

RELATIONAL DESIGN

11th Nordic Design Research Society (NORDES) Conference
Dates: 6-9 August 2025
Venue: OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions are now most welcome for NORDES 2025.

The 11th Nordic Design Research Society (NORDES) Conference

www.nordes2025.org

Conference co-chairs University of Oslo (Prof Alma Culén), OsloMet (Prof Laurence Habib) and AHO (Prof Andrew Morrison)

ORIENTATION

NORDES 2025 marks the 11th bi-annual conference in this series. Launched in 2005, the Nordic Design Research Conferences have been shaped and sustained through commitment and participation from a range of Nordic design research institutions, together with regional and international participants.

NORDES 2025 symbolises a collective arrival for this community at the completion of the first quarter of the 21st century. The event offers a range of shared spaces and formats for reconsidering what we intended and may have achieved so far in design inquiry.

However, at this juncture, this occasion also invites us to reconsider designing and related practices, pedagogies and research as we look towards the mid-21st century. We do so in the contexts of pervasive, difficult and emergent challenges, compound crises, and deepening complexities and uncertainties about how to achieve and secure substantive and durative transformation in a world undergoing rapid ecological and systemic demands and changes.

THEME

NORDES 2025 takes up the open theme **Relational Design** to offer perspectives and means through which we may together investigate and discuss complex dilemmas and current responses, along with design's futures and futures designing.

Relational Design gives attention to ontological multiplicity in evolving processes of becoming and emergence. It accentuates working with possibilities, tensions, paradoxes and contradictions in re-framing and shaping resonances, alliances, linkages and networks of making and researching.

Working within and across difference, Relational Design instantiates interrelations, intersections and distinctions. It facilitates non-normative, situated knowledge experimentation and its generative practices. Relational designing treasures linked, participative and dynamic agency to bring forward pragmatically viable, equitable and bearable transformative potentials and their resonant effects.

Designing and researching relationally asks us to consider the shaping of re-directive design as well as analytical and methodological frames and practices linked with values, ethics, concepts and methods centred on repair, regeneration and reinvigoration.

This includes how agency be realised when embedded within alliances, networks and webs of relationships to cultivate incipient ventures and bolder analyses in articulating relational design activities and pluralist design research formations.

Overall, rethinking and re-making design relationally invites engagement in working with entanglements - of places, zones, values, processes and participation - that are enmeshed in living and regenerative situations, environments, systems and situated acts of worldmaking.

The following are open prompts for consideration:

How might we re-think and re-work design researching in a way that remains rich and responsible in its situated, exploratory and critical practices while charting pathways and networks, alliances and diversity which contribute to wider structural, systemic and ecological transformation towards sustainable tomorrows?

What are the pragmatic, political and creative-critical characteristics of a linked, re-positioned design inquiry that reaches beyond the logics of immediate market gain and commercial extractivist exploitation and their continuing ecological destruction?

How might we elicit diverse potentials and possibilities for realising plural, mutual, malleable and participative change in which human and nonhuman entities and ecologies are interwoven and interspersed, reflexively, recursively and regeneratively?

What design tools and techniques might be applied to work with temporal and spatial intersections and relations that support shaping creative, multimodal and transductive design literacies in order to steward practices,

ethics and cultures of care and environmental justice for near and farflung regenerative futures?

In what ways might we rethink and decolonise roles and relations, activities and responses in shaping counter-narratives and collaborative storytelling in design inquiries that are infused with context-rich alternatives, plural perspectives and multiple mediational formats?

What non-essentialist, transdisciplinary design-thick intersectional critiques of circular thinking and economic models might inform socially, technically and ecologically responsible and vibrant sustainable change?

SUBMISSION FORMATS

NORDES conferences accept full submissions not only abstracts. A range of well-rehearsed submission formats provides both formal analytical frames yet allows for designerly articulations suited to shaping and querying relational designing practices and their research approaches and modes of publication.

