SFAM Conference 2026
Borders and Contact Zones

Wednesday October 21, 2026
11:00 am-12:30 pm
Registration
Hotel Lobby

For those registered for Lucas Museum Tour, the bus departs from the hotel at 1 pm

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Thursday October 22, 2026
8:30 am-12:15 pm
Registration
Outside Studio Ballroom

Thursday October 22, 2026
9:00-10:00 am
Welcome Continental Breakfast
Welcoming Remarks from Executive Board
Studio Ballroom

Thursday October 22, 2026
10:30 am to noon
Concurrent Sessions

SESSION 1: BORDER GEOGRAPHIES

Crow He
UC Davis
Homage to the Square: Speculative Cartography and the Tabletop Game

Thomas Yount
Clean Earth Future
Polycentric Borderlands: Cooperative Worldbuilding and the Dissolution of Governance Boundaries in Climate Cooldown

Jeri Zulli
Fashion Institute of Technology
Transgressing Borders in *The City & the City*

SESSION 2: THE BIOPOLITICS OF SPECIES

Dawon Han
Korea University
Captive Companionship: Translation, Sacrifice, and the Limits of Companion Species in *Project Hail Mary*

Anna Temel
University of Warsaw
The Biopolitics of Multispecies Coexistence in *Mass Effect*

Daesan Yun
Korea University
Speculative Cinema and the Technopolitics of Extraterrestrial Contact: A Triadic Reading of Contact, Arrival, and *Project Hail Mary*

SESSION 3: DECOLONIAL POLITICS

Kelsey Chen
Stanford University
There is No Shore: A Politics of the Abyss in Spacefaring Narratives of Le Guin, Delany, and Lem

Haerin Shin
Korea University
Stolen Metamorphoses: Techno-Feminist Reappropriation and Its Foreclosure in Hollywood Remediations of Asian Speculative Fiction

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Thursday October 22, 2026
Noon to 1 pm
Lunch, Studio Ballroom

Thursday October 22, 2026
1-2:30 pm
Concurrent Sessions

SESSION 4: BORDERLINE VIOLENCE: CARCERAL FUTURISM, MONSTROUS KINSHIP, AND (UN)MAKING TIME IN SPECULATIVE FICTION

Ripley Baker
UC Santa Barbara
Fear and Found Family in Exile: Body Horror and Monstrosity as Queer Kinship in Trans+ Horror Fiction

ksenia fir
UC Santa Cruz
Policing Constructs: Weaponized Disability, Subjecthood, and Violence Work of SF Cyborg Cops

Lizzy Hatch
UC Santa Cruz
Time Loops: Prison Abolition, Crip Time, and Narrative Border (Un)Making

SESSION 5: KINSHIP, QUEER POSSIBILITY AND THE UTOPIAN

Lesley R. Gouger
CSU Long Beach
Alternative Family Structures: Examining the Intersections of Family, Sustainability, and Technology in Science-Fiction and Speculative Fiction Media

Ryan Lerrik
University of Massachusetts, Boston
Creating Possibility in the City of Refuge: Queer Desire and Community Building in Emet North's *In Universes*

Matthew Snyder
UC Riverside
The Half-Prophecies of *Everything for Everyone* and Its Borderless World of Communes

SESSION 6: THE BORDERS OF PERSONHOOD

Stephen Dougherty
University of Agder
Persons, Corporations, Group Minds, and Replicants: The Science Fiction of the Fourteenth Amendment

Remy Sumida-Tate
University of Washington, Seattle
"Cell-Penetrating Compounds": Semi-impermeable Borders and Blurring Race in Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash*

Gregory T. Carter
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
"The Council Said No": Unauthorized Crossings in Star Wars: *The Acolyte*

Thursday October 22, 2026
2:30-3:00 pm
BREAK

Thursday October 22, 2026
3:00-4:30 pm
Horrors Ancient and Futuristic: A Conversation with Filmmmaker Leigh Whannell
Studio Ballroom

Host: Zachary Horton
Leigh Whannell is the co-creator of the *Saw* and Insidious franchises, and recent director of prescient AI horror *Upgrade*, and supernatural domestic terrors *The Invisible Man* and *Wolf Man*.

Thursday October 22, 2026
4:30-500 pm
SFAM Business Meeting

Please join the Executive Board for a discussion about possible future direction for SFAM as an organization. We would like to hear from attendees about their preferences regarding future conference themes, the possibility of starting an association alongside the conference, and the future of conference governance.

