

An introduction to Systems Oriented Design

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Systems Oriented Design emerged from teaching design students to get better at coping with complex situations. It started in 2006 and steadily developed and crystalized with the start of the Relating Systems Thinking and Design symposia series and the establishment of the pluralistic field of Systemic Design in 2012. SOD was defined as a “dialect” of the bigger field of Systemic Design which was conceived as containing and relating many different approaches to relate design with systems thinking. Early it was clear that the design professions and practices as well as theories had a lot to contribute to the rich field of systems thinking and vice versa. The main intention of SOD was to create a designerly way of working with complex systems. Systems thinking should not replace nor come in the way of working like a designer. In contrary, design should be the major approach, method and tools to work with complex systems.

The SOD unit at AHO has been central in establishing Systemic Design as a current mainstream approach, methodology and perspective across design fields. It has introduced the RSD symposia series; it took the initiative for the Systemic Design Research Network and the formalization of the Systemic Design Association.

The SOD unit at AHO is teaching across the different fields of design and architecture at bachelor master’s level and advising PhD thesis. In addition, we are running a three-year executive masters part time program.

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His current practice and research focus on organizational capacity building, the redesign of economic models, and the visualization of complex systems. As a facilitator and educator, he promotes the convergence of systems design and alternative economic theories, using visual methodologies and large-scale mapping (visual canvases) to operationalize macroeconomic concepts in local-scale institutional, financial, and community solutions.

⁽²⁾ **Birger Sevaldson**, Dr Birger Sevaldson [dipl NCAD PhD] is a professor at the Institute of Design at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO), Institute of Design. He is trained as an interior architect and furniture designer. He has been practising in various

fields of design, including architecture and interior design, furniture design, industrial design and art-based projects. He has a PhD in creative design computing and has been researching systems thinking in design since 2006. He is central in the development of Systems Oriented Design, and his research focus is to develop systems oriented design thinking and practice for meeting the increased challenges of globalisation and the need for sustainability. He publishes on various themes, including Systems Oriented Design, creativity, and research by design. Birger is a member of the council of the Design Research Society and is the founder of the Relating Systems Thinking and Design Symposia and a co-founder of the Systemic Design Association.