

The 44th International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts

Afrofuturism

Guest of Honor: Oghenechovwe Donald Ekpeki

Guest Scholar: Isiah Lavender III

March 15-18, 2023

Orlando Marriott Lakeside Hotel

The theme of the 2023 ICFA will be “Afrofuturism.” If Afrofuturism is rising, as the title of Isiah Lavender III’s groundbreaking study of the literary movement proclaims, or is already risen like Africa itself, as the title of Oghenechovwe Donald Ekpeki’s jointly edited anthology asserts, it does so as part of a groundswell across fantastic modes, genres and media. From the cosmic artistry of Sun Ra, and iconic visionaries speaking from and for estranged and defamiliarized spaces such as Olaudah Equiano, W.E.B. DuBois, Chinua Achebe, Samuel R. Delany, Octavia E. Butler, Herbie Hancock, Earth, Wind and Fire, Ben Okri, Michelle Cliff, Maryse Condé, Stafford L. Battle, Tananarive Due, Steven Barnes, N.K. Jemisin, Nalo Hopkinson, Tobias L. Buckell, and Nisi Shawl, to fast-rising stars such as Oghenechovwe Donald Ekpeki, Wanuri Kahiu, Fanuel Leul, Sheree Renée Thomas, Zelda Knight, Manzi Jackson, P. Djeli Clark, Mame Boukouma Diene, Deji Bryce Olukotun, C.L. Clark, Rivers Solomon, Tade Thompson, Dilman Dila, Olatunde Osunsanmi, Justina Ireland, and Tlotlo Tsamaase, the 44th Annual ICFA will celebrate the fantastic imaginations of creators from Africa and its Global Diaspora, crossing linguistic and other identity and communicative boundaries and borders to arrive at Afrofuturism’s unifying, edifying, uplifting, and often terrifying revelations.

Topics may address, but need not be limited to:

- Representations of African-ness in space and time
- Afrofuturism among Othered futurisms
- Depictions of relations in the process of power-shifting by African and Diaspora creatives and scholars addressing race, gender, class, ethnicity, traditional versus colonial nationalities, and/or mechanisms of exclusion, exploitation, appropriation, or reparation, among other topics
- Exploring traditional, colonial and de-colonialist nationalities, ethnicities and boundary-defined affiliations
- Reclaiming and proclaiming by proto-claiming
- Problematics of representations of African-ness by non-African-descent creators
- Gatekeeping, stereotyping, eurocentrism, and the demand for Realism in African and Diaspora works in scholarship and publishing
- Being African or Diaspora in publishing: challenges and best practices regarding acceptance, revision and rejection of works, marketing, finding an agent, getting paid
- New technologies and platforms shaped by Afrofuturism’s creatives, scholars and fans, challenging Eurocentric conceptions of futurism
- Global applications of an Afrofuturist lens
- Chattel enslavement and its legacies, as represented in Afrofuturism
- Globalizing and negotiating identities
- An African and Diaspora canon
- Masking, unmasking and empowerment
- Monstrous, demonic and shapeshifting Afrofuturism
- Afrofuturism troubling, querying and/or challenging concepts of utopias and dystopias

- Pandemics, plagues, poxes, and Afrofuturism: the spread of colonizing, eugenicist, genocidal, and/or resistance infections
- Afrofuturism in languages other than the colonial
- Globalized neoliberalism
- Politics, ideologies and revolution

We welcome proposals for individual papers and for academic sessions and panels on any aspect of Afrofuturism in any media. We encourage work from creatives, institutionally affiliated scholars, independent scholars, international scholars who work on the fantastic in languages other than English, and students.

Proposals not related to the conference theme are also welcome.

Submit abstracts here: <https://forms.gle/67JJZeKoSWMyhRvQ8>

Abstracts due: October 31st

ICFA 44 Guest of Honor – Oghenechovwe Donald Ekpeki

Oghenechovwe Donald Ekpeki is an African speculative fiction writer, editor and publisher in Nigeria. He has won the Nommo award for Best Speculative Fiction by an African twice, both for Short Story and Novella, as well as the Otherwise and British Fantasy Awards. He is the first African to have won the Nebula Award for Best Novelette with his climate fiction story *O2 Arena*, for which he is also a BSFA, BFA and Nommo Award finalist. He is the first African to be a Hugo Award Best Novelette finalist, the first African editor to be a finalist in the Hugo Award Best Editor category, and the first BIPOC editor to be a finalist in both the Hugo Award Editing and Fiction categories in the same year. He has been a finalist for the WFA, Locus, BSFA, Sturgeon, and This Is Horror Awards. His fiction and non-fiction have appeared in and are forthcoming in *Tordotcom*, *Asimov's*, *Uncanny Magazine*, *Apex Magazine*, *Strange Horizons*, *Galaxy's Edge*, and *NBC*, among other venues. He edited and published the first ever *Year's Best African Speculative Fiction* anthology, a Hugo, WFA, Locus, and BFA finalist, and the Pan-African non-fiction anthology, *Bridging Worlds: Global Conversations on Creating Pan-African Speculative Literature in a Pandemic*. He co-edited the BFA-winning *Dominion* anthology and the *Africa Risen* anthology, which has earned a starred review from *Publishers Weekly*. He guest-edited the collections window of *Interstellar Flight Press* and has read for *Podcastle*, *Strange Horizons*, *Cosmic Roots*, *Eldritch Shores*, and other publications. He is the founder of *Jembefola Press* and the *Emeka Walter Dinjos Memorial Award for Disability in Speculative Fiction*. He co-organized the *Discon 3 African stream* and *2021 Nommo Award ceremony*, and is a *Guest of Honour* at the *2022 Can*Con*. He has the double distinction of being the first African-born Black writer and the youngest writer to be *Guest of Honor* at the *International Conference for the Fantastic in the Arts*. You can find him on *Twitter* https://twitter.com/penprince_ and on his website <https://odekpeki.com>.

Guest Scholar – Dr. Isiah Lavender III

Isiah Lavender III is Sterling-Goodman Professor of English at the University of Georgia, where he researches and teaches courses in African American literature and science fiction. His books include *Race in American Science Fiction* (Indiana UP, 2011), *Black and Brown Planets: The Politics of Race in Science Fiction* and *Dis-Orienting Planets: Racial Representations of Asia in Science Fiction* (UP of Mississippi, 2014 and 2017 respectively), *Afrofuturism Rising: The*

Literary Prehistory of a Movement (Ohio State UP, 2019), and *Literary Afrofuturism in the Twenty-First Century* (Ohio State UP, 2020), co-edited with Lisa Yaszek. His interview collection *Conversations with Nalo Hopkinson* is forthcoming from UP of Mississippi in early 2023. He is currently hard at work on *The Routledge Handbook of CoFuturisms*, co-edited with Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay, Grace Dillon, and Taryne Jade Taylor as well as his manuscript-in-progress, *Critical Race Theory and Science Fiction*. If you would like to know more about Dr. Lavender, check out <https://narrativeencounters.aau.at/how-reading-shapes-us-isiah-lavender/>

The title of his ICFA Guest Scholar presentation shall be “Imaginary Amendments and Executive Orders: Race in United States Science Fiction.”

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