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Introduction

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The world is changing fast, and technology is becoming smarter and more intelligent. As Artificial Intelligence dominates the conversation — with Quantum Computing, Synthetic Data, and Organoid Intelligence on the horizon — designers face an urgent question: Are we heading toward Utopian or Dystopian digital futures?

This proceedings, featuring 11 in-depth contributions, addresses how these rapid digital developments fundamentally influence the work of the designer, the design process, and the applied design researcher. The authors are not looking for quick answers, but try to determine the future questions that emerge from the interaction between design and AI.

The authors explore the challenges and opportunities AI presents to the design profession, discussing the value of human creativity when AI can generate unlimited amounts of creative content instantly. This publication is a necessary exploration for the community of Applied Design Researchers, seeking the right questions to deal with the complex relationship between design and an increasingly intelligent world.

This publication documents the results of the NADR 2025 knowledge cycle. Each year, NADR explores a specific research theme, supporting an exchange of knowledge and experience to further develop the field of Applied Design Research. The proceedings were presented at the NADR symposium on October 20, 2025, during the Dutch Design Week in Eindhoven.