

TERRITORY: TERRA, TERROIR, TERROR

ASLE 2027 Biennial Conference
22–24 June 2027
University of Maryland, College Park,
ancestral lands of the Piscataway People

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Territory signifies both shared and contested space. The term takes its root from *terra*, meaning earth or land. It shares sensibility with *terroir*, the unique ecological aspects of a particular place. And the term simultaneously calls up the violences perpetrated in the name of ownership—the climate-changing realities of colonialism, settler colonialism, and racial colonial capitalism. Territory, in other words, tells not just of *terra* and *terroir*, but also of *terrere*—terror.

The Association for Literature and the Environment’s 2027 conference theme invites us to consider these convergences. Just as the IPCC 2022 report declared colonialism the historical and ongoing driver of climate change and all its terrifying realities, recent work in the environmental humanities has turned to genres of the gothic, horror, dark fantasy, and mystery to represent the fear, dread, ambient and embodied terrors associated with specific places, particular environmental crises, the global rise of authoritarianism, and other realities and challenges.

We seek papers, creative works, and other forms of inquiry that engage with these concerns, broadly construed. Possible topics include but are not limited to:

- **Literary genres and aesthetics.** The Dark Gothic, Frontier Gothic, horror, mystery, the grotesque, the uncanny, and the dark sublime and pastoral, as well as engagements with colonial ecological horror, terror, and the concept of *terror nullius*.
- **Geographies.** Global and/or place-based knowledges; the wake, the shoals, and other geographies otherwise uncaptured by “land”; the blue humanities; imagined spaces; Craig Santos Perez’s “Terripelago” and Esme Murdock’s “terrortory.”
- **Histories.** Representations of displacement/deterritorialization, including removal, relocation, diaspora, unhousing, climate and political refugeeism, etc.
- **Temporalities.** Fast, slow, past, future, halting, fleeting, disappearing, differentially visible, aleatoric, or otherwise time-based representations of terror.
- **Politics.** State and more-than-state terrors; the relationship between the global war on terror and the “war” on global warming; the politics of direct action in the Green Scare and subsequent terrorism enhancement charges for environmental protestors; histories and present realities of white-terror in the Confederacy, Klan, and contemporary ethnonationalist and accelerationist groups, as well as NIMBYism, ecofascist rhetorics, immigration politics, border policies, concepts of territorial belonging, and somatic/sensory expressions of colonial terror.
- **Virtualities.** AI, predictive targeting, data centers in the concrete and abstract.
- **Affect and emotion.** Psychoanalytic and cognitive approaches to climate changes, ecological disruption, their social effects, and their representation, especially concerning fear or terror.
- **Critical hope.** Affects, histories, and imaginations of political resistance, joy, hope, and other generative practices.

We also welcome work that engages in other ways with the concerns outlined above and/or with the vision and mission of ASLE, which seeks to inspire and promote intellectual work in the environmental humanities and arts. Our vision is an inclusive community whose members are committed to environmental research, education, literature, and art, as well as service, environmental justice, and ecological sustainability. Learn more at our [website](#).

Confirmed Keynote Speakers

- [Dr. Shelbi Nahwilet Meissner](#), Indigenous feminist philosopher and first-generation descendant of the La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians (Payómkawichum) and Cupeño (Kupangaxwichem); Assistant Professor in the Harriet Tubman Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park; and founding director of the Indigenous Futures Lab.
- [Dr. M Jackson](#), geographer, glaciologist, National Geographic Society Explorer, TED Fellow, three-time U.S. Fulbright Scholar, and author of *Ice to Water* (2024), the novel *The Ice Sings Back* (2023), *The Secret Lives of Glaciers* (2019), and *While Glaciers Slept: Being Human in a Time of Climate Change* (2015).
- [Dr. Tao Leigh Goffe](#), writer, theorist, and interdisciplinary artist working across histories of race, geology, climate, performance studies, architecture, and media technologies; Associate Professor of Literary History and Cultural Theory in the department of Women and Gender Studies at Hunter College, City University of New York, and in Earth and Environmental Sciences at the CUNY Graduate Center; and author of *Dark Laboratory* (2025) and the two-channel video installation *Black Pacific, Chinese Atlantic* (2024), commissioned for the Ninth Asian Art Biennial in Taichung.

