

Q1 2026 — 1<sup>st</sup> Issue

# SOCIAL DESIGN NETWORK NEWSLETTER

Projects, ideas, and learnings from the social design community.



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## EDITORIAL NOTE - 01

Welcome to the very first edition of the Social Design Network newsletter—we're delighted to start this new year with you.

You're receiving this email because we've crossed paths before, whether at one of our conferences, events, or gatherings, and you expressed interest in the work we do. We truly appreciate that connection and are glad to continue the conversation here.

This newsletter will be shared quarterly and aims to offer useful updates from across the social design network and its community—highlighting ongoing projects, opportunities for collaboration, open positions, grants, and inspiring ideas worth sharing.

In this first edition, you'll find a curated mix of upcoming events, learning opportunities, projects and funding calls, recent publications, helpful resources, and invitations to collaborate.

Our hope is that this newsletter helps strengthen ties within our growing community and supports our shared goal of making design more equitable and creating positive social impact.

As this is our very first edition, we welcome your suggestions for future issues of the newsletter.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

Warm regards,  
The Editors: Flavia Alice Mameli and Zsófia Pataky

## NETWORK HIGHLIGHTS - 02

02.2 – Projects & Community Activities

### **Reassessing the Social – Understanding Transformation** - Proceedings of the 2025 Social Design Network Conference

**Reassessing the Social – Understanding Transformation -**  
Proceedings of the 2025 Social Design Network Conference

We're pleased to share that the **proceedings of the Social Design Network Conference 2025** are now published and freely accessible. Over three days in September 2025, more than 200 researchers, practitioners, and PhD candidates from 25 countries gathered in Lucerne and Berne to discuss how social design is being reshaped by intertwined crises and transformations. The PhD Symposium in Bern opened the convening, highlighting engaged research and emerging voices, while the conference in Lucerne expanded the conversation across talks, workshops, exhibits, and experimental formats.

The published proceedings grow out of these exchanges. Spanning almost 500 pages, they bring together over 30 peer-reviewed contributions that examine questions of socio-ecological transformation, participation, conflict, and pedagogies for (eco-)social transformation. Taken together, the volume documents a broad range of contemporary international debates and approaches in social design, offering a reflective view across sessions, disciplines, and geographies.

Michael Speranza developed the visual language of both the conference and the proceedings. Our sincere thanks go to all authors, reviewers, collaborators, partners, and the conference teams at HSLU and HKB..

**Access the full proceedings here:**

<https://zenodo.org/records/17559020>



## 02.1 – Upcoming Events

### **“Sè Design” “International Research Festival - Elvira Todaro**

The "Sè Design" Festival (November 2025 - February 2026) is a hub for significant studies and projects in the various interdisciplinary research fields of Eco and Social Design, combining traditional and innovative contributions, historical memory and contemporaneity, and both well-known and lesser-known investigations and applications. In line with the C.O.M. City Open Museum Project, the festival presents and promotes a new research and development network focusing on emerging design approaches geared toward eco-sustainability and social participation, self-generative design, creative, performative, and cultural production. These projects are aimed at reinvention, care, creative preservation, and well-being, international and multicultural dissemination, creative and responsible enjoyment and experience.



## **Unlearning Power in Design -**

Eva Liisa Kubinyi, Janka Csernák, Hatice Kesdi, Shilpa Das

Four of SDN's **Empowerment and Inclusion Special Interest Group** members (Eva Liisa Kubinyi, Janka Csernák, Hatice Kesdi, Shilpa Das) collaborated to share teaching practices across feminist studies, participatory theory, and disability studies. During a three-day intensive course at the Estonian Academy of Arts, they facilitated discussions on power with ten graduate design students, drawing on case studies from India, Turkey and Hungary.

A horizontal, safe learning environment encouraged open exchange and personal reflection, concluding with individual and collective insights on unlearning in design.

The collaborative plans to continue with the co-teaching subgroup. The course's focus will change each time according to the host institution.

