

Extrapolation, Special Issue: Science Fictional Ecologies in Contemporary Art

Deadline: Nov 15, 2024

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EXTENDED DEADLINE: November 15, 2024

In a moment defined by planetary transformations and crises, speculative and science fictional narratives have become crucial modes for imagining possible and alternative futures and realities. Across media, these narratives decenter the human perspective within the intersections of technology, the sciences, and social relations, offering critical tools for interrogating the present and speculating on the future states of humanity, technology, and the Earth. As environmental crises reach a planetary scale—with human activities ranging from industrialization and colonialism to various forms of exploitation and extraction fundamentally impacting Earth's geo-physical systems—science fictions have become increasingly central to imagining possible futures on an altered planet and exploring embodied perspectives of non-human intelligences and more-than-human beings. In response to (and also co-forming) the crises and the critical debates surrounding the planet's well-being, visual, performance, and media artists are increasingly in dialogue with scholars and researchers within environmental sciences, humanities, and social sciences interrogating the geo-physical and the socio-ecological dimensions of contemporaneity. By engaging science and climate fiction genres as source material, contemporary artists integrate, challenge, and expand associated conventions and narratives in their work. The prevalence of dystopian, utopian, catastrophic, and regenerative imaginaries—alongside reflections on current socio-ecological conflicts through science fiction tropes—demonstrates how global visual artists across mediums are substantively engaging with future-oriented discourse. This proposed special issue aims to understand how contemporary artists utilize and transform science fiction elements to address concerns about the present, envision alternate realities, and critique current socio-ecological, technological, and political issues. It will explore the intersection of science fiction with visual arts, examining how this confluence shapes our understanding of the Anthropocene epoch and its associated challenges. The proposed special issue will ideally host contributions from scholars and researchers working on science fiction studies, visual culture, art theory, visual studies, and adjacent disciplines, as well as research pieces by artist researchers, practitioners, and curators.

Topics may include:

- technologies of immersion, AR, VR and science fictional imaginaries;
- counternarratives and countervisualities from the global south, non-western sf and arts;
- speculative design;

- Afro-futurisms and African Futurisms;
- science fiction and time-based media;
- AI in the visual arts;
- bioart and sf;
- other culturally-specific futurisms in the arts (Latinx Futurisms, Indigenous Futurisms, Asian Futurisms);
- the inclusion of specific science fiction authors within the arts;
- multimedia projects defying the boundaries between literature, film and visual arts;
- curatorial practices informed by sf;
- museum studies and sf;
- rewilding the museum;
- land art and sf;
- decolonial art practices and land-based sf;
- DIY sciences and futurity;
- hacker methodologies in art and sf;
- posthumanism in contemporary art;
- petrocultures and imaginaries in the arts;
- energy futures;
- science fiction and performance art;
- science fiction and performance art;
- pluriversal ontologies, transitional design and the future.

Proposed length (including notes and bibliographies): 6,000-8,000 words

Extended timeline:

Abstract deadline: November 1st 2024 [EXTENDED DEADLINE: November 15, 2024]

Deadline for first drafts for peer review: May 7th 2025 (6 months to write article)

Final revised drafts back from all authors: November 2025 (2 months for revisions)

Publication: mid-2026

Please send abstracts and inquiries to both guest editors

Guest Editors:

Emiliano Guaraldo, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland: emiliano.guaraldo@unisg.ch

Alison Sperling, Florida State University, USA: asperling@fsu.edu

Works cited:

Butt, Amy. 2021. "The Present as Past: Science Fiction and the Museum." *Open Library of Humanities* 7 (1). <https://doi.org/10.16995/olh.634>.

Frost, Andrew. 2016. "Possible Futures: Science Fiction in Contemporary Art." *Artlink*, December. <https://search.informit.org/doi/abs/10.3316/ielapa.580788158343691>.

Jørgensen, Dolly. 2022. "Coda on Curation: Thoughts on Science Fiction and Museums." *Configurations* 30 (3): 367–75.

Mendlesohn, Farah. 2022. "Curating Science Fiction in the 'Rainbow Age': A Discussion in Several Parts: ICFA 43 Guest Scholar Keynote." *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 33 (3): 22–68.

[1] See also the exhibitions *Science Fiction: Voyage to the Edge of the Imagination* (Science Museum, London 2023), the 2016 Sydney Biennale, the Afrofuturist exhibit *Before Yesterday We Could Fly* (MET, New York 2021), *Conquest of Space: Science Fiction and Contemporary Art* (UNSW galleries, Sydney 2014), *Not of This Earth: Contemporary Art and Science Fiction* (Boston Cyberarts Gallery, Boston 2017), *Science Fiction(s): If There Were a Tomorrow* (Weltmuseum, Vienna 2023-2024).

Reference:

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