NORDES 2025 invites the following contributions by type:

- Full papers
- Exploratory papers
- Workshops
- Exhibition
- Doctoral Consortium

All submissions are subject to a pre-review process carried out by the conference chairs and submission category coordinators to ensure coherence and quality. Full and exploratory papers, workshop and exhibition proposals will be subject to double-anonymous peer reviews. One set of full reviews per submission is provided with notifications and guidelines for preparing revised manuscripts for final digital publication. The Template for all submission types is provided on the NORDES 2025 website together with links for Submissions.

KEY DATES & REGISTRATION

Important dates for contributions

Call for contributions: 1 November 2024

Submissions open: 15 January 2025

Deadline Full and Exploratory papers: 14 February 2025

Deadline Workshops, Exhibitions & Doctoral Consortium: 28 February 2025

Notification to contributors: 31 March 2025

Final revised submissions: 25 April 2025

Final acceptances: 9 May 2025

NOTE: Registration is needed by presenters by 31 May to be included in the programme, archive and proceedings.

Conference fee & registration

Fees includes the opening event, daily refreshments, lunches and the conference dinner. Registration opens: 10 April 2025

Early Bird:

Students, including PhD students, with valid student ID (before 22 May 2025): 250 €

Regular participants: (before 22 May 2025): 450 €

Standard:

Student (closes 12 June 2025): 300 €

Regular (closes 12 June 2025): 500 €

Late & onsite registration (one fee for full or partial attendance):

Student (with valid student ID): 400 €

Regular: 600 €

PROGRAMME & PUBLICATION

Programme

Final programme published: 20 June 2025

Programme outline:

Wednesday 6 August 2025: Welcome, Keynote, Refreshments and Snacks

Thursday 7 & Friday 8 August 2025: Keynotes, Conference presentations and events

Saturday 9 August 2025: Doctoral Consortium

Publication

All accepted submissions will be available as open access publications during and after the conference via the NORDES Digital Archive. Subsequently, publications will be accessible via the online DRS Digital Library and in the format of an integrated Conference Proceedings.

ABOUT NORDES 2025

Location

In 2025 NORDES returns to Oslo. The conference is located at the OsloMet city centre campus. On this occasion, we have three closely connected conference chairs from three leading design research institutions and a lively local organising committee and a team of Nordic organisers and regional and international reviewers.

Conference co-chairs

University of Oslo (Prof Alma Culén), OsloMet - OsloMetropolitan University (Prof Laurence Habib) and Oslo School of Architecture and Design, AHO (Prof Andrew Morrison)

Organisers, reviewers, theme and session chairs, assistants, communication design and sponsors will be posted online at a later date.

Previous conferences

Papers from and material about earlier NORDES conferences can be found at www.nordes.org and also archived in the DRS digital library <https://dl.designresearchsociety.org/nordes/>

ON CONTRIBUTION TYPES

NORDES 2025 welcomes a variety of contributions and offers a range of types of submissions. Please note that conference follows a full delivery format with well formed and professionally edited texts. To build quality in design research, we encourage colleagues to have had their contribution read and reviewed by one of their peers or a supervisor. Templates for each type of contribution are given in the links below. Each contribution type will be co-chaired by a select team from the Programme Committee that will arrange reviews. Each anonymous submission will be anonymously reviewed by two peers. Extensions will be given only in exceptional circumstances.

FULL PAPERS

Co-chairs: Alma Culén, Einar Sneve Martinussen, Nevad Pavel, Minna Pikkarainen, Heather Wiltse

Details

This submission category invites original and mature research and results positioned in relation to existing research literature. Full papers represent the current frontier of knowledge in the design field. Full papers may take the shape of a range of formats and rhetorical styles depending on the nature and character of material presented. In this type of contribution to NORDES, we ask that authors pay especially close attention to the conference theme and to ways design inquiry may address and develop it - academically, pragmatically and professionally - through creative and critical engagement.

Full Papers are limited to maximum of 10 pages (excluding abstract and references). Please limit the file size to 5 MB or less, use the relevant NORDES template and follow its guidelines for preparing your submission.

Submit papers at the latest 14 February 2025.

For further inquiries on this submission category please contact the chairs.

When accepted for review each submission will receive a minimum of two peer-reviews addressing strengths, weaknesses, originality, and significance of the submission. If the submission is accepted for publication, authors are expected to adopt suggested improvements as noted by reviewers and the conference programme committee. A final submission must be fully language edited.