At the beginning of this year, they hope to organize a joint brainstorming session and create a shared agenda for 2026.





02.2 – Projects & Community Activities

**When Technology Designs Us – How Artefacts  
Shape the Social - Social Design Masterclass Series vol 1. -  
Durre Ali Shehwar and Ariel Guersenzvaig**

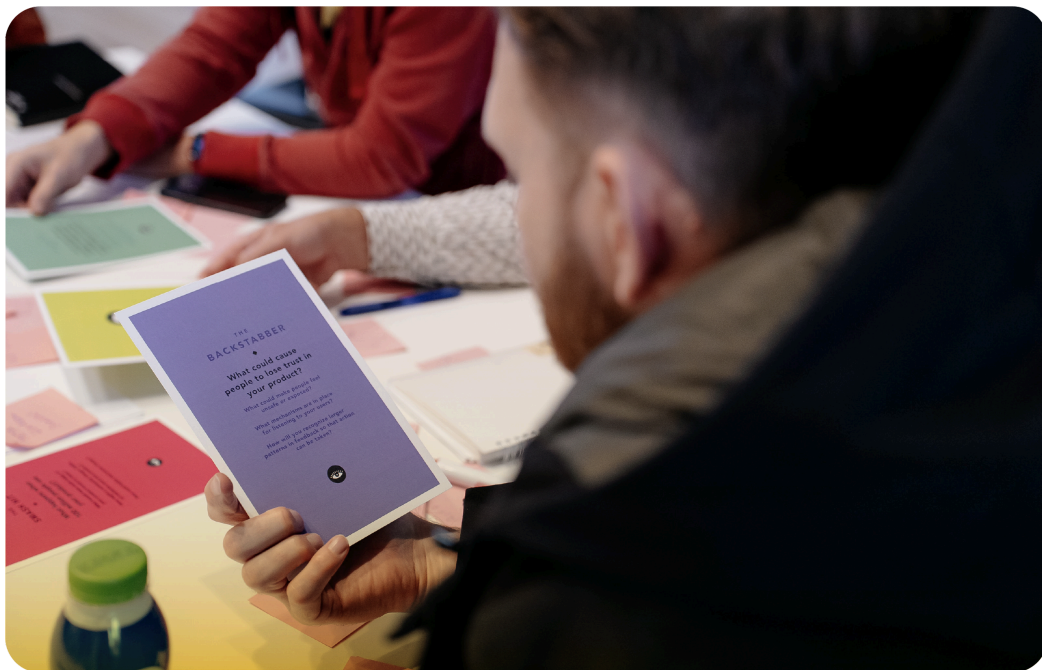
At the end of November 2025, we launched the very first session of the new Social Design Masterclass series with MOME Open – exploring how technologies and artefacts shape our social worlds. We had the privilege of learning from two outstanding tutors: **Ariel Guersenzvaig** – design & technology ethicist exploring the societal impact of machine intelligence and the ethics of professional design.

**Durre Shehwar Ali** – multidisciplinary designer and educator whose work interrogates power, neocolonialism, and frictionless solutionism in design and pedagogy.

The course kicked off with an on-site session at MOME Budapest, where invited participants impressed us with their engagement, curiosity, and thoughtful perspectives. Their contributions set a meaningful tone for the days ahead.

The two-day online deep dive built on that momentum, we dug even deeper into how technologies shape social life – and how we can approach these dynamics with criticality, strategy, and care.

**Course information:** <https://open.mome.hu/when-technology-designs-us/>



## 02.2 – Projects & Community Activities

### **"Designing Connections – Embracing Loneliness Through Design"** - EKA × Kyushu University joint course

Loneliness is increasingly recognised as a significant public health and societal challenge. The **Estonian Academy of Arts (EKA)** and **Kyushu University** responded to this agenda through a joint course, "Designing Connections: Embracing Loneliness Through Design," exploring how relational design approaches can help strengthen social connectedness and everyday wellbeing. In November 2025, mixed Estonian-Japanese student teams presented five projects at the final course presentation. The course started online, continued with the Kyushu University team's visit to Tallinn in early September, and finished with a workshop in Japan in October.

