

The LINK conference emerged from reflections and concerns that we always had about our own actions as educators, researchers, and practitioners in the field of Art and Design. Over the years, we have noticed that such concerns have not disappear. On the contrary: they have multiplied, diversified, and become more complex. The more we dialogued with people worldwide, especially from the so-called “Global South”, the more we realised that these same issues were also dear to our colleagues, albeit with their own colours and contours. This is the LINK that unites us.

The first step was taken as a small in-person event for guests, held in 2019 at the AUT's South Campus in Manukau. At that time, there was no intention of organising an annual conference. The magnitude of the issues raised seemed to have a particular inhibiting effect on the incompleteness of the conference itself, considering the potential for the rich and fruitful exchange of ideas. Despite, or perhaps precisely because of the difficulties and adversities, this new scenario compelled us to move forward. The second edition of LINK, carried out in a hybrid way in 2020, expanded the quantity, diversity and quality of the works presented.

Emerging themes, new epistemologies, and the multiple relationships between theory and practice (if such a distinction can be made) have consolidated as a sort of amalgam of LINK's main issues. It covers, in a transversal and interdisciplinary way, arguably the entire field of Arts and Design. These discussions

expanded beyond the event, and a special issue with 13 articles was published in the DAT Journal in 2021. At this moment, our doubts and uncertainties gave way to the commitment to promote a better event in each new edition. Furthermore, this commitment is only possible thanks to a team that is both dedicated and passionate about this purpose that unites us.

Later that year, the Covid-19 pandemic began to spread across the world. In a short time, uncertainty gave way to millions of people's anguish, suffering, and pain. At the same time, many ideas, beliefs, and values are starting to be reconsidered, bringing new challenges for a new era. Science, the construction of knowledge, and the University itself have a paradigmatic role in this moment of transformation and the search for the construction of a better world. Research changes the world. LINK's community is constituted by researchers to leverage parameters to activate different ways in which practice can create knowledge. They are based on cultural, geographic, and ideological positions shaped by the communitarian and the glocal. Thus, in offering these practice-led research considerations, we propose that we can learn “from” rather than “about”. This feeling emanates from recognising that the peculiar stories that generate social and artistic practices form dialogic encounters with voices on the periphery of authority and loop an iterative process to generate their own theoretical foundations.



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