

Call for Papers

Posthuman Ecofeminism in Art, Literature, and Aesthetics

Date: 23.-24.10.2025, University of Bonn

“By making a compelling case for mutual interconnectedness, ecofeminism emphasises the ecological idea that 'we' are all in *this* together, although we differ. These insights are key to the making of a notion of posthuman subjects as heterogeneous alliances.”

(Braidotti 2022, 78–79)

Ecofeminism and posthumanism are two approaches that contribute to reshaping our understanding of power, nature and society. Ecofeminism has been analysing the connection between social oppression and ecological destruction since the 1970s (Hansen, Gerner 2024). It shows that the exploitation of nature and discrimination against marginalised groups are often based on the same power structures. In recent years, research interest in ecofeminism has increased, as it addresses intersectional issues in the context of queer studies, indigenous studies and black studies and helps to understand the climate crisis from a multi-layered perspective (Đurđević and Marjanić 2023).

Posthumanism develops these considerations further. It questions strict divisions – between subject and object, nature and culture and male and female – and instead emphasises relationships, hybridity and interdependencies (Braidotti 2016, 2019). The critical posthumanities take up central ideas of ecofeminism and continue them in the context of current crises. Haraway (2018) and Tsing (2015) particularly emphasise the importance of inter-species sociality, while Gruen and Adams (2021) critically question the devaluation of the "other" – be it non-male, non-white or non-human. Ferrando (2019) also describes the interdependencies and co-creation between human and non-human actors.

In analysing modern and contemporary art and literature, a posthuman-inspired ecofeminism opens up new perspectives on aesthetic practices. Artistic and literary works can challenge existing boundaries and experiment with new forms of conviviality. For example, they draw on indigenous knowledge, utilise activist methods or operate at the interface between art and research. These works offer alternative perspectives on the relationship between humans, ecology, and technology and thus contribute to a new understanding of our world in the accelerating climate crisis.

Networks. Interdisciplinary and Collaborative Research

The aim of the workshop is to make the convergences between the theories of ecofeminism and critical posthumanism fruitful for the analysis of visual and literary artworks of modernism and the present. Artists, writers, and collectives have made explicit references to these theories in their works. However, the critical participation of art history and literary studies has not yet been realized.

The workshop wants to explore posthuman ecofeminism as a threshold of new thinking. We are interested in transdisciplinary perspectives between literature, art, and aesthetics that deal with ecofeminism and posthumanism, the historical relationship between both and the historical deep structures of the epistemes (anthropo-, andro- and Eurocentrisms) that they critically scrutinise. Three topics will take centre stage:

1. The examination of ecofeminism in contemporary art, literature, and curatorial practice.
2. The theoretical interfaces between ecofeminism and posthumanism and their possible extensions.
3. The question of which new aesthetic forms of expression, narrative modes, forms of cognition, and visual practices are opened up by posthuman-ecofeminist thinking.

Potential (but not exhaustive) questions we hope to address are the following:

- How can modern and contemporary art, literature and aesthetics be understood anew through the combination of ecofeminism and posthumanism – especially with regard to works that reflect these approaches themselves, think them further and express relationality in their aesthetic strategies?
- What strategies do artists, writers and collectives use to relate to the intersectionality of posthuman ecofeminism?
- What perspectives of a posthuman ecofeminism have become effective in our post-pandemic present, and to what extent has the pandemic made “global frontlines of care” (Krasny 2023) visible?
- How should we assess the increased interest in the curation of ecofeminist art in the context of the climate crisis?
- To what extent can posthuman ecofeminism be seen as a critical reflection of the European legacy of the Enlightenment, and what new concepts of non-dualistic and decentralised mediation can be derived from this?
- What alternative forms of writing, publishing and curating that take up ecofeminist critique of power and posthuman thinking can be developed from this?
- How do concepts such as *care*, *body*, or *life* evolve between ecofeminism and posthumanism?

The workshop will test joint methodological approaches in art and literary studies in order to establish transdisciplinary collaboration. We are excited about presentations concerning these (and related) issues from all areas in academic and artistic research that focus on art, literature, or aesthetics.

Please send your abstract (300 words) and a short bio (150 words) to both Hauke Ohls (hohls@uni-bonn.de) and Carolin Slickers (carolin.slickers@uni-bonn.de) by 5 May 2025. We will inform you about the acceptance of the paper by 19 May 2025.

Interested in the sustainability of our research and its branching out, we would like to continue the collaborative work after the workshop. The longer-term perspective of the project is a network proposal to the DFG on posthuman ecofeminism in art, literature, and aesthetics.

Caring for each other.

The workshop will be held in person. Travel and accommodation costs will be covered. Presentations are requested in English.

The workshop is a transdisciplinary cooperation between the Institute of Art History and the Institute of German Studies, Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies and is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (MWK) as part of the Excellence Strategy of the federal and state governments.

Contact:

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Literature

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