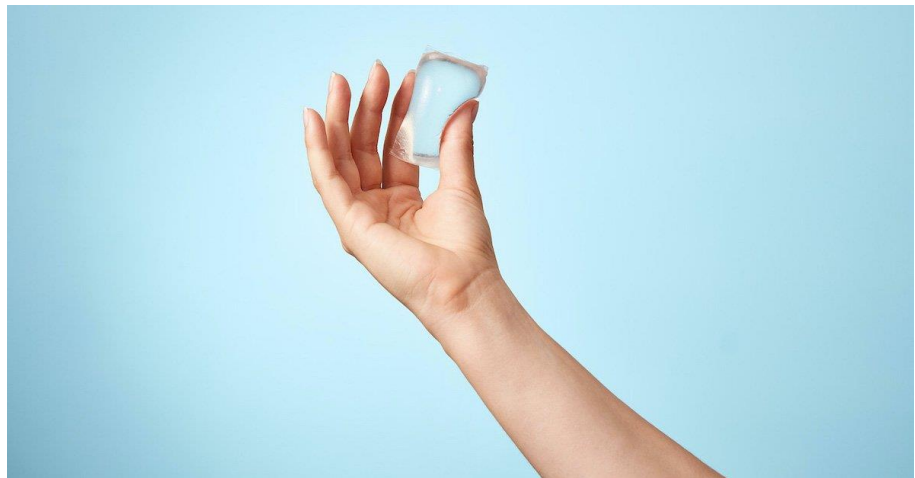


Questions of Scale: Economy and Ecology



Thursday 10 February 2022

12.00 – 17.00

Tickets: £14 (student/concessions £12)

Join our first **Future Observatory** symposium, where designers, academics and economists will explore the metrics of scale and success in design and their impact on our environment. Hosted in conjunction with the exhibition **Waste Age: What Can Design Do?**

When it comes to innovation in design, success is often measured by scale. The perennial question is: how to scale up? Impact is counted in millions of units or the percentage of market share. But what if scale is a problematic metric? What if more is not necessarily better? Indeed, what if many of the environmental challenges we face are the result of processes and materials deployed at too large a scale?

The first Future Observatory symposium focuses on design research that challenges our understanding of scale. From the laboratory to the bioregional to the planetary, it will enquire whether there are appropriate and inappropriate scales of production. What do we mean by 'local' and are there natural limits of growth beyond which ecosystems or human networks suffer? Are myriad small-scale solutions superior to standardised, globalised ones? This half-day event will bring together designers, researchers, policy-makers and businesspeople to explore the measures of success.

The symposium will be held in the Design Museum's main auditorium with a bespoke stage set designed by Material Cultures, commissioned to respond to the Questions of Scale symposium. Event tickets include entry to **Waste Age: What Can Design Do?**.

Programme:

12.00 – 12.15: INTRODUCTION

Tim Marlow, Director, Design Museum
Justin McGuirk, Director, Future Observatory

12.15pm – 13.15: SESSION ONE, REGIONAL SCALES

'Local' is a watchword of environmental thinking but the networks and materials required for effective localism are often unexplored. In response to planetary systems and crises, architects and designers are increasingly practising within bioregions, drawing on resources offered up by the surrounding landscapes and their communities.

Christian Benimana, MASS Design Group (joining remotely)
Summer Islam, Material Cultures
Jan Boelen, Atelier Luma (joining remotely)

Panel chaired by Stephanie Sherman, Central Saint Martins

13.15 – 14.15 LUNCH

14.15 – 15.15: SESSION TWO, TIMESCALES

How is a time a factor in designing for the transition to carbon neutrality?
Are designers thinking according to longer timescales – those determined by forestry growth, land stewardship or educational cycles – with future needs in mind?

Helen Gordon, Author: Notes from Deep Time
Andrea Trimarchi and Simone Farresin, Formafantasma (joining remotely)
Andrew Waugh, Waugh Thistleton Architects

Panel chaired by Justin McGuirk

15.15 – 15.45: BREAK

15:45 – 16:45 SESSION THREE, ECONOMIC SCALES

Ethical products and technologies have to compete against dominating multinationals and, at the same time, vast industries balk at the structural changes the climate crisis demands. Economies of scale are essential to societal impact and yet, beyond a certain point, become detrimental to change.

Rodrigo Garcia Gonzalez, Notpla
Nirav Patel, Framework (joining remotely)
Rebecca Earley, Centre for Circular Design

Panel chaired by Hettie O'Brien, the Guardian

16.45 CONCLUSION

17.00 SYMPOSIUM ENDS

Speakers:

Andrea Trimarchi and Simone Farresin, Formafantasma

Formafantasma is a research-based design studio investigating the ecological, historical, political and social forces shaping the discipline of design today. Italians Andrea Trimarchi and Simone Farresin founded the studio in 2009 and their aim is to facilitate a deeper understanding of both our natural and built environments and to propose transformative interventions through design and its material, technical, social, and discursive possibilities. Working from their studio in Milan (Italy) and Rotterdam (The Netherlands), the practice embraces a broad spectrum of typologies and methods, from product design through spatial design, strategic planning and design consultancy. Their work has been exhibited at the Design Museum, the V&A, MoMA, Metropolitan Museum, Art Institute Chicago, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Stedelijk Museum and many more internationally as well as a solo exhibition at Serpentine Galleries.

