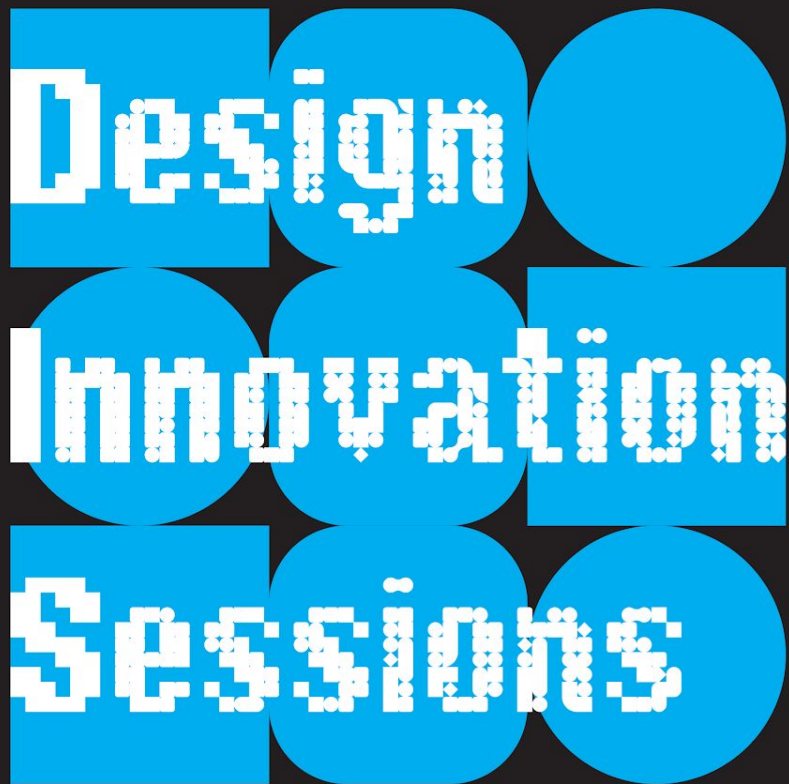




Keep the tension

designing with
generative AI

Kars Alfrink
TU Delft

“Around 80% of our clients strictly forbid us to use AI in the end product.”

Studio Dumbar, 2025

Has a client ever told you not to use AI in the deliverable?

Red light: yes. **White light:** never.

The field is stirred up

"AI art is democratizing creation" creation is already democratic pick up a pencil homie

11:51 PM · Jun 1, 2024 · Everybody can reply

AI won't replace designers.
But designers who use AI will replace those who don't.

I'm speechless.

I cloned Airbnb in 15-mins with [@boltldotnew](#).

And people think AI won't replace designers...

Repost this, I'll DM you my prompt strategy.

Keep hearing devs say that they only use ai for "pre-concept art"

There is no pre-concept art. There is concept art. That's where the idea starts. With the concept.

You're using ai for concept art.

6:31 PM · Jan 12, 2026 · Everybody can reply



Kumail Nanjiani
@kumail.bsky.social

AI art does not exist. It is an oxymoron.

5:36 PM · Aug 29, 2025 · Everybody can reply

Google crashed figma's stock -10% with 1 AI product. thats \$2B wiped out. graphic designers cooked.

Posts on Bluesky and X, 2024–2026. Names blurred.

