

From design rebels to global scholars: 30 years of EAD breaking the mould

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It's been 30 years since a group of young design researchers rebelled against the orthodoxy in UK design research at the time to suggest a new, inclusive European focus to design research. This was the birth of the European Academy of Design, more often known affectionately as the EAD. Led by Rachel Cooper collaborating with many other (often female) design researchers, the EAD is characterized by a desire to maximize inclusivity, supporting emerging as well as experienced design academics to express themselves through peer-reviewed design research and writing. A journey through the EAD archives finds contributions from some of the titans of design research, often exploring embryonic or emerging ideas that have gone on to be mainstays of the design research landscape. Soon after the first EAD conference in 1995, the Design Journal was born, a close sibling and enduring partner of the EAD. Accessibility is the bedrock of the EAD; anyone who has attended one of the 14 EAD conferences is made a lifelong member without need to pay a subscription fee. This desire is to make attending design conferences affordable, where merit, not the wealth, of their organization is the deciding factor. The last conference in 2023 was hosted simultaneously in India, Brazil, Finland, Spain, and the UK, bringing physical and virtual communities together around the world. 2024 saw a free 18-h global writing event where over 200 participants contributed to a research-writing event that followed the sun around the world from Macau to Indiana, with design researchers learning from each other in a wonderful diversity of cultures and nationalities. Many experienced academics supported this event. Often, they were members of the Design Journal Editorial Board, a testimony to the close relationship between EAD and the Design Journal. EAD continues to innovate in how it supports the dissemination of excellent, emerging design research always, though, with a commitment to peer review. We share this with The Design Journal, and this commitment to quality is demonstrated in the papers presented in this issue of the Journal.

Kaygan and Kaygan (2024) examine the roles of healthcare professionals in the development of medical devices within seamless multimodal experiences (SMEs). They highlight the growing trend of collaboration between designers and healthcare professionals owing to the rise of patient-centred healthcare. They articulate a lack of literature detailing the specific roles these professionals take in such collaborations. Through interviews with 32 professionals in Ankara, Turkey, the study identifies four key roles: business partners, expert users, mediators, and medical professionals. These roles shape product specifications, user experience, and business strategy, ultimately influencing design outcomes. Their work contributes to a broader understanding of collaborative medical design processes.

Song and Wang (2024) present SMEC, a card-based participatory design tool aimed at enhancing SMEs in connected and autonomous vehicles. With the growing complexity of multimodal interfaces, they emphasize the need for participatory design methods to balance user preferences with technical constraints. SMEC was developed based on the SME framework and refined through iterative testing with end users