

VOLUME 2.

# Driving

Collective approaches  
enriching design principles

# Design

Edited by Distributed  
Design Platform



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# Introduction

Jessica Guy, Distributed Design Platform lead at Fab Lab  
Barcelona | IAAC

In a world characterized by rapid technological advancements, shifting global landscapes, and the urgent need for alternative, meaningful, regenerative solutions, design plays a pivotal role in shaping our future. "Driving Design," presented by the Distributed Design Platform, embarks on a journey through the transformative power of design in the contemporary era.

This book is not merely a collection of theories and principles; it is a dynamic exploration of design's capacity to drive innovation, foster inclusivity, and navigate the complexities of our interconnected world. Through the lens of the Distributed Design Platform, we delve into the multifaceted aspects of design that extend far beyond the creation of physical artifacts. As our societies evolve, so must our approach to design. We advocate for a paradigm shift, challenging conventional norms and embracing a postcolonial and post-anthropocene perspective. We navigate the intricacies of design education, emphasizing the importance of breaking free from outdated systems to empower a new generation of designers capable of shaping policy-making processes.

This book is a testament to the potential of design to address the pressing challenges of our time. Join us as we venture into the realms of collaborative experimentation, where designers become agents of change, translating methods across different contexts and sectors. We invite you to explore an alternative present that is not confined to the status quo, but seeing design as a driving force behind systemic transformation.

Enjoy a glimpse into the field  
of the ever-evolving field of  
Distributed Design.

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# Acción Veredas | Paths-Action

## Integrating craftpersonship heritage and maker culture through a learning experience in Higher Education in Design

### Project team

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Carlos Jiménez Martínez;  
Jorge de la Torre Cantero

### Organization

Universidad de La Laguna

### Location

San Cristóbal de La Laguna,  
Canary Islands, Spain -  
Europe

### Project type

Learning experience  
through product

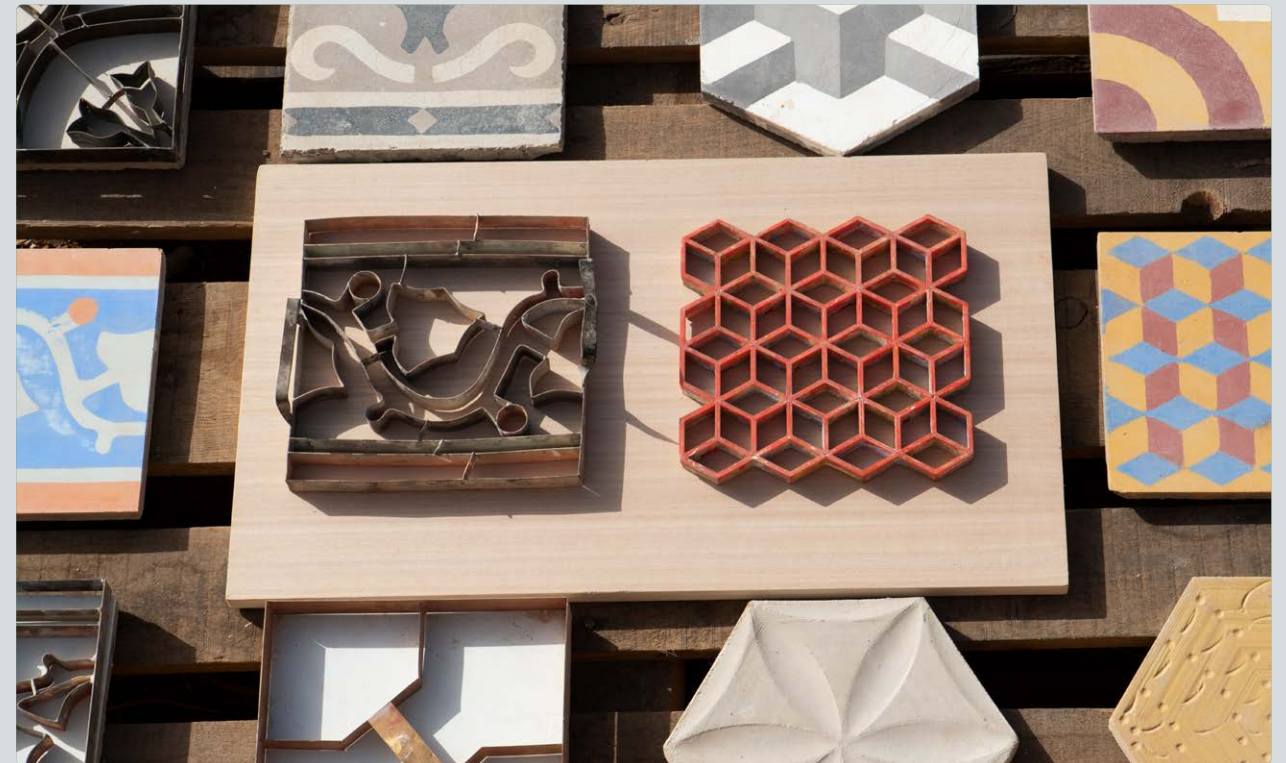
## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Acción Veredas (Paths-Action) focuses on the revaluation of the semi-industrial craft of hydraulic tiles through a maker culture approach. This heritage is present in numerous buildings from the beginning of the 20th century and the craftpersonship is currently extinct in the Canary Islands. In this region, a social organisation is rescuing the knowledge of hydraulic tiles by combining it with a Fab Lab approach, which led our research group to start a collaboration to introduce it into the classroom.

