

Exhibiting, Advertising, & Sponsorship Opportunities

AT THE 2026 ANNUAL MEETING OF
THE AMERICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION



iMPROVISATION

OCTOBER 22-25 in CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

THE ANNUAL MEETING

THIS YEAR

Chicago, Illinois
"Improvisation"

October 22-25, 2026 at the
Historic Palmer House Hotel

Previous Conferences

2025 San Juan, Puerto Rico
"Late-Stage American Empire?"
2249 Attendees · 507 Sessions

2024 Baltimore, Maryland
"Grounded Engagements in American Studies"
1774 Attendees · 367 Sessions

2023 Montreal, Canada
"Solidarity: What Love Looks Like in Public"
2643 Attendees · 508 Sessions

2022 New Orleans, Louisiana
"The Roof is On Fire"
1692 Attendees · 344 Sessions

2021 Online Conference
"Creativity within Revolt"
1958 Attendees · 393 Sessions

2019 Honolulu, Hawaii
"Build as We Fight"
2342 Attendees · 507 Sessions

The Annual Meeting is a vibrant gathering where scholars, educators, students, activists, and artists come together to explore U.S. culture and history through an interdisciplinary lens.

More than just a conference, it's a dynamic space where disciplinary boundaries dissolve, geographies blur, and professional divides disappear. Here, we connect, collaborate, and exchange ideas in a variety of formats and across a wide array of fields.

Beyond fostering dialogue, the annual meeting serves as a platform to celebrate achievements and elevate the field of American Studies, and in so doing engage practitioners alongside the wider public in meaningful, lasting ways.

THIS YEAR'S THEME

“I am interested in shock, and surprise, and improvisation, as methods by which to understand political and social life.” – Billy-Ray Belcourt

Program Committee

Chair

Tanisha C. Ford, CUNY Graduate Center

Co-Chairs

Marlon Bailey, Washington University in St. Louis
Terrion Williamson, University of Illinois–Chicago

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Tiffany Barber, UCLA
Adrienne Brown, University of Chicago
Rikki Byrd, University of Texas–Austin
Sonya Donaldson, Colby College
Charles Hughes, Rhodes College
Kasey Keeler, University of Wisconsin–Madison
S. Heijin Lee, University of Hawaii at Manoa
Matthew Morrison, Stanford University
Akemi Nishida, University of Illinois–Chicago
J.T. Roane, Rutgers University–New Brunswick
Mérida Rúa, Northwestern University
John Thabiti Willis, Grinnell College

Improvisation is not an accident of collapse.
It is a method of creating under constraint.
The riff. The break. The pivot. The “yes and.”

Improvisation is more than an act of survival.
It is mutual aid conjured in dissent.
Glitter thrown on ICE agents.
Frankie Knuckles spinning vinyl at The Warehouse.
It is sweat-drenched bodies. Intricate footwork.
La Raza. Ebony. Jet. Underground zines. Mixtapes igniting new freedom dreams.

Improvisation lives in the ruins of what has been broken and still dares to imagine what might be built next. In its most radical form, it is essential to reparative justice and worldbuilding. Both instant and enduring: improvisation is a fleeting gesture that can open the door to permanent transformations. Those who improvise know that violence is ongoing, that collapse is real. Yet they dare to believe that creativity, play, and collaboration are lifelines.

A change is gonna come. But what do we do in the meantime? This conference implores us to dwell in the meantime.

2026 marks 250 years since the founding of the United States—a nation built upon the entangled systems of settler colonialism and chattel slavery. This turbulent anniversary calls for new provocations: What is the work of American Studies in our current meantime? If we take improvisation seriously—as method, politics, and horizon—what new forms of freedom must be improvised now?

Higher education is under attack. Departments dismantled. Funding slashed. Tenure eroded. Students and contingent faculty persecuted, fired, deported, or disappeared. Academic freedom, as we once understood it, is no longer. We ask: What is a “comfort zone” in a time of global peril? Are our scholarly tools still useful, or must we do wholly different work? What unlikely alliances might be required to survive this crisis? These questions demand an honest reckoning as we imagine a future—an “other side.” We must get messy. It is in the messiness of collaboration, in the décalage of translation, that imperfect possibilities arise.

