

Opening Statement

Lesley-Ann NOEL

doi: 10.21606/pluriversal.2020.001

It's June 4th of the craziest year of our history. Welcome everyone to PIVOT 2020. This event is co-hosted by the Pluriversal Design Special Interest Group of the Design Research Society and the Phyllis M. Taylor Center for Social Innovation and Design Thinking of Tulane University.

I am Lesley-Ann Noel; I'm one of the co-chairs of the Pluriversal Design SIG. My friend Renata Marques Leitao is the second co-chair. I'm also the Associate Director of Design Thinking at the Taylor Center at Tulane University. This event is co-hosted by the Pluriversal Design SIG and the Taylor Center.

PIVOT 2020 was always intended to be a space for multiple perspectives in design and design thinking, and as a conscious counter to a narrative that design is from a dominant culture. In PIVOT, we aimed to highlight diverse voices, perspectives, epistemologies, and ontologies with an emphasis on design and social innovation, but also opening the discussion to related areas. We wanted to be more inclusive than a typical conference. We always imagined several alternative formats. We played with different ideas such as a writing retreat, an academic summer camp, and a format where people could co-author something new with a person they had just met.

We always wanted to ensure that cost would not be a barrier to participation. We wanted to ensure the involvement of our colleagues in other parts of the world. We also wanted to create a space where non-academics or early academics would also feel welcome and safe to share their work and be involved in the conversation.

We felt that New Orleans was the perfect setting for these types of conversations, given the city's diversity, history, and location —further away from big cities like New York and San Francisco, and its proximity to the Caribbean and Latin America and 'other worlds.' Tulane would be a good host given the role that it plays in research in this city.

Then, of course, everything changed. COVID-19 arrived, and we rapidly changed the format several times. COVID created much disruption, and we heard a marked increase in the word 'pivot' that we chose last fall. Still, we went ahead and invited participants to consider designing a 'world of many centers and voices' and we intentionally sought great diversity in the participants. As such, we have



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presenters and stories from Indonesia, India, Kenya, Brazil, the Caribbean, Australia, Uruguay, Japan, Canada, several European countries, the Middle East, and the United States, and more.

We continued to work throughout the uncertainty of the pandemic. After weeks of sheltering in place, Memorial Day in the US, just over a week ago, was marked by two very racist incidents that changed the landscape again. The current unrest is a clear reminder of the need to create space for multiple voices and perspectives in our lives. COVID-19 forced people to use the word 'Pivot', and we hope the current unrest will result in even more significant shifts in society.

We thank the designers and researchers who answered our call, despite challenges with technology, lack of childcare, and the difficulty of focusing at this time. We feel honored that you were able to participate. We thank you for your patience with our changes in information or format along the way due to ever-morphing situations and the speed with which we were trying to accomplish this work.

We thank the presenting and non-presenting participants for choosing to share this day with us. It's a difficult time, but we hope you'll spend some hours with us connecting with new people and sharing new ideas.

A special thank you to my fellow members of the organizing committee, Renata, Laura, Maille, Sam, Mari and Michelle, and the student support staff, Tran, Delaney, Mehr, Shaymaa, Chidinma, Hamed, Lauren and Chloe, the staff at the Phyllis M. Taylor Center for Social Innovation and Design Thinking at Tulane University and our friends at the Design Research Society.

Dr. Lesley-Ann Noel

PIVOT 2020 Chair