



AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF AFRICA

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Call for papers/panels.

REPATRIATING AFRICA: OLD CHALLENGES & CRITICAL INSIGHTS!

10th Anniversary Celebration
5th Biennial Conference of the African Studies Association of Africa (ASAA)

in partnership with

New Horizons University (UNH) and the Arrupe Center for Research and Training (CARF)
Lubumbashi, DRC

October 25-28, 2023

The 5th Biennial conference of the African Studies Association of Africa (#ASAA2023) will be held in Lubumbashi, the Democratic Republic of Congo. It will commemorate 10 years since the association was launched on October 25, 2013, at the International Conference on African Studies organized by the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana (October 24-26, 2013). For the first time in the history of the ASAA, the Biennial will be held in a Francophone country, the Democratic Republic of Congo, a key part of the association's strategy to spread its work across different parts of the continent and its diaspora; and to strategically strengthen knowledge institutions with the aim of centering Pan Africanism as intellectual lens for critical inquiry.

The theme of this year's conference is: **“Repatriating Africa: Old Challenges and Critical Insights.”** Africa's encounter with other parts of the world is filled with contested histories. Slavery, the Transoceanic and Trans-Saharan trades, Colonization, and the continent's current entrapment in global systems of accumulation continues to provoke critique amongst scholars, particularly with respect to loss, exploitation, and extraversion. Slavery, the slave trades and Colonization continue to be foregrounded, not just as hideous crimes against humanity, but also for its continuous impact on African knowledges and cultural heritage. Global crossroads with Africa continue and have always been accompanied by looting, destruction, and cultural obliteration.

Recently, resuscitation of the old and recurrent question of repatriation *has reoccupied center-stage as a crucial step for de-linking and restoring African dignity*. This new push for repatriation is provoked by the activation of the decolonization movement across Africa and its diaspora, particularly in the economic, financial, cultural and knowledge spheres. Deepening calls for decentering colonial orthodoxies and centering Africa has given new impetus to the new quest for African cultural heritages, knowledges, traditions and what some see as a quest for authenticity. As, particularly art objects and archives, begin journeys of return, there is a need for deeper conversations about processes cultural loss, spiritual return, and restoration.

MISSION: To promote Africa's own specific contributions to the advancement of knowledge about the peoples and cultures of Africa and the Diaspora.



Sixty years after the founding of the Organization of African Unity (currently African Union), what is the state of the Pan Africanist project to restore and restitute African-ness? How should Africa engage with the question of repatriation? What new challenges, critical insights and radical strategies should the continent deploy to restitute lost heritage? What new questions emerge as looted heritage begins journeys 'home'? What is the place/role of research, cultural heritage, archives, knowledges, and knowledge production in the project of restoring African dignity?

The conference will extend old reflections on the restitution of African cultural heritage, initiated by Africans in the aftermath of independence, along four lines each of which raises a host of burning questions. Participants are invited to propose contributions based on these four axes: **restitution, reparation, restoration, and repatriation** that do not just engage with the current focus on tangible, but also critically place the intangible at the heart of restitution debates. This latter focus should for example, provocatively engage with themes such as repatriating knowledges, spirituality, histories, archives, concepts, theories, methodologies, languages, and other ideas often coded as external.

Also, the **International Congress of African and African Diaspora Studies (ICAADS)** will meet as a pre-conference event on October 24. The first ICAADS Congress was organized in 1962 by President Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana. There have been four other ICAADS meetings, in 1967 in Dakar under the patronage of President Leopold Sédar Senghor, in 1973 in Addis Ababa under the patronage of Emperor Haile Selassie, in 1978 in Kinshasa under the high authority of President Mobutu Sese Seko. Since the last session that took place in 1985 in Ibadan, ICAADS went dormant. The ICAADS revival will discuss and reinvigorate the extraordinary transformative momentum of African Studies on a global scale and will have *policy implications*, urging African leaders to heed the most pressing contemporary issues impacting on Black communities worldwide. These include the west's environmental debt towards Africa, neo-colonialism and the resurgence of military coups, Pan-Africanism, African citizenship, and the status and treatment of African migrants within and outside the continent, the African Union attitudes towards dictatorships, its position on international politics (e.g. the Covid-19 pandemic, etc.), gender and sexuality, the state of African studies and its diasporas, etc.

Submit panel, paper, and other cultural presentation proposals in the following thematic areas:

Restitution Axis

1. Reappropriation of African Artworks
2. Revisiting foundations of culture
3. Sovereignty and heritage (historical, epistemological, and transgenerational justice)
4. Museums and Africa
5. Re-foundation of African identities and society today (New African Personality)
6. Integration, humanism and Modernity
7. Restituting Knowledges

Reparation Axis

1. Reparation defined or undefined.
2. Moral, ethical and spiritual dimensions of reparation.
3. Socioeconomics and reparation
4. Philosophical presuppositions and subjugation of African governments



5. Military and Reparation
6. Reparation, Science and technology
7. Knowledges and Ideologies

Restoration Axis

1. What tangible and intangible values need restoration?
2. From restoration to revolution
3. Restoring Knowledges
4. Cultural Forms & Praxis
5. Politics and State Formations
6. Identities and Personhood

Repatriation Axis

1. Repatriation of research sites, intellectual priorities and heuristic postures.
2. African tradition, 'plural' engagements and modern technology.
3. Conscious and decisive engagement as disruption
4. Humus African culture and a new world
5. Repatriating Knowledges

Abstracts:

Abstracts (Papers, Panels, Roundtables, and cultural presentations) should be a minimum of 200-250 words with the authors affiliation, bio and contact information. The organizers encourage authors to identify which axis they are aligning their abstract with and if desired to construct panels of 4 presentations.

1. Submit your Proposal in English [here](#).
2. Submit your proposal in French [here](#).

Deadline for abstracts: **May 31, 2023**

Responses to abstracts: **May 31, 2023**

For all questions, email: conference@as-aa.org

*** Please visit [our website](#) for a more information on the association.