

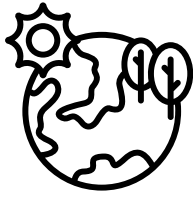
The Regenerative Design Manifesto

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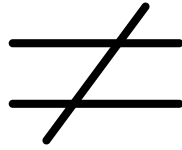
We design as a service for something greater than ourselves

We recognize design as a powerful force that impacts not only human experiences but the very fabric of life on Earth. As designers, we acknowledge design as a medium for serving something greater than ourselves — the regenerative capacity of living systems, the intricate web of life, and the future of all beings.

We design for positive eco-system impact, actively contributing to restoring and enhancing our planet's natural capacity. This means that we take ethical responsibility for the impact of design on more-than-human beings and environments. This includes fostering sustainable relationships and continually challenging instrumental and extractivist approaches.

We develop design decisions that support the regeneration of natural flows through the full value chain and the entire lifecycle of design, mapping materials, more-than-human stakeholders, and resources — prioritizing long-term, systemic change over short-term gains.

We understand the inherent unpredictability of natural systems and strive for resonance — where designs feel intuitively in sync with nature's patterns and rhythms, recognizing that true regenerative impact goes way beyond ideas of neutrality and seeks to expand nature's carrying capacity.



We design for friction and a renewed engagement with the world

Historically, design has been used as a machine smoothing out friction and eliminating resistance until the world has become nothing more than an instrument for human consumption and gratification. We believe that design should expand rather than reduce our engagement with the world. That requires new encounters and new modes of interaction. That requires elements of friction.

We believe the ethical emerges from acknowledging and experiencing difference — not by reducing otherness into sameness.

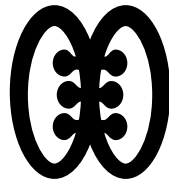
We design for friction — for interaction and exchange between multiple agents rather than for mere consumption and material extraction of the world to suit our personal, immediate needs.

We design encounters with all that lies beyond the human realm, understanding that our “other” and the needs and perspectives of more-than-human entities are a part of our embeddedness in the world.

We strive for material authenticity and honesty, working with material propensities and abilities and allowing those to come to the fore, thereby creating sensuous encounters.

We work with scale, time, and perspective to move beyond our own phenomenology as designers and users.

Designing to slow things down or creatively engaging with scale can serve both as a form of resistance and as a catalyst for transformative change, while also offering a calming and restoring impact.



We design for interdependence and mutual flourishing

Every element, from an insect to climate forces, has its own kind of influence. Humans are co-participants in large networks of actors. We acknowledge the agency of more-than-human entities such as microorganisms, animals, plants, fungi, and landscapes.

We ask ourselves how our design empowers more-than-human elements and how we, in return, are empowered by the world around us that we are a part of, thereby seeking to integrate distributed agency within the design processes.

We design to integrate the needs of more-than-human species and systems into planning and development processes.

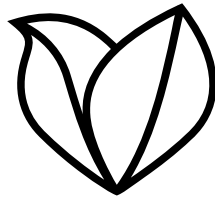
We are inspired by nature's own design methodologies and how they can re-develop our own processes.

We take inspiration from ecosystem functions and the ability to create positive impact across agents and elements.

We believe that mutual flourishing requires breaking down the artificial barrier between humans and the natural world. By reimagining society and nature as one, design can seek to create a world where diverse and more-than-human individuals and systems thrive.

We design to regenerate and protect habitats, hereby supporting Earth to sustain essential ecological processes. Our design not only sustains but also enhances biodiversity. It gives back more than what is extracted throughout the entire value chain — including energy, materials, and the balance of emissions.

We cultivate a profound appreciation of and care for nature, encouraging active engagement with and caring for a diverse living world.



We expand design beyond mere appearance and problem-solving

More than mere problem-solving, design must encompass a broader and more transformative role in shaping a just future in better balance. It is an inherently critical and political practice.

We challenge the conventional notion of longevity in design, moving away from a strict focus on material and aesthetic durability to a more holistic understanding of social and ecological longevity.

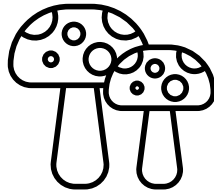
We understand that notions of beauty and aesthetics are contextual and historical. Creative excellence must be a thoughtful reflection of this and must dare to challenge current destructive aesthetics.

We focus on creating lasting value that extends beyond human lifespans, considering the impact of design on future generations, and respecting learnings and values stemming from our ancestors.

We foster long-term relationships of engagement and care because we know that addressing complex ecological issues requires ongoing commitment rather than short-term fixes. Our designs create opportunities for sustained interaction, learning, and adaptation.

We understand that durability also means our work evolves in synergy with changing conditions.

We design to challenge the social, economic, and political systems that are the root causes of the problems we identify.



We design new narratives embracing more-than-human perspectives

We recognize the semiotic dimensions of design, understanding that they serve as communication forms that can influence the conditions for various species. By understanding and considering the perceptual capacities of more-than-human individuals and entities, designers can craft narratives that resonate with a broader audience, encompassing both human and more-than-human perspectives.

We use design to tell stories and create narratives that elevate more-than-human experiences and values. By employing storytelling, we highlight the needs and viewpoints of, e.g., plants, animals, and fungi. This narrative shift can foster empathy and care for the natural world, encouraging a more responsible and compassionate approach to design.

By utilizing speculative design, we imagine alternative ways of being and challenge our assumptions about the world, opening new possibilities for interacting with nature. Fiction can provoke critical reflection and discussion about the kind of future we want to create.

We embrace plurality through inclusive world-building. Designs should not impose a singular vision but create spaces for dialogue and co-creation of shared future scenarios, allowing for multiple approaches and outcomes.



Copenhagen, November 28, 2024

The principles in this manifesto emphasize a holistic, participatory, and ethical approach to design that seeks to heal and regenerate the world rather than extract from or degrade it.

They suggest a profound shift from human-centered design models to ones inclusive of broader ecological and ethical considerations, essential for addressing the challenges of our current era and fostering more inclusive futures.

The principles were co-created by more than 100 designers from around the world, engaged through the international design event DesignMatters in Copenhagen 2024, and by design members of Design Denmark.

On behalf of the many contributors, the curators of this manifesto invite you to further develop and transform the guidelines into new thoughts and new design practices.

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