

ASA NEWS

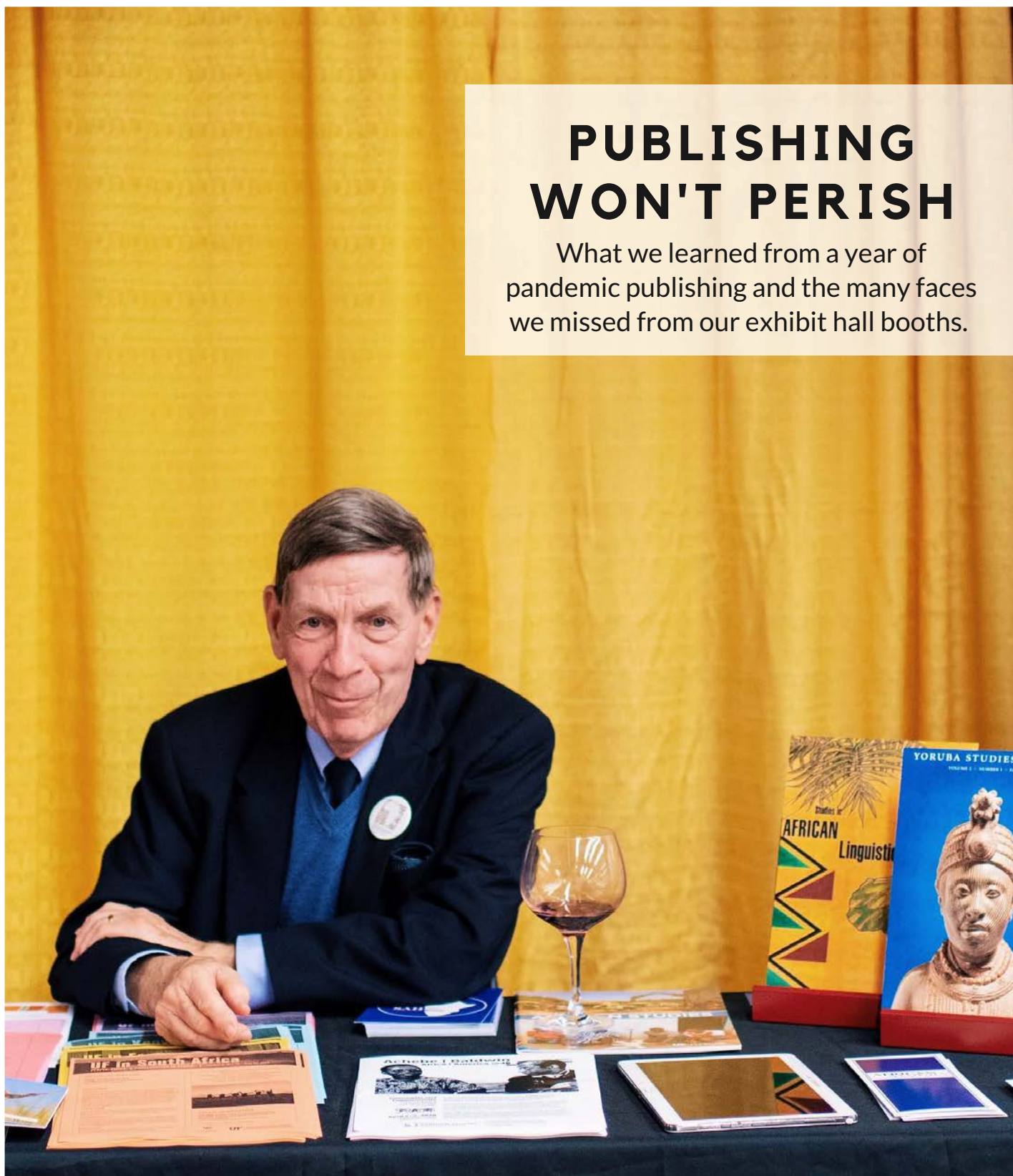
ENHANCING THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ABOUT AFRICA

PUBLISHING WON'T PERISH

What we learned from a year of pandemic publishing and the many faces we missed from our exhibit hall booths.

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AN AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION PUBLICATION

LETTER FROM THE ASA

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainty surrounding vaccine distribution and international travel, the African Studies Association Executive Committee has voted to convene the 2021 ASA Annual Meeting virtually. Although we miss seeing our members, presenters, friends, and colleagues in person we cannot guarantee the safety of our attendees at this time, nor can we guarantee access for our many international members.

While this may be disappointing for some, the ASA strongly believes that making this decision now for a November conference offers distinct advantages, including an event format that you can anticipate with certainty and plan for accordingly. We have already begun to review and expand our digital programming outside the Annual Meeting so that we might continue to build online spaces to facilitate interaction for our constituents online. The 2020 Virtual Annual Meeting taught us important lessons about virtual community building (p.35). After careful consideration of your Annual Meeting Participation Survey feedback we are excitedly reimagining some of our events for 2021.

We are committed to increasing access to our Annual Meeting programming and as such, we have simplified our registration rate structure and reduced our registration rates by approximately 40% for 2021. We hope that this decreased fee will assist the participation of our many global constituents including intellectuals that have been previously unable to join us. Increased access will be particularly exciting in light of the new Africa's Diasporas subtheme, which we anticipate will be a vibrant submission category this year.

We have received many inquiries as to why a virtual meeting is not free to attend for all. We want to be transparent in sharing that webinar and video-conferencing platforms are not free – especially when used on a large scale. A sizeable virtual conference also carries increased security concerns and technological support is necessary to prevent internet harassment and Zoom bombing. We are pleased to report that as a result of our software support there were no incidents of harassment or Zoom bombing in 2020 and we intend to uphold that standard in 2021. In addition to software, a monumental number of ASA and vendor staff hours go into planning and executing the ASA Annual Meeting, without which we would be unable to operate.

In 2020, approximately 80 proposals were deferred in the hopes that we would reconvene in person while others were entirely withdrawn. For those who did not participate last year, we hope that you will reconsider and enrich our meeting by sharing your work in new ways. If you deferred a proposal last year or entirely withdrew, you must resubmit your proposal to the 2021 CFP to indicate your intention to present on this year's program. Deferred proposals will be automatically accepted by our Program Committee and placed on the program. In addition to including our deferred and withdrawn panelists, this year we also aim to increase our Coordinate and Affiliate Organization sponsored panels by 20% over last year. These organizations are vital to the strength of our community and we look forward to featuring them prominently on our 2021 program.

In order to realize a dynamic and inspiring 2021 Annual Meeting, we ask our long-standing participants to help us spread the word so that we may welcome new scholars and practitioners into the ASA community. We know that the past year has been financially difficult for many, as it has been for the association itself. By holding a virtual conference, we hope that the reduced registration fees, along with the absence of hotel and travel costs, will alleviate some of the economic burdens on our participants. Furthermore, we are proud that a virtual event allows the ASA to do our part to combat climate change, given the incredible reduction of carbon emissions that a flight-and-hotel-free event ensures.

We encourage all of our members, past attendees, and new participants to take the next few months to explore how your research and knowledge can be communicated in digital formats. Do you have ideas about ways to present a paper outside of a standard Zoom presentation? Let us know! We look forward to exploring this digital era together and excitedly await our next gathering.

CONTENTS

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE

3 PUBLICLY ENGAGED HUMANITIES TRENDS

The NHA discusses trends in the publicly engaged humanities amidst the pandemic.

7 BUILDING NEW TOWERS: NEW ORLEANS MUSEUM OF ART

Dr. Ndubuisi C. Ezeluomba shares his journey in African Art History and art curation.

11 CRITIC.READING.WRITING!

ASA Past President Ato Quayson and Grace Toleque share their secrets to YouTubing as a team.

15 THE PERSISTENCE OF THE PEN: PANDEMIC PUBLISHING PERSERVERES

ASA publishing exhibitors highlight exciting new work, trends, and how to pitch virtually.

21 MEET THE NEW ASR DISSERTATION PRIZE WINNER

Cecilia Durojaye won a new ASR award in 2020 for her interdisciplinary dissertation.

25 PODCASTING ON AFRICA: THE HIP HOP AFRICAN

Member and podcaster Dr. Msia Kibona Clark shares her podcasting passion with ASA.

29 ASA MEMBER NEWS

Updates from our Members, who push the field forward.

35 THE 2020 VIRTUAL MEETING: BY THE NUMBERS

The two-page infographic illustrates how successful the 2020 Virtual Meeting really was.

37 GET TO KNOW THE 2021 ANNUAL MEETING

Enjoy an introduction to the 2021 Program Chairs and read the full theme statement they crafted.

39 ASA ADVOCACY IN PRACTICE

The history of ASA Advocacy is outlined and explained by former committee chair Sean Jacobs.

43 THE SPECIALIST DIRECTORY

The ASA has a new benefit for its members. Read about our digital rolodex of Africa experts.

44 STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION

Important Board updates, voting outcomes, and association changes.

45 DOUBLE FEATURE DECADENCE

ASA Film Prize Chair, Ken Harrow shares his top film picks to fill your indoor hours.



Founded in 1981, the National Humanities Alliance (NHA) is an advocacy coalition dedicated to the advancement of humanities education, research, preservation, and public programs. NHA is supported by more than one hundred national, state and local member organizations and institutions.

TRENDS IN THE PUBLICLY ENGAGED HUMANITIES IN THE PANDEMIC MOMENT

By **Michelle May-Curry,**

Humanities for All project director

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, many humanists set out to document the quickly worsening global health crisis. As the months progressed, a summer fueled by national protests against police violence and immigrant detention made apparent the overlapping social consequences of public health disparities and racial injustice amidst the COVID-19 crisis. In this context, scholars from a range of humanities disciplines created public-facing projects that aimed to record and understand the effects of social isolation, mass-death, higher mortality rates for Black and brown people, a steep economic downturn, and our collective digital existences.

The National Humanities Alliance's Humanities for All initiative has been working to collect and document these publicly engaged humanities projects with particular attention to how scholars have been leveraging the methodological tools of the humanities to address this moment of crisis and change. Across these projects, we have noticed three trends in the field: humanists have cataloged the breadth of pandemic experiences through oral history and archival collection methods, they have creatively navigated the digital pivot with interactive programming, and have made meaning out of this moment with perspectives from history, literature, and art.

Most common across projects has been the use of oral histories and archival collection methods. These largely digital projects have used storytelling and critical reflection to amplify community voices and histories and help individuals navigate difficult experiences related to the pandemic. At Arizona State University, the *[Journal of the Plague Year](#)* project has published and mapped personal

essays, images, and articles about the pandemic, collecting thousands of entries on their website in a matter of months. At Florida International University's Wolfsonian Public Humanities Lab, students from the honors college were given disposable cameras and asked to document what it felt like to live through a summer of uprisings and isolation. Participating students then wrote reflections on what they experienced and told their stories through short podcast episodes. The [resulting archive](#) of stories sits at the intersection of arts and humanities, as students curate their lives through images and narrative.

Humanists have also turned to global histories and literature to draw connections across cultural contexts. Many Title VI National Resource Centers have organized programming for secondary school teachers around themes of global health and histories of pandemics. The University of Michigan's International Institute, for example, organized a 3-day virtual workshop for history, social studies, and English teachers titled Pandemics and Power in World History & Literature, where teachers learned how to use humanity's historic encounters with disease to have challenging and timely conversations with students through literature. In lieu of in person events and speaker series, the University of Iowa's Obermann Center for Advanced Studies produced Pandemic Insights, a YouTube series of filmed conversations in which Iowa faculty, community partners, students, and staff helped viewers understand the pandemic through the lens of their research. Reflecting a range of humanities interventions, [Pandemic Insights](#) conversations include lessons from WWI writers on grief and death, reproductive health and the language of "emergency" and cinema in a moment of global crisis.

Perhaps most strikingly, by embracing digital platforms public humanities projects have expanded educational access and partnerships both within the university and across community organizations during the pandemic. At the University of Madison, Wisconsin's Humanities

Center, Aaron Fai notes how their Humanities Responders program—a COVID-related rebranding of their Humanities Exchange program—was able to fund a virtual convening for the leading LGBTQ+ nonprofits in Wisconsin's Dane County to identify common needs during the pandemic, overcome previous barriers to collaboration, and coordinate community resources. Led by Yidong Wang, a UW PhD

"THESE INITIATIVES PRESENT MODELS FOR UNDERSTANDING HOW HUMANITIES METHODS CAN INTERVENE IN MOMENTS OF SOCIAL RECKONING BY CREATING SPACES FOR COLLECTIVE STORYTELLING AND CIVIC ACTION"

candidate in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, the event facilitated an unprecedented moment of coalition-building for the region's queer community organizations. At Barnard College, professor of history Nara Milanich used funding from the Institute for Latin American Studies to create a remote summer research initiative for twenty undergraduates and masters students on COVID-19 and Central American migration. The research-advocacy project partnered with Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), an organization that represents unaccompanied migrant minors in legal proceedings. Alongside a series of webinars led by faculty across higher-ed institutions, students also received research training from Barnard-Columbia librarians that prepared them to do a deep dive into Central American and Mexican press, government, and NGO sources.

However, other universities, particularly those in rural areas with less internet connectivity and fewer digital resources, have noted that the lack of in person contact has almost entirely extinguished their connection to their community partners, a difference that highlights the resource divide between urban and rural institutions and communities.

Together, these initiatives present models for understanding how humanities methods can intervene in moments of social reckoning by creating spaces for collective storytelling and civic action. In the coming year, we will be working to document the lessons learned through these individual public humanities projects through our [Humanities for All Blog](#) as well as through in-depth profiles on our website. We are also partnering with directors of compelling initiatives to implement customized surveys that measure their impact on participants' perceptions of the humanities and civic-minded behaviors. We [invite you to partner](#) with us in these efforts, and hope to provide insights across projects that benefit the whole humanities community.



The **Boston University African Studies Center** is a U.S. Department of Education Title VI National Resource Center and an active member of the **ASA Outreach Council** which promotes the teaching of Africa in K-16 classrooms, collaborates on an annual teacher workshop, and produces teacher resources for the proliferation of responsible teaching of area studies in U.S. schools.

In January 2021, the work of the BU Outreach Center was featured in the NHA Humanities for All blog that highlights public facing humanities work. Read their fantastic feature on the African Artifact Map by **clicking the linked quote on the next page.**

The feature was authored by Dr. Elsa Wiehe, who leads the BU African Studies Center Outreach Program and is the Immediate Past Chair of the ASA Outreach Council. The map project was developed under the leadership of Outreach Manager Breeanna Elliott, who is currently a Ph.D. Student in the History of Science and Medicine at Yale University.

A map of Africa with various countries labeled. Overlaid on the map are several numbered circles in orange and blue, representing data points. The text is centered over the map.

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**THE PEDAGOGICAL VALUE OF
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LIFE IN VARIOUS CONTEXTS.**

“



BUILDING NEW TOWERS: IMPACTFUL CAREERS OUTSIDE TEACHING

From Nigeria to NOMA, Dr. Ndubuisi C. Ezeluomba has had an incredible career journey. See how he landed his position as the Françoise Billon Richardson Curator of African Art at the New Orleans Museum of Art, engages his research interests, and how he believes we can empower emerging scholars to achieve career goals outside of teaching.

In August 2018, you were appointed Françoise Billon Richardson Curator of African Art at the New Orleans Museum of Art (NOMA). Prior to this appointment you were an Andrew W. Mellon curatorial research specialist in African art at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA), and a consultant at the Harn Museum of Art at the University of Florida. What motivated your decision to follow this career path?

