**CFP for the Modernist Studies Association’s Annual Conference**

**MIGRATION**

**Chicago, November 4-7, 2021**

The city of Chicago was a major destination of the Great Migration, the mass exodus of African Americans from the Jim Crow South to the industrial centers of the North from 1916-1970. In the wake of the 2016 presidential election and ensuing developments in U.S. immigration policy, Chicago has been declared a sanctuary city for migrants and asylum-seekers. The MSA 2021 conference on Migration in Chicago aims to highlight the creativity, energy, and inspiration that the Great Migration brought to the city’s modernist culture, but also the racialized discrimination and persecution that confronted African American migrants in Chicago and other northern and western destinations. In addition to domestic migration, our conference invites new work on the making of the American city by waves of immigrants from Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa—in the case of Chicago, from the trading post of founding settler Jean Baptiste Point du Sable to the city’s famous lakefront skyline and its world-class museums, universities, libraries, concert halls, theaters, and jazz and blues clubs. To accompany the conference the Newberry Library has scheduled an exhibition, “Chicago Avant-Garde,” curated by Liesl Olson, which will showcase the radical experimental culture that emerged in Chicago across a range of artistic media during the first half of the twentieth century, focusing on the contributions of women to this cultural efflorescence.

MSA 2021 will take place in the historic Drake Hotel, located on Chicago’s beautiful lakeshore near many of the city’s attractions and safe, convenient public transportation for destinations further afield. Renamed “The Drayton,” the Drake inspired an early scene in Nella Larsen’s 1929 novel *Passing* in which two mixed race women, both passing as white, risk exposure and expulsion by taking tea on the Drake’s whites-only roof terrace. This terrace is now long gone, along with the segregation rules that limited its clientele to whites. But the racialized discrimination dramatized in *Passing*, which shaped Chicago’s ethnic neighborhoods, persists in downtown Chicago amidst the glamorous stores of the Magnificent Mile and the city’s vibrant restaurant scene, itself a beneficiary of migration. Though we chose the Migration theme and the Chicago venue long before the pandemic, the many interrelated crises of 2020 make it abundantly clear that the history of migration is far from past but profoundly shapes the present and future of American cities.

Participants are invited to understand migration as a capacious term, enabling new conversations about the Great Migration, migration from abroad, the current global migration crisis, and the impact of these demographic movements on modernist innovation in literature, drama, music, art, architecture, and design in the twentieth- and twentieth-first centuries. Taken metaphorically, the theme of migration also embraces translation, transmission, transmediality, transnationalism, transgenderism, transraciality, and transference—the “carrying across” in all senses that the Greek root of meta-phor suggests.

As part of the MSA’s initiative to promote a more diverse Association, the 2020 conference will feature five streams of interrelated interdisciplinary panels. Each stream solicits proposals for individual papers and aims to attract a wide range of scholarly and critical perspectives.

Plenary events will include a **Keynote lecture by Hortense Spillers (**Vanderbilt University) and a **Keynote panel on Modernism and the Great Migration in Chicago** chaired by **Liesl Olson (**Newberry Library), with discussants **Kenneth Warren** (University of Chicago) and **Adrienne Brown (**University of Chicago).

**Participation**

So as to involve as many people as possible as active participants, the MSA limits appearances on the program to one in each category below:

* Seminar, either as leader or as participant
* Panel or roundtable, as participant (you may also chair a different panel or roundtable)
* Digital exhibition
* “What Are You Reading?” session

In other words, you may organize a seminar, present a paper on a panel, register for a workshop, mount a digital exhibition, and participate in a “What Are You Reading” session, but you may not present two papers on panels.

MSA rules preclude panel or roundtable organizers from chairing sessions in which they are presenting a paper or substantive remarks. You may chair as many sessions as you like, so long as you observe this rule.

Panel organizers are asked to identify a chair and to include this information with their proposals. The MSA Program Committee can ask conference attendees to chair panels without pre-designated chairs, but we urge participants to choose their own chairs.

All those who attend the MSA conference must be members of the organization with dues paid for 2020-2021 (MSA membership runs from July 1 until June 30 each year) and any past dues paid in full. For information on MSA, please consult the [Association website](https://msa.press.jhu.edu/). Except in cases pre-approved by the program committee, MSA speakers are generally expected to present in person, rather than remotely. The MSA21 organizers will revisit this rule as pandemic conditions and advisories continue to unfold.

**Call for Seminar Proposals**

**Deadline: February 5, 2021 (Friday)**

Seminars are a highly valued feature of the MSA conference. Participants write brief position papers (5-7 pages) that are circulated and read by all participants prior to the conference. Each seminar is limited to 15 participants. Two hours in length, the Seminars generate lively exchange and often facilitate future collaborations. The seminar format also allows a larger number of conference attendees to seek financial support from their institutions as they educate themselves and share their research and pedagogical interests. The MSA encourages seminar leaders to draw together scholars from a diverse range of institutions and at various ranks, including graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, contingent faculty, and independent scholars. **Please note:** this is the call for proposals by *seminar leaders*. Seminar participants will sign up on a first-come, first-served basis when registering for the conference.

