

# CRAFTING ENERGY LITERACIES FOR DECOLONIAL POSTCARBON FUTURES

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## **Abstract:**

Blackouts in the wake of extreme weather events, oil spills, solar micro-generation, landscape scars of fossil extraction, rising electricity prices and debilitating energy debt bring human energetic entanglements into sensibility, also in countries of the global North. In science and technology studies, energy humanities and related fields the concept of energy literacy has been used as a tool to examine people's energy knowledges, affect, and involvement in sustainable energy practices that are often reduced to energy savings. Critical of knowledge deficit models that blame subjects for their ostensible illiteracy, indifference or short-sightedness, the approach of material participation (Marres 2012) orients the analysis to everyday material practices such as collaborations with smart meters or solar panels, which some argue increase energy literacy (Ryghaug, Skjølsvold and Heidenreich 2018). And yet, an understanding of how energy is embedded in the production, transportation and disposal of products, and differentially fuels and disables lives that Sheena Wilson (2017) calls deep energy literacy, often remains elusive in extant conceptions of energy literacy (van den Broek 2019). Such exclusions give renewed impetus to this panel's call for crafting 'mixed and differential [energy] literacies' (Haraway 1997) that perform diffractive readings of the matterings of photovoltaic cells, lithium batteries, plantation landscapes, and other colonial legacies. Barad (2001) calls agential literacy a learning to intra-act responsibly within the world. In a related vein Claire Colebrook (2012, xi) draws on Deleuze to suggest a viral model of literacies where 'each new attainment of literacy introduces difference into what counts as literacy', allowing us to sense more things, and enabling practices not of replication but of 'mapping – marking out new spaces, new dimensions, new lines of filiation'. The panel proposes to trace and bring into conversation such differential energy literacies. Topics include but are not limited to energy experiments (Maguire, Watts and Winthereik 2021); energy art and activism (Powell 2018); attention to how other life forms affect and are affected by energy infrastructure; the minor refusals, uncertainties, and deviations in the efforts to remember extractive energy ventures and unexpected solidarities; practices and legacies of land regeneration; new sensing practices through digital applications and platforms; and ostensibly unproductive practices and affects such as joyful energy wasting or squandering which might together open to non-extractive decolonial energy futures. The panel welcomes work in progress and arts-based research.

## **Key words:**

energy literacy; postcarbon futures; practices of sensing