

WONDER (Women in Design Research) is a network of female professors, postdocs and students from the Scandinavian countries. The network has existed since 2012, it is interdisciplinary and has the goal to increase the number of women in design research, practice and education. [www.ntnu.edu/womenindesignresearch](http://www.ntnu.edu/womenindesignresearch)

# INVITATION LETTER

## WONDER

### KITCHEN TABLE CONVERSATIONS

#### 19 OCT 2020

The annual WONDER meeting is not an exception from the general events happening right now in society, including academia. We are writing this invitation letter in our third month of quarantine, distancing, and isolation. We have seen and experienced that the pandemic underlines all kinds of inequalities, social and financial, on both local and global levels. Perhaps more acutely than ever, it has raised questions about the current economic and social systems, and how resources are distributed.

Many researchers are privileged to be able to work from home, in improvised home offices, or from the kitchen table. Academic life has transformed from mobile to remote, from face-to-face to virtual and from material to immaterial.

Working from home can, on the one hand, make you isolated from colleagues and society, create anxiety, annoyance, and lack of

motivation and inspiration. On the other hand, despite the screen exhaustion, one beautiful thing about zoom meetings, we have discovered, is that we see each other exposed in our informal everyday habitats, with personal details in the background and family members interrupting.

On a micro-level, the pandemic has turned the most familiar situations upside down. Sociologist Eva Illouz writes that “(t)he world has become, overnight, unheimlich – uncanny, emptied of its familiarity. Its most comforting gestures – shaking of hands, kissing, hugging, eating with others – have turned into sources of anxiety and danger”.<sup>1</sup> Her observation points towards the ambiguity of the home as a comfortable space, and in general, many already existing questions and complexities that this situation has brought up to the surface.

Historically, women’s emancipatory projects have centered around struggles to free themselves from domestic spaces and the kitchen. The home has been regarded as an oppressive place that keeps one away from professional and societal life. From a feminist Afro-American perspective, bell hooks suggested instead that home can also be regarded as a site of resistance in a repressive, colonized, and white supremacist world.<sup>2</sup> Thus she rereads the concept of private domesticity as potentially a public act of resistance.

We think of WONDER 2020 as a moment to share our thoughts and experiences through conversations. We are inspired by the thinking of architect Nel Janssens, who argues that the term conversation suggests a non-linear kind of collective sense-making, that takes place in everyday life. Departing from an etymological analysis of the word, she finds that *conversation*

means “the act of living with or keep company with”.<sup>3</sup> Her approach resonates with different critical modes of design research that we choose to inhabit with our different projects, and that allow us to engage politically, socially and designerly with the challenges our world(s) face.

In this light, we are acknowledging the challenges and new insights of this spring for us all, as humans and design researchers and practitioners. Therefore, we invite you to come together and share experiences, practices, strategies, reflections, resistances, and insights to the 2020 online edition of WONDER, framed as kitchen table conversations.

Please apply by filling in [this form](#) by latest **1 September 2020**.  
A program will be sent out in early October.

Kind regards,

Hanna af Ekström, Angeliki Dimaki-Adolfson, Maryam Fanni

PhD students in Design at HDK-Valand Academy of Art and Design, Gothenburg University

Written from Gothenburg, Oslo, Stockholm, May 2020

1

Eva Illouz, “Coronavirus Reveals What Really Makes the World Go Round, and It’s Not Money – The bluff of neo-liberalism must be called out”, *The Haaretz*, 04 April 2020

2

bell hooks, “Homeplace (A site of resistance)”, *Yearning: Race, gender, and cultural politics* (1990)

3

Nel Janssens, “Prologue: Collective Sense-making for Change: About conversations and instructs”, *Feminist Futures for Spatial Practice* (2017) p151–156



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WELCOME TO

WONDER

KITCHEN TABLE CONVERSATIONS

19 OCTOBER 2020

ONLINE

09.00–17.00 CEST

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://gu-se.zoom.us/j/68247529258?pwd=NE1KS1JlbXoyT2JBZ1Z0dERzTW1TZz09>

Passcode: 808779

**Please note**  
List of preparations  
in yellow bubbles  
on next page!  
:)

## INTRODUCTION

09.00–09.40 Welcome speech by organizers

09.40–10.00 Round table presentations

FIVE MIN BREAK

**Bring an object!**  
For the round table presentations, we kindly ask you to select and bring an object that has somehow been significant for you during COVID-19 isolation.

