

17th International Conference on Penal Abolition
Call for Presentations / Call for Workshops/ Call for Art

July 26-29, 2017

New Bedford, Massachusetts, Turtle Island [U.S.A]

Abolition and its Ghosts:
Historic Memory and Ongoing Struggles Against Colonialism and Slavery

The local organizing committee for the 17th International Conference on Penal Abolition extends this invitation to submit proposals for presentations, art and workshops. You can contact the local organizing committee through: icopa17@umassd.edu

Location:

The site of this year's meeting is significant. New Bedford, on the northeastern coast of Turtle Island, was the first northern home for Frederick Douglass, an African man who escaped chattel slavery in the U.S. South to become an outspoken abolitionist, author, speaker, advocate, and community organizer. Upon arriving in New Bedford, Douglass quickly realized how the "free" states of the North were not free for all. He dedicated his life to working towards abolition within strong abolitionist communities in New Bedford and beyond.

Theme:

Honoring the legacy of Frederick Douglass and all enslaved Africans who fought for their lives and our freedom, this conference aims to inspire understandings and draw our visions towards the diverse, repeated and present manifestations of colonialism and slavery. We seek papers, presentations, workshops and art that can illustrate how the penal system prolongs historic violence into modern life while centering the voices of those most impacted and least heard.

ICOPA 17 will also highlight the voices of those who are at the frontlines of the struggle against the many faces of the carceral states in which we live and die today, for our lives are built upon the resistance of our ancestors and are haunted by the unchanging root sources of colonial power: the militarized occupation of stolen lands and the racialized labor that was forced to work them.

Proposals:

We seek proposals that can include but are not limited to:

1. **Presentations:** scholarly papers; panels.
2. **Workshops:** teach-ins; trainings; projects and activities that can be started and completed at ICOPA; skill-sharing opportunities; educational workshops on organizing experiences

including successes, defeats and obstacles.

3. **Art in all of its manifestations:** visual media; stories; poetry; theatre and other forms of live performance; creative reflections of life and death through prison and the many punishing branches of the penal system.

We encourage proposals that address **abolitionist** perspectives on:

- Structural and state-sanctioned violence
- White supremacy
- Heteropatriarchy
- Anti-colonialism
- Indigenous/First Nations freedom struggles
- Strong critiques of the narratives and assumptions of rehabilitation and penal reform
- Historic memory of abolition and resistance
- Legacies of chattel slavery and anti-Blackness
- Environmental Justice
- Environmental movements including Contamination of natural resources and politics
- Reproductive Justice and self-determination
- Re-thinking claims of "modern day slavery"
- Policing, imprisonment, and incarceration
- Immigration and borders
- Houselessness and settler colonialism/gentrification
- Creative and wide reaching understandings of imprisonment and carceral violence: living death, social death, hauntology, ghosting/ghosted analyses, living within or stepping beyond the shadows of chattel slavery and colonialism, etc.

We will prioritize proposals that center:

- Prisoners, former prisoners and their families
- The lived experiences and voices of those most directly harmed by the criminal justice system at the intersections of race, class, gender and sexuality.
- Grassroots organizing
- Trans people of color at the front lines of struggle
- Transformative justice and projects that present justice beyond the confines of punishment
- Anti-prison, anti-carceral campaigns
- Struggles and successes coming out of prison and building communities of support

All proposals that fall within the themes of ICOPA 17 will be considered.

Call for Artists / Artworks:

ICOPA 17 will also include a gallery show, to be held concurrently with the conference. We are searching for artists, particularly those currently or formerly imprisoned and those whose lives have been affected by the carceral state, who are interested in submitting artwork that expresses experiences of and interactions with the penal system and its effects. We seek artwork that engages with both the themes of the conference and artists' own explorations on the intersections of art and resistance. ICOPA 17 encourages artists to use any medium of their choosing - visual arts, applied design, music, performance, poetry or any form of writing, and more. ***Please include in your proposal title of artwork, medium, and exhibition or performance needs.***

Deadline for all proposals is May 1, 2017:

Submissions should be written in English or Spanish.

Please provide:

1. Full Title
2. Names of all presenters, authors, artists
3. 250 word description of your proposed presentation, workshop, or artwork
4. Contact information

Please email all proposals to: **icopa17@umassd.edu**

Please type "**ICOPA 17 Proposal**" into your subject heading. Please also indicate in the subject heading the type of proposal you are submitting: **presentation, workshop, or artwork.**

****PLEASE NOTE: Conference organizers aim to achieve free child care and offer scholarships for low-income attendees. Please contact us for more information.****

More information about registration, lodging, travel, visas, etc. will be available soon on the

ICOPA 17 website: <https://icopa17.wordpress.com/>

Kind regards from the ICOPA 17 Organizing Committee.