Chicago, our gathering place, is improvisation in action. A city built on the ancestral homelands of the Neshnabék: the Potawatomi, Odawa, and Ojibwe Nations; the Illinois Confederation: the Peoria and Kaskaskia Nations; and the Myaamia, Wea, Ho–Chunk, Sauk, and Meskwaki Nations, shaped by centuries of dispossession and violated treaties. A palimpsest continually remapped by waves of Black, Latino/a/x, and Asian migration. It is a global city: Bridgeview. Bronzeville. Humboldt Park. Pilsen. Chinatown. Albany Park. A cultural hub whose poetics hum in Gwendolyn Brooks’ “Boy Breaking Glass.” The pensive lenses of Carlos Javier Ortiz and Diana Solís. The whimsy of a Shirien Damra illustration. The genius of immigrant artist-educators who birthed Chicago-style improv comedy. The experimental practices of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians. From jazz to house, drill to reggaeton. From Fred Hampton and the Young Lords through the Rainbow Coalition to the Arab American Action Network. Chicago is a living repertoire of improvisatory practices that link art, activism, and knowledge production. A city scarred by segregation and violence, yet alive with queer and trans brilliance and disability justice work. Wreckage and glitter, wound and possibility. The city deeply informs—and maybe even changes—how we gather and what we can learn from one another and from our local communities.

This call for proposals is a blue note; riff on it freely. We want to reimagine what an academic conference can be: immersive, collaborative, and deeply engaged with the community. We invite scholars, artists, activists, archivists, and community builders to dream big with us. While we welcome paper presentations and roundtables, we want to experiment with alternative session formats: performance art, workshops, laboratories, immersive screenings, tours, and more. We especially welcome proposals that center the Midwest in conversations about the global South or American Studies from the periphery. We also seek professional development and community organizing panels that use improvisation as an approach.



Who will you meet at
the annual meeting?

AUDIENCE

You'll connect with...

PROFESSORS, GRADUATE STUDENTS, PUBLIC SCHOLARS,
ACTIVISTS, ARTISTS, COMMUNITY LEADERS, MUSEUM
PROFESSIONALS, AND OTHERS

with specialties & interests in...

ACTIVISM
ART & VISUAL CULTURE
CAPITALISM & MARXISM
COLONIALISM & IMPERIALISM
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
CRITICAL ETHNIC STUDIES
DIGITAL HUMANITIES
EDUCATION & PEDAGOGY
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES
ETHNOGRAPHY
GENDER & SEXUALITY

GEOGRAPHY & SPACE
HISTORY
INDIGENOUS STUDIES
LITERARY STUDIES
MEDIA STUDIES
METHODOLOGIES
MIDDLE EAST STUDIES
PERFORMANCE STUDIES
POPULAR CULTURE
RACE & ETHNICITY
TRANSNATIONAL STUDIES

...and so much more



*Join with us
and thousands
of scholars in
Chicago!*

ADVERTISE

Orders & artwork due July 31



Limited
Quantities
Available

RESERVE HERE

Advertise in the Program

Your advertisement will appear in both the print and digital versions of the program book. Page dimensions are 6"x9" with a .125" bleed.

FULL PAGE SPREAD: \$820

2-PAGE SPREAD: \$1406

3-PAGE SPREAD: \$1979

4-PAGE SPREAD: \$2467

ADDITIONAL PAGES: \$659/ea

Purchase a program advertisement and get 20% off an ad in the June 2026 issue of *American Quarterly*.

- Full Page (4.75"x7.5"): \$460 (regularly \$575)
- Half Page (4.75"x3.5"): \$344 (regularly \$431)

Contact journalsadvertising@jh.edu to claim your discount! Artwork due April 15th. Please note that the dimensions for AQ ads vary slightly from those for the Program Book.

Advertise Digitally

Get noticed on the app or in our conference emails.

APP SPONSOR: \$2500

As sponsor, you'll be featured prominently on the home screen and landing page.

APP ADVERTISEMENT: \$300

Includes one image and 50 word description

CONFERENCE EMAIL MESSAGING: \$500

Promote your booth, org, or business in an email to attendees leading up to or during the conference (75 words and one 200x320px image)

Advertise On-Site

Take advantage of on-site opportunities for greater exposure!

