



CONNECTIVITY

and **CREATIVITY**

in times of **CONFLICT**

Cumulus Antwerp

2023



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Preface

Connectivity and Creativity in times of Conflict - conference proceedings VI
 Cumulus president's message - Design for Adaptation in Times of Complexity IX

Track 1

Nature positive/design for transformation

Editorial 2
Design methodology
 Scenario-building through a systemic lens: a new perspective on tools and methods to design for sustainability transitions 4
 Intimacy/integrity: a framework for thinking about epistemological styles in design activity 9
 Democratizing design: the development of a 'Design for Do-It-Yourself' framework 15
 The power of imagination: immersive and experiential counterfactuals to engage with sustainability 20
 Applying human-centered system design to the development of a tool for service innovation 25
 Pulse approach: integral design project management to empower transformative processes 30
 Research on design sketch from different disciplines: overview and directions 35
 Researching the invisible: troubling qualitative research design through information architecture 41

Design education

T+ designers: a case for transdisciplinarity in design higher education by way of a South African case study 46
 Materiality, commons, and design education 51
 Representing and shaping regenerative futures: a context-specific approach to art and design education. 58
 Creative strategies for the learning spaces of the future 62
 Implementing SDGs in a product design curriculum, or: the value of tap water 67

Design materialization

Yutaka: how do we prototype the transformative change towards nature positive designs with soil 72
 Material experience: the future of material selection for product design 77
 Discerning modes of design in ecological restoration 82
 From visual to multisensory: how does intangible cultural heritage of traditional costume self-remodel in digital interactive environment? 87
 Designing sustainable furniture: guidelines to promote furniture life cycle design 94

Biophilic approaches in design

Biophilic design for remote studying environments: analysis of case studies involving a collaboration between ergonomics and environmental psychology 98

Bioreceptive interfaces for biophilic urban resilience 103
 Artificial nature: possibilities for mycelial composite material design 109
 Botanical design: exploring the application of parametric plants in furniture 113

Eco-social transitions

Systemic Design Oriented Leadership (SDOL) – a co-created play for eco-social leadership development with the methods of Systems Thinking 118
 Design for transformation: unlock competencies for coping complexity 122
 Change agents: designers interpreting 'the social' and 'social' interpretations of design 127
 The changing role of designers in transition processes 132

Fashion innovations

Fashion design matter: the role of design in guiding a sustainable transformation in Europe 137
 Convincing fashion consumers to go green: a brand communication problem? 142
 Prototype dialogues; re-balancing design thinking through negotiations with fabrics, form and future 148
 Future fashion: new and ancient systems at the intersection of anthropology, ecology and innovation. 152

Urban design & citizen inclusion

Design fiction localised 158
 Transit Oriented Development used to formulate design guidelines for an improved bus network in Malaysia 163
 Exploring sustainable ecosystems in the "15-minute" urban living circle—take Shanghai Urban Space Season 2021 as an example 169
 The Unified Citizen Engagement Approach: a design-oriented framework for involving citizens in the energy transition 174

Design & digitisation

Designing for Viral Infection Awareness through PLAYMUTATION 179
 Gamifying the low impact customer solution design 183
 Connecting to the future; using serious games and scenario development for responsible design 189
 About utopias, apocalypses, respawning and zombies and how understanding images of space and time may inform design for sustainable behaviour 194

Track 2

Digital futures/hybrid reality

Editorial 200
New crafts and craftspeople
 Fashion Craftsmanship 4.0. Learning experience about Industry 4.0 technologies for hybrid digital fashion-tech products, processes, and business model design 202
 Crafting hybrid workflows for the design of augmented textile artefacts 210

