

Sustainable Innovation 2025
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Past, Present and
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**Dr Idrees Rasouli, Associate Professor of Design and Urban Innovation, Cambridge School of Art,
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Dr Idrees Rasouli is an award-winning designer, academic, and researcher working at the intersection of products, processes, and places. Born in Kabul, raised in London, and nurtured in over a dozen countries, he brings a global perspective and a deep cultural, contextual, and geographic awareness to both academia and industry. His expertise lies in *Design and Innovation for Urban Justice and a Post-Oil World*, with a particular emphasis on arts and design that heal, prepare, and transform. His research investigates the role of design in addressing systemic inequalities, environmental transitions, and civic participation, particularly within resource-constrained, post-industrial, and fragile contexts.

A design leader and strategic change-maker, Idrees has an international profile spanning four continents and twenty countries, with research and commercial-educational partnerships involving over one hundred organisations. He enables creative practice and pedagogy, knowledge exchange, and collaborative research that bridge higher education, business, and society. With extensive experience in scaling initiatives from pilot projects into mature systems, he is widely recognised for driving innovation and transformation across diverse and complex contexts.

Idrees is currently Associate Professor of Design and Urban Innovation at Anglia Ruskin University (Cambridge, UK), where he builds eNective ecosystems that advance mission-driven education, research, knowledge exchange, and strategic partnerships. He serves as the institutional REF 2029 Lead Reviewer for Unit of Assessment 32 (Art & Design) and directs multidisciplinary postgraduate programmes in art, design, and innovation within the Cambridge School of Art. He is leading the development of a new *DesignLab* within the Arts, Media, and Creative Technologies Centre, and acts as Faculty Lead for Academic and Industry Partnerships in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities, Education, and Social Sciences.

Beyond academia, Idrees is the Founder & Creative Director of *X-Crop*, a Cambridge-based research and innovation lab focused on making cities, organisations, and people better by design. He is also Co-Founder & Co-Lead of *Create Cambridge*, a new cultural compact for the city, dedicated to transforming the role of culture, cultural leadership, and partnership to ensure Cambridge becomes a globally recognised champion of creativity and innovation.