**Designing for a Connected World**

Total 641 words

As we move towards a post-COVID-19 future, designing solutions for a connected world has become more important than ever before. To meet a new wave of global challenges, designers must embrace fresh thinking, decisive leadership, and collaborative creativity across multiple disciplines. A greater understanding of shifting global trends, challenges, and opportunities will inform better design choices, and ultimately create a more coherent and connected experience for users.

In this issue, we look at Business of Design Week (BODW) 2021, which saw over 80 design masters and leading visionaries share insights around the theme “Global Design Reset” from 29 November to 4 December. It has been fascinating to see emerging conversations around integrating nature and sustainability are complemented by the “phygital” realities of cryptocurrency and the metaverse—there’s a lot to unpack and consider!

One of our esteemed BODW speakers is [Bruce Mau](https://2021.bodw.com/en/speaker/bruce-mau), Chief Executive Officer at Massive Change Network, and Founder of Bruce Mau Studio. I was most inspired by his latest book *MC24: Bruce Mau's 24 Principles for Designing Massive Change in your Life and Work,* which provides prompts to help us think critically on how his principles could be applied to elevate design and address the enormous challenges around us. “We think short term, party like there’s no tomorrow, and pass the check to future generations […] Things gotta change. Now.” he writes. Bruce believes the only way to make real change is to inspire, and *MC24* provides a good dose of Mau’s optimistic and impactful design thinking to help make massive change for the betterment of our planet and its people. During his keynote at BODW, Mau said, “The real story of our time is living together and caring for one another.” Change is now definitely upon us.

Another BODW speaker, [Prof. Jeremy Myerson](https://2021.bodw.com/en/speaker/jeremy-myerson), recently published his latest book: *Designing a World for Everyone*. We experience the world predominantly through places, products, communications, services, and systems, and how they are designed. However, in the past — and often today — there are many who have been given insufficient consideration in these designs, with their cultural backgrounds, economic circumstances, disabilities, or differences, not taken into account. This book is a powerful read that looks at how design has shifted over the last 30 years to become more empathetic and inclusive of different human needs. Seeing these ideas aligning internationally is uplifting and encouraging.

Aligning nature with design is another theme, which I found beautifully encapsulated in a recent installation at Design Miami/Basel 2021 by another of our past BODW speakers, Japanese architect [Sou Fujimoto](https://www.bodw.com/en/explore/between-nature-and-architecture-bodw-2020). A joint project with Dutch design firm Studio Drift, Fujimoto has designed [an installation](https://www.dezeen.com/2021/10/08/studio-drift-sou-fujimoto-superblue-installation-basel/) where flower-like lamps rise and fall within a forest of wooden beams, in movements designed to remind us to attune our bodies to the rhythms of our natural environment. As Lonneke Gordijn, Co-founder of Studio Drift, shares, “In this time of disconnect and climate crisis, we are in desperate need of aligning with each other to create a vision that will secure the future of our planet.” This installation sought to create a place where people could, “engage in conversations about the past, present, or future of architecture, and about urban settlements and the natural environment,”saysFujimoto.

Of course, it’s also the time of year when we announce and celebrate our DFA Awards winners. There are some incredible designs showcased which integrate Asian perspectives, and demonstrate inspiring leadership and commitment to the betterment of society.

As [Patrick Whitney](https://laa.dfaawards.com/en/winner/), professor in residence at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and recipient of the coveted DFA Lifetime Achievement Award 2021, puts it, “Connecting ideas that were not previously connected is core to creativity.”

Read on to learn more, and I hope you find inspiration.

Happy reading, design devotees—and best wishes for the holiday season and New Year!

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