## DISCUSSION

10.05–11.00

FIVE MIN BREAK

11.05–12.00

EXPERIENCES FROM  
THE FIELD OF DESIGN AND ACADEMIA  
IN THE CHALLENGING TIMES  
OF THE PANDEMIC

## LUNCH

12.00–13.00

## PRESENTATIONS

13.00–13.30 Martina Keitsch

FIVE MIN BREAK

13.35–14.05 Linda Holmer

FIVE MIN BREAK

14.10–14.40 Nina Bjørnstad

FIVE MIN BREAK

14.45–15.15 Cheryl Akner Koler and Corina Akner

TWENTY MIN OPTIONAL PAUSE ACTIVITY

ORGANIZED BY CHERYL AND CORINA

15.35–15.55 Evren Uzer

reports from Parsons, NY

FIVE MIN BREAK

**Haptic FOOD Lab**  
Please prepare:  
1 apple and banana,  
knife and plate

**Provocative FIKA**  
Please prepare:  
☀ apple juice or cider  
☀ coffee  
☀ water cooker  
☀ three similar glasses  
(able to have hot liquid in)

## FINAL NOTES

16.00–16.30 Final discussion

16.30–17.00 Planning WONDER 2021 (Optional)

## DOCUMENTATION

A PDF with visual notes, created by HDK-Valand student Linn Graeker, will be sent to all after the event.

## — ORGANIZERS —

**Hanna af Ekström**

PhD student in Design  
HDK-Valand Academy of Arts and Design  
University of Gothenburg  
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My research aims to contribute with perspectives and methods based on a common foundation of our various functional variations, by creating design methods beyond objectifying empathy methods that risk reproducing able-bodiedness. The inquiry of the methods is within the project Tink. Together with people with norm-breaking functional variations and architects, we explore urban stormwater solutions through sensory experiences such as visual contrasts, hearing, smell, and taste, to get a deeper understanding of inclusion and accessibility.

**Angeliki Dimaki-Adolfson**

PhD student in Design  
HDK-Valand Academy of Arts and Design  
University of Gothenburg  
angeliki.dimaki.adolfson@hdk.gu.se

Angeliki Dimaki-Adolfson is a Greek-Norwegian designer. Through her project *Play on the borders of Europe*, she investigates the spatial and temporal aspects of play, through the lens of design in the Greek borderlines. Angeliki gained her BA in Interior Architecture and Design from the Technological Institute of Athens. She then moved to Oslo where she got her MA in Design from the Oslo School of Architecture and Design in 2010 and where she has been residing since then.

**Maryam Fanni**

PhD student in Design  
HDK-Valand Academy of Arts and Design  
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Maryam Fanni is a graphic designer with a degree from Konstfack University College of Arts, Crafts and Design from 2013. She runs her own design studio focusing on printed matter and book design for cultural and non-profit clients, alongside research-based collective artistic practices. Since 2018 she is a PhD student with a project on signage systems as technology of control of the aesthetic order in the city.

## — PRESENTERS —

**Martina Keitsch**

Professor in Sustainable Design  
Norwegian University of Science and Technology  
martina.keitsch@ntnu.no



Gender Narratives from Mustang, Nepal - Part 1: Common Work  
Participatory design depends on teamwork, which is advanced through inclusion, acceptance, support and trust, while individuality is endorsed. This is especially relevant when heterogeneous stakeholders and or marginalized groups or individuals are involved in a participatory design process. An important aspect for successful participatory design within this context is to acknowledge diversity of needs and knowledge in seemingly homogenous stakeholder groups for example local people. Different types of communication to co-ordinate individual perspectives and expectations and to integrate single performances in a common action plan are needed. Narratives play a significant role in the participatory design process. Sharing stories creates openness, builds trust and ownership, contributes to empathy and cohesion between stakeholders, and alleviates tensions. Storytelling and narratives also contribute to flattening of existing hierarchies and levelling of power relationships. Equally important, they can provide enjoyable experiences and can emotionally touch and engage people. 'Gender Narratives from Mustang, Nepal' presents an example of applying narratives to discuss property, work and education of men and women in Mustang Nepal. The goal of ongoing study is to understand the background for a participatory design project for renewable energy entrepreneurship with women in the area. The presentation discusses methods, findings challenges and possibilities of narratives as

socio-cultural dimension of inclusion and analysis mutual development of capacities such as literacy, creativity, critical knowledge, empathy, and trust for a common participatory design process.

