

Untangling Design Purpose



AN ISTITUTO MARANGONI LONDON & MACROMEDIA UNIVERSITY MUNICH DESIGN SYMPOSIUM

Wednesday 17th April 2024
09.00 – 16.00 (BST)
10.00 – 17.00 (CET)

In an era characterized by unprecedented complexity and interconnectedness, the role of design has never been more vital or challenging. Our world is a tapestry of intricacies, where design permeates every facet of our lives, shaping our interactions, environments, and experiences in profound ways.

However, design has become deeply tied to the extractive practices of unchecked market capitalism. Whether in urban planning, product, architecture, interiors, service, fashion, user interface design, or even the design of systems and innovation, the decisions that designers make can have profound consequences. Designers must first do no harm.

As design has progressed from a traditional craft to an advanced professional field and an academic discipline, it has consistently encountered barriers and obstacles, only to evolve and adjust in response to the demands and opportunities of the times. Design can either

perpetuate existing problems or offer innovative solutions and be a force of change; it can be a catalyst for sustainability, or inadvertently harm the environment; it can be a bridge between cultures and foster inclusivity, or carelessly perpetuate inequality.

The symposium Untangling Design Purpose will delve profoundly into the core essence of design today, all in pursuit of answering fundamental questions. Our overarching goal is to envision new potentials of design for a hyper-complex world, transcending its origins and problematics, and harnessing its capacity to evolve into a potent, pluriversal catalyst for the regeneration and transformation of people and planet.

Keywords:
design futures, symbiocene, global citizens, responsibility, critical design, commoning, pluriverse, regeneration, interconnection, ecological design.



PROGRAMME FOR THE DAY

Times given in CET, so please check against your own time zone

10.00	Welcome: Professor Oliver Szasz, Macromedia Munich and Dr Kirsten Scott, Istituto Marangoni London
10.10	Panel 1: Learning from the Pluriverse
11.35	Break
11.40	Morning keynote from Professor Caroline Hummels
12. 20	Project presentation 1: Lilli Gänsbauer and Peter Langwieser Unveiling Loneliness: A Design Perspective on Emotional Health
12.35	Lunch Break
13.25	Project presentation 2 – Simone Stubblefield: Trauma-Informed Design
13.35	Panel 2: Learning from Complexity
14.55	Break
15.00	Afternoon keynote – Professor Jonathan Chapman
15.40	Panel 3: Learning from Connection
16.50	Summary
17.00	Close

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Professor Jonathan Chapman

Jonathan Chapman is Professor & Director of Doctoral Studies at Carnegie Mellon University's School of Design where he leads the PhD in Transition Design—a research leadership program for designers committed to making positive change in the world.

He is the author of five books at the intersection of industrial design, human experience, and sustainability. His most recent book, *Meaningful Stuff: Design that Lasts* (MIT Press, 2021) calls for an “experience heavy, materials light” design sensibility that increases the quality and longevity of our relationships with products, and demonstrates why design can—and must—lead the transition to a sustainable future.

Chapman is a consultant and strategic advisor to global businesses and governmental organizations from Puma, COS, and Philips, to the House of Lords, the United Nations, and NASA. His Op-Ed for *The Guardian* outlining his research agenda received 1,000+ comments within hours of going live.

He is a Visiting Professor in Design at the Politecnico di Milano, and graduate student advisor at MIT, Cambridge University, Royal College of Art, and KAIST. He holds a PhD in Design (2008), MA in Design Futures (2001), and BA (Hons) in Industrial Design (1997).

At the age of 38, he became the youngest person in the UK to achieve the rank of Full Professor in Design. *New Scientist* described Chapman as “a mover and shaker” and a “new breed of sustainable design thinker.”



KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Professor Caroline Hummels

Caroline Hummels is Professor of Design and Theory for Transformative Qualities at the department of Industrial Design at the Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e). Her activities concentrate on designing and researching transforming practices. With her team and external stakeholders, including the Province of North-Brabant, Philips Design, RISE, Rijkswaterstaat, Enpuls and ZET, she leverages emerging technologies through which they jointly change practices to navigate transforming societies towards sustainable futures. Doing so, she focuses on being-in-the-world theories, embodied and aesthetics interactions, imagination, data-enabled design and participatory sensemaking. Her research questions questions practices and societies through theoretical lenses, including design-philosophy correspondence, in which philosophy informs design practice and design practice is used to philosophise, in order to tackle imminent societal challenges.

Caroline is founder and member of the steering committee of the Tangible Embedded, and Embodied Interaction (TEI) Conference, editorial board member of the International Journal of Design, member of the Dutch Design Week sounding board, and ambassador of CLIKCNL for the Key Enabling Methodologies related to 'Participation and co-creation'.





OUR PANELS AND PANELISTS

Panel 1:

Learning from the Pluriverse

Moderated by Kirsten Scott

1 **Meeting in Difference: Reflecting on Responsibility when Exchanging Across the Colonial Difference**

Presented by Jennifer Whitty, Associate Professor, School of Design, Victoria University of Wellington; Richa Sood, Associate Professor, Fashion Design, IIAD, Delhi; Angela Jansen, director of the Research Collective for Decoloniality & Fashion; Alua Duisenbeck, Kazakhstan.

2 **Fashioning Pluralities of Praxis in Harmony with Nature Through Chinese Indigenous Knowledge**

Presented by Oli Dong, Yan Yuan, Jennifer Whitty, Associate Professor, School of Design, Victoria University of Wellington.

3 **Fashion & Artisanal Work: Exploring the White Savior Complex in Design Collaborations**

Presented by Sandra Mathey García-Rada, Adjunct Professor at Parsons Paris.

4 **Relinquishing control, liberating design pluriversalism**

Presented by Marie Williams, founder and CEO of Dream Networks, and Camille Kramer-Courbariaux, YUX Co-founder and YUX Academy Director.

5 **Designing for Manas (Mind): The Indian Idiom of Purposeful Creation**

Presented by Sachin Sachar, Exhibition Designer, Archivist, Pedagogue, Storyteller, Delhi.



OUR PANELS AND PANELISTS

Panel 2:

Learning from Complexity

Moderated by Oliver Szasz

1 **Current, Industrial Design and Innovation Practices: Use Case Generation and Anticipation Facing Societal Expectations**

Presented by Dr Niklas Hermann Henke, Scientific Work Package Leader at Capgemini Engineering (Toulouse). Non-Permanent Research Member of the GRESEC laboratory (Grenoble).

2 **Future Makers: brands in a changing global landscape**

Presented by Scott Frankum, independent technology and strategic advisor, and Robert Meeder, professor of practice and global leader in fashion and sustainability

3 **Materiality, Process and New Technologies in Design: how do these design paradigms converge to assist in a regenerative future within contemporary design practice?**

Presented by Julie Ross, Programme Leader for MA Design at Istituto Marangoni London.

4 **Design and Complexity**

Presented by Dan Vlahos, Assistant Professor of Visual and Performing Arts at Merrimack College (Boston), and of Dan Vlahos Design.



OUR PANELS AND PANELISTS

Panel 2:

Learning from Connection

Moderated by Kirsten Scott and Oliver Szasz

1 **Decolonizing Design: Abandoning The False Promise of Modern Progress**

Presented by Dr Ricardo López-León, Design Sciences Center, Autonomous University of Aguascalientes, Mexico.

2 **Sensory Design: Broader modes of engagement for liberatory design**

Presented by Sugandha Gupta, Assistant Professor, Fashion Design and Social Justice, Parsons School of Design, New York.

3 **Regenerative Design Futures: De-institutionalising learning and disentangling from extractive narratives**

Presented by Dr Pavel Cenkl and Dr Mona Nasser, Regenerative Learning Network and Schumacher College.



