

# **RESISTING TOXIC CLIMATES**

## **Gender, Colonialism, Environment**

**Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh, EH3 5NZ**

**Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> – Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> July**  
**9:00am – 5:30pm**



### **A British Academy and Wellcome Trust Conference**

Conference Convenors:  
Rebecca Macklin, Alexandra Campbell, Michelle Keown

Made possible with the additional support of the University of Edinburgh, the Edinburgh Environmental Humanities Network, and the Leverhulme Trust.



## **Day 1: Wednesday 26th July**

09:15 - 9:45 Registration and coffee

9:45 – 10:00 Welcome and introduction by the conference convenors

### **10:00 - 11:30 Session 1: Re-evaluating Feminist Approaches to Toxicity - Part I**

- Mishuana Goeman, 'Care, Justice, and (Re)claiming Public Space'
- Katucha Bento, 'Black feminist legacy for Queerlombo formation and Futuristic Dreamwork'

11:30 - 12:30 Artists in Conversation: Caitlin Stobie and Natasha Thembiso Ruwona

12:30 - 1:30 Lunch

*A vegetarian lunch will be provided for all attendees. This time can be used for self-guided exploration of the gardens and engagement with artworks.*

### **1:30 - 3:30 Session 2: Colonial Environments and Decolonial Ecologies**

- Meztli Yoalli Rodriguez, 'Grief is a Portal: Resistances and Alternative Time against Environmental Dispossession in Mexico'
- JT Roane, 'Terraforming 'mississippi-america': On June Jordan's Dissident Ecological Thought'
- Patricia Widener, 'Dominant & Critical Oil Narratives: A Prolonged Age of Promoting & Opposing Oil Extraction'
- Christine Okoth, 'Black Indigeneity and the Inexhaustible Novel'

3:30 - 4:00 Coffee Break

### **4:00 - 5:30 Session 3: Re-evaluating Feminist Approaches to Toxicity - Part II**

- Savage Bear, 'Indigenous Erotics: The Fall and Rise of the Red Erotic'
- Astrida Niemanis, 'Toxic Love' [remote]

[END OF DAY 1]

*Please note this is a draft programme and changes may occur.*

## Day 2: Thursday 27th July

09:00 – 09:30 Registration and coffee

### 9:30 - 11:30 Session 3: Geographies and Narratives of Waste and Toxicity

- Treasa DeLoughry, 'Social Reproduction, Latency, and Toxic Chemical Kinship in Contemporary Pollution Poetry'
- Dipali Mathur, 'Available to be Poisoned: The Toxic Politics of E-waste Management in India'
- Hannah Boast, 'Writing Minamata'
- Simone M. Müller, 'How to Locate Global Environmental Justice? The Toxic Ship and Narratives of Waste and Mobility'

11:30 - 12:30 Guided tour of the [Shipping Roots](#) exhibition by Keg de Sousa, with Curator and RBGE Creative Director Emma Nicolson

12:30 - 1:30 Lunch

*A vegetarian lunch will be provided for all attendees. This time can be used for self-guided exploration of the gardens and engagement with various artworks.*

### 1:30 - 2:20 Session 4: Emerging Critical-Creative Paradigms - Part I

Film screening and Discussion: Thandi Loewenson, 'The Uhuru Catalogues'

2:20 - 2:45 Coffee Break

### 2:45 – 4:15 Session 4: Emerging Critical-Creative Paradigms - Part II [remote panel]

Papers and Discussion

- Jason Allen Paisant, 'The Possibility of Tenderness: A Black Migrant's Search for Freedom in Nature'
- Alycia Pirmohamed, 'With a Line From': A reflective case study on the creation of new ecological poetry'
- Craig Santos Perez, 'Habitat Threshold: Resisting Toxic Ecologies and Pacific Poetry'

4:20 - 5:30 Closing Forum: Discussions, Reflections, Next Steps

[END OF DAY 2]