We established an initial workshop based on the maker principles, Understood as the premises of democratisation of knowledge and digital design and fabrication technologies [1,2,3,4,5,6], and carried out for university Design students. Participants are guided to take on the role of makers of new tiles, engaging in a collaborative project that ranges from design conception to the physical creation of a hydraulic tile carpet. A hybrid construction technique is used to produce the tiles in a non-traditional environment, combining traditional knowledge with tools designed and manufactured using digital fabrication technologies. The workshop is also characterised by the integration of playful dynamics that encourage participation, engagement and collective dialogue, as well as project documentation and the creation of resources under Creative Commons licences. Throughout the process, the classroom is also connected to the territory through local institutions and the situated urban heritage. As a result, students become aware of the heritage, acquire collaborative, open design and Fab Lab skills and contribute to the decentralised documentation and dissemination of content about this craft.

## CONTEXT AND HISTORY

Acción Veredas is part of an ongoing doctoral thesis, at the beginning of which, a mapping of the maker labs in the Canary Islands was carried out, with a particular focus on those that have emerged from entities with a social base. Among the cases identified is the NGO Aldeas Infantiles SOS, which develops a wide range of socio-environmental projects. In 2013, this organisation began a traditional



hydraulic tile workshop with the aim of transmitting this craft and making it accessible to new generations. Although the craft of making these pieces has disappeared from the Canary Islands, it constitutes a living cultural heritage that can be found in many with buildings from the early 20th century. Over the years, this workshop has experimented with the creation of new moulds using digital design and manufacturing technologies, an aspect that caught our attention during our research [7].

In 2021, as part of the thesis, there was the opportunity to learn the process of making tiles in collaboration with Aldeas Infantiles SOS. This experience, combined with the declining heritage value of the tiles and the possibility of addressing it in the classroom through maker culture, marked the beginning of the Acción Veredas project.

## WHAT IS THE NEED IT TACKLES?

The project aims to highlight the artistic, historical and artisanal value of the declining heritage of hydraulic tiles in the Canary Islands, exploring its past narrative and proposing future perspectives. Through the workshop design, there is an opportunity to promote student-centred learning in university classrooms, connecting students to the real world and providing spaces for reflection, experimentation and action linked to the territory. In this context, a local reality is presented, characterised by the disappearance of the craft, the prominent presence of this type of pavement in urban areas, the lack of documentation on the subject and the absence of local actors working on it.

The workshop allows to promote co-responsibility with this heritage through a process that establishes links between the participant and the object; to promote 'doing it together' over 'doing it yourself', with an educational approach inspired by maker culture; and to offer the acquisition of manual, digital and social skills. It also explores, through its transformation into a neocraft, the generation of open digital resources for decentralised replicability, documentation and the creation

IMAGE 1. Samples of hydraulic tiles and frames belonging to the NGO SOS Children's Villages (2021, SOS Children's Villages in Tenerife, Arianna Fanio, CC BY-NC-SA)

of reciprocal workflows with related communities. In short, it combines heritage conservation with educational community participation and the promotion of new forms of creation.