TOTE BAGS: \$10,000

TOTE BAG INSERTS: \$500*

38"X88" PROMOTIONAL SIGNS: \$1000

*Cost of insert extra

Showcase your press or organization

EXHIBIT

Reserve by July 31st

Full Booth: \$1500

A 10'x10' space with dividers perfect for presses and other exhibitors who want space and flexibility with displays. Includes:

- Draped 8' back wall and 3' side walls
- 6' draped table, 2 chairs, wastebasket
- 3 complimentary conference passes

Table Only: \$500

A single table in the exhibit hall without dividers or walls. This is an affordable option specifically for community and cultural organizations and non-traditional exhibitors who want to display materials or promote programs (not book presses). Includes:

- 4' draped table, chair, and easel
- 1 complimentary conference pass

All Booths & Tables Include

- Booth identification sign
- 24 hour exhibit hall security
- Exhibit concierge help with display rules, labor questions, and general exhibit and facility information
- Networking access to 2,000+ professionals in American Studies and related fields
- Listing in the conference program, mobile app, and exhibitor section of ASA website
- General Exhibit Hall clean-up
- Sponsorship and advertising opportunities

Exhibit Hours

Fri, Oct 23, 9:30 am-5:45 pm
Sat, Oct 24, 9:30 am-5:45 pm
Sun, Oct 25, 8:30-11:00 am

Exhibitor Set-Up

Thurs, Oct 22, 11:00 am-4:00 pm

Exhibitor Tear-Down

Sun, Oct 25: 11:00 am-3:00 pm

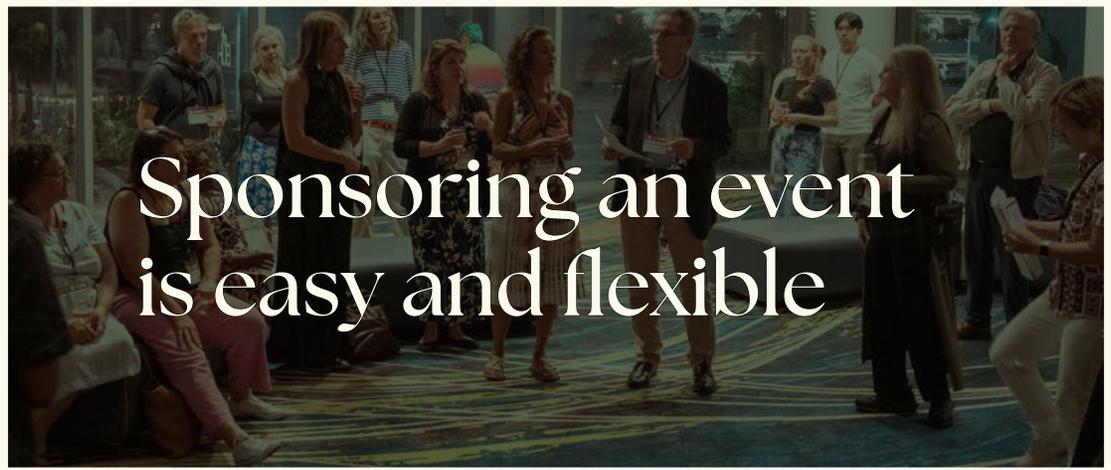


Limited
Quantities
Available

RESERVE HERE

SPONSOR

Reach out by July 31



Sponsoring an event
is easy and flexible

Available for Sponsorship

Opening Reception & Awards Ceremony

Popular awards ceremony and cocktail party to celebrate book prize winners, celebrate ASA authors, and kick off the annual conference.

Presidential Address Party

Lively evening reception offered in conjunction with the Presidential Address.

Race & Indigenous Scholar Social

Gathering for BIPOC scholars to join in community and support.

Graduate Student Mixer

A friendly, fun space for graduate students to kick-back, connect, and collaborate.

International Scholars & Friends Happy Hour

Warm, communal gathering to connect scholars from across the globe.

Depending on the sponsorship amount you choose (between \$1000-\$10,000), you'll receive:

- Name and logo on event materials (signage, print & digital program, website)
- Full-page ad in the program or awards booklet
- Targeted promotional opportunities through conference emails or the app



*Ready to
sponsor
or discuss
options?*

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*Ready to reserve your exhibit
or advertising opportunity?*

CLICK HERE TO ORDER

*Interested in sponsorship?
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