When I resumed grad work at the University of Florida in the fall of 2013, my professor included me to participate in the preparation of *Kongo Across the Waters*, a major exhibition that toured five venues in the country and the museum in Tervuren, Belgium. A great chunk of the graduate seminar was tied to the exhibition. In the process of working with the team and participating

in the seminars, I became interested in a career as a curator. I stayed close to the University museum (Harn Museum of Art) after the exhibition and immersed myself with the various divisions within. In the fall of 2016 when I was about to embark on the fieldwork trip for my dissertation, I was hired as a Mellon fellow to join the team at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond. Through the visionary leadership and keen interest placed on me by the team leader (Richard Woodward), he allowed me go to Nigeria for three months to conduct fieldwork. Upon my return from that trip, I went to work with the team and continued working as the curatorial research specialist in African art until I was appointed to the curatorship at NOMA. I must admit that the team leader was such a pragmatic leader who was willing to nurture younger colleagues in the field. Continuing

dialogues as the project unfolded became a significant component that carried everyone along. It also contributed to the book that just came out from the press (*The Arts of Africa: Studying and Conserving the Collection*, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts). Since resuming at the New Orleans Museum of Art, I have continued to research the collection and conceiving thought-provoking exhibition ideas.

You have a PhD in art history from the University of Florida, Gainesville and your doctoral research focused on visual cultures of shrines. Your dissertation was entitled “Olokun Shrines: Their Functions in the Culture of the Benin-Speaking People of Southern Nigeria.” Can you tell us how your doctoral research interests inform your current curatorial work? How has your PhD training helped you along the way?

My specialization is the visual cultures of shrines, and my core focus is on the shrines dedicated to the veneration of Olokun among the Benin speaking people of southern Nigeria. Within that sphere of study, I can be looked at as a specialist in the historic arts of Africa. This is very important especially when you place it against my current position. As the curator of African art here at NOMA, I am in charge of the historic arts of the continent. A significant strength of my scholarship immediately relates to the sort of materials that I curate here at NOMA. However, I did not detach myself from contemporary artistic practice that is ubiquitous in the continent. My research and scholarship and practical experiences are the strongest factors that readily position me as one of the best candidates to handle the sorts of materials in the African art collection at NOMA. Born and raised in Nigeria, I have participated in the creation and use of some of these materials that I currently curate. Therefore, I bring deep knowledge and understanding of the materials to shed clearer meaning to museum visitors.

What type of mentoring did you receive that lead you to this job? Were you mentored by faculty, curators, or both?

I have received mentorship from both the academy and the museum establishments. During the time I was undergoing graduate work at the University of Florida, Gainesville, I enjoyed some of the best mentorship from Prof. Robin Poynor. His depth of scholarly knowledge of the field and his dedication to nurture budding scholars, led him to dish out mentorship to his teeming students. I must add that, he stayed



back to finish supervising me, even when he was supposed to have retired. I enjoyed a robust scholarship and practical advice at the University, all thanks to him.

Similarly, in the fall of 2016, I was hired to join the team at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) in Richmond to work on an Andrew W. Mellon funded project that sought to study the African collection at the museum. I worked under Richard Woodward, the African art curator. Although I left two years later, I had acquired a significant amount of mentorship from him. It was not a surprise that I immediately went to work as the African art curator here at NOMA in the fall of 2018. As I stated above, Richard's pragmatic leadership style made it possible for me to easily immerse myself, and easily too, to the workings of the museum. His guidance and continuing support remain a gift for me as I continue to navigate my role here at NOMA.

What can faculty and institutions do to help their students pursue careers across the discipline?

They can do a combination of things. Firstly, they can make the students understand the need for interdisciplinarity. This is very important especially in the current system of things. Earlier in grad school, my supervisor had added me to participate in the build up to an exhibition, which would tour five venues in the United States and Belgium. This was truly a blessing as it gave me a first hand experience on how exhibitions are planned and executed. It also afforded me the opportunity to understand the idea behind works within the museum establishments. Even though I work within the museum establishment, I have not completely detached myself from mainstream teaching. When the opportunity presents itself, I have always taught at adjunct capacity at universities and colleges.

Secondly, they can offer students thorough advice to participate in internships across disciplines. For example, students can be encouraged to apply and

and participate in internships within museums – these could be university or public museums. What some students will realize having gone for such experiences is that the museum is also another type of classroom and a larger one at that. In summary, faculty and institutions can help students by revealing to them the need to be open in their eventual decision to careers after graduate school. Engaging students about the benefits of pursuing careers in other discipline, helps those students by preparing them for when such opportunities become available.

Do you engage with academic institutions often in your current position? Do you feel connected to the academic community through your work?

The simple response to this question is, yes. I teach courses that have leaning to museums, but I also teach courses in my field of specialization in African art history. Even as a curator, I am very active in research and publication, which is a strong point in my role in the museum, and that is the one avenue where my role intersects with the academic community. I have participated in academic events and still do until this day. I have been invited as distinguished speaker at numerous universities, and more recently have been invited to give lectures relating to topical academic conversation, such as my involvement with the issue of the repatriation of Africa cultural patrimony. There have also been opportunities to collaborate with academic institutions in Africa at events that seek to intersect knowledge of museum practice and mainstream academic discourses. And I hope to continue along this trajectory.

What do you enjoy about your current position, and what are some of the challenges in your role?

One of the big take aways from being a curator of the historic arts of Africa is the joy of participating in telling the stories of these art works and objects. Being born and raised in the continent and participated in the making and use of some of these works offers the most practical knowledge base needed for the role. Equally, studying and specializing in African art history offers the necessary academic grounding to deal with the theoretical foundation for the articulation of the material importance of these astonishing works. These are some of the joys I derive working in my current role as the African art curator at NOMA.

The financial resources to actualize some of my curatorial projects provide some challenge. And with COVID-19 and the altered landscape of our world, the depleted economy makes it difficult to find financial support. I have to wait for and be sure that there are available funds to be able to reinstall the African art gallery, which was one of the significant activities that I articulated during the interview for the role. We hope that grant institutions will approve of some of the grants applications we have sent out in this regard. Equally due to lean financial resources, it is almost impossible to generously spend funds for acquisition of new works. We hope that these challenges can be mitigated as things begin to look up.

How has the history and culture of New Orleans shaped and impacted NOMA's African art collection and your curation of it?

"THE IMPORTANCE OF THE AFRICAN STORY CANNOT BE OVER EMPHASIZED... THE CONTINENT IS A CONTINUUM"

The diversity of the cultures of New Orleans provides uniqueness about the city. Regarded as the most African city in the country, the African art collection at the museum represents one of the best in the south and even the country. Since I resumed my position as curator here, I have enjoyed my role and have curated some exhibitions, which suggest the importance of our collection, but also their importance in the cultures that created and used the art works. Art collectors and dealers also have impacted the museum immensely. For example, a significant gift to the collection in the 1970s by Victor Kiam, and another one by Mrs. Francoise Billion Richardson in the 2000s are worthy of note. It was these gifts that kick started what we behold today as some of the iconic pieces of African art in the collection. Other gifts and strategic purchases of the years have complemented these. Equally, Mrs. Francoise Billion Richardson provided the seed money to endow the African curator position at the museum (the title attached to the African art curator position). Other individuals have in varying ways donated to the museum, and are still giving. All these are ways the community has helped in the development of the collection.

NOMA is known for its African art collection as well as its collection of French and American art and its extensive sculpture installations. Why do you think it's important for museums to continue to collect African art specifically and continue to engage specialists like yourself in curatorial roles?

The role of museums is to collect, care and exhibit cultures. This is a noble role. Not only does it help to preserve these material culture for posterity, but it also offers us the opportunity to enjoy the diverse creativity that artists and other creative people have created over time.

The importance of the African story cannot be overemphasized. Very early on in my engagements with African materials in museums, I have always stressed the importance of the historic materials, but also stress that the continent is a continuum, and not ahistorical as some of the materials in museums collections seems to suggest. It is by collecting and displaying the historic as well as the contemporary artistic creativity of the continent that a holistic understanding of the continent can be achieved. Anything shy of these will continue to perpetuate the feeling that the continent only created historic materials and as such ahistorical.

Continuing collection of African art in American museums is vital in the articulation of the creativity that emanates from the continent, but also to help in the correct representation of reality out there. The engagement of specialists in interpreting the materials is the first step and best approach to the presentation of the art works and objects.



What types of collaborations or projects would you like to see materialize with other academics in African area studies?

We are already working on a collaborative exhibition with the Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk Virginia. Titled *Black Orpheus: Jacob Lawrence & the Mbari Club*, the exhibition explores the connection between African American artist Jacob Lawrence (1917-2000) and his West African-based contemporaries during a period of artistic innovation emerging from socio-political upheaval. In 1965, Lawrence presented thirteen tempera and gouache paintings and nine crayon and ink drawings of Lagos and Ibadan marketplaces at the Terry Dintenfass Gallery in New York. These images were the culmination

of an eight-month stay in Nigeria hosted by German cultural critic Ulli Beier, one of the founders of the Mbari Artists & Writers Club. This show has assembled some seasoned scholars in the fields of African studies and African American art to participate by contributing essays in the book/catalogue that accompany the exhibition. This is one of many projects that will engage academic partnership with museums.

Looking ahead, I hope to find other opportunities for engagements with academics in African area studies, especially scholars and institutions on the continent. This is very significant, because continuing to exclude the continent in the various projects that we carry out here amounts to continuing disrespect to the continent and its peoples.



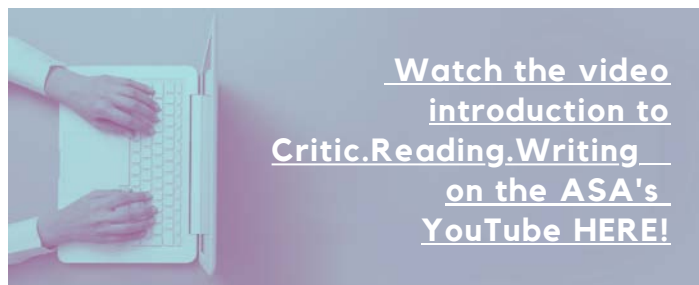
Critic. Reading. Writing.

ASA Past President Ato Quayson and his wife, Grace Toleque share their successful YouTube project, intellectual creativity, and finding inspiration in their life together.

Ato Quayson is the Jean G. and Morris M. Doyle Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies at Stanford University. He teaches in the Department of English. **Grace Toleque** is the Program Officer at the Institute for Diversity in the Arts at Stanford University. She is also a jewelry designer.

We love the name of your YouTube Series "Critic.Reading.Writing." Can you tell us more about how and why you chose that name for this project?

I have for a long time thought of designing an undergraduate course titled Critics Reading Writing. The objective of the course would simply be to examine how various critics read literature or pieces of writing. Thus, we might have Edward Said on *Middlemarch*, Chinua Achebe on Conrad, J. Hillis Miller on Kafka, Eric Auerbach on Homer and the Bible, Stephen Greenblatt on *The Tempest*, Wole Soyinka on Nietzsche, and so on. The idea would be to pretend that we were looking over the shoulders of these critics to see how they read writing. For some reason I have never quite got round to devising the course, but when time came to decide on a title for our YouTube channel it is that title that came forward



most strongly. Because I am indeed a critic that is reading writing (and other things).

We should also say something about why we started the channel at all. My wife Grace and I were utterly devastated at the killing of George Floyd. We anguished over it for many many days after which we decided that it was important as Black people to show the world that Blacks were not only thugs, or entertainers, or sports people but that we came bearing many gifts to the feast we call life. Ours was then to share what we are best at, which is communicating knowledge and presenting it in the best possible manner. Being the creative director, videographer, and editor of the series, Grace is really in charge of the beautiful aesthetic values of the videos. I just do what I am told!

We would describe your work as an engaging mix of scholarly analysis and pop culture. How do you decide what you'll cover in each episode?

Our decision making process has changed over time, but at its heart is the decision of what thematic cluster we would like to explore and around which we then settle on a number of episodes. And so we did a whole set of episodes on Tragedy from the Greeks, through Shakespeare and then into expressions of the concept in African and Postcolonial Literature. We had episodes on Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*, Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*, and J.M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*, among several others. Another thematic cluster we have started exploring is on spatial theory, cities, and literature. We have already put out an episode defining the field of Urban Studies from the perspective of Accra and another one on the Afro-Brazilians of Accra, 1836–Present Times. There are several episodes following on from these ones that will explore specific concepts of space as they might be applied to both literary and real life contexts. One of these we put out recently was on reading the Airport as Chronotope. There are several more to follow.



Your series has developed into a multiplatform conversation. We particularly love your proverb snippets on Instagram. Can you tell us more about the different ways you use various communication tools to share all your ideas and information?

The idea was always to explore innovative ways of delivering our message across different platforms. So for a while I recorded 1-minute think-files on my cell phone that I then uploaded onto Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. These were used as appetizers for upcoming episodes. I am afraid I have not been that consistent on using this method but intend to go back to it in a more systematic way as we move along. Much of our publicity has been via Facebook and also sending out messages to various friends and acquaintances to ask them to spread the word. It is clear that in this too we will have to sharpen our game.

You make YouTubing look so effortless and fun. Were there skills that you needed to learn or perfect in order to feel confident about your final product?

This is really Grace's domain. When we launched the channel it was the first time she had ever recorded and edited a video. But she said that there was nothing that Google and his little sister YouTube could not teach you. So she set about learning how to edit the videos as professionally as possible while putting them out week by week. It was excruciatingly painful to start with and in the first several weeks she used to spend an average of 30 hours (thirty hours) to produce a 30-minute episode. She frequently started on a Friday afternoon and was not done until late on Saturday, sometimes well after midnight. Now she has got much better at it, but even then she spends anything between 6 and 10 hours to produce a 30-minute episode. It takes a huge amount of commitment to sustain the kind of quality we are after, but it is really all up to Grace's determination that we have been able to maintain the kind of standard that you see on screen. She is absolutely uncompromising in trying to put out the best possible product. And she keeps learning more about the skills that are required all the time. And still from Google and his little sister YouTube.

2020 was the year of video with the rise of virtual teaching and Zoom meetings, but being on camera can still be intimidating. Do you have any tips for those that still feel camera shy?

First of all, there is nothing straightforward or indeed natural about being in front of the camera. Everything requires practice and more practice. But I have been

lucky because I have always had Grace's sharp and critical eye to watch over me. She points out things that I could not have known myself, such as how to speak from the pit of my belly and to articulate my words at a pace that makes it understandable to everyone, no matter their competence in the English language or what variety of each they speak. Then there are things like how to stand, how to look at the camera, when to realize quickly when you have mispronounced a word and have to do another take of a particular section, etc. At first I used to resist taking instructions from her, but now that I know that she has a broader view of the quality that we are aiming for, there is not even the faintest squeak from me. I always follow my creative producer's instructions to the letter.

What has been the most rewarding part of this venture? What challenges have you faced with the production of this work, or with the broader YouTube community?

Absolutely the most rewarding aspect of the enterprise in general has been the opportunity to do this together as a husband-and-wife team. Another advantage is that we can talk about it at any time of day and night and not feel that we are bothering each other. We have learned so much from each other from doing the channel together. But of course the other reward has been to know that we are actually performing a great service to people far and wide whom we do not know and may never be able to meet. The remarks in the comments section to each episode have been a great source of strength and inspiration.

The main challenges we, or better still Grace has faced pertain to how to master the skills that are required to put out a really good product. Because we both want the channel to be the best of its kind in what we are doing. We are fully agreed on that one.

Critic.Reading.Writing. addresses a huge gap in literary and cultural education. Why should institutions seek to integrate more humanities programming and African literature into their curricula?

There is no better time than the present to get a good grounding in the humanities because one of its

main values is to teach us that not everything has a straightforward answer and that it is also a part of knowledge building to entertain sometimes contradictory opinions. With specific reference to literature, I like to think of it as in a way replenishing oneself with moral vitamins. But like real vitamins you have to take them consistently and for a long time for them to really work. But the humanities in general may also be said to provide moral vitamins and the fortification that comes with them.

Do you have any advice for scholars that are looking toward platforms like YouTube to reach audiences outside the classroom?

