



DRS 2024 Theme Track Proposal

Designing (for) Transitions and Transformations: Imagination, Climate Futures, and Everyday Lives

Track chairs

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Track chairs are also part of the review panel

Abstract

The urgency of crises in planetary health—climate, biodiversity loss, inequality, and others—has made design’s role in transformative change ever-more important in the pursuit of sustainable, just and resilient futures. Arising from distinct disciplinary traditions within academia, the fields of design, futures, transitions, sustainability science and allied approaches (with their own norms, frameworks, and methods) are increasingly converging. Emerging from this space are new configurations and integrations, especially in practical applications where policymakers, communities, businesses, and new forms of organisation are engaging with the challenges we face—often situated and local, but interdependent within the complex systems of society and the environment.

In design research, approaches such as transition design (Irwin et al, 2015) feed into a fertile landscape where futures studies, speculative and critical design, pluriversality (Leitão et al, 2021), imagination infrastructuring, justice (design justice, climate justice, just transitions), more-than-human and nature-inclusive perspectives (e.g. Veselova et al, 2022), emotions in transitions (e.g. Lindström et al, 2021), alternative economics, regenerative design, non- and decolonial perspectives (e.g. Juri et al, 2021), feminist perspectives, design education (and futures literacy), and many other lenses on transformative change are overlapping, creating a new space for exchange and exploration.

This track aims to help this emergent community discover each other and cross-pollinate—enabling new connections, collaborations and learnings, and a first step towards building a DRS Special Interest Group. We build on tracks, conversations, and workshops at DRS 2018 (Boehnert et al, 2018) and DRS 2022 (Coops et al, 2022; Light et al, 2022) specifically focusing on designing for transitions or nurturing transformative futures by/through design.

Indicative references

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