DESIGN(ERS) BEYOND PRECARITY Proposals for Everyday Action

Bianca Elzenbaumer / Brave New Alps

e.g., Danah Abdulla,
n Otherwise: Towards
y-Centric Design
n Curricula in
London: Goldsmiths,
of London, 2017);
hnert, *Design,*
itics: Towards
ocene (London:
loomsbury Academic, 2018);
Arturo Escobar, *Designs*
for the Pluriverse: Radical
Interdependence, Autonomy,
and the Making of Worlds
(Durham, NC: Duke University
Press Books, 2018); Ramia
Mazé, Meike Schalk, and
Thérèse Kristiansson, eds.,
Feminist Futures of Spatial
Practice: Materialism, Activism,
Dialogues, Pedagogies,
Projections (Baunach: AADR,
2017).

2. Consider, e.g., the rise in
design courses catering to
this desire, such as the BA in
Design + Change at Linnaeus
University (SE), the MA in
Eco-Social Design at the Free
University of Bozen-Bolzano
(IT), the MA in Transformation
Design at the University of
Fine Arts Brunswick (DE), the
MA in Sustainable Design at
Kingston University (UK), or the
Ph.D. programme in Transition
Design at Carnegie Mellon
University (USA).

Introduction

How to create the social and material conditions that make critical, transformative design practice possible? This question continues to drive us in our work, especially because we are convinced that if we want design skills to be used for the creation of a world into which many worlds fit,[1] then lots of people interested in doing such transformative work need to be enabled to do it repeatedly and in the long-run. We know that the desire to use design as a tool for critical inquiry – to undo the roots behind issues such as rampant racism and earth systems breakdown – is shared by many,[2] but precarious conditions of work and life – which for designers manifest in ways such as overwork and underpayment, hyper-flexibility and lack of predictability, inability to access sick pay, paid vacations, or parental leave – make such a critical and transformative use of design materially difficult. When confronted with the pressure and anxieties produced by precarity, doing work that challenges the status quo often seems utopian as a basis on which to secure one's immediate livelihood. We also agree, however, that to be a realist in our times of social and ecological breakdown fuelled by neoliberal politics that try to commodify everything, one needs to be utopian and to work with full force towards just and sustainable futures.

From our own position of environmental activism and precarity back in 2006, we began to grapple with the question of how to sustain critical, transformative design practices: first by exploring the origins of precarizing conditions that stop people from doing critical and transformative work;[3] later by creating *Precarity Pilot*,[4] an online platform and series of workshops that share actionable tools against the mess and anxiety of precarious working and living conditions; and then by going into detail about how long-term eco-social practitioners make work work.[5] What we would like to do with this text is to share some of the main things we have learned throughout this period about how – as designers – we can work in our everyday towards a movement beyond precarity, for ourselves as well as for others. We will outline four general principles for orientation and three concrete everyday strategies and tactics that can be supportive in creating the socio-material conditions for sustaining a critical, transformative practice and, thus, for the creation of a world guided by principles of eco-social justice.[6]

Points of Orientation for a Move Beyond Precarity

To ask how to undo, go beyond, or exit precarity is also to ask what desires, interests, and values orient our actions and our being in the world. For us, questions about critical, transformative practice and about how to go beyond precarity are also questions of how not to be governed by precarizing principles, objectives, and procedures.[7] In being informed by such questions, we propose three points of orientation that we have found helpful in challenging precarity and making space for design practices of critical inquiry and social transformation.

There is an urgent need to attune ourselves to recognize precarizing value practices, i.e., to recognize those actions and processes – as well as correspondent webs of relations – that are predicated on a value system that exposes us and others to precarious working and living conditions, while at the same time (re)producing them.[8] This urgency is underlined for us by the reactions we got

3. Bianca Elzenbaumer, "Designing Economic Cultures: Cultivating Socially and Politically Engaged Design Practices Against Procedures of Precarisation" (London: Goldsmiths, University of London, 2014).

4. Brave New Alps, "Precarity Pilot," 2014, precaritypilot.net/.

5. Bianca Elzenbaumer et al., "Mapping Eco-Social Design," 2016, www.brave-new-alps.com/mapping-eco-social-design/.

6. We have already shared elsewhere how design educators can contribute to create a more diffuse awareness of precarious working conditions and to prefigure ways of working and living that lead beyond precarity: Brave New Alps, "Notes on Design Education and (Prefigurative) Work Politics," *Art, Design & Communication in Higher Education* 16, no. 1 (1 April 2017), 117–23, doi.org/10.1386/adch.16.1.117_1.

