

digital dialogue

CONFERENCE

RISE OF AFRO-FUTURISM IN AFRICA'S CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Telling the African story from a different perspective through technology

Dubai, UAE (May Day, 2018) – Fresh off the critical acclaim and success of Black Panther, Afrofuturism is experiencing a resurgence with the thirst for new perspectives on African stories in relation to technology to grab the attention of a wider audience. Speaking on the focus on 'Afrofuturism', **Jonathan Dotse - Ghanaian Afrofuturist and Science Fiction Writer** presented his insights on the concept of Afrofuturism and its impact on Africa's creative industries at the 5th edition of the Digital Dialogue, a thought-leadership platform established in 2012 and facilitated by MultiChoice to address various issues facing the video entertainment industry on the continent and share industry best-practice.

Dotse spoke about his influences behind his various works saying, *"Back in 2009, I attempted to write science-fiction however, I was trying to write it from an Africa perspective but found it difficult to find a believable foundation to build my content. My ideas were based on a Western perspective so I began to think more about Africa and science-fiction in a constructive and realistic way while creating awareness for the lack of Afrocentric narratives in the genre."* Defining Futurism as *"any mindset that predisposed society to express their belief in terms of something far larger than present and past,"* Dotse explained further saying Afrofuturism is an ancient African cultural practice undertaken as 'resistance to cultural hegemony and loss of identity'.

According to Dotse, the African-American diaspora has played a critical role in the recent resurgence of Afrofuturism, looking at various creative works including the Woyaya album by Ghanaian Afro-pop band Osibisa; American fiction writer Octavia Butler; American jazz composer Sun Ra; US music artist Janelle Monae as well as films like Les Saignantes by Jean-Pierre Bekolo; Pumzi by Wanuri Kahui from Kenya; Robots of Brixton by Kibwe Tavares; Kajola by Niyi Akinmolayan in Nigeria and District 9 by Neill Blomkamp from South Africa. *"Expressions of Afrofuturism are present in all facets of African and African-Diaspora creativity. The African*

Diaspora has played a significant role in advancing defining Afrofuturism while various independence movements spurred much of the creative energy,” says Dotse.

Dotse also shared his belief that Afrofuturism has led to a re-awakening of self-identity among African youth and its potential to grow the strength of ‘socio-political movements seeking to boost African representation in media’. Dotse also expressed his belief that Afrofuturism will ignite and grow engagement of youth in science and technology and increasing accessibility to the tools of digital media creation and dissemination. He concluded his presentation by exploring the future prospects of Afrofuturism which include reconnecting traditional African culture with modern concepts of development and reconstructing the missing pieces of Africa’s lost history in technology to drive youth engagement in STEM and futurist thinking.

Note to Editors:

- For more information, please visit www.multichoiceafrica.com and follow the social media conversation on the hashtag #DigitalDialogue2018 and tag Instagram: MultiChoice Africa; Twitter: MultiChoiceAF; Facebook: MultiChoice Africa.

Images of the speaker are available for download here:

Speaker Bio: Jonathan Dotse - Afrofuturist and Science Fiction Writer

Jonathan is a science fiction writer, Afrofuturist, and digital hypermedia artist based in Accra, Ghana. Jonathan holds a bachelor's degree in Management Information Systems from Ashesi University in Ghana. Jonathan created the AfroCyberPunk blog in 2010 to explore the creative potential of African science fiction and has since published several articles and short stories in various print and online publications, including Jungle Jim, Sci Dev, Acceler8or, Brave New Now (2014), and African Futures (2016). Jonathan is currently working on his first novel, a sci-fi mystery/thriller set in Accra in the year 2057. Jonathan has also directed and developed a number of virtual reality (VR) productions, including *Pandora* (2015), the *Elsewhen* interactive VR experience for the Dakar Biennale (2016), and the VR documentary film *Spirit Robot*, which premiered at the Sheffield Doc/Fest (2017) and was produced with the support of the Goethe-Institut as part of the VR Africa Project. In January 2018, Jonathan launched AfroCyberPunk Interactive, a digital hypermedia creative studio and publishing house which aims to pioneer new forms of immersive and interactive applications for mobile devices.

About the Digital Dialogue Conference:

The 2018 Digital Dialogue Conference is a thought leadership platform facilitated by MultiChoice Africa in order to foster a better understanding of the future direction of the video entertainment industry in Africa. This is the 5th edition of the conference which was established in 2012 to create a better understanding of Digital Migration and its impact on Africa’s digital landscape. Since then, the independent and growing platform has been critical in fostering a better understanding and building knowledge on video entertainment and Digital terrestrial markets while creating necessary conversations with thought leaders about various industry-related issues.

About MultiChoice:

Entertainment is a powerful way to tell stories that open our minds, bring people together around shared passions, and connect us to new realities. It makes us laugh and cry. It informs, it educates and it inspires. MultiChoice is a video entertainment company, and our role is to enrich lives. Our mission is to deliver value to our customers by making great entertainment more accessible. We find and develop the right mix of content and deliver it to millions of people across Africa – anytime, anywhere. Whether it's local telenovelas, the excitement of world class sport or the latest global blockbusters, our investment in leading-edge content and technology systems deliver the shows that people love into their hands and their living rooms. We listen to our customers to understand their changing lives, the pressures they face and what matters most to them. We are committed to using these insights to put customers at the heart of all the decisions that each of us make every day. We're reshaping our business to improve our customers' experience, whenever and wherever they engage with us. Born and bred in Africa, MultiChoice is a team of more than 2750 full time and over 14 thousand contractors and independent agencies and accredited installers who to collectively deliver the greatest entertainment in the world to more than 49 countries across Sub-Saharan Africa. We are managed and run by local people, and strive to provide all our employees with new opportunities. We're proud of the contribution we make to our communities, and our business has grown hand-in-hand with local economies by forging long-term partnerships with governments, national broadcasters and entrepreneurs. As the continent's leading funder of sport and local production, we've built skills and capacity to become the backbone of content that matters to our customers. As Africa continues to change rapidly, the entertainment industry is ever more relevant. We want to use our influence and resources to play a positive role in Africa, helping to grow Africa's people and creative industries into vibrant, economic powerhouses. It's by creating value for our customers, our employees and society that we'll build a successful business for the future.