

RESEARCH THEME

XLI Cycle – a.y. 2025/2026

Title of the doctoral research Towards a Protopian Paradigm in Design: Redefining Creativity in the Post-Anthropocene Era

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Abstract

The modern age is marked by a human-centred perspective placing humans above other species, leading to destructive actions toward our planet. Additionally, the rapid evolution of digital technology demands careful management to foster innovation while ensuring environmental sustainability. Within this intricate framework, Design Futures emerges as a strategic approach to envisioning alternative futures where humans and other species coexist harmoniously, aided by digital technologies.

Envisioning these futures requires imagination to challenge prevailing assumptions and facilitate a "creative leap" toward more sustainable outcomes. Addressing these challenges calls for new methods and skills to: 1) foster creativity beyond human-centric views, recognizing the interconnectedness of all beings; 2) embrace a more holistic perspective to design technological solutions, aligning with ethical principles and societal needs; 3) face the complexities and uncertainties of the future by transforming pressing global issues into opportunities for design, co-creating solutions through the concept of "protopia", implying proactive prototyping for "better" and inclusive futures. As digital advancements continue, creativity and design evolve as well, becoming guiding forces in addressing social and environmental challenges. The shift toward a just and inclusive digital transformation requires new skills, methods, and design approaches for a world encompassing more than just human interests.

The aim of this research line is to redefine creativity in the Post-Anthropocene era, interpret protopian principles to develop actionable strategies for the future, and explore Design Futures' role in managing nonlinear scenarios and anticipating future challenges posed by digital technologies. The PhD candidate embarking on this research journey will have the opportunity to engage with other EU and PhD research on related topics.

Keywords

"Design Futures", "Post-Anthropocene Creativity", "Protopian thinking"