The most important thing is to have a really burning idea that you feel strongly you need to share and to find the best means of sharing it. It is important not to be afraid to start with, but at the same time to be prepared to put in extraordinarily long hours and a lot of hard work. Most of the material on YouTube currently pertains either to the expression of strong opinions (such as on politics or social issues), or on sports and entertainment. But there is also a large segment of material on YouTube that pertains to how to get things done. People are desperate for guidance, whether it is on how to swing a kettlebell, how to cook jollof, or simply how to love your cat better. The point is that so long as what you want to share is primarily in the service of other you are likely to find an audience. Your ego has to be placed far behind you to start with if you do not want to get bitterly disappointed with a sluggish uptake of the material you put out or simply with negative comments. But once you do it first for the passion that you feel about the subject matter you will gradually begin to convert people to your way of seeing things. And then you can reach back for your ego and be at one with it again.

What do you see for the future of Critic.Reading.Writing?

Well, both Grace and I consider the channel a long term project. And we have lots of incredible ideas that we want to explore on it, like for example sharing our views on the many cities that we are familiar with all over the world. The plan is to build Critic.Reading.Writing until it is a channel of record for some of the most innovative insights on literature, the humanities, the arts, fashion, cities, and various other things.



Submit Your 2020 ASA Conference Paper For The

Graduate Student Paper Prize

The winning essay will be submitted to the *African Studies Review* for expedited peer review. Polish last year's paper, request a letter of support, and submit via email to kathryn@africanstudies.org

SUBMISSIONS DUE BY MARCH 15



All of the images in this article were captured during the 2019 Annual Meeting Exhibit Hall in Boston, MA. We miss so many of these faces, and look forward to seeing everyone in Philadelphia, PA in 2022.



THE PERSISTENCE OF THE PEN

Although publishing has shifted in some ways over the past year due to COVID-19, it's clear from these conversations with our exhibitors that publishing won't perish. We're feeling a bit better thanks to the expert insight and advice of Africa World Press, Inc. & The Red Sea Press, Inc.'s Kassahun Checole, Boydell & Brewer: James Currey's Jaqueline Mitchell, Duke University Press' Elizabeth Ault, Indiana University Press' David Hulsey, Michigan State University Press' Caitlin Tyler-Richards, Ohio University Press' Laura Andre, Pathfinder Press' Nick Castle, University of Michigan Press' Ellen Bauerle, and University of Wisconsin Press' Dennis Lloyd. See what they have to say about changing trends and workflows. [See the full interviews from each publisher](#) on our website for more detailed information for your next book pitch.

How has the pandemic and the broad suspension of in person events impacted publishing?

Michigan State University Press: Scholarly publishing has faced many of the same struggles as other industries, especially those tied to academia. Editors have had to turn their homes into offices; and opportunities for quick or spontaneous conversations have become non-existent. Processes like peer review and manuscript revision have slowed down due to others' overwhelming obligations... On a more positive note, the pandemic has brought some changes to publishing that may bode well for the industry's future. There has been an increase in ebook sales (for this reason, presses are in better shape than, say, brick-and-mortar bookstores), and greater opportunities

for entry-level remote work, which means one doesn't have to move to an expensive city to get publishing experience.

Duke University Press: The effects have been really wide-ranging! Without conferences, we don't have the chance to celebrate new books coming out--DUP's usual conference tradition of author photos in the booth, or book parties, or bringing mentors and colleagues by the booth to buy the book... I miss the impromptu checkins, someone bringing a student to our meeting at the hotel bar, or seeing two people you didn't realize knew each other having coffee, overhearing conversations in the book room or talking with folks about the best panel they went to.

University of Wisconsin Press: Amazon's decision to deprioritize book shipping early in the pandemic hurt,



but we've mostly recovered from that. Over the summer and fall it's been amazing to see the wide variety of approaches individuals are taking to overcome travel restrictions by setting up virtual bookstore events, recorded Zoom interviews shared with asynchronous classes, and the wide variety of conference presentations.

James Currey: There are still good books coming in, but what is missing is the chance conversations and meetings with new people that were so fruitful. We are very active in making new contacts in new ways, of course, and still 'present' at conferences, and hope that scholars see our virtual stands, where newer titles are displayed and on offer. Twitter - @Boydell_Africa - has provided a great alternative conversation, and this is where you can be alerted to our presence at online conferences, as well as special offers.

What have been the publishing trends that you've seen over the last year? What trends are you most excited about?

Indiana University Press: An acceleration of the decolonizing of lists, especially in African Studies. That movement toward decolonization is seismic and multifaceted, ranging from choices of reviewers to the use of proper diacritic[s] when rendering African languages to the selection of series editors.

Pathfinder Press: There is a growing interest in titles about the fight against racism. Pathfinder has important books on this topic. Our titles by and about Malcolm X have been particularly popular.

Michigan State University Press: For one, there seems to be a real blossoming in non-western transregional studies, including more intra-Africa comparative studies, more Critical Cold War studies, and deeper investigations into Sino-African relations. I am intrigued by the new approaches scholars across a number of disciplines are taking to built and natural environments, and look forward to some great environmental histories and ecocriticisms in the near future. I am also thrilled to see African queer, African futurist and African DH studies developing into distinct lines of inquiry.

James Currey: We continue to work strongly with African publishers, importing books from them as well as licensing JCP-originated books on the continent. The pandemic also allowed time for more long-term developments: James Currey established two new series in 2020, Making & Remaking the African City: Studies in Urban Africa Series and Future Rural Africa. There is exciting research being done in and on Africa and its global impact, and we look forward to publishing books that derive from this, and making this research widely available.

Africa World Press: At Africa World Press, we reacted quickly to the killing of Mr. Floyd to produce books related to human and civil rights, to republish many of the books of similar tenure, to upgrade the quality of our books both editorially and in production quality. For example, we have produced more books that are artistically designed and printed in full color. The global movement of Black Lives Matter has shown our books are relevant and increased the demand for books.

Since we still can't get together, how have book pitches changed and what should our members know about the process?

University of Michigan Press: The fundamental business of publishing hasn't really changed. Research continues; important scholarly work continues; credentialing continues.

Indiana University Press: Book pitches now are almost exclusively through the online proposal submission form on our website. That way of introducing our editors to your book is far more efficient than in person discussions at conferences.

Africa World Press: I think the most revolutionary thing that has happened in the last 11 months is both the effective use of the internet and new communications instruments like Zoom, to reach to readers globally and bring our authors and their books closer to their readers.

University of Wisconsin Press: One thing that has changed (for the better) is the widespread availability and familiarity of video conferencing tools such as Zoom that allows more face-to-face interactions than solely at the annual conference. As a result, we've been considering setting up acquisitions editor office hours throughout the year, to facilitate initial meetings between potential authors and Press.

James Currey: Our proposal form and details of the publishing process are available online on our website. I would encourage potential authors to get in touch either with me (jmitchell@boydell.co.uk) or series editors about their book projects, giving us a brief description of the book and its audience and/or to send in a proposal form.



Pathfinder Press

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"THE FUNDAMENTAL BUSINESS OF PUBLISHING HASN'T REALLY CHANGED. RESEARCH CONTINUES; IMPORTANT SCHOLARLY WORK CONTINUES; CREDENTIALING CONTINUES."

Duke University Press: I and most of the editors I know are still eager to hear from people. I've set up an online office hours system where folks can sign up to meet with me. As with meeting in person at a conference, I anticipate these being short conversations, and it's useful for me to see a brief project description or abstract in advance, so we have some common ground... Because of increasing austerity in university budgets, which are affecting departments across the board (including presses and libraries), many of us have to be more careful about the kinds of books we can take on, so I do find myself saying no to things that might have been a maybe in a less conservative time. I'd say that makes it more important to make sure that your book is a fit for a press--not just topically, but tonally, in terms of the kinds of audiences you want to reach and the academic conversations your work is in--before reaching out.

What new projects are you working on that the African Studies community should be on the lookout for?

University of Michigan Press: I'm happy to say that our book series African Perspectives, edited in conjunction with the University of Michigan's African Studies Center, continues to grow rapidly in breadth and depth, despite the pandemic.

Ohio University Press: We're excited for this year's New African Histories series, which includes ten new books between now and December. We also will add two titles each to the series War and Militarism in African History and Ohio Short Histories of Africa.

Pathfinder Press: Pathfinder's most recent title is *Red Zone: Cuba and the Battle against Ebola in West Africa*. We featured this book at the virtual ASA conference and will continue to promote it widely, along with Pathfinder's new edition of *The Jewish Question: A Marxist interpretation* by Abram Leon. This book will soon be published in French. It will be a valuable resource for readers across the former French colonies of North and West Africa.



Africa World Press: COVID-19 has forced us to rethink how we work. We have made changes that is making it easier to reach a larger readership. A series of successful production of smaller pocket book size on Africa in the global context. These are mainly on topical issues. We are projecting at least 16 books in the initial stage and five of these are already out.

University of Wisconsin Press: This spring we'll be publishing a new book by David Schoenbrun that traces groupwork, ethnicity, and systems of belonging in East Africa for more than a millennium; a history of African nurses in rural apartheid South Africa by Leslie Anne Hadfield; and a new paperback edition of John M. Janzen's look at public health in the 1980s and 1990s in the Lower Congo.

Indiana University Press: We have begun the process of completely reimagining and reinvigorating the African Studies list at IUP. It will look very different in three years.

SCENES FROM OUR 2019 EXHIBIT HALL

Photographer Benjamin J. Austin captured many of the joyful moments and familiar faces of our 2019 Annual Meeting Exhibit Hall in Boston, MA including the cover shot of Dr. R. Hunt Davis, professor emeritus of African History at the University of Florida, enjoying a celebratory event from his booth.





RESEARCH TO THE BEAT OF YOUR OWN DRUM

The 2020 *African Studies Review* Best Africa-Based Dissertation Award winner, Cecilia Durojaye shares her wisdom from years of interdisciplinary research to help us think about the universal power of music, communication, and creativity during the pandemic.

In 2020, the *African Studies Review* (ASR) awarded its inaugural Best Africa-Based Dissertation Award. Proposed in 2019 by members of the *African Studies Review* Editorial Review Board, this award recognizes an Africa-based doctoral student who has successfully defended their dissertation/doctoral thesis on an aspect of African studies at an African institution of higher education during the previous calendar year. In 2018, the newly reshaped Editorial Review Board adopted a five-year strategic plan to guide the development of new initiatives. This strategic plan advances the mission of the *African Studies Review* as a leading voice in interdisciplinary African studies research, advocacy, and knowledge circulation. This plan guides the journal's stewardship, ensuring that it continues to lead in discovering new voices and disseminating knowledge that informs academia, policy, and social advancement. The plan identified five values: quality, inclusiveness, integrity, creativity, and accessibility. This new prize is part of the journal's mission to publish cutting-edge original research while advancing also scholarly engagement across continents and communities.

The winning author is given the opportunity to work with a member of the ASR Editorial Review Board or Editorial Team to consider turning some of their dissertation chapters into articles for publication, and receives a gift card for e-books from Cambridge University Press, who sponsors this prize.

Recognizing the diversity in language in which knowledge production in Africa occurs, submissions to this prize are invited in any language. The 2020 prize cycle welcomed a total of sixteen submissions in English, French, and Hausa. The *African Studies Review* encourages newly minted PhDs to consider submitting to this prize in 2021. The deadline to submit is **April 15, 2021**.

The 2020 Best Africa-Based Dissertation Award was given to Cecilia Durojaye from the University of Cape Town for her thesis, '*Evoked emotional responses in the performances of selected Yorùbá dùndún ensembles*'.



You completed your PhD at the University of Cape Town in 2019 and your work has been described as "interweave[ing] work from music, anthropology, and studies of emotion." Can you tell us more about your broad academic areas of interest, and how these disciplines overlap in your work? How did you develop these academic interests?

Thank you for the question. I can say that I am interested in many areas, particularly language and music, emotion and music, forms of communication, indigenous knowledge systems, African traditional and popular music, and the performing arts in general. There are so many questions to which I want answers. But one thing that has been my fascination for a very long time is peoples' experiences of music and other art forms, how these are communally, individually, and culturally shaped and how these define us as humans. Why do people feel happy, recall memories, cry, dance when listening to music? How do these experiences differ between people and within groups of people? Why do people react to some specific kinds of music but not the other? Since music and emotions play significant roles in human lives, and they are both present in every culture, for me – and as demonstrated in my study – the overlap of various disciplines is just natural.

In 2020 you became the first winner of the *African Studies Review* Prize for the Best Africa-based Dissertation for your thesis entitled "Evoked Emotional Responses in the Performances of Selected Yorùbá Dùndún Ensembles." How did you decide to narrow your work down to this thesis topic in this vast, interdisciplinary space?

Yes, you are right. It was challenging to have these different interests overlapping with various disciplines and to think about bringing these into a coherent whole. When my supervisor, Professor Anri Herbst and I had our first discussion concerning my study, she had just won a National Research Foundation (NRF) grant to research music cognition in Africa using different methods. That provided the first opportunity to conduct the interdisciplinary study. Then, the dùndún talking drum tradition being one of the oldest art forms in Nigeria and an embodiment of culture – music, language, emotions, history, indigenous

knowledge etc. naturally lends itself a suitable candidate for combining many areas into one.

But to narrow down the work, I had to engage with and understand the different disciplines: their worldviews and approach to research, the main problems being addressed, their theoretical stance, and so forth and how my topic fits in these constellations. Then I began to look into convergences or divergencies in arguments and the conceptual and methodological gaps in these fields. For example, I found that the music-emotion studies mostly use Western-based framework, materials, participants, and quantitative methods. Those who managed to include non-western perspective have little or no understanding of their culture of interest. On the anthropology/ethnomusicology side, emotions and music were hardly discussed together in a single study. Although I do not see how we can talk about the musical behaviour of a group of people without considering how this behaviour is influenced by feelings and vice versa. Instead of focusing on differences, however, I diverted my energy on what the disciplines have in common and how they influence one another. Of course, doing this requires considering how to cross the methodological and conceptual hurdles and combine the different approaches. I also thought about how to present the report to reflect the canons of all sides while also maintaining my style and freedom but not betraying the communities my study represents. It was equally important to think about how to convince each of the disciplines that the research is of high quality. Thinking about these issues and having these as my goals helped give a focus to the study.



"WHEN I LOOK AT THE ONGOING CREATIVE RESPONSES TO THE PANDEMIC... [I] SEE HOW ART FORMS, SUCH AS MUSIC, STRENGTHEN SOCIAL INTERACTION"

In 2020 there was frequent discussion about communication and community, particularly in response to pandemic isolation and public protest. Your thesis touches on both community making and the use of art forms and creative expression to communicate. Can you share any insights on the connection between community and communication that you developed through your work?

Of course, as humans, we need community as we are inherently social creatures. When I look at the ongoing creative responses to the pandemic, and I think about my work, on the one hand, I see the importance of social interaction to human survival – mentally, physically, emotionally. On the other hand, we see how art forms, such as music, strengthen social interaction. People tend to avoid negative situations, seek social activities, and find ways to draw strength from one another. Communicating through different creative expressions is one of these ways. For example, in my study, when dūndūn drummers perform music or poetry at funerals, they honour the deceased and support the relatives in their griefs to show them they are not alone. Making music together, listening together, and sharing the same experience, perhaps in the same or different time and space, gives a sense of belonging to a community. Even if we have diverse backgrounds and speak different languages, we have something in common, something that connects us and communicates in a unique way that everyone understands. Music is useful because it can easily be transmitted over distances (we see that during this pandemic with balcony performances and various online performances). So, the expressive and communal nature of music makes it a robust communication tool that solidifies social interaction and community-making.

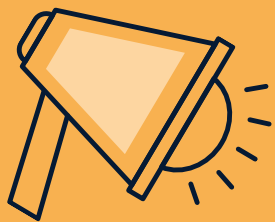
What motivated you to submit your thesis for this new prize? Do you have any advice for Africa-based scholars who are still considering whether or not to submit their work?

