

## Special issue: Design of and with the “past”

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### Call for papers:

The intention of this special issue is to explore the politics of shaping designed environments by navigating the shifting (temporal) relations and conflicts between the “past”, “existing” and the “new”. When most things in the designed environment are already made, existing infrastructures, systems, materials, and objects, as well as practices of maintenance and repair, become more relevant than traditionally-prevailing calls for new design solutions and innovations. For example, up to 95% of existing buildings are expected to still be standing in 2050, with renovation and adaptation currently accounting for approximately 50% of all EU construction,<sup>1</sup> a ratio that will only increase as renovation rates are set to double.<sup>2</sup> This reversal invites us to revisit the relations between prospective disciplines and regimes which deal with creating the “new” and the “future” – such as design and architecture – and retrospective disciplines traditionally associated with representing the “existing” and the “past” – such as archaeology and heritage. From a European perspective, policies such as the New European Bauhaus<sup>3</sup> and the Davos Declaration<sup>4</sup> foreground the strengthening of interdisciplinary discourse and actions as a response to this challenge.

Overcoming knowledge silos requires both critical discussions and situated field accounts which observe and reveal the changing politics and emerging challenges resulting from the rising scarcity and uncertainty of place and resources. While it is not uncommon that disciplines operate in the same locations – whether consecutive, parallel or overlapping – the professional demarcations now often appear arbitrary, even reactionary. In order to transcend this and approach design in and of the designed environment in more transdisciplinary ways, as an editorial team composed of researchers in design, architecture, archaeology, heritage, and conservation we are inspired by broken world thinking that takes “erosion, breakdown, and decay, rather than novelty, growth, and progress” as starting points (Jackson 2014, p. 221). We invite authors of this special issue to engage with the notions of heritage ecologies (Bangstad & Pétursdóttir, 2021), recuperation and, reviving stories entangled with the design settings, but neglected by prevailing design narratives (Rosner, 2020), critical heritage studies (Harrison, 2012), broken world thinking and pluriversal approaches to designing (Escobar, 2018), beyond dominant global north ontologies as well as narrow human regimes (Tsing, 2015).

We invite contributions in the form of design research, (visual) reflections, inquiries, cases – empirical or critical, as well as speculative. We look forward to submissions which unsettle hampering knowledge regimes and break new ground with regard to how practices, methodologies and theories – across binary constructs – situate themselves in, and grow out of, the existing designed environment:

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<sup>1</sup> The Architects' Council of Europe, “The Architectural Profession in Europe 2022 Sector Study,” (Brussels, 2023): 28

<sup>2</sup> EC Renovation Wave Strategy 2020

[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/ip\\_20\\_1835/IP\\_20\\_1835\\_EN.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/ip_20_1835/IP_20_1835_EN.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/index_en)

<sup>4</sup> <https://baukultur--production--storage.s3.amazonaws.com/baukultur/2022-06-09-075742--context-document-en.pdf>

- What critical junctures between the “past” and the “future”, or the “existing” and the “new”, can be taken as starting points in thinking about such transdisciplinary approaches in design contexts? For example, how do societal challenges expressed in the Climate Crisis, such as resource exploitation, energy efficiency, sustainability, circular economy and the Anthropocene shape design politics, strategies and ways of thinking about and doing research in the designed environment?
- How do phenomena such as erosion, breakdown and decay invite the surpassing of disciplinary knowledge silos? What new forms of design practice, inspired by heritage conservation emerge from working in and with more-than-human and material ecologies? This poses the challenge of how to develop effective more-than-human living places and less damaging ways of living, within the conservative constraints of living with what is already here.
- How can situated, more integrated and everyday practices of *designing with the past and the existing*, challenge cultural, expert-led, institutional demarcations which define access and privilege in the designed environment?
- How does the engagement with the past and questions of maintenance, care, repair, and reuse lead to new and different kinds of transdisciplinary approaches to working with the existing designed environment? How can this, in turn, generate design approaches that strive towards more pluriversal politics, policies and legislation?

Please send your contributions in line with Design Issues Author Guidelines (see <https://direct.mit.edu/desi/pages/submission-guidelines> ) to [liesbeth.huybrechts@uhasselt.be](mailto:liesbeth.huybrechts@uhasselt.be) . We strive for approximately 5 articles (see submission guidelines) and 1 visual essay (3 pages). Please note that the submission and review process is conducted by us as an editorial team. In line with the way of working of Design Issues, the journal’s decision about acceptance of the special issue will only be made once the issue is ready. We are however confident we can turn this into a valuable collection.

#### **Timeline:**

First round of submissions (3000-4000 word draft paper) by the 20th of November.

The first decision and review will be shared on the 21st of December.

An online workshop will be held on the 8th of February to discuss the accepted draft papers with all authors involved, with the aim of revising and developing these drafts into full articles.

The revised papers will be submitted on the 4th of March.

The final decision will be shared on the 4th of May.

#### **Visual essay examples:**

Visual Essay examples (selection);

Anamarija Korolj, Leon Lai; Post-Atmosphere. *Design Issues* 2022; 38 (2): 80–86. doi:

[https://doi.org/10.1162/desi\\_a\\_00683](https://doi.org/10.1162/desi_a_00683)

general Artwork images from an exhibition

Danne Ojeda; “One and Three Books” Unfolded. *Design Issues* 2019; 35 (2): 101–112. doi:

[https://doi.org/10.1162/desi\\_a\\_00539](https://doi.org/10.1162/desi_a_00539)

Curatorial project about book design (from a course)

Paolo Patelli, Giuditta Vendrame; Friction Atlas: Making Authority Visually and Physically Discernible in Public Space. *Design Issues* 2018; 34 (4): 21–24. doi: [https://doi.org/10.1162/desi\\_a\\_00508](https://doi.org/10.1162/desi_a_00508)

Control/law exerted through design of public spaces

Victor Margolin; The Bicycles of China. *Design Issues* 2016; 32 (3): 92–97. doi:  
[https://doi.org/10.1162/DESI\\_a\\_00402](https://doi.org/10.1162/DESI_a_00402)

Artemis Yagou; The Collection of Technical Toys in the Deutsches Museum, Munich. *Design Issues*  
2016; 32 (1): 87–92. doi: [https://doi.org/10.1162/DESI\\_a\\_00368](https://doi.org/10.1162/DESI_a_00368)  
Photographs of toys in the museum

Paul Stiff; Designing Information for Everyday Life. *Design Issues* 2014; 30 (3): 78–83. doi:  
[https://doi.org/10.1162/DESI\\_a\\_00280](https://doi.org/10.1162/DESI_a_00280)