



Global Design Collaborations x Local Impact


Saturday Feb 22, 2025 | 10.30-17.30h

This un.conference seeks to bring together a diverse range design educators, university leaders, researchers, and practitioners from around the world to explore how design education can foster impactful collaborations with local community initiatives, activists and other stakeholders. Through participatory sessions and open discussions, we aim to reflect on past experiences, define common goals, and create innovative approaches for the future together.

Following a Global Workshop: The un.conference is following a workshop that aimed at recognizing, understanding and supporting different spaces of sociability, exchange, and urban resistance in Cologne. We engaged in observation as well as dialogue with different stakeholders active in these spaces, we explored in which ways those local collaborations can be of mutual benefit, generate local impact and allow GDI to be a platform that works with local partners in a lasting and sustainable way.

The un.conference continues the theme of the workshop "Third Places in Cologne: Designing Transformations for Convivial Encounters" by reflecting on the proposals developed by the project groups and the views of the actors from Cologne with whom we worked during the week. The actors are essentially initiatives and organizations that make important contributions to the sustainable development of Cologne in a way that is oriented towards common good. While the workshop is looking for ways to strengthen these actors, build new relationships where possible, create interventions as urban plug-ins and thus aims at being important contribution from the design perspective, the un.conference format should be a further development of the workshop setting and actively involve all participants.

A format of mutual learning and exchange: An un.conference is a participant-driven event that emphasizes informal and spontaneous discussions, held in flexible spaces designed for collaboration, sharing and creative explorations. The primary goal of an un.conference is to facilitate knowledge sharing, idea generation, and networking among attendees through interactive sessions engaging all participants.



As a prompt, the un.conference should be structured around three main aspects:

Experiences: What are experiences we can share? What are cases of best practice? What did we learn in those settings? Have we experienced global collaborations that were beneficial for local actors, communities or organizations? How do cultural, social, and economic contexts influence these partnerships?

Expectations: What are different partners in collaboration expecting? Which competencies do universities see as necessary? What are partners expecting? Are the expectations matching? What do community activists hope to gain from partnerships with design institutions? What are the responsibilities of educators and students in fostering community collaboration? How can these partnerships align with and inform the curriculum and institutional goals?

Explorations: What do we want to achieve in the future? What could be settings and frameworks of collaborations? Could new formats emerge? How could we implement this in our structural and curricular settings at universities? How can we integrate community-driven projects into the design curriculum? How can technology and digital platforms support these initiatives? How can a network like GDI be of mutual benefit? Using the potential of GDI as a Global Design Network, the thematic focus will be on exploring how global collaborations and networks can also generate a sustainable local impact and thus create new ecosystems of collaboration. Participating speakers share experiences and perspectives in the different countries and higher education systems and explore which future opportunities.

Schedule for Saturday, February 22

Morning session 10.30-13.00h

Three roundtables will share experiences and expectations in collaborative settings. Each roundtable is moderated by one GDI faculty member.

13.00-14.00h: Lunch break

Afternoon session 14.00-16.00h

Joint session. Brief reports from the roundtables, joint discussion on explorations - creating frameworks for future collaborations.

Closing remarks: 16-16.30h

Coffee and networking: 16.30-17.30h

Registration

Everybody is welcome - register until February 20 at gdi.cologne@gmail.com

Participation is free, but we charge 6€ for water, coffee and a light lunch.

GDI Partner universities are KISD / TH Köln (Germany) Musashino Art University Tokyo (Japan), Lasalle University of the Arts (Singapore), Shih Chien University / SCID Taipei (Taiwan), Central Saint Martins / ual London (UK).

This year's guest: SIVA Shanghai Institute of Visual Arts (China).

Workshop design and realisation in collaboration with urbz (Paris, Genua, Mumbai).

Local Partners during the workshop week: NeuLand eV, IGLU uG, Vunky Foods, Marktschwärmerei, Vringstreff, Gold+Beton, Unser Ebertplatz, Büro für Städtereisen, Alte Feuerwache, Kartäusergärten / Essbare Stadt Köln, FoodSharing ... and more!