This collaboration has been exhilarating and thought-provoking, full of creative tension, cross-cultural learning, and the kind of challenge that pushes everyone involved - students and teaching and support teams in Estonia and Japan alike: **Melanie Sarantou, Tanel Kärp, Daniel Kotsjuba, Zhang yanfang, Tokushu Inamura, Yas Hirai, Heloísa Seratiuk Flores, Karolina Lehtma, Sandra Mell, Naoko Hamabe, Janne Kukkk** and others. customer quote, or to talk about important news.

The project has been supported by the **Erasmus Program**.



02.3 – Grants

**Intercultural Craft.**  
**A bridge between traditional knowings and cultures**  
- Margherita Vacca

The [Intercultural Craft project](#) concluded in July 2025, and saw the joint eco-social design team **UNIFI DIDA (Italy)** and **ELISAVA (Spain)** collaborate with other project partners from Italy, Slovenia, Spain, and Greece to design and develop practices for the socio-professional inclusion of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers through the creation of training activities in intercultural craftsmanship and the circular economy. The final evaluators recently announced that the research project received a 100/100 rating from the Italian National Agency for **Erasmus+**.

Based on the good results, the team is planning the submission of Intercultural Craft 2 soon.

More information on the project: <https://www.inter-craft.eu/>



# Inter Craft

A BRIDGE BETWEEN  
TRADITIONAL KNOWINGS  
AND CULTURES

02.3 – Grants

## **Fruska 2.0 Project** - Janka Csernák

The FRUSKA research project, founded and led by **Janka Csernák (Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, Budapest)**, is a design-focused educational program that supports the social mobility of disadvantaged girls aged 10-18 through creativity, maker activities, and shared learning experiences. Rooted in participatory design and mutual learning, the program emphasizes supportive teaching and peer-to-peer mentorship to build self-esteem, autonomy, and the confidence to shape their own environments and futures. Through a four-part workshop series participants engage in the design and customization of everyday objects. These hands-on activities not only teach practical skills but also help the girls develop technological, self-awareness, and social competencies that can improve their long-term opportunities.

In its fifth year, **FRUSKA 2.0** is expanding to rural areas with a mobile workshop bus. Co-designed with students, it brings creative learning to schools, youth clubs, and community centres, while sharing an adaptable method with educators to support resilient and empowered girl communities.

More information on the project:

<https://mome.hu/en/projektek/fruska>

Interview about the project: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxOxVTnp17s&t=8s>



02.4 – Resources & Publications

**From data to codex: making knowledge public framing participation through participatory data physicalization**

- Matteo Moretti

This [article](#) explores **Participatory Data Physicalization** (PDP) as a design approach for transforming data into shared knowledge through embodied, spatial, and collaborative practices. By

reframing PDP as a form of collective and situated writing, the paper proposes an expanded notion of the codex as an open, negotiable space. Drawing on four case studies, it identifies key dimensions—data, bodies, time, and facilitation—and shows how PDP can reshape public engagement with data, supporting civic education, social communication, and empowerment.