Evaluation

Full papers will be reviewed based on:

Curiosity and expansion: The conference aims to invite curiosity and expansiveness in interpreting its theme. Authors should explain their interpretation of the theme clearly to enable reviewers to make sense of the contribution for the design research community.

Originality and articulation: Originality refers to ways the output introduces a new way of thinking about a subject, is distinctive or transformative compared with previous work in the design field. Articulation concerns ways the purpose of the work is clearly conveyed as design research. It includes how the inquiry is positioned theoretically, and how appropriate methodologies, methods and techniques have been selected, applied and re-considered. Important too is reflection on how processes and documentation are presented to show that the purpose has been achieved.

Clarity and communication: A paper needs to be clear in its focus, argumentation and supporting research and situated practices. Communication is understood as the ability to convey the focus in choice of research problems and questions, selections of format and genre, and uses of relevant text, visuals and other means. A paper needs to be readable and fully language edited.

EXPLORATORY PAPERS

Co-chairs: Joanna Boehnert, Enrique Encinas, Astrid Marie Heimer, Henry Mainsah, Laura Popplow, Nicolas Torretta

Details

The exploratory papers category functions as a channel through which emergent research topics and approaches may be investigated before becoming acknowledged or established in the broader design research community.

Here we invite submissions in forms such as, but not limited to, design cases, design fictions, design critiques, pictorials, annotated portfolios, as well as more traditional short papers. Whether text-driven or visual, submissions will differ in format because each seeks the most effective way of presenting an intended contribution to the theme and research community. A submission needs to connect its purpose, argument, claims and design work, together with the mode of inquiry selected. While exploratory, this is still a research paper category. Submissions must refer closely to the conference theme and include a clearly communicated topic, questions and supporting design-based research linked to clear methods, hopefully, with strong foundation in empirical data. We encourage authors to investigate existing and novel concepts in the search for new theoretical openings, possibly drawing new linkages between nearby disciplines.

We ask authors to use the NORDES template as a basis, and we strongly recommend exploratory papers to be no longer than 3000 words (excluding abstract and references) with a maximum file size of 5 MB.

Submit papers at the latest 14 February 2025.

For specific inquiries on this submission category please contact the chairs.

Evaluation

Submissions will be reviewed with respect to novelty and quality of the research contribution, the consistency, clarity and effectiveness of the presentation, and the contribution paper's relevance for the conference theme.

Accepted papers will be published in the digital archive. As part of building the NORDES research community and the formats of exploratory papers, we may ask scholars who submit papers to also review others' work.

WORKSHOPS

Co-chairs: Angeliki Dimaki-Adolfsen, Onkar Kular, Vibeke Sjøvoll, Mari Suoheimo, Danielle Wilde, Signe Louise Yndigegn, Christina Zetterlund

Details

Workshops will run for a maximum of 3 hours. Workshop proposals need 2 components: a Workshop Description and a Practical Overview. The Workshop Description frames the direction of the exploration, its significance and relevance, as well as the research basis for the workshop. The Workshop Description will be included in the Nordes 2025 Proceedings as a peer-reviewed publication. Following the related NORDES paper template, a Workshop Written Description must be a maximum of 3 pages (excluding abstract and references) and not exceed 5 MB.

The Practical Overview is submitted in addition to the Workshop Description. This provides a summary of the practicalities for running the workshop. Please include in the overview the workshop title; motivation; length of the workshop (we suggest a half day or a full day); a tentative programme; a minimum and maximum number of participants; anything participants need to bring; preferred set-up (including space, equipment, supplies, etc.); support needed (technology, materials or other assistance). Please note how you will deal with any related ethical issues, consent and data privacy. The submission will also be evaluated as to whether it can be achieved practically, so this element of the submission needs to be carefully prepared.

Submit contributions at the latest 28 February 2025.

Evaluation

Workshop proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Experimental nature: Exploration of a novel and compelling aspect of design research and/or practice that challenges the current boundaries of the field and reveal ways of knowing and becoming that emerge or are otherwise overlooked.

