Foreword

The 26th Digital Landscape Architecture Conference takes place at a time when the role of landscape architecture is increasingly critical in addressing interconnected global challenges. The convergence of climate change, geopolitical instability, and socio-economic inequalities is accelerating in ways that amplify one another, requiring a fundamental reassessment of how we design and plan for the future. More than a passive discipline reacting to crises, landscape architecture must take an active role in shaping regenerative futures by integrating computational intelligence with ecological and social foresight. This requires not only technical advancements but also a shift in mindset – one that challenges disciplinary conventions, redefines our design methodologies, and embraces systemic thinking across scales.

Computational design has become an indispensable tool for understanding and shaping complex systems. Through geospatial modeling, data-driven analysis, and AI-assisted design, we now have unprecedented capacities to visualize, simulate, and test alternative futures. However, the focus on technological advancements often risks overshadowing a more fundamental question: responsibility. Responsibility in research – to ensure that digital methodologies are not just efficient, but also ecologically and socially just. Responsibility in design – to create landscapes that are not only performative but also foster long-term resilience and inclusivity. And responsibility in education – to equip the next generation with the critical, ethical, and systemic thinking necessary to navigate a world of growing uncertainty. More than ever, the DLA community holds the potential to move beyond discussions on tools and techniques and critically examine how an expanded understanding of digital landscape architecture can shape equitable and regenerative futures. Subtle shifts in perspective, multiplied across our global community, can yield profound change: for instance, treating biodiversity not as an afterthought but as a core design metric, or viewing climate resilience not as a constraint but as a creative design driver. Yet, as we develop new computational frameworks, we must also ask: Do our digital methods help us reveal hidden complexities, or do they inadvertently obscure the very systems we seek to understand?

A crucial part of this expanded responsibility is recognizing that landscapes are inherently more-than-human. The environments we design are interdependent networks of living organisms. Many of the contributions in this volume move beyond the Anthropocene perspective and explore multispecies coexistence, demonstrating how landscape architecture can foster ecologically integrated and inclusive futures. Emerging computational approaches showcase dynamic modeling of ecological processes with increasing precision, integrating biodiversity, habitat dynamics, and environmental feedback into design workflows. However, as planetary conditions shift and ecological baselines are continuously redefined, the challenge is no longer just to preserve landscapes but to actively design adaptive systems that can regenerate in response to change. These approaches challenge us to rethink the boundaries of participation in design, expanding co-design beyond human stakeholders to include the ecological systems and species that shape and sustain our landscapes.

Collaboration, the central theme of DLA 2025, has been gaining momentum in landscape architectural research and practice. In recent years, discussions at DLA have increasingly explored co-design and co-creation, highlighting their role in participatory processes, computational methods, and ecological integration. However, co-design has often remained con-

strained within human-centered frameworks, limiting its full potential in addressing contemporary socio-ecological challenges. A broader interpretation acknowledges that landscapes are co-produced by both human and more-than-human agents. This expanded perspective is already shaping practice, as designers, ecologists, and technologists experiment with interactive sensing, bio-receptive materials, and algorithmic approaches that integrate species movement, habitat dynamics, and long-term ecological change into design processes. These emerging methods signal a fundamental shift – from designing for ecosystems to designing with them.

However, designing with ecological intelligence requires more than digital precision; it demands a deeper commitment to ethical and complex systemic thinking. As landscape architecture increasingly engages with multiscalar, socio-ecological complexities, collaboration must extend beyond human stakeholders to embrace ecological networks, environmental processes, and planetary interdependencies. The discussions at DLA 2025 will provide an opportunity to critically examine how collaboration – both human and more-than-human – can drive more adaptive, inclusive, and regenerative design futures.

Yet, fundamental questions remain: Are we collecting data about landscapes in ways that translate into positive change on those landscapes, or are we overwhelmed by information while meaningful action lags? Do emerging computational methodologies give agency to nonhuman actors, or do they merely reinforce human-centered paradigms under the guise of complexity? Addressing these questions requires expanding not only our methodological approaches but also our scientific and ethical commitments.

As readers engage with the contributions in JoDLA 2025, I invite them to do so with a mindset that is both curious and reflective. This issue presents a diverse set of perspectives on how computational and digital methodologies are shaping landscape architecture today and in the future. But beyond advancing technical knowledge, it also offers an opportunity to reassess the broader impact of our work – to question assumptions, challenge disciplinary boundaries, and contribute to a field that remains adaptable, responsive, and visionary. As we move forward, the task is no longer just to innovate but to critically redefine the role of digital design in fostering planetary resilience. In doing so, we uphold the principles that have long defined this community: curiosity, responsibility, and the pursuit of meaningful change.

Enjoy this volume!

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