## WHAT WAS THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF THE PROJECT LIKE?

The aim of the workshop was to provide access to both the design and manufacture of hydraulic tiles, meeting two main technical requirements: a construction system that would allow tiles to be made in a space without the traditional tools of the craft, and a method of making moulds that would be easy to replicate and produce. To achieve this, we embarked on a process of ethnographic research and specific bibliographic review, which culminated in the combination of traditional knowledge and innovations developed by the NGO Aldeas Infantiles SOS in Tenerife, with instrumental contributions of the Anda project by Estudio Valija in Argentina [8]. This synergy of knowledge was transferred to the Fab Lab ULL, where we carried out experiments and evaluations to verify its viability. During this phase, we built tools both manually and digitally, created video tutorials for the creation of three-dimensional moulds, and produced tiles of sufficient quality for the educational purposes they would serve in the classroom [9]. In the experimental process, we also introduced our own contributions in terms of spatial dimensions and workflows in order to enhance the practical dynamics in the classroom, as well as the collective management of space and resources.



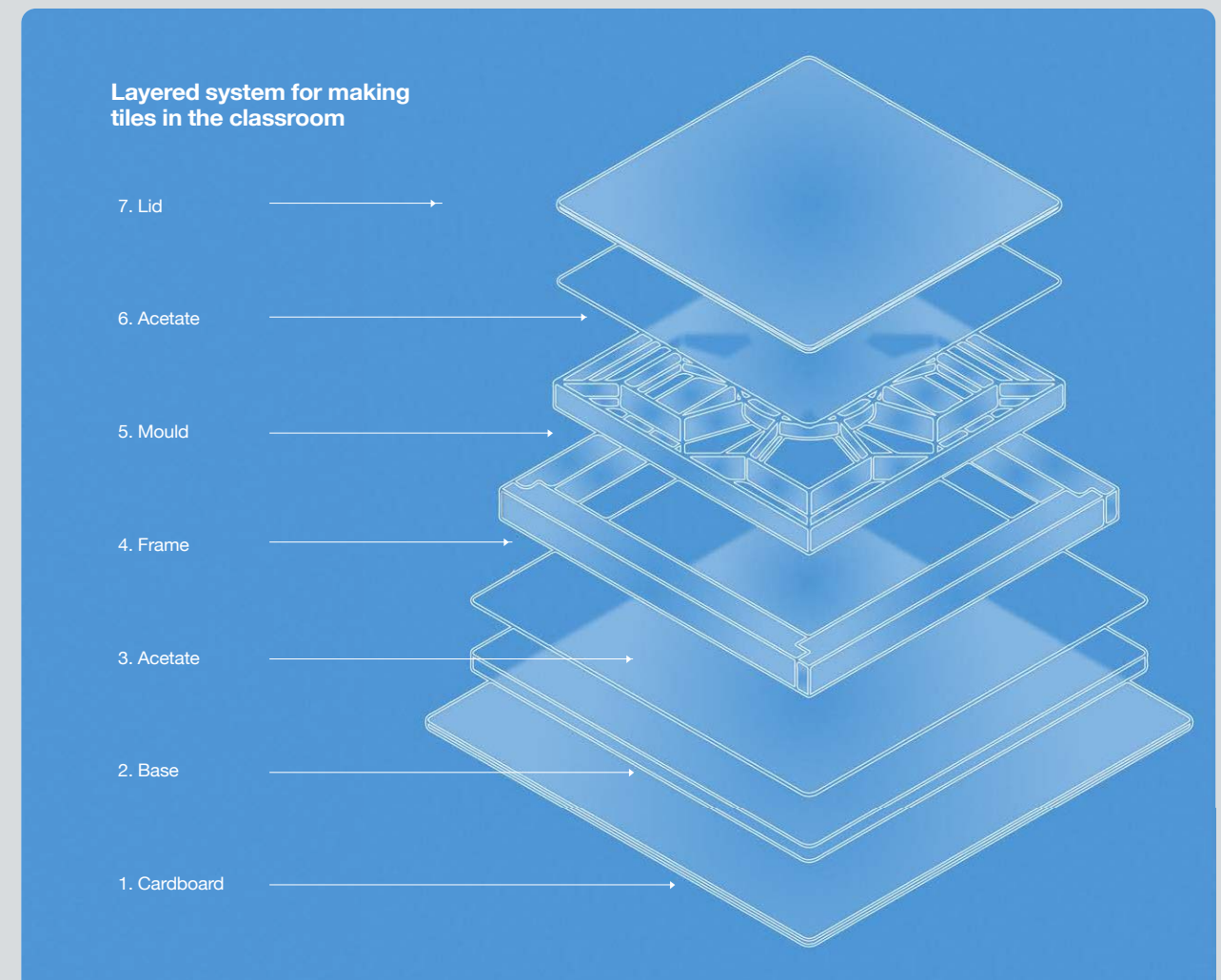
Subsequently, the learning experience was put into practice with a group of university students (n=17) from the 3rd and 4th years of the Design Degree at the University of La Laguna, in the subject of Ecodesign, during the academic year 2021/22.

