

## Exploring the Total Beauty of a Sustainable Design Culture

University of Southern Denmark, Kolding

Monday 26 May

Lectures and discussion: 10.00-12.30

Workshop: 13.30-15.30

Venue: The Auditorium, University of Southern Denmark, Engstien 1, 6000 Kolding

The University of Southern Denmark, Kolding presents two of Europe's leading figures in the field of sustainable design in a shared discussion and workshop.



Professor **Jonathan Chapman**, University of Brighton is known for his 2005 book *Emotionally Durable Design* where he presented a new way of thinking about sustainable product design that included the emotional relationship between users and products as a way of prolonging their lifespan. Jonathan Chapman has worked with this concept as design consultant for governments as well as global companies and brands like Puma and H&M.



French design theorist and strategic design consultant **Francois Jégou** is a leading figure in the field of social innovation as co-ordinator of the European branch of the social innovation network DESIS (Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability). He is co-organiser, together with Ezio Manzini, of the Sustainable Everyday Project (SEP) an open web platform ([www.sustainable-everyday.net](http://www.sustainable-everyday.net)) to stimulate research and didactic activities

between social innovation, design for sustainability and peer-to-peer services. He is the director of the Brussels based design research company *Strategic Design Scenarios* which has worked with governments and municipalities all over the world developing scenarios for sustainable futures.

We are bringing these two perspectives together in order to discuss the notion of a sustainable design culture and the role of aesthetics in this. Sustainability is an ethical demand prompting us to respect the limitations of resources with regards to the living conditions on the globe for ourselves and future generations. This calls for a holistic view on the circle of production and consumption of goods and the development of a common sustainable design culture spanning companies, designers, politicians and the public as consumers and citizens.

Ethical and political aspirations as drivers for design development is a recurring theme in design history but more often than not the development of aesthetic style has seemed to outlive the ethical intentions. In the end aesthetics is inseparable from design, but aesthetics could also be accused of being part of the problem creating desire for new objects and exchanging ethical symbolism for real ethical action. So how can aesthetics play an active part in the development of sustainable design? And does this call for a new understanding of beauty? We have borrowed the term 'total beauty' from Edwin Datchefski's 2001 book *The total beauty of sustainable products* where he argues that the beauty of sustainable products is not limited to its physical appearance but also encompasses the networks it is part of in terms of impact of the environment and means of production. Aesthetics however is still inescapably linked to the sensual. So how can sustainable processes and networks be visible or tangible? Should sustainable objects look sustainable at all? What are the tasks, possibilities and limitations of the designer in a sustainable design network? And how can sustainable consumption and democratic politics be combined?

By posing such questions we hope to encourage a fruitful discussion on the possibilities and limitations of sustainable design and to take this discussion further into the question of what characterizes a sustainable design culture and how it is created? Which human competencies, skills and knowledge are needed from future designers and engineers as well as from the public regarding new forms of politics and citizenship?

In the morning Jonathan Chapman and Francois Jégou will each deliver a lecture followed by a shared discussion. In the afternoon the two speakers will lead a common workshop engaging the participants in further reflection on the subjects and their practical implementation. In this, we will, in particular, be focusing on the competencies and knowledge that are needed to develop in the directions outlined in the morning's lectures and discussion.

#### Program

10.00 - 10.15: Introduction

10.15 - 11.00: Keynote lecture by Jonathan Chapman

11.00 - 11.15: Coffee Break

11.15 - 12.00: Keynote lecture by Francois Jégou

12.00 - 12.30: Panel discussion

12.30 - 13.30: Lunch

13.30 – 15.30: Workshop

Registration: [pdk@sdu.dk](mailto:pdk@sdu.dk). Please state whether you will attend the workshop or the lectures only.

Admission: Free

The seminar is arranged by the SDU Design Initiative and is part of the Kolding Design Culture seminars organized in collaboration with Professor Guy Julier, Victoria and Albert Museum/University of Brighton.