7. Michel Foucault, "What Is Critique?," in *The Politics of Truth*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer and Lysa Hochroth, trans. Lysa Hochroth (New York: Semiotext(e), 1997), 44–47.

8. For a discussion of value practices, see Massimo De Angelis, *The Beginning of History: Value Struggles and Global Capital* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 24.

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when running *Precarity Pilot* workshops across Europe. On the one hand, in contexts where we worked with already precarious designers – for example, in self-organized summer schools – there was a sense of relief among participants at being able to speak openly about the difficulties of precarious work, yet also a sense of hopelessness in regards of how to get out of it. People felt that the practical as well as conceptual tools they had acquired so far did not open up empowering perspectives in their working lives. On the other hand, in university contexts we encountered a great deal of denial of precarious working conditions and a preconception that to experience them means an individual lack of creativity and talent or too little commitment to work, and that's certainly something that does not apply to oneself, so no troubles in sight.

Despite the diversity in approach, for a majority of participants in both contexts there was an inability to recognize patterns of work and ways of life that generate precarious conditions for oneself and others. Overwork was seen as fulfilling, jumping from one project to the next as exciting, lack of retirement provisions and parental leave as something to deal with in a distant future, doing un- or underpaid work for prestigious clients or design studios as an excellent stepping stone for one's career, and the prospect of at some point holding a respected teaching position was seen as the guarantee for critical practice. While we agree that all these aspects can be fulfilling, we also know that they are so only as long as overwork and flexibility are self-directed, social provisions are secured by access to the systems of a functioning welfare state or by wealthy parents, underpayment does not simply lead to the next underpaid job, and the respected teaching position is actually properly paid. However, to go beyond systemic precarity, it is incredibly important to recognize precarizing patterns of work and life, as this enables one to come up with other ways of doing, while generating a sense of empowerment that goes beyond oneself: changing the way I work and live will not just help to de-precarize myself but also others.

MOVING BEYOND PRECARITY

Design Struggles

9. Joan C. Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 102.

10. Bernice Fisher and Joan C. Tronto, "Toward a Feminist Theory of Care," in *Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women's Lives*, ed. Emily K. Abel and Margaret K. Nelson (State University of New York Press, 1990), 40. This ethics of care and interdependence needs also to be applied beyond the field of humans to consider our interdependence with the more-than-human world in order to remake our subjectivities and our everyday practices. An elaboration of this aspect would, however, exceed the space of this text.

Follow a Logic of Interdependence to Practice Differently

A helpful first step in learning and activating de-precarizing value practices is to recognize our interdependence within and beyond our professional field. From this recognition we can start to act with an ethics of care, i.e., an ethics that "implies reaching out to something other than the self"[9] and that includes all activities "that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible."[10] This implies that fighting against the deleterious effects of precarious working and living conditions is not just about saving your own butt, as that's precisely the attitude that perpetuates precarizing value practices.

For us it is imperative that designers who do well economically and who have the racial, social, or geographical background that makes life easier, extend a supportive hand to others well beyond their circle of friends and cultivate de-precarizing value practices. Such value practices can take pretty conventional forms, such as fair pay for collaborators, charging properly for our services to avoid fee dumping, taking time to contribute to eco-social causes, and to slow down and cultivate a way of life aware of our interdependence with the more-than-human others in this world. Acting from a logic of interdependence and solidarity contributes – one act at a time – to improving the working situation and ability to produce transformative work for many more than just oneself.

Treat the Economy as the Malleable Stuff of Everyday Life

Another empowering move in generating de-precarizing value practices is to learn to see the economy as *always* diverse, i.e., as always made up of activities and exchanges beyond the money nexus and the logic of profit, and thus as a realm we always participate in, no matter how we secure our livelihoods. To better grasp the concept of the diverse economy, we can imagine the economy to have the shape of an iceberg where market exchanges are only the top

of what we see, while under the water there is a diversity of relational patterns of exchange and support that helps people to sustain their livelihoods. On the one hand, this feminist approach to the economy, developed by geographers J. K. Gibson-Graham,[11] places each of us as a key actor who makes the economy (and who can decide on how to make it) on a daily basis. On the other hand, it places the economy as a historical, discursive practice that is shaped by a wide range of actors and that by no means needs to stay as it is.[12]