I was encouraged by my supervisor Professor Anri Herbst who believed in the uniqueness of the work and how important it is to disseminate the findings. It made my supervisor very proud that the three external examiners from different fields gave great feedback on the dissertation. Of course, I am also very proud of my dissertation, and I thought it is worth submitting because it stood a chance. I am, therefore, glad that she gave me the support. Besides winning the prize, I am delighted that I participated in the competition because I learned so much about other notable works by scholars in Africa. I see this as an excellent platform for information, inspiration, and collaboration. We do not know enough about the various incredible research being conducted on the African continent. That is why I would advise other African-based scholars to submit their works, as it is a great opportunity to share their ideas and insights with other researchers.

Now that your doctoral work is complete, what's next for your research and career?

Following my doctoral programme, I completed an 18-month postdoctoral fellowship at the Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics in Frankfurt, Germany. During my stay, I started two new research projects: one with a team at the institute and the other with a group at the lab of Professor Michael McBeath at Arizona State University, United States. The projects expanded on my PhD research findings and are still ongoing. Apart from these, I am currently looking for research and teaching opportunities. I am looking forward to undertaking more studies that bring out Africa's uniqueness, working with collaborators from different fields, and generally contribute to African scholarship and community.





SUBMIT TO THE 2021 AFRICAN STUDIES REVIEW PRIZES

1

GRADUATE STUDENT PAPER PRIZE

Nominations due March 15, 2021. Any paper presented by a graduate student at the 2020 ASA Virtual Annual Meeting is eligible.

2

BEST AFRICA-BASED DISSERTATION

Nominations due April 15, 2021. Dissertations must have been defended during the previous calendar year (2020) and can be submitted in any language.

3

BEST AFRICA-FOCUSED ANTHOLOGY OR EDITED COLLECTION

Nominations due April 15, 2021. Titles must have been published during the previous calendar year (2020) and can be submitted in any language.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT

AFRICANSTUDIES.ORG/PUBLICATIONS/AFRICAN-STUDIES-REVIEW-PRIZES/



PODCASTING ON AFRICA: THE HIP HOP AFRICAN

Msia Kibona Clark isn't just a professor at Howard University, she's the host of a successful podcast: The Hip Hop African. She spoke about her experience on a panel with other Africa podcasters during the 2020 ASA Annual Meeting, but here she delves deeper into her production expertise, podcasting with students, and loving what you do.

How did you get involved in podcasting? Why did you decide to pursue it regularly?

I started podcasting after assigning it as a project for my students. I was always a fan of podcasts and got the idea to add them to my curriculum. After that, I decided to try it myself and really enjoyed it. I kept it at once a month so that I would not overextend myself, and I am so happy that I did.

You have spoken passionately about podcasting as an egalitarian platform that engages many constituencies including students. Can you tell us a little more about how podcasting is unique or interesting in its ability to communicate information?

You really do not need expensive equipment to podcast. You do not need a special FCC license. While there is the danger of there being too many voices, if one taps into a topic that is under served, they can provide a valuable contribution to the conversation. Podcasting allows important and interesting conversations to happen on platforms that are more accessible.

There has been such a focus on the validity of facts in news media and a general blurring of lines between information dissemination, editorializing, and pure entertainment. What do you see as your role and responsibilities in a popular medium that is clearly both entertaining and educational?

Walking the fine line between entertainment and education is difficult and it is a constant challenge. My podcast primarily hosts artists, so we made the decision to primarily focus on socially relevant topics and leave the pop culture questions to pop culture platforms.



Some podcasters receive regular audience feedback, questions, or corrections depending on their topic and genre. What sorts of ways do you engage your listeners beyond hosting your show?

We frequently receive emails in our podcast's inbox. Most of the messages are from artists wanting us to hear their music. We also engage with African hip hop scholars who listen to the show. That has led to collaborations at conferences, in journals, and other academic spaces.

What has been the most enjoyable aspect of podcasting for you? What have been some of the challenges in your experience?

I have really enjoyed meeting and talking to artists whose work I enjoy listening to. The challenges have been trying to secure interviews with artists and having to navigate the entertainment industry as an academic. Academia (African Studies) does not prepare you for it.

Many of your episodes have engaging and knowledgeable guests. Do you have any dream guests or dream topics you haven't yet covered?

Yes. The one guest I really want to talk to is Somali artist K'Naan. After the 2010 World Cup and his subsequent album he left the industry. But he had such a powerful voice, and his departure was an important statement on the music industry.

There are some U.S. artists I would love to talk to. I found out Nipsey Hussle was Eritrean after he was killed. He is someone I would have loved to have interviewed. Of course, I would love to talk to Beyoncé about Black is King!

For students or others that may be interested in podcasting but lack a strong technological or communications background, what is your number one piece of advice? What about for those that are not enthusiastic about self-promotion?

There are so many online tutorials, books, and podcasts on podcasting. Many of us are self-taught. There are a ton of resources out there. A lot of it is

"PODCASTING HAS A VALUABLE PLACE IN ACADEMIA...[PODCASTS] PROVIDE PLATFORMS FOR SCHOLARS TO SPEAK TO THEIR COLLEAGUES, AND THEY CREATE AND PROVIDE PRIMARY DATA SOURCES IN THE FORM OF INTERVIEWS"

geared towards people who want to monetize their podcasts or become podcast "stars". But the technical advice is often useful. Self-promotion can be uncomfortable. I never say my name in a podcast or introduce myself. Most hosts do introduce themselves. But I am still not comfortable with it, so I focus on introducing the show and the artist being interviewed, and I use "we" a lot. For someone uncomfortable with self-promotion, using "we" instead of "me" takes the focus off of yourself, and puts it on the show.

From the outside, podcasting appears to be a lot of work for limited monetary compensation, but we also know that monetization isn't the only measure of success. How can individuals pursue podcasting in a way that adds value to their career if not their wallet?

Podcasting is something you should do because you feel passionate about the topics your conversations will cover. They should be conversations you would want to have even if they weren't being recorded. Podcasting has a valuable place in academia, as content creators-scholars do several things for the academy. They inform the academy about scholarship and research happening in the academy, they provide platforms for scholars to speak to their colleagues, and they create and provide primary data sources in the form of interviews with various key informants.

Reginold Royston said in his 2020 ASA Annual Meeting presentation that podcasting began to experience a global golden age in 2014 but that Africa's true breakout into the scene was in 2018. Are we still in the golden age for podcasting in and on Africa? What do you see for the future of the medium?

Yes. Absolutely. We are still seeing the expansion of internet access across Africa. Countries like Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa are the primary sources of the content currently being produced online. But, as internet access become easier and more accessible across Africa, we will continue to see increases in online content from around Africa.

Outside of producing your own series, do you listen to other podcasts regularly? What other podcasts can you recommend to our community for Africa related or non-Africa related listening?

I am an avid listener of podcasts. As an African studies student, listening to BBC's Africa Today, every day, was invaluable in helping understand the diverse political and cultural dynamics across the continent. I enjoy news magazine shows like BBC's The Comb (focuses on stories from across Africa), This American Life, and BBC's The Documentary. Other than my co-panelists' podcasts, for academic related content, recently I have been watching the video podcast Black Woman Radicals. They have had some amazing panels since COVID started. I am pop culture scholar, so I listen to a lot of podcasts on popular culture. I listen to The Read the most.

What do you see for the future of your own podcast? Do you have anything in the pipeline that our members should look out for?

This spring we will be recording our interviews live, with our students on Zoom. We have confirmed weekly guests who will join us via Zoom for the first hour to do an interview in which the students will participate. It will be the first time the students participate in this way in the episodes. Wish me luck!



When we asked ASA members to send in their updates, we were thrilled to see a number of younger members making an impact and starting exciting ventures. One entry drew special attention – a High School Senior who exemplifies the inspiring motivation of Gen Z to engage in thoughtful debate and meaningful dialogue for the future of our field.

Name: Atswei Laryea

Hometown: Sidwell Friends School, Washington, D.C. I am Ghanaian and Nigerian by origin.

What is the name and goal of your podcast?

Delve into Discourse. My co-hosts, Jahari Shelton and Isaac Pickrum, and I engage in conversation about news, culture, liberation, and justice, hoping to provide the conditions for thought-provoking dialogue amongst listeners.

What has been the most exciting aspect of podcasting?

I love the fact that, because we are friends, our conversation is comfortable yet challenging. We're able to cloak our analysis in jokes, fun analogies and references while bringing forth our own cultural inventories and frameworks. I have also enjoyed the conversation that has bloomed out of the podcast. My other peers and I will often hop on FaceTime to further discuss what was said during an episode. Overall, it has been such an intellectually enriching experience.

Do you plan to continue podcasting once you graduate or do you have other projects you hope to pursue in African Studies?

Definitely. I grew up listening to the radio all the time, so in college, I would love to take my podcast on-air. As an Africana Studies major, I hope to tap into my other interests such as Ethnomathematics and African Musicology, though I am not sure what my projects in those fields will look like just yet.

GHANA STUDIES ASSOCIATION 2021 EVENTS



NEW YEAR, NEW WAYS TO CONNECT

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GSA Public Forum: Black Internationalism

Friday April 9

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Inaugural GSA Keynote Address

During the ASA Annual Meeting, November 16–20

Speaker, Date, & Time: TBA

Registration for the ASA Annual Meeting Required



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Recent Member Publications

Gemechu Abeshu, Access Alliance, "This Conflict is New to Us': Conflict in the Borderlands of Ethiopia and Djibouti" (2021) *Journal of Modern African Studies*, forthcoming.

Simonmary Ahiokhai, University of Portland, "African Migrant Christians Changing the Landscape of Christianity in the West: Reading the Signs of the Times." *The Church and Migration: Global (In)difference: Pathways for Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).

Simonmary Ahiokhai, University of Portland, "Black theology in dialogue with LGBTQ+ persons in the Black Church: walking in the shoes of James Hal Cone and Katie Geneva Cannon." *Theology & Sexuality* 27(1): 1-18.

Simonmary Ahiokhai, University of Portland, "Making A Case for An Economic Alternative for Our Globalized World: Insights from the Margins." *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions* 8(3): 77-88.

Gerard Akindes, Independent Scholar, co-edited *Sports in Africa, Past and Present* with Todd Cleveland, Tarminder Kaur, (Ohio University Press, 2020).

Akinmayowa Akin-Otiko, University of Lagos, *The Study of Religion and Issues in the Religion of the Africans* (University of Lagos Press, 2021).

Bibi Burger, University of Pretoria, guest edited special issue "Engaged Queerness in African Speculative Fiction" in *Scrutiny2: Issues in English Studies in Southern Africa* 25(2).

Robin P. Chapdelaine, Duquesne University, *The Persistence of Slavery: An Economic History of Child Trafficking* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2021).

Robin P. Chapdelaine, Duquesne University, "Marriage Certificates and Walker Cards: Nigerian Migrant Labor, Wives and Prostitutes in Colonial Fernando Pó," *African Economic History* 48 (2).

Allan D. Cooper, North Carolina Central University, co-edited with Emmanuel O. Oritsejafor *Africa and the Global System of Capital Accumulation* (London: Routledge, 2021).

Jose Cossa, Pennsylvania State University, co-authored with Le Grange, L., & Waghid, Y. "Cosmo-Ubuntu: Toward a New (Exterior to Modernity) Theorizing about the Human, the Cosmos, and Education" *Comparative Education Review* 64(4): 753-756.

Corrie Decker, University of California, Davis, co-authored with Elisabeth McMahon, *The Idea of Development in Africa: A History* (Cambridge University Press, 2020).

Laura DeLuca, University of Colorado, Boulder, co-authored with Irene Amoke "COVID-19 and Conservation: Innovative Community Conservation Initiatives Amid a Pandemic," *Swara: The Voice of Conservation in East Africa*, October-December 2020.

Laura DeLuca, University of Colorado, Boulder, co-authored with Alex Dudley "Film Review: Kifaru (2019)," *Swara: The Voice of Conservation in East Africa*, October-December 2020.

Anthony Diala, University of the Western Cape, "Understanding the relevance of African customary law in modern times," *The Conversation* 1 December 2020.

Anthony Diala, University of the Western Cape, "Are Africans ready for integrated state and indigenous laws?" *AllAfrica* 11 November 2020.

Hlengiwe Portia Dlamini, University of the Free State, "Race, politics and constitution-making in the negotiations leading to Eswatini's independence (formerly Swaziland) 1960-1968" *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 1-15.

Daniel Douek, McGill University, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in South Africa* (Oxford University Press, 2020).

Matthew Emerson, Amherst College, "Toward a Safe Archaeology Field School-Insights into Policies, Procedures, and Team-Based Learning" *Advances in Archaeological Practice* 0(0): 1-8.

Marc Epprecht, Queen's University, co-authored with Iain Edwards *Working class homosexuality in South Africa: Voices from the Archives* (HSRC Press, 2020).

Susanna Fioratta, Bryn Mawr College, *Global Nomads: An Ethnography of Migration, Islam, and Politics in West Africa* (Oxford University Press, 2020).

Robert J. Gordon, Professor Emeritus University of Vermont, *South Africa's Dreams: Ethnologists and Apartheid in Namibia* (Berghahn Books, 2021).

Ulrike Groß, *Dance in West Africa, Analysis and Description in Relation to Aspects of Communication Theory* (Waxmann, 2020).

Bright Gyamfi, Northwestern University, "From Nkrumah's Black Star to the African Diaspora: Ghanaian Activist Intellectuals and the Development of Black Studies" *Journal of African American History*, 2021 forthcoming.

Trevor P. Hall, Independent Scholar, *Before Middle Passage: Translated Portuguese Manuscripts of Atlantic Slave Trading from West Africa to Iberian Territories, 1513-26* (Routledge, 2020).

Myra Houser, Ouachita Baptist University, *Bureaucrats of Liberation: Southern African and American Lawyers During the Apartheid Era* (Leiden University Press, 2020).

Anne Hugon, Pantheon-Sorbonne University, *Être mère en situation coloniale: Une histoire de la maternité en Gold Coast (1910-1950)* (ED Sorbonne, 2020).



Daniel Iweze, University of Benin, "Boko Haram Insurgency, Inter-faith Dialogue and Peacebuilding in Kano: Examining the Kano Covenant" *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review* 11 (forthcoming).

Daniel Iweze, University of Benin, co-authored with Uchenna Anyanwu "Post-Civil War Community Strategies in (Anioma) Western Igboland, 1970-1991" *Brazilian Journal of African Studies* (forthcoming).

John Janzen, University of Kansas, co-edited with Harold Miller and John Yoder, *Mennonites and Post-Colonial African Studies: The Influence of Mennonite Communities on Africanist Scholarship* (Routledge, 2021).

Charlotte Joy, University of London, *Heritage Justice* (Cambridge, 2020).

Loren Kruger, University of Chicago, *A Century of South African Theatre* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020).

Benjamin Lawrance, Dugmore Boetie's *Familiarity is the Kingdom of the Lost* [1969], with Foreword by Nadine Gordimer and Afterword by Barney Simon, co-edited with Vusumuzi Rodney Kumalo, comprising co-authored introduction and annotated text (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2020).

Anna Mazzolini, Politecnico di Milano, *Breve Guida per le Assenze* (book of poetry) (Oedipus, 2020).

Gwinyai P. Muzorewa, Lamar University, *An Account of Zimbabwe's Ephemeral Rise to Prominence* (2021).

Ayodeji Olukoju, University of Lagos, "African Seaports and Development in Historical Perspective," *International Journal of Maritime History* 32(1): 185-200.