Clear planning: The goals, structure and plan for the workshop are clearly presented with explicitly stated expectations regarding resourcing and realistic support needs.

Research basis: Evidence of scholarly positioning in a relevant area of design research; connections drawn between practical explorations in the workshop and theoretical concepts and implications.

EXHIBITION

Co-chairs: Arild Berg, Nicholas Stevens, Einar Stoltenberg, Joshi Suhas

Details

We welcome the submission of artifacts of various types (physical, digital, processual, performances, posters etc) that must be accompanied by an explanatory and

notational and analytical research framed text (maximum 3000 words excluding abstract and references). All contributions to this category of Design Research Exhibitions must be fully formed, whether conceptual or completed. All costs for shipping and main materials are to be covered by contributors. Curating will be selective and devised by a dynamic on-site team.

Evaluation

This contribution type will be included in the Proceedings and must provide a research context, related literatures and works, clear link to the conference theme, and an analysis and reflection on what 'exhibition' does and means in conducting and communicating design inquiry.

Submit papers at the latest 28 February 2025.

DOCTORAL CONSORTIUM

Co-chairs: Martina Čaić, Sisse Finken, Maria Göransdotter, Julia Jacoby, Satu Miettinen, Josina Vink

Details

Doctoral researchers are encouraged to submit work for consideration in any of the main conference types, including this one. Submissions in categories other than the Doctoral Consortium need to be fully prepared with supervisors and co-authors for anonymous submission to anonymous research review at an international level.

In contrast, the NORDES Doctoral Consortium (DC) offers PhD students a full-day, on-site and dedicated space for sharing and discussing design research work-in-progress and for learning and engaging fellow students and established researchers. The event follows the main conference so that doctoral candidates may draw on experiences, insights and dialogues from the wider NORDES community.

The DC is a venue that works with specific doctoral research projects and positions them in the wider regional and international contexts of design research. The DC supports the generative character of doctoral research and contributes to shaping topics, themes, perspectives, content and methods, along with building networks between students and with larger research projects and institution. The DC also functions as an arena for rehearsal and preparation of material for research publication. Supervisors are welcome to attend.

Submission

To participate, you are invited to submit a short position paper relating your PhD research. The position paper should be no more than 500 words, include design work, be no more than 5MB in size, and contain the following elements:

- A summary of your PhD project

- A discussion of how it relates to, or how you would like it to relate to, the NORDES design research community

- A description of short-term and long-term plans for the continuation of your PhD project.

Here are some tips for writing your position paper:

Refer to the general Call for Contributions
Think of the initial submission as the start of a conversation with peers from the design research community
Engage your supervisor/s in thinking about what you want to get out of the Doctoral Consortium and how you could shape your initial submission
Be sure to fully edit your submission
Follow up the revision of your paper with your peers and supervisor/s.

Submit position papers at the latest 28 February 2025.

Evaluation

Position papers will be reviewed by the co-chairs of the Doctoral Consortium. We will review your submission for suitability to the NORDES design research community and the conference theme.

Following presentations, feedback and reviews will be given by fellow students, attending supervisors and senior design researchers. Revised papers are to be submitted to the co-chairs one month after the event (by Monday 15 September 2025). Preparing, presenting and revising your contribution qualifies for 3 ECTS credits. Final revised position papers will be compiled in a NORDES Doctoral Consortium 2025 booklet (but will not be included in the Conference Proceedings) to be circulated in autumn 2025.

Programme Committee

Arild Berg
Joanna Boehnert
Martina Čaić
Angeliki Dimaki-Adolfson
Enrique Encinas
Sisse Finken
Maria Göransdotter
Astrid Marie Heimer
Julia Jacoby
Onkar Kular
Henry Mainsah
Einar Sneve Martinussen
Satu Miettinen
Nevad Pavel
Minna Pikkarainen
Laura Popplow
Vibeke Sjøvoll
Synne Skjulstad
Nicholas Stevens
Einar Stoltenberg
Joshi Suhas
Mari Suoheimo
Kristin Støren Wigum
Nicolas Torretta
Josina Vink
Danielle Wilde
Heather Wiltse
Signe Louise Yndigegn
Christina Zetterlund