Andrew Waugh, Waugh Thistleton Architects

Andrew is a Founding Director of Waugh Thistleton Architects, a practice dedicated to delivering buildings and places of the highest architectural quality that acknowledge their impact on the environment. He is a world renowned spokesperson for low impact materials and innovative delivery methods in architecture, and lobbies and lectures internationally, communicating the urgent need for change to mitigate the climate crisis. A pivotal player in the global shift towards renewable, bio-based materials, Andrew's innovative approach to design has been acknowledged by a RIBA President's Award for Research and a Stirling Prize nomination in 2018 for Bushey Cemetery which uses traditional rammed earth construction to create a sensitive, contextual architecture.

Christian Benimana, MASS Design Group.

Christian Benimana is a Senior Principal and Managing Directors of MASS Design Group, and is Director of the African Design Centre, a field-based apprenticeship set to empower leaders to design a more equitable, just, and sustainable world. Benimana has been listed among 10 architects and designers that are championing Afrofuturism and has taught at the Architecture School of the former Kigali Institute of Science and

Technology with a goal to develop the next generation of African designers with socially-focused design principles. Before joining MASS, Benimana worked with LongiLat Architecture and Research in Shanghai assisting with the Porsche Center in Shanghai and the Netherlands Pavilion in the 2010 International Expo.

Helen Gordon, Author: Notes from Deep Time

Helen Gordon's books include *Notes from Deep Time* (Profile), *Landfall* (Penguin) and, with Travis Elborough, *Being a Writer* (Frances Lincoln). She has written about nature, science, clothes and books for various newspapers and magazines including the Economist's 1843 magazine, the Guardian and Wired UK. A former Granta magazine editor, she currently teaches creative writing at the University of Hertfordshire.

Hettie O'Brien, the Guardian

Hettie O'Brien is opinion editor at the Guardian and was previously a writer and editor at the New Statesman. Her reporting has been published in the Guardian, the New Statesman, Times Literary Supplement and elsewhere. Previously, Hettie worked as a reporter in Washington D.C. covering the federal trade commission and as a researcher at Rethinking Economics.

Jan Boelen, Atelier Luma

Jan Boelen is a curator of design, architecture, and contemporary art. He is rector at the Karlsruhe University of Art and Design (HfG) and artistic director of Atelier LUMA, an experimental laboratory for design in Arles, France. Boelen is the founder and former artistic director of Z33 – House for contemporary art in Hasselt, Belgium. He was curator of the 4th Istanbul Design Biennial in Istanbul (2018) and initiated Manifesta 9 in Belgium (2012). Lastly, Boelen curated the Lithuanian Pavilion *Planet of People* in the Venice Architecture Biennial (2021). Boelen recently edited *Social Matter, Social Design: For Good or Bad, all Design is Social* (Valiz, 2020), and his writing addresses the implications of design in everyday life and how artistic practices shape the discipline.

Nirav Patel, Framework

Nirav Patel is Founder and CEO of Framework. Before starting Framework, he was part of the founding team of Oculus and led the hardware team through the first few years of growth and a handful of excellent VR headsets. He left Oculus (and Facebook) in 2019 to fix the broken, inefficient, and wasteful consumer electronics industry by building great products that are designed to be upgradeable, customizable, and repairable.

Rebecca Earley, Centre for Circular Design

Rebecca is an award-winning designer and Professor of Sustainable Fashion Textile Design at the UAL. She is based at Chelsea College of Arts where she is Co-Founder and Director of Centre for Circular Design (CCD). Rebecca's practice and research encompass making materials and prototypes, exhibition curation and writing. She particularly enjoys the challenge of educating and inspiring audiences into more sustainable choices and actions towards circular futures.

Rodrigo Garcia Gonzalez, Notpla

Rodrigo Garcia Gonzalez is a Designer, Architect, and Inventor. He is the Co-Founder and Co-CEO of Notpla, a London based start-up with the goal of making packaging disappear. Currently, he is a senior lecturer of Product and Furniture Design at Kingston University and a visiting tutor at Imperial College and Royal College of Art. Rodrigo received his architectural degree from the ETSAM, Technical University of Madrid, and studied at Umeå Institute of Design, Imperial College of London and Royal College of Art. His works have been shown in different artistic centers such as the Cite de l'Architecture of Paris and the Venice Biennale of Architecture. As a senior lecturer, he has collaborated with different universities and institutions as Cornell University, CEPT, Imperial College, Royal College of Art or Kingston University.

Stephanie Sherman, Central Saint Martins

Stephanie Sherman is a design director, strategist, producer, and writer. Working across urbanism, technology, and culture, her projects repurpose outmoded systems as collaborative platforms. She currently directs the MA Narrative Environments at Central Saint Martins, collaborates with Autonomy (a think tank on the future of work), and produces marathon radio broadcasts with Radioee.net

Summer Islam, Material Cultures

Summer Islam AADipl (hons) ARB is a founding Director of Material Cultures. She has extensive experience of leading prominent cultural and community projects from inception to completion. Her work is focussed on the holistic integration of construction technologies and design. Summer co-runs 'Construction in Detail' in the Spatial Studies department at the University of the Arts London. Summer has taught at the Bartlett, University College London, the London Metropolitan University, the Architectural Association and the University of Cambridge. She was previously an associate at award-winning design practice 6a architects in London. Summer co-founded architecture and design practice Studio Abroad with George Massoud in 2014.