



**THE W. E. B. DU BOIS DEPARTMENT OF AFRO-AMERICAN STUDIES**  
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

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*Call for Papers*

## **Art & Power in Movement:**

### **An International Conference Rethinking the Black Power and Black Arts Movements**

A call for papers for an international conference on the Black Power and Black Arts Movements, University of Massachusetts Amherst, November 18-20, 2010.

As the W.E.B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies celebrates the fortieth anniversary of its presence in the academy we wish to connect our commemoration with the emerging scholarship on African American culture and politics in the 1960s and 1970s. The Black Power movement and its cultural twin, the Black Arts movement of the 1960s and 1970s, fundamentally changed how people in the United States understood culture, education, community, politics, and even their own identities—in short, the humanities and fine arts in the broadest sense. The profound and continuing political impact can be seen in the many ways that images, formulations, and rhetoric of Black Power and Black Arts were recalled and deployed positively and negatively in the 2008 presidential campaign from Barack Obama’s “Yes, we can” to rightwing characterizations of Obama as a “stealth black nationalist.” Black Arts and Black Power were consciousness-raising movements that envisioned an alternative master narrative of the United States that is still struggling to be born.

These movements also significantly inspired the establishment of new academic fields, such as Black Studies, Women’s Studies, Latina/o Studies, Asian American Studies, and Ethnic Studies, and influenced already established fields. The founding and growth of an enduring public arts sector, also, owe much to Black Arts and Black Power in that the reshaping of public support of cultural and educational endeavors engendered heated debates about what culture truly is, what it might do, and what it should do. The two movements did much to widen public acceptance of the ideas that popular culture can be “serious” and “high” culture popular. Despite these contributions and influences (and recent work by scholars rethinking the movements), the legacy of Black Arts/Black Power remains greatly misunderstood and underappreciated.

This interdisciplinary conference will bring together new scholarship on Black Power and Black Arts as well as contributions by veterans of those movements. The organizing committee seeks papers dealing with, but not limited to

- Regional expressions of Black Arts and Black Power
- The Origins of Black Arts and Black Power
- Black Arts and Literary and Artistic Genres
- The ideologies and political practices of Black Power
- The Intersection of Politics and Art in Black Power and Black Arts
- The political and cultural legacies of Black Power and Black Arts

One-page abstracts and brief bios to [blackarts@afroam.umass.edu](mailto:blackarts@afroam.umass.edu) by April 17, 2010.