*Please note this is a draft programme and changes may occur.*

## Convenor Biographies

**Rebecca Macklin** is Levehulme Early Career Fellow at the University of Edinburgh and previously was Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at the Penn Program in Environmental Humanities, University of Pennsylvania. She completed a PhD in Comparative Literature at the University of Leeds in 2020 and, from 2017-18, was a Fulbright Scholar at Cornell University with English and the American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program. Her research examines the material and cultural relations of gender, colonialism and resource extraction. She is co-founder of the Intersecting Energy Cultures project, an interdisciplinary initiative dedicated to co-creating research with communities around questions of energy production, transition, and access. She has published work in *ariel: A Review of International English Literatures, Interventions, Transmotion*, and her first monograph, *Unsettling Fictions: Relationality and Resistance in Native American and South African Literatures*, is forthcoming.

**Alexandra Campbell** is Lecturer in Contemporary Literature and Environmental Cultures, based in the School of Critical Studies at the University of Glasgow. Previously, she held positions at Edinburgh Napier University, the University of Edinburgh, and Bath Spa University. She received her PhD from the University of Glasgow. Her research emerges at the nexus of interlocking forms of environmental oppression and resistance that occur within and against logistical infrastructure. She is currently working on her first monograph, tentatively titled *Poetics and Logistics: Infrastructure, Insurgency and the Intimacy of Form*, which examines the lived terrains and emergent grammars of struggle as conditioned by logistical capitalism. She is the current Co-editor of the ASLE-UKI Journal, *Green Letters*.

**Michelle Keown** was born and grew up in New Zealand, where she completed a BA in English and Linguistics, and an MA in English Literature (specialising in Maori Literature in English), at the University of Waikato. She joined the University of Edinburgh in 2005 and is now Professor of Pacific and Postcolonial Literature. Keown is the author of *Postcolonial Pacific Writing: Representations of the Body* (Routledge, 2005) and *Pacific Islands Writing: The Postcolonial Literatures of Aotearoa/New Zealand and Oceania* (Oxford University Press, 2007). She is co-editor (with David Murphy and James Procter) of *Comparing Postcolonial Diaspora* (Palgrave, 2009); and co-editor (with Andrew Taylor and Mandy Treagus) of *Anglo-American Imperialism and the Pacific: Discourses of Encounter* (Routledge, 2018). Keown led the ‘Marshallese Arts Project’, which resulted in a range of new creative works that explore the continuing impacts of nuclear testing in the Pacific, including poetry by Marshallese author and environmental activist Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner and *Jerakiaarlap*, a graphic novel by Hawaiian artist Solomon Enos.

## Artist Biographies

**Natasha Thembiso Ruwona** is a Scottish-Zimbabwean artist, researcher, and curator. Working primarily in film, she is interested in how Afrofuturism and psychogeography can meet through experimental forms of storytelling. Through her practice, she investigates healing and well-being by exploring relationships between the environment and creativity.

**Caitlin Stobie** was born in South Africa and lives in Edinburgh. She is a winner of the Douglas Livingstone Creative Writing Competition, the Heather Drummond Memorial Prize for Poetry, and

the Hammond House International Literary Prize, and was named by *New Contrast* as one of South Africa's 'rising stars' in poetry. Her debut poetry collection, *Thin Slices* (Verve Poetry Press, 2022), was shortlisted for the Melita Hume Poetry Prize and the Rædleaf International Poetry Award. She is a Lecturer in Creative Writing at the University of Leeds.

## Speaker Biographies

**Jason Allen-Paisant** is a Jamaican writer and academic who works as an associate professor of Critical Theory and Creative Writing at the University of Manchester. He's the author of several books, including two poetry collections, *Thinking with Trees* and *Self-Portrait as Othello*. His non-fiction book, *The Possibility of Tenderness*, will be published by Hutchinson Heinemann in 2024.