This means that as designers we can make the economy the object of our design and even of our whole design practice, starting in the everyday with how we craft the diverse economies that sustain our livelihood and through which we weave ourselves together with others. This move towards diverse economies is especially important because (very often) critical, transformative work pays less and is more difficult to sustain than work that perpetuates the hegemonic system. In a diverse economies logic, making a living and creating the material and social conditions that enable critical, transformative work ceases to be a question of working your way up a ladder whose bars have become ever further apart and ever more slippery. Rather, it becomes a matter of weaving yourself into an ecology of practices that enables you to unfold your own force in challenging the status quo and experimenting with other ways of doing.[13] An ecology of practices, in which to ask what modes of doing and thinking one belongs to, is not a frictionless or tensionless space, but a space in which people can connect in empowering ways while creating an environment in which many can flourish.

Undo Ambitions for Imperial Modes of Living

In addressing our desires for less precarious ways of working and living while practicing design in critical and transformative work, we need to engage with structural and personal ties to imperial modes of living, i.e., ways of life that draw on ecological and social resources of more or less far away places to guarantee high living standards for oneself, while destroying the habitats and ways of life

11. The diverse economy has been theorized by feminist economic geographers J. K. Gibson-Graham. See their foundational work on this as well as the popularized version of it: J. K. Gibson-Graham, *A Postcapitalist Politics* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); *Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

12. Michel Callon, "What Does It Mean to Say That Economics Is Performative?," in *Do Economists Make Markets: On the Performativity of Economics*, ed. Donald MacKenzie, Fabian Muniesa, and Lucia Sui (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 311–57; Timothy Mitchell, "Rethinking Economy," *Geoforum* 39, no. 3 (2008), 1116–21.

13. Isabelle Stengers, "Introductory Notes on an Ecology of Practices," *Cultural Studies Review* 11, no. 1 (2005), 183–96, doi.org/ http://dx.doi.org/10.5130/ csr.v11i1.3459.

"TREAT THE EXISTING SITUATION AS A (PROBLEMATIC) RESOURCE FOR PROJECTS OF BECOMING, A PLACE FROM WHICH TO BUILD SOMETHING MORE DESIRABLE IN THE FUTURE."

J.K. GIBSON-GRAHAM — THE END OF CAPITALISM (AS WE KNEW IT), 2006

14. Ulrich Brand and Markus Wissen, *Imperiale Lebensweise: Zur Ausbeutung von Mensch und Natur in Zeiten des globalen Kapitalismus* (Munich: Oekom Verlag, 2017); I.L.A. Kollektiv, *Auf Kosten Der Anderen? Wie Die Imperiale Lebensweise Ein Gutes Leben Für Alle Verhindert* (Munich: Oekom Verlag, 2017); For an English introduction to the concept, see Ulrich Brand, "Imperial Mode of Living and the Politics of Social-Ecological Transformation," July 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=6306Svk_8j8.

15. Kathryn Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None* (Minneapolis, MN: University Of Minnesota Press, 2018).

of others.[14] Imperial modes of life are attractive, and much of the infrastructure and practices of everyday life in the minority world imply the destruction of other life-worlds along racialized fault lines.[15] Thus for critical, transformative design practices, it becomes crucial to question one's ambitions, ways of doing, and fields of reference, as a way to shape decisions and ways of working. Here we see two key aspects: (a) getting over one's sense of innate entitlement to imperial modes of living, and (b) working towards ways of practicing design and sustaining one's practice that experiment with degrowth and (ever-growing) solidarity.

To get over one's entitlement to imperial modes of living in the minority world, it is important to dig into the social history of one's upbringing and the context one lives in: what practices are enabled because of your gender, your skin color, your geographical and social background, your body fitness? For example, it is just as important for male designers to begin to see through patriarchal and sexist patterns as it is for white designers to begin to see through the patterns of racist and colonial socialization. Once

these dividing and destructive patterns become apparent it is possible to begin to form ambitions – and from these to produce design projects and thus modes of living – that empower through the creation of social solidarity and material support structures that allow for the emergence of a just pluriverse.

