

Open Access Community Investment Program

Resource: *liquid blackness: journal of aesthetics and black studies*

The Request

The *liquid blackness* research group began as a group of faculty, students, and alumni of the Moving Image Studies doctoral program at Georgia State University (GSU) collaboratively studying blackness and aesthetics. In 2014 the research group launched the journal *liquid blackness* as an open access, online-only journal and had published seven issues by October 2017. During that period, the journal grew into a forum for the exploration of bold methodologies for the formal analysis of blackness in contemporary visual and sonic arts and popular culture at the intersection between the politics and ethics of aesthetics, and by 2018 *liquid blackness* had secured wide readership among Black Studies, Visual Culture, and Art History scholars, as well as artists and curators. Seeking to more firmly establish the journal by publishing it on a regular basis, as well as raise the profile of the *liquid blackness* research group, the founding editor, Alessandra Raengo, contacted Duke University Press (DUP) to start a conversation about a possible publishing partnership between the journal and DUP.

Since 2020 the *liquid blackness* research group website—now the [liquid blackness project](#)—has been archived at the Library of Congress for its cultural and historical significance.

Working together, Alessandra Raengo, her co-editor, Lauren McLeod Cramer (University of Toronto), and DUP relaunched the journal, [liquid blackness: journal of aesthetics and black studies](#), in April 2021 with the publication of Volume 5, Issue 1. We have been able to keep the journal open access because of a generous five-year funding commitment from GSU, starting in 2020, in the amount \$25,000 per year.

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GSU's funding commitment, which is always contingent on funding from the State of Georgia, will end in 2024. To continue to be open access beyond 2024, *liquid blackness: journal of aesthetics and black studies* will need \$43,000 per year.

Overview

About the *liquid blackness* journal

The *liquid blackness* journal seeks to carve out a place for aesthetic theory and the most radical agenda of Black studies to come together in productive ways, with the goal of attending to the aesthetic work of blackness and the political work of form. In this way, the journal develops innovative approaches to address points of convergence between the exigencies of Black life and the many ways in which blackness is encountered in contemporary sonic and visual culture.

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The journal is published by DUP on behalf of liquid blackness Limited.

About Duke University Press

Established in 1926 as a department of Duke University and reporting to the Provost's Office, DUP is a full service, not-for-profit academic publisher. DUP supports scholars in doing what they are passionate about: learning, teaching, and effecting positive change in the world.

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As mandated by Duke University, DUP operates on a net-zero basis, and in years where there is a publishing surplus, the surplus is set aside in reserves to use in later years as funds for investments or to use in instances where DUP has a net deficit for the year.

DUP has established itself as a bold and ambitious publisher that continues to thrive in a rapidly changing ecosystem: finding, curating, enriching, and disseminating scholarship that is vital to readers working at the forefront of their fields in the humanities, social sciences, and mathematics. Its journals and books are recognized for their quality, topical importance, and expert design. DUP is a leader in technology and innovation among scholarly presses, maintaining multiple digital platforms that deliver content around the world.

DUP currently publishes six fully open access journals.

Impact of Resource

Central to the *liquid blackness* journal's dedication to "the radical agenda of black studies" is a commitment to mentoring the next generation of Black/black studies scholars. This emphasis on advancing the present and future diversity, equity, and inclusion in our discipline is also the reason the journal is seeking funding support at this early stage. Often alluding to the jazz ensemble as aspirational structure, the *liquid blackness* research group experiments with forms of sociality through an emphasis on collaborative and yet non-proprietary attachments to the group. This is a strategy of community-building and a tool to build "heritage knowledge" by exposing researchers to the underrepresented archives of black expressive culture. The research group and the journal aim to establish tools and a space that allows the next generation of scholars and creatives to write themselves into the same radical history.

This investment guides all editorial and production choices. As an indication of the *liquid blackness* journal's ongoing work to expand the voices and perspectives featured in each issue, the Table of Contents highlights four kinds of contributions: the main section—"Studies in Black"—assembles various modes of black study; "Critical Art Encounters" offers sustained and at times meditative engagements with contemporary artworks; the section called "Accent Marks" indicates shifts that emphasize possible lines of flight; and "In Conversation" features a dialogue with practitioners or theorists. At the same time the art, writing, and conversation in these sections demonstrates the continuity between these scholarly modes to emphasize black

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studies' varied methodologies and to serve as a standing invitation to practitioners, curators, and other scholars whose work only appears in academic journals as a special/irregular feature.

