



# Design as Everyday Theatre

Towards a performative praxis of social design

**PhD defence by Maria Foverskov**

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2020 at 13:00

KADK, Aud. 1 (check for updates: [www.kadk.dk](http://www.kadk.dk))

Danneskiold-Samsøes Allé 51, 1435 Copenhagen



## Public PhD-defence

**Maria Foverskov** defends the dissertation  
**Design as Everyday Theatre;** Towards a performative praxis of social design

The defence takes place **Thursday 10 of September 2020, at 13:00 in Aud. 1,**  
Danneskiold-Samsøes Allé 53, 1435 Copenhagen K.

### Agenda

- 13:00 Welcome and presentation of chairperson, assessment committee, supervisors and author
- 13:05 Maria Foverskov presents her dissertation *Design as Everyday Theatre*
- 13:50 Short break  
According to the 'Ministerial Order on the PhD Course of Study and the PhD Degree' the chairperson may invite the audience to contribute with short statements. Such intentions should be addressed to the chairperson during the break.
- 14:00 Pelle Ehn, Professor Emeritus, School of Arts and Communication, Malmö University, Sweden
- 14:30 Brendon Clark, Associate Professor, Umeå Institute of Design, Umeå University, Sweden
- 15:00 Sissel Olander, Associate Professor, Institute of Visual Design, KADK, Copenhagen, Denmark (Chair of the assessment committee)
- 15:30 Comments from the auditorium  
The assessment committee evaluates and makes the concluding remarks  
Closure of session

### Assessment committee

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| Brendon Clark  | Associate Professor, Umeå Institute of Design, Umeå University, Sweden   |
| Pelle Ehn      | Professor Emeritus, School of Arts and Communication, Malmö University, Sweden                                 |
| Sissel Olander | Associate Professor, Institute of Visual Design, KADK, Copenhagen, Denmark (Chair of the assessment committee) |

### Principal Supervisor

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| Thomas Binder | Professor, Lab for Planet, Design School Kolding, Denmark (Chairperson of the defence) |
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The thesis is the result of a PhD project funded by the Danish Enterprise and Construction Authority (EBST) under the program for user-driven innovation, Danish Centre for Design Research (DCDR) & KADK.

The thesis is available to look through for interested persons at the Library of Architecture, Design and Performing Arts, Danneskiold-Samsøes Allé 50, 1434 Copenhagen K.

There can be a **maximum of 100 people in the room**, so please come early if you want to make sure to get a seat. There is also the opportunity to partake online via Zoom. If you wish to do so, please e-mail Karen Margrethe klau@kadk.dk beforehand.

# Design as Everyday Theatre

## Towards a performative praxis of social design

### Abstract (UK)

Design disciplines are transitioning from designing objects to designing transformations of service relations and experiences. Designers have now moved beyond designing *for* industrial production, to further engage in co-production of partnerships, entailing the complex relations of public spaces and civic spheres; co-designing *with* citizens as well as public and private partners. Within civic design of welfare technology there is no longer *a user* nor *a consumer*. No singular use-context and not one common temporal consumption of 'use'. Relations of design and use – production and consumption – are constantly distributed in feedback loops, transgressing a linear flow of time, space and social relations. Contemporary design research no longer discusses how to “*design for the real world*”, but rather “*designs for the pluriverse*” when “*everybody designs*”. In short: designers are not only designing *with*, but also within fluid partnerships for societal change. Design research doesn't provide much scaffolding for professional designers navigating such unstable social and temporal landscapes. This thesis provides a performative framework and introduces a performance praxis, when navigating complex modes of participation. The thesis describes transitions of contemporary design roles and practices engaged in co-design of public and civic concerns, as social design within public-private partnerships of welfare innovation.

The empirical explorations of the multiple and situated roles of design are anchored in three user-driven innovation projects of citizens-centred welfare services and public-private partnerships, related to different aspects of the Danish context of welfare innovation. Exploring citizens wellbeing, across different sectors as related to social welfare technology and informal care communities within slightly supported senior commons. The research is situated within the fields of Co-Design and Participatory Design, but this thesis introduces theoretical lenses from Performance Studies. By ethnographic descriptions of situated co-design encounters, the thesis proposes three performative modes of participation, described as *rehearsing*, *performing* and *reenacting*. Within these performative modes both citizens, civil servants, private- and NGO partners are engaging as everyday designers as they co-design and transition welfare relations and practices. Everyday designers are invited to co-construct a liminoid and reflexive space for *rehearsing*; as trying out and playing with existing and altered practices. Further they engage a mode of *performing*; that sustain situated relations, as living the embodied practices in a present and specific context. The third mode of engagement is described as *reenacting* and is dispersing moments of temporal completion, as a negotiation of the existing (as well as possible and undesirable) relations and by de- and re-constructing practices among partners co-designing the Everyday Theatre.

