

The 2017 National Women's Studies Association conference will take place in Baltimore, Maryland from Nov. 16-19. The topic will be "40 Years after Combahee: Feminist Scholars and Activists Engage the Movement for Black Lives." The NWSA Aging and Ageism Caucus believes this topic provides many central connection points to the study of aging and ageism in the lives of women. We would like to submit a panel (3-4) of presenters for each of the following proposed subthemes (see descriptions below):

1. Arts & Culture: How social media and visual culture are changing how we view, engage and change the world
2. Revisiting Intersectionality
3. Sexualities and representation
4. Movement building and freedom-making
5. Violence, trauma, agency, and resilience
6. Engaging, questioning and transcending the state

Please submit a 100-word abstract in response to one of the six sub-themes by **February 10th, 2017 to nwsa.aging@gmail.com**. Along with the abstract, please include your name, institutional affiliation (if applicable), and paper title. If you include sources in your abstract, please include a bibliography.

The Age and Ageism Caucus co-chairs will compile the abstracts and submit panels to the NWSA Conference for consideration. If your abstract is selected for a panel, you must register in the NWSA database so the co-chairs can submit your abstract. *Please note that acceptance to a panel does not guarantee acceptance to the conference. While panel submissions have a higher rate of acceptance than individual papers, not all panels are accepted.* If you have any questions, please contact the Caucus chairs individually. The current chairs are Linda Hess (University of Frankfurt, linda.hess@em.uni-frankfurt.de) and Melanie Cattrell (Blinn College, melanie.cattrell@blinn.edu).

Panel #1: Arts & Culture: The Aging Black Female Body in Contemporary Visual Culture

While media representations of the young female black body are often one-dimensional and highly sexualized, until recently, representations of the aging black female body were either non-existent or desexualized. This is especially true in contemporary film and television. As media driven by consumerism, this ignorance of aging sexuality is not surprising. As Age Studies scholar Margaret Gullette wryly points out, "Capitalism demonizes sexual aging not only out of dumb sentimentality for youth, but for commercial purposes." However, within in the last decade, many television series (including network, cable, and streaming platforms) and films now include well-developed aging African American female characters. This panel seeks

3-4 papers which examine such characters (and the actresses who play them) through the intersecting categories of age, race, and sexuality.

Panel #2: Revisiting Intersectionality: Age/Aging and its Intersections

Drawing attention to intersectional identities as well as intersecting oppressions is one of the core objectives of the Black Feminist Statement issued by the Combahee River Collective in 1977. We are seeking 3-4 innovative papers for a panel that explores how age/aging intersects with other identity categories, such as race, gender, sexuality, and class. We are specifically interested in questions of how the category age/aging interacts with these other categories with regard to mechanisms of oppression but likewise how it might offer specific opportunities for resistance.

Panel #3: Sexualities and Representation: Against the policing of sexual expression

We are looking for 3-4 papers that engage with the topic of sexuality and age/aging, specifically with regard to women of color. In 1977, the authors of the "Black Feminist Statement" pointed eloquently to the oppression that ensues from the policing of gender expression and in particular to the policing of sexual expression of women of color. This policing originated from men of color as well as largely from white society: "We were told in the same breath to be quiet both for the sake of being 'ladylike' and to make us less objectionable in the eyes of white people" (211). Age studies scholars from Simone de Beauvoir to Margaret Gullette have shown the significant extent to which of older women's sexualities are also policed through various strategies. If the bodies of a women of color are considered dangerous 'locations' of sexuality and sexual expression and the bodies of old women are likewise considered dangerous for the same reason, how do strategies of policing sexuality intersect concerning aging bodies of color? What possibilities for resistance might arise from these intersectional positions? How might the forms of feminism proposed by the CRC be adopted by older women to oppose the cultural policing of sexual expression?

Panel #4: Movement Building and Freedom-Making: The Role of Aging Black Women in the Black Lives Matter Movement

In a 2015 article in *Dissent* magazine, Marcia Chatelain argued against the claim that BLM is a "leaderless movement," stating, "It isn't a coincidence that a movement that brings together the talents of black women—many of them queer—for the purpose of liberation is considered leaderless, since black women have so often been rendered invisible. Across history, any time a movement has had black

women at its helm or in its leadership—from Ida B. Wells and the Niagara movement to Ella Baker in the civil rights movement—there have been sexist and racist attempts to undermine them.” How have black women played a leadership role in the BLM Movement? How have black women—and, specifically, aging black women—played a leadership role in other liberation movements? What forms of black/ feminist/ queer legacies do these movements build upon that are distinct from heteronormative, patriarchal forms of inheritance and knowledge? How have interlocking systems of oppression worked to render their contributions invisible, and what role does ageism play in this invisibility? This panel seeks 3-4 papers that interrogate the role of aging black women in BLM and social movements.

Panel # 5: Violence, Trauma, Agency, and Resilience: Age/ Ageing as a Position of Resistance

In their “Black Feminist Statement” the women of the Combahee River Collective state: “We believe that the most profound and potentially the most radical politics come directly of our own identity” (212). Aging is often viewed as a disadvantaged, or “reduced” identity. We are looking for panelists who explore age and ageing as a position of agency and resistance that draws strength from this specific identity, and finds ways to counter or work through violence and trauma and offer ways to articulate profound and radical politics in the spirit articulated by the CRC in their 1977 manifesto.

Panel # 6: Engaging, Questioning and Transcending the State: Race, Age, and Everyday Activism

Forty years ago, the Combahee River Collective observed that “contemporary black feminism is the outgrowth of countless generations of personal sacrifice, militancy, and work by our mothers and sisters.” They pointed to the work of ancestors—“some known . . . thousands upon thousands unknown”—as the foundation of movement building and freedom making. As at the beginning of the twenty-first century North American society is still saturated with ageist structures and discourses, this panel seeks 3-4 participants who discuss the “everyday activism” of opposing ageism and stereotypical perceptions of age/aging in their professional, private, and political lives. Revisiting the importance of intergenerational relations, lineages, and ancestors, in the spirit of the CRC’s statement we ask participants to evaluate their own “location” as ‘heiresses’ to legacies from the previous “countless generations” and also as explorers, initiators, and forerunners for future generations, specifically with regard to queer/ black/ feminist forms of intergenerational inheritance that transgress rigid heteronormative concepts of heritage and legacy.