Ayodeji Olukoju, University of Lagos, co-edited with Daniel Castillo Hidalgo, *African Seaports and Maritime Economics in Historical Perspective* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

Christopher Ouma, University of Cape Town, *Childhood in Contemporary Diasporic African Literature: Memories and Futures Past* (African Histories and Modernities Series, Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

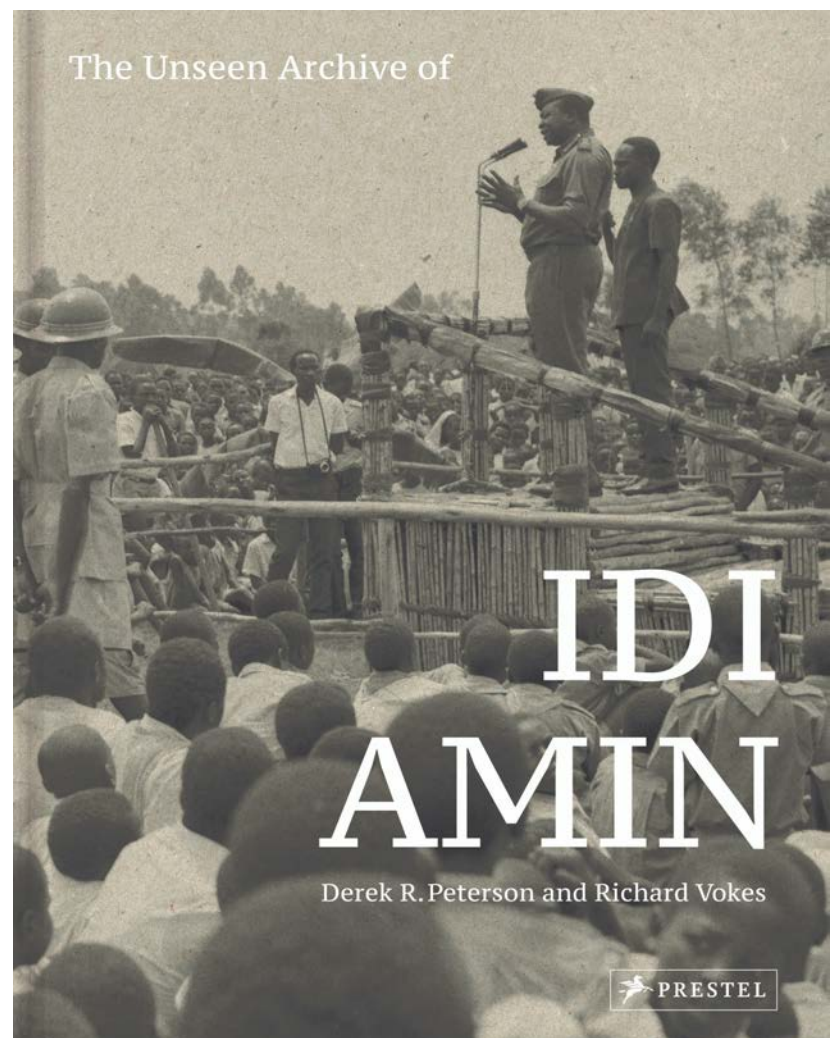
Dave Peterson, National Endowment for Democracy, Africa Program, *Africa's Totalitarian Temptation: The Evolution of Autocratic Regimes* (Lynne Rienner Pubs., 2020).

Derek Peterson, University of Michigan, co-authored with Richard Vokes, *The Unseen Archive of Idi Amin: Photographs from the Uganda Broadcasting Corporation* (Prestel, 2021).

Celia Reddick, Harvard University, co-authored with Dryden-Peterson. S. "Refugee Education and Medium of Instruction: Tensions in Theory, Policy and Practice" in C. Benson & K. Kosonen (Eds.), *Language Issues in Comparative Education: Policy and practice in multilingual education based on non-dominant languages* (Brill Sense, 2021).

Amber Reed, Southern Oregon University, *Nostalgia After Apartheid: Disillusionment, Youth, and Democracy in South Africa* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2020).

Joan Ricart-Huguet, Loyola University Maryland, "Colonial Education, Political Elites, and Regional Political Inequality in Africa" *Comparative Political Studies* 2021 forthcoming.



Joan Ricart-Huguet, Loyola University Maryland, "The Origins of Colonial Investments in Former British and French Africa" *The British Journal of Political Science* 2021 forthcoming.

David L. Schoenbrun, Northwestern University, *The Names of the Python: Belonging in East Africa, 900-1930* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2021).

Peter Schouten, Danish Institute for International Studies, *Roadblock Politics: the Origins of Violence in Central Africa* (Cambridge University Press, 2021).

Kevin Shillington, Independent Scholar, *Charles Warren: Royal Engineer in the Age of Empire* (Pretoria, 2021).

Kevin Shillington, Independent Scholar, *Patrick van Rensburg: Rebel, Visionary, Radical Educationist, a biography* (Wits University Press, 2020).

Joya Uraizee, Saint Louis University, *Writing That Breaks Stones: African Child Soldier Narratives* (Michigan State University Press, 2020).

Richard Werbner, Emeritus Professor University of Manchester, *Anthropology After Gluckman* (Manchester University Press, 2020).

Member Announcements

Gemechu Abeshu, Access Alliance, received the 'Preis der Stadt Bayreuth' for his outstanding doctoral dissertation.

Simonmary Ahiokhai, University of Portland, was promoted to Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Portland, Portland, Oregon.

Joyce Ashuntantang, University of Hartford, was promoted to Full Professor of English at the University of Hartford.

Joyce Ashuntantang, University of Hartford, won the 2020 African Literature Association Book Award-Creative Writing for the poetry collection *Beautiful Fire*.

Kelly Askew, University of Michigan, won the Dikalo Award for Best Feature-Length Documentary Film at the 2020 Cannes Pan African International Film Festival (Festival International du Film Panafricain de Cannes) for the documentary *Maasai Remix* (2019, co-directed with Ron Mulvihill).

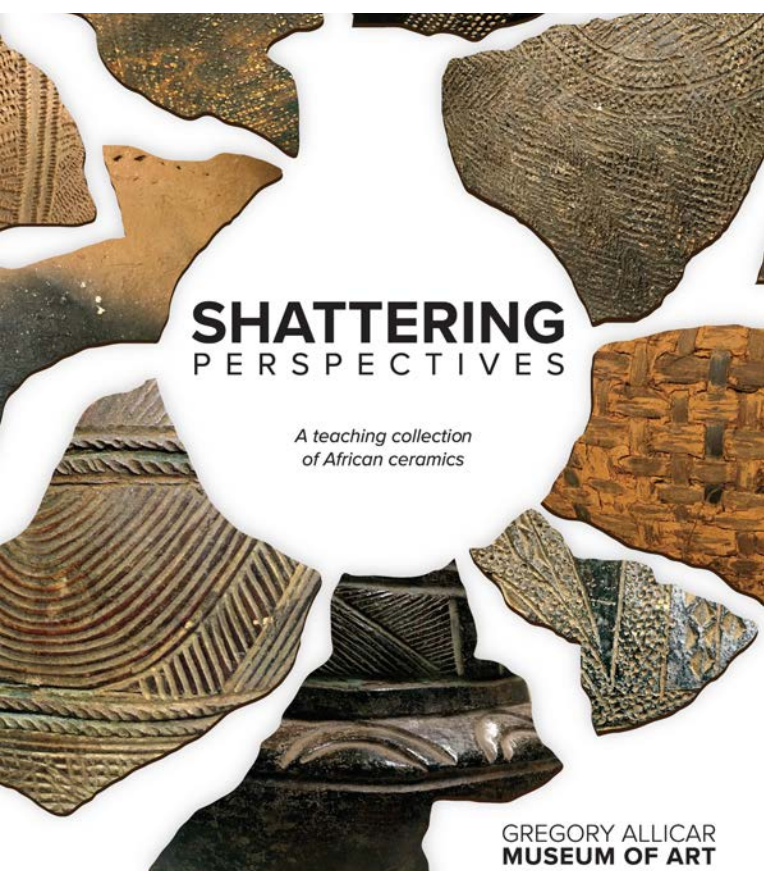
Abbass Braham, University of Louisiana Lafayette, defended his dissertation on the history of colonial Mauritania, and is now a Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Louisiana Lafayette.

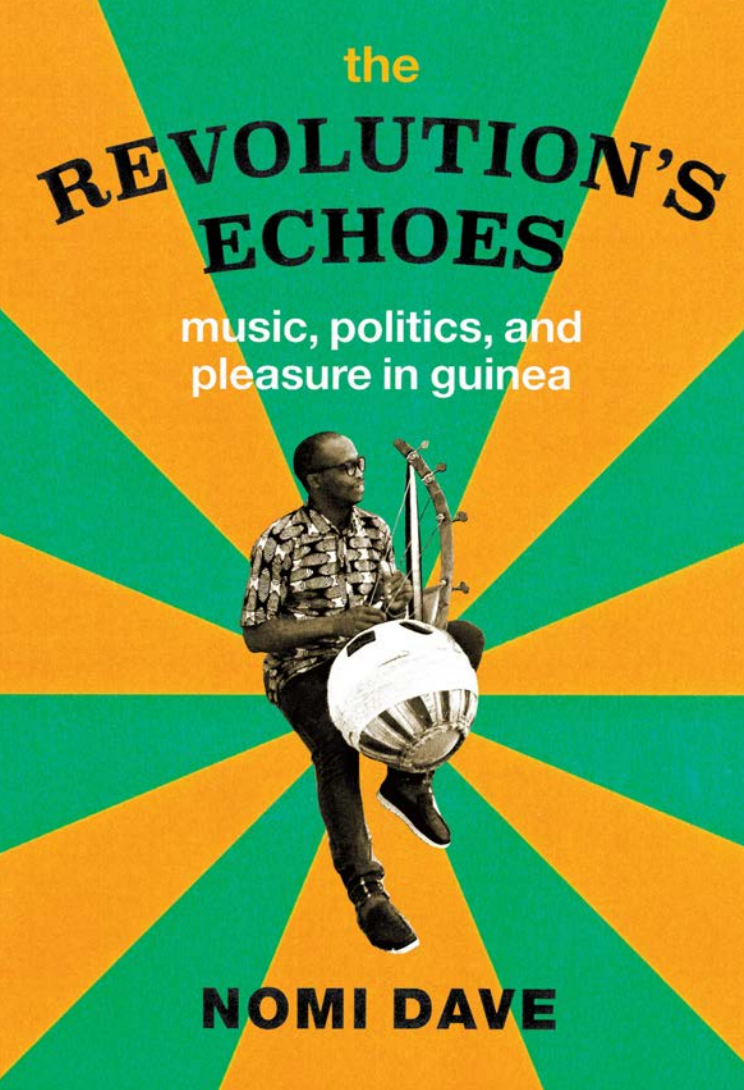
Nomi Dave, University of Virginia, was awarded the Ruth Stone Prize for outstanding first monograph in ethnomusicology for *The Revolution's Echoes: Music, Politics, and Pleasure in Guinea* (University of Chicago Press, 2019).

Laura DeLuca, University of Colorado, Boulder, was awarded a Center for Arts and Humanities (CAH) Remote Teaching Award for her innovative remote teaching proposal titled "Danger of a Single Story."

Anthony Diala, University of the Western Cape, was promoted to Associate Professor of Law and appointed Director, Centre for Legal Integration in Africa at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

Anthony Diala, University of the Western Cape, was awarded a C2 rating by the National Research Foundation of South Africa.



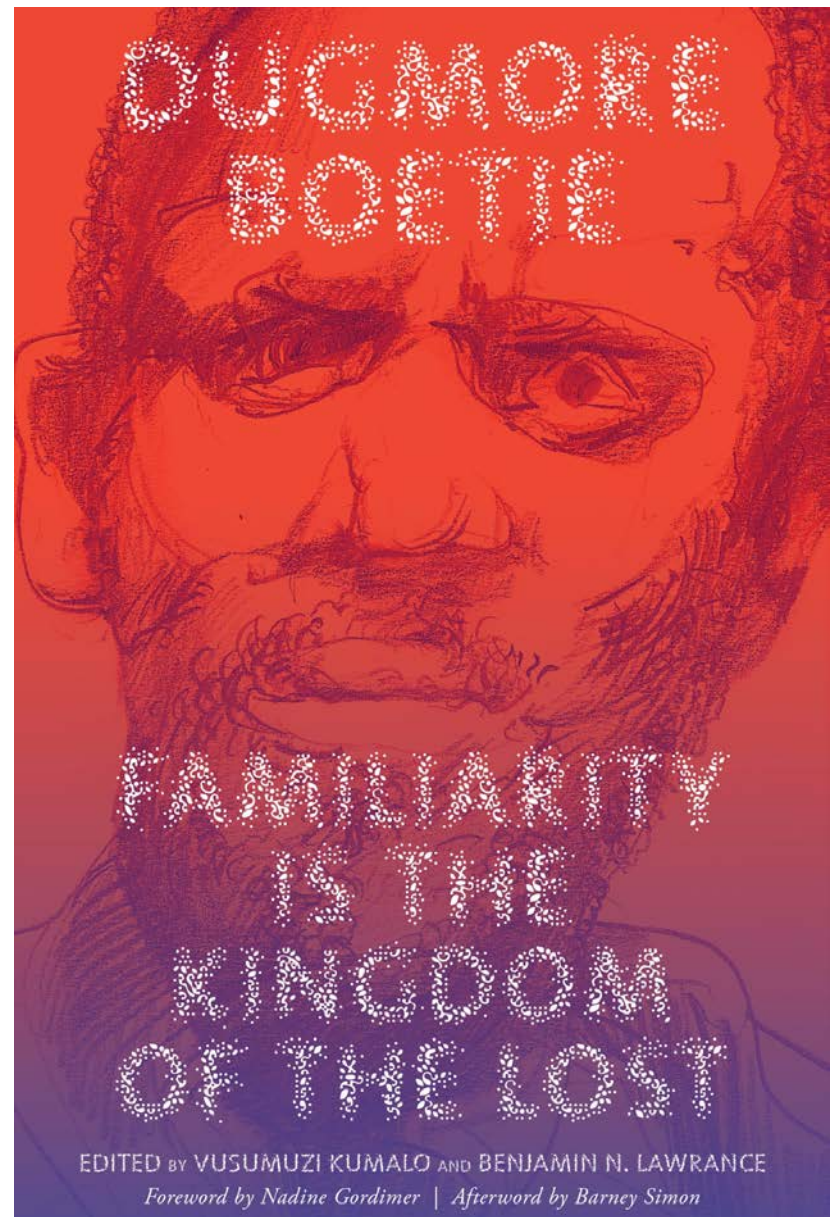


Jacqueline-Bethel Tchouta Mougoué, University of Wisconsin-Madison, was interviewed by Kim Yi Dionne on Ufahamu Africa, February 13, 2021.

Sindiso Mnisi Weeks, University of Massachusetts Boston, has joined the editorial collective of *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* and invites scholars in and of Africa to submit their work on the anthropology of law and politics (broadly defined) to the journal.

Paul Naylor, Hill Museum and Manuscript Library, announces that as of January, 2021 the first 10,000 entries of the Timbuktu manuscripts collection are now digitized and available to view online.

Evarist Ngabirano, Makerere University, successfully defended his PhD dissertation: "Beyond ethnic patriotism: A comparative study of Toro and Kigezi districts in Uganda."



Elizabeth Eames, Bates College, wishes to donate a film collection of several hundred titles set on the African continent, free of charge. Universities or film scholars may inquire about acquiring the collection via email. Serious inquiries only.

Geoffroy Heimlich, Institut des mondes africains, announces an exhibition on archaeological research in the Lovo massif is now available virtually.

Myra Houser, Ouachita Baptist University, was granted tenure in 2020.

Charlotte Joy, University of London, will join the UK UNESCO national commission as Culture Director.

Martha Lagace, African Communities Together (ACT), was awarded the Leading Edge fellowship for 2020 from the American Council of Learned Societies.

Atswei Laryea, Sidwell Friends School, launched a podcast entitled *Delve into Discourse*.

EDITED BY VUSUMUZI KUMALO AND BENJAMIN N. LAWRENCE

Foreword by Nadine Gordimer | Afterword by Barney Simon

INSURGENCY AND COUNTERINSURGENCY IN SOUTH AFRICA



Evarist Ngabirano, Makerere University, was awarded a 2021-2022 post-doctoral fellowship at Makerere Institute of Social Research, Makerere University.