| | | | |
|--|-----|--|-----|
| Distance: digital immersive technologies and craft engagement | 214 | Fantastical reality: designing virtual urban space through extended reality | 333 |
| Notions of hybrid craft production: conversations and small-scale experiments in digital fabrication | 219 | The Metapolis – cities between a ripple and a blur | 338 |
| Research through design in the cyber-physical era | | Towards data activation and engagement within a smart city | 345 |
| Digital synesthesia in product design. Building a vocabulary of physical interactions for a sensible quantified self | 223 | Technology driven design education | |
| Digital content that offers experience of listening to crystallized music | 228 | Teaching design of technologies for collaborative interaction - an emerging pedagogical framework | 349 |
| The body can not be thought: the 'disabled body' as a catalyst to develop new paradigms for human-computer integration. | 232 | A mixed-method approach: virtual reality to co-create future higher education workspaces in a post COVID-19 academic environment | 357 |
| Metaphysical Instruments: prototypes for hybrid and live music-making | 236 | An attempt to integrate AI-based techniques into first year design representation course | 363 |
| Redefining the role of design(ers) | | Digital fashion | |
| Virtual skin: co-creating 3D materials with synesthetic artificial intelligence | 241 | The emperor is naked: deconstructed materiality in fashion NFTs | 368 |
| Cabinets of curiosities for the postcolony II: tokens: collections I-V | 245 | Dematerializing fashion- improving design-led sustainable and hybrid retail experiences via digital twins | 372 |
| Speculating futures in an age of nostalgia | 250 | Fashion archive as a meta medium: unfolding design knowledge through media technologies | 379 |
| Computational thinking in design and fabrication for augmented and accessible museums. | 254 | Fashion and the metaverse: from omni-channel to direct-to-avatar | 384 |
| Usability and performance of innovations | | Track 3 | |
| Usability and UX evaluation of an online interactive virtual learning environment: a case study of Wales' Virtual Hospital | 260 | Handle with care/inclusivity | |
| Design perspectives for the future of work in Industry 5.0 environment: the digital and physical space in Augmented Reality uses | 266 | Editorial | |
| Assessing the impact of immersive versus desktop virtual reality shopping experiences in the fashion industry metaverse | 271 | Design for/as communication | |
| A pilot study with the Shaper Origin to determine the learning curve of augmented fabrication | 276 | Encouraging humanitarian assistance in conflict zones through animated public service announcements | 392 |
| Design for and with extended reality | | The design of an engaging focus group discussion toolkit involving school-aged children following urotherapy | 397 |
| Introducing the material experience concept in the metaverse and in virtual environments | 280 | Inclusive Transformation of age-friendly communities based on digital technology support | 402 |
| Balancing authenticity and creativity: A VR system design for assisting in ceramic creation. | 287 | Taking care of the elderly through the tools of the animated communication design: a useful and ethical imperative | 408 |
| What is the furniture in the Metaverse for? | 292 | Pee poo period. Exploring the intersection between shame, bodily fluids, and sustainable design | 413 |
| Design for and with digital fabrication | | Design for diverse users | |
| Craft in the age of robots | 299 | Feminist value sensitive design of self-tracking technology based on female body data | 419 |
| Light it up: designing electronic textile with a light as a design material | 304 | Spatial "mutual altruism" as a relationship of care for homeless people. How design impacts social re-integration | 425 |
| Strategy for knowledge transfer in AM as a hybrid process chain towards a transition from prototyping to commercialisation | 309 | I'll be there for you: exploring a sense of belonging to enhance student engagement | 429 |
| Speculative tinkering on circular design materials through 3D printing | 317 | Inclusive design in the context of performative gender through product form | 433 |
| Flaws as features, new perspectives for developing an additive manufacturing design language | 322 | Landing the internship: the role of gender in finding ID internships | 438 |
| The digital on urban scale | | Object as the tool of recovery - Examining material culture of young refugees in Hungary for trauma processing | 443 |
| Designing smart product-service systems for smart cities with 5G technology: the Polaris case study | 328 | The food delivery industry and its lack of care in gender equality: the speculative case of 'GiGi' | 448 |
| | | Winning at more than a game! A storytelling board game concept to raise awareness about refugees' language barriers | 455 |