Construct Nurturing Value Practices

For us as designers, combining a logic of interdependence and diverse economies with a desire to undo imperial modes of living, means being at a point where it's possible to stop trying to fit one's work and life into conventional business or career templates. As J. K. Gibson-Graham teach us, the economies that sustain our livelihoods are by default always much more diverse – and we would say messy – than we are made to think.[16] From this perspective, the design of economies that carry ourselves and others beyond precarity becomes an appealing design task. We can begin to create amorphous entities that entangle work and life in empowering ways, while creating multiple economies above and below the waterline of the iceberg to sustain a design practice that does not want to cater to conventional market needs. There are many people out there doing this already, and the moment one doesn't take the design world of glossy magazines, shiny start-ups, and corporate collaborations as one's frame of reference for "success" one can begin to come up with pretty workable and nurturing value practices for work and life that challenge the isolating individuality that neoliberal politics pulls us towards.[17]

Strategies and Tactics to Move Beyond Precarity

"If women are everywhere, a woman is always somewhere, and those places of women are transformed as women transform themselves."
—J. K. Gibson Graham

If you have come this far in reading this text, you might begin to argue that the challenge we are setting out is too

16. It's also interesting to note that when you start digging into design practices that are successful in conventional terms, these very often sustain themselves in part through inherited wealth and/or supportive governments, who themselves mostly build their wealth on colonial pasts, a neocolonial present, and petroleum extraction.

17. The Feral Business Research Network, of which we are members, draws together a whole range of practitioners who are enacting diverse economies through artistic and designerly methods.

18. Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

big and that conventional, competitive ways of practicing design still seem the safest option to go beyond precarity. If this is the case, you might be experiencing a form of the "cruel optimism" that affect theorist Lauren Berlant has so sharply theorized.[18] Cruel optimism is an attachment to compromised conditions of possibility: the escape from precarious working and living conditions always seems just around the corner, but their resolution continuously escapes because cruel optimism keeps us locked into precarizing value practices.

So what follows are entry points to value practices that in our experience can break with compromised conditions of possibility. For some these value practices might seem too small or irrelevant, for others they might be too big, depending on where you are currently at. For us, they serve as concrete starting points and thinking devices that help us to reframe our ways of thinking, doing, and being in the world.

Make Long-term Plans

Capital moves people around and draws them to the center: to find your luck you are urged to move from the village to the town, from the town to the regional capital, and from there to the metropolis. The constant urge to move on and, especially, to move ever closer to a more powerful center, is in our view a precarizing value practice that is further exacerbated by the fact that places where capital is more dense are very often also places that precarize through exclusivity (expressed through, for example, high living costs and fierce restrictions on the right to stay based on qualifications and citizenship) and sped up, individualizing lifestyles. While we know very well that the center is also often where you get fresh air (and safety) by escaping the stifling patriarchal, sexist, racist, and homophobic structures of more peripheral spaces or where there is at least a chance of finding paid work (or security from war), we have also observed that resisting capital's demand for constant movement is for some designers a strategy against precarization.

While we have seen that places that feel more peripheral are often more fertile spaces for growing

de-precarizing value practices because access to living and working space is more affordable, we also think that whether you choose to live in a space that feels central or peripheral (and this can be a pretty subjective feeling), what is most important in terms of challenging precarity is to have a long-term plan you can stick to and inventively move around in when the pressures, anxieties, and doubts of precarity pull on you. Being exposed to precarity implies a constant temporariness, a constant flux of building and abandoning social and material structures, thus missing out on the possibility of creating interlinking infrastructures that can take us and others beyond precarity, infrastructures that can support critical practice through dire times.

Loosen the Grip of Money

Precarity is also related to the need for a constant flow of money to cover basic needs, work-related expenses, and leisure. However, the more you earn the more you spend, so the feeling of never earning enough remains pretty much a constant. From observing this dynamic, we have come to be convinced that voluntarily frugal lifestyles – paired with the political request for a general basic income – can be a way out of the tyranny of underpaid work, forced consumerism, and sped up ways of life. Frugal lifestyles can drastically reduce the need for – and with it the tyranny of – money. Frugality in terms of technology can mean to keep on fixing and upgrading your computer while resisting the pressure to keep up with the newest IT trends and taking a political stance by treating with care objects that have high social and environmental costs. When you also apply frugality to the consumption of energy, it means that flying both for work and leisure becomes an exception. In a critical and transformative act, you stop placing your own well-being and success above that of others further along the chain of destruction of the human practice of flying.

Once you perceive the economy as diverse, you can also begin to play with how you access what you need without moving through the money nexus, while growing rich social networks of mutual aid. But you can also loosen the grip of money by experimenting in more radical ways.