Additionally, the journal has developed an approach to outreach, both informal and “ensemblic” collaborations, as an extension of that mission. To coincide with the publication of journal issues, the *liquid blackness* group and journal editorial board have hosted screenings and symposia and produced video content and digital archives that promote and elaborate on the work of our contributors, which is vital for emerging scholars attempting to both form scholarly networks and disseminate their research. These events and special projects are also training opportunities for the journal's student staff members and ensure scholarly tools are accessible for those working inside and outside of the academy. The key to this kind of mentorship, a process *liquid blackness* calls “shepherding,” is sustained engagement with writers—soliciting and championing research in its earliest stages, providing feedback and opportunities for one-on-one guidance from senior scholars and, after publication, providing a platform for that work.

This is a long-term commitment to the success and professionalization of underrepresented scholars and artists that demands we identify support and resources in advance of the conclusion of our GSU funding.

Online usage statistics for the period June 2021 through May 2022 are included in the Appendix. The *liquid blackness* journal is indexed/abstracted in the following: *DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals)*, *ERIH PLUS (European Reference Index for the Humanities)*, *Humanities Source*, *Humanities Source Ultimate*, *OmniFile Full Text Mega*, *Open Academic Journal Index*, *TOC Premier*, *Ulrichsweb*.

In alignment with Duke University's [Office for Institutional Equity](#), DUP is leading our scholarly publishing industry in thinking about diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility—not only in what it publishes, but also in how it runs its organization. DUP's Equity and Inclusion Task Force meets monthly, hosting training sessions, book studies, and discussions. It actively seeks programs and training opportunities to increase awareness and foster the sort of inclusive community that aligns with the mission and values of the Press. DUP has also made strong commitments to hire individuals from underrepresented communities with recruitment efforts that ensure a broad and inclusive applicant pool.

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Organization and Technical Compliance of Resource

The *liquid blackness* journal is owned by liquid blackness Limited. The Editing and Publishing Agreement established between DUP and liquid blackness Limited states the following regarding the journal's editorial independence:

liquid blackness Limited shall be responsible for the content of the Journal. This responsibility includes appointing and securing Editors; setting of editorial policies and procedures; solicitation of articles and all other material to be published in the Journal; reviewing of articles submitted for publication in the Journal to determine which should be accepted into the Journal. . . .

As per the journal's mission statement, the journal is dedicated to the most radical agenda of Black Studies and always invested in accounting for the exigencies of black lives. The Editorial Board, Associate Editors, and Advisory Board fully reflect the diversity of disciplinary formations that share the same commitment as well as BIPOC scholars who are at the frontline of its academic and creative expressions. The journal is explicit about its political and ethical investment in stating that it seeks to explore "who can do theory (scholars, artists, activists, individuals, and ensembles), how theory can be done (in image, writing, archiving, curating, social activism), and what a Black aesthetic object is ("high"/"low" art, sound and image, practice and praxis)."

Growing out of the mission statement of the *liquid blackness* project (the research group Dr. Raengo founded at GSU) "to mentor the next generation of students of color and those committed to the agenda of black studies" the journal's mission is reflected in all its operations: content selection, review process, mentorship of junior scholars, and collaborative practice among contributors and Boards. Guest-edited issues by junior scholars (one of which is forthcoming in Fall 2022) or guest-edited by faculty members with their doctoral students (one of which is forthcoming in Spring 2023) are some of the ways this happens.

Diversity and social justice are also implemented in the way the journal's editorial office continues to mentor diverse graduate students as they learn all phases of editorial operations.

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The *liquid blackness* project is inspired and driven by the scope and aim of Black Studies: centering on Blackness—black people and black art—and critiquing Western civilization’s attachment to the project of whiteness. As it condemns the atmospheric reach of anti-blackness, it also makes the rejection of white supremacy and privilege the goal of its scholarly pursuits.

DUP is committed to providing accessible websites and content to its users regardless of their abilities. To that end, DUP commits to providing an online experience that meets or exceeds the guidelines set out in the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, version 2.0.

DUP’s digital platform also conforms with Section 508 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

DUP works with the following partners to ensure digital preservation of its book and journal content:

- CLOCKSS (all DUP journals included)
- LOCKSS (all DUP journals included)
- Portico (all DUP books and journals included)

Operational and Financial Stability of Resource

Since DUP became the publishing partner of *liquid blackness* Limited in 2021, the *liquid blackness* journal has published two issues per year on schedule.

Themed issues are always geared toward the most cutting-edge and politically urgent questions in the multidisciplinary field of black studies. Currently, planned issues include (but are not limited to):

- thingness and black objecthood
- Black Canada
- Unattachments and the question of affect

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- the right to intimacy
- black archives
- race and science education
- radical curatorial practices
- race and space
- black sounds and sonicity
- animacy/animation/animateriality
- digital blackness

The *liquid blackness* journal remains open access because of funding from GSU in the amount \$25,000 per year through the first five years of publication at DUP. However, that funding is subject to appropriations by the Georgia state legislature and the availability to GSU of sufficient funds to maintain its open access funding commitment to the journal. GSU will cease this financial support after 2024, if not before because of funding limitations or restrictions. Because of these two factors, it is imperative that we begin now to obtain funding commitments to begin by fall 2024 at the latest.

