

African Ecologies: Knowledge and Creativity for Sustainable Planetary Futures

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In 2011, Rob Nixon proposed that one of the central challenges for addressing human-driven climate change was representational: how to make visible the ecological degradation that occurs gradually and out of sight within communities on the receiving end of global inequality. This symposium revisits Nixon's provocation 15 years later from the specific vantage point of African environments and cultures. While the African continent makes amongst the least contributions to global emissions, it bears the brunt of climate impacts, from soil erosion, drought, and famine to mass flooding, polluted waterways, biodiversity loss, and mass waste dumps. Yet even in the midst of climate crisis and collapse, African and African diasporic creatives bear witness to the experience of living with and through environmental degradation, through fiction, poetry, visual art, film and performance, fashion, and other creative forms. This symposium invites creative and critical dialogues about African cultural forms and representational practices that engage with the reality of the climate crisis across genre, space, time, and language. By exploring how African creative works produce their own critical frameworks, environmental priorities, and political solidarities, we draw renewed attention to Africa as a site of ecological thinking that can transform the conceptual, political, and creative stakes of the climate crisis and provide new directions for visions of shared futures.

This symposium will feature scholarly and creative presentations. We invite abstracts for critical essays that address African ecological knowledge traditions, environmentally-engaged cultural forms and representational practices, and/or imaginative and practical visions for sustainable futures. We welcome approaches based in the humanities, arts, social sciences, and/or cultural studies, and especially encourage those that look expansively at temporalities, geographies, and languages across the African continent, as well as those that work across genres and creative mediums. Topics may include but are not limited to the following:

- African futures: pathways, planning, possibilities
- Challenges for creative production: accessibility, distribution, global and local audiences
- Climate migration: diaspora (re)formation, disaster preparedness, transhumance
- Energy: energy transitions, green energies, hydro and solar energy, waste/e-waste
- Extractivism: critical minerals, fossil fuels, mining/drilling, pollution
- Extreme weather: drought, flooding, "natural" disasters
- Genres and forms: Africanfuturism, epic, fantasy, historical fiction, horror, rural and pastoral, science and speculative fiction, multimodal and cross-genre works, genre (re)mixing

- Frameworks and methodologies: decolonial ecologies, distance and/or proximity to subject matter, global climate justice, habitability, informant-based research, multispecies flourishing, reparations, resilience, sustainability
- Imperial ecologies: colonialism, climate colonialism, race and racial capitalism, uneven distribution of adaptation and mitigation supports
- Indigenous knowledges: environmental epistemes, lived experience as a form of knowledge, situated knowledge
- Languages: Afrophone and non-English languages, multi-lingualism, translation
- Narratives of environmental crisis: Anthropocene, African Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Necrocene, Racial Capitalocene, Plantationocene, woman-identifying perspectives, trans and queer perspectives
- Non-human narratives: animals, the more-than-human, post-human
- Planetary politics: climate advocacy, environmental activism, humanitarianism, international climate treaties, UN sustainable development goals

For scholarly presentations, please submit an abstract (350 words maximum) and bio (100 words maximum) to africanecologies@gmail.com by **15 December 2026**.

We also invite proposals for the presentation or performance of creative work (poetry reading, short film screening, visual art presentation, etc.). For creative presentations, please submit a short description of the work (350 words maximum) and bio (100 words maximum) to africanecologies@gmail.com by **15 December 2026**.

Given the symposium's focus, African-based researchers and creatives are especially encouraged to participate, as are early-career researchers. A small number of needs-based travel and accommodation bursaries will be available to support travel to and from Ireland.

Questions about the symposium can be directed to africanecologies@gmail.com.

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