Inaugural address prof.dr.ir. Conny Bakker, c.a.bakker@tudelft.nl, 0624472323

No Time to Waste

Doing sustainable design is a challenge
The field of design for sustainability has grown and branched out over the past three decades. The field has diverged to a point where it has become very difficult for design students as well as professional designers to grasp the concept of 'design for sustainability' and find starting points for its operationalization. In other words: where to begin? What path(s) to follow? Where do they lead? These are all questions of methodology.

More urgent than ever
Achieving sustainability is more urgent than ever. There is literally no time to waste. Conny Bakker research aims to create methods for industrial designers to successfully incorporate sustainability into their daily practice. Methods are means to help designers achieve desired change as effectively and efficient as possible. Any set of methods worth its salt should start by acknowledging the specific worldview, or perspective, it springs from.

Changing perspectives
In Conny Bakker's inaugural address, she will address six relatively recent changes in perspective on design for sustainability. These show the increasing complexity of the field of Design for Sustainability and open up new avenues for method development.

1. **Ecological limits**. It is now abundantly clear that economic growth cannot be decoupled from material and energy use. There is no easy win-win. Instead, we need to create human *and* planetary wellbeing while recognizing our planet's ecological limits.
2. **Radical change**. Incremental change is not enough (such as small-scale reductions in energy consumption and minor corrections to the ways people accomplish their goals). Significant changes are needed if we want to sustain quality of life into the far future.
3. **Longer timeframes in design**. Moving away from the idea of innovation as a process of constant and rapid renewal to a recognition of the need for longer timeframes in design. Longer timeframes are needed to counter premature obsolescence, to design for multiple product lives, and to redirect harmful technologies into more benign forms.
4. **Confronting consumption**. Sustainable design must focus on supporting the everyday lives and livelihoods of (groups of) people in order to help them thrive. We have to stop framing environmental problem solving as an individual consumer responsibility, and instead focus on meaningful social change.
5. **Materializing design**. Moving away from the view that the digital revolution will dematerialize the economy, to a (renewed) recognition of the materiality of design. Digital technology depends on materials and energy. The digital revolution will transform our world and create new opportunities for sustainability, but the materials and energy basis of society requires equally transformative changes in order to progress towards sustainability.
6. **Circular design**. Designers need to shift their focus from waste management and recycling-as-downcycling towards an emphasis on high-value and high-quality product and material cycles. We have no time to waste more.