

CFP: 15th Annual Africana Studies Symposium: “Performing Africana Art and Culture: Repression, Resistance, and Renewal.”

The Africana Studies Department at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, in conjunction with the Department of Dance and the Department of Art and Art History, invites proposals for its fifteenth annual symposium, “Performing Africana Art and Culture: Repression, Resistance and Renewal,” which will take place on April 6-7, 2017. This two-day event will combine scholarly presentations with creative workshops on performative African and African diaspora arts. The goal is to facilitate cross-disciplinary conversations between the humanities, the social sciences, and the arts.

Africana cultural practices have been a site of knowledge production, self-affirmation, spiritual awareness, community building, and resistance to social, racial, and economic injustice. Yet, Africana arts and culture have a long and varied history in the modern world, ranging from severe official repression to tacit state support on the continent of Africa and throughout the African diaspora. Between the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, for example, numerous state and colonial officials suppressed Africana practices, regarding them as threatening to “public health,” “civilization,” “development,” and the stability of colonial regimes. During this period of repression, Pan-Africanists, black nationalists, and others often encouraged the resurgence or re-imagination of Africana cultural practices as a component of their struggles for liberation, equality, and independence. Then in the mid-twentieth century, amidst the Civil Rights movement in the United States, the Cuban revolution, the decolonization of Africa and the Caribbean, and the establishment of Black Studies departments and African universities, the former restraints on Africana practices were relaxed in many places. Some states even officially embraced Africana cultural practices as representative of their multi-racial/multi-ethnic society and/or post-colonial identity. Today, Africana practices continue to play an important role in many societies, as a form of protest, a method of expression, means of constructing identity and particularly as a lure for cultural tourism.

We invite researchers and performers who examine any aspect of the repression, re-imagination, or celebration of Africana artistic, cultural, or spiritual practices to submit a proposal for a scholarly presentation or artistic workshop. We welcome submissions related to a variety of topics including, but not limited to: dance, music, clothing, visual and expressive arts, symbols, language, religion, and ritual.

We especially welcome scholarly presentations and artistic workshops that address:

- Religious/spiritual practices as resistance to state oppression and denigration of Africana cultures and peoples.
- Responses of the Africana artistic experience to globalization and millennial capitalism
- Popular dance and movement— salsa, kizomba, zouk, semba, capoeira, Afro-house, hip hop, bachata, etc.
- Dance forms influenced by religious/spiritual practices -Rumba, Bomba, Samba Afro, movements of the Orixás/Orichas/Orishas, etc.
- Africana visual arts with its diversity of forms, media, and themes

- The relationship between Africana cultural practices and tourism
- The ways in which museum collections and exhibitions have shaped our understanding of Africana artistic and cultural practices
- Africana performative practices as a means of constructing identity
- The roles of fashion and the body as instruments of affirmation and/or resistance
- Artistic contributions to political protests

This symposium will include a roundtable discussion about teaching methodologies and programming, as well as bridging gaps between Africana Studies and the Arts in University education.

Please submit proposals (less than 300 words) for presentations or workshops to Dr. Danielle Boaz, dboaz@uncc.edu by December 15, 2016. Participants will be notified by January 15.

Limited travel funds are available and may be used to support graduate students and early career scholars. To apply, please submit a short statement explaining the significance of the conference theme to your larger body of scholarship as well as a copy of your CV along with your proposal.