**Access to publication:**

<https://pgjournal.aiap.it/index.php/pgj/en/article/view/10>



02.4 – Resources & Publications

### **Use Instead of Own - Tom Bieling**

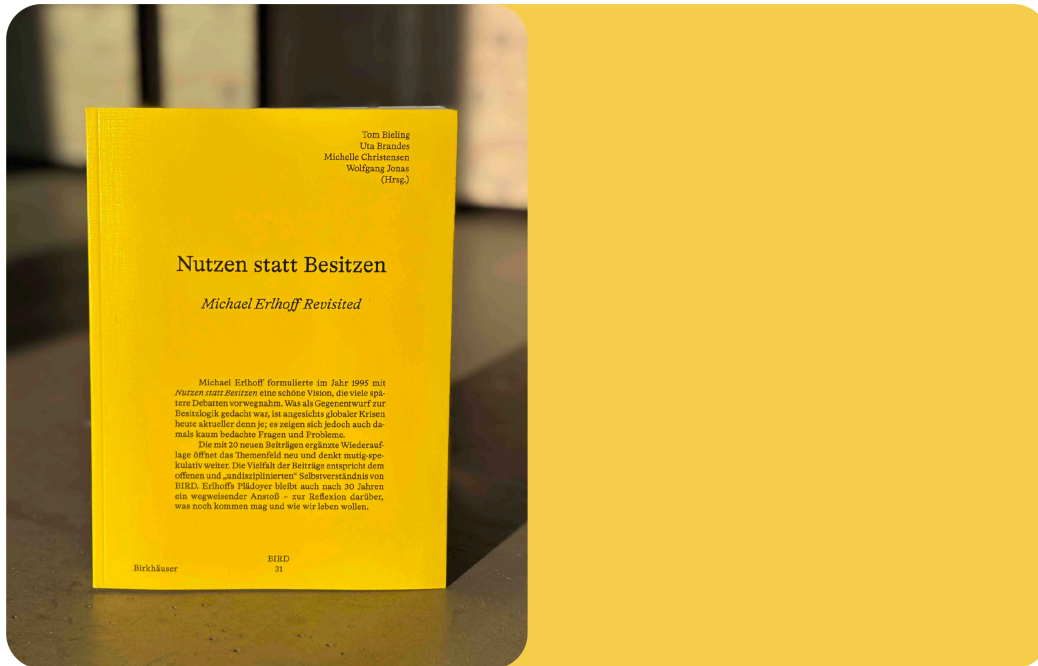
When Michael Erlhoff published his programmatic book "Nutzen statt Besitzen" (Use instead of Own) in 1995, it was an appeal for a different, more reasonable way of working and living together - economically, ecologically, and socially. The key idea: things don't have to belong to us in order to serve us.

Thirty years after the original text appeared, and in the twentieth year of its existence, the **BIRD (Board of International Research in Design)** - which Erlhoff co-founded - now republished the text, expanding it with contemporary perspectives. Twenty essays by authors from design, art, media theory, philosophy, mobility research, and cultural studies continue the central idea in a critical, nuanced, and future-oriented way. Not a nostalgic retrospective, but a lively, experimental space of thought about how we want to deal with things, resources, and knowledge in a globalized, digitalized world. The book is published in German.

Bieling, Tom / Brandes, Uta / Christensen, Michelle / Jonas, Wolfgang (Eds.) (2025): Nutzen statt Besitzen - Michael Erlhoff

Revisited. Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag.

**Link to publication:** <https://www.bird-international-research-in-design.org/books>

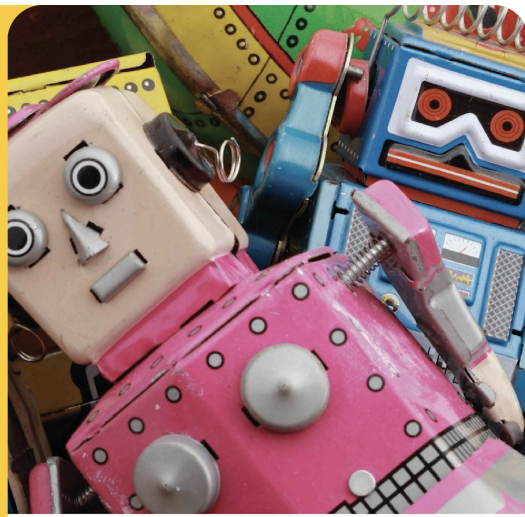


#### 02.4 – Resources & Publications

### **Gendered Design: An Interdisciplinary Framework - Pinar Kaygan**

Gendered Design: An Interdisciplinary Framework proposes “gendered design” as a conceptual framework for the use of design researchers, educators and practitioners to analyze, critically reflect on, challenge and transform the ways in which design processes and methodologies contribute to the prevalent gender power relations. Presenting a comprehensive review of the extant feminist work, this book identifies explicit and intentional as well as unreflexively and ultimately careless practices, which lead to, respectively, gender-stereotypical and gender-blind products. Drawing on four case studies, Gendered Design attests that, if products have such an important role in gender relations, then they can also be shaped in integrative and inclusive ways that advance gender equity.