CALL DETAILS

In the interest of diversifying professional activities and cultivating generative intellectual conversation throughout the entirety of the conference, ASLE is making two changes to its conference structure for 2027:

- First, we are introducing a new “seminar” modality for paper presentation in which 9–12 participants agree to meet during the same time slot for all three days of the conference, with 3–4 participants presenting per day. The goal is for the seminars to proceed less as conventional presentations and more as writing workshops, fostering in-depth exchange over the course of several days rather than in the space of a single session. We will accept proposals for pre-formed seminars as well as create them from individual abstracts. (For more details, see the section on “seminars” below.)
- Second, we are establishing a standardized daily schedule, with all seminars scheduled in the morning, workshops around midday, and conventional panels and roundtables of scholarly papers and creative readings throughout the day.

With these changes in mind, ASLE welcomes the following proposals for our 2027 conference (described in more detail in the sections below):

- Pre-formed panels of scholarly papers and/or creative readings (4 presenters), roundtables (5–7

- presenters), and seminars (9–12 presenters over three days)
- Individual scholarly papers or creative readings, to be placed into either a conventional panel, a roundtable, or a seminar
- Workshops organized as 90-minute sessions with 1-3 leaders, open to all conference attendees (scalable to walk-up audience size).

Most sessions—including all seminars and workshops—will only be available to those attending the conference in person, and we are unfortunately unable to accommodate hybrid sessions. Those who submit proposals to present at the conference in person will therefore not be able to present virtually. That said, as in years past, in 2027 we will also host a number of fully virtual panels and roundtables to allow people who cannot attend in person an opportunity to participate (at a lower registration price). All virtual sessions will be held in the 2–3 days prior to the in-person conference. In-person plenary sessions will also be available to virtual participants, both as live streams and recorded. To submit an abstract or proposal for virtual participation, please see the instructions below.

PAPER AND SESSION PROPOSAL SUBMISSION PROCESS

There will be three session formats at the 2027 ASLE Conference (not including Workshops, see more on those further in the CFP):

- **Conventional panels** of scholarly papers and/or creative readings, which must include a chair (who may also serve as a panelist) and 4 panelists who will speak for no more than 15 minutes each, followed by discussion
- **Roundtables**, which must include a chair (who may also serve as a panelist) and 5–7 panelists who speak for no more than 8–10 minutes each, followed by discussion
- **Seminars**, which meet at the same time for all three days of the conference and must include 9–12 participants (one of whom must serve as chair) who will speak for no more than 15 minutes each, followed by discussion

All sessions will be 90 minutes long (including daily meetings of seminars). We will accept proposals for both pre-formed sessions (whether a conventional panel, roundtable, seminar, or workshop) and individual presentations (to be placed into a panel, roundtable, or seminar), with no preference given to one type of proposal or the other. Both scholarly and creative submissions are welcome. ASLE encourages experimentation with alternative forms of presentation, discussion, and engagement, especially in pre-formed sessions. We expect to receive more proposals than we can accommodate; therefore, not all proposals will be accepted.

Only one individual abstract submission is allowed per person. Participants can present only once during the conference as part of a panel, roundtable, or seminar. Facilitating a workshop or chairing a session do not count towards this limit. It is acceptable for a pre-formed session organizer to submit two or more topically linked sessions (e.g. seminar format), but organizers themselves may still only present on one.

All proposals must be submitted via the [Pheedloop submission platform](#). Click on your submission format type below and fill out the required form. If this online submission requirement poses significant difficulty, please contact us at 2027asleconf@gmail.com.

Please read below for specific submission information regarding the various presentation formats, submission guidelines, and links to submission forms.

Pre-Formed Sessions

Proposals for pre-formed sessions should be for one of the three formats detailed above (conventional panel, roundtable, or seminar). We especially encourage groups engaged in collaborative critical, artistic, pedagogical, activist, or other work to present the results of those efforts in any session format.

