

A2ru 2025 Annual Conference:
"Creative Futures: Driving Interdisciplinary Innovation Through the Arts"
Call for Proposals

A2ru's next annual conference will take place October 23-25, 2025 at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. This will be an in-person conference.

The a2ru national conference is an opportunity for practitioners and researchers from across higher education to share innovations and perspectives in the arts. a2ru advances the full range of arts- and design-integrative research, curricula, programs, and creative practice to acknowledge, articulate, and expand the vital role of higher education in our global society. a2ru's work, in partnership with an international network of leading higher education institutions, allies, and partners, envisions a world in which universities—students, faculty, and leaders—explore, embed, and integrate the arts in everyday practice and research.

Host

The 2025 a2ru Conference will be hosted by the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Theme:

This year's theme, "Creative Futures: Driving Interdisciplinary Innovation Through the Arts," explores how future-thinking in the arts can reimagine and redefine disciplines, collaboration, and the academy to better meet the demands of our rapidly shifting technological, ecological, and political landscape. How can we center creativity in the interdisciplinary problem solving needed to meet these current challenges? How can we use the arts to advance our goals of sustainability, social justice, and human flourishing? In this moment, how can the arts illuminate what it means to be a human being?

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

All Proposals are due by Monday, April 14 at 11:59pm Pacific Time.

Track One: Creative Futures

Topics in Track One explore the conference theme "Creative Futures: Driving Interdisciplinary Innovation Through the Arts." Proposals may focus on research, creative practice, and/or pedagogy.

Potential thematic questions to consider include:

Future Thinking in the Arts: What does it mean to be a future-thinking artist or scholar today? How do we prepare for futures shaped by technology, climate change, and shifting social structures? How might speculative design and imaginative arts lead innovation? How does the academy support future-facing arts practices and research?

Redefining Disciplines in a Globalized, Interconnected, Networked World: What is the role of discipline in an interdisciplinary and hybridized creative landscape? How do traditional practices evolve in the face of rapid technological and cultural shifts? How do the arts inspire interdisciplinary problem-solving across fields like science, technology, and social justice to address challenges such as sustainability, equity and human flourishing? What policies or pedagogies are needed to center creativity in interdisciplinary inquiry? What might a truly post-disciplinary arts academy look like?

Emerging Technologies and the Arts: How are AI, XR, AR/VR and digital tools transforming the creative process? What ethical, cultural, and artistic challenges arise with these new mediums? How can the arts shape the narratives around technological development?

Track Two: Practical Applications For Arts Integration in Higher Education

Topics in track Two are broadly concerned with creating and supporting work, developing tools, and presenting ideas about integrating the arts and design in the context of academic research and teaching cultures. Presentations and workshops should contribute to the conference by addressing one of the following themes: modes of collaboration; interdisciplinary stewardship; equity; campus amplification and departmental engagement; promotion and tenure; and dealing with data, cultures of evidence, and impacts case-making.

Track Three: Steps Toward Change

“Steps Toward Change” sessions focus on pedagogy, research and creative and administrative practices being undertaken by faculty, students, and staff that promote greater systemic and institutional diversity and equity in the arts and higher education. These sessions may also look specifically at how a2ru can become a more diverse organization and advance equitable access.

SESSION FORMATS

Presenters will be expected to present in person, to a fully in-person audience.

Workshops (90 minute sessions)

Proposals for workshops provide opportunities for immersive work sessions that address a topic or question related to the themes of the conference. Proposals should

consider including at least two of the following elements: an intentionally designed format to foster discussion or activity across areas of expertise; a topic or artistic practice connected to the conference theme or arts-integrative methods; intended working methods and outcomes of the group process; hands-on activities; and a mechanism by which to continue the work post-conference.

Presentations / Panels (90 minute sessions)*

In this format, presenters and performers can reflect on completed work or suggest next steps for projects that have already been launched. Proposals should include a description of the content to be presented and an explanation of how the format of the presentation will be conducive to the next steps. Proposals for both individual presentations (approximately 20 minutes) and full panels will be considered.

Art/Poster Gallery (60 minute session)

Proposals should address how a presenter would display their theme-relevant work in written and graphic formats on a physical poster or through their artwork in ways that showcase their practice and research. The artwork and posters will be shown during an extended coffee reception and presenters will have time for informal and individual discussions.

**We recognize that many will want to share their work in slide format, but as an organization that encourages creativity, we encourage proposals from those who want to share their research in a more unique format. Feel free to show a video, play a game, lead a short discussion, demonstrate artistic research/teaching, or simply give a slide presentation. Whatever you choose to do, make sure you indicate your chosen format in your proposal.

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

- Proposals are welcome from all higher education faculty, administrators, staff, and students; staff at organizations in the arts and/or education sectors; and independent artists and scholars. Proposals from a2ru individual members, those affiliated with a2ru institutional members, or those invited by a2ru leadership will receive priority consideration.
- Both individual and group proposals are encouraged.
- Applicants may submit more than one proposal and be considered for more than one type of session.
- Acceptance for a session implies a commitment to attend that session and participate in person.
- All presenters are required to register for the conference by the close of the presenter registration period in early summer.
- All proposals will receive anonymous review by a2ru committees and staff.
- Proposals must be anonymized and should not include any identifying information—e.g., name, institution/organization, advisors, etc.

- Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:
 1. Clarity of presentation objectives and methods
 2. Engagement with a2ru's mission and values
 3. Relevance to conference theme and/or chosen track
 4. Creative contribution to, or advancement of, the topic/field
 5. Clear and achievable learning objectives

Proposals should be submitted via this link:

<https://forms.gle/CfoJhPGkYA8vSZdu7>

For questions or more information, visit a2ru.org or contact a2ru Associate Director Shannon Fitzsimons Moen at a2ruconnect@umich.edu.