

Afropolitanism

In the past decade sociologists, cultural critics, and smug New York and London hipsters have discovered a new generation of global nomads – the young and well-educated Africans with a decidedly global outlook and multicultural sensibilities. Since it was first coined by Taiye Selasi in a 2005 magazine article the term “Afropolitanism” has taken root not only among the young and educated of the cosmopolitan capitals of the West but also on the continent which continues to dispatch waves of ambitious jetsetters to the urban centers of Europe and North America. As often happens with new phenomena and the fashionable idioms denoting them, the term “Afropolitanism” has become a contested one, spawning diverse and often conflicting interpretations of what it actually means to be an “Afropolitan,” especially in relation to the “Afropolitans” diasporic, African, and “Western” roots and identities. This panel will respond to the expanding debate surrounding the issue of Afropolitanism by situating the term within a variety of cultural and geographical contexts and thus examining its viability and objectivity as the descriptor of a transnational urban phenomenon.

Organizers: Maxim Matusevich, Seton Hall University, United States & Mark Stein, University of Münster, Germany & Anna Rastas, University of Tampere, Finland