Alternative formats for pre-formed sessions are also encouraged, such as visual exhibitions, interactive creative engagements, debates, etc. Please contact ASLE Conference Chair Kathryn Dolan at 2027asleconf@gmail.com before proposing such alternatives.

A proposal for a full session should include a summary abstract that gives a brief description of the session's theme and scope in 300 words/2000 characters or less. This overview might address applicability to the conference theme, how the session connects to the mission and goals of ASLE and the broader environmental humanities community, and/or scholarly and creative merits. Proposals may also be submitted for virtual panels. Any proposals for virtual panels must be clearly indicated as such at the time of submission. (Please note again that we are not able to accept proposals for hybrid panels.)

For conventional panels, roundtables, and seminars for which presenters DO have separate formal talk titles/abstracts, this submission requires two steps:

1. The session chair/organizer should select the session format and submit the session abstract. Please include presentation titles and authors for all other panelists in the provided fields, so we can check them against submissions in Step 2.
2. Other panelists (including the organizer, if they are also presenting) must also submit their individual abstracts (300 words/2000 characters or less) as a separate proposal. Please have them select "Abstract that is part of a pre-formed panel or seminar" and include the session title in the appropriate field. Full session proposals will be considered completed and ready for review once all participants have submitted their abstracts.

For roundtables for which presenters DO NOT have a separate formal talk title/abstract, Step 2 is not required, but all discussants and their contact information must be listed in the "Co-Speakers" section of the submission form.

For all pre-formed sessions, ASLE requests that organizers prioritize diverse representation of research and/or creative focus, institutional home, academic position, and subject positionality. To this end, we encourage organizers to assemble participants and/or review abstract submissions holistically, in the interest of creating the most well-rounded session possible. All pre-formed sessions are required to include participants from more than one institution and from more than one academic rank or sector.

To facilitate more inclusion and interdisciplinarity in pre-formed sessions, we encourage those with session ideas to post a brief call of no more than 300 words to invite presenters to apply to your proposed session. Please submit your panel call to us no later than **1 November 2026** via [this link](#). We will post these calls on the ASLE conference website and advertise them through our publicity channels.

Note that pre-formed sessions are not guaranteed acceptance to the conference unless they are submitted by affiliated organizations or ASLE interest groups. If we are unable to accept a session, the individual proposals in that panel will receive full consideration as part of the individual abstracts review.

Submit a proposal for a pre-formed session [here!](#) Please be sure you select “Traditional Full Panel”, “Roundtable Panel WITH presenter abstracts”, or “Roundtable Panel WITHOUT presenter abstracts” for the Proposal Format Type.

Submit an individual paper for inclusion in a pre-formed panel or roundtable [here!](#) Please be sure you select “Abstract that is part of a pre-formed panel or seminar” for the Proposal Format Type.

Seminars

This year ASLE is offering a new option for presenting and hearing scholarly or creative work: seminars. Like traditional panel sessions, seminars will offer participants the opportunity to present a paper and listen to the papers of their fellow presenters, as well as welcome a broader audience. However, where traditional panels meet once, seminars will meet three times (during the same time slot) over all three days of the conference. Seminar groups will include approximately 9–12 presenters, with 3–4 participants speaking on each day. Presenters involved in a seminar commit to attending all three days, allowing for an evolving conversation in which all participants have the opportunity to rotate between the presenter role and the audience role. Other ASLE conference attendees are also welcome and encouraged to attend seminar meetings and participate in audience Q&A, as they do for conventional panels.

Applicants may submit proposals for pre-formed seminars or individual abstracts. If you are interested in submitting a proposal for a pre-formed seminar, please follow the two-step process in the section on “pre-formed sessions” above. If you submit an Individual Proposal (see section below for details and submission link), you will be asked about your willingness to participate in different types of session formats, including seminars. Conference organizers will then group individual papers together to create seminars based on shared themes and interests.

Submit a proposal for a pre-formed seminar [here!](#) Please be sure you select “Seminar” for the Proposal Format Type

Submit an individual paper that is part of a pre-formed seminar [here!](#) Please be sure you select “Abstract that is part of a pre-formed panel or seminar” for the Proposal Format Type.

