



President's Message

Flourishing

Earlier this month, I had the great privilege to be invited as an international speaker to a series on the theme of “Flourish Together,” from the Lancaster Imagination team that DRS fellow President and Distinguished Professor of Design Management and Policy at Lancaster University, Rachel Cooper, OBE, founded back in 2006.

This new series by the team is intended to seed key streams of design research for an upcoming research agenda and publication. As part of the program’s first session, we examined the following provocation and questions: What does it mean for us to flourish together? As a species, our ingenuity has transformed the way we connect and interact in profound ways. Yet, despite all our progress, we face enormous challenges. In a world of increasing inequality and instability, how might we overcome the divisions that limit our collective actions not simply to survive but also thrive? This was a working session in many ways that was eloquently moderated by one of our field’s giants, Professor Sir Christopher Frayling, and included John Ehrenfeld. John has been writing about the concept of flourishing for the last couple of decades. Wearing my hat as President of Cumulus and observing the incredible set of global conversations my colleagues are facilitating through Cumulus Connects; the preparation for our inspiring CumulusRoma conference organized by the brilliant team at Sapienza, and many of the activities our executive board are leading as we soon conclude our second year of service, the sense of flourishing I witness around me moves me deeply. In preparing my remarks for the Imagination Lancaster session, I went back to John’s writing in a 2019 *She-Ji journal* article and offer it to all here. John writes: “Design for flourishing must pay attention to the larger system in which people live out their lives, all the way to the boundaries of nations, and, for some factors like environments, to the full expanse of Planet Earth.”

In our emerging post COVID world, shaken and stirred by a year of loss, disruption, systemic racism, and inequities, this is a call that resonates as a prescient call for action.

Let’s heed the call and strive to flourish – together!

Mariana

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