

CFP: CUNY English Student Association Graduate Student Conference



Image: niv Acosta, "Discotropic", photo by Thomas Seifert

BLACK LIVES

April 12, 2019

CUNY Graduate Center, NY, NY

SUBMISSION DEADLINE EXTENDED TO FEBRUARY 28, 2019

Keynotes: Michelle M. Wright (Emory University) and Rafael Walker (Baruch College)

"Black Lives" has emerged in recent years as a conceptual touchstone following the wake of Black Lives Matter, a galvanizing social movement of public protest against the persistence of institutionalized forms of anti-black violence that besiege Black individuals and communities on a daily basis, both within the United States and across a range of geopolitical contexts. The phrase implicitly challenges nationalist and global concepts of humanity that do not include blackness as a viable sign of life and citizenship. As critics such as Paul Gilroy, Denise Ferreira da Silva, Robert Reid-Pharr and Henry Louis Gates Jr. have noted, "universal humanism" has been historically built upon a constitutive rejection of black being. To push back against such entrenched conceptual repudiations of black particularity, we take a cue from Jamaican philosopher and novelist Sylvia Wynter, who argues that black particularity paradoxically retains a utopian impulse for recognizing "our collective agency and authorship of our genres of being human" (2006). We intend for the conference to respond to the urgent need to think about the impact and meaning of "Black Lives" both as a touchstone for contemporary activism as well as a scholarly heuristic for research across a range of fields and disciplines. By doing so, we hope to make resonant the potentiality of blackness to signify as a radical node of meaning and being across a range of identitarian and relational articulations.

We seek papers and panel proposals that take up any aspect of "Black Lives" understood broadly as an entry point into research. Please submit an abstract of up to 250 words, a short biographical description, and your contact information by February 28, 2019. Proposals and questions should be sent to conference organizers at blacklivesconferencecommittee@gmail.com.