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DECENTERING DESIGN PERSPECTIVES THROUGH THE UMWELT.

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DOI: 10.63442/YQFT7110

KEYWORDS | UMWELT, MORE-THAN-HUMAN, SPECULATIVE DESIGN, DESIGN

ABSTRACT | This workshop is designed to explore the inherent subjectiveness of our being-in-the world. Drawing inspiration from thinkers like Bridle, Ingold, Tsing and others, it centers around von Uexküll's concept of Umwelt. In the workshop, participants will creatively explore the concept of Umwelt as a speculative design instrument through our proposed design methodology, Decentering Design. The exercises in this methodology help redefine the human position in relation to the more-than-human community through hands on observation and mapping exercises.



1. Workshop Theme

This workshop is designed to explore the inherent subjectiveness of our being-in-the world. Drawing inspiration from thinkers like Bridle, Ingold, Tsing and others, it centers around von Uexküll's concept of Umwelt (von Uexküll, 1992). Umwelt illuminates the unique way each individual perceives and interacts with their environment, emphasizing the deep connection between a being's sensory perceptions, their agency, and the world they inhabit (Lee, 2018). This results in the acknowledgement of multiple existing worlds, opening up a non-anthropocentric pluralistic worldview. Authors like Bird Rose (Rose, 2012) and others (Tsing, 2015; van Dooren, 2014) show us that we must understand these multiple worlds not as separate but as interwoven multispecies, highly localized communities.

During this workshop, participants will creatively explore the concept of Umwelt as a speculative design instrument. Our design methodology, Decentering Design, helps redefine the human position in relation to the more-than-human community in spatial design processes. The participants will explore the surrounding environment of the campus location through a series of observation and mapping exercises. The activities are divided into two main exercises. The first focuses on exploring Umwelt as a world formed by the individual's various sensory experiences within their own biological range. The second exercise challenges participants to creatively and visually approximate the Umwelt of another-than-human being. This two-fold process allows for speculations on the intersections or overlaps between human and other-than-human Umwelten, fostering a decentered experience and encouraging us to find meeting grounds to engage with the more-than-human community.

This hands-on workshop will culminate in the creation of mappings that act as artefacts, capturing and communicating the participants' experiences to a wider audience. In the concluding part of the workshop, there will be a round-table discussion where participants will share their insights and artefacts, leading to a rich exchange of ideas.

2. Target Audience

This workshop targets designers, architects and landscape architects interested in decentering their own perspective towards more-than-human perspectives. The workshop is focused on the plurality of perceptions of the environment.

3. Expected Number of Participants

We aim to organize the workshop for 10 to 20 participants.

4. Agenda

The workshop will take 180 minutes.

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|------------------------|--------|
| • Introduction 1 | 5 min |
| • Part 1 - observation | 60 min |
| • Part 2 - ideation | 60 min |
| • Reflection | 45 min |

5. Equipment Needed

We require drawing paper, a minimum of 15 A4 sheets + 1 A4 cardboard per participant. Colored pencils, drawing pencils and wax crayons adapted to the number of participants. Two roles of paper tape. Additionally, we need an indoor space with easy access to the outdoor environment surrounding the building. In the room, we need chairs for all participants and the possibility of presenting the drawings made (tables or an empty wall).

If the campus environment has a green management plan or species inventory (planting and animals) this would help us in our preparation.

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Giliam Ganzevles, graduated as design researcher at the ArtEZ Institute of Arts Arnhem (NL) with an interest in global (non)-spatial phenomena and their regulations. He currently is part of Futures through Design, a research center at KASK Conservatory HOGENT Howest (BE), and is a researcher at Howest University for Applied Sciences. He employs design thinking and speculative design to explore the more-than-human and artificial intelligence. His latest research is focused on collaborative design initiatives with the More-than-Human community, particularly through their Decentering Design project.

Bert De Roo is an architect and researcher. He is part of Futures through Design, a research center at KASK Conservatory HOGENT Howest, School of Arts. He has been working as a freelance architect on self-initiated projects and for multiple Ghent-based architectural offices. He has executed research in the field of historic estates and more-than-human design and is currently exploring strategies for designers to become part of a socio-ecological community and act with care in the context of their research lab Decentering Design.

Glenn Deliège is a philosopher and works as researcher at Futures through Design, a research center KASK Conservatory HOGENT Howest, School of Arts. After having finished his PhD in environmental philosophy (KU Leuven), working on the value structure of present-day preservation practices, he was involved in research surrounding the ethical aspects of rewilding (RU Nijmegen) and the role of animals in urban spatial design (HOGENT), a research line which has now broadened into a collaborative and transdisciplinary research project surrounding the role of design in a more-than-human-world: Decentering Design. Next to his research activities, he is also a lecturer, teaching landscape philosophy, animal studies and spatial design for/with animals, among other things.

Acknowledgements: This workshop was developed in the research projects 'FUTUR-US' funded by Howest University of Applied Sciences and 'Towards a design methodology for the more-than-human' funded by the research center Futures through Design. Supported by HOGENT and KASK & Conservatory HOGENT Howest. The idea and content of the workshop emerged from the fruitful conversations with Mirte van Aalst, Jo Boonen and other colleagues. We are indebted to the students participating in the workshops and classes informing this final proposal.

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This contribution was presented at Cumulus Budapest 2024: P/References of Design conference, hosted by the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest, Hungary between May 15-17, 2024.

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ISBN Volume 1: 978-952-7549-02-5 (PDF)

ISBN Volume 2: 978-952-7549-03-2 (PDF)

DOI Volume 1: <https://doi.org/10.63442/IZUP8898>

DOI Volume 2: <https://doi.org/10.63442/TADX4016>

Conference Organisers

Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest (MOME)

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