



UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND
CILECT- CARA CONFERENCE
WITS FILM AND TELEVISION DIVISION
1 SMUTS AVENUE
JOHANNESBURG
SOUTH AFRICA
1 – 4 JULY 2024

EXTENDED CALL FOR ABSTRACT SUBMISSIONS

Conference Theme: Dangerous knowledge, dangerous technologies: The power of contemporary artistic practice as disruptively constructive work.

The African Regional Association (CARA) of The International Association of Film and Television Schools (CILECT) would like to invite abstract submissions on the above theme for its 2024 conference which will be held on 1 — 4 July 2024 at the Wits University Film and Television department, Johannesburg, South Africa.

The conference seeks to explore questions around a) knowledge and b) technological forms which disrupt normative political, social, and cultural regimes for human advancement in Africa. It draws inspiration from Plato's famous state-utopian work *Republic*, which conceived of dangerous knowledge as authentic facts which can potentially lead to disruption.' History has demonstrated that disruption is often a necessary component to achieving meaningful change. This conference puts at the center of danger and disruption various cinematic, televisual and image-creation art-forms (as knowledge producing instruments and processes).

Over the years, we have witnessed a litany of examples of cinematic and televisual productions which have caused ripples in the political, social and artistic spheres. These include John Trengove's *Inxeba* (2017), Jahmil Qubeka's *Of Good Report* (2023), Wanuri Kahiu's *Rafik* (2018), films which were all censored by government agencies for addressing highly contentious topics. The widespread backlash from various traditionalist camps and high echelons of power demonstrate the dangerous nature of such deconstructive artworks. The short student film *Luister* (Bam 2015) not only exposed rampant forms of racism at Stellenbosch University but further led to a nation-wide discourse on Afrikaner racism, the identification and punishment of racist perpetrators and the mass mobilization of political figures who flocked to the university to condemn racism. The biblical literature accounts of Adam and Eve being prohibited from eating the tree of knowledge (of good and evil) is but one famous exemplification of the ways in which particular forms of knowledge and knowing can be deemed dangerous and disruptive. This special issue sees dangerous disruptions as a critical component to undoing oppressive *status quo* which have embedded themselves in the fabric of African institutions. What other forms of dangerous creations have we witnessed and in what ways have these transfigured and recalibrated dominant discourse and praxis?

We also invite papers which explore dangerous technologies and production processes. Dangerous technologies encapsulate both acuitive approaches and machines which have exponentially expedited, automated and simplified imaginative practices while simultaneously amplifying opportunities for creative fraudulence, theft and lethargy. These may include Artificial Narrow Intelligence (ANI), Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) and Artificial Super intelligence (ASI).

There has been unprecedented moral and alarmist reactions towards the emergence of such new technologies; all predicated around their potential to radically diminish human input in the making processes. This special issue seeks to complicate our relationship to such ‘dangerous technologies’ by exploring the ways in which African educational film institutions can inculcate transformative, disruptions with, against, through or even without such technologies.

Submissions are anticipated in the following areas:

- a. Film and Television art pedagogies, epistemic disobedience practices (both inside and outside the lecture hall). These will explore questions around transgressive teaching methodologies, stigmatised, unorthodox forms of knowledge and knowledge making, and novel assessment practices specifically located within cinematic and televisual art practice.
- b. Radical sex, sexuality and gender communicative visual modalities/prospects. Questions around sex, sexuality and gender remain an unrelenting thorn in most African countries where women and LGBTQIA+ community members remain under precarious oppressive living conditions. Paper submissions will explore the contribution of various filmic modalities in challenging, questioning and de-centering despotic heterosexist and values which remain perniciously ubiquitous till today.
- c. Generative vs curative film(ic), screenwriting, production and post production practices. In what ways do artificial screenwriting, image generating and editing technologies in the African context present opportunities for upscaling film praxis? Similarly, in what ways do these technologies and processes pose various types of ‘danger’ and threat (real or perceived) to African filmmaking and filmmakers generally?
- d. Screen cultures, screen production (process) analyses and critiques e.g. news broadcasting, docu-series, reality television etc. How do we make sense of pervasive western-produced (e.g. Black Panther franchise) and television programming widely imbibed by Africans which seem to re-imagine, challenge and layer enduring notions of African culture and identity? Submissions will also explore the ways in which African countries have increasingly become an international filmmaking destination by global film studios which hardly employ local skills. How do such ‘dangerous’ industry practices potentially disempower and/or bolster local film industries and what is the role of local authorities in regulating such disruptive practices? Additionally, how do we theorise the ways in which global news outlets both cast a spotlight on certain important African injustices while simultaneously stereotyping and caricaturising its people?
- e. Sociology and policies of visual-performative, filmic modalities. Paper submissions can explore the sociological impact, role and contribution of cinematic arts and the various policies which impede filmmaking practice alongside legal opportunities and possibilities which can radically improve image creation industries.
- f. Streaming platform companies, models and opportunities for local communities. The arrival of streaming giants like Netflix, Showmax and Amazon presents both interesting opportunities and dangers for local film sectors. On the one hand local filmmakers can produce works which provide global audience exposure. On the other hand, indigenous stories and story-telling traditions must subject themselves to rigid commodifying narrative formats, structures, visual aesthetics demanded by these companies. Furthermore, local content makers who wish to enter the streaming sector are expected to unfairly compete with the dominance of these streaming oligarchs. What are the possibilities for local and indigenous stories and story-tellers in retaining control of their stories both locally and abroad?

All abstracts should be submitted to caraconference.witstv@wits.ac.za by the deadline of: 31 May 2024.