

RESEARCH THEME

XLII Cycle – a.y. 2026/2027

Title of the doctoral research	Rethinking urban communities: a multispecies approach to Design for Social Innovation
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Abstract	More-than-human perspectives are reshaping design research by challenging conventional human-centred paradigms. While synthetic agents, such as AI, dominate this discourse, the inclusion of biological entities, plants, animals, and ecosystems, remains underexplored. A growing multispecies design approach seeks to address this gap by investigating new forms of relationality across species and envisioning modes of coexistence, particularly within urban and/or human shaped environments where such interactions are increasingly critical. Within this context, Design for Social Innovation can play a key role in translating these perspectives into practice. Traditionally centred on human communities, it is now challenged to expand the notion of “community” to include nonhuman agents that lack representation and are often marginalised. This raises critical questions about how design can support their participation and what new social structures may emerge from recognising their agency. This PhD proposes to investigate community-making practices through a more-than-human lens. By moving beyond an exclusively human focus, the research aims to critically explore how Design for Social Innovation can expand its scope, fostering new understandings of urban multispecies communities.
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Keywords	multispecies design, design for social innovation, community-making
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