



**EALCSC**  
Eastern African  
Literary & Cultural Studies  
Conference



**The 6th Mashariki (Eastern African) Literary and Cultural Studies Conference**  
**Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda**  
**August 24-26, 2023**

**Aesthetics and Interpretative Practices across East African Literary and Cultural Imaginaries**

**Call for Papers**

The 6<sup>th</sup> Mashariki (Eastern African) Literary and Cultural Studies Conference comes in the wake of five previous conferences. The inaugural one was held at the University of Nairobi in September 2013, followed by Makerere University in August 2015, the University of Dar es Salaam in August 2017, Bahir Dar University in August, 2019 and most recently at Moi University in September, 2021. The conference series is a drive to motivate dialogue between the region's scholars and stakeholders across the continent and beyond who are interested in the greater Eastern African region.

The 2023 edition of the conference is interested in the material, intellectual, spiritual, cultural and literary conditions that have shaped aesthetic and interpretative practices in and on the region across different epochs. In doing this, the conference hopes to provoke dialogue with the past, but also project future trajectories of aesthetic and interpretative practices.

The conference reflects on the continuities, discontinuities and repurposing of aesthetic and interpretative practices across different temporal contexts in the region's literary and cultural imaginaries. In an attempt to unsettle and question the assumed standard processes of knowledge, cultural production, and dominant discourses, the conference will examine the past and present formulations of Eastern/ Africa centred approaches to notions of aesthetics, interactions and interpretations. How have these, for example, been shaped by the Covid-19 pandemic and its uncertainties or the current issues with elections and election violence in the region at its sixth decade as a postcolonial region? What complexities come with this regional and political postcolonial identity? How have texts produced benefitted from the different voices and tensions over the postcolonial era? How do the consumers of these texts interpret and relate the texts with the day-to-day realities? What is the place of the producers, consumers and policy makers or regulators of literary and cultural practices in the Eastern African region in shaping aesthetic and interpretative directions? What have been the influences and impacts of aesthetic movements and debates such as Black Aesthetics, the language question, orature, spoken word art, jua-kali aesthetics and digital aesthetics? What are the implications of policies such as Ujamaa, and the Common Man's Charter, affirmative action and the valorisation of STEM on the literary and cultural landscapes in impacting on the aesthetic and interpretative cultures that take shape in Eastern Africa? We invite papers, panels and roundtables animated by these and related questions.

The conference invites reflections on the intricate blend of frameworks and methods across literary, social and cultural contexts. It is interested in how literary and cultural studies researchers and scholars, artists, media practitioners and other cultural workers think and theorise through a wide canvas of images, texts, narratives, cultural practices in the varying literary and cultural realms in Eastern Africa. The wider interpretations that come from these interactions of different strands of both literature and culture are of importance to the debates in this conference.

We invite papers on topics that include but are not limited to:

- i) Utopian. Dystopian and speculative aesthetics
- ii) Imagining Regimes of Excess
- iii) Digital Literary/ Cultural Economies and their aesthetics and critical practices
- iv) Forms of Aesthetic Resistance in Literary and Cultural Production and Consumption.
- v) Eco-poetics
- vi) The Continuous Language Question
- vii) The Black Aesthetics Movement in Eastern Africa
- viii) The Cold War and its aesthetic and critical imperatives
- ix) Eastern Africa and Marxist Literary Criticism
- x) Post/Structuralism and its malcontents
- xi) Ujamaa and the question of aesthetics

We invite papers, panels, roundtables and poster presentations that critically engage with these threads. Please submit your abstracts of up to 300 words to [mashariki-conf2023@mak.ac.ug](mailto:mashariki-conf2023@mak.ac.ug) by **Friday March 4, 2023**.

Panel proposals should include panel members, as well as their paper titles and abstracts. All abstracts must include the presenter's institutional affiliation and status i.e., student or faculty/academic. Please note that presentations will be done in English.

**Conference conveners:**

Department of Literature Makerere University and Mashariki Literary and Cultural Studies Initiative