**Dr. Martina Maria Keitsch** is Professor for Sustainable Design and PhD Program Leader at the Department of Design, Faculty of Architecture and Design, Norwegian University of Science and Technology. From 2019-2023 she is appointed Visiting Professor at the Institute of Engineering, Tribhuvan University, Nepal. Keitsch is project leader of the NORAD financed NTNU/IOE project MESSSD 'Energy for Social Sustainability' (<http://messsd.ioe.edu.np/>) from 2015-end 2020. She is also Project leader of the DIKU, NORPART financed project SAMAJ, 'Transdisciplinary Education for a Sustainable Society from 2019-2023' (<https://www.samaj.online/>). Keitsch has worked for over 20 years in the sustainable development field, mainly with industrial ecology, eco design, and -architecture, urban planning, stakeholder inclusion and transdisciplinary collaboration, and ethics of sustainability. Keitsch is Member of several Scientific Committees, and board member of the Network, Women in Design Research. She has been Guest-editor of four special issues for the Journal "Sustainable Development". Keitsch is teaching Bachelor- Master- and PhD students and has published several articles on the topics above. Recent publications cover: Sustainability and Public Space, Transdisciplinary collaboration in Renewable energy projects, Sustainable Design and Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation through Low carbon-city design.



### **Nina Bjørnstad**

Associate Professor/ Industrial Designer  
The Oslo School of Architecture and Design



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WSHF – a norm-critical study of dissemination is a qualitative study of research dissemination in two specific exhibitions at the AHO gallery this fall. Informed by system design, and a method such as mapping, which is used to find patterns, will serve us, but most emphasis will be placed on interviews.

Research process and results from landscape and design are presented in two recent exhibitions this fall. The communication or media, span

from written text to experiences triggering all senses. Which media is used to convey feelings, information and how experiential and sensuous effects are activated? Whether references to other specific aesthetics, science or cultural cue is a premise. Metaphors are normative in a way that the culture we live in has certain connotations to signs, i.e. in naming of the exhibition. Important design as colour coding, abstractions or built space will be registered. Is it so that disseminations of research are governed by norms?

**Nina Bjørnstad** is Associate Professor/ Industrial Designer at Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO) in Norway. She has a Master in Industrial Design from Konstfack University College of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm and is an experienced teacher in the field of aesthetic and semiotics for product-, interaction- and service designers. 2020 she became the main coordinator for Industrial Design 2, 4th year, where "far future" product design concepts are developed. She is a guest participant in the research projects HAPTICA, within the field of aesthetics that will emphasize haptic aspects of movement, touch, taste and smell in relation to a creative gestalt process. Member of several expert committees and Committee for employment at AHO. Nina is engaged in supporting a more gender-aware culture at AHO and has been on the board of WONDER Scandinavian Network for Women in Design since 2012.



### **Cheryl Akner Koler**

Professor in Theoretical and Applied Aesthetics  
Konstfack Design program DIV  
[cheryl.akner.koler@konstfack.se](mailto:cheryl.akner.koler@konstfack.se)

### **Corina Akner**

Founder of VÄRT – sustainable food lab in  
Gothenburg  
[info@vartsweden.com](mailto:info@vartsweden.com)

Collective Dimension of Table Setting:

In this educational project, we will share the ways students open their kitchen and homes to each other and the course leaders as they explored aesthetic principles, haptic feelings, and emotional memories in a course about plating and table setting. The 3-day workshop, lead on zoom, guided students through 7 stages of collective sense-making experiences that were carried out in the heart of their kitchen. Although the students all worked individually in their homes they were never alone. Each stage was done in the company of one or more students with a designated host. The everyday act of making dough, cutting up fruit to arrange on a plate, or placing a cloth on a table (or perhaps floor), framed the course in a very

unpretentious way. Many of the stages introduced abstract 3-D form and space principles, however, the materials used to explore these principles were flour/water, fruits/vegetables, and other food materials. We also introduced our food labs based on our latest results in haptic research from the HAPTICA project. To support a more emotionally complex experience in the final table setting stage a Co-creative writing method was used to support students to recall uncensored memories relating to a chosen song/music piece. The process and results for each stage combined a personal touch that would have been difficult to bring about if the workshop was done in an institutional space.



