

THE GORDON INSTITUTE FOR PERFORMING AND CREATIVE ARTS (GIPCA) INVITES YOU TO

FUTURES  
OF  
WHAT WE  
FACTS THAT MATTER

TUESDAY 7 FEBRUARY @ 17H00  
UCT HIDDINGH HALL

DICK HEBDIGE  
CORI HAYDEN  
DAVID GOLDBERG  
ACKBAR ABBAS  
ACHILLE MBEMBE  
KARIM MAKDISI  
SARAH NUTTALL

ALL WELCOME. ADMISSION FREE. REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED.  
FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSION:  
[www.gipca.uct.ac.za](http://www.gipca.uct.ac.za) / [fin-gipca@uct.ac.za](mailto:fin-gipca@uct.ac.za) / +27 21 480 7156

**JWTC**

Johannesburg Workshop in Theory and Criticism

GORDON INSTITUTE  
**GIPCA**  
FOR PERFORMING  
AND CREATIVE ARTS

 UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
**UCHRI**  
HUMANITIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE

# FUTURES OF NATURE

## FACTS THAT MATTER

The Gordon Institute for Performing and Creative Arts (GIPCA), in collaboration with the Johannesburg Workshop in Theory and Criticism (JWTC) and The University of California Humanities Research Institute (UCHRI), will be hosting **Futures of Nature/Facts that Matter** on 7 February at 17:00 at Hiddingh Hall.

Convened by cultural commentator and critic Sarah Nuttall (University of Stellenbosch), this discussion will include leading international academics Cori Hayden, Ackbar Abbas, Dick Hebdige, Karim Makdisi, Achille Mbembe and David Goldberg.

The dualism between humans and nature has been a defining characteristic of modernity, alongside the incorporation of the world into global markets and the attendant production of waste on a scale never seen before. Yet there is a growing recognition that the rate of change of natural processes is shrinking towards the time scales of human society. The time lines of nature are now converging with those of society in a mutual lockstep. This panel will discuss questions such as to what extent is the convergence of social and natural time opening up to possible disasters in the future? What are the implications of this foreshortening of social and natural time for artistic and aesthetic experimentation, new modes of politics and broader issues of equity and justice?

Admission is free and refreshments will be served. For more information, please contact the GIPCA office: 021 480 1756 or [fin-gipca@uct.ac.za](mailto:fin-gipca@uct.ac.za)

### ABOUT THE PANEL

**Ackbar Abbas** is a Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of California, Irvine. Previously he was Chair of Comparative Literature at the University of Hong Kong and also Co-director of the Centre for the Study of Globalization and Cultures. His research interests include globalization, Hong Kong and Chinese culture, architecture, cinema, postcolonialism, and critical theory. His book *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance* was published in 1997 and he currently serves as a Contributing Editor to the academic journal *Public Culture*.

**David Theo Goldberg** is Director of the University of California Humanities Research Institute (UCHRI) and Professor of Comparative Literature and Criminology, Law and Society at the University of California Irvine. His work ranges over issues of political theory, race and racism, ethics, law and society, critical theory, cultural studies and, increasingly, digital humanities. He is the author and editor of several books, including *The Threat of Race* (2008), *The Racial State* (2002) and *Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader* (1995), and is the founding co-editor of *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture*.

**Cori Hayden** is an Associate Professor in Anthropology and Director of the Centre for Science, Technology, Medicine and Society at the University of California, Berkeley. Her research focuses on the anthropology of the biochemical sciences, global pharmaceutical politics, and postcolonial engagements with intellectual property and the politics of innovation and appropriation. These themes animated her 2003 book, *When Nature Goes Public: The Making and Unmaking of Bioprospecting in Mexico*. Hayden's current research is an ethnographic investigation of the recent emergence of generic drugs in Mexico, and the complex relationships—simultaneously biochemical, commercial, and political—currently unfolding in their name.

**Dick Hebdige** is a Professor in the Department of Art and Film Studies and Director of the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He has been teaching in art schools since the mid 1970's, also having served as the Dean of Critical Studies and the Director of the experimental writing program at CalArts. Hebdige has published extensively and is the author of three seminal books on art and popular culture: *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, *Cut'n'mix: culture, identity and Caribbean Music* and *Hiding in the Light: On Images and Things*. His research interests include transmedia performance and the integration of critical thinking into art practice and teaching.

**Karim Makdisi** is an Associate Professor of International Relations and International Environmental Policy at the American University of Beirut. His current research projects include a multidisciplinary investigation of how multilateral environmental treaties (MEAs) are implemented in Lebanon and the Arab region; the evolution of environmentalism in the Arab region; and the shifting role of the United Nations (including peacekeepers) in the post-Cold War period. He is also interested in the state of international relations in the Arab region and is Associate Director of the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs.

**Achille Mbembe** is a Research Professor at the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER) and co-convenor of The Johannesburg Workshop in Theory and Criticism (JWTC). He has written extensively on African history and politics and his work has been translated in various languages. He is the author of many books in French, including *Sortir de la grande nuit. Essai sur l'Afrique décolonisée* (Paris, 2010). He is also the winner of the Bill Venter/Altron Award for his *On the Postcolony* (2001).

**Sarah Nuttall** is Research Professor in English at the University of Stellenbosch and worked for ten years at the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER). She is recognised locally and internationally as a prominent voice in the on-going debates on cultural theory and is the author, editor or co-editor of eight books, including *Entanglement: Literary and Cultural Reflections on Post-apartheid* (2009), *Load Shedding: Writing On and Over the Edge of South Africa* (2009), *Senses of Culture: South African Culture Studies* (2000), and *Beautiful/Ugly: African and Diaspora Aesthetics* (2004).