19. Christophe Meierhans, *Common Wallet (General Presentation, Oct 2018)*, 2018, vimeo.com/295537042.

20. "Ecosol Fidenza: Ecohousing nel quartiere Europa a Fidenza," www.ecosol-fidenza.it/ (accessed July 25, 2019); Tv2000it, *"Siamo noi": Cohousing a Fidenza*, www.youtube.com/watch?v=frgyQ76zCjo (accessed July 25, 2019).

21. See also Caroline Shenaz Hossein, *The Black Social Economy in the Americas Exploring Diverse Community-Based Markets*, Perspectives from Social Economics (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

22. Recent examples of such solidarity in our own network are the Cornerstone Housing Coop in Leeds, UK, always offering one spare room to refugees in need for immediate accommodation, and R50 in Berlin, who between 2015 and 2016 hosted a family of twelve Syrian refugees until, through their network, they had found proper housing for all of them.

Sharing all your income in a common pot with a group of people who also feel a desire for socio-economic transformation can be one way to go. In 2018, a diverse group of ten cultural producers in Brussels (Belgium) decided to start a common wallet as an experiment in kinship, solidarity, and radical trust, for although everyone in the group deserves steady access to money, there are not enough well-paid and stable jobs to go around.[19] Such experiments can lead to more common plans: in the 1990s a group of peace activists – one of whom is the architect Luca Rigoni – started a similar income-sharing collective in Fidenza (Italy). Ten years later they opened up their experiment to more people and built an ecological co-housing space in their town, which also offers leisure spaces for others in their neighborhood.[20] Loosening the grip of money on your minds, desires, and doing – through whatever mode of experimentation you choose – allows you to think in practice through what money does to us, our relations, and our lives, while creating a space from where it becomes possible to construct lives beyond precarity.[21]

Care for Common Infrastructures

Safe housing is a basic need, but desires for its fulfillment are often channeled into efforts for single household and family homes and often come with precarizing mortgages and individualisation by design. Moving desires and efforts around housing towards cooperative living can be very empowering, and, for designers wanting to do critical and transformative work, a way to embed themselves into spaces where daily experimentation opens different approaches to what designs and human practices the world beyond precarity needs. To share ownership of a building keeps living costs relatively low in the long-run, while providing communal spaces in which to grow supporting social connections that can carry people through financially difficult times and through which to offer support for people in immediate need for shelter and care.[22] Very often, such forms of cooperative living can also be inscribed into what we would call intergenerational commons, i.e., commons that are passed on between generations, since through legal

forms such as community land trusts and network arrangements such as Radical Routes in the UK, cooperatively owned houses can be locked into communal ownership for perpetuity, thus guaranteeing a base for critical citizenship and work for generations to come. Moreover, the extra space that cooperative housing often entails can be used to host radical businesses that work towards just sustainability, as is the case with the Cornerstone Housing Coop in the North of England, which hosts a cooperative of activist printers.[23]

But clearly common infrastructure is not just about housing. To start small and immediately with caring for more collective infrastructures, you can investigate through practice how others can be empowered through the social, intellectual, and/or material wealth you have. How can it be channeled into more collective and collaborative efforts to work ourselves away from precarious living and working conditions towards an ecologically and socially just society? Small experiments in opening up to others what you have can bring up desires and ideas for more extensive action. The frame here is about creating ecologies of support where the myth of the heroic designer as genius is undone in favor of gentle, solidary, and effective modes of cooperation that enable transformative infrastructures to emerge.

Concluding to Take Action

As you see, these entry points into value practices that defy precarity interweave with and nurture each other. We think that for designers engaging in critical, transformative design, solving their own issues around precarious work and life through collaborative and cooperative arrangements – starting today wherever they are at – is a way to enact a prefigurative politics; a politics that does away with the separation between life and work in collectively empowering ways rather than the disempowering ones enacted by neoliberal politics, where all of life is sacrificed for work and hegemonic notions of success. Combine these practices that challenge precarity through the creation of social and material support structures with social movement activism – for causes such as environmental

23. Bianca Elzenbaumer and Fabio Franz, "Footprint: A Radical Workers Co-Operative and Its Ecology of Mutual Support," *Ephemera: Theory and Politics in Organization* 18, no. 4 (November 2018), 791–804.

justice, queer culture, no borders, universal healthcare, and a general income – and you get a powerful mix of activities that all aim at taking us en-masse beyond precarity.