**IMAGE 2.** Collaboration between colleagues during the creation of a tile (2021, Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of La Laguna, Arianna Fanio, CC BY-NC-SA)

## WHAT IMPACT DOES YOUR PROJECT CURRENTLY HAVE?

The first workshop has made it possible to gather feedback from participants, evaluate the content and dynamics of the workshop, establish local links and begin to explore the heritage of hydraulic tiles in the Canary Islands. The learning methodology used facilitated the design and production of tiles without the need for traditional tools in a conventional classroom setting. According to pre- and post-workshop surveys, participants improved their technical and social skills and discovered new local stakeholders. Resources were also created in both digital and physical forms conceiving: eight tile designs (two-dimensional files and three-dimensional models for 3D printing), video tutorials, a visual collection of local tile examples on Pinterest [10], an explanatory audiovisual about the workshop for dissemination purposes [11], 3D printing tools and the hydraulic tiles themselves.

As a further result, the project was selected for the 'Jóvenes Talentos del Diseño Iberoamericano' exhibition in 2023 [12].



**IMAGE 3.** Layered system for making tiles in the classroom (2021, Fab Lab ULL, Jorge de la Torre, CC BY-NC-SA)

## WHAT IS THE GLOBAL-LOCAL RELATIONSHIP OF THE PROJECT?

The project focuses on contemporary issues, emphasising innovation in craftsmanship and the revitalisation of traditional techniques in a digitalised environment. Focusing on a widespread heritage, but with a particular emphasis on the Canary Islands, it aims to promote collaboration between local actors and learning, while developing digital resources for decentralised reproduction and dissemination. In this way, the initiative hopes to act as a bridge between the local and the global, creating significant experiences in the territory that generate resources accessible worldwide. This will allow people from different regions who are aware of the disappearance of this heritage to access, learn and possibly adapt these methods to their own local contexts.

## WHY IS ACCIÓN VEREDAS DISTRIBUTED DESIGN?

We have begun to build an educational ecosystem that connects students with the real situation of a heritage in the territory, alongside other actors and a way of working that focuses on collaboration and the digital. Progress is documented and dialogue is encouraged to promote cohesion in the collective project proposed in the classroom. The sessions are designed to be dynamic, allowing for the creation, sharing and testing of proposed solutions. The resources generated will be openly distributed so that the experience and knowledge gained can be shared and adapted in different contexts.

In terms of regeneration, the project aims to recover the memory of craftsmanship in the region by understanding the past, listening to the present and proposing actions for its revaluation. In this way, its research as neo-craftsmanship also integrates methods that can be reproduced globally, while working with local resources and communities. Although the project still has challenges to overcome in order to achieve its objectives, it is based on a maker culture approach, based on doing together, promoting tangible and testable making, as well as sharing, providing and acquiring knowledge and resources to change the current realities of the heritage addressed.

## IF YOU COULD HAVE DINNER WITH ANYONE (HUMXN, PLANT, FUNGI, OR OTHERWISE) LIVING OR DEAD, WHO WOULD YOU DINE WITH?

I would share a meal with my grandparents, all of them. It would be an opportunity to continue listening to them, to get to know each other better and to learn more about the realities of a world that is no longer the present one.

### Financial Support:

This research is supported by the Predoctoral Programme for the Training of Researchers in the Canary Islands 2020 of the Regional Ministry of Economy, Knowledge and Employment, co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) with a co-financing rate of 85% within the framework of the ESF Operational Programme for the Canary Islands 2014-2020.