Care(ful) spaces

| | |
|---|-----|
| Cities for all: co-design interventions on urban features using inclusive technology | 461 |
| Separating Covid from non-covid: spatial adaptations in existing hospital buildings | 466 |
| Wayfinding is caring | 471 |
| Explore vacant public spaces regeneration to facilitate minor's activities and education under inclusive design principles | 475 |
| Human-space relationships as narrative processes for inclusivity | 480 |
| Urban darkness: human experience of atmosphere and fear | 485 |
| Daily social interactions of hawkers as a catalyst to actuating bottom-up spatial justice: experience from Hong Kong | 489 |
| The city of care through walkability and proximity. Researching on and with Generation Alpha on urban walkability assessment | 494 |
| Hinges, passages and comfort | 499 |
| Renewal of urban ecological transportation network based on inclusivity design — Take Sydney's "Livable Green Network" plan as an example | 504 |
| How to take care of the Antwerp modernist social housing of Alfons Francken? And how do this housing blocks take care of its changing population? | 510 |
| Inclusive innovation: a study of creative furniture design for urban community public space | 515 |

Co-creating care(ful) design

| | |
|--|-----|
| Health, care and prosthetics: co-design methodologies in the case of autofabricantes | 519 |
| See the unseen: a co-creation design process for children with incarcerated parents | 524 |
| The power of photovoice: AI support provides voicing opportunities for children in sex education | 529 |
| Co-design for the common good: a holistic approach to workspace projects | 533 |
| Co-designing neighbourhood identities. How to share memories and experiences towards a common sense of belonging | 538 |

Design(ers) & learning

| | |
|---|-----|
| Universal design for learning as an inclusive teaching methodology for an African art and culture course in Ghana | 544 |
| Material-led thinking as a practice of care: a strategy from art and design education | 550 |
| Artful care for self and others in daily design practice | 555 |
| Material metaphors: method for physicalising relations and experiences | 560 |

Design ethos

| | |
|--|-----|
| A South African approach towards a caring design practice | 565 |
| Weighing the tensions of nostalgia, necessity, and care in contemplating the future of the Nigerian design-scape | 570 |
| Food as a form of care: designing social innovative processes and practices | 575 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Designing with posthuman kinship: from posthuman theory to human-non human collaborative design approaches | 580 |
| Beyond empathy: how curiosity leads to greater care | 585 |

Inclusive approaches to intangible cultural heritage

| | |
|---|-----|
| Convention versus contemporaneity: the affordances of design-led mediation towards sustaining an ancestral cycle of linen making in Castelões, Portugal | 590 |
| Combining care for planet, people and culture towards circularity | 594 |
| Media art creation process using digitized archetype of Korean traditional dance movement | 600 |
| Envisioning design strategies for intangible cultural heritage activation | 604 |

Sustaining traditional crafts and techniques

| | |
|---|-----|
| Craft for care, design for life. Heritage contemporary enhancement and communication design tools as a resource for social changes, fostering diversity and inclusion | 610 |
| Embroidered heritage: a design-led visual ethnography of traditional Palestinian motifs | 615 |

Adaptation of the built environment

| | |
|--|-----|
| Design for Ukraine's heritage: engaging international students during times of war through design activism | 619 |
| The technical compatibility of vertical greening with built heritage | 624 |
| New design models for proximity retail and senior inclusion | 628 |
| Investigating spatial patterns of green infrastructure at built heritage sites in Antwerp, Belgium | 632 |
| From architecture to community: adaptive reuse as social practice | 636 |

Participation and role of communities

| | |
|---|-----|
| Methodology and evaluation of digital assets reconstruction of cultural heritage with visitor participation in museum | 642 |
| Community heritage: an immersive approach to disaster resilience | 646 |
| Caring for human diversity and built heritage through design: a multiple case study enquiry | 651 |

