engage and expand the knowledge base of youth in the Kent community and its surrounding areas through an offering of academic, cultural, and creative workshops and activities. To enroll please contact: Asantewa Sunni-Ali, Ph. D., Director, Center of Pan-African Culture phone: 330-672-0157 or email: asunnial@kent.edu.

“Pan-African Theatre Ensemble Announces Fall 2018 Productions”

The Pan-African Theatre Ensemble (PATE) will hold two productions: “An Echo in the Bone” written by Dennis Scott, November 15, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. and “Malcauchon, or Six in the Rain” written by Derek Walcott, November 29, 2018 at 2:30 p.m. Performances will run in the African Community Theatre, room 230 Oscar Ritchie Hall, located at 225 Terrace Drive on Kent State University campus. Tickets are on sale now cost $10 for general audiences. KSU Faculty, Staff and Students will be admitted for free with valid ID. Call (330) 672 0082 or email at dforbese@kent.edu for your reservation. Tickets can also be purchased online by visiting the African Community Theatre webpage https://www.kent.edu/pas/act.

The Pan-African Theatre Ensemble consists of Kent State University students across campus, and members of the Kent/Akron/Canton communities meeting every 1st Friday of the month. The goal of the Pan-African Theatre Ensemble is to produce engaging, inspiring, experimental, and eclectic theatre and performance styles from the Pan-African world. Under the direction of D. Amy-Rose Forbes-Erickson, the PATE offers opportunities to connect with people from various backgrounds and cultures, and chances to travel and perform at festivals and events - USA, Caribbean, and Africa. Our first planned theatre festival is with the International Collegiate Theatre Festival at the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland in the summer 2019.
Fall 2018 IAAA Lunch & Learn presentation series

The Institute for African American Affairs (IAAA) in the Department of Pan-African Studies presents the Fall 2018 lunch and learn presentation schedule featuring two faculty from Kent State University’s school of theatre and dance, and the college of education, health and human services. These lunch-time presentations will be held: Wednesday, September 19, 2018, Digital Activism: Black Bodies Reclaiming Public Places by Gregory King; Wednesday, October 10, 2018, Let’s Get Real: An Exploration of Mental Wellness and Preparedness of Black Women in College by Janice A. Byrd. Presentations will be held in room 127 Oscar Ritchie Hall from 12 p.m. - 1 p.m. These presentations are free and open to the public.

These lectures are informal and typically held at lunch time in the conference room in Oscar Ritchie Hall. Speakers will be DPAS faculty, other KSU faculty and administrators, invited scholars from other universities and colleges, practitioners in various pertinent fields (international development, community organizing, police and public safety, etc.), and DPAS graduates who return to share their experiences in the professional world. If you are interested in giving a lecture for the lunch and learn lecture, please send an email to dpas@kent.edu. Learn more about the upcoming IAAA lunch and learn lecture schedule by visiting our events page.

UUMBAJI GALLERY

Spirit of the Masquerade exhibit September 2018

The Uumbaji Art Gallery located at Kent State University Oscar Ritchie Hall, presented “Spirit of the Masquerade,” a doll exhibition, themed Masquerades of Western Africa. The featured artist for this exhibit is Orisanmi Kehinde Odesanya formally known as Joyce Morrow Jones. Orisanmi has been designing and creating dolls for over 20 years. Through a passion for African art and culture, she has created more than 200 small-scale figures to honor Yoruba deities and masqueraders. Along with her small-scale figures, Orisanmi created a full-sized masked costume for this exhibition. Her work embodies the wisdom and folklore of oral tradition and thereby represents the philosophy, spirituality and performance of Yoruba expressive culture.
For many cultures and people, the mask facilitates the bridge between the physical and spiritual realms. Spirit of the Masquerade recreates the beauty of the Mask through a doll series, educational program exhibit. Masks featured in this exhibit are: Yoruba Raffia, Yoruba Gelede, Yoruba Egungun, Bwa Masquerade, Burkina Faso, Sande Sowo, Dogon, Epka, Acuba, Benin, Chowke Pwo, Ghanian Style, and Bamileke. According to Odesanya, “the Masquerade...telling the story: The appreciation of a culture begins with understanding.” Learn more about the artists’ point of view

BUS @ 50 Reloaded: photography collection from E. Timothy Moore, Lafayette Tolliver, and others

The Department of Pan-African Studies, with the support of Kent State University office of the President and University Libraries is pleased to announce “BUS @ 50 Reloaded: A photography collection from Lafayette Tolliver, E. Timothy Moore, and others,” an exhibit of the photographs of Lafayette Tolliver, E. Timothy Moore and others. An opening reception will take place Saturday, October 6, 2018 from 12 p.m. - 4 p.m. in the Uumbaji gallery in Oscar Ritchie Hall. Exhibit dates are October 6, 2018 - October 28, 2018 gallery hours are from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

“BUS @ 50” includes photographs of African American student life ranging from 1968-2015 and covers import events including presentations and lectures by now iconic national figures. The exhibit, which also features images of student led protests and student events, chronicles the development of Black United Students at Kent State University from its inception in 1968 to the present. Curated by professor Idris Kabir Syed, and University archivist Lae’l Hughes-Watkins.