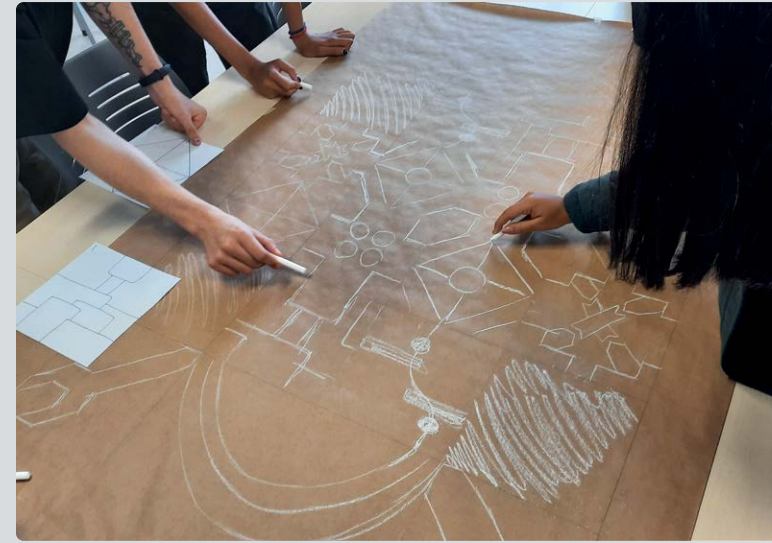


IMAGE 4. First sketch of the hydraulic tile carpet project (2021, Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of La Laguna, Arianna Fanio, CC BY-NC-SA)

IMAGE 5. Vectorisation of design proposals during the workshop (2021, Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of La Laguna, Arianna Fanio, CC BY-NC-SA)

IMAGE 6. Creation of hydraulic tiles in the classroom. (2021, Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of La Laguna, Arianna Fanio, CC BY-NC-SA)

IMAGE 7. Checking the result of a tile during the manufacture (2021, Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of La Laguna, Arianna Fanio, CC BY-NC-SA)

IMAGE 8. The final tangible result of the collaborative project (2022, Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of La Laguna, Arianna Fanio, CC BY-NC-SA)















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#### EXCERPT

1. How can we reconstruct nonhuman habitats and improve interspecies interactions?

2. This shift in habitat raises considerations about animal welfare ethics, human-honeybee coevolution, and the role of design practice in this process, i.e. either aiding in promoting a healthy and mutualistic co-existence with these insects or exploiting them as farming equipment.