Submitted by:

Alessandra Raengo, Distinguished University Professor, School of Film, Media & Theatre,
Georgia State University;

Lauren McLeod Cramer, Assistant Professor, Cinema Studies Institute, University of Toronto;
and

Duke University Press

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APPENDIX

Usage Report

liquid blackness: journal of aesthetics and black studies

June 2021–May 2022

Websites

Duke University Press maintains and updates two *liquid blackness: journal of aesthetics and black studies* websites on a regular basis. Those two sites are the Duke University Press *liquid blackness* journal site (www.dukeupress.edu/liquid-blackness) and the *liquid blackness* journal site for content access (read.dukeupress.edu/liquid-blackness).

Usage Statistics

The following chart details user activity on the *liquid blackness* journal content site (read.dukeupress.edu/liquid-blackness) from June 2021 through May 2022.

Month	HTML	PDFs	Total
Jun 2021	693	278	971
Jul 2021	391	190	581
Aug 2021	349	171	520
Sep 2021	571	401	972
Oct 2021	1,083	416	1,499
Nov 2021	1,020	471	1,491
Dec 2021	3,261	899	4,160
Jan 2022	2,579	416	2,995
Feb 2022	1,368	329	1,697
Mar 2022	1,502	439	1,941
Apr 2022	1,499	316	1,815
May 2022	3,845	943	4,788
Total	18,161	5,269	23,430

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The 10 Most Frequently Read Articles on read.dukeupress.edu

The table below lists the most frequently read articles on read.dukeupress.edu from June 2021 through May 2021.

Article	Views
Rinaldo Walcott The Black Aquatic <i>2021, Volume 5, Issue 1, p. 63</i>	3,984
R. A. Judy The Unfungible Flow of Liquid Blackness <i>2021, Volume 5, Issue 1, p. 27</i>	2,298
Ekow Eshun A Liquid Africa: Fluidity as Practice and Aesthetics in <i>Diasporadical Trilogía</i> <i>2021, Volume 5, Issue 1, p. 75</i>	1,442
Nicholas Mirzoeff The Whiteness of Birds <i>6, Issue 1, p. 120</i>	<i>2022, Volume</i> 1,298
Jared Sexton Basic Black <i>2021, Volume 5, Issue 2, p. 75</i>	1,268
Alessandra Raengo Black Study @ GSU: The Album <i>2021, Volume 5, Issue 1, p. 5</i>	1,111
Thomas F. DeFrantz dancing among the watery folds <i>2021, Volume 5, Issue 1, p. 107</i>	1,107
Alessandra Raengo and Lauren McLeod Cramer Editors' Notes <i>2021, Volume 5, Issue 1, p. 1</i>	1,036
Alessandra Raengo The Jurisgenerativity of a Liquid Praxis: A Conversation with John Akomfrah <i>2021, Volume 5, Issue 1, p. 127</i>	892
Fred Moten, Suné Woods, and James Gordon Williams You are mine. I see now, I'm a have to let you go. <i>2021, Volume 5, Issue 1, p. 97</i>	856

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Institutions with Greatest Activity on read.dukeupress.edu

The table below lists the fifty institutions that most frequently accessed articles on read.dukeupress.edu from June 2021 through May 2022

Institution	Views	Institution (continued)	Views
New York University	150	Kings College London	17
Duke University	113	City University of New York	17
Columbia University	79	Indiana University Libraries	17
University of Connecticut	78	University of Texas, Austin	16
University of California, Irvine	74	University of Massachusetts Amherst	16
University of Toronto	58	University of Washington	16
University of Amsterdam	55	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	16
Georgia State University	50	University College London	15
University of California, Los Angeles	50	Purdue University	14
Vassar College	49	University of Montreal	14
University of Manchester	43	Hartwick College	13
Stanford University	27	University of California, Santa Cruz	13
University of California, Berkley	25	Dickinson College	12
Syracuse University	25	Goldsmiths College	12
University of Cape Town	23	Cornell University	12
University of Chicago	23	Fordham University	12
New York Public Library	23	Bryn Mawr College	12
Cambridge University	22	Manchester Metropolitan University	12
Northwestern University	21	Pennsylvania State University	12
University of Maryland	20	Iakob Gobebasvili Telavi State University	11
Clayton University	20	Bucknell University	10
Yale University	20	University of Huddersfield	10
University of California Santa Barbara	19	University of California, Riverside	10
School of Art Institute of Chicago	19	University of St Andrews	10
Brown University	18	University of Notre Dame	10