**Link to publication:** <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/gendered-design-9798765159835/>



# GENDERED DESIGN

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY FRAMEWORK

PINAR KAYGAN

BLOOMSBURY

02.4 – Resources & Publications

**Janka Csernák and Borbála Marosán:**  
CreatResili Method Book  
(Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest,  
Society & Action Lab)

This project, implemented within the framework of the **Creative Europe programme**, focuses on the development of vulnerable communities of women, particularly those living in socially and geographically marginalised conditions, with a history of gender-based violence. By engaging vulnerable women, the project aims to create tools that promote agency, empowerment, and self-advocacy among women through the introduction of social design and various creative methods. The **CREATEREsili** builds on cross-sectoral cooperation. It brings together a governmental humanitarian and development agency (the Hungary Helps Agency), an artistic hub (Pro Progressione), an NGO working with marginalised women (the Jahjaga Foundation), and a tech company (Gjirafa). MOME's role as an associated partner was to create a methodological framework for creativity-based engagement with the target group and to provide a socially sensitive training program for artists and designers.

**Download the book:**

<https://discovery.mome.hu/hu/record/-/record/MOMEMCR2508>

III O III E



# CREATResili

**A Social Design Methodology for  
Working with Vulnerable Women  
in Social Entrepreneurship**

02.4 – Resources & Publications

## **“What we’re reading”**

A curated list of **SDN member’s works and inspirations:**

<https://socialdesignnetwork.org/resources/>

## **CALLS FOR COLLABORATION-03**

Calls for Collaboration

### **Erzsébet Hosszu: Design for Mental Health project**

The project explores the connection between environmental loss and design in fostering a caring environment. An interdisciplinary team integrates knowledge on supportive environments, participatory design, and homelessness to develop a new research area. Through a pilot intervention at the **Budapest Methodological Centre of Social Policy and its Institutions (BMSZKI) Alföldi Temporary Shelter**, the project explores how participatory design can be embedded in shelter regulations to

enhance long-term services. The project aims to foster knowledge sharing across mental health, environmental studies, and design, ultimately creating a cross-institutional research framework and a tested methodology for future studies.

**Call for collaborations:** We are looking for partners who have relevant knowledge about homelessness and/or mental health support aiming for international knowledge sharing and shared methodology development in the frame of a long-term collaboration (project proposal).

If you are interested, please reach out to:

**[hosszu.erszsebet@mome.hu](mailto:hosszu.erszsebet@mome.hu)**

**More information:** <https://mome.hu/en/projects/design-for-mental-health>



## CALL FOR PAPERS - 04

Call for Papers

### **Shifting Regimes - Changing Orders**

#### **Call for the DGTf Conference 2026**

Call for Abstracts Deadline: 27 March 2026

Call for Papers

### **Special Issue: Designing Democratic Innovation: Co-Design and the Futures of Participation in Governance**

Abstract deadline: 20th March

Call for Papers

### **Call for Papers: Art of Research 2026: Aalto University**

Paper deadline: 15th March

Call for Papers

### **Call for the 2nd Learnings/Unlearnings: Environmental learning, spatial design and participatory pedagogies within institutions and beyond conference, in London September 3-5, 2026.**

Deadline for abstracts: 15 March 2026



## OPEN POSITIONS-05

Open positions

**Postgraduate researcher grant:  
Eco-Social Design on time and care in the 15-minute City**

Open positions

**University Professor in Experimental Processes in Art  
(Design Departments)**

Many thanks to our contributors for making this issue possible.  
Have something to share?  
We'd love to hear from you for the next newsletter: [info@socialdesignnetwork.org](mailto:info@socialdesignnetwork.org)

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