Azeez Olaniyan, Federal University, joined the faculty of Federal University in Nigeria as a full Professor of Political Science.

Ayodeji Olukoju, University of Lagos, joined the Advisory Board for *Journal of Global History* (2021-23).

Elizabeth Perrill, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and Indiana University Press have been awarded the Millard Meiss Publication Grant through the College Art Association to support the 2022 title *Burnished: Zulu Ceramics Between Rural and Urban South Africa*.

Celia Reddick, Harvard University, designed and taught a course in Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education entitled Language and Power at School: Colonialism and Neocolonialism in Education Development in Africa.

David Riep, Colorado State University, announces *Shattering Perspectives*, a collaborative, student generated exhibition exploring ceramic arts from across the African continent from the Gregory Allicar Museum of Art (Colorado State University) permanent

collection. The exhibition will run through Spring 2021 and will be accompanied by a printed catalog as well as virtual symposium including a keynote address.

Serah Shani, Westmont College, was awarded a grant from The John Templeton Foundation for a research project in Kenya entitled "The Cultural Evolution of the Conscience, Virtues, Character Development, and Human Progress."

Lahra Smith, Georgetown University, has been named the new Director of the African Studies Program, Walsh School of Foreign Service.

Maya Smith, University of Washington, won the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for French and Francophone Studies for *Senegal Abroad: Linguistic Borders, Racial Formations and Diasporic Imaginaries* (U. Wisconsin Press 2019).

SENEGAL ABROAD

LINGUISTIC BORDERS, RACIAL FORMATIONS,
AND DIASPORIC IMAGINARIES



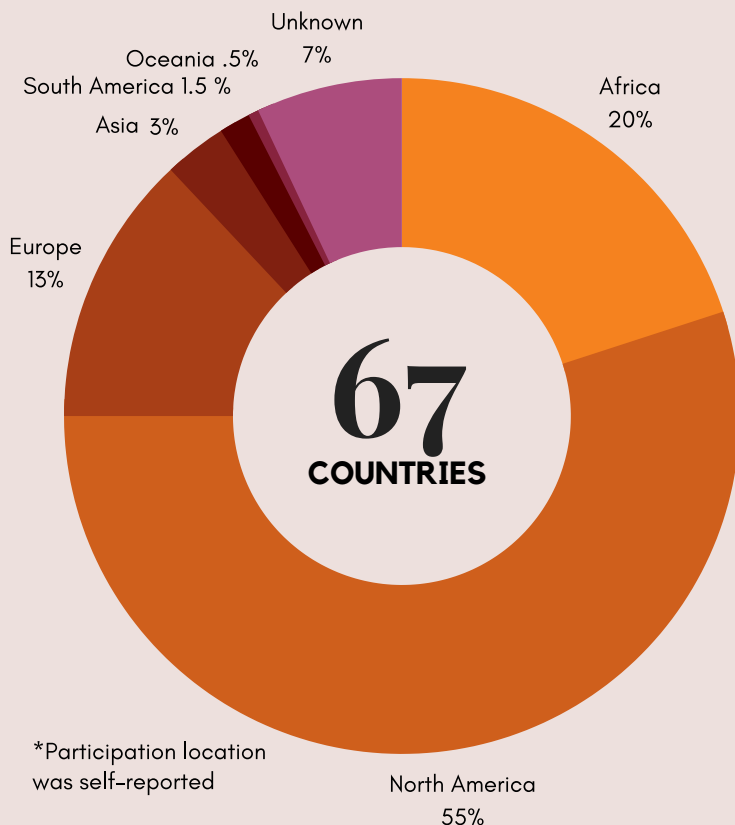
MAYA ANGELA SMITH

ASA 2020 VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING

by the numbers

Many of our meeting participants expressed pleasant surprise and overall satisfaction at the conclusion of our 2020 Virtual Annual Meeting. While there is no true substitute for reuniting with old friends and meeting people in the hallways, many of our members, particularly emerging scholars abroad, expressed a deep appreciation for the relaxed tone, affordable access, and diversity of sessions. We thought we would share the following data from our 2020 Virtual Annual Meeting so you can see for yourself how it turned out.

PARTICIPATION LOCATION



1,195

VIRTUAL MEETING REGISTRANTS

35%

OF OUR 2020 PRESENTERS WERE EMERGING SCHOLARS

The Annual Meeting Survey revealed that most emerging scholar respondents desire some form of virtual participation or other virtual events to reduce the cost of travel and increase their resume building opportunities.

"Please keep virtual option[s], especially for early stage graduate students and scholars who are unable to travel due to funding, disability, or family responsibilities."

—Survey Respondent

29

CCNY SCHOLARS

Thanks to the generous support of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the African Studies Association hosted 29 Emerging Scholars from the Continent.

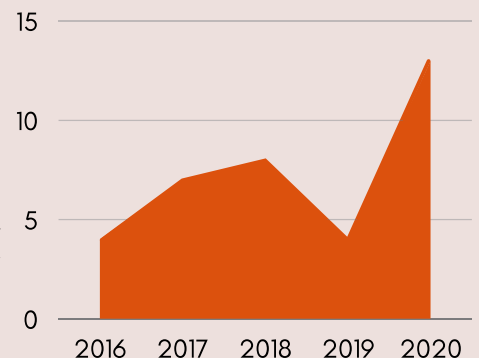
Our Virtual Exhibitors offered 16 discount codes for African Area Studies books to Annual Meeting attendees.

21

EXHIBITORS

GRADUATE STUDENT PAPER PRIZE SUBMISSIONS

Although submissions have increased overall since the prize was established in 2001, we still have a long way to go before even 1/4 of our Emerging Scholar presenters polish and submit a paper annually.



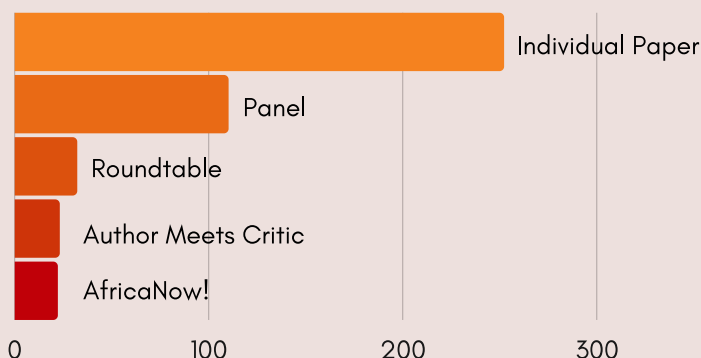
270

SESSIONS IN TOTAL

203 LIVE
67 ON-DEMAND

ACCEPTED PROPOSALS BY TYPE

Even though there were only 23 Author Meets Critic sessions, 2020 marked a notable increase in submissions to that category and we couldn't be more thrilled!



TOP 5 ATTENDED SESSIONS

1. Teaching While Black: African History and the Politics of Blackness in the Classroom
2. On Beyoncé's Africa: African Perspectives on Black is King
3. Decolonizing the Archive? Power and Persistence in Archival Practices and Historiography
4. Beneath the Surface: A Transnational History of Skin Lighteners
5. Debates on Restitution and Repatriation Claims: African Heritage in the Museum

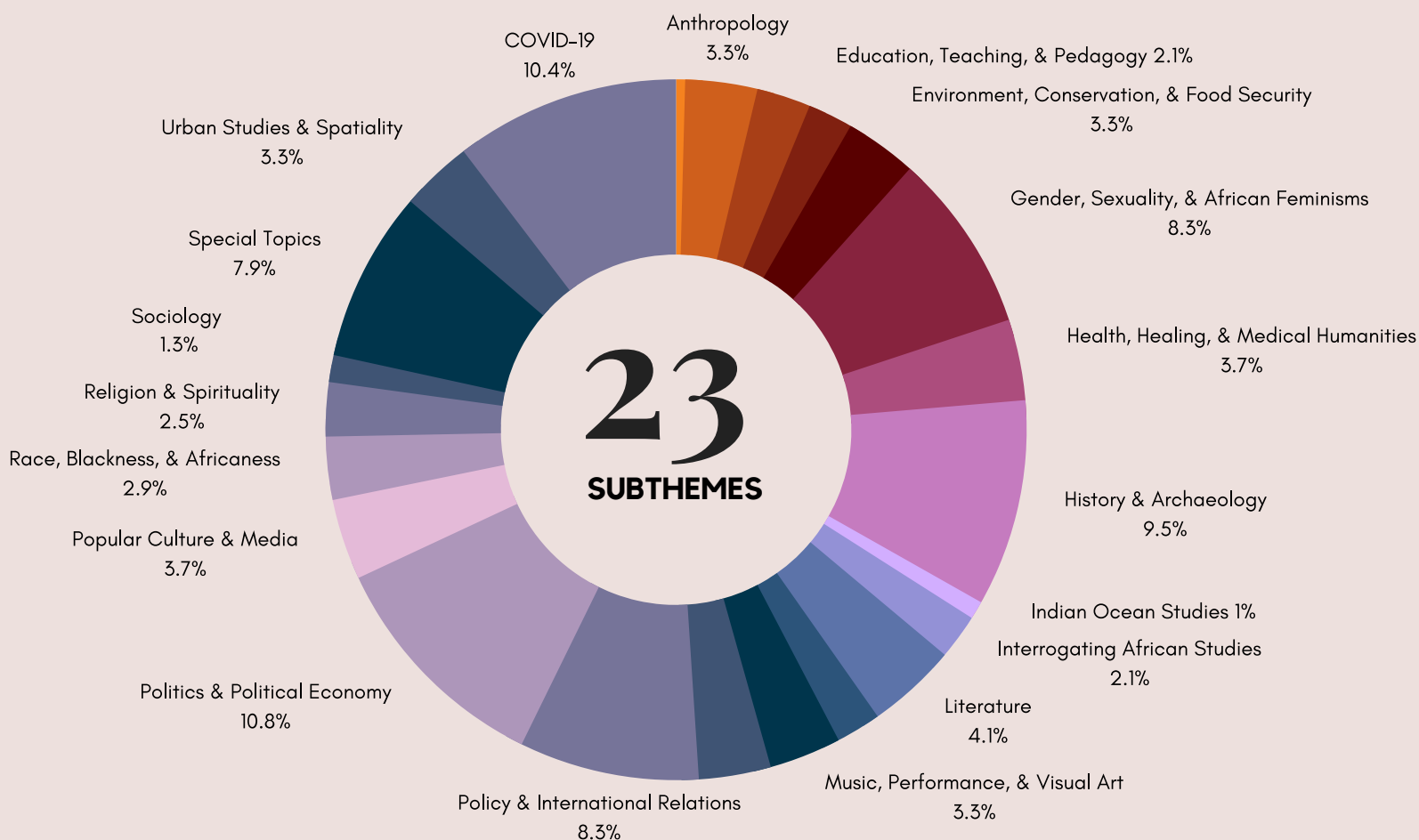
*Keynotes not included

50

SPONSORED SESSIONS

The Queer African Studies Association & African Studies Review tied for the most sponsored sessions on the 2020 program.

SESSION BREAKDOWN BY SUBTHEME



Meet the 2021 Program Chairs

The ASA's Program Chairs work hard behind the scenes to craft the CFP theme, develop unique and timely subthemes, and gather brilliant subtheme chairs to review your submissions among many other things. This year's volunteers Gretchen Bauer and Akosua K. Darkwah have done an incredible job, all while maintaining their regular (pandemic) work loads. Get to know them and their scholarly work, and don't forget to read their complete call for the 2021 Annual Meeting, Re-Centering Africa: Resistance and Renewal in a World Beyond COVID-19.

Gretchen Bauer is professor in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at the University of Delaware where she teaches African politics and gender and politics, and where she served as department chair and associate dean for many years in the past. Her research focuses on women's political leadership in Africa, with a current emphasis on women in parliament and cabinet in Ghana. She has published widely in her fields, including numerous scholarly books and journal articles, in recent years engaging primarily in collaborative research with colleagues outside the US. From the margins of political science, she has sought to add African cases and African voices to the global politics and gender literature. Recently, she has been a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Ghana Legon in 2016, a Senior Fellow at the Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa (MIASA) at the University of Ghana Legon in 2019 and a 2019-20 Democracy and Development Fellow at the Ghana Center for Democratic Development in Accra (GH-CDD). At the University of Delaware, she directed the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Mandela Washington Fellowship for five years, 2014 through 2018. She has taken undergraduate students to study abroad and is proud of her graduate students' contributions to the fields of African politics and gender and politics. As an ASA member since before she was a graduate student at UW-Madison, and a past Board of Directors member and subtheme chair, she is delighted to co-chair the 2021 program.

Akosua K. Darkwah is associate professor and Head of Department in the Department of Sociology at the University of Ghana Legon where she teaches courses in political economy and development sociology. Her research encompasses questions around women in work, the creative economy and migrant communities in Ghana as well as women in politics in Ghana. Together with colleagues from across the university, she has won numerous grants for research projects, the most recent of which is a million USD grant from DANIDA to study the creative economy in Ghana. She has published dozens of peer-reviewed book chapters and journal articles. In the last couple of years, she has been co-authoring papers with colleagues from different disciplines including this year's co-chair with whom she has published work on women in politics. Her teaching expertise has been sought for numerous US study abroad programs. In addition, her knowledge of women's work in Ghana has been sought by international bodies including UN Women and more recently the International Labor Organization. She is also an active member of Ghana's women's movement and is now the Deputy Convenor of Ghana's Network for Women's Rights. Currently, she serves on the editorial boards of the journals *African Studies Review* and *Feminist Africa*. Prior to serving as co-chair of the 2021 African Studies Association meeting, she served as a subtheme chair for the 2018 meeting. She is thrilled to be able to serve an association she joined as a graduate student at UW-Madison in the 1990s.

2021 NOVEMBER 16 - 20
A VIRTUAL EVENT

64th African Studies Association Annual Meeting

RE-CENTERING AFRICA: RESISTANCE AND RENEWAL IN A WORLD BEYOND COVID-19

Program Chairs: **Gretchen Bauer** (University of Delaware) and **Akosua Darkwah** (University of Ghana)

The theme of the 2021 African Studies Association annual meeting is “Re-centering Africa: Resistance and Renewal in a World Beyond COVID-19.” The world has been ravaged by COVID-19; tens of millions of people have been infected with the disease and millions have died, while economies have been devastated. At the same time, the global pandemic has forced us to pause and reflect on the values we hold dear and rethink our ways of being. In the last year, concerns about work-life balance, the health of our planet, the value of work, glaring income inequality, racial and ethnic injustice, the harm that the neoliberal development model continues to wreak on African economies have all been raised yet again in different circles. The importance of these ideas has been highlighted as the pandemic shattered life as we know it. Thus, 2020 was not just the year of the pandemic but also a year of shifts in ways of thinking and being. In Africa and elsewhere, 2020 accelerated a paradigm shift that was already in the making. This call invites proposals that reflect on the resistance and renewal in Africa that this paradigm shift represents.

Resistance: From even before resistance to missionary conceptions of work and the varied colonial rules imposed on populations across the continent in the 1800s and 1900s through to contemporary resistance to authoritarian rule – witness Stella Nyanzi and Bobi Wine in Uganda, the #EndSARS movement in Nigeria, #ZimbabweanLivesMatter, academics’ #dropthePUB campaign in Ghana, as well as the efforts of creatives such as the hip hop group Y’en Maare in Senegal and political cartoonist Michael Soi in Kenya – Africa has a long history of resistance. Some of these efforts are well known, others less so, all with varying degrees of success. Each, nonetheless, reflects Africans’ insistence on resisting dominant narratives and practices that seek to silence and harm them. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Africans across the continent are engaging and mobilizing to take their destinies into their own hands and forcing a re-imagining and re-shaping of existing paradigms.