The three relational design modes are further discussed through a navigational worldmaking praxis within multiple *approaches*, *position* and *practices*; such as approaching multiple worldviews of *trickstering*, *wayfaring* and *bartering* relations in different lifeworlds when transitioning social practices in relation to others.

The thesis contributes to the fields of Co-Design and Design Anthropology by analysing design encounters in relation to the performative qualities of design - as Everyday Theatre. The thesis provides a socio-spatio-temporal rendering as a performative atlas for navigating practices in the making. Thus, positioning design praxis as entangled, embodied and performative; always in fluctuating relations to oneself as well as others. The thesis argues how designers could approach their bodies to explore different performative modes of co-producing social change.

# Design som

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# Hverdagsteater

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## En performativ praksis for socialt design

### Resumé (DK)

Designdiscipliner er under udvikling fra design af objekter til design af interventioner af service-relationer og fællesskaber. Mange designere, der før designede for industriel produktion, engagerer sig nu i samproduktion af offentlige og private partnerskaber for at understøtte komplekse sociale processer, der engagerer både borgere såvel som offentlige og private partnere. Ved brugerdreven innovation af velfærdsteknologi findes der ikke længere én brugergruppe og ikke længere én brugskontekst. Relationen mellem design og brug – produktion og forbrug – distribueres konstant i feedback loops, der overskrider tidligere designtraditioners fokus på lineære strømme gennem tid, sted og sociale relationer. Nutidens designforskning diskuterer ikke længere “*design til den virkelige verden*”, men snarere “*design for pluriverset*”, når “*alle designer*”. Kort sagt: designere designer ikke længere kun *for* og *med* brugere, men også i relationer af partnerskaber. Designlitteraturen yder ikke meget støtte for professionelle designere, der designer og navigerer i foranderlige, relationelle og sociale landskaber. Denne afhandling bidrager med et performativt blik på en social praksis, når designere navigerer i komplekse former for deltagelse. Afhandlingen beskriver udviklingen mod det 21. århundredes nye designroller og -praksisser, der beskæftiger sig med co-design og samproduktion af offentlig-private partnerskaber for velfærdsinnovation der ønsker at transformere samfundsudfordringer.

De empiriske undersøgelser af de situerede og kontekstuelle designroller udspringer af forfatterens engagement gennem tre brugerdrevne innovationsprojekter af offentlig-private partnerskaber for design af borgernære velfærdsydelser, der er relateret til forskellige aspekter af samskabelse og udvikling af velfærdsinnovation i en dansk kontekst. Forskningsbidraget positionerer sig indenfor felterne Co-Design og Participatory Design, men i afhandlingen introduceres teoretiske perspektiver fra Performance Studies. Ved etnografiske beskrivelser af co-designengagementer argumenteres der med afhandlingen for tre forskellige former for performativ deltagelse, beskrevet som *rehearsing*, *performing* og *reenacting*. Indenfor disse performative samarbejdsformer, engagerer både borgere, embedsmænd, private og NGO-partnere sig som hverdagensdesignere, der designer og transformerer velfærdsrelationer og praksisser. Hverdagsdesignere inviteres først og fremmest for at samproducere et liminoidt og reflektivt rum for *rehearsing* (at øve sig); for at afprøve og undersøge eksisterende og ændrede hverdagspraksisser. Derefter følger et modus af *performing* (at opføre); der lader partnere udforske relationer, ved at opleve de transformerede hverdagspraksisser i den reelle og specifikke kontekst. Den tredje modus beskrives som *reenacting* (at genopføre), som omhandler et (gen)forhandlingsrum for de eksisterende relationer ved at de- og rekonstruere praksisser blandt relationer af partnere, der samskaber et *hverdagsteater*.

De tre relationelle co-design modi beskrives yderligere gennem en *world-making* praksis for at designere kan navigere gennem forskellige roller; såsom *trickstering*, *wayfaring* og *bartering* af relationer af livsverdener ved transitioner af sociale praksisser i partnerskaber.

Med afhandlingen bidrages til forskningsfelterne Co-Design og Design Antropologi ved at analysere designevents i relation til designrollernes performative kvaliteter - som et *hverdagsteater*. Afhandlingen beskriver en outline af processuelle performative modi for at støtte sociale designere i at navigere og positionere designengagementet i forhold til egne og andre partneres relationer. Gennem afhandlingen argumenteres der for, hvordan designere kan formgive med en performativ materialitet og en kropslig forståelse for at påvirke forskellige performative modi for samproduktion af social forandring i et velfærdsperspektiv.