Seminar Topics: There are no limits on topics, but they should be clearly defined and capacious enough to interest many participants. Experience has shown that the more guidance the leader provides, the more productive the discussion. To review past seminar topics, go to the Conference Archives on the MSA website, click the link to a prior conference, and then click on “Conference Schedule” or “Conference Program.” You will find seminars listed along with panels and other events.

Please include a brief (**300**-word) description of seminar purpose and format. Seminar leaders’ bios are limited to **100** words.

Submit seminar proposals by **Friday 5 February 2021** at msa2021.exordo.com.

**Call for Individual Paper Proposals for MSA Panel Streams**

**Deadline: April 9, 2021 (Friday)**

Individual paper proposals must speak directly to one of this year’s streams, which link several panels or roundtables that will take place on different days of the conference. Successful proposals will demonstrate the promise to advance new research or ideas relative to the designated topics of the streams. The MSA Program Committee will vet individual proposals and organize them into panels and roundtables as appropriate. Conference organizers may also solicit papers and groups of papers for streams.

Please include a **300**-word abstract of the paper. Author bios are limited to **100** words.

Submit individual paper proposals for panel streams by **Friday April 9, 2021** at msa2021.exordo.com.

**Stream Topics**

**The Great Migration**

MSA 2021 in Chicago aims to commemorate the Great Migration, which brought hundreds of thousands of African Americans to the city to escape racist violence in the Jim Crow South. Although Chicago was scarcely a safe haven and remains a deeply segregated city, blighted like other American cities by systemic racism, ethnic discrimination, and police violence, many African American refugees helped to create the Black Chicago Renaissance in the mid-twentieth century. Migrants from the South who contributed to this Renaissance included musicians such as Mahalia Jackson, Muddy Waters, Howlin’ Wolf, Jelly Roll Morton, Buddy Guy, Jimmy Reed, and Sun Ra; writers such as Richard Wright, Margaret Walker, William Attaway, and Ida B. Wells; and visual artists such as Archibald Motley, Eldzier Cortor, and Gus Nall. As the Great Migration brought artists who helped to create a distinctive Chicago modernism, it also transformed the culture of other cities in the United States. Papers in this stream may focus on any of the destinations of the Great Migration and on its wide-ranging cultural reverberations.

**Modernism and the archive**

Recent work in modernist studies has addressed black radicalism and the archive, issues of race and publishing, black book design, and narrating forms of intimate life through the use of archives, as in Saidiya Hartman’s *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*. This stream invites papers on the modernist “archive” as a concept and a form of institutional power as well as on specific “archives” in all their plurality and contingency, including community archives, personal archives, indigenous archives, and the evolving protocols pertaining to archiving such recent events as Barack Obama’s history of activism in Chicago, and the present crises of pandemic and protest (for instance, [the Blackivists’ statement](https://sixtyinchesfromcenter.org/the-blackivists-five-tips-for-organizers-protestors-and-anyone-documenting-movements/)). Participants might also consider the relationship between archives and storytelling, between empirical documentation and narrative form, and between lost or silenced histories, obliterated records, and fictional narrative.

**Translations**

This stream invites participants to consider how translation across languages and cultures influences the arts of modernism. Papers may also address translations as a wider category that includes passing, crossovers, hybridizations, and palimpsestic overlays between ethnicities, races, nationalities, locales, historical moments, genders, identities, genres, and media. Other forms of trans-ness, such as psychoanalytic transference or the transmission of affect, could also fall under this rubric.

**Climate and Ecological Change**

Climate change and ecological depredation have created urgent conditions for migration in the past, present, and foreseeable future. Other causes, such as poverty, war, and persecution, stem at least in part from these environmental crises. This stream invites participants to think about these crises in relation to migration, though papers on any aspect of modern environmental change will also be considered. In addition to the movement of people(s), the movement of plants and animals and their effects on host environments are also relevant to this stream.

**Arts of Migration**

Many different forms of art and literature take migration as their theme or impetus. While the stream on “The Great Migration” focuses on the United States, “Arts of Migration” invites papers on transnational and other kinds of migration and its impact on writing, architecture, design, music, the visual arts, foodways, sports, and other forms of cultural expression. Examples include the migration of Bauhaus aesthetics to the United States, which was spearheaded by emigres like Mies van der Rohe; the exile of the major figures of the Frankfurt School to Los Angeles; the transplantation of the right-wing Austrian School of economics to New York City and Hyde Park Chicago. Participants are encouraged to consider how migration transforms the culture of the host country by introducing influences from abroad, and how the host country in turn indigenizes imported traditions.

