

“i am my ancestors’ wildest dreams”

contemporary cultures of black impossibility

The Black impossible is a rich site of inquiry: it’s Sandra Bland not being pulled over for failing to signal; Emmett Till living to his 80s; Eric Garner breathing. But, the Black impossible also gives us this: the Haitian Revolution and the Nat Turner rebellion; Black Twitter, #BlackGirlMagic and #BlackBoyJoy; *Insecure*, *Underground*, *Black Panther*, and *Get Out*.

The Black impossible is at once about continuing to live and resist in the face of the debilitating policies of modernity (impossible to do, but nevertheless done), yet also about the seeming impossibility of ever *just* living. The Black impossible draws together modes of cultural responses to the ethos of life and living in the face of practices of discipline and death. On the fiftieth anniversary of Black Studies, it asks us to bring together the critical methodologies and creative practices of Black Study to bear on the now and the future.

How has contemporary Black culture responded to, resisted, and existed in the face of this tension? What do we make of the visual, sonic, material, and digital cultures (to name a few) of the now? How do the realities of culture manifest themselves through and as political behavior? How do we turn to cultural productions as sites of life and living? How do we define the impossible?

The second biannual conference of the African American Studies Department at Princeton University will explore the contemporary cultures of the Black impossible. This conference seeks to bring together intellectuals, artists, and organizers working across many different disciplines, mediums, and movements that speak to the cultures and the impossibility of Black life in the U.S. and abroad.

We invite graduate students working in the humanities and social sciences, artists, political prisoners, organizers and intellectuals (broadly conceived) to submit papers on topics including – but not limited to – cultures of the black impossible, and:

- music
- narrative & literature
- material cultures
- Black politics
- gender & sexuality
- visual cultures (mass media, art, etc.)
- capitalism, neoliberalism, & economic inequality
- philosophy & critical theory
- grass-roots organizing
- Black love
- the carceral state
- the (new) Black radical tradition
- digital cultures (social media, video games, etc.)
- mourning practices
- religion & spirituality
- Black institutions (the Black church, etc)
- Black counter-publics
- speculative futures

Please submit an abstract of no more than 400 words, a short biographical description, and your contact information by **June 1st, 2018**. Proposals and questions should be sent to conference organizers Kimberly Bain and Chaya Crowder at aasprinceton@gmail.com.

Please circulate widely.

Conference dates:
October 18-20, 2018