BIOGRAPHIES

Danah Abdulla is an Arab-Canadian designer, educator, and researcher – not in any particular order but always all three. She is program director of Graphic Design at Camberwell, Chelsea, and Wimbledon Colleges of Art, University of the Arts London. She has previously held positions at Brunel University London and the London College of Communication, University of the Arts London. Danah holds a Ph.D. in Design from Goldsmiths, University of London (2018). She is a founding member of the Decolonising Design platform. In 2010, she founded *Kalimat Magazine*, an independent, nonprofit publication about Arab thought and culture. Danah's research is particularly focused on decolonizing design, possibilities of design education, design culture(s) with a focus on the Arab region, the politics of design, publishing, and social design.

Tanveer Ahmed, after many frustrating years of learning and teaching dominant capitalist models of fashion design, began a part-time Ph.D. at the Open University, UK, to investigate ways of teaching antiracist and anticapitalist forms of fashion design. Inspired by Black feminist literature and decolonizing education movements, she has drawn on her family histories and identity to offer students ways of disrupting the Eurocentric and neoliberal agendas that dominate fashion design education. The project described in her essay, by centering a garment from the Global South, has helped

students question the dominance of European fashion design in their curricula and resources. Her long-term aspiration is to contribute to fashion design educational paradigms by generating new antiracist, postcapital agendas in fashion design. She is currently a visiting lecturer in design at Goldsmiths College and the Royal College of Art, London.

Zoy Anastassakis (b. 1974) is a Brazilian designer and anthropologist. She is associate professor and former director of the Superior School of Industrial Design, State University of Rio de Janeiro (ESDI/UERJ), where she coordinates the Design and Anthropology Lab (LaDA). In 2014, she published *Triunfos e Impasses: Lina Bo Bardi, Aloisio Magalhães e o design no Brasil*. In 2018, she was invited as a visiting researcher in the Department of Anthropology, University of Aberdeen, Scotland, where she took part in the research project "Knowing from the Inside," coordinated by Tim Ingold. Since 2019, she is an associated researcher at the Centre for Research in Anthropology (CRIA) at Nova University, Lisbon, Portugal. In 2020, she published the book *Refazendo tudo: Confabulações em meio aos cupins na universidade*. Together with Marcos Martins, she is preparing a book on the ESDI Aberta movement, to be published in 2021 by Bloomsbury, in the series *Designing in Dark Times*.

Ahmed Ansari is an assistant professor in NYU Tandon's Department of Technology, Culture, and Society. He holds a B.Des. in communication design from the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, in Karachi, Pakistan (2008); and an M.Des. and Ph.D. in interaction design from Carnegie Mellon University (2013 and 2019). His research interests intersect at the junction between design, critical cultural studies, and the history and philosophy of technology, particularly in the contexts of the Indian subcontinent.

Brave New Alps, cofounded by Bianca Elzenbaumer and Fabio Franz, is a collaborative design practice based in the alpine Lagarina Valley in Italy, whose twelve members are dedicated to the creation of commons and community economies. Since embarking on design studies in 2002, they have been looking for ways in which to activate design skills for eco-social causes. Since 2010, Bianca has been researching the entanglements and worldviews that create the precarious working conditions that make critical design practices so difficult to sustain. Since 2014, Fabio has been researching commons and modes of community organizing in the Italian Alps. As members of the international Community Economies Research Network, they activate empowering readings of the economy in order to create modes of practice and living that can sustain themselves and others engaged in transformative practices. Currently, Bianca also works as a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellow at Eurac Research in Italy, where she runs the Alpine

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FNS SNF

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éc a l
ECAL: ECAL Ecole cantonale d'art de Lausanne

n|w
University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland
Academy of Art and Design
FHNW HGK: University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland, Academy of Art and Design

— HEAD Genève
HEAD – Genève: Geneva School for Art and Design

HKB
Hochschule der Künste Bern
Haute école des arts de Berne
Bern University of the Arts
HKB: Bern University of the Art

Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts
HOCHSCHULE LUZERN
Art and Design
FH Zentralschweiz
HSLU: Lucerne School of Art and Design

University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland
SUPSI
SUPSI: University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland

z hdk
Zürcher Hochschule der Künste
Zurich University of the Arts
ZHdK: Zurich University of the Arts

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PLURAL

The PLURAL series focuses on how the intersections between, identity, power, representation and emancipation play out in the arts and in cultural practices. The volumes in this series aim to do justice to the plurality of voices, experiences and perspectives in society and in the arts and to address the history, present and future meaning of these positions and their interrelations. PLURAL brings together new and critical insights from artists, arts professionals, activists, cultural and social researchers, journalists and theorists. Series design by Lotte Lara Schröder