Renewal: Over the course of the pandemic, Africans have demonstrated resilience and the ability to re-imagine and re-shape their futures. African ingenuity and innovation were immediately in evidence as the COVID-19 pandemic arrived at airports across the continent: one-day COVID-19 tests developed in Senegal, drones to deliver test samples in Ghana, drones to enforce mask mandates on city streets in Kigali, ‘Veronica buckets’ for hand washing where running water is in short supply, urban gardens to enhance food security in Johannesburg, the search for a ‘warm weather’ vaccine, among others. Africa’s efforts at renewal are not limited to the health sector and they are not a novelty. Innovations abound across the continent. In a variety of ways, Africans have shown the way in how things can or should be done. Interested in increasing women’s representation in parliament? Look to Rwanda. Rethinking higher education? Turn to the #RhodesMustFall campaign in South Africa and African Leadership Universities in Mauritius and Rwanda. Reshaping the arts scene? See Ibrahim Mahama’s Savannah Centre for Contemporary Art in northern Ghana. What does attention to Africans’ ways of being and thinking teach us about how to organize politics, economies, societies, religion, culture and more in a world beyond COVID-19?

We invite proposals from a range of disciplines that explore the ways in which Africa provides the context for imagining a brave new world, a world in which Africa, with its historical and contemporary manifestations of resistance and renewal, offers new ways of thinking about a world beyond COVID-19. We acknowledge the many ways these phenomena are interlinked and encourage proposals that explore these synergies.

In issuing this call, we are cognizant of the many ways in which the pandemic has imposed limitations on the work of the ASA community: unable to travel and conduct research, unable to write and publish in the face of income insecurity and new child or elder care burdens, less able to teach and mentor effectively, faced with dwindling resources from our universities, research institutes and foundations, stymied by disrupted job markets, connecting and collaborating only via zoom and not in person...what will be the implications of these impacts for our annual meeting?

As always, submissions that fall outside of the scope of this theme are welcome.

AN ASSOCIATION TIMELINE

THE HISTORY OF ADVOCACY IN THE ASA

2015, ASA FORMS ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

Advocacy is a relatively new endeavor of the ASA. The Advocacy Committee of the Board is created in 2015, after then President Dorothy Hodgson proposes an Advocacy Policy to guide the Association and the committee. This policy is adopted in Fall 2015. Prior to this policy, the Executive Committee of the Board would issue advocacy statements and directives on an ad hoc basis.

2015, SECRETARIAT JOINS IN ADVOCACY INITIATIVES

Pursuant to the directive of the Board, the ASA Secretariat joins advocacy organizations such as the National Humanities Alliance (NHA), the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), and NAFSA: Association of International Educators. ASA staff had already begun attending conferences of these organizations in 2014. The ASA continued its already active engagement with the Coalition for International Education (CIE).

2016, SECRETARIAT HOSTS ADVOCACY WORKSHOP

The ASA co-hosts a pre-conference advocacy workshop with the NHA at the 2016 ASA Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. This workshop gives advocacy opportunities to over 30 Annual Meeting attendees including the chance to meet their state congresspeople to discuss the importance of supporting and funding African Area Studies.

2017, ASA ESTABLISHES ADVOCACY TRAVEL AWARD

In 2017, the ASA Secretariat launches the ASA Advocacy Travel Award, which provides a \$1000 stipend to ASA members to travel to Washington, DC, and participate in an advocacy event. In 2017 there are 2 awardees, but the award expands annually to fund 4 members by 2019. Attendees can select to participate in the conference and advocacy days of NHA, COSSA, NAFSA, or CIE.

2018, CREATES ACADEMIC FREEDOM TASK FORCE

Under the leadership of Derek Peterson, the ASA Advocacy Committee created the Task Force for the Protection of Academic Freedom. The Task Force works to defend and advance scholars' ability to freely pursue, distribute, and discuss their research in academia and in public life. Through the Task Force, the ASA monitors infringements on academic freedom worldwide but specifically in Africa and the United States. While the Advocacy Committee Members serve on the Task Force, the Task Force is an entirely separate entity and includes representatives from ASA Coordinate and Affiliate Organizations.

2020 IN HINDSIGHT: THE ROLE OF ASA ADVOCACY IN GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS

by Sean Jacobs,
2020 Advocacy Committee Chair



In early 2020, in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ghana's government announced a new bill to control the country's public universities. The proposed law, the Public University Bill (PUB), would change how universities would be governed, especially what level of influence the state would have over how universities would be run. Up to now, the country's constitution prevented the country's President from serving as a university chancellor (a ceremonial role) or their ability to appoint or nominate officers (like chancellors, university presidents, university council chairpersons) or fill university councils. The Bill also proposed that the country's president could dissolve a university council.

In May, the Ghana Studies Association (GSA), a Coordinate Organization of the ASA, released a statement summarizing the Bill as "unconstitutional," "unnecessary" and "harmful" to the future of higher education in Ghana. Many GSA members are based in Ghana's public universities. The GSA repeated a criticism of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences that the proposed changes represent a "constriction of the space for differentiation among public universities, for innovation, and for the drive for excellence." The proposed new law would affect

Ghanaian researchers' ability to develop and carry out research, especially those that involve partnerships outside of Ghana.

The statement ended by calling on the government "to withdraw the bill; failing this, Parliament should exercise its independence of the Executive by rejecting it outright."

To ramp up the public pressure, the next month, Nana Akua Anyidoho and Akosua Adomako Ampofo, both GSA members, wrote a post for the London School of Economics' Africa Blog on why the Public University Bill is a rollback of the hard-won academic freedom that Ghanaian academics have enjoyed for decades now. They warned that the proposed changes could result "... in the top administration of universities being suspended during a change-over of government, as happens in many public institutions in the country. Moreover, a sitting president might conceivably manufacture such a crisis for an immediate political end."

As for the timing: "The answer is, in a word, control. The PUB is one of many pieces of legislations introduced by the Nana Akufo-Addo administration

that would revise the internal governance structures, regulatory structures, and admission processes of educational institutions, and grant the government unprecedented control over all levels of the educational system.”

Nana Akua Anyidoho was President of GSA and Akosua Adomako Ampofo is a board member of the ASA and President of the African Studies Association of Africa. It also happened that the latter sat on the ASA board’s advocacy committee. I chaired the committee at the time.

Akosua approached the advocacy committee. That same month, the ASA quickly released a statement basically linking to the Ghana Studies Association call. This is not unusual as the association takes the lead from its affiliate organizations and works closely with them. (One innovation of the last few years, under the previous chair of the advocacy committee, Derek Peterson, was the setting up of an advocacy task force to facilitate this kind of quick response. During my time as chair, the advocacy committee was still in its initial stages and had its work disrupted by COVID-19. It remains to be seen how it can positively impact the ASA’s work.)

The ASA’s decision to release a statement is consistent with the organization’s brief to comment when academic freedom is being threatened. In some instances, the ASA statements get picked up by local and international media. It is very difficult to measure the effectiveness of these statements, though it is generally understood that public pressure, via solidarity or concern statements have swayed governments. This is usually the case when associations across disciplines band together to release statements (think when the American Studies Association, Middle Eastern Studies or one or more of the learned societies, combine to release a statement, as happened in the unjust detention of Roland Marchal, a French Africanist and his Iranian colleague, Fariba Adelkhah, in Iran).

The government didn’t respond. Save for some

reporting in Ghanaian media and on Twitter, the statement did not make much traction. But back to strength in numbers. A few months later, I was contacted by Scholars at Risk, an American organization that works to agitate for academic freedom around the world. Two years earlier, when Derek Peterson (historian at University of Michigan) was still chair of the advocacy committee, he had invited representatives of Scholars at Risk to speak to a panel of the advocacy committee organized at the ASA annual meeting (held in Boston) to talk about Scholars at Risk’s work.

Scholars at Risk wanted to know whether the ASA would join a letter it was sending to the Ghanaian government, urging “Ghanaian officials ... to direct the appropriate authorities to withdraw or otherwise reconsider the Public University Bill 2020 in order to ensure full respect for academic freedom and institutional autonomy, as recognized in the Ghanaian constitution and applicable domestic and international law.”

On October 9, Scholars at Risk published the letter it had sent to Ghana’s vice president as well as the Minister of Education. The letter was reported in the Ghanaian press and soon the government was making excuses and rationalizations for the Bill. By the end of that month, Ghanaian MPs let it be known that they “have listened to public criticism against the Public University Bill 2020 that was tabled in parliament and have decided to put it on hold, because there is the need for further consideration.”

Ghana was gearing up for elections, so it was no surprise when the opposition candidate, John Mahama (a former president), promised that if the Bill became law before the elections, should he come to power that his government would not hesitate to initiate steps for its immediate repeal, as a matter of priority.

Mahama lost the election, but it was clear that the public criticism stung as a few days after the election, the government announced that it was suspending the Bill indefinitely.

The point here is not to argue that the ASA's statement led to the change in policy in Ghana, but merely to illustrate how we worked. At most, the ASA can release statements to bring light on issues affecting academics.

During my time as chair, we released statements on, among others, police violence at Makerere University, Uganda and most crucially on police violence in the United States and Africa. The ASA statements were emphatic. For example, on racial violence by police in the US, that statement read: "The African Studies Association stands in solidarity with those who demand accountability from our police, politicians, and president. We reject the increasing militarization of local police forces and the strenuous efforts to undermine democracy through voter suppression." As for our duties as scholars: "Through our research, writing, teaching and advocacy, the African Studies Association is committed to undoing the damage wrought by institutional racism. We pledge to

contribute to and support efforts that address racial, economic and social inequalities. More importantly, we will be part of solutions that privilege the value of human life and our collective humanity in Africa and in the United States."

In the statement on police violence on the continent, the statement "... appeal to governments to refrain from using excessive force and to institute policing reforms in the context of public health and social services that address approaches to community policing and public service delivery comprehensively." (This statement, however, left out references to the colonial roots of policing.)

These two statements foregrounded the debate on where and how the ASA intervenes. The problem of police violence are broader societal issues, not just affecting academics. This was a bold step for the ASA and perhaps points to new possibilities for where and how the ASA speaks out on abuses.





ADD YOUR NAME TO THE ASA MEMBER SPECIALIST DIRECTORY

Filling out a profile is as easy as adding your card to our rolodex, but it's searchable by more than just the alphabet.

The African Studies Association is pleased to announce the launch of the ASA Member Specialist Directory. A new initiative in 2021, this directory showcases the expertise of ASA members available to the general public. The ASA recognizes the critical role our members play in disseminating historical and contemporary knowledge about Africa. This directory will facilitate more consistent exchange of information about Africa between members of the ASA and those outside the community with a need for a better understanding of issues relating to African Studies, and current events in Africa.

Members have the opportunity to volunteer their knowledge to serve as country experts for asylum claims, provide media commentary, or other professional services. The ASA routinely receives requests from asylum lawyers for country experts, translation service requests, and more. This directory will facilitate connections between ASA members and news programs, print publications, radio shows, and a variety of other professionals seeking specific expertise. A modern-day rolodex, inclusion in this directory will provide members an opportunity to widen their networks, see a greater impact of their research findings, and add freelance jobs and services to their resumes.

ASA members are invited to complete the [Specialists Directory Profile Builder](#), available on myASA only. Members are encouraged to include expertise keywords that will be featured in the homepage of the Specialists Directory, along with a more detailed biography, and additional information (personal webpages, Twitter handles, etc.) as desired. Members will have the option to indicate if they would like to be contacted for any or all of the following categories: Media Commentary; Asylum Claims; and Other Professional Services.



STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION

During the 2020 Annual Meeting, the ASA Board of Directors voted on the action items listed below. The 2021 board members are:

Carolyn A. Brown, *President*
Ousseina D. Alidou, *Vice President*
Ato Quayson, *Past President*
Mary Osirim, *Treasurer*
Akosua Adomako Ampofo, *Member*
Nana Akua Anyidoho, *Member*
Leonardo Arriola, *Member*
Didier Gondola, *Member*
Abdoulaye Gueye, *Member*
Adeline Masquelier, *Member*
Dumi Moyo, *Member*
Sylvester Okwunodu Ogbechie, *Member*
Lahra Smith, *Member*



2020-2021 Board Decisions

- The Board approved a motion for the Central African Studies Association (CASA) to become a Coordinate Organization.
- The Board approved a motion for the Queer African Studies Association (QASA) to become a Coordinate Organization.
- The Board approved a motion to accept the 2021 Budget.
- The Board ratified the renaming of the Herskovits Prize to become the ASA Best Book Prize.
- The Board ratified the renaming of the ASA Service Award to be the ASA Outstanding Service Award.
- The Executive Committee agreed to hold the 2021 Annual Meeting virtually.
- The Executive Committee agreed to reduce conference registration rates for 2021.

Double Feature Decadence

INTRODUCED AND ANNOTATED BY KENNETH HARROW

Whether you're social distancing inside or just avoiding the snow, these 29 must-watch African films will help fill your indoor hours with wonder, brilliance, and compelling story-telling.

Below, I suggest films that I was able to view in the last couple of years, some of which were considered for the ASA Film Award. Some of the films I most loved are not currently distributed on major platforms, making it harder to see them (for now). In some cases, I have indicated where you can try to access them, but unfortunately not all are going to be easy to get. Some may not be streaming, some may be available in one country, and not another, but if you can manage to find them all, that would be wonderful. It is important not to forget: film distribution is not the same as books; in some cases streaming on platforms may not yet, or ever, become available. I have included them anyway in the hopes you will be able to find a link at some point, somewhere. It can take a few years for filmmakers to get their films into distribution, and so I recommend patience in your search.

There are positives and negatives to the film industry and the African film scene specifically, nowadays. There remains the burgeoning growth of Nollywood, which has inspired people across the continent to believe that anyone could make a film, digitally, at relatively low cost, and without piracy destroying their efforts. Nollywood's success helped some filmmakers find ways to finance projects and obtain high quality postproduction values — but of course not all big budget films are quality productions. Like many film industries, Nollywood can be constrained by formulaic expectations, particularly from global networks like Netflix, that aim to perpetuate a pigeon-hole style ultimately creating tedious repetition. The best directors surmount this, but it is a problem when audiences come to expect a certain style of acting or

constrained character profiles as evolution beyond those constraints can become increasingly challenging. There are many talented filmmakers like Kunle Afolayan, and Tunde Kelani, who engage social issues or obstacles in their work without becoming reductive or didactic. Taking up pedophilia, as Afolayan did in ***October 1***, was daring, and innovative. Similarly taking up sickle cell, as Kelani did in ***Dazzling Mirage***, was equally daring. An enormous number of diversely aged Nigerian directors are working today; they have created more than films, but an industry.

We owe so much to Nollywood and other major industries in Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, and South Africa for leading the revolution away from the old celluloid models, heavily financed by European sources and distribution networks, toward African models that could be emulated across the continent. The current innovations of independent filmmaking are incredible. There is enormous talent in the films I've seen from film industries I have known very little about — from Angola to Kenya to Ethiopia to Cameroon to Burundi and Rwanda, and on and on. Film distribution systems are also undergoing vast and rapid changes and we can finally find some access for African filmmakers. Now, we can see new possibilities for growth of many African cinemas, and for viewers both on the continent and abroad to enjoy creative and wonderful films. I have done my best to highlight some of these less-recognized industries and some brilliant work they've produced as I believe this is what needs to be discovered, heralded, and most of all disseminated.

Ar Condicionado (Air Conditioner) dir. Fradique a.k.a. Mario Bastos prod. Jorge Cohen (Angola 2019).

True farfelu, this film pulls off fantasy from the point of view of the poor workers of Luanda. This was available for viewing as the grand prize winner for the 2020 ASA Film Prize. A film critic describes it as “A breezily off-beat affair from the West African coastal nation of Angola, *Air Conditioner (Ar condicionado)* should beguile and captivate those able to adapt to its idiosyncratic rhythms and humor. A highly accomplished and promising first full-length fictional outing for U.S.-trained mono-monikered multi-hyphenate ‘Fradique’ (a.k.a. Mario Bastos), this magical realist tale set and shot in bustling capital Luanda is buoyed by a quite outstanding original jazz-inflected soundtrack by Aline Frazao, whose renown already stretches beyond her continent’s shores.” It is weirder than “breezily off-beat” – it is wonderfully imaginative and touching.

