

THE AFRICA INSTITUTE UPDATES COUNTRY-FOCUSED CULTURAL AND SCHOLARLY SEASON: 'GLOBAL GHANA' FROM SUMMER TO FALL



Sharjah, June 20, 2022: After the success of the first conference as part of the Global Ghana season titled, *Sites of Departure/Sites of Return*, in March 2022 held in Sharjah, The Africa Institute are excited to present the second iteration of Global Ghana in the fall and are working with leading scholars to create a rich, engaging and stimulating cultural and scholarly program in Accra.

Initially planned to be held this summer from July 14-16, the Accra edition of the Global Ghana conference is being rescheduled to October 27-29, 2022 due to unforeseen logistical complications.

The fall conference-themed, “Global Ghana: In Search of Africa’s Black Star” explores the multiplicity of meanings that have been and continue to be invested in Ghana as a beacon of African emancipation, African unity, and continental innovation. The program

aims to eschew racially essentialist interpretations of the Black Star in favor of diverse perspectives informed by Ghana’s complex history, from Ghana’s role in the trans-Atlantic slave



trade in the 17th and 18th centuries to its place as one of the most significant sites for Afro-Arab solidarity in the 20th century.

Deep historical perspectives will inform the program's consideration of how younger generations in Ghana today are reimagining what and who constitutes the Black Star nation and its possible futures through a range of different media, including visual and performing arts. To end the two-part scholarly conference, the event will be complemented by a dynamic range of musical and film performances.

The commissioned scholars **Akosua Adomako Ampofo** (University of Ghana, Legon); **Jean Allman** (The Africa Institute and Washington University in St. Louis); **Carina Ray** (University of Michigan) and **Joseph Oduro-Frimpong** (Ashesi University) are curating and convening the two-part interdisciplinary scholarly conference.

The Africa Institute's Ghana-focused season aims to engage Ghana's history and contemporary condition critically and creatively in ways that push beyond the conventional narratives that oversimplify the nation's profound significance to its citizens, continental neighbors, and to diaspora. The season seeks to reveal the complex and contested forces that have shaped Ghana, past, and present.

As part of its annual public programming, the AI annually organizes a season of scholarly, cultural, and artistic activities in various media and genres that focuses on one country from the African continent, or one of the African diaspora communities worldwide. This series of country-focused activities highlight the complex history of the African world, while also providing a forum for creatively engaging its present and imagining new futures.

Co-Convener Biographies

Akosua Adomako Ampofo is a Professor of African and Gender Studies at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana (UG). Adomako Ampofo is President of the [African Studies Association of Africa](#); an honorary Professor at the Centre for African Studies at the University of Birmingham; and a Fellow of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences. She is the immediate past Dean of International Programs at the University of Ghana, was the foundation Director of the University's Center for Gender Studies and Advocacy (2005-2009) and from 2010-2015 was Director of the Institute of African Studies.

An activist scholar, Adomako Ampofo's areas of interest include African knowledge systems; higher education; race and identity politics; gender relations; masculinities; and popular culture. In her current work on Black masculinities, she explores the shifting nature of identities among young men in Africa and the diaspora. Another project, "An Archive of Activism: Gender and Public History in Postcolonial Ghana" seeks to constitute a publicly accessible archive of, and documentary on gender activism and "political women" in postcolonial Ghana (with Kate Skinner, University of Birmingham);



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funded by the British Academy).

Adomako Ampofo is the Editor-in-Chief of *Contemporary Journal of African Studies* and Co-Editor of [Critical Investigations into Humanitarianism in Africa](#) blog. She serves on the board of several organizations including the U.S African Studies

Association; The Center for the Advancement of Scholarship, University of Pretoria; Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, University of Bayreuth of which she is Chairperson; Perivoli Africa Research Centre, University of Bristol; Institute for Humanities in Africa, HUMA, University of Cape Town. Adomako Ampofo's work has been variously recognized by, among others, the Fulbright Scholar Program and the Sociologists for Women and Society (SWS), which awarded her the Feminist Activism Award.

Follow her: [@adomakoampofo](#)

Jean Allman is the Professor of History at The Africa Institute. She is J.H. Hexter Professor in the Humanities and Professor of African and African American Studies at Washington University in St. Louis, where she directs the Center for the Humanities. Allman's research and published work engages 19th- and 20th-century African history, with a geographic focus on Ghana and thematic interests in gender, colonialism, decolonization, and the racial politics of knowledge production. Her work has been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, Fulbright-Hays, the Social Science Research Council, and the Mellon Foundation. She was the President of the Ghana Studies Council (now Association) from 1992-1998; has served on the Board of Directors of both the African Studies Association (USA) and the Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora; and was the President of the African Studies Association in 2018.

She is the author of *The Quills of the Porcupine: Asante Nationalism in an emergent Ghana*, "I Will Not Eat Stone": A Women's History of Colonial Asante (with Victoria Tashjian), and *Tongnaab: The History of a West African God* (with John Parker) and has edited several collections, including *Fashioning Africa: Power and the Politics of Dress*. Allman co-edits the *New African Histories* book series at Ohio University Press, and her work has also appeared in a range of journals, including the *Journal of African History*, *Africa, Gender and History*, *Journal of Women's History*, *History Workshop Journal*, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, *African Studies Review*, *American Historical Review*, and *Souls*.