**Savage Bear** is a rabble-rouser, Nehiyaw'iskwew (Cree woman) and member of the Montreal Lake Cree Nation in northern Saskatchewan. She is the Director for the McMaster Indigenous Research Institute (MIRI) and is an Assistant Professor within the Indigenous Studies Department. Savage is also the National Director of Walls to Bridges (an education program bringing post-secondary education to incarcerated and formerly incarcerated folks). Before coming to McMaster, Bear worked at the University of Alberta, where she was the Director of the Indigenous Women & Youth Resilience Project and the academic lead on 'Indigenous Canada,' a highly successful online course boasting over half a million learners; she was also an assistant professor of Native Studies and Women's and Gender Studies. An accomplished academic, Bear has made significant contributions to Indigenous scholarship and the national Indigenous education landscape since earning her PhD from the University of Alberta in 2016. Her current research includes social justice, prison abolition, body sovereignty, sexuality, gender and reproductive justice, contemporary Indigenous art, and Indigenous literature. When she is not marking, teaching or enjoying her new role as Kookum (grandmother) you will find her literally chasing waterfalls around Hamilton's amazing trails with her dog, Odin.

**Katucha Bento** is a Lecturer in Race and Decolonial Studies, Co-Director of Race.ED Network at the University of Edinburgh, and the co-founder of the Free Afro-Brazilian University (UNAFRO). Her coexistence with quilombos comes from a long journey, since 2003, as an important pillar of references in her formation at personal, spiritual and professional levels. She is part of the Quilombo Anastacia, in Araras (Brazil) from where she received the guidance and commendation to be the Honorary Chaplain in Candomblé at the University of Edinburgh. Her work is inspired in samba and quilombo communities, Black and Queer feminisms and subversive epistemologies and praxis. She has a core belief in ethics of caring, power to the people and the dreamwork for surreal futures. Guide-mother/auntie of Chizara, Jaxon and Chibueze, children of the Black diaspora.

**Hannah Boast** is Chancellor's Fellow at University of Edinburgh, and was previously Ad Astra Fellow at University College Dublin and Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at University of Warwick. Hannah is writing a book called *Water Crisis and World Literature*. Their first book, *Hydrofictions: Water, Power and Politics in Israeli and Palestinian Literature* (Edinburgh University Press, 2020), was shortlisted for the ASLE-UKI Book Prize 2021. Hannah's work has been published in journals including *Environmental Humanities*, *Textual Practice* and *Green Letters*.

**Treasa De Loughry** is an Ad Astra Fellow and Assistant Professor in World Literature in the School of English, Drama, and Film at University College Dublin, Ireland. Her research and teaching interests include examining global mediations of waste, disassembly, pollution, and climate change in contemporary fiction. Recent publications include the monograph *The Global Novel and Capitalism in Crisis – Contemporary Literary Narratives* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), and various chapters and

articles on narrative and visual representations of plastic pollution, petro-modernity, and/ or world-economic and ecological crises.

**Mishuana Goeman**, daughter of enrolled Tonawanda Band of Seneca, Hawk Clan, is currently a Professor of Indigenous Studies at University of Buffalo (on leave from UCLA’s Gender Studies and American Indian Studies) and President-elect of the American Studies Association. Her monographs include *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations* (University of Minnesota Press, 2013) and the forthcoming *Settler Aesthetics: The Spectacle of Originary Moments in the New World* (University of Nebraska Press, Fall 2023). She is also part of the feminist editorial collective for *Keywords in Gender and Sexuality Studies* (NYU Press 2021) which won the Choice award in 2021. Digital Projects where she is a co-pi include *Mapping Indigenous L.A* (2015), *Carrying Our Ancestors Home* (COAH, 2019), *Mukurtu California Native Hub* (2020), and the new *Haudenosaunee Archival Repository of Knowledge* (Hark, 2023).

**Thandi Loewenson** (b.1989, Harare) is an architectural designer/researcher who mobilises design, fiction and performance to stoke embers of emancipatory political thought and fires of collective action, and to feel for the contours of other, possible worlds.