Beyond My Steps dir. Kamy Lara, prod. Paula Agostinho (Angola 2019) Shown at San Francisco Dance Festival, current distribution unknown.

Another imaginative but especially inspiring Angolan film, *Beyond My Steps* deals with a contemporary dance company in Luanda and the tremendous challenges artists face today in expanding their repertoire with, but especially beyond, the traditional. It is filled with spectacular dance footage and is a testimony to the vibrancy of the film industry in Angola. The San Francisco Dance Festival explains that “through rare archival footage of the 2017 season show of the Contemporary Dance Company of Angola, five dancers interpret tribal dances and costumes, transforming them into contemporary forms and bridging time through movement. Most of the dancers – coming from other provinces of the country – bring memories and traditions with them when moving to the bustling, erratic and frantic reality of the capital city.”

Two films from Sudan that should be at the top of any list of wonderful African films:

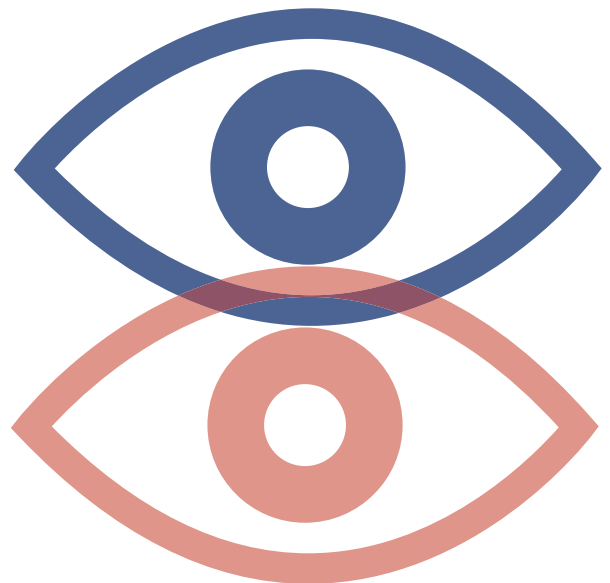
Khartoum Offside dir. Marwa Zein, (Sudan 2019). Shown in the NY African Film Festival, current distribution unknown.

A moving story of a Sudanese women’s football team as the women and their coach persist in the face of male resistance. The World Football Organization imposes rules that provide that Sudan’s National

Football team have funding, but their ability to play on the international arena is in question. This film strongly dispels any image of the women as subdued or repressed figures in this Muslim country. It offers a powerful call for women to have the right to play, and presents their perspective of the situation looking on to the rest of the world. These are women who are great players, but whose greatness will be tested on an international scale. Their language and efforts are highly entertaining, amusing, and encouraging. This is a film in which the “issue” is really driven by the personalities that lead us to find inspiration.

Talking About Trees dir. Suhaib Gasmelbar (Sudan 2019) Amazon Prime.

This is a wonderful account of four old guys trying to revive cinema in Sudan. These stalwart figures in the history of Sudanese filmmaking made this film in the face of obstacles presented to them by the state (the film occurs before the current government came to power); and in a sense it is an account of the struggles of the artist against state’s bureaucratic oppression. This issue expands into the larger question of film itself, as the self-reflexivity of the film’s conceit gives us access to the larger question of “why make films at all?” – especially in a world in which the economic and political imperatives of film culture have deeply marked off possibilities in locations on the margins of global filmmaking. The dialogue gives the viewer access to our richest intellectual and artistic human qualities and the bittersweet comedy compels us to honor these figures who demand respect for Sudanese filmmaking. This is one of my favorites of all cinema, period.



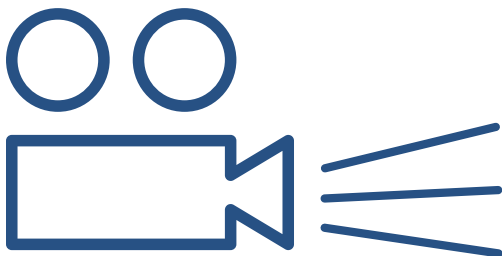
Netflix has expanded its black cinema offerings extensively. I will highlight a few of the major films that they have managed to capture recently:

Atlantique dir. Mati Diop (France; Senegal 2019) Netflix.

Mati Diop is the cat's meow — a tremendously talented filmmaker (I also adored her ***Milles Soleils***). She won the Cannes Grand Prix for this film and its brilliance is difficult to articulate. If I were to say it is a zombie or ghost film, that would not be enough. If I were to say, it speaks to the politics of power and money in Dakar today, that would not be enough either. If I were to say Diop has reconfigured a Senegalese love story in ways you would not have imagined, that would still not be enough. It is enough to say Diop is one of the major filmmakers working today, and this film will certainly gratify you — and more. For cognoscenti of African cinema, you must follow her as she is striking new ground.

Lionheart dir. Genevieve Nnaji (Nigeria 2018) Netflix.

Genevieve Nnaji co-wrote, produced, directed, and starred in *Lionheart*, another Nollywood major film, not least of all because of Nnaji. This was the first Netflix original film produced in Nigeria. As expected, the style has become familiar: the rhythm, postproduction, appeal to emotions—the class of Victoria Island denizens—and a Nigeria of corruption and abuse to be overcome. It was well worth seeing; but for me indicates the challenges of an industry which is prescribing more and more conventional types. It was selected as a candidate for the Academy Awards and denied on a ridiculous technicality. The film follows “Adaeze Obiagu (portrayed by Nnaji), who wants to substitute for her father, Chief Ernest Obiagu (Pete Edochie), when he can no longer run his company due to health issues. Her father, however, asks his brother Godswill (Nkem Owoh) to take his place, and Godswill and Adaeze have to work together to save the company from debt as well as a threatened takeover by businessman Igwe Pascal.”



Rafiki dir. Wanuri Kahiu (Kenya 2018) AmazonPrime.

Kahiu, the director of the 2009 sci-fi short ***Pumzi*** graced audiences with *Rafiki* in 2018. The film had its international premiere in the Un Certain Regard section at the 2018 Cannes Film Festival; it was the first Kenyan film to be screened at the festival. The film follows the romance that grows between two young women, Kena and Ziki, amidst family and political pressures particularly Kenyan LGBTQ rights. Kena and Ziki become close and have a number of romantic rendezvous but tensions arise in a hostile political climate as homosexuality is illegal. What follows are the navigations of two young lesbians confronted with social disapprobation. This is a solid, likeable, finely made film. Even more of a must-see since the Kenyan government tried its best to ban it — but that's a whole other story.

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind dir. Chiwetel Ojiofor (Nigeria; Malawi 2019) Netflix.

A young, brilliant Malawian boy faces a technical challenge to his community, and invents electric pump to resolve issue of loss of water. Though grounded in a true story, the essence here (as in many of African films) is to underscore the great challenges faced by innovative youths in Africa, and their ingenuity in overcoming them. This particular feature is less a virtue in the film than one risking clichés about Africa. Despite this, the warmth and skill of the Nigerian star and director, Ojiofor, carries the film. Netflix is making and distributing a wide range of African films and not all would make it to the top of my list, but this is certainly well-done.

The Lost Okoroshi dir. Abba Makama (Nigeria 2019) Netflix/Osiris Film.

A truly original, weird, funny, effective film! I truly loved this one. The Toronto International Film Festival summarizes the plot: “Haunted by dreams of an ancestral Okoroshi masquerade, a disillusioned security guard wakes up one morning to find himself transformed into a mute, purple spirit, in Abba Makama's surrealist romp through the sprawling city of Lagos.” It was beautifully shot, and was more than “off-beat”—it was crazy. Too good, perhaps too unconventional for Netflix? I strongly recommend this over all the other star-studded features that have done so well at the box office. But it will not be easy to find for long.

Up North dir. Tope Oshin (Nigeria 2018) Netflix.

Although Oshin has directed several introspective short films such as **The Young Smoker**, **Till Death Do Us Part**, **New Horizons** and **Ireti**, she is known best for her highly successful feature film releases **Up North** and **New Money**. Oshin has produced some of the highest box office breaking movies in Nigeria. *Up North* has been described as “a picturesque love letter to Northern Nigeria [and] the latest to join Netflix’s burgeoning Nollywood roster. *Up North* follows the journey of a young, rebellious heir from an affluent family who is sent away to national service in Bauchi as punishment for his rebellious behaviour. The film stars musician-turned-actor Banky W in a lead role. Other cast members include Adesua Etomi, Michelle Dede, Ka nayo Kanayo, Ibrahim Sulaimon and Saeed Muhammed. The screenplay is based on a story from Effiong who fell in love with Bauchi during his many travels around the country.”

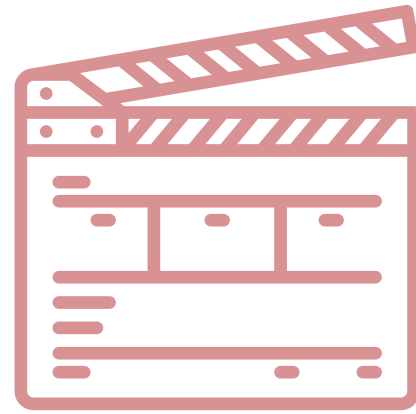
There are three films dealing with the abusive situation that is mining. The first two, set in Burkina Faso, are outstanding. The third is more professional than the others, and for that reason a smidgeon less compelling.

Pas d’or pour Kalsaka dir. Michel Zongo (Burkina Faso 2019) Rush Lake.

A strong documentary—A multinational gold mining company mines at great long-term cost to the community, with moving testimony concerning open mine pit workers in Burkina Faso. The humanity of the workers, the language, and especially their sentiments work powerfully with devastating issues of labor, poverty and exploitation—especially given the government’s involvement. The film creates valuable emotions and ideas from the visuals of physical repetition of gestures, of breaking stones, and of struggling workers. This is one of my favorites in making the agency of the poor, and their struggle, visually and conceptually real. A powerful film and a serious indictment of government collusion with the international British mining company that exploited the locals.

Le loup d’or de Baolé dir. Chloe Aïcha Boro (Burkina Faso 2019) Current distribution unknown.

Another powerful mining film described thus at the Carthage Film Festival: “In the heart of Ouagadougou, a granite quarry where nearly 2,500 people, adults and



children, work in Dantean conditions, on the margins of a society that refuses to see them. But in 2014, the revolution went through this and blew on the minds, a wind of emancipation and hope.” It was essentially “real”—close to the people who tried to take possession of their own labor, of their right to organize, and to have decent wages for backbreaking labor. It puts a stark spotlight on the dire working conditions of the laborers in a granite quarry. On the margins of a society that refuses to see them, the film centers them, as they revolt against the slaveholder-like terms of their employment. *Le Loup D’or de Baolé* is a moving, visually stunning rendition of the Baolé quarry and its workers.

Dying for Gold co-dir. Richard Pakleppa and Catherine Meyburgh (S. Africa; Namibia 2018) Icarus.

Thank god for Icarus, which has dozens of wonderful films. Icarus describes it thus: “In their gripping documentary, South African director Catherine Meyburgh and Richard Pakleppa expose a century of deplorable environmental, labor and human rights practices, bringing to light the real cost of gold at last. In the biggest class action law suit the country had ever seen, South Africa’s largest gold mining companies were accused of knowingly exposing miners to deadly dust and disease. Now, harrowing underground footage, intimate interviews with miners and their families, and rare archival material come together in *Dying for Gold*, the untold story of the making of South Africa.” This is solid documentary style filmmaking, reportage, and engagement.

I strongly recommend two highly personal, attractive, and talented films by the Cameroonian filmmaker Rosine Mbakam. Both films are distributed by Icarus, and each is better than the other!

"ENGULFED IN BEAUTIFUL CINEMATOGRAPHY THAT IS BOTH SWEEPING AND INTIMATE, QUBEKA SHOWS THAT ACTIONS TO UPLIFT FAMILY, AND NOT ENDANGER THEM, IS WHAT REAL MANHOOD IS ALL ABOUT."

Chez Jolie Coiffure and ***The Two Faces of A Bamileke Woman*** dir. Rosine Mbakam (Cameroon 2018) Icarus.

In *The New Yorker*, a fine blurb by Richard Brody: "The Cameroonian-born, Belgium-based director Rosine Mbakam's two documentary features, *The Two Faces of a Bamiléké Woman* and *Chez Jolie Coiffure* form an extraordinary diptych of the migrant experience. The earlier film is boldly and intricately personal. Mbakam, accompanied by her white European husband and their toddler son, returns to her native city, Yaoundé, to visit her mother, whose recollections delve deep into the intimate nexus of politics and tradition—including her marriage to a polygamous man and the principles of female independence that she imparted to Mbakam. A crucial institution there is the tontine, a financial self-help group for women, which also comes to the fore in *Chez Jolie Coiffure* filmed in a Brussels hair salon that is managed by a Cameroonian woman named Sabine and serves as a meeting place for African residents. Sabine speaks to Mbakam about her arduous clandestine journey to Europe and her experience of racism in Belgium. Mbakam's camerawork makes brilliant use of mirrors and windows—and, in the process, catches a terrifying police raid against undocumented migrants." One after another, fine women filmmakers are stepping into the spotlight.

Knuckle City dir. Jahmil X.T. Qubeka (South Africa 2019) Hulu.

For some reason *Knuckle City* stays with me. It is a compelling boxing film; reminiscent of Tarantino in mood. Film critic Anne T. Donahue said "It is a movie that's as defined by what one's heart can endure as much as it is by its mesmerizing sport, its acting and how long it will stay with you. *Knuckle City* cannot be overlooked." Courtney Small of *In The Seats* gave it a 4/5 stars and praised the fresh take on traditional genre tropes, saying "Bathed in a sea of poverty and corruption, *Knuckle City* challenges traditional notions of masculinity to expose how toxic and destructive it is. Spreading like a virus, the sins that the brothers' inherited from their father are part of a greater systemic problem impacting the township of Mdantsane. Unflinchingly gritty, *Knuckle City* brings a fresh South African take on traditional genre tropes. Engulfed in beautiful cinematography that is both sweeping and intimate, Qubeka shows that actions to uplift family, and not endanger them, is what real manhood is all about."

For more great films, there are also the rare independent distribution companies like ArtMattan and Icarus who valiantly year in year out continue to provide fine African, and some Caribbean films. We have been lucky, at the ASA and ALA, to have enjoyed longstanding collaboration with ArtMattan, who made available to us films on their list. A number of their films merit special mention, including ***Kinshasa Makambo*** (Dieudo Hamadi, D.R.C.), ***Two Weeks in Lagos*** (Kathryn Fasegha, Nigeria), and Shola Amoo's ***The Last Tree*** (UK; Nigeria). Most of all, we were lucky to have been able to see the newly restored version of ***Shaihu Umar*** (Didi Cheeka, Nigeria), one of the early classics of Nigerian cinema.

Happy viewing and stay safe!



Official Selection
tiff
Toronto International
Film Festival 2019



THE LOST OKOROSHI

A FILM BY ABBA T. MAKAMA

Osiris Film and Entertainment presents The Lost Okoroshi Directed, Produced, and Edited by Abba Makama. This is just one of the 29 outstanding films mentioned in Double Feature Decadence for your viewing pleasure. Read each entry to see where you can view the film online, or what distributor to contact for a screening.

ASA EMERGING SCHOLARS NETWORK (ESN)

CONNECTING THE VOICES OF
THE FUTURE.

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FUTURE OF THE ASA ESN.

March 11, 2021
12:00pm EST/UTC-5

Attendance will be limited.
[Register](#) to receive the meeting link.

** The ASA defines Emerging Scholar as current graduate students (both masters-level and doctorate-level), and recent graduates or early-career professionals who are still within 5 years of receipt of a terminal degree.

