

DESIGN FOR CHANGE

# DIVERSITY EQUALLY INCLUSION

DEMAT  
SIGNTERS



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# OUR 2023 GOALS

- Increase the number of BIPOC, Latinx, Asian, and indigenous people who attend and speak at our events
- Increase the number of LGBTQIA+ people who attend and speak at our events
- Increase the number of people with disabilities who attend and speak at our events
- Set the DEI agenda as a transversal approach to all our activities
- Include a younger audience and students in our events, such as Talent Matters, and through partnerships with educational institutions

# WHAT WE ARE DOING TO REACH OUR GOALS

- **Hosting the first event in Mexico City and the third conference in Tokyo, with at least 50% of the line-up being made up of local designers**
- **Introducing in 2023 DEI tickets and DEI discounts, designed to make our conferences more accessible to those from any minority background**
- **Finding sponsors supporting our DEI agenda**
- **Fostering conversations around the DEI agenda at our conferences (through talks, workshops, themes, and choice of speakers) and in our online magazine**
- **Hosting Talent Matters in Mexico City and Tokyo (other than Copenhagen) and partnering with educational institutions to include students and faculties in the discussion around digital design**



# OUR ABOUT AWO

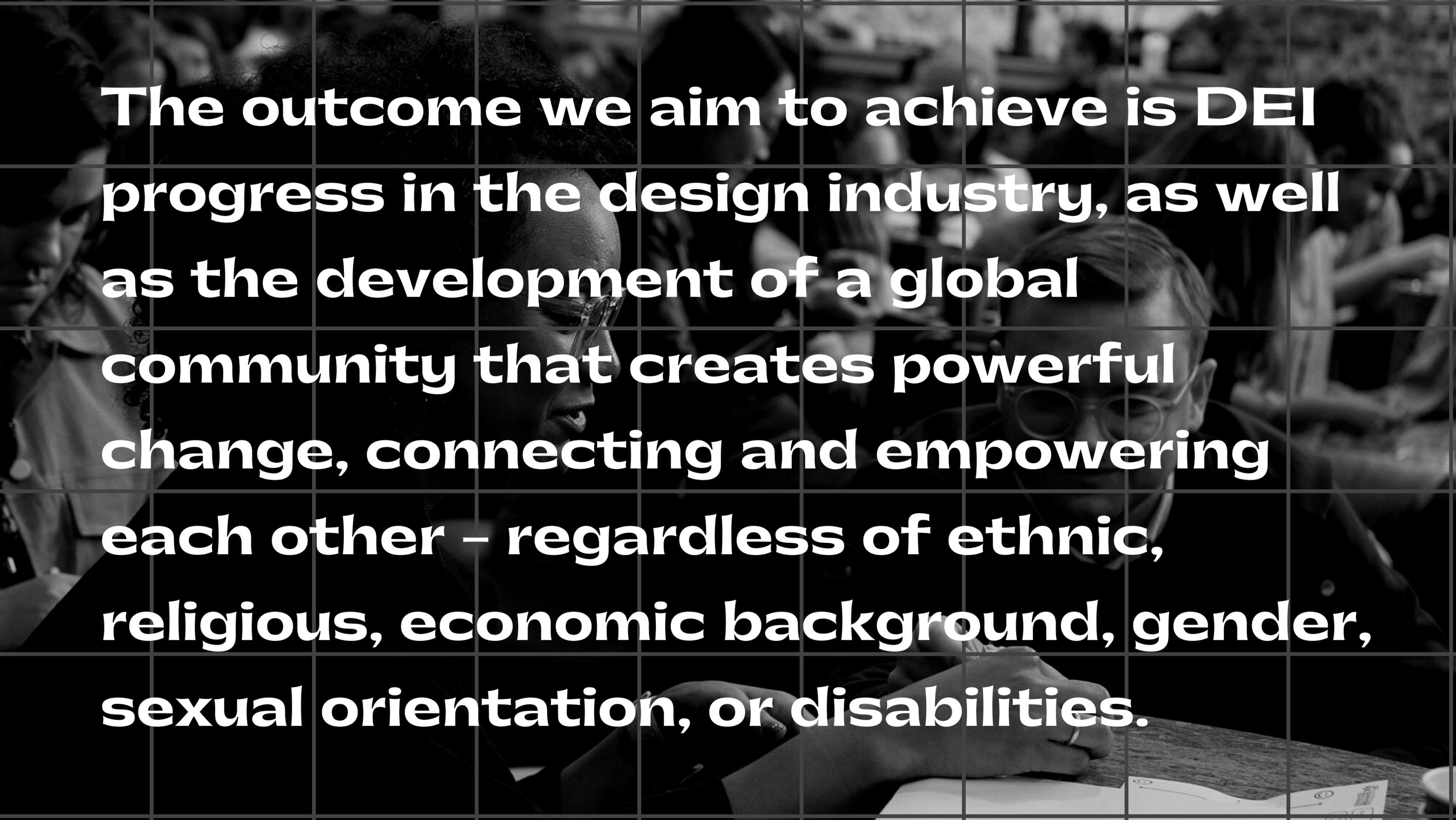
Learn about what we're doing to continuously and authentically put into action what we stand for and believe in.

