



# NEXT STOP: KUMASI

**Princeton Convocation on West African Cities. Connecting Princeton USA and Kumasi, Ghana to work on the cities of Accra, Ghana and Lagos, Nigeria.**

## Convocation:

### Venue:

Princeton University School of Architecture  
Betts Auditorium

### Date and time:

March 9th -10th, 2007  
Friday 5:30pm - 7:30pm, Saturday 8:30am - 5pm  
School of Architecture, Princeton

### Thanks go to:

W. E. B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research, Harvard University.  
Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies

### Directed by:

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Dean; School of Architecture, Princeton University

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Director of Architecture,  
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### Facilitated by:

#### **Christopher Cripps**

Urbanist, UK and Ghana  
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## Context:

On the fiftieth anniversary of Ghanaian independence (and the two hundredth anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the UK), the School of Architecture at KNUST, under its new head, George Intsiful, is holding a conference on 'African Architecture Today' on June 5th-8th 2007.

<http://www.knust.edu.gh/conferences/architecture.php>

Faced with the explosion of cities in the 'undeveloped' world, the subject of Architecture/Urbanism has perhaps been polarized between a 'developed' product which is essentially 'western', and a focus on poverty – slum housing – in 'the south'. Cities such as Accra and Lagos are emerging into a period of major infrastructural planning and investment (e.g World Bank investment in Lagos infrastructure).

Progression routes out of poverty into a self-determined, developed economy need to be recognized and supported. The knowledge base, skills and expertise which are needed, challenge the confines of current 'western' research, teaching and practice.

At Princeton, the School of Architecture has established a center for Architecture, Urbanism and Infrastructure, part of whose remit is to work on the city within developing countries. One focus will be on the African cities of Accra and Lagos (work is already being done on a mass housing product for Ghana). There is a university-wide interest around cities, and there is good potential for interdisciplinary working. We present here a session which is an introduction to that work.



## Summary

A convocation will be sponsored jointly by Princeton University (Center for Architecture, Infrastructure and Urbanism unit) and The Center for Human Values on 9th -10th March 2007, in order to examine the main issues in developing a focus on African cities, in particular Accra and Lagos. We will seek to establish the basis for, and define in outline, the working links which could be developed.

The outcomes will be taken forward to the conference at Kumasi, Ghana, in 2007. From there, specific proposals which could include student exchanges and projects, research and consultancy links, will be made.

### Format:

#### Friday

- Evening Keynote Speech

#### Saturday

- Morning Session: Questions #1 and #2
- Presentation and Discussion, followed by Group Discussion
- Afternoon Session: Questions #3 and #4
- Presentation and Discussion, followed by Group Discussion.

**Question 1** What is the current state of knowledge about, and practice of architecture and urban design in West African academies and practices?

**Question 2** What thinking is being developed about African cities and Architecture by Africans in the American/European Diaspora? How does this relate to African-American and African critiques and practice in the visual arts?

**Question 3** What is the context of development in African Cities? What are the implications for architecture? What are the dynamics of growth and investment in African cities?

**Question 4** What are the implications for research and education in African Schools of Architecture/Urban Design and American Schools of Architecture/Urban Design? How can we bring American Academies into practical and effective relationship with African Architecture, Urban Design and development?

### Outcome:

Report on issues and proposals for possible teaching and research links to continue at Kumasi Conference in June 2007.



## Core themes

- **Universities – Legon/Kumasi/American universities – current, potential links**  
How can we bring American academies into practical and effective relationship with African Architecture, Urban Design and development?
- **African Modern Architecture now; its modern history and historic buildings American/Euro-centrism in teaching, research and practice of Architecture**  
Is the subject of Architecture as understood, taught and researched in ‘western’ academies accessible to advancement of the above?
- **Unplanned Lagos and Accra – explosion history – center and periphery, compact and dispersed.**  
What are current infrastructure and investment plans in cities such as Lagos and Accra?

- **Architectures Emerging**  
How relevant are the experiments and prototypes coming from ‘Humanitarian Design’?
- **Architecture and Culture**  
How does this relate to African American and African critiques and practice in the visual arts?

## Invitees

**Speakers: Architects, urbanists, artists/creative thinkers in African American studies and the diaspora. Architects, urbanists artists/creative thinkers from West Africa**