

John Thackara

John Thackara is a writer, curator and leading voice on sustainable futures. He connects design with daily life, clean growth and mental wellbeing, sharing real-world stories from cities and bioregions. He helps diverse partners build lasting ecological relationships, publishes at thackara.com, and speaks at conferences, corporate events and arts festivals.

KEY TOPICS

- Rewilding AI: Machine Learning, Convivial Tech and Sustainability
- Pathways to Sustainability - Finding Your Place In The Next Economy
- Future Ways of Living
- Connecting Cities and Nature

BIOGRAPHY

About John Thackara

Born in the UK and now based in southwest France, John studied philosophy, trained as a journalist and spent a decade as a book publisher and magazine editor. He later became **Director of Research** at the **Royal College of Art** and went on to lead the **Netherlands Design Institute in Amsterdam**, where he launched the celebrated Doors of Perception conference. He served as programme director for **Designs of the Time in North East England**, a flagship of UK social innovation known as Dott07. In France he curated City Eco Lab for the Saint Étienne design biennial, a hands-on platform for relational design and urban rural reconnection. John is a Senior Fellow at the Royal College of Art and a Fellow of Musashino Art University in Japan. He has advised the **UK Design Council** and Policy Connect's Design Commission. He has also worked as a visiting professor with a special focus on place based professional workshops that enable relationships across communities and sectors.

Keynote Formats And Options

- **One Hour Keynote Lecture** A fast, story-rich overview of designing tomorrow's world today, tailored to corporate leaders and public audiences. Formats adapted to your agenda and venue.
- **More Interactive Workshops** Half-day or full-day interactive workshops and design clinics that bring together diverse actors to co-create practical next steps, from convivial technology pilots to ecological agriculture pathways.
- **Chaired Sessions And Q&A** John chairs international conferences, moderates panels and hosts explorers clubs style conversations where presentations John tells lead naturally into audience dialogue. He has chaired international conferences and served on professional awards juries.

Themes He Speaks On

- **Convivial Technology** Tools and services that help people thrive in place, with a special focus on mental health, daily life and the edge effect where disciplines meet.
- **Urban Rural Reconnection** Relocalisation engine ideas that link food, water, soil and care systems,

enabling relationships between cities and their surrounding bioregions. The aim is to reconnect man and nature in practical, local ways.

- **Relational Design For Organisations** How formats adapted to context can help teams across a company enable diverse actors to act together, from boardroom to neighbourhood, and deal with many challenges in real time.
- **Clean Growth Without Hype** Practical steps that corporate leaders can take now, grounded in evidence from curated City Eco Lab projects and other lived examples.
- **Designing Tomorrow's World Today** Lessons from communities worldwide that have won support, scaled quietly and kept their values intact, with a special focus on how to enable relationships that endure.

Selected Career Highlights

- First Director of the Netherlands Design Institute, Amsterdam, from 1993 to 1999
- Director of Research at the Royal College of Art, London, from 1989 to 1992
- Programme Director, Designs of the Time 2007, a major UK social innovation initiative
- Curator, City Eco Lab for the Saint Étienne design biennial in France
- Senior Fellow, Royal College of Art; Fellow, Musashino Art University
- Roles that include chairing international conferences and serving on professional awards juries

Publications And Editions

John's recent title is **How To Thrive In The Next Economy: Designing Tomorrow's World Today**. His earlier best-seller **In The Bubble: Designing In A Complex World** was published by MIT Press and translated into multiple languages, with French edition and Italian edition among them. He has also authored **Design After Modernism: Beyond the Object** and **Lost in Space: A Traveller's Tale**, and has long published online dispatches that connect design to daily life.

Who Books John

Event hosts programming a perception conference, international conferences or leadership away days book John for presentations that connect strategy with the real world. Formats are adapted for auditoriums, smaller rooms or place based professional workshops. Corporate leaders value the way he enables diverse actors to move from insight to action, and the way he brings influential people together to design practical steps.

What Others Say

"a business provocateur…." "has established a global reputation as a cutting-edge design expert" "a design luminary" "a wired era visionary" "brilliant insights into the internet and sustainability"

Booking John Thackara

For a **keynote**, a chaired session or interactive workshops, choose from a one hour keynote lecture, a fireside conversation or a custom workshop with a special focus on your sector. Presentations John tells are built around compelling real world stories, with formats adapted to your goals and audience size. If you want more

interactive workshops or design clinics, we will shape them to your brief.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY

> "*“Gave our conference the positive energy it needs “* "
>
> **— European Carton Makers Association**

> ""*You provoked us with outside-in, future-related, concepts and opinions”* "
>
> **— TNT**

> "*“You lifted the conference and discussion to a high level”* "
>
> **— Oslo Architecture Triennale**