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**Design Futures Forum returns with over 30 international and local thought leaders to share insights on creating a brighter, collective future through design**

*Forum featuring tech futurist Cathy Hackl will address how design is at the forefront of transforming the latest technologies, health and care systems, and sustainability*



The Design Futures Forum visual by Practice Theory highlights the unfolding of rich narratives, with the opening of layered tabs revealing the depth and expansiveness of the discipline.

**Singapore, 5 August 2024** – DesignSingapore Council (Dsg) is bringing together innovators, pioneers, and leading industry voices from across the globe for its second edition of Design Futures Forum, a key event of the Singapore Design Week (SDW). Spanning two inspiring days from October 1 to 2, 2024, the new expanded format held at the Victoria Theatre and The Arts House will host keynotes, presentations and panel discussions on the opening day before moving into a second day of in-depth discussions and interactive sessions.

At this flagship initiative of Design Futures, one of three defining pillars of the festival organised by the Council, speakers from diverse fields will respond to this year's theme, 'Designing Our Collective Future'. The theme emphasises design's role and impact in emerging technologies, sustainability, and care – vital areas for shaping shared and resilient futures for all.

Setting the stage will be tech futurist Cathy Hackl, renowned as the “godmother of the spatial web”. Amid the unprecedented rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and spatial computing, Hackl will deliver

a keynote on the convergence of AI, spatial technologies and gaming, and the larger transformative implications for design, industries and daily lives.

“Singapore is leading the way on many fronts when it comes to technology and design. I’m excited to be here and hope to help attendees make better sense of where things are heading beyond the hype, understand what this moment of tech convergence means and how it will impact us and the future of the work they do,” says Hackl.

### **In-depth conversations on design futures**

The forum then kicks off with the rest of the **Emerging Technologies** segment, led by curator Debra Langlely, a Singapore-based venture capitalist behind Lyra Ventures. Joining her will be Jeremy Ang, Global Technology Alliance Director and Strategy Advisor, BytePlus; and Alex Govoreanu, Chief Executive Officer of Questo, a platform for city exploration games. Discussions will centre around the evolving dynamic between emerging technologies and design, highlighting the power of human creativity in this uncharted territory.

This will be followed by talks on the topic of regenerative design in the **Sustainability** segment, helmed by Aric Chen, General and Artistic Director of Het Nieuwe Instituut. With the escalating planet crisis rendering baseline sustainability measures insufficient, Chen and his speakers will highlight the urgency for bold, regenerative practices to secure a viable future. Speakers include influential Thai architect, Boonserm Premthada; and Mitchell Joachim, professor and co-founder of Terreform ONE, a non-profit architecture and urban design research group.

Tamsin Greulich-Smith, who heads DesignSingapore Council’s School of X, will anchor the **Care** segment. Her panel of speakers will examine how design – via adaptive clothing or at the level of care systems and environments – enhances our health and quality of life. The audience will hear from Professor Wong Hon Tym, Senior Consultant and Advisor, National Healthcare Group Eye Institute (NHGEI) and the Clinical Director of the Centre for Healthcare Innovation (CHI); Professor Jeanne Tan, Chief Operating Officer and Centre Assistant Director of the Laboratory for Artificial Intelligence in Design (AidLab); and Claudia Poh, founder of adaptive clothing label Werable.

“Design has been playing a role in improving care experiences for years, both for clinician and patient, but we believe the potential of design to impact care outcomes in the future could be truly transformative. I’m looking forward to igniting our collective imaginations by bringing to life future possibilities for design and care through the conversations and engagements we’ve got lined up that focus on actionable opportunities,” says Greulich-Smith.

To round off the first day, a closing panel will be facilitated by Ziqq Rafit, a design strategist, educator, and tech enthusiast. Rafit is the Global Pillar Lead for Gen-AI Ethics and Governance for Ernst and Young, and lectures on Design Innovation at the Singapore Institute of Technology.

### **Bridging knowledge and practice through focused sessions**

The second day of the forum will build on the discussions of Day 1. Participants can expect to be engaged and inspired through a series of intimate presentations and interactive sessions that will delve further into the three segments.

For **Emerging Technologies**, Copenhagen-based digital design platform Design Matters, will present how new technologies in the digital and product fields can create lasting social impact. Hosted by Reginé Gilbert, author of “Inclusive Design for a Digital World: Designing with Accessibility in Mind”, the segment also features Megan Bednarczyk of Duolingo which is using generative AI to power translation; Tobias Ahlin, Principal Design Engineer at GitHub; Dr Farah Shiraz, Chief Scientific Officer at Khora, a leading Scandinavian Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) production studio and Ice Zhao Bing, Design Lead at interactive real-time 3D software development company, Unity Technologies, among others.

Driving the discussions in the **Sustainability** segment are Wendy Chua, co-founder of Forest & Whale and interdisciplinary design researcher, curator and educator, as well as Dr Ying Seow, a UK-based sustainability practitioner. The pair will lead two distinct panels where participants get to address the overarching issues of climate change and systemic change before shifting perspectives to examine plastic use, its effects on a microscale and the local movements which have sprung up. Featured speakers include Dr Chris Lim, an ophthalmic surgeon who leads sustainability efforts for the National University Health System Ophthalmology cluster; Dr Srilalitha Gopalakrishnan, Associate Director of Research at the Future Cities Laboratory Global, Singapore-ETH Centre; and Ar. Leong Tatt Man, a founding member of The Circle for Human Sustainability (TCHS) and director at Tierra Design Studio.

To investigate design’s role in different systems of **Care**, Tamsin Greulich-Smith and School of X, are joined by a suite of design experts such as Proud Patanavanich of Bangkok’s MedPark Hospital and Pilar Diaz Gonzalez, Chief Executive Officer of Femography. They will guide participants through several lively activities, ranging from the co-creation of apparel, environments, and cultures to pitch proposals and team debates on effective design in care and its outcomes.

“By bringing together thought leaders, designers, and innovators from all over the world, the Design Futures Forum is actively encouraging our participants to inspire change in their own spheres of influence. Being a forward-looking city, we believe we can drive conversations and foster collaborations to design a shared future that is more sustainable, technologically ethical and healthier for everyone,” says Dawn Lim, Executive Director, DesignSingapore Council.

### **Design Futures Forum**

1 to 2 October 2024

<https://dff2024.eventbrite.sg>

Tickets for the Design Futures Forum are currently on sale. Early bird sale ends 31 August 2024. Please refer to the website for the latest programme and updates.



Images can be found in this folder [HERE](#).  
Download the press kit [HERE](#).

### **About Singapore Design Week**

One of Asia's premier design festivals, Singapore Design Week (SDW) celebrates Singapore's distinctive brand of creativity, exploring design through three defining festival pillars: Design Futures (the design of the future and the future of design), Design Marketplace (lifestyle trends with a spotlight on Southeast Asia) and Design Impact (innovative solutions for a better world). Organised by DesignSingapore Council, SDW is a celebration of creativity and innovation, championing thought leadership and showcasing the best of design from Singapore and beyond. [sdw.sg](http://sdw.sg)

### **About the DesignSingapore Council**

The DesignSingapore Council's (Dsg's) vision is for Singapore to be an innovation-driven economy and a loveable city by design. As the national agency that promotes design, our mission is to develop the design sector, help Singapore use design for innovation and growth, and make life better in this UNESCO Creative City of Design. Dsg is a subsidiary of the Singapore Economic Development Board. <https://designsingapore.org/>

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