



Outlook

[External] Abstract Submission for SiDE Symposium @TU Delft

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Thanks for filling out [Abstract Submission for SiDE Symposium @TU Delft](#)

Here's what was received.

Abstract Submission for SiDE Symposium @TU Delft

The symposium, “What Was Sustainability?: The Past, Present, and Future of Sustainability in Design and its Education,” March 26-27, 2025 at the Delft University of Technology, will bring together educators and researchers to explore the history of sustainability, as a concept and set of practices, in design and design education. The symposium will focus in part on the story of industrial design at TU Delft, with the goal of contextualizing that within larger narratives of Dutch, European, and global design education, as well as of sustainability beyond design. A collaboration with IIT Delhi and a counterpart to the SiDE Symposium there in January ([link](#)), we are interested in transnational, comparative, and postcolonial/decolonial perspectives. Though the center of gravity will be industrial design, we welcome perspectives on related design fields. And finally, though our orientation is historical, we are open to studies that help us build a better understanding of the present state of sustainable design and suggest directions for the future.

We therefore welcome proposals for short presentations, to become part of small paper sessions or workshops, on topics including:

- The history of particular programs or courses on design for sustainability/sustainable design.
- The intellectual history of sustainability or sustainable design.
- Critical discourse analysis of “sustainability,” particularly around design.
- Histories of other relevant areas of design and design education, such as social responsibility.
- Comparative studies of sustainability in industrial design, communication design, architecture and urbanism, crafts and fashion design, etc.
- Critiques of sustainability in design or design education, e.g. as it relates to capitalism and growth economics.

We seek extended abstracts of 600 words explaining the argument or intervention, methods and disciplines, and area of design.

Submissions should be submitted by February 28. Decisions will be delivered by the end of the following week.

Some of the papers presented will be included as chapters in a book on the conference theme.

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Submit the Abstract

We seek extended abstracts of 600 words explaining the argument or intervention, methods and disciplines, and area of design.

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Title *

Reimagining Design Education to Engender Sustainable and Inclusive Futures:
Developing More-than-Human Design Pedagogy

Abstract *

Improving sustainable education and expertise amongst next generation design students is crucial to redressing our planet's climate emergency. From seminal contributions by luminaries Papanek [1] and Fry [2], to more recent work, like Boehnert et al [3] and Noel et al [4], a substantial body of post-war scholarship has expounded methodologies for implementing sustainable design pedagogy. Yet, much existing literature speaks less to embedding sustainability theory and practice into educative forums and speaks more to realising such strategies in commercial and organisational design settings. In the UK context, there has been a near 70% decline in school-age pupils choosing design-oriented subjects since 2010 [5], whilst the environmental-social-economic benefits of studying creative disciplines including design at college and university remain hugely undervalued [6]. In light of such learning stagnation, and with planetary boundaries ever closer to tipping point [7] it is evident more pedagogic work still needs to be done. Responding to this challenge, this paper outlines how we can rethink design education to positively re-engage pupils with Sustainable Design knowledge and skills – specifically by embodying an inclusive, More-than-Human perspective. Our geological ('geo') era, the Anthropocene, is characterised by a complex network of multi-scale interrelations and dependencies between ecological 'zoe' actants (including flora, fauna, funga, water, climate), and technological 'techno' actants (including materials, componentry, devices, data, AI) [8]. Whilst 'techno' products, services and infrastructure will likely aid the transition to Net Zero and Circular Economies of future, their increasing adoption is also creating significant planetary issues like resource depletion, carbon emissions and toxic waste [9]. As Haraway [10] stresses, technologies are never neutral – they actively embody the unsustainable, financially driven, effective accelerationism of their corporate developers [11]. The recent rapid advancement of AI also means 'techno' actants are quickly becoming 'moral agents' which can autonomously make decisions that impact the natural environment with or without our individual/collective consent [12]. This paper contends that by harnessing a More-than-Human lens, tutors can pedagogically support students in developing critical and creative proposals that more sustainably and inclusively negotiate today's deeply entangled 'zoe-techno-geo' assemblage [13]. Using a UK university undergraduate module as its substrate, the paper explores how the novel union of More-than-Human-Centred Design [14] and Speculative Design [15] methods can be leveraged, alongside Constructive Alignment techniques [16] and 'glocal' education policies (e.g., [17]) to scaffold this approach. To help make its case, the paper showcases design work that serve as tangible exemplars of More-than-Human Design Pedagogy in action. This includes Micro, an 'unnatural' health supplement prototype, which critiques the growing impacts of micro-plastic pollution upon ocean biodiversity, and Re:Play, an educational 'STEAM' game repair toolkit developed to support technology circularity in local communities. These embodiments highlight how More-than-Human Design Pedagogy interrogates long held norms in undergraduate design education by questioning what exactly what constitutes 'good' sustainable and inclusive praxis. This disruptive approach also pushes beyond the common yet ineffective habit of simply 'bolting on' top-down sustainability criteria to existing teaching and learning activity [3]. Moreover, it emancipates students from myopic, technological deterministic thinking [18], allowing them to rationalise the potential implicit environmental implications 'techno' actants may bring (e.g., risks, trade-offs, defuturing [2]) as part of their design process, alongside the explicit socially

beneficial applications. In sum, the paper demonstrates how curricula built upon More-than-Human Design Pedagogy fosters independent development amongst students which is innovative, reflexive, and most importantly, sustainable, both in terms of designerly and real-world intent. At the same time, More-than-Human Design Pedagogy facilitates educators in reimagining learning outcomes that better equip students with the design mindset, skills, and resilience they need to tackle socio-technical sustainability challenges once post-study.

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3 Key Words *

Design Pedagogy; Sustainable Futures; More-than-Human

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