

Call for Papers

Issue # 10

Peri-pheral Design

Exploring emerging approaches at the peripheries of design towards resilient futures in a post-Anthropocene world

Issue Editors: Kritya Gera (Royal College of Art, London) and Ashley Hall (RCA)

In recent years, several events characterized by uncertainty and that require an urgent response have shifted the focus from the traditional designerly ways of doing things to embracing what remains unknown and unexplored within the design discipline, whether in everyday mundane relationships between humans, things and materials or technological/economic/strategic interactions. In a post-Anthropocene world, the move towards resilient futures demands looking away from the notion of common sense, namely, the world, the context and the relations that are conceived and perceived towards a multitude of alternatives that lie at the *peri-pheries* of design. Mainstream design discourse has predominantly centred on Western world ideologies around perception, epistemology and action, often neglecting alternative and marginalized discourses (Abdulla et al. 2019) originating from indigenous knowledge, both from the Global South and the North. Additionally, insufficient attention has been given to the political dimensions and implications of contemporary design practices.

Within urban studies, the notion of peripheries signifies the physical space on the fringe of megacities, the in-between that is constantly evolving and represents the discontinuities and hinges that emerge between socio-urban territories (Simone 2010). The survival actions explored by the people of Third World megacities are described by architect Rem Koolhaas as inventive measures characterized by experimental responses that reflect a 'culture of make-do' (Enwezor and Patteeuw 2004, 116) that engender significant systems based on alternative ways of functioning and aspects of self-organization and that provide spaces of deregulated actions (Roy 2011; Godlewski 2010).

Several scholars argue that urban peripheries present settings for critical contestation of citizenship and practices of hegemony (Holston and Caldeira 2008). In these contexts, flexibility and uncertainty are considered inherent parts that transform into crucial resources for existence. Thus, the concept of *peri-pheries* relates to the 'in-between' interface to explore emerging



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concepts within design practice. An 'other' kind of economy/knowledge (Fry 2003), the process of 'worlding' (Haraway 2016) and finding worlds within the world and the pluriverse (Escobar 2018, 2020) decolonize existing systems and processes. In her work *Staying with the Trouble*, Haraway (2016) argues towards the concept of becoming capable or 'response-able' with the help of multiple relations and within different contexts. This approach emphasizes the role played by each entity that renders each one capable of different and unimagined collaborations. The knowledge and experiences brought in by individual entities from their respective known worlds into contexts that are unfamiliar and uncomfortable may present a possibility for other worlds to exist (Haraway 1992). Transitioning from theoretical discourse towards a more practical realm, this knowledge acts as a catalyst to initiate contestable regenerative collaborations between different peripheral agents, such as humans, and beyond that also include contexts, environments and tangible and intangible infrastructures.

Consequently, there is an imperative to consider multiple centres within the peripheries to decolonize the design process within the realms of research, practice and education. This approach calls for focusing on the invisible processes that open up spaces for dialogues and negotiations within the design context that have the potential to be 'response-able' towards the complex crises the world faces today. Designing for/with people at the peripheries (Gera and Hasdell 2023; Meagher 2005), exploring methods that use unconventional approaches (Christensen et al. 2011; Hall and Wojdecka 2021; Om et al. 2021) and designing for peripheral interactions (Bakker et al. 2015; Weiser & Brown, 1996) within our everyday existence, such as in the context of technology (Weiser & Brown, 1996) highlight unconventional explorations of 'how' and 'what' new tools and approaches open up opportunities within the design context.

We see these design *peri-pheries* as the result of a continuous permutation combination of various infrastructures, including their 'agents' *inter-acting* at different scales. The concept of design *peri-pheries* advances as an interface to prompt and explore emerging post-Anthropocene concepts through a non-linear approach that diffuses the boundaries imposed by existing systems and the questions of power and politics. This proposal aims to focus on such *peripheral* design instances that unleash new opportunities within the design context towards more equitable, sustained and resilient futures.

This call for papers for the *Peri-pherial* Design issue of *Cubic Journal* invites scholars and practitioners to highlight such peripheral approaches towards unimagined resilient design futures. For *peri-pherial* design, we consider three dimensions: social, making and the design economy. In this respect, we pose the following questions: What are the elements that signify *peri-pherial* design? Who or what comprise the peripheral agents and what is the significance of their roles? How does this approach/lens of peripheries contribute to the evolving landscape of design processes transitioning towards more equitable and resilient futures? What is the evolving role of technology within these

peripheral arrangements? We welcome theoretical contributions, case studies, photo essays, pictorials and short videos that respond to one or more of the areas outlined below.

Social: What are the *peri-peries* within the social context of design? What is the significance of these *peri-peries* in relation to the spatial, socio-cultural and political aspects that highlight the marginalization of communities, spaces, behaviours and relations?

Making: What are the *peri-perial* approaches, tools and techniques that remain unexplored within design research/practice? How does this tangential knowledge inform future design disciplines towards 'Post Anthropocene'?

Design economy: What are the unclassified design strategies directed towards innovation and value creation in the private sector? What is their role in promoting design collaborations between the public, private and third sectors moving towards equity and resilience in the design context?

Various forms of contribution are invited:

[a] Theoretical contributions up to 7000 words that critically reflect on existing theories and philosophies focusing on Design and Peripheries moving towards equitable and resilient futures.

[b] Empirical/Case studies emerging from research or practice-based design that highlight peripheries or peripheral design as significant elements of the study. These should be submitted as articles of up to 7000 words or as photo essays (high-res) accompanied by a 1000-word description explaining the main contribution.

[c] Frameworks or design principles that engage or highlight peripheral design approaches to address situations of crisis. These should be submitted as pictorials (high-res images) supported by a 1000-word description explaining the main contribution.

Authors must follow the submission criteria for each contribution type described on the [cubicjournal.org](https://www.cubicjournal.org) website. All contributions will be double-blind peer-reviewed. No publication fees will be required. Published works will be open access.

Please note that Cubic follows the Chicago Manual of Style. For more information, see <https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>.

Authors must follow the submission criteria for each contribution type described on the [cubicjournal.org](https://www.cubicjournal.org) website. Final submissions must be made by 1 February 2025 at noon Hong Kong Time to krity.gera@rca.ac.uk (Issue Editor) as well as Daniel.Echeverri@mail.muni.cz (production editor).

Important dates:

- Call for contributions: 1 November 2024
- Submission deadline: 1 February 2025
- Peer review notification: 1 May 2025
- Final publication: 1 August 2025

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Krity Gera is an architect, designer and an academic currently working as Assistant Professor/Tutor at the Royal College of Art in London. Her research and practice revolve around just mobility transitions where she explores concepts related to urban informality as a design paradigm and works with marginalised communities. Krity runs regular workshops around 'Gender and Agency' (<http://www.gender-agency.org/>) in collaboration with a colleague, and is currently the guest editor for a special issue on research methods for the Codesign journal.

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Ashley is Professor of Design Innovation at the Royal College of Art in London and visiting Professor at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. He leads postgraduate research in the design school and MRes Healthcare Design with Imperial College. His research focusses on innovation methods, design resilience, design for safety, experimental design, and he is director of the NEMO project using co-design to change humanity's relationship with the ocean.

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Journal of Urban Mobility 4: 100061.

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Cubic Journal
ISSN: 2589-7098 (Print)
ISSN: 2589-7107 (Online)