

Global Hip Hop Studies



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Special Issue: “Knowledge Reigns Supreme”: The Fifth Element in Hip Hop Culture’

Global Hip Hop Studies (GHHS) is a peer-reviewed, rigorous and community-responsive academic journal that publishes research on contemporary as well as historical issues and debates that surround hip hop music and culture around the world.

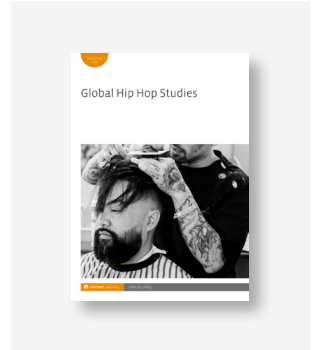
The Special Issue’s remit

Deejaying; emceeing; breaking; graffiti: these are commonly considered hip hop’s four core elements. While hip hop contains multiple elements beyond its core, many hip hop artists, activists and fans worldwide understand and recognize a ‘fifth element’ as *knowledge*. This naming practice shows us how hip hop communities understand the importance of the history, values and artistry of the culture beyond their own temporal-spatial borders. With roots in the Universal Zulu Nation in the 1970s (Chang 2005), hip hop’s fifth element includes aims of self-realization (‘knowledge of self’), empowerment and information about the history of the genre as well as its key practitioners (Gosa 2015; Alim, Haupt, Williams 2018).

The fifth element is somewhat elusive in terms of definition and systematic study because of its multimodal nature: knowledge manifests itself through live performances and cultural texts ripe for academic study, such as recordings, films, music videos and social media. Rappers often refer to metaphors of education, such as KRS-One as ‘The Teacha’, ‘backpack rappers’ and ‘schooling’ someone, in addition to emphasizing the importance of sharing hip hop histories and social messages. Knowledge also appears in educational practices, such as artist–scholar knowledge exchanges, (critical) hip hop pedagogy, and the very field of hip hop studies (Chetty and Turner 2018; Turner 2017; Emdin 2010; Lamont Hill 2009; Love 2019; Petchauer 2011; Söderman 2011; Snell and Söderman 2014). Rollefson demands that knowledge in hip hop must ‘be accessed through local knowledge and practice’ (2017: 233).

Until now, full recognition of the fifth element has faced two challenges. First, academic studies of the flows of hip hop knowledge are either absent or reserved for a small number of those working in education departments. Second, practitioners outside the academy often view hip hop scholarship and other institutionalized knowledge practices (often justifiably) with a certain level of scepticism. This Special Issue of *Global Hip Hop Studies* thus addresses questions about the role of knowledge in global hip hop culture: how is it mediated across other elements, social groups and cultural borders? How is knowledge passed on from one hip hop generation to another? What is the role of hip hop knowledge in educational institutions around the globe and how can it be used for the benefit of artists and the community? What can we as researchers, activists and artists learn from knowledge practices in global hip hop culture?

We invite contributions from a variety of disciplines, including musicology, pedagogy, cultural studies, ethnomusicology, visual studies, media studies, history, sociology and other relevant fields. We are particularly keen to bring artists and scholars together to co-produce new methods for hip hop education while welcoming a wide range of perspectives and definitions around the intentionally broad concept of hip hop’s fifth element.



Guest Editors

Sina A. Nitzsche
Dortmund University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Germany
europeanhiphopstudiesnetwork@gmail.com

Darren Chetty
University College London, UK

Justin A. Williams
University of Bristol, UK

Coordinating Editors

Adam Haupt
University of Cape Town
adam.haupt@uct.ac.za

J. Griffith Rollefson
University College Cork
jg.rollefson@ucc.ie

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Topics

Submissions may consider, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- knowledge and hip hop's origins;
- knowledge and the other 'four elements' (graffiti, breaking, deejaying, emceeing);
- distinctions between 'old school', 'new school', 'true school' and indices of authenticity;
- forms and sites of informal (i.e. street) knowledge;
- knowledge of 'Self' in rap music, audio-visual and social media;
- local, regional, global and glocal perspectives on hip hop knowledge;
- hip hop's 'uses' in primary, secondary or tertiary education;
- tradition vs. innovation in hip hop education;
- hip hop knowledge and digital education;
- racial, gender and class politics of hip hop knowledge and education;
- hip hop's role in the 'decolonization' of curricula;
- knowledge exchange in artist–scholar collaborations;
- heritage, lineage and passing down of knowledge in global hip hop communities.

Types and scope of written and visual texts

- articles: 6,000–8,000 words maximum excluding bibliography;
- artist statements and interviews: 3,000–5,000 words;
- book reviews: 1,000–2,000 words;
- media reviews: 1,000–2,000 words;
- 'Show and Prove' pieces: high-res images (one of which will be chosen for the cover) and 400–2,000 words reflection and explanation;
- syllabi for classes, workshops, summer schools at any level: 1,000–2,000 words.

Submission

To be considered for this Special Issue, please submit the following via [this Google Form](#) by 1 September 2021:

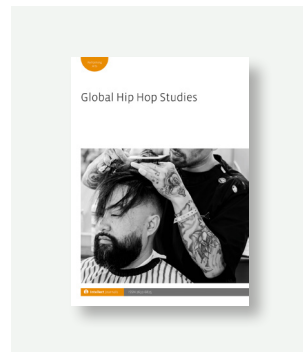
- an abstract of 150–250 words including author name(s) and institutional affiliation(s) (plus references, if necessary); and
- a brief bio of 150 words including author(s)'s positionalities in relation to their topic.

Acceptance

If your abstract is accepted, we will expect to receive the full article or statement uploaded via Intellect's [online submission portal](#) by 1 August 2022. For a journal-specific style guide, please visit [Intellect's website](#). This Special Issue has an extended research term to provide sufficient time for those who would like to pursue funding for their projects.

Contact

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Guest Editors.



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