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EDITORIAL

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Fuelling New Possibilities: Weaving the Future of Design and Craft Through Knowledge Sharing

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Abstract

This editorial introduces the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Design and Craft Studies* (JDCS) and outlines its vision as an inclusive forum for advancing scholarship, practice, and knowledge exchange across design and craft. Against a backdrop of rapid technological, environmental, economic, and cultural change, it considers how these fields have evolved beyond their traditional foundations to become important drivers of innovation, cultural identity, social transformation, and environmental sustainability. The editorial emphasises knowledge sharing and collective innovation as essential to developing more collaborative, interdisciplinary, and socially responsive approaches to contemporary challenges. It also affirms practice-based research and the processes of making, experimentation, material exploration, and reflection, as a rigorous mode of knowledge production that complements established forms of academic inquiry. By bringing together diverse disciplinary, professional, cultural, and geographical perspectives, JDCS seeks to create a shared intellectual space in which ideas, methods, and practices can be critically examined and collectively advanced. The editorial concludes by inviting researchers, practitioners, educators, policymakers, students, entrepreneurs, and creative professionals to contribute to this inclusive and dynamic community capable of shaping the future of design and craft.

Keywords
Design and Craft, Knowledge Sharing, Collective Innovation, Interdisciplinary Collaboration, Practice-Based Research, Artefact, Cultural Narratives, Contemporary Thinking, Knowledge Generation

1 | INTRODUCTION

This editorial marks the inaugural issue of the Journal of Design and Craft Studies (JDCS), a scholarly journal dedicated to advancing knowledge and fostering intellectual exchange across the fields of design and craft. Amid rapid technological change, environmental challenges, shifting economies, and cultural transformations, these disciplines have expanded well beyond their conventional boundaries, creating a growing need for spaces that encourage critical dialogue, interdisciplinary inquiry, and collaborative knowledge creation. Responding to this need, JDCS provides a forum where scholars, educators, designers, craftspeople, policymakers, artists, entrepreneurs, and innovators can exchange ideas, generate new insights, and contribute to addressing society's most pressing challenges. Although historically rooted in aesthetics, technical production, the preservation of cultural memory, traditional knowledge systems, and the skills of making, design, and craft, these have evolved into strategic drivers of innovation, cultural identity, economic development, social transformation, and environmental sustainability (Manzini, 2015). The interplay between long-established traditions and contemporary advances has created a dynamic ecosystem in which creativity, innovation, practical expertise, and cultural knowledge converge to produce artefacts that both preserve heritage and remain relevant to contemporary society. Consequently, design and craft have become powerful means of interpreting cultural narratives while responding to emerging societal needs. Against this backdrop, JDCS seeks to advance rigorous scholarship and meaningful dialogue by critically engaging with the cultural, social, economic, philosophical, and technological dimensions of design and craft.

Guided by this vision, JDCS is committed to advancing design and craft-driven inquiry that critically examines aesthetic and technical practices while engaging with the wider socio-technical, political, economic, and cultural contexts within which they operate. The journal also champions practice-based research, recognising making, experimentation, reflection, and creative practice as legitimate and rigorous modes of knowledge production alongside writing and critical analysis (Candy & Edmonds, 2018). This commitment reflects a broader belief that

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meaningful advances in design and craft emerge through the open exchange of ideas across disciplines, sectors, and communities.

2 | KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND COLLECTIVE INNOVATION

In today's interconnected world, knowledge has become one of the most valuable resources for innovation. Unlike finite material resources, it grows rather than diminishes when shared. Collaborative projects, interdisciplinary partnerships, open-source platforms, design exhibitions, maker spaces, and research networks all create opportunities for ideas to evolve through collective contribution. The emergence of the knowledge-sharing economy represents a fundamental shift in how innovation takes place. Whereas traditional models often relied on closed systems that protected ideas within institutional boundaries, contemporary approaches increasingly recognise that collaboration accelerates creativity, reduces duplication, and generates greater public value (Chesbrough, 2003). This transformation has significant implications for design and craft. Designers no longer work in isolation but participate in global communities where ideas, prototypes, techniques, digital resources, and creative methods are exchanged continuously. Likewise, craftspeople benefit from networks that preserve indigenous knowledge while embracing contemporary technologies that expand production, documentation, and market access. Communities that openly share skills, experiences, and innovations strengthen entrepreneurial ecosystems, encourage lifelong learning, and stimulate creative industries that generate both economic and social value. The creative economy flourishes when practitioners learn from one another, mentor emerging professionals, and contribute collectively.

JDCS embraces this philosophy by serving as a forum for the exchange of ideas rather than simply a publication venue. We envision the journal as an intellectual commons where research findings, design practices, methodological innovations, critical reflections, and creative experiments circulate freely to stimulate further inquiry. In doing so, the journal contributes to a scholarly community in which knowledge is continually refined through dialogue, collaboration, and critical reflection. Knowledge exchange also enables design to move beyond conventional problem-solving towards systems thinking, where innovation becomes adaptive, participatory, and socially responsive (Brown, 2009). By bringing together diverse perspectives, it broadens the questions that are asked, enriches the methods employed, and expands the range of solutions that emerge. In this way, design scholarship becomes not merely an academic endeavour but a democratic process that values multiple ways of knowing (Escobar, 2018).

3 | PRACTICE-BASED RESEARCH AND DESIGNERLY WAYS OF KNOWING

A defining characteristic of JDCS is its commitment to recognising practice-based research as a legitimate and rigorous mode of knowledge production. Design and craft generate distinctive forms of understanding through iterative experimentation, prototyping, reflection-in-action, and material exploration (Cross, 2006). These "designerly ways of knowing" complement conventional academic research by revealing insights that cannot always be captured through textual analysis alone. Practice-based inquiry demonstrates that making itself is a mode of thinking and knowledge generation. Every prototype, material experiment, fabrication process, and crafted object embodies decisions informed by cultural values, technical knowledge, ethical considerations, and creative judgement. Recognising these contributions broadens the scope of scholarly inquiry while strengthening the relationships between academia, industry, communities, and professional practice.

Accordingly, JDCS welcomes contributions that examine the role of design and craft in shaping socio-technical and socio-political environments; explore the intersections of material practice, innovation, ethics, and emerging technologies; and investigate how design contributes to social justice, inclusion, sustainability, and cultural resilience. The journal also encourages scholarship demonstrating how design thinking, craft knowledge, and creative methodologies generate new forms of cultural, economic, and social value (Manzini, 2015).

4 | LOOKING AHEAD

As we publish this inaugural issue, the future of JDCS depends not only on its editorial team but also on the scholarly and professional communities it seeks to serve. The journal will achieve its greatest impact by facilitating meaningful conversations, encouraging intellectual curiosity, and inspiring collaborative action across disciplinary and geographical boundaries. We therefore invite researchers, practitioners, educators, policymakers, students, entrepreneurs, and creative professionals to view JDCS as a shared intellectual space and to contribute to its continued growth. Together, we hope to cultivate an inclusive and dynamic community that advances scholarship, supports practice, and shapes the future of design and craft through the open sharing of knowledge.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

No additional datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.

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ETHICAL APPROVAL STATEMENT

There is no ethical approval for this study.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

The authors declare that no AI tools were used during the preparation of this manuscript.

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