

# The 43rd International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts

## FANTASTIC COMMUNITIES

March 16-20, 2022

Orlando Marriott Lakeside Airport Hotel

The Oxford English Dictionary defines “community” as the sharing of something: a geographically or politically defined space, an activity (professional or not), a mentality (attitude or interest), an identity (voluntary or inherent), or a legal or economic interest (e.g., ownership, “a commonality of goods”). The fantastic may arguably be understood as a metaphorical collective space occupied by communities that self-identify based on a shared interest in the creation, appreciate and/or study of the fantastic arts, activities that frequently have financial and sometimes legal dimensions.

The theme of the 2022 ICFA will be fantastic communities. The IAFA invites proposals for papers, paper sessions, panels and roundtables on the representation of communities in works belonging to the fantastic genres in any media, or on any aspect of one or more fantastic communities. Why do they exist, what do they do, what challenges and/or opportunities do they face, or how do they and their members interact internally or with other communities. This topic includes both the representation of communities in works belonging to the fantastic genres in all media and the various communities that exist within its creation, mediation, interpretation, valorization and consumption. Examples of such communities would be the creators of narrative, film, music, gaming and other arts; the enterprises that develop, fabricate, market and provide the product to consumers (publishing, film and television, music and video game production companies—both commercial and non-profit—, as well as translators and editors); the various groups constituting the category of consumers: readers, viewers, gamers, listeners and the others commonly known collectively as “fandom”. Commercial and not-for-profit scholarly presses, magazines and literary reviews, scholarly journals, editors, and scholars and critics also form part of the world of fantastic communities. Within each segment of this world, communities self-organize into collectives such as fan clubs, creative or scholarly organizations and trade groups, to cite but a few examples. These are many times organized around identities of nation, language, gender, race, ethnicity or even ideology. The activities of these communities are equally multitudinous and diverse: from producing works to evaluating, developing and delivering them to a public; sharing information, common interests and opinions; and judging or interpreting works in the fantastic.

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Analyses of how “communities” are represented in fantastic works. Why are they represented a certain way, in a certain place, at a certain time?
- Relations of power in representation of community in fantastic works: race, gender, class, ethnicity, nationality; mechanisms of exclusion, exploitation, appropriation, etc.
- Relations of power are at play within or between fantastic communities. What challenges and opportunities do communities face in achieving greater social justice within its ranks

or without? Examples of topics of interest would be challenges or best practices regarding acceptance/rejection of works or scholarship (gatekeeping), reviews, awards; the job market, salaries, promotions and positions in leadership, and equity in funding opportunities.

- How new media technologies and platforms (podcasts, blogs, fan sites, informational web sites) has been used by and shaped by fantastic communities. Have they changed the nature of the fantastic itself, how it is conceived, perceived or defined and if so, how?
- Economic factors and fantastic communities: the effects of globalized neoliberalism.
- Politics, ideologies and fantastic communities. How have they changed the nature and functioning of a fantastic community or communities?
- Fantastic communities and the nation state: to what extent is national identity still relevant in our ever-more globalized world? Is there an “international canon”? Can one be created?
- Fantastic communities and languages: What is the relationship between language and the creation, development, and delivery of fantastic arts? Is a global fandom possible and, if so, how can it be created? How does the creative community go about marketing to other cultures? What are the roles of the production/publishing companies, editors and translators in this process, what challenges and opportunities do they face?
- COVID-19 and fantastic communities: How has the pandemic affected and changes the nature of fantastic communities and how they operate? What are the challenges and opportunities created by it? What might the future hold?

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

The conference will feature Guest of Honor Nisi Shawl and Guest Scholar Farah Mendlesohn. We encourage proposals that engage the work of these two distinguished guests.

The submissions portal will open on 10/4/2021 (<https://www.fantastic-arts.org/icfa-submissions/>) and the deadline is 10/31/2021. Further instructions regarding submissions will be available at this link, including instructions regarding how to prepare submissions, IAFA’s Division Structure and Division Head contact information where questions may be sent. More information forthcoming.

**GUEST OF HONOR: Nisi Shawl**

Multiple award-winning author and editor Nisi Shawl is best known for fiction dealing with gender, race, and colonialism, including the 2016 Nebula Award finalist *Everfair*, an alternate and more optimistic history of Africa’s Congo region. They’re the co-author of *Writing the Other: A Practical Approach*, a standard text teaching techniques for inclusive representation in fiction, and a co-founder of the Carl Brandon Society, an inclusivity-focused nonprofit. They’re also a critic and essayist, with work appearing in *Ms. Magazine*, the *Washington Post*, *Uncanny Magazine*, and other periodicals, and as the introduction to a volume of the *Library of*

America. They have spoken at Duke University, Spelman College, Sarah Lawrence College, University of Hawaii Manoa, and many other institutions, both in person and online.

Shawl has edited and co-edited several anthologies, including *Strange Matings: Science Fiction, Feminism, African American Voices*, and *Octavia E. Butler; Stories for Chip: A Tribute to Samuel R. Delany*; and *New Suns: Speculative Fiction by People of Color*. Their short story collection *Filter House* is a co-winner of the Otherwise Award, formerly the James Tiptree, Jr. Award. Additional awards include the Kate Wilhelm Solstice Award, the World Fantasy Award, two Locus Awards, and an inaugural 2020 FIYAH Magazine Ignite Award. They have served for over two decades on the board of the Clarion West Writers Workshop. Both Shawl and their cat, Minnie, like to watch birds--but for very different reasons.

GUEST SCHOLAR: Farah Mendlesohn

Farah Mendlesohn won a Hugo with Edward James in 2005 for *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature*. She is also the author of *Diana Wynne Jones: The Fantastic Tradition and Children's Literature*, *Rhetorics of Fantasy*, with Edward James, *A Short History of Fantasy*, *The Inter-galactic Playground: A Critical Study of Children's and Teens' Science Fiction*, with Michael M. Levy (President of IAFA from 2004 to 2007) *Children's Fantasy Literature: An Introduction*, which won the World Fantasy Award and the Mythopeic Award in 2017. In 2019 year she published, *The Pleasant Profession of Robert A. Heinlein*, and her book, *Creating Memory: Historical Fiction and the English Civil Wars* was published in 2020. She was President of IAFA from 2007 to 2010.

\*Join us in Orlando in 2022. We will add your intellectual and creative distinctiveness to our own. Resistance is futile.\*