



**CELEBRATE ASWAD'S 25th ANNIVERSARY
ASWAD 2025 - 12th Biennial Conference
Call for Papers**

“I’ve known rivers”: The Ecologies of Black Life and Resistance

Our host site, Saint Louis, sits at the confluence of two iconic rivers, the Mississippi and the Missouri. These continuously moving waterways have carved into the landscape, reshaping the bedrock that guides humans, plants and animals together. They can yet prove unpredictable as their banks rise and retreat as they nourish and cleanse. ASWAD's 2025 Conference theme takes as its inspiration the river, and waterways, as an analytical framework for Black lives past and present. In addition to Langston Hughes's poem, Vincent Harding's book, *There is a River* suggests the river as a metaphor for Black freedom struggle. Rivers are “powerful, tumultuous, and roiling with life; at other times meandering and turgid, covered with the ice and snow of seemingly endless winters.” At its best, the Black freedom struggle “has moved consistently to the ocean of humankind's most courageous hopes for freedom and integrity.”

Rivers offer a starting point for invoking water as a longstanding analytic that has been central to the imagination and the lived experience of Blackness. Water has been the site of traumatic dislocation and rupture (Middle Passages, “sold down the river”, the Mediterranean) as well as resistance (maritime marronage). Water is a site for sacred work and ritual practice (crossing the kalunga, baptism, water spirits such as female deities and mermaids). Water is a site of labor, often gendered. Water therefore serves as a prompt for urgent questions about landscapes and ecologies as well as diasporic ruptures, spiritual practices, labors of many kinds, fugitivity and resistance. Expanding the focus to bodies of water, this conference includes in its optic the relation of inland rivers and coastal Africa.

The conference will take place at the Marriott St. Louis Grand Hotel on October 29 - November 2, 2025.

Suggested Subfields

- Black freedom and ecological justice
- Black feminist eco-ethics
- Plant and animal life

- Maritime cultural landscapes
- Gender and Environment
- Afro-Maritime/Marine Spiritualities and Philosophies
- Ethno-racial policies against Black rural populations, farmers, and maroon-descendants
- Rivers of change: Ferguson and the long histories of Black freedom struggles
- Streams of music: converging musical genres

We encourage the submission of full panels. In your proposal, please indicate which of the above topic(s) you will address. All applications should include an abstract and a brief bio for each presenter.

To submit your proposal, visit

<https://convention2.allacademic.com/one/aswad/aswad25/>.

Review of proposals will begin September 3, 2024. All proposals should be submitted by December 6, 2024. Acceptances will be issued on a rolling basis. We encourage multidisciplinary panels defined by diversity across identity markers, including but not limited to age, race, gender, sexuality, ability, academic rank, language, and geographies among others. Individuals may participate in up to two different ways – e.g. as a panellist and chair, a panellist and discussant, etc. **To submit a proposal and to present at the conference, your ASWAD membership must be current.**

If you have any questions, please contact aswadconference@aswadiaspora.org.