Introduction to the Special Issue:
Design and Futures (Vol. I)

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As Nobel Laureate Herbert Simon famously observed: "Everyone designs who devises courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones" (Simon, 1996).

Designers and futurists, it turns out, have a great deal in common. This mutual recognition is reaching critical mass as each comes to appreciate how their respective traditions have much to offer to making urgent change in the world, and even more so, together.

It is increasingly acknowledged within the futures studies community that operating with a largely verbal and theoretical bent over the past half century has afforded too little impact on actual future-shaping behaviours. Meanwhile, those in the design community recognise a need to interrogate higher-level consequences – the futures, the worlds – that their products, systems and other outputs help produce.

Part of what bringing design and futures into sustained dialogue does is to allow each field to become more fluent in a second language which is the other's native tongue.

How may designers systematically map out preferred futures, and what frameworks might futures studies furnish to help them? Conversely, how might futures scholars and practitioners adopt designerly modes of exploration, working more materially, visually and performatively to instantiate and illuminate possibilities?

'Design and futures' together offer ecosystemic and embodied approaches to shaping our collective prospects, informed by a diverse range of practices.

We are excited to have been working with the Journal of Futures Studies over several years to bring readers a special double issue dedicated to 'Design and Futures'.

In this first issue, Vol. I, we have five peer-reviewed articles: Stuart Candy and Kelly Kornet introduce a new framework engaging communities and individuals in tangible forms of speculation. Ramia Mazé argues for the significance of how political dimensions suffuse futures thought. Cher Potter, DK Osseo-Asare and Mugendi M'Rithaa analyse the worldviews embedded in a makerspace platform in Accra, Ghana. Jake Dunagan offers an account of teaching experiential futures, written in collaboration with a whole class of graduate students. Anne Burdick shows how a multilayered experiment around developing a storyworld, characters, prototypes, and plot, delineates a rich design space scaffolded by a simultaneously narrative, conceptual, and material brief.

Powerful shorter contributions by speculative designers James Auger and Julian Hanna, design futurist Anab Jain, Hollywood worldbuilder Alex McDowell, architect Liam Young, design scholar Jamer Hunt, and

the geographically-distributed Decolonising Design Collective round out a remarkable first cross-sectional scan of design and futures perspectives.

In the next issue, Vol. II, curators, strategic designers, policymakers, and philosophers join the conversation.

As guest editors of this special edition, we wish to thank all authors who submitted articles and essays, and also the peer reviewers who so generously gave their time.

Our own practices originate in futures and design studies respectively, but we have both been actively 'hybridising' for a while now. In promoting such entanglements more widely, we aim to offer readers across both communities, and well beyond, insight into how disparate perspectives and tools, in combination, can challenge, remix, and strengthen each other, as well as open on to further exchange.

Of the immensely exciting community weaving that is underway where futures and design meet, these pages represent just some initial strands. We foresee many more to come.

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