

## Call for Papers for the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts Climate Change and the Anthropocene

March 18-21, 2021  
ICFA 42 will be a virtual event.

**\*Submissions portal opens 2 November and closes 29 November\***

Since the turn of the millennium, the term Anthropocene has been widely popularized to describe the massive changes humanity has inflicted upon the planet through our technologies and ways of living—influences so substantial that some believe we have entered into a new geological epoch. Climate change, and its related crises of ecological damage, forced migrations as weather and arable land shift, and mass extinctions of nonhuman species, are imaginative and materially entwined. Climate change asks us to think in spatial and temporal scales that exceed human lifetimes and perceptions, while the concept of the Anthropocene encourages us to think in global, perhaps cosmic registers about humanity's pasts and possible futures.

Amitov Ghosh suggests in *The Great Derangement* (2017) that among the difficulties of confronting climate change is the fact that it is “unthinkable” via the conventions of realist fiction. Taking our cue from Ursula K. Le Guin’s phrase “realists of a larger reality” in her acceptance speech for the Medal for Distinguished Contributions to American Letters, IAFA 42 (March 18-21, 2021) will explore the power of fantastic genres to make climate change and other crises of the Anthropocene visible and intelligible. How have fantastic genres helped us represent and respond to this reality? How might these genres offer us new ways for thinking about humanity, our planet, and the complex entanglements between them? How might we reimagine ourselves and the future in the face of climate change? We welcome papers and panel proposals addressing these and related questions across any genre, every language, and across all media of the fantastic. We encourage submissions about Black authors, filmmakers and creators, and by Black scholars.

Possible topics might include, but are not limited to:

- Texts engaging questions of eco-horror aesthetics and themes
- Environmental racism
- Critiques of the term Anthropocene from a Critical Race Studies perspective, and those from the intersection of Black Studies and the Environmental Humanities.
- Non-anglophone speculative fictions related to the anthropocene
- Fantastic texts by that explore indigenous worldviews on ecology
- Analyses of how specific motifs or themes emerge and change with time, such as climate-driven apocalypse or images of urban worlds
- Texts that imagine innovative technologies and/or new lifeways that offer new patterns for human habitation
- Texts or other media that interrogate questions of ontology, especially humanity’s relationship with other life
- Engagements with alternative terms used to frame our present era—Donna Haraway’s Cthulucene, Jason Moore’s Capitalocene, and the like
- Work emerging from ecocritical frameworks and methodologies
- Work emerging from posthumanist frameworks and methodologies, especially human-animal studies

- Work emerging from environmental humanities and petrocultures frameworks and methodologies
- Dystopian and/or utopian responses to climate change
- YA and children's literature and its distinct strategies for representing climate change
- Work on significant authors of ecologically themed works, such as Kim Stanley Robinson or N.K. Jemisin or the subgenre solarpunk
- Analyses of texts or other media that question the human/animal boundary
- The role of fantastic texts in offering new theoretical rubrics for thinking about climate change and the Anthropocene

The conference will feature Guest Scholar Stacy Alaimo (University of Oregon) and Guest of Honor Jeff Vandermeer. We encourage proposals that engage the work of these two distinguished guests.

The IAFA Portal open for submissions on 2 November and close on 29 November, URL forthcoming.

We are pleased to announce that the themes for our 2022 and 2023 conferences will be "Fantastic Alterities" and "The Black Fantastic: The African Diaspora and Speculative Fiction", respectively.

### **Submission process:**

Paper or session proposals will go to the appropriate Division Head as usual.

Once accepted, the author may choose one of the following formats:

- Papers will only be accepted in .pdf, maximum 2000 words.
- Presentations will be accepted in PowerPoint or MP4 format and should be between 10-15 minutes.

The papers/presentations must be read before the sessions, which will be limited to discussing of them. Authors will not be allowed to summarize them due to time limitations.

Panels will be synchronous, limited to 3-4 participants, and proposals should be sent to the appropriate Division Head, or to the 1<sup>st</sup> VP.

More information forthcoming at <https://iaffita.wildapricot.org/>.

### **Dates to remember:**

The submissions portal will open Monday 2 November

Submissions will be due Sunday 29 November 11:59 p.m. (all time Eastern US)

ALL registration ends on Monday 22 February 11:59 p.m.

Papers/Presentations due Monday 1 March 11:59 p.m.