**Call for Panel Proposals**

**Deadline: April 9, 2021 (Friday)**

We invite panels that promise to expand research and debate on a topic and present a clear rationale for the papers’ collective goal. Panel proposals that engage recent research-grounded discovery and debate, exciting new approaches, or theoretical interventions are encouraged. Topics need not address the conference theme.Please be sure to characterize in your proposal what each paper contributes individually and how it fits into a cohesive session.

• We encourage interdisciplinary panels and generally discourage panels on single authors.

• In order to allow for discussion, preference will be given to panels with three participants (20 minutes each), though panels of four will be considered (15 minutes each).

• Panels composed entirely of participants from a single department at a single institution are not likely to be accepted.

• The MSA encourages panels comprising scholars from a diverse range of institutions and of various ranks, including graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, contingent faculty, and independent scholars.

• Please elect an appropriate chair for your panel if possible and include this information as part of your proposal. Otherwise, the program committee will recruit a chair for you.

Please include a **300-500**-word abstract of the session. Author bios are limited to **100** words.

Submit panel proposals by **Friday 10 April 9, 2021** at msa2021.exordo.com.

**Call for Roundtable Proposals**

**Deadline: April 9, 2021 (Friday)**

All topics will be considered for roundtables. Unlike panels, which generally feature a sequence of 15-20-minute talks followed by discussion, roundtables gather a group of participants around a shared concern in order to generate discussion among the participants and with the audience. To this end, instead of delivering full-length papers, presenters are asked to deliver short position statements in response to questions distributed in advance by the organizer, or to take turns responding to prompts from the moderator. The bulk of the session should be devoted to discussion. No paper titles are listed in the program, only the names of participants.

Please bear in mind these guidelines:

• Roundtables may feature as many as 6 speakers but are more likely to be accepted if they include 4 or 5.

• Roundtable organizers should discourage participants from writing formal papers and to be as brief and concise as possible, ideally speaking for no more than 5 minutes at a time in order to facilitate discussion.

• We particularly welcome roundtables that include participants from multiple disciplines, and we discourage roundtables on single authors.

• The MSA encourages roundtables comprising scholars from a diverse range of institutions and of various ranks, including graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, contingent faculty, and independent scholars.

• Graduate students are actively encouraged as speakers, but a roundtable composed entirely of graduate students is less likely to be accepted than one with a mix of academic ranks.

Please include a **300-500**-word abstract of the session. Participants’ bios are limited to **100** words each.

Submit roundtable proposals by **Friday April 9, 2021** at msa2021.exordo.com.

**Call for Workshop Proposals**

**Deadline: April 23, 2021 (Friday)**

Workshops focus on topics related to professional life, such as publishing, teaching, the job market, mid-career challenges and opportunities, research and the liberal arts college, and alternative/non-academic jobs, and how best to ensure the future of the profession. Popular workshops in previous years have been on topics such as “What Do Presses Want from a First Book?,” “Digital Approaches to Modernism,” and “Critical Writing.” Participation in a workshop does not limit participation in other aspects of the conference.

Workshops should be participatory in format and can be either 90 or 120 minutes in length. They may be led by one person or by a panel of experts. **Please note** that this call is for *workshop leaders*. Participants will register for workshops at the same time as conference registration.

Please include a brief (**200-**word) description of workshop purpose and format. Participants’ bios are limited to **100** words.

Submit workshop proposals by **Friday April 23, 2021** at msa2021.exordo.com.

**Call for Digital Exhibits and Posters**

**Deadline: April 23, 2021 (Friday)**

Reflecting the increasing importance. of the digital humanities in modernist studies and the proliferation of innovative work that does not lend itself to presentation in the form of a scholarly paper, we invite proposals that provide a short overview (including web links) of 1) the nature, design, and purpose of a digital project; 2) how the project advances modernist studies; and 3) how the presenters plan to exhibit and explain the project at the conference. Be sure to list all participants and institutions involved in the project and specify who among these would attend the conference.

Please include a **300**-word abstract. Presenter bios are limited to **100** words.

Submit digital exhibit and poster session proposals by **Friday 24 April 2020** at msa2021.exordo.com.

**Conference Access**

The MSA is committed to ensuring that all conference registrants will be able to participate in conference events.

We ask that all conference attendees give thought to questions of access and work with the conference organizers to create an event that is welcoming to the entire community of participants.

If you would benefit from individual accommodations including, but not limited to, ASL translation, paper copies of session presentations, or large type documents, please contact the conference organizers.

**Statement on Inclusion**

The Modernist Studies Association supports the rights and dignity of all persons associated with our organization and conference. We hold that inclusivity, diversity, access, and equality are critical to the strength of our organization and the effectiveness of our academic mission. In the spirit of maintaining a welcoming and inclusive organization, we urge our participants to use individuals’ preferred names and pronouns when introducing speakers and in citing their work or ideas.