James Baldwin in 1958. (Photo: Mortke Weissman)

JAMES BALDWIN’S GLOBAL IMAGINATION
A MULTI-SITE CONFERENCE EVENT
Program in Africana Studies, Department of Social & Cultural Analysis
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY, New York, NY
February 17-20, 2011

Program in Africana Studies, [NYU] The Asian/Pacific/American Institute, [NYU]
Institute of African American Affairs, [NYU] The Department of English, [NYU]
The Office of the Vice-Provost for Globalization and Multicultural Affairs, [NYU] The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, [NYU]
The Humanities Initiative, [NYU] The Studio Museum in Harlem
The Institute for Public Knowledge [NYU] WNYC Radio 99.3FM/820AM
The Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality, [NYU] The Brecht Forum
Queen Mary, University of London, UK

CONFERENCE PROGRAM COMMITTEE

• AWAM AMKPA, New York University
• RICH BLINT, New York University
• DOUGLAS FIELD, Staffordshire University, UK
• BILL SCHWARZ, Queen Mary, University of London
Staged in the context of global economic insecurity, a planet gripped by the ravages of war and climate change, ever-increasing gaps in wealth, as well as rampant fundamentalism (East and West), “James Baldwin’s Global Imagination” is intended as an examination of globality not simply as a matter of demography but as an urgent call to re-consider the contemporary utility of Baldwin’s expansive injunction to William Faulkner (and, in fact, to us all), “[t]hat any real change implies the breakup of the world as one has always known it, the loss of all that gave one an identity, the end of safety.” These proceedings are thus proposed as an opportunity to take seriously Baldwin’s consistent and insistent proposal that categories of difference represent an early misnaming, a dangerous and cowardly misrecognition of the moral imagination required to confront not only our mortality but also the brutal legacies of our collective histories. Taking Baldwin’s vision as our starting point, this conference aims, among other related concerns, to make legible the continued impacts of U.S. state racism in this putatively post-racial period. In this post-Civil Rights epoch saturated by disorienting fictions of progress circulating alongside the vulgar traffic in difference that characterizes much of late-capitalist popular consumption, critical appraisals of such processes are timely and necessary. This orienting intellectual posture illuminates the continued structural and identitarian restraints which remain the most dominant features of global life, and has particular implications for policy-making, interdisciplinary scholarship, as well as twenty-first century conceptions of the self that refuse the false, or, more precisely, rigid, character of borders and disciplines.

**Conference Program Schedule**

**Thursday, February 17, 2011, 7PM**
The Studio Museum in Harlem, Galleries/Theatre
144 West 125th Streets between Lenox Avenue, (Malcolm X Boulevard) and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevard (7th Avenue), NY, NY

Black and Latino Literary Salon: Re-Read: James Baldwin’s, “The Creative Process”
A collaboration between The Studio Museum, WNYC Radio, 93.9 FM, AM 820, and NYU’s multi-site conference event, “James Baldwin’s Global Imagination.” Re-Read is a new program series at the Studio Museum designed to re-engage classic and/or previously published texts. In tandem with WNYC’s signature Literary Salon, and New York University’s multi-site conference event, “James Baldwin’s Global Imagination,” (Feb.17th-20th), this program will highlight the essay, ‘The Creative Process,’ originally published in *Creative America* (1962) and, most significantly, included in James Baldwin’s indispensable volume, *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Non-fiction 1948-1985.* Widely-known and frequently cited, this essay addresses complex issues of representation which are important for literature, visual art, and the full range of practices that comprise the discipline of art.

Panelists:
- Hilton Als, staff writer, *The New Yorker*
- Darryl Pinckney, novelist, playwright, essayist; frequent contributor to the New York Review of Books

Co-Moderators:
- Celeste Headlee, host of WNYC’s *The Takeaway*
- Patrick Henry Bass, senior editor at *Essence Magazine* (WNYC moderators)

**Friday, February 18, 2011, 5:30PM**
The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Langston Hughes Auditorium, NYPL
515 Malcolm X Boulevard (@135th Street), NY, NY

Opening Reception: 5:30pm-6:15pm
Opening Plenary Roundtable: 6:30pm-8:15pm

“James Baldwin’s Global Imagination”
- Herb Boyd, Baldwin Biographer
- Aisha Karefa-Smart, Niece of James Baldwin
- Randall Keenan, author, ed., James Baldwin- *The Cross of Redemption: Uncollected Writings*
- David Leeming, Baldwin Biographer
- Hortense J. Spillers, Vanderbilt University