Follow us on Instagram @ uumbajikent for upcoming events and media contacts.

DPAS FACULTY RESEARCH
Dr. Asantewa Sunni-Ali

As holder of a 2018 Summer Research and Creative Activity Appointment I traveled to Belize and Guatemala, Central America to collect data for research and documentary series, Seedz of Revolution. Seedz explores the lived experiences of African descended youth working in pursuit of individual and collective liberation. Over the course of six weeks, I conducted interviews, participant observations, and empowerment workshops with Garifuna youth, government workers and elders. The collected research data
will be used for both academic publication and for the production of Seedz of Revolution: Growing Up Garifuna, an episode in the documentary series.

Dr. Felix Kumah-Abiwu

My 2018 summer has been eventful and productive in terms of my research works. I was in Ghana from May to June to conduct field research works in the cities of Accra, Kumasi and Tamale. The project is part of my main research agenda on “Elections, Political Violence and Ghana’s Democratic Governance.” My interactions with ordinary Ghanaians, political, policy and media elites/experts through my face-to-face interviews have been greatly rewarding. Not only did I collect rich data for my ongoing research projects, but I also enjoyed the trip very much, thanks to the research fund I received from Kent State University.

I conducted another field study at the United Nations (UN) in New York City in July 2018. I interviewed senior diplomats at the Ghana and Nigeria Missions to the United Nations on my current research project which focuses on the “Voting Behavior of Ghana and Nigeria at the UN General Assembly.” I look forward to many scholarly publications from these research projects.

Mwatabu Okantah

The DPAS Ghana Study Abroad program present students and community stakeholders with a unique chance to explore 21st century life—at both the village and city levels—in the West African nation of Ghana. This interdisciplinary course is an academic/cultural opportunity designed to explore contemporary “life” in a modern West African society. This two week experiential sojourn is designed introduce participants to the “real Africa.”

In May 2017, traveling with Dr. Felix Kumah-Abiwu as Faculty Chaperone, we lead our first group—my Divine 9—to Ghana. More than a study abroad class, our experience became a pilgrimage from the moment we gathered at Cleveland-Hopkins International Airport to begin our journey. When we landed in Accra, we were met by Nana Kwodwo Eduakwa V, Chief of Atonkwa Village, located near Elmina in the country’s Central Region, and, Nana Kwa David Whitaker of Cleveland. There are no words to describe the joy I felt watching our students experience being in the former home of W. E. B. DuBois or standing for a group picture in front of the statue of Kwame Nkrumah or our tour of Manhyia Palace in Kumasi.
On the one hand, every day was a highlight, but, our visit to the village of Atonkwa stands out. The students stayed with host families selected by Chief Eduakwa. We were welcomed home, greeted by the Elders, the Queen Mother and the children. The students were given Akan Day names in a traditional Fante naming ceremony. While in the Central Region, we visited the infamous dungeons at Elmina and Cape Coast Castles. We cried together and bonded in the knowing that we are descended from people that survived those dungeons. The following morning, at an Ancestral Sun Rise ritual on the beach at Elmina, we were all able to lay our burdens down.

I was never more proud of a group students then when they pleaded to spend the remainder of our sojourn in the village. What I feared might be the most difficult part of our journey became the experience that touched and stayed with them the most. We experienced “the real Africa” in the village. Just revisiting these few memories, makes me long to take our next group during the Summer Intersession 2019.

Dr. D. Amy-Rose Forbes-Erickson

I was accepted to represent Kent State University in the International Collegiate Theatre Festival (ICTF) program 2018-2019 for the Pan-African Theatre Ensemble to perform at the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland in the summer, 2019. I received internal funding from the University Research Council to research and participate in the ICTF with a devised production of Mwatabu Okantah’s Cheikh Anta Diop: Poem for the Living, called “Digital Masks to Africa.” This new production explores a philosophical and spiritual journey to Africa with a multilingual cast performing in African languages (Wolof, Twi, Kiswahili), and European languages (English, French, Spanish, German) to reflect African descent cultures and communities around the world.

Nia (Purpose) @ KSU

Featured KSU Student leader

Brianna Robinson

Brianna Robinson is currently the Editor in Chief of Uhuru Magazine here at Kent State studying Sociology with a concentration in inequalities and she has a minor in art history. She is also a founding member of the Black Femme Collective, an organization which serves as a safe space for all black people who are feminine aligned. She is very passionate about the feminism, equity, the arts and self expression and hopes to reflect the pursuit of freedom through everything she creates in the future."