

enormous impact behind the scenes. Over the fifty-seven years this journal has been in publication, the submission and review process has been managed, basically, through a series of lists. They've been shoved in manila folders or dumped in computer folders. Sometimes they've been hand-written in steno notepads. Sometimes they've been Excel spreadsheets. During my time here, I have vainly attempted to win my office colleagues over to the dark side of Access databases. This summer, when I temporarily took over managing peer review in addition to all my other tasks, I realized that we were using close to a dozen different software programs and/or cloud accounts to process and review submissions. It was a ridiculous waste of time involving copying and pasting from one screen to another to another, things got misplaced, and we were prone to dangerous gaps in communication. In attending journal-editor sessions at the Association of University

Presses conferences over the years, it didn't seem that anyone else was doing anything radically different, beyond their note-taking software of choice.

Over the years I've investigated proprietary manuscript management systems for academic journals. By and large what was available was geared toward large (usually scientific) journals that get hundreds if not thousands of submissions per year, and the systems were priced accordingly. The last time I looked (in 2021) there were a couple of new systems coming online that were manageable and affordable for small journals like *African Arts*, but they were still relatively untested and I didn't want to risk them.

By the time you read this First Word, *African Arts* will be using the Open Journals System developed by Public Knowledge Products at Simon Fraser University in Canada to process and manage our manuscript submissions and peer review. (I'm a

little nervous announcing this here because, as of this writing and given the wonders of publishing lead time, we've signed the contract but haven't actually set up the system yet.) From the point of view of authors and reviewers, this means there will be one site where you can submit papers, be invited to review papers, and see your reviews and publication decisions and all other editorial communications. It will also make it much easier for the editorial office to keep track of things, to see where papers are in the process, to remind people that they owe us a review or revision. Once you have created an account in the system, you can get into the system (as long as you remember your password)! No more expiring Box access! No more "I'm not a UCLA employee, how do I get in here?" We believe this will make the whole process of publishing with *African Arts* more efficient and user-friendly for everyone. The best kind of change.

african arts consortium

• UCLA • University of Florida • Miami University, Ohio • University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill •

CONSORTIUM EDITORS UCLA

Marla C. Berns, UCLA
Carlee S. Forbes, UCLA
Silvia Forni, UCLA
Erica P. Jones, UCLA
Peri Klemm, CSUN

Miami University, Ohio

Jordan Fenton, Miami University, Ohio
Matthew Rarey, Oberlin College
Sarah Van Beurden, Ohio State University
Kristen Windmuller-Luna, Cleveland Museum of Art
Joseph Underwood, Kent State University

University of Florida

Álvaro Luís Lima, University of Florida
Nomusa Makhubu, University of Cape Town
Fiona Mc Laughlin, University of Florida
Robin Poynor, University of Florida
MacKenzie Moon Ryan, Rollins College

University of North Carolina Chapel Hill

Lisa Homann, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
Priscilla Layne, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Carol Magee, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
David G. Pier, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Victoria L. Rovine, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

EDITORIAL OFFICE

Leslie Ellen Jones, Executive Editor and Art Director

departmental editors dialogue editor

Amanda M. Maples
book review editor
David G. Pier

exhibition review editor, north america

Amanda Gilvin
exhibition review editor, europe
Helena Cantone
exhibition review editor, africa
Yaëlle Biro

CONSULTING EDITORS

Rowland Abiodun
Mary Jo Arnoldi
Kathleen Bickford Berzock
Suzanne Preston Blier
Elisabeth L. Cameron
Christa Clarke
Henry John Drewal
Christraud Geary
William Hart
Dunja Hersak
Shannen Hill
Bennetta Jules-Rosette
Christine Mullen Kreamer
Alisa LaGamma
Rebecca Nagy
Constantine Petridis
John Picton
Dana Rush
Raymond A. Silverman
Kenji Yoshida

African Arts (ISSN 0001-9933 print, 1937-2108 online) is published quarterly by the University of California, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1310, in spring, summer, autumn, and winter. For editorial information consult our websites at <http://www.international.ucla.edu/africa/africanarts/> and <https://direct.mit.edu/afar> or email *African Arts* at afriartsedit@international.ucla.edu (editorial); afriartsbus@international.ucla.edu (operations).