Friday October 23, 2026
8:00 am-12:15 pm
Registration
Outside Studio Ballroom

Friday October 23, 2026
8:00-8:30 am
Continental Breakfast
Studio Ballroom

Friday October 23, 2026
8:30-10 am
Concurrent Sessions

SESSION 7: TIME AND HISTORY

Todd Chapman
University of Colorado Boulder
The Ghost-Seam: Interrogating Language-Mediated Class Borders in Alan Moore's *Jerusalem*

Christopher Allen Walker
Colby College
Stasis: Cryonics as a Technology of Hope

Jiaqi Wang
Korea University
No Eternal Heroes: Historical Temporality and Survival Ethics in Liu Cixin's *Death's End*

SESSION 8: GENRE AND TEMPORALITY

John Bruni
Grand Valley State University
"Sailing on the Edges of Time": SF and Cybernetics in the Work of Brian Eno

Eonho Jeon
Korea University
Letters Beyond Longitudes: Singular Emblems and the Crossing of Borders in Ken Liu's 'The Paper Menagerie' and Sergei Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2

Alexandrea Holder
Florida Atlantic University
Faith, Intersectionality, and Afrofantasy as a Site of Reclamation

SESSION 9: REALITY AND OTHER WORLDS
Zachary Horton
University of Pittsburgh
The Mind/Body Problem in 1950s AI Speculation

Juliette Andre
University of Colorado Boulder
Crossing into the metaverse: how to 'tell computers and humans apart' in Alain Damasio's "C@ptch@"

Jewon Lee
Korea University
Reskinning the Orient: Refractive Orientalism in Online Game Worlds

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Friday October 23, 2026
10:00-10:30 am
Coffee Break

Friday October 23, 2026
10:30 am to noon
Concurrent Sessions

SESSION 10: PANEL DISCUSSION: INFRASTRUCTURING DIASPORIC MEDIA ARTS WITH GENERATIVE AI TOOLS

Chantal Eyong
USC
37 Years: Blending Intergenerational Migration Histories and Geographies with AI

Andrea Kim
USC
Shanzhai Creative Logics in *Monkfish Song*, a Folktale on Survival

Faye Zhang
USC
Memoirs of a Barefoot Doctor: Animation, Gesture, and AI in Ethnofiction Film

SESSION 11: NEW METAPHORS FOR AI (II)

Stina Attebery and Marshall Piros
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo
Archiving Science Fiction Metaphors in AI Discourse

Owen Leonard
UC Santa Barbara
Space: Optimization Landscapes, AI, and the Accumulation of Capital

David Shipko
Vanderbilt University
Machina Ex Deo: The History of the "Artificial Intelligence" Signifier

SESSION 21: WORLDS IN PANELS: WRITING SPECULATIVE FICTION FOR COMICS

Moderator: Rylend Grant

David Avallone
R.E. Nelson

Friday October 23, 2026
Noon to 1 pm
Lunch, Studio Ballroom

Friday October 23, 2026
1-2:30 pm
Concurrent Sessions

SESSION 13: LABOR ACROSS THE MULTIVERSE

Yoonsuh Jung
Korea University
Bordering the Multiverse: Aespa's 'MY' and the Speculative Worldbuilding of K-pop

Mihaela Mihailova
San Francisco State University
Digital Maximalism as a Contact Zone: Spectacle and Myth in *Nezha* and *Nezha 2*

Ida Yoshinaga
Georgia Tech
White Female/Queer Screen Labor in *The Comeback:* Multi-Hyphenates in the Age of the Algorithmic Auteur

SESSION 14: THEORIZING FANTASY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Briana Best
Indiana University, Bloomington
In Defense of Escapism

Timothy Murphy
Oklahoma State University
Episte(magic)ology: Magic as Articulation, Episteme, and Metaphysics in Fantasy

Benjamin J. Robertson
University of Colorado Boulder
"Put these foolish ambitions to rest": Allegorithm and Story in *Elden Ring*

SESSION 15: BORDERS OF THE HUMAN

Steven Shaviro
Wayne State University
Blurred Bounaries: M.A. Foster's *Ler* Novels

Jagoda Tyczyńska
University of Warsaw
You Are What You Eat: Vampirism and the Crisis of Native Identity in Stephen Graham Jones' *The Buffalo Hunter Hunter*