AI is not one thing

Neither will get us very far

Wholesale rejection, uncritical embrace

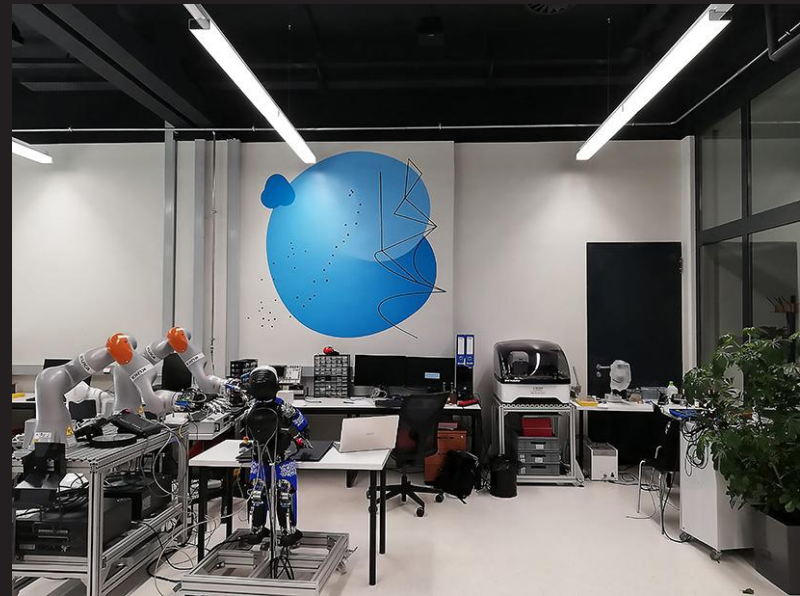
Most of us already live somewhere in between

The tensions are real

Deskilling, or new ways of designing

Built on others' work, or work you own

Automation, but who benefits



Hold the tensions, use them

Use them as an engine for moving forward

**“It creates
boundaries,
it creates friction.
It does not give you
the answer.”**

Vera van der Burg,
From Text-to-Clay

Deskillling, or new ways
of designing

Images: Dezeen; van der Burg,
The Material Gaze (2026)



“Our near future will be a
remix of our
collective history...”

Monotype, on its AI type tool tested by
Blaze Type

Built on others' work, or work you own

Images: Blaze Type



FONT 04: FUSION
A B C D E F G I J K L M N O P
Q R S T U V W X Y Z
c d h i j k l p q v w x y y z

A B C D E F G I J K L M N O P
Q R S T U V W X Y Z
c d h i j k l p q v w x y y z

**“If all media is training data,
including art, let’s turn the
production of training data
into art instead.”**

Holly Herndon and Mat Dryhurst, *The Call*

Automation, but who benefits



Images: Ding (2024); © Leon Chew, Serpentine, 2024

The design of designing with generative AI

Pipelines and workflows:

the means of design, and an object of design

Effort and friction

Design makes futures experienceable

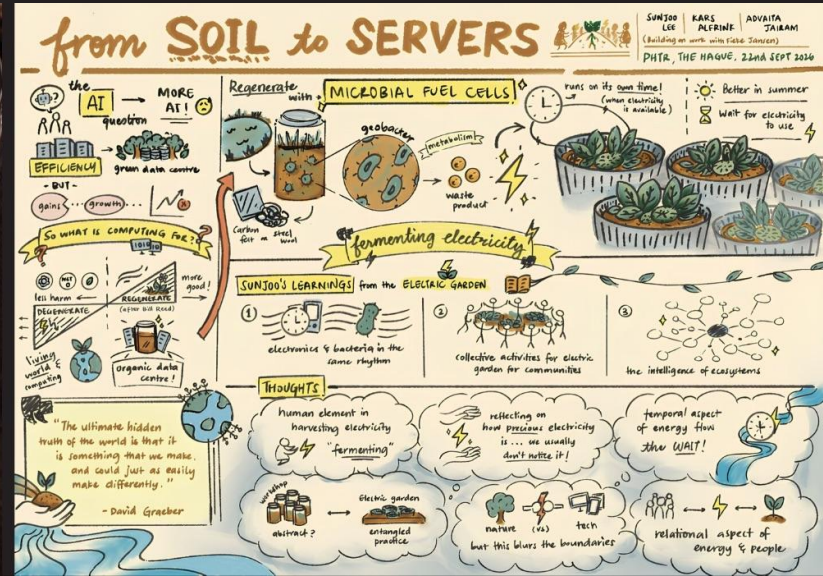


Photo: From Mud to Models, TH/NGS 2025, with Fieke Jansen, Sunjoo Lee and Lena Trotereau.

Drawing: Advaita Jairam, From Soil to Servers, PHTR 2026.

What is it, then?

Not as a single thing

Not autonomous

Not savior or doom

What metaphor does your mind go to?

Send me your metaphors

c.p.alfrink@tudelft.nl

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