Poster abstracts

| | |
|---|-----|
| Adding value to the future through design and entrepreneurship: PLACE | 657 |
| A video game for emotion regulation of medical students | 658 |
| Video game design for ecological impacts | 659 |
| Dwell and move, change ensues | 660 |
| Transposing timelines | 661 |
| Artificial intelligence-aided type design for Chinese script | 662 |
| Design and reconstruction of the new interest youth community in china in the post-epidemic era | 663 |
| Sound E-scape: an interactive, digital application for music therapy and soundscape generation | 664 |
| Development of existing biophilic interior design definition | 665 |

| | | | |
|---|-----|--|-----|
| Design-driven approaches to human augmentation. An exploratory study | 666 | Human augmentation: the role of design in the design of on-body interfaces for cognitive-sensorial wellbeing | 718 |
| Designing with people: creating a multi-level interdisciplinary design education environment for more inclusion | 667 | A conception toward design narratives for innovation | 721 |
| Material connotations: meta-structure research of practice based projects with invasive species plant waste | 668 | Home away from home – The role of design methods in processing trauma of forced migration and loss of place | 725 |
| From collecting natural objects to presenting the future anthropocene: exhibition design for the anthropocene theme in museums | 669 | Decoloniality and healing: confronting inter-generational trauma/ideologies through architectural preservation and education | 728 |
| Catacombs: refuge on the border of the virtual and the real | 670 | The ephemerality of an organic material and its implications: a context specific study with invasive exotic species (Japanese knotweed) waste in Genk, Belgium | 731 |
| Hybrid specimens: Phygital artefacts at the intersection of analogue + digital crafts | 671 | Visual communication bridging intercultural barriers | 734 |
| Content management system in mapping movable objects | 672 | Feeling the future car: designing for driving pleasure in the era of co-driving | 737 |
| FlavourGame: interaction design in hybrid games | 673 | Mediterranean landscapes in emergency: nature and culture | 739 |
| Bibliometrics in circular design visual representation | 674 | Key Performance Indicators for measuring and evaluating users' sensory perceptions and behaviors in learning spaces in higher design education | 742 |
| Inclusivity as a hype phenomenon in advertising | 675 | Textile handcraft making and women creators' psychological well-being: a narrative review | 746 |
| Inclusion in recruiting | 676 | Cross-case analysis on the integration of extended reality (XR) with the design and planning of the built environment | 750 |
| Values, design and educational project: contemporary projections | 677 | Ecosystem services: an interpretive paradigm of urban and territorial heritage. Strategies, guidelines, and vision for sustainable cities | 754 |
| Project Hope : the creative revolution mural, a human singularity approach | 678 | Characteristic analysis of future-oriented design based on cognitive context theory | 757 |
| More-than-human ways of thinking through felting wool | 679 | Digital wellbeing and design | 760 |
| "Care strategies to strengthen heritage structures as a community asset during the pandemic: the case of Bahay Nakpil-Bautista" | 680 | Appropriation and appreciation of Austrian and Indonesian puppetry | 763 |
| A novel offloading insole system designed for healthcare | 681 | Reinventing the gastronomic experience: using interactive digital environments to raise awareness of food-related cultural heritage | 766 |
| Towards an embodied expression of pandemic nodes & networks in the age of social distancing | 682 | Developing cultural heritage sustainability from the perspective of participatory sentimental souvenir design | 770 |
| Cumulus Phd network | 683 | How does design intervention promote sustainable rural transition: an analytical framework based on the multi-level perspective model | 774 |
| Evolution of 'Mashrabiya' in the Middle East & North Africa - traditional wood carving technique revival | 684 | Designing future hybrid creative space using digital tools in educational institutions and organizations | 777 |
| Exploring the potential of material innovation to revitalize traditional crafts in Egypt | 687 | | |
| An overview of design suggestions for contemporary theatrical VR productions | 690 | Reviewers | 781 |
| Polymath interpolation in transdisciplinary open-ended design – design for conservation | 693 | | |
| Implementation of design culture as a strategic innovation through design-oriented industrial conversion and product diversification | 696 | | |
| Sustainable transformation of age-friendly community centres based on transition design | 700 | | |
| Parametric Joinery. Development of a system of configurable joints | 704 | | |
| Designing a ward inventory for a sustainable healthcare. Framework for healthcare providers of configurations among disposable medical devices, clinical procedures, and medical equipment in the neonatology department. | 707 | | |
| A safe space of creativity-designing with vulnerable female communities | 711 | | |
| The direction of wayfinding. From the identification of a place to the expression of its meaning. | 715 | | |

President's message - Design for Adaptation in Times of Complexity



Lorenzo Imbesi

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President, Cumulus Association

The 2023 Cumulus conference in Antwerp at the Faculty of Design Sciences of the University of Antwerp, in close collaboration with the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, is the second conference in Belgium in the history of Cumulus and it is taking back our large community in presence in Europe after the global pandemic. The very large attendance from all over the world during the four days of the conference is well speaking about the strong need to get back to share design projects, research, and educational experiences in person. The city of Antwerp was a perfect place to host the large global community of Cumulus, while standing as an economic and cultural center, where have been flourishing creativity and design for the development of the sectors of fashion, product design, and new media.

