

## Literature, Cinema, and African Futures

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In a growing body of theory, the last few decades have seen an inversion of temporalities whereby Africa and the global south are no longer seen as trying to catch up with the global north in the competitive modernization game but are now leading the way. From breakneck urbanisation, to the growth rate of the economy, to the pervasiveness of neoliberal social restructuring and engineering, inclusive of advanced forms of exploitation of labour, surplus extraction and processes of capital accumulation through the expropriation of land, water and raw materials, the global south is now at the cutting edge of neoliberal globalisation. In African and diasporic literary and film production, this has been accompanied by a proliferation of future oriented narratives and representations that, in the words of Kodwo Eshun, one of Afrofuturism's foremost thinkers, reorient cultural vectors "towards the proleptic as much as the retrospective". In literature, we have seen the publication of collections such as *AfroSF* (2012 – the first pan-African science fiction anthology), *Lagos 2060* (2013 – Nigeria's first science fiction anthology), or Naledi Okorakor science fantasy novel *Who Fears Death* (2010). Meanwhile, in film production we have had (among others) Neill Blomkamp's *District 9* (2009), *Elysium* (2013) and *Chappie* (2015), where Johannesburg and global south urban landscapes are turned into the setting of a dystopian future, as well as a host of films experimenting with images of African futures, from Wanuri Kahlu's short science-fiction *Pumzi* (2009) to Marvel's blockbuster *Black Panther* (2018). Against this backdrop, in this panel we will look at the different images of African futures produced by the diverse representations that can be found in contemporary African and diasporic cultural theory, literature and film.