# A Part of Our DNA

In our path to developing educational content for digital designers, we create spaces that open the conversation around the industry's challenges, but also honest questions about our own humanity and role as designers.

Through the themes of our conferences, we encourage design leaders and practitioners to reflect on relevant topics related to inclusion and diversity, promote awareness, foster social responsibility and empathy.



A black and white photograph of a diverse group of people in a meeting or workshop. The image is overlaid with a grid pattern. The text is centered and reads: 

**The outcome we aim to achieve is DEI progress in the design industry, as well as the development of a global community that creates powerful change, connecting and empowering each other – regardless of ethnic, religious, economic background, gender, sexual orientation, or disabilities.**

# Allies for Diversity

We believe that a real community can only be formed by learning from each other. Through our speakers, participants, partners, and collaborators, we seek to learn and join the battles fought by underrepresented groups. It is thanks to their support, that we can create a space that provides opportunities for diverse designers to expand their network and continue to become the leaders of an industry truly engaged in inclusivity.

As a team, we strive to create and support a culture of inclusion and belonging, where people, culture, and systems, nurture a digital design industry that embraces diversity in the workplace, equal opportunity, and inclusive practices in all aspects of our work.



Lee Timutimu, Designer from Aotearoa New Zealand, speaking at Design Matters 22

# A Conference for Everyone

Involving designers from different backgrounds on and off stage at our conferences is a challenge we meet with pride. This is why we've come up with different ticket types, discounts, and price levels, tailored to our audiences and with a focus on including designers from underrepresented groups.

The **DEI ticket** is more accessible and is intended to support the participation of people with BIPOC backgrounds, who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community, and/or with disabilities. At the same time, we want to include students, independent designers, and non-profit staff who may have a harder time accessing the conference at regular prices.



Anna Lytical, Coding Drag Queen from NYC,  
speaking at Design Matters 22

# WHY SHOULD WE DECOLONIZE OUR DESIGN PRACTICES?

The world is becoming more aware of the enormous absence of Indigenous knowledge and practices in our societies. From history to art, from research methods to the language we use, Colonialism still permeates our mindsets and the way institutions are wired, including design. **When we designers create, thinking about the future, we are thinking about possibilities.** We design a plurality of possible futures, and then we narrow it down to one. To decolonize and decenter design, we need to think more broadly – to embrace plurality. As designers, this is an opportunity to bring clarity, be the catalysts for change, and help push for a different, more equitable future.





# DEI DATA

## IN NUMBERS AND NAMES

Keeping track of our work and progress within the DEI agenda is fundamental to us. At the same time, we are aware that measuring this type of data might lead to grey areas and to the risk of tokenizing people, which is something we want to avoid.

# 46

## NATIONALITIES

The highest number of nationalities recorded at one conference, Design Matters 19. At Design Matters 22, attendees from more than 30 Countries attended the conference.

70

%

of the people who attend the Design Matters conferences in Copenhagen come from outside Denmark.

# 55

%

is the average percentage of attendees who identify as female attending our conferences.

56%

of the speakers of Design Matters 22 identified as female.

39%

of the speakers of Design Matters 22 identified as male.

5%

of the speakers of Design Matters 22 identified as non-binary

# 21

## COUNTRIES

The number of different countries the speakers of Design Matters 22 come from.

Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mozambique, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Spain, Sweden, Vietnam, United Kingdom, USA.

DESIGN MATTERS TOKYO 22

50%

of the speakers of  
Design Matters Tokyo  
22 were Japanese.

DESIGN MATTERS TOKYO 22

50%

of the speakers of  
Design Matters Tokyo  
22 were not Japanese.

