

Call For Papers

2023 Workshop

Rethinking Print Culture, Media, Digital and Oral History as Archive, Evidence, and Method: From Africa to the World

April 27-28, 2023

Hosted by Johns Hopkins University, and in collaboration with the Institute of African Studies at Carleton University and the Humanities Research Center at the University of Dar es Salaam, this event will bring together a dynamic group of senior graduate students and scholars, with an emphasis on emerging scholars, to re-examine and re-imagine the place of media in forging dynamic identities, communities, social structures, and futures across the African continent.

Building on new histories of media, this workshop will explore two central methodological questions. First, how do scholars from within the humanities and social sciences access and imagine what constitutes print culture, media, digital and oral history to produce new understandings of the relationship between pasts, presents, and futures? In part, this question constitutes a call to re-imagine archives as varied forms of media which exist in multi-lingual (isiZulu, Yoruba, and Kiswahili, for instance) and multi-material spaces (textile, images, oral traditions, living objects, and performance). Second, how do new archives produce novel understandings of public cultures and audiences, social and political organizing (from gendered and sexual lives to anti-colonial and decolonial strategies and movements), mobility and belonging, health and healing, environmental phenomenon and crisis, and modes of governance or authority building practices prior to and in 21st century? By new archives, we mean innovative methods for re-reading media, and/or new analytical tools for re-thinking what can constitute an archive across disciplinary boundaries.

This interdisciplinary workshop is broadly anchored in five themes:

1. How do African institutions, ideas, and processes shape the historical production, consumption, and preservation of media from the late 16th century to the present?
2. How are reading publics and cultures built, shaped, and sustained by media including 'new media'? How have media changed over time and how have various forms of media influenced one another?
3. What is the relationship between media and power? How do production and circulation shape various cultures, broadly defined, across African history?
4. How might we explore the impact of media from Africa into the World? How can various forms of media from Africa fully contribute to the creation of black/Black archives on a global scale? How can we study the circulation of African-based and black/Black press into spaces not delineated by borders and across the diaspora?
5. How can we retheorize the positionalities, contributions, and embodied knowledges of girls, mothers, grandmothers, queens, spiritualists, diviners, market-women, gender, and sexuality evinced through media? How might we more closely examine their contributions to the production of political, social, intellectual, economic, and affective knowledges and cultures through media?

To encourage participation, and in recognition that COVID-19 and opaque visa processes persist, this 2-day event will be hybrid: it will take place at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland and online. We invite participants from across academic, political, and artistic communities to apply with a brief biography (maximum 50 words) and an abstract (maximum 250 words) by **December 31, 2022**. All participants will receive an honorarium for their participation. Graduate students, post-doctoral candidates, faculty, and participants without access to funding may request support for intended travel expenses. For more information or to submit an abstract, please email all documents in Word or PDF format to Vincenza Mazzeo, Chambi Chachage, Thomas Keegan, and Frolence Rutechura at rethinkingafricanmedia2023@gmail.com.

Funding for this event has been provided by The Alexander Grass Humanities Institute, Tabb Center, and Department of History at Johns Hopkins University.

The organizational structure of this workshop is experimental. Fundraising and collaboration are ongoing processes. If you're interested in providing fiscal support to participants, to facilitate travel and research, please contact us.