PRESENTER BIOS

Pavel Cenkl is the Dean of Academic Affairs at Prescott College in Arizona (US) and the Founder and Director of the Regenerative Learning Network. His work focuses on the intersection of transformative learning, community and ecology and on finding the tangible steps we can take together toward a more regenerative and resilient educational future. Previously Head of Schumacher College (Devon, UK) and Dean of Sterling College (VT, US), Pavel writes and speaks widely about curriculum design and pedagogy, global learning networks, environmental humanities and philosophy and has developed programmes in ecology, humanities, outdoor skills and recreation, regenerative food and farming, and more. Pavel's books include *Transformative Learning: Reflections on 30 Years of Head, Heart, and Hands* at Schumacher College (with Satish Kumar, 2021); *Nature and Culture in the Northern Forest: Region, Heritage, and Environment in the Rural Northeast* (2010); and *This Vast Book of Nature: Writing the Landscape of New Hampshire's White Mountains, 1784–1911* (2006). His current book project is titled *Networked Learning: Transforming Higher Education through Distributed Learning*.

Yi Dong, lecturer, works in the College of Fashion and Art Design at Xi'an Polytechnic University (XPU), PRC. She is a researcher in fashion marketing, fashion buying and merchandise and design education. She is also a fashion buying consultant with several companies and is starting to explore ancient Chinese philosophy.

Alua Duisenbeck is a Kazakh woman who had worked in education sector in Turkistan at the time when the Responsible Fashion Series event took place. She reflects on generational knowledge she acquires from her grandmother and the nurturing stories that are told in the homes of Almaty, how they shape alternate realities and lift anxieties in the navigation of life in the modern capitalist society.

Scott Frankum is a technology developer, creative director and digital strategist with wanderlust and an MBA. He is a trusted strategy and technology advisor to MSMEs and boards worldwide.

Sugandha Gupta is the Assistant Professor of Fashion Design and Social Justice at Parsons School of Design. She is a textile artist, designer, and a disability advocate. Employing her embodied experiences as a woman with a disability, she creates sensory textiles that engage a wider audience through their senses. Her creative practice investigates materials through exploration, and transformation using traditional processes. Her research interests are at the intersections of disability, identity, and environmental justice. Gupta's disability advocacy at museums, national conferences, and universities, redefines disabilities as opportunities and strengths. Gupta is an established professional with over 15 years of experience. Her work has been showcased at American Crafts Council Show, Smithsonian Craft Show, Hunterdon Art Museum, NYTM, The Met, The United Nations Headquarters, and the Guggenheim Museum. She has won prestigious awards such as, Dorothy Waxman Textile prize, CFDA Design Graduate, and International Design Award.



PRESENTER BIOS

Dr Niklas Henke is Scientific Work Package Leader at Capgemini Engineering in Toulouse and part of the research team Future of People@Work / Comm@Work since July 2023. He works at the intersection of Design and Communication Research, combining artistic with scientific perspectives. He worked for innovation- and design / advertising agencies based in France and Germany, as Creative Strategist, User Interface Designer, User Interface Design Manager, and as a Freelance User Experience Researcher. His research focuses on the role of creativity and the human body in the context of modern technological transformations. He teaches theoretical and practical design and communication courses in Grenoble, Paris, Cologne and Duesseldorf.

Angela Jansen is a decolonial researcher, educator, consultant, curator and director of the Research Collective for Decoloniality & Fashion (RCDF). As a unique platform beyond institutional, disciplinary and geographical boundaries, the RCDF experiments with decolonial ways of knowledge-creation and sharing concerning body fashioning—through conversation, through the communal and coalitional and through deep listening broad diversity of voices across age, race, gender, education, discipline and geography.

Camille Kramer-Courbariaux is the founder of YUX, a pan-African research and design agency, leveraging design to imagine an Africa where people create their future based on their needs, culture & identity.