Hyerim Jung
Korea University
Relational Names, Borderland Bodies: Plant-Human Hybridity and the Limits of Species Bordering in Baek Heena's *Yeoni* and T*he Willow Lord*

Friday October 23, 2026
2:30-3:00 pm
BREAK

Friday October 23, 2026
3:00-4:30 pm
Plenary Event:
Kalindi Vora
AI Borders Everywhere: Speculation, Technology and the Crisis of the Human
Studio Ballroom

Saturday October 24, 2026
8:00 am-12:15 pm
Registration
Outside Studio Ballroom

Saturday October 24, 2026
8:00-8:30 am
Continental Breakfast
Studio Ballroom

Saturday October 24, 2026
8:30-10 am
Concurrent Sessions

SESSION 16: NEW METAPHORS FOR AI (II)

Joshua Pearson
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo
"Once more into the breach, rebellious hero…": How SF's Reflexive Individualism Misdiagnoses the Real Risks of AI

Rachel Anderson
Grand Valley State University
Age of Faith: Saints' Relics and Algorithmic Opacity

Sayeong Kim
UC Riverside
Flesh Behind the AI: The Objectification of Asian Female Labor in Elaine Castillo's *Moderation*

SESSION 17: THE NECROPOLITICS OF SPECIES

Kexin Han
Korea University
Classification, Exclusion, and the Moral Unmaking of the Human: Toward a Posthuman Gaze in *Mickey 17*

Spencer Lanctin
Korea University
The Default and the Displaced: Border-Making in Pixar's *Hoppers*

Morgan Llewellyn
University of Colorado Boulder
Borders and the Necropolitical Violence of Transhumanism in David R. Bunch's *Moderan*

Saturday October 24, 2026
10:00-10:30 am
Coffee Break

Saturday October 24, 2026
10:30 am to noon
Concurrent Sessions

SESSION 18: DESTABILIZING GENRE CATEGORIES

Lisa Swanstrom
University of Utah
FLUBBERS: Synthetic Substances in War, in Space, and in the Kitchen

Cole McMullen
University of Washington
"Extreme and Improbable": Persuasion and Financial SF in the Citrini Report

Francis Quina
University of Pittsburgh
Across the Blind Eternities: Borders, Genres, and the Magic The Gathering Multiverse

SESSION 19: POSTHUMAN MEDIA

Merry Lynn Byrd
Virginia State University
Bunker Sci-Fi and the Bounds of Purity in Two Current Television Series: *Fallout* and *Paradise*

Nari Yang
Korea University
Who Plays Whom? Singularity, Cruel Optimism, and *Black Mirror*'s "Plaything"

Soonmi Jung
Korea University
Witches at the Threshold: Park Hoon-jung's *The Witch* (2018) and the Cartography of Border Crossing in the Wake of #MeToo Korea

SESSION 20: *STAR WARS* ROUNDTABLE

Joshua Pearson
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo

Patrick Sharp
CSU Los Angeles

Sharon Sharp
CSU Dominguez Hills

Mihaela Mihailova
San Francisco State University

Gregory T. Carter
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

David Shipko
Vanderbilt University

Saturday October 24, 2026
Noon to 1 pm
Lunch, Studio Ballroom

Saturday October 24, 2026
1-2:30 pm
Concurrent Sessions

SESSION 21: WHO OWNS THE FUTURE? COPYRIGHT, CONSOLIDATION AND CREATIVE CONTROL IN ENTERTAINMENT

Helen Shin in conversation with entertainment lawyer Natalie Locke to discuss recent trends in the field.

SESSION 22: EXPERIMENTAL ZONES AND BELONGING

Johann Pibert
University of Bonn, Free University of Berlin
From Film to Theater Psychology: The Zone as a Liminal State in Tarkovsky's *Stalker* and Didenko's *Wishing Machine*

Amanda Rivera
Korea University
Bordering the Human: from Bare Life to the Posthuman in Peake and VanderMeer

Mikael D. Sebag
Laguna College of Art + Design
"It's Not About You": Interdimensional Borderwork and Ethical Re-Enchantment in *Doctor Strange*

Saturday October 24, 2026
2:30-3:00 pm
BREAK

Saturday October 24, 2026
3:00-5:00 pm
Plenary Event: Screening of *Assembly*
Discussion Panel: James Tobias, Allison de Fren, Courtney Baker
Studio Ballroom

Saturday October 24, 2026
5:00-7:00 pm
Closing Reception
Studio Ballroom