Moderator: D. Quentin Miller, Suffolk University, Boston
Concert: 9:00pm–10:30pm
“Come out the Wilderness: The Lyric Seduction of James Baldwin,” $25.00
• Rashidah Ismaili AbuBakr
• Courtney Bryant
• Marc Carey
• Latasha N.
• Nevada Digg’s
• Tamar Kali
• Morley
• Somi
• Imani Uzuri

Panel II: 3:45pm–5:00pm
Re-Reading James Baldwin’s Giovanni’s Room
• Alex Corey, University of Colorado–Boulder, “Making Room for Giovanni: Sex, Murder and Refusal in Giovanni’s Room.”
• Douglas Field, Staffordshire University, UK, “Giovanni’s Room and the Queer Atlantic: Sailing and Cruising from New York to Paris.”
• Stephanie Li, “Imagining Blackness in James Baldwin’s Giovanni’s Room.”
Moderator: Steven Fullwood, The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, NYPL.

Panel III: 5:15pm–7:00pm
James Baldwin in the “Age” of Obama
• Kendall Thomas, Columbia University
• Hortense J. Spillers, Vanderbilt University
• Cheryl Wall, Rutgers University, New Brunswick
Moderator: Martha Diawara, New York University

Featured Event: 7:00pm–9:00pm
James Baldwin on Film
James Baldwin: From Another Place [Sedat Pakay|12mins|1973]; I Heard it Through the Grapevine [Dick Fontaine|85mins|1982] – With Post-Screening Discussion with Filmmakers
Co-Moderators:
• Magdalena Zaborowska, University of Michigan
• Joan Harris, actor, journalist

Panel IV: 9:30am–10:45am
James Baldwin and Performance
• Tamara Bransburg and Matthew Seriff-Cullick, Smith College, “The Politics of Self-Narration: Performing Identities On and Off the Stage in Baldwin’s Tell Me How Long the Train’s Been Gone.”
• Koritha Mitchell, Ohio State University, “How Theater Re-created James Baldwin.”
Moderator: Awam Anka, New York University

Panel IV: 11:00am–12:30pm
“James Baldwin and the Social (Sciences)”
• Richard Sennett, New York University
• John Kuo Wei Tchen, New York University
Moderator: Avital Ronell, New York University

Lunch 12:30pm–1:30pm
Panel V: 1:30pm–3:00pm

**James Baldwin: Love, Freedom, and the Fabrication of the Self**
- Ben De Witte, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, “Another Love, Another Country: James Baldwin’s Reconfiguring of Relationality.”
- Joanna Jeskova, Suffolk University, “Love Transcends Anti-racism in James Baldwin’s Another Country and Just Above My Head.”
- Seth Silberman, Independent Scholar, “What Can it Make of What it Sees? Secrecy, the Knowledgeable, and Queer Theory.”

**Moderator: Marcellus Blount, Columbia University**

Panel VI: 3:45pm–5:30pm

**James Baldwin and the State**
- Kaveh Landsverk, Columbia University, “Undefined and Currently Undefinable: Rethinking James Baldwin and Black Power (s).”
- Fred Smith, University of California-Berkeley, “Baldwin, Republicanism, and A Forgotten Guarantee.”

**Moderator: Avital Ronnell, New York University**

**Final Plenary Roundtable: 5:30pm–7:00pm**

“James Baldwin and the Contemporary Scene”
- James Campbell, author and editor, Baldwin Biographer
- Colm Tóibín, author
- Patricia J. Williams, Columbia University
- Małgorzata Zaborowska, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

**Co-Moderators:**
- Rich Blint, New York University
- Bill Schwarz, Queen Mary, University of London

All events are FREE and OPEN to the PUBLIC unless otherwise noted.

Seating is limited and registration is required. For sessions scheduled at New York University (February 19–20, 2011), please e-mail baldwinconference@gmail.com to RSVP. For tickets to the concert, “Come out the Wilderness: The Lyric Seduction of James Baldwin,” please contact The Schomburg Center directly at 212-491-2200. Seating for the event scheduled at The Studio Museum on February 17, 2011, is on a “first-come, first-served” basis.