

Today's and tomorrow's design researcher – reinventing the intersection

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1. Workshop Organisers

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2. Context of Conversation Topic

The conversation will be based on an initial study kicked off by design:transfer about different roles and competences of design researchers, focussing on the personal role the participants currently fulfil. The interim report of the survey was presented at the Swiss Design Research Conference in January 2016 and provided insights into the implicit links between competences, methods and team formation. It resulted in ambitious, yet critical discussions – and showed, that there is an urgent need to keep this discussion running. Therefore we are proposing a workshop session during the DRS 2016, which will be both, an active reflection about competencies of design researchers and an interactive production of new ideas and knowledge about their linking role in teams.

All four workshop organisers have a background in leading, consulting or working in various settings and cultural environments: Andrea is specialized on design-driven transformation within large corporations and the public sector, Daniela focuses on design in transdisciplinary sciences, Vera-Karina is an expert on methods and tools for unknown and irrational futures in international innovation teams and Jana is a catalyst for visual and aesthetical tools in scientific research teams. All four are teaching at universities around Europe on topics like design research, design theory, urban futures and transdisciplinary science.

3. Planned Activities and Expected Outcomes

The major outcome for the participants will be an active reflection about competencies and current roles of design researchers and an interactive production of new ideas and knowledge for their future profession.

These findings and the foregoing discussion will be documented by both the participants through a hands-on process of clustering facts and ideas, and by the workshop organisers through evaluation and documentation of the outcomes for on- and offline purpose. The documentation will be made public via various channels to keep the discussing running.

The workshop will be split in four intersecting sessions: personal role, tasks, team, and organisation. By presenting themselves and their daily work, sketching and comparing team structures, intersections, hierarchies, and organisation structures, and reflecting about their personal experience therein, the participants will create visual examples of their position as design researchers. The main part of the workshop will focus on the present, and on how a design researcher is already embedded within a team and organisation. These insights will support the following discussion on possible new roles and skills a design researcher will need, and will focus on identifying the linking phenomena between today and the future.

4. Intended Audience

We kindly invited maximum 15 to 20 people for the session to offer a cosy, intimate atmosphere among each other. Academics and practitioners from various backgrounds are warmly welcome, and it is open for every experience level from student to expert. Openness, willingness to learn and experience themselves and their fulfilled role is appreciated.

5. Length of Workshop

The proposed workshop session is set up for half-a-day, which is needed for the four phases. Ideally our workshop will not take place during PhD by Design conference because part of the team will participate in the PhD Session.

6. Space and Equipment Required

- ☐ 25 seating options for all participants and workshop moderators
- ☐ 5 tables, projector, white walls for mapping exercise, sticky notes, prototyping material, pencils
- ☐ Audio recording

7. Potential Outputs

The study about roles and competences in an on-going research project – Outcomes of the workshop will be added to and compared with the existing findings.

Additionally we think about a special issue on how the findings will affect design education.

About the Organisers:

Andrea Augsten *Design Researcher at Volkswagen AG, Lecturer, Co-Founder design:transfer.* Originally trained as a designer, Andrea explores a human centered approach in teaching, society and business. Design Thinking and knowledge transfer are her focus. She is Co-Founder of design:transfer and conducts her PhD within the Innovation Center of Volkswagen.

Daniela Peukert *Design Researcher, Lecturer and Co-Founder design:transfer.* Daniela works as design researcher, lecturer and author. Her work focuses on transdisciplinarity and designerly knowledge production. She conducts her PhD at Leuphana University Lüneburg and co-founded design:transfer, an initiative that facilitates design research as a transdisciplinary science.

Vera-Karina Gebhardt *Design Researcher and Lecturer.* Vera-Karina likes asking uncomfortable questions about tomorrow. She studied Design, Literature/Arts/Media, and Spatial Planning in Italy, Portugal, Austria and Germany, and is currently pursuing her PhD. Prior she was a researcher at TUM and worked as Idea/Innovation Manager at BMW.

Jana Thierfelder *Design Researcher and Lecturer for transdisciplinarity in the arts, ZHdK Zürich.* Jana has studied visual communication and transdisciplinarity at ZHdK, where she currently works as lecturer. She collaborates with scientists and investigates the potentials of design as a research-tool for them. She positions her work in STS, epistemology and ethnography.