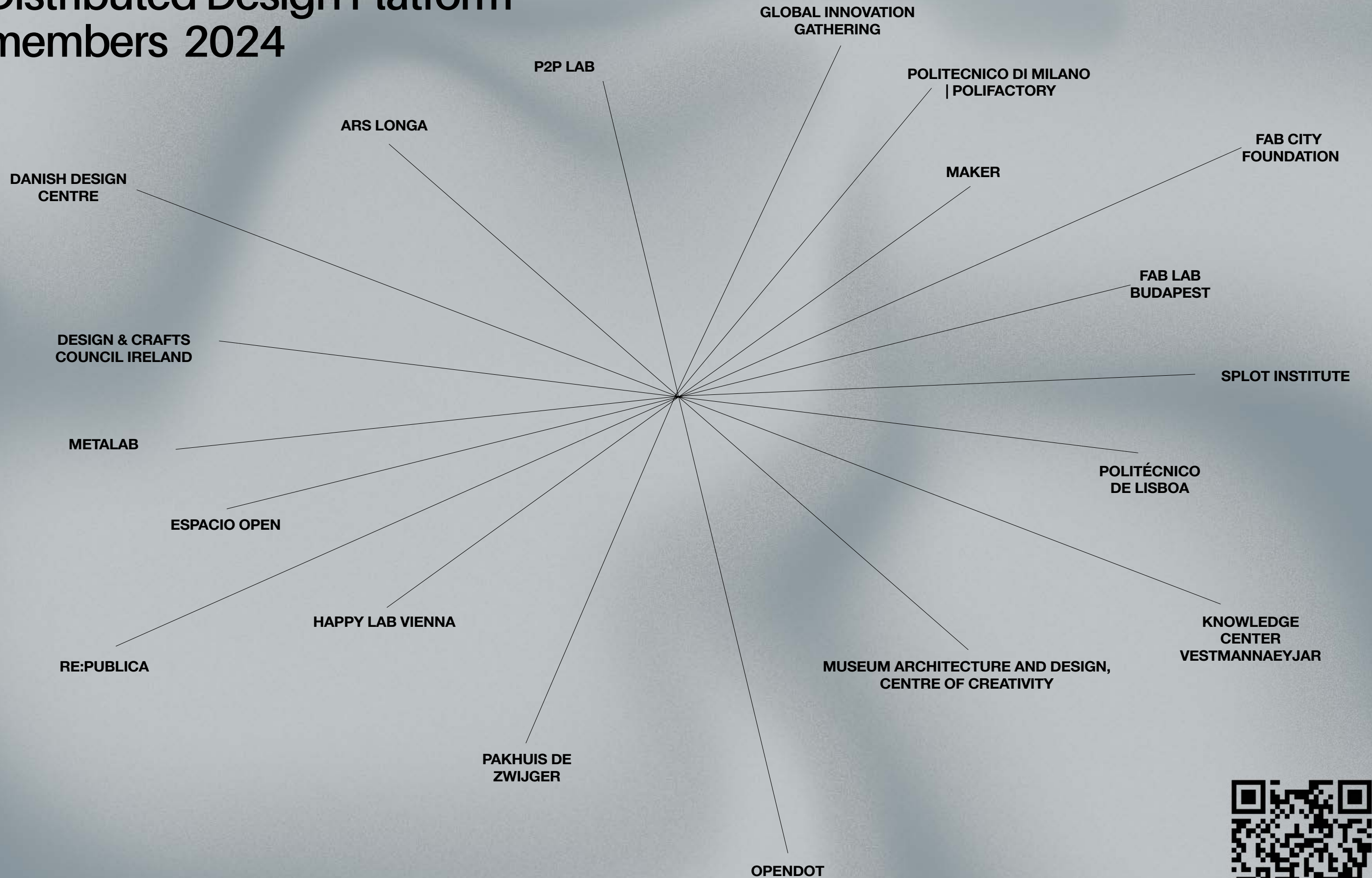
3. Biohybrid architectural systems include micro-ecosystems, which are smaller and more carefully defined networks of organisms that exchange energy and nutrients.

4: Like musical composition, biohybrid design activities have constraints and compositional elements. One or more melodies—organisms or abiotic factors—follow their own nonlinear trajectory at different speeds while interacting and overlapping.

5. This investigation is about more than just supporting honeybee survival and health; it is about redefining our relationship with the living environment, our socio-cultural context and recognising the interconnectivity of all living species.

6: Our goal is to provide this content to encourage the readers to try adapting their ideas and potentially employ regenerative making practices in their own regions, bringing this beehive concept to best practice communities where more ecosystem impact can be studied.

# Distributed Design Platform members 2024



The Platform is coordinated by Fab Lab Barcelona at the Institute for Advanced Architecture of Catalonia (IAAC)



Driving Design is the fifth in a series of seven publications developed within the Distributed Design Platform, co-funded by the European Union.

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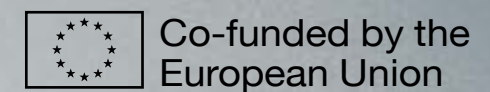
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Driving Design is the sixth of seven publications from the Distributed Design Platform. Established in 2017 and co-funded by the European Union, the Distributed Design Platform brings together Fab Labs, Makerspaces, cultural organizations, universities, and design centers from around the globe.

Driving Design is a non-exhaustive collection of articles, reviews, and profiles that represents and highlights the motivations, opportunities and challenges that drive the practitioners and the field of Distributed Design.

The book curates a collection of works under five umbrella themes, each of which offers the space for the Distributed Design community to share their vision, approaches and areas of exploration to answer who and what are the drivers of Distributed Design.

The chapters explore Commoning approaches to combat the scarcity myth; Designing with abundance; From prototypes to possibilities: Democratizing design through learning; Living with worlds: Ecologies of practice and kinship; From heartland to healing: Designs cultivating rejuvenation.