Follow her: [@jeanallman](#)

Carina Ray is the A.M. and H.P. Bentley Associate Professor of African History at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. A scholar of race and sexuality, comparative colonialisms and nationalisms, migration, and maritime history, print cultures, bodily aesthetics, and the relationship between race, ethnicity, and political power, Ray's research focuses on Ghana and its diasporas, while also branching out to include a long-term oral history project documenting the experiences of Cubans who served in Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia. She is the author of *Crossing the Color Line: Race, Sex, and the Contested Politics of Colonialism in Ghana*, winner of the American Historical Association's 2016 Wesley Logan Book Prize; the African Studies Association's 2017



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Aidoo-Snyder Book Prize; and a finalist for the United Kingdom African Studies Association's Fage and Oliver Book Prize. Her work has also appeared in *Gender and History*; *PMLA*; *American Historical Review*; and *Journal of West African History*, among other publications. She is a series co-editor of *New African Histories* (Ohio University Press) and *African Identities* (Cambridge University Press) and recently completed three-year terms as editor of *Ghana Studies* and as a member of the board of editors of *The American Historical Review*.

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Joseph Oduro-Frimpong is a media anthropologist and Director of the Center for African Popular Culture at Ashesi University. He received his PhD from the Department of Anthropology at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale (2012) and also holds degrees in Information Studies (University of Ghana, Legon) and Human Communication (Central Michigan University). He is an American Council of Learned Societies/African Humanities Program Fellow. He has held postdoctoral fellowships at Rhodes University and at the University of Cape Town.

Widely published, his research has appeared in respected journals, including *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, *International Journal of Communication*, and *African Studies Review*, and in a number of edited volumes, including *Popular Culture in Africa: The Episteme of Everyday Life* and *Taking African Cartoons Seriously: Politics, Satire, and Culture*.

Follow him: [@drodurofrimpong](#)

About The Africa Institute

Established in 2018, The Africa Institute in Sharjah, UAE, is an interdisciplinary academic research institute dedicated to the study, research, and documentation of Africa and the African diaspora. As the only institution of its kind located in the Gulf—the historical nexus of African-Arab cultural exchange—The Africa Institute is uniquely positioned to expand its understanding of African and African diaspora studies as a global enterprise. The Africa Institute's curriculum of postgraduate studies is designed to train the next generation of critical thinkers in African and African diaspora studies, through its program of international symposia and conferences, visual art exhibitions and artist commissions, film and performance series, and community classes and outreach events. The Institute is expanding public understanding of Arab and African exchange within not only the scholarly community but also the local Sharjah community, the region, and around the globe. The Institute has commissioned Adjaye Associates to design a new campus that, when completed will allow for significantly expanded programming. The Institute is led by Dr. Salah M. Hassan and Hoor Al-Qasimi. Learn more at <https://theafricainstitute.org/>.



About Hoor Al-Qasimi

Hoor Al Qasimi has been spearheading the establishment of The Africa Institute into a major international institution, building upon the rich legacy of Afro-Arab cultural and scholarly interchange in Sharjah, including the landmark 1976 “Symposium on African and Arab Relations” that envisioned a future nexus for learning and collaboration between the two regions. Working in partnership with Africa Institute Director Dr. Salah M. Hassan, she continues to shape its programming and future endeavors.

A practicing artist and curator, Al Qasimi is also President and founding Director of Sharjah Art Foundation (SAF), which was established in 2009 as a catalyst and advocate for the role of art in Sharjah, the UAE, regionally, and internationally. With a passion for supporting experimentation and innovation in the arts, Al Qasimi has continuously expanded the scope of the Foundation over its ten-year history to include major exhibitions that have toured internationally; artist and curator residencies in visual art, film, and music; commissions and production grants for emerging artists; and a wide range of educational programming for children and adults in Sharjah. In 2003, Al Qasimi co-curated Sharjah Biennial 6, and has since continued as Biennial Director. Under Al Qasimi’s leadership, the Sharjah Biennial has continued to grow as an internationally recognized platform for contemporary artists, curators, and cultural producers. Her leadership in the field led to her election as president of the International Biennial Association (IBA) in 2017.

About Dr. Salah M. Hassan

Long active in Sharjah, the larger Gulf region, and Africa through his research, conferences, and curatorial work, including many projects developed in collaboration with Sharjah Art Foundation, Dr. Salah M. Hassan played a foundational role in the development of The Africa Institute. He currently serves as the Institute’s founding Director, where he continues to spearhead its academic, research, artistic, and public programs in collaboration with The Africa Institute President Hoor Al Qasimi.

Hassan concurrently holds positions at Cornell University as the Goldwin Smith Professor of African and African Diaspora Art History and Visual Culture in the Department of Africana Studies and Research Center; in the Department of History of Art and Visual Studies; and as Director of the Institute for Comparative Modernities. Hassan also served as Professor of History of Art in African and African American Studies and Fine Art at Brandeis University, where he was previously awarded the Madeleine Haas Russell Professorship in the Departments of African and Afro-American Studies and Fine Arts (2016-2017).

Media Contacts

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