This project is an important step in opening up the sensorium to include all the senses and to connect abstract reasoning with tangible feeling and inner emotional drives.

**Cheryl Akner Koler** is the project leader / artistic leader of HAPTICA -and an expert in the haptic attributes. She is a Sculptor and design educator who completed her Ph.D. from Chalmers University of Technology in 2007 entitled: Form & Formlessness. Cheryl has lead three major artistic research projects funded by the Swedish Research Council concerning; Complexity, Nano, and Haptics. Her teaching involves embodied studies, aesthetic abstractions, and product semiotic in the BA& MA program. She recently held a 4-year guest professorship at the School of hospitality, culinary arts, and meal science at Örebro University working with culinary artists in developing their profile in applied aesthetics.

**Corina Akner** is the founder of VÄRT – sustainable food lab in Gothenburg. In VÄRT's workshops, they alternate between different practical thinking exercises to understand systems in ecology, circular economy, product design and sustainability. Food is the material used to make the questions concrete and haptic. Waste is the issue at the top of the agenda. Being able to directly participate in the sustainable transition as an individual and organization is the

transformative goal.



**Linda Holmer**  
Junior lecturer in Design



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Image: Workshop at Tamer Institute of Community Learning, Ramallah, Palestine 2020. Investigating the mood of a pen, with closed eyes (because pens sometimes gets shy and won't tell when being looked at).

The project investigates and tries to conceptualize The performativity of the picture book, in order to strengthen the ability to speak about the media in its own picture book-specific terms, broadening the knowledge of the picture book as a media in its own right, and not from the current dominant literary scientific perspective.

The narrative picture book has emerged from children's literature, but it is out of media aspect as age-differentiated and non-instrumental as the film medium, theatrical medium or the opera. This project is collecting stories, knowledge and understandings for the picture book as an art form, and trying to loosen it from that burden of instrumental thinking or having to have a purpose, be good for anything or that it has a utility, that often is connected when talking about picture books in general, and children's literature in particular.

It investigates interaction / interplay / synergies between the different parts in a picture book, and in the process of making a picture book. It is also aiming to investigate where this interplay forms a further third in collaboration with the reader, maker / makers and mediator.

The project is investigated through; own artistic practice as a picture book maker and through the platform Nästa together with Ina Marie

Winther Åshaug; exploratory workshops at the course Att bilderboksberätta (how to tell through picture books) at HDK-Valand together with researcher Ulla Rhedin and poet Gro Dahle. Interplay between the different art forms in a picture book in open allegory with related art forms, such as opera and film media.

**Linda Holmer** is a teacher in design at HDK-Valand, editor, writer, illustrator, art director and quite often unsure of things.



### **Evren Uzer**

Assistant Professor of Urban Planning at School of Design Strategies, Parsons, New York  
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Evren Uzer is a NYC based educator, urban planner and community practitioner working on civic engagement in planning and design and her current research focuses on activism, critical heritage studies and feminist spatial practices. She has a PhD and BSc in Urban and Regional Planning, and MSc in Urban Design, from Istanbul Technical University. Her PhD thesis (2010) is on cultural heritage at risk. Evren joined Parsons in 2015 from University of Gothenburg in Sweden where she was a postdoctoral research fellow between 2013-2015 in the School of Design and Crafts where she worked on her project focusing on Heritage activism.

Evren is also affiliated with University of Gothenburg, School of Design and Crafts (HDK) in Sweden through her research project "Reconciliatory Heritage: Reconstructing Heritage in a Time of Violent Fragmentations" funded by Vetenskapsradet (VR), Swedish Research Council (2017-2020).