Fall 2012

Secessionist Spaces and Nigerian Identity

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WUURD, the Washington University Undergraduate Research Digest, is published by the Office of Undergraduate Research once a semester each academic year. Applications for submission and Statement of Editorial Policy may be found online.

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Recommended Citation
http://openscholarship.wustl.edu/vol8_iss1/1

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Fela Anikulapo Kuti: “he-who-holds-death-in-his-pocket,” the father of “Afrobeat,” the “Black President,” “Chief Priest Say,” was a prominent Nigerian musician and activist in the 1970s-1980s. The impact of Fela’s music—its subversive and revolutionary undertones, its lyrics about a pan-African identity and political corruption—still reverberate within a wider discourse of popular music, political culture and post-colonial identity. Fela, an organic intellectual of the urban disenfranchised, used a variety of spaces as sites to contest a new Nigerian culture. This research explores how Fela performed identity through his use of space in his venue the “Afrika Shrine” and the secessionist commune he established in Lagos, the “Kalakuta Republic.”