Design Emergency take the helm as Wallpaper* Guest Editors

Paola Antonelli and Alice Rawsthorn edit a 39-page section of Wallpaper’s October 2020 issue to explore design’s role during and after Covid-19

Design Emergency, the global design authority, releases its October 2020 issue today, guest-edited by Paola Antonelli and Alice Rawsthorn of Design Emergency. They take over the magazine’s newsstand and limited-edition covers, as well as a 39-page section of the magazine to explore design’s role during and after Covid-19.

Design Emergency is a project by Paola Antonelli, senior curator at the department of architecture and design at MoMA, creator of ‘Broken Nature’ at the XXII Triennale di Milano, and winner of the 2020 London Design Medal; and Alice Rawsthorn, design critic and author of Design as an Attitude and Hello World: Where Design Meets Life. Launched in April 2020 as an Instagram Live series @design.emergency, their collaboration now appears in print for the first time, in the pages of Wallpaper*.

Design Emergency’s Guest Editor takeover is art-directed by design consultancy Studio Frith, founded by Frithe Kerr, and includes portraits by photographer Brigitte Lacombe, shot over Zoom in light of pandemic-era restrictions. It features Paola Antonelli and Alice Rawsthorn’s interviews with nine design leaders across seven countries, who have either led the Covid-19 response, or are leading the way in post-pandemic reconstruction. They range from an Afghan tech entrepreneur who is nurturing teenage roboticists, to a New Zealand pioneer of public health information campaigns, to a Nigerian architect devising floating cities. The line-up of interviewees reflects the evolving definition of design, growing beyond a specialist function to become a general attitude of inventiveness.
Paola Antonelli, co-founder of Design Emergency, says:

‘Many of the people that we celebrated are not trained as designers. But all have embraced the design label we offered them. This is when you see design becoming an attitude: when you set your mind towards a goal and you use the tools at your disposal, in the most economical, effective, safe and elegant way possible.’

Alice Rawsthorn, co-founder of Design Emergency, says:

‘This is a period of extraordinary and agonisingly painful change for many people, and with further devastation and disruptions to come, particularly in economic terms. Design is not a panacea to any of these issues, but by working in an intelligent, thoughtful and responsible way, with relevant specialists from other fields, designers could make a major impact in trying to rebuild our lives for the better.’

Sarah Douglas, Editor-in-Chief of Wallpaper*, says:

‘Wallpaper’s annual Guest Editors’ issue has always acted as a lightning rod for the times, an opportunity to invite creative pioneers to take their seat at the Wallpaper* editorial desk and make their mark on the magazine. I am delighted we could invite the incredibly inspiring duo of Paola Antonelli and Alice Rawsthorn to be our Guest Editors for 2020. Design Emergency is exactly what the world needs now, a testament to design’s ability to innovate and inspire in a time of crisis.’

Further information

Interviewees in the Design Emergency Guest Editors’ section in Wallpaper* include:

- **Alissa Eckert**, medical illustrator at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and creator of the spiky blob recognised worldwide as Covid-19
- **Mark Dalton**, creative director of New Zealand’s Unite Against Covid-19 public information programme
- **Roya Mahboob**, founder of the Digital Citizen Fund and creator of the Afghan Dreamers project, which has trained teenage girls to build emergency ventilators
- **Michael Murphy**, co-founder MASS Design Group, an international non-profit architecture practice specialising in healthcare and social justice
- **Federica Fragapane**, an information designer who worked with think-tank Surgo Foundation to track how Covid-19 preys on vulnerable communities
- **Hilary Cottam**, social designer and author of Radical Help: How We Can Remake the Relationships between Us & Revolutionise the Welfare State
- **Kunlé Adeyemi**, founder of architecture practice NLÉ and champion of a world of cities built on water
- **Sara Saeed Khurram** and **Iffat Zafar Aga**, founders of all-female health provider network Sehat Kahani, who are pioneering telemedicine in Pakistan
- **Andrea Trimarchi** and **Simone Farresin** of design duo Formafantasma, pioneers of investigative design and heads of the new GEO-Design course at Design Academy Eindhoven
As art director for Design Emergency’s Wallpaper* covers and Guest Editor section, Studio Frith has translated into print the identity it created for Paola Antonelli and Alice Rawsthorn’s Design Emergency Instagram Live series. The identity includes a bespoke typeface, with a modular construction that allows letterforms to be built as needed, and a colour palette of white and Design Emergency blue.

Photographer Brigitte Lacombe was already a follower of Design Emergency prior to working with Wallpaper* on a portfolio of portraits of Paola Antonelli, Alice Rawsthorn, their nine interviewees, and Frith Kerr. From her studio in New York, Lacombe photographed them in a two-day marathon of Zoom sessions, creating a series of pictures that speak about both personality and purpose.

The October 2020 issue of Wallpaper* is now on newsstands, and available as a complimentary download on wallpaper.com.

It is the latest in Wallpaper’s series of annual Guest Editor issues, launched in 2007. Previous Guest Editors have included Dieter Rams, Zaha Hadid, Rei Kawakubo, Karl Lagerfeld, David Lynch, Robert Wilson, Frank Gehry, Liz Diller and Neri Oxman.

Design Emergency’s Guest Editor takeover will also feature on wallpaper.com and Wallpaper*-branded social media channels, and will be supported by guerrilla marketing activity.

For interview and image requests, please contact Wallpaper* commissioning editor TF Chan: tf_chan@wallpaper.com.

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Studio Frith’s newsstand (left) and limited-edition covers for the October 2020 issue of Wallpaper* feature the Design Emergency logo and bespoke typeface in signature blue and white. Limited-edition covers are available to subscribers, see Wallpaper.com