Ricardo Lopez-Leon is a Lead Researcher-Lecturer at the Design Sciences Center, Autonomous University of Aguascalientes, Mexico. Has a PhD in Art and Design Sciences by Autonomous Metropolitan University. Level 2 researcher at National Council of Science and Technology. Leader of the Integral Design Studies research group. Member of the Master in Arts faculty. Member of the editorial committees of different international Journals. Editor in chief of *Artificio*, a scientific journal for the Design Sciences. International lecturer participating in conferences around the world. Author in several international publications, focusing on the last years to research in Visual Studies, Design Theory, and Art & Design Education.

Sandra Mathey García-Rada is a Peruvian fashion researcher based in Paris. She holds an MA Fashion Studies from Parsons Paris and has previously studied Fashion Design at the Fashion Institute of Technology. She currently works as an Adjunct Professor at American universities in Paris, and her research focuses on the analysis of the legacy of colonialism in contemporary fashion practices.



PRESENTER BIOS

Robert Meeder is a renowned figure in fashion, design, and sustainability, has significantly influenced both academia and industry over 20 years. His expertise in textiles, management, and sustainable innovation has made notable impacts, particularly in promoting sustainable fashion in Sri Lanka. Meeder's academic credentials from the Royal Danish Academy and Höögskolan Borås underscore his interdisciplinary approach. His notable presentation of the world's first blockchain-enabled handloom textiles at Dutch Design Week 2023 exemplifies his commitment to integrating traditional crafts with cutting-edge technology. As a professor of practice, researcher in the field of craft and technology, and advisor to the EU, Meeder's insights into sustainable policy and design innovation are highly regarded. His mentorship and contributions to leading publications and conferences solidify his status as a key influencer and mentor in the design world, inspiring a new generation of designers with his visionary approach.

Mona Nasser is a researcher, educator, and consultant specializing in co-design and ecological education. Currently, she holds the position of Head of Research and Programme Lead for MA Ecological Design Thinking at Schumacher College and is also a member of the Regenerative Learning Network team. Mona is involved in interdisciplinary and international research projects focusing on climate change adaptation and mitigation in the global south. She is a longstanding member of the Jali Ardhi research team, where co-design is employed to facilitate community-led responses to soil erosion caused by climate change. In addition to participatory design education, Mona's teaching focuses on transformative processes, environments, and practices.

Julie Ross is Programme Leader for MA Design programmes at Istituto Marangoni London. Prior to this, she spent over twenty years living and working in Singapore, Sri Lanka and Kenya, in lecturing and senior management roles. Throughout this period her responsibilities included establishing new programmes, departments and academic specialist design streams. She specialises in sustainable design through recycled glass as a material application for product, interior and furniture design.

Sachin Sachar is a practicing exhibition designer, archivist, researcher, pedagogue, and storyteller. His Delhi-based maker's studio functions as a research lab, employing practice as a means of inquiry into design, crafts, and tradition. Since 2013, it has also evolved into a formal archive of material culture, encompassing both traditional and contemporary elements. With his active interest in India's indigenous knowledge systems and traditional ethos, his ongoing non-formal research titled "Paribhasha, paddhati, aur Siddhant" collates several definitions, studies processes, and re-articulates theories and underlying principles, shedding light on a distinct Indian idiom of feeling, thinking, doing, and being. As a visiting faculty member at esteemed institutions like NID, Ahmedabad, and IAD, Delhi, since 2012, Sachin shares his expertise. His latest endeavour, MY STORYEUMS, involves creating mini traveling museums that vividly convey aspects of traditional knowledge and material culture through multi-sensorial engagements and his heartfelt theatrical storytelling.



PRESENTER BIOS

Richa Sood is a designer, consultant, conceptualiser and Assistant professor at India Institute of Art and Design New Delhi. She holds MA Fashion Degree from Nottingham Trent University, u.k. With 22 years of work experience in Indian fashion she has worked with most well-known couture brands and retail brands. She is a specialist in graphic design for textiles and engineered digital prints for garments. She is a trained Indian classical dancer (Odissi) and an aspiring artist. She aims to blend her experience in design practice with design pedagogy and classroom learning.

