

The conversation between Jafari S. Allen und Serena O. Dankwa explores different Black postcolonial sites in which desires for (erotic) power, friendship, and intimacy are being negotiated. Both Dankwa's research into the everyday materiality and provisionality of female same-sex intimacy in Ghana and Allen's work on transnational Black desires for political empowerment and autonomy transcend analytical boundaries between friendship and sexuality, between scholarship, art, and activism. While considering intimate connections and disconnections across the "Black world", this conversation seeks to understand the intertwinement of various forms of struggle and sociality.

**Jafari S. Allen** is Associate Professor of African American Studies and Anthropology. He works at the intersections of (queer) sexuality, gender, and blackness, and teaches courses on the cultural politics of race, sexuality, and gender in Black diasporas; Black feminist and queer theory. Allen is the author of *iVencemos?: The Erotics of Black Self-Making in Cuba* (Duke UP, 2011) and editor of *Black/Queer/Diaspora* – a special issue of *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* (18:2-3, 2012).

**Serena O. Dankwa** earned her PhD from the Institute of Social Anthropology at the University of Berne. Specialized in the study of gender and sexuality in West Africa, her doctoral project focused on practices of female friendship and same-sex intimacy in postcolonial Ghana. In 2010-2011, she was the Sarah Pettit Fellow in LGBT Studies at Yale University. Besides her academic work, she freelances as a music journalist and broadcaster with SRF2 Kultur.

Desire, wandering about and forming assemblages, might be accompanied by serendipity or mate with jouissance or the power of the erotic, even as it fails to reach its presumed aim. Instead of running on a single track, we take desire to be functioning in a multiple manner. We call on desire's serendipity to grasp its illogical, contingent modes as a figure of fortunate errands. The lecture series **Desire's Multiplicity and Serendipity** looks for queer reconceptualizations of desire, its cultural articulations and lived realities. The key question is how to get from the critique of desire as a hierarchizing and normalizing force to the heterotopias of desire. What would it mean to understand or experience desire as opening up to alterity, undermining its own involvement in structural inequalities and normative violence?

The Lecture Series **Desire's Multiplicity and Serendipity** is a cooperation between the **Institute for Queer Theory** and the **ICI Berlin**.

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# SERENA DANKWA AND JAFARI S. ALLEN

DESIRE, FRIENDSHIP,  
AND INTIMACY ACROSS  
THE "BLACK WORLD"

