



2025 CAAR Conference Call for Proposals

Knowledges in Motion: Black Travels, Belonging, and Transformations

March 20-22, 2025

Humboldt University Berlin

The Collegium for African American Research (CAAR) is pleased to announce a call for proposals for the 2025 biennial conference. After a four-year hiatus due to COVID-19 and other challenges, the 2025 conference will be hosted by Humboldt University Berlin. The conference theme, “Knowledges in Motion: Black Travels, Belonging, and Transformations,” reflects African and African-diasporic production, critiques, and contributions to new discourses and existing epistemologies. Short- and long-distance travels and migrations within and across regions, continents, and epochs have been at the center of the Black experience in its varied, complex, and transformative forms. The colossal impact of the movements of people of African descent along with ideas, ideologies, and cultures are manifested historically and in the present: free and enslaved Africans who used their knowledge and skills to save and sustain economies of Arab societies and the New World; the Nardal sisters, Paulette and Jeanne, who, with Aimé Césaire, Léon Damas, and Léopold Senghor, other sojourners in 1930s Paris from French colonies in the Caribbean and Africa, produced Negritude, an enduring analytical category in Black studies; Kwame Nkrumah and Nnamdi Azikiwe, who shared their knowledge about Africa and their experiences as “Black subjects” in the British Empire, as they studied in early twentieth-century USA; African American Avant-guard entertainer Josephine Baker, and literary scholar Langston Hughes, who helped mold the “Black culture craze” in Paris in the early decades of the twentieth century; diverse African and African Caribbean immigrant communities in North and South America, Europe, Australia, and Asia, whose members have tapped into premigration knowledge and experiences to shape changes in the larger societies of their new homes; and subsequent-generations of African descended migrants, who, in physical and cyberspaces, demonstrate hybrid knowledge and skills.

The site of the 2025 CAAR conference offers a fitting reference for the movements and influences of African and Black diasporic knowledge, especially as personified by W.E.B. DuBois, one of the most iconic figures of Black history. From 1892-1894, W.E.B. DuBois studied at Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, now Humboldt University Berlin. In this brief, but formative, period, Du Bois used the opportunity to further understand race, Blackness, and American racism through the prisms of Germany’s intellectual traditions. Berlin was an important intellectual site for Black scholars and artists such as Alain Locke, Paul Robeson, and Angela Davis, whose work in turn provided crucial impulses for and fostered innovative knowledge production in Germany. Ninety years after Du Bois’ affiliation with Humboldt, Audre Lorde’s stay at the Free University Berlin in 1984 and her continuing engagement with scholars of the Black diaspora in Berlin had a far-reaching impact on Afro-German knowledge production and political activism, as well as Black transnational relations more generally. Like DuBois and other students and scholars who, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries studied and exchanged ideas on the grounds of Humboldt, CAAR members will convene on the same site to share their research and scholarship, addressing a variety of topics, some of which are enduring themes from previous centuries that continue to shape political, economic, and social developments of our time.

We invite complete panels and individual paper proposals that address the following sub-themes:

- Europe as a Site for Collaboration for Diasporic Knowledge Production
- Epistemologies in African, Indigenous, Caribbean, and Diasporic Communities
- African American and Afro-German Interactions
- Black Citizenship and Travel
- Black Travel Writing
- *Saudade* and Imagined Longings for Self and Home
- Migration, Knowledge and Belonging
- Women as Carriers of Knowledge
- Gendered Knowledges
- Erotic Desire and Travel
- Blackness, Travels, and Foodways
- Cultural Sharing and Transformation
- Queer of Color Critique
- (Dis-) Abilities and Travel
- Travel and Affirmation of Indigeneity
- AI and Afro-Futurism
- Protest, Resistance, and Global Struggles for Black Liberation
- Epistemologies of Exile
- Historical Preservation—Archives, Museums and Repositories of Black Knowledge
- Memory and Memorials
- Knowledge, Race, and Empire
- Dance, Music, Theater, Film, and Popular Expression/s

All proposals should include a title, a one-page CV or bio sketch for each presenter, email addresses for all presenters, and an abstract of no more than 250 words. Please submit your proposal for individual paper or a panel by SEPTEMBER 30, 2024, to caarknowledges-2025@hu-berlin.de. Notifications of acceptance of proposals will be sent out by December 30, 2024.

For inquiries about the conference, please contact Eva Boesenberg at eva.boesenberg@hu-berlin.de.