Dan Vlahos is a Boston-based design leader, educator, and researcher. He is currently an Assistant Professor of Visual and Performing Arts at Merrimack College, where he serves as Director of the Undergraduate Graphic Design Program. He is also President of AIGA Boston. Vlahos' clients include Harvard University, Duke University, Educators for Social Responsibility, and the Industrial History Center. Dan received both an MFA and BFA from Massachusetts College of Art and Design—where he began teaching in 2009. Vlahos' research explores empowerment, complexity, dynamic media, sustainability, and creative learning. In 2020, Merrimack College's Interdisciplinary Institute named Vlahos a Presidential Fellow, and in the same year, he became a member of the Society of Printers in Boston. In 2021, Vlahos entered the Design Incubation program as a Writing Fellow. In 2023, he became a USGBC LEED Green Associate and the first AIGA Design Leader (DL) in New England.

Jennifer Whitty (Muintir na hÉireann) is an Associate Professor of Design. Her work aims to usher in a new era of deep systemic change for global fashion, that is expansive and diverse, rooted in social and environmental justice. She specialises in reimagining mindsets, models, and systems for fashion through the integration of theory, and practice. She has worked in key capacities as educator and designer in many leading design programmes and companies across the globe - USA, Europe, Asia and Australasia. Her various global clients include Conde Nast, Future Learn, & the United Nations.

Marie Williams is a playful chartered engineer, design lecturer, TedX speaker and CEO of Dream Networks. Her design practice is situated in designing regenerative, and culturally resilient play spaces. Her work seeks to deconstruct notions of what play constitutes and open up sustainable spaces where everyone can experience the joy of play. She does this by positioning users as design partners, adopting appropriate technologies and recentering play on interactions and desires. In 2016, she founded Dream Networks, and has collaborated with businesses, schools, and communities to co-design and build engaging play spaces designed by children in marginalised communities. To date, Dream Networks has adopted sustainable design practices to create inclusive play spaces for over 60,000 children in the UK and Africa. She has taught on design, innovation, and play at Universities in the UK, Kenya, and the USA such as Bristol University, Yale University, Arts Centre, and the University of Nairobi.



PRESENTER BIOS

Yan Yuan, Associate Professor, and Assistant Dean of College of Fashion and Art Design at Xi'an Polytechnic University (XPU) is an educator, researcher, designer and translator in the field of sustainable fashion, creative fashion design, and historical Chinese costume. Her work explores sustainable design for fashion through a lens of zero waste pattern cutting, ancient Chinese philosophy, deconstruction and reconstruction.

MODERATOR BIOS

Kirsten Scott is Head of Research at Istituto Marangoni London. Previously she has worked as Programme Leader at IML for a range of MA design programmes, including MA Fashion Design, MA Luxury Accessory Design, MA Interior Design and MA Product Design. Her PhD (RCA) explored cross-cultural communication through craft and her subsequent research has investigated and promoted the contemporary value of indigenous knowledge systems that reflect harmonious collaboration with nature. She also researches decolonized approaches to fashion education. She is founder of the Barkcloth Research Network, a cross-disciplinary research group of designers, artists, environmentalists, farmers and scientists across the UK, US and Uganda. Her focus as a designer and researcher has become increasingly holistic, multi-disciplinary, and activist.

Oliver Szasz has been a professor of media and communication design at Macromedia University in Munich since 2011 and oversees the international master's program in design management. Furthermore, he is co-founder and managing director of Culturesphere, a design consultancy and gallery based in Munich. Culturesphere focuses on the agency of design and the arts in general as a driving force for transformation within organizational, societal, and ecological realms with the aim to foster future-oriented perspectives that promote sustainable thinking and behavior. He also co-founded Symbio(s)cene, a social-profit organisation with the vision to contribute to shaping a new mindset that promotes thinking beyond the Anthropocene. Symbio(s)cene advocates distinctive strategies that interconnect sciences with artistic approaches and design methodologies, giving space to both cognitive and emotional dimensions of knowledge to foster regenerative solutions for sustainable human-nature relationships. His research and critical discourse focus on design-driven innovation, design-led research and technology-mediated design processes.