

Future of Life Summer School

A speculative summer program
exploring future narratives across
different design disciplines.

July 26th – 30th
Bio Design Lab
HfG Karlsruhe
Germany

Concept

The Future of Life Summer School is an exploratory summer program organised by Bio Design Lab, an incubator for collaboration within Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design. It is a hybrid and evolving space that connects the university with local resources and aims to reflect on modes of production and collaboration.

Within the framework of the university's 30th anniversary, the Summer School of Bio Design Lab invites 60 participants to create probable, plausible and speculative future narratives of cohabitation. From future material mining to terrestrial designing, from building materials to settling on different planets - participants will explore parallel and partly interwoven program strands and form a bio-circular system by the end of the program.

The five-day program offers workshops led by inspiring designers, architects and researchers followed by an open evening program with lectures, talks, panel discussions & performances.

Theme

With rising temperatures and CO2 levels, as well as the declining health of our ecosystem, we are forced to reevaluate our co-existence on this planet. We ask ourselves: What will life in the future look like? And is there still place for us?

Both design and designers play a central role in exploring these critical questions. Designers can challenge the outdated concepts of sourcing, producing and consuming whereas design can portray complex information in an accessible form. Future of Life participants together with inspiring designers, architects and practitioners will work on proposed research questions on an experimental and material level. New material concepts, tools and spaces will emerge through a series of workshops, lectures and exhibits.

Daytime Program

The daytime program offers workshops led by renowned international and local designers, researchers, philosophers and guided tours in collaboration with ZKM (Zentrum für Kunst und Medien Karlsruhe)

- DISRUPTIVE MATERIALS LAB
How do our present actions shape the fossils of future?
- NON-HUMAN DESIGN LAB
What would you talk with bacteria about?
- ARCHITECTURE LAB
Will climate catastrophes design our cities?
- FUTURE TOOLS LAB
What tools will go extinct in future?
- A VISIT TO ZKM

Daytime Program

DISRUPTIVE MATERIALS LAB

Workshop expert: Shahar Livne

*How do our present actions
shape the fossils of future?*

This speculative workshop will look into a far-future scenario and investigate anthropogenic materials, future mining and how the term “value” will shift in future materials.

Framework:

100 years (speculative scenario)

Daytime Program

NON-HUMAN DESIGN LAB

Workshop expert: Paula Nerlich & Romy Kaiser

What would you talk with bacteria about?

Participants will work on probable future communication scenarios between bacteria and humans. Our environment is built on microorganisms and there could not be a life without them. We are slowly developing tools to start communicating and collaborating with microorganisms. To what extent could such a collaboration benefit both sides?

Framework:

5–20 years (probable/possible scenario)

Daytime Program

ARCHITECTURE LAB

Workshop expert: Niveau Zero Atelier

Will climate catastrophes design our cities?

Our future will be defined by our ability to adapt to environmental changes - from rising temperatures and water levels to extreme storms and resource shortages. For urban regions, in particular, essential solutions need to be developed and implemented quickly. From photosynthesis to carbon-absorbing materials and alternative techniques - what will life in a city look like in future?

Framework:

20–100 years (plausible / speculative scenario)

Daytime Program

FUTURE TOOLS LAB

Workshop expert: Chris Spatscheck

What tools will go extinct in future?

As the approach to design changes, so do our tools. Designers develop novel techniques, grow their own materials and print their own tools. What role will Bio Labs play in the development of skill, material and collaboration? And will schools be able to adapt?

Framework:
20 years (plausible scenario)

Evening Program

The summer program offers an open-evening program accessible to the general public. Various talks, presentations and panel discussions will take place around various topics related to the summer school curriculum:

OUTSIDE PLANETARY LIMITS (July 27th)

Presentations and a panel discussion about expanding life on other planets. Critical questions will be asked, such as, where do we even start? What should be packed in our bags? What materials can we use and how will food be grown?

BIOPHILIC INTELLIGENCE (July 28th)

An event dedicated to living materials, structures and dreaming bold about solutions that could heal our planet in terms of rising temperatures and dropping biodiversity.

MOVIE NIGHT (July 29th)

A selection of »food-for-thought« movies.

Eligibility of participants

- Can demonstrate an interest in changing the world through design;
- Possesses a good level of English;
- Is curious, creative and has a collaborative mindset;
- Is a student or recent graduate (graduated no longer than 3 years ago).

Costs

Participation at the summer school is free of charge. However, participants need to cover the traveling, accommodation and daily costs.

Practical information

The Summer School Future of Life is a 5-day long program filled with workshops, talks, guided tours and panel discussions. All workshops and presentations will be held in English.

Dates

Future of Life summer program starts in the afternoon on July 26th 2022, evening and will end in the evening of July 30th

Location

The summer school takes place in Karlsruhe, Germany within the premises of HfG Karlsruhe

Questions

Ask them here: biodesignlab@hfg-karlsruhe.de