Workshops

Beginning in 2027, there will no longer be pre-conference workshops. Instead, as noted above, workshops will now occur throughout the conference, around midday, as part of ASLE’s new daily conference schedule. ASLE invites workshop proposals on a variety of subjects, but is particularly interested in proposals that focus on:

- Graduate student professionalization (e.g., CVs, teaching statements, job market mentorship, publication mentorship, alt-ac careers, etc.)
- Early-career and contingent scholar mentorship
- Pedagogy
- Public humanities
- Community-engaged scholarship
- Environmental humanities and activism beyond the university

Workshop proposals should include an overview summary of the workshop's content and modality, a detailed outline of 90 minutes' worth of workshop activities, and be scalable for a walk-up audience. The overview might address applicability to the conference theme, how the workshop connects to the mission and goals of ASLE and the broader environmental humanities community, and/or scholarly, creative, and/or activist merits. Unfortunately, ASLE can only accept proposals for in-person workshops at this time.

Submit a proposal for a workshop [here!](#) Please be sure you select “Workshop” for the Proposal Format Type.

Individual Proposals

Proposals may be submitted for individual paper presentations or readings. These presentations, if accepted, will be placed into an appropriate session by the conference organizers. Applicants will be asked about their willingness to participate in different types of session formats (i.e., roundtables or seminars); answering yes will increase chances of acceptance. See details about each format above.

Individual abstracts must not exceed 300 words/2000 characters, and should include:

- Working title (you will be able to edit this later)
- Brief overview of the topic background
- Presentation's main focus and unique content (e.g. theoretical contribution, project description, pedagogical experience, presentation of artistic work, personal or institutional experience, etc.)

Proposals may be submitted for virtual presentations, to be included in fully virtual online panels. Any proposals for virtual presentations must be clearly indicated as such at the time of submission.

Submit an individual proposal [here!](#) Please be sure you select “Individual Abstract” for the Proposal Format Type.

DATES AND DEADLINES

All proposals for pre-formed sessions, individual presentations, and workshops—as well as abstracts for individual presentations that are part of pre-formed sessions—must be submitted via Pheedloop by the deadline, **11:59pm EST on 8 January 2027**. If a pre-formed session is not accepted, its associated individual abstracts will still be considered.

We will evaluate all proposals carefully and notify applicants of decisions by 26 February 2027. If you submit a proposal but discover you can no longer attend the conference, please inform the organizer of your session (if relevant) and ASLE of your withdrawal by 30 January 2027. For questions about submitting, please contact us at 2027asleconf@gmail.com.

TRAVEL AWARDS

ASLE will make a small number of \$500 travel awards available, as we have for past conferences. The purpose of the travel award is to support members in precarious circumstances, who lack institutional

funding, and who can reasonably demonstrate that an award will make attending the conference possible. Awards typically support members whose presence contributes to ASLE's mission of "promoting equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility on behalf of the membership." Applications for these awards will open in late February 2027.

CONFERENCE LOCATION

The [University of Maryland, College Park](#) is the state's flagship university, located just outside Washington, D.C. One of the nation's preeminent public research universities, UMD has a commitment to environmental and social values, such as the programs, projects, and events offered through UMD's [SustainableUMD](#) network and [Do Good Institute](#).

As environmental humanists, we recognize that in-person meetings such as the ASLE conference are largely made possible by fossil fuels and thereby contribute to climate change. Guided by the goals outlined in the [2027–2033 ASLE Strategic Plan](#), we remained at this conference site due to its relative proximity to the majority of ASLE members, its connectivity to interstate and intercity rail transit, and its ease of international access. College Park is located on the Green Line of the D.C. [light rail metro system](#), and we encourage attendees to utilize it when possible. The stop is about a mile from campus. The nearby area boasts several projects and landmarks of interest, including ECO City Farms, the Hyattsville Food Forests, and the Rachel Carson House.

We are aware that incidents occurring locally, nationally, and internationally have a direct impact on our community, as well as the community of UMD. UMD police do not have a cooperative contract with immigration officials (see [this press release](#)). Regardless, both international and interstate travel will continue to be deeply affected. ASLE's leadership team is discussing a number of mitigation strategies and alternatives for affected members.