DESIGN MATTERS TOKYO 22

48%

of the speakers of  
Design Matters Tokyo  
22 identifies as  
female.

DESIGN MATTERS TOKYO 22

52%

of the speakers of  
Design Matters Tokyo  
22 identifies as male.

# WE WELCOME LGBTQIA+ DESIGNERS



Designers and creatives who belong to the LGBTQIA+ community are encouraged to join our community. We have been collaborating and working together with them since the start, and we always give LGBTQIA+ designers the opportunity to share their knowledge and stories on stage at our conferences. The largest number of LGBTQIA+ speakers/collaborators was reached at Design Matters 2022.

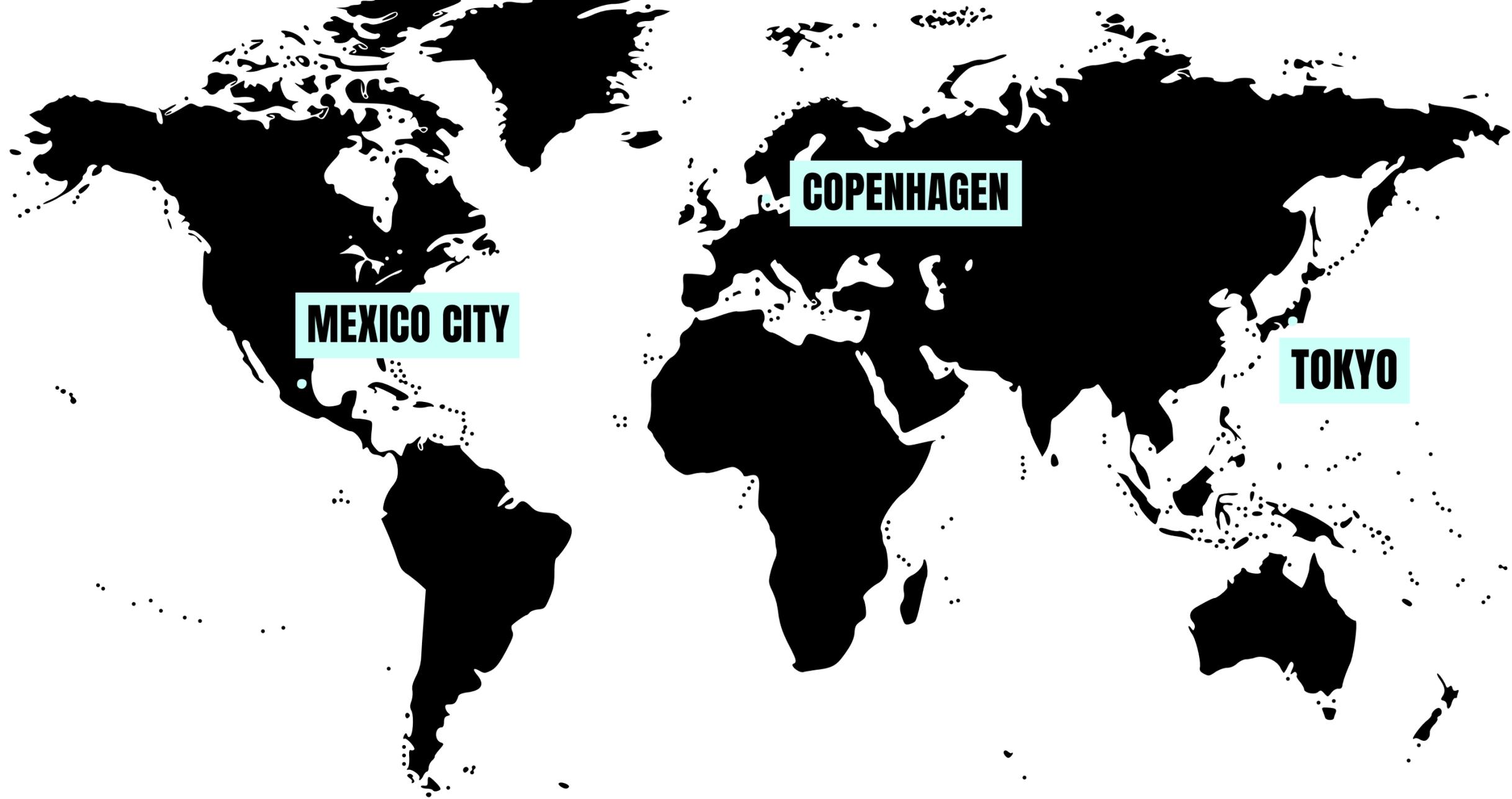
Names of LGBTQIA+ designers who spoke at our conferences include **Layshi Curbelo** (she/her), **Luke Murphy** (they/them), **Eriol Fox** (they/them), **Ramses Cabello** (he/him), the drag queen **Anna Lytical** (she/her), **Celeste Mountjoy** (she/her), **Erica Rider** (she/her).

# INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY MATTER

Being inclusive and diverse is one of Design Matters' priorities. Most recently, at Design Matters 22, one of the conference themes was decolonizing/indigenizing design, and a variety of speakers shared their experience and indigenous knowledge, such as **Lee Timutimu**, a descendant of the Māori tribes of Ngāti Awa, Ngāi Te Rangi, Tūhoe and Ngāti Porou, Berlin-based Vietnamese designer **Ngọc Triệu**, Mozambican designer **Guidione Machava**, Brazilian designer **Jane Vita**, **Andrew Lee** , designer who is Korean but grew up in Japan and now lives in the US, Nigerian open-source design expert **Victory Brown**, and designers from the American BIPOC community such as **Jordan Craig** and **Regine Gilbert**.

Our inclusive agenda isn't limited to last conference's line-up, though. Other designers who are part of the BIPOC community we have collaborated with include **Oluwaseyi Sosanya**, **Aurélia Durand**, **Khalid Albaih**, **Anita Patwardhan Butler**, **Kjegwan Leihitu**, **Rahul Sen**, **Aditi Kulkarni**, and more.

# TAKING THE CONVERSATION AWAY FROM THE EUROCENTRIC AGENDA



Choosing to **decentralize the conversation around digital design** is a key component of our DEI agenda. This way, we can guarantee an inclusive and fair view within the industry. In addition to this, each year, we seek the help of designers with a global perspective in our Committee Meetings, to support us in deciding the themes and topics we talk about at our conferences.

# ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION OF ANY FORM OF DISABILITY

Providing accessible content and including people with any form of disability matters to us too. Our conference spaces have and will always encourage participation of people with disabilities.

We've had speakers talk about accessibility, such as **Regine Gilbert**, accessibility advocate **Laura Kalbag**, Japanese designer **Reiko Hirai**, and our host and ex-speaker **Sam Horner** who gave a talk about being a color blind designer. We also write content together with other designers who are inclusivity & accessibility experts, such as cross-cultural designer **Senongo Akpem** and LEGO's universal-design expert **Bret Schafbuch**.

After receiving feedback from a couple of members of our community who are visually impaired, we edited our existing website based on their feedback. We are now in the process of designing a new, more inclusive website.

# OUR TEAM

Everyone in the Design Matters team has a different nationality and educational background. The age of each team member varies from 20 to 50.



Michael,  
Denmark

Giorgia,  
Italy

Ryo 'Roy',  
Japan

Elsie,  
Peru

Sara,  
Slovakia

Viki,  
Czech Republic

# OUR MANIFESTO

We are Design Matters; **a conference for designers, by designers**, with only designers and creators on stage.

We strive to create a space where emerging and experienced designers intersect and educate one another. We are a communal space for the design community to **share ideas, knowledge, and experiences**.

**We are a melting pot** of startups, independent, and established professionals working in the design & tech industry. We are a nonhierarchical community that encourages everyone to make their voice heard.

**Representation matters to us. And so does unlearning patriarchal mindsets and cis normative practices.** We hold ourselves accountable for increasing and improving the quality of representation we bring on stage and welcome into our community. We believe diversity is a window of opportunity to enrich our thinking and praxis from different viewpoints and experiences.

**Sustainability and fighting climate change are at the forefront of our agenda.** Our goal is to promote environmental awareness as well as ethical and sustainable solutions for life on Earth. We are activists, committed to focus on impact and further the adoption of planet-centric design practices.

**Creativity, curiosity, accessibility, and innovation** are other driving factors that move us every day. We commit ourselves to staying transparent and authentic and to putting our words into actions. Our community should expect no bullshit, which means **no sales pitches and marketing nonsense**. Only knowledge and inspiration from designers - digital and non.

**Stay inspired and collaborate with us to make our DEI agenda happen throughout the year.**

**If you're a designer belonging to a minority group, don't hesitate to reach out to us.**

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