The topic selected by the co-Chairs Inge Bertels, Kristof Vaes, and Jouke Verlinden is revolving around the concept of connectivity and creativity in times of conflict, which is a very current topic challenging designers, artists, educators to discuss and explore on how culture and creative industry are offering clear solutions for resilience and innovation models on human scale, crossing the three sub-topics of sustainability, digital futures, and inclusivity.

While producing large number of paper presentations, panels, keynotes, PhD networking and working groups, the conference was developed around four track topics, raising four dichotomies: Nature positive/Design for transformation, Digital futures/Hybrid reality, Handle with care/Inclusivity, and Method/Art.

As a final result, the volume of the conference proceedings is sending a clear message to the large global design community to work and give a positive answer to the challenges of our present and future society. The design action is always impacting the society and the environment with creative solutions, since it deals with local and global emergencies. Aspects such as complexity and plurality, uncertainty and nonlinearity, or reciprocity, force every designer to a new responsibility to the "other", be it a person, an animal, vegetable, or artifact. Consequently, the design action is always a problematic and multidimensional action, that is answering to new questions in creative ways, often related to the technological acceleration and the social development: the environment and the ecology, justice and social equity, globalization and local cultures, new technologies and scientific research,

new forms of biological and artificial life and the responsibility towards future generations.

While exploring new approaches and addressing complex challenges through transdisciplinary collaboration, the conference addressed the notion of network, which is including openness, inclusivity, intelligence, evolution, innovation, sociability, creativity, development, so highlighting how it is important for the designers to adopt collaborative approaches to design.

Additionally, the notion of network is encompassing the mission of Cumulus Association to provide a global platform to encounter worldwide and to share knowledge: spanning all five continents and bringing together more than 350 members across different art, design and media educational institutions, Cumulus is a diverse global family, bound together by a multiplicity of experiences and perspectives, while fostering collaboration for creative solutions towards sustainability, equity and innovation. Since design is growing globally and becoming a large complex eco-system, it is essential for designers and educators to understand, and at the same time, to be connected to the proliferating global networks, so that they can develop new forms collaboration, and reach all those places in the world where research and innovation are moving in the direction of new scenarios for design.

While responding to the current and future challenges for design, the 2023 Cumulus conference at the University of Antwerp was reflecting and giving voice to such diverse and plural environment, so respecting the emerging differences and nurturing the values of plurality, global engagement, and open dialogue, at the same time generating a welcoming and friendly environment for innovation and a joyful experience for our members.

In the following pages of this volume, you will find part of the memories of such rich experience. The rest is staying in the mind, the soul and the actions of the people attending in Antwerp from all over the world, who will keep networking and collaborating after they are back, so extending the outcomes to the rest of our community even after the conference.



CONNECTIVITY
and CREATIVITY
in times of CONFLICT

Reviewers

Reviewers



We would like to thank all reviewers of manuscripts, posters, and workshops proposals for their valuable time and feedback:

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This book contains academic papers and posters of the Cumulus Antwerp conference, held in Antwerp on 12-15 April 2023. The Cumulus community, designers, artists, and educators were invited to submit contributions on how culture and creative industry can offer resilience, consolation, and innovation models on human scale, in line with the conference theme 'Connectivity and Creativity in times of Conflict'.

The contributions were double blind reviewed in the tracks

- 1) Nature positive/Design for transformation,
- 2) Digital futures/Hybrid reality,
- 3) Handle with care/Inclusivity, and
- 4) PhD network.

Editors: Kristof Vaes & Jouke Verlinden