The opinions of contributors and advertisers are not necessarily those of *African Arts*.

Subscription information: *African Arts* is distributed by The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA 02142. Subscription and address changes should be addressed to MIT Press Journals, One Broadway, Floor 12, Cambridge MA 02142. Phone: 617-253-2889, US and Canada 800-207-8354. Fax: 617-577-1545. Email: journals-orders@mit.edu. For fastest service and more information, subscribe online using our secure server at <http://mitpress-journals.org/aa>.

Subscription rates: print and electronic, Individuals \$118.00, Students/retirees \$67.00, Institutions \$270.00; online only, Individuals \$106.00, Students/retirees \$53, Institutions \$227.00. Canadians add 5% GST. Outside the U.S. and Canada add \$24.00 for postage and handling for print edition. Individual JSTOR Access Fee: \$25 for Volumes 1-45 online from JSTOR. Prices subject to change without notice.

Single issues: Individuals \$32.00; institutions \$58.00. Canadians add 5% GST. Outside the U.S. and Canada add \$6.00 per issue for postage and handling. Prices subject to change without notice.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *African Arts*, MIT Press Journals, One Rogers Street, Cambridge, MA 02142-1209. Periodicals postage paid at Boston, MA and at additional post offices.

Permission to photocopy articles for internal or personal use is granted by the copyright owner for users registered with the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC), Transactional Reporting Service, provided that the per copy fee of \$10 per article is paid directly to the CCC, 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 02193 (fee code: ISSN 0001-9933). Address all other inquiries to the Subsidiary Rights Manager, MIT Press Journals, One Rogers Street, Cambridge, MA 02142-1209. Phone: 617-253-2864. Fax: 617-259-5028. Email: journals-rights@mit.edu.

African Arts is abstracted and/or indexed in IBZ: International Bibliography of Periodical Literature; SCOPUS; MLA International Bibliography

© 2024 by the Regents of the University of California, African Arts Journal Consortium
Printed in China

african arts presents original research and critical discourse on traditional, contemporary, and popular African arts and expressive cultures. Since 1967, the journal has reflected the dynamism and diversity of several fields of humanistic study, publishing richly illustrated articles in full color; incorporating the most current theory, practice, and intercultural dialogue. The journal offers readers peer-reviewed scholarly articles concerning a striking range of art forms and visual cultures of the world's second-largest continent and its diasporas, as well as special thematic issues, book and exhibition reviews, features on museum collections, exhibition previews, artist portfolios, photo essays, edgy dialogues, and editorials. **african arts** promotes investigation of the interdisciplinary connections among the arts, anthropology, history, language, politics, religion, performance, and cultural and global studies and subscribes to the ethical guidelines of the College Arts Association, in particular §II.B.2 (Acknowledgment of Sources and Assistance), and of the African Studies Association, in particular §3 (Informed Consent and Confidentiality). All articles have been reviewed by members of the editorial board and/or outside reviewers.

OUR POLICY ON THE USE OF AI TOOLS BY AUTHORS

We adhere to the policy of our distributor, the MIT Press, regarding the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in journal publication. The MIT Press does not allow AI tools such as ChatGPT or large language models (LLMs) to be listed as authors of our publications. The emerging consensus of scholarly organizations, including the [Committee on Publication Ethics](#), is that AI tools do not meet the requirements for authorship since they cannot assume ethical and legal responsibility for their work. MIT Press authors must represent to the press and to readers that their work is original as well as responsible and scholarly in its use of material created by others. Authors who use AI tools to produce text or images/graphics, or to collect data, must inform their editors of this use and be transparent about it in their manuscripts so that readers understand the role of these tools in the development of the work. Authors are fully responsible for the content of their manuscripts including any portions produced by AI tools, and are liable for any ethical breaches that may result from the use of such content.