**Dipali Mathur** completed her Ph.D. in Environmental Humanities and Cultural Studies from the University of Wollongong (UOW) Australia in March 2022. Her thesis has recently been published as a monograph by Lexington Books in 2022, titled *Available to Be Poisoned: Toxicity as a Form of Life*. Dipali was a ‘Digital Scholarship Postdoctoral Fellow’ at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities (IASH) at the University of Edinburgh. She has since been awarded a British Academy Newton International Fellowship for the period 2023-2025 to carry out her new research project at Ulster University, Belfast. Dipali is also an Honorary Fellow at UOW Australia for the period 2022-2023, and is an affiliated researcher with The Posthumanities Hub at Linköping University, Sweden. Prior to commencing her Ph.D. research in Australia, Dipali has taught English Literature at the University of Delhi, India as an Assistant Professor from 2013-2015.

**Simone M. Müller** is DFG Heisenberg Professor of Global Environmental History and Environmental Humanities at the University of Augsburg, Germany with a particular focus on globalization processes, the intersection of ecology and economy, and the era of the Anthropocene. Her research interests range from the international trade in waste and liminal aquatic spaces to conceptual work on toxicity, ambivalence, and everyday exposure. Her research has received numerous awards, among them from the Smithsonian Institution, the Science History Institute, the University of Pennsylvania, or the German Research Foundation.

**Christine Okoth** is Lecturer in Literatures and Cultures of the Black Atlantic in the Department of English. Her work is primarily concerned with questions of environment and race in contemporary Black literature and visual art. She's currently writing a book entitled *Race and the Raw Material* and her work has been published in *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, *Modern Fiction Studies*, and *Textual Practice*.

**Alycia Pirmohamed** is a Canadian-born poet based in Scotland, and the author of the poetry collection *Another Way to Split Water*. She was the Junior Anniversary Fellow at IASH and a postdoctoral Creative Writing Fellow at the University of Liverpool. Currently, Alycia teaches creative writing at the University of Cambridge.

**J.T. Roane** is Assistant Professor of Africana Studies and Geography at Rutgers University and Andrew W. Mellon chair in the Institute for the Study of Global Racial Justice.



**Yoalli Rodríguez** was born and raised in Puebla, Mexico. They are an Assistant Professor of Latin American and Latinx Studies and Anthropology at Lake Forest College. They are a member of the Decolonial Feminist Network in Mexico. They were awarded the 2021 National Women Studies Association and University of Illinois Press, First Book Prize. Their book manuscript (under contract with University of Illinois Press) is titled tentatively *Grieving Geographies, Mourning Waters: Race, Gender and Environment on the Coast of Oaxaca, Mexico*.

**Craig Santos Perez** is an Indigenous Chamoru from the Pacific Island of Guam. He co-edited six anthologies and authored six books of poetry and the monograph, *Navigating Chamoru Poetry: Indigeneity, Aesthetics, and Decolonization*. He is a professor in the English Department at the University of Hawai'i, Mānoa

Cover image: Carolina Caycedo, 'Thanks For Hosting Us, We Are Healing our Broken Bodies / Gracias por hospedarnos. Estamos sanando nuestros cuerpos rotos', 2019.

1 channel HD Video 8:48 min, color and sound. With: Marina Magalhaes (Choreography), José Richard Aviles, Tatiana Zamir, Belle Alvarez, Bianca Medina, Isis Avalos, Patty Huerta, Celeste Tavares. Photographer: Bobby Gordon. With thanks to the artist for permitting us to use this image.

Accessibility information relating to the Royal Botanic Gardens can be found here: [www.rbge.org.uk/visit/royal-botanic-garden-edinburgh/access](http://www.rbge.org.uk/visit/royal-botanic-garden-edinburgh/access).

If you have any questions about this event, please contact Rebecca Macklin on [r.macklin@ed.ac.uk](mailto:r.macklin@ed.ac.uk), or the British Academy on [conferences@thebritishacademy.ac.uk](mailto:conferences@thebritishacademy.ac.uk).