



THE AFRICA INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES 'GLOBAL GHANA': A SEASON OF SCHOLARLY AND CULTURAL PROGRAMS

The second edition of The Africa Institute's annual country-focused program to be presented in Sharjah, UAE, and Accra, Ghana, in 2021-22, convened by leading scholars Akosua Adomako Ampofo, Jean Allman, Carina Ray, and Joseph Oduro-Frimpong

APRIL 5, 2021 (Sharjah, UAE)—The Africa Institute today announced **Global Ghana**, the second edition of its 'country-focused season'—an annual initiative exploring one African country or African diaspora community through a range of scholarly and public programs. *Global Ghana* is organized by The Africa Institute in collaboration with leading scholars **Akosua Adomako Ampofo, Jean Allman, Carina Ray, and Joseph Oduro-Frimpong**.

Global Ghana will include a two-part interdisciplinary scholarly conference beginning with *Global Ghana: Sites of Departure/Sites of Return* held in Sharjah, followed by *Global Ghana: In Search of Africa's Black Star*, held in Ghana. The multidisciplinary program will also include a film festival, a series of musical performances, a staged theatrical performance, and an exhibition showcasing dynamic work by contemporary Ghanaian artists. The season will be launched with a keynote lecture and press conference in Fall 2021, followed by a musical concert featuring an eclectic mix of popular Ghanaian musicians.

The Africa Institute created this annual series to highlight the complex history of the African world while also providing a forum for creatively engaging its present and imagining new futures. Inaugurated in 2019-20 with *Ethiopia: Modern Nation/Ancient Roots*, the country-focused season is an integral part of The Africa Institute's year-round work to develop and support original scholarship and programming that expands understanding of African and African diaspora studies among the academic community and the broader public.

The Africa Institute's Ghana-focused season aims to critically and creatively engage Ghana's history and contemporary condition. Pushing beyond conventional narratives that oversimplify the nation's profound significance to its citizens, continental



neighbors, and the larger African diaspora, the season seeks to reveal the complex and contested forces that have shaped Ghana, past and present.

Global Ghana: Sites of Departure/Sites of Return

Sharjah, UAE | Spring 2022

The first part of the two-part program ***Global Ghana: Sites of Departure/Sites of Return***, held in Sharjah in Spring 2022, will examine the ways in which Ghana has emerged over the last century as a focal point of diasporic engagement beginning with early 20th-century 'Back to Africa' movements, followed by Pan-Africanism, anticolonial liberation movements, and more recently, with heritage tourism. One of the focal points of the conference will be Ghana's efforts to cultivate and curate diasporic engagement among African-descended people in the diaspora and Ghanaians living abroad through the recent "Year of Return" and "Beyond the Return" campaigns.

The season will push beyond Ghana's Atlantic world connections to open a wider field of enquiry about Ghana's relations with the Arab world, and examinations of the past, present, and future of Afro-Arab relations. *Global Ghana: Sites of Departure/Sites of Return* seeks to welcome and engage audiences in Sharjah and throughout the UAE with compelling and thoughtfully developed dialogue.

Global Ghana: In Search of Africa's Black Star

Accra, Ghana | Spring 2022

Held in Accra, ***Global Ghana: In Search of Africa's Black Star*** will explore 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 this end, the two-part scholarly conference will be complemented



by a dynamic range of musical, theatrical, and film performances and an exhibition of contemporary Ghanaian art.

Additional information on the participants and schedule for *Global Ghana: Sites of Departure/Sites of Return* and *Global Ghana: In Search of Africa's Black Star* will be announced in the coming months.

The health and safety of guests and participants are of utmost priority to The Africa Institute. The Institute will continue to monitor developments on COVID-19 and the program will be subject to modification depending on how the pandemic evolves and travel is impacted.

Co-Convener Biographies

Akosua Adomako Ampofo is 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. 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.

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; and the 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 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 H. Coplan Chair of Social Sciences and Associate Professor of African and African American Studies at Brandeis University, where she also serves as Director of Faculty Mentoring. 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 Aidoo-Snyder Book Prize; and 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 others. She is a series co-editor of *New African Histories* (Ohio University Press) and *African Identities* (Cambridge University Press), and recently completed a three-year term as editor of *Ghana Studies* and as a member of the Board of Editors for *The American Historical Review*.

Follow her: @sankaralives

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 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,



and 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.

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