

Relational AI Personas in Everyday Ubiquity: Embodied & Situated Design Methods for Sustainable, Plural Futures

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Abstract

AI agents now permeate homes, streets, and even bodies as chatbots in appliances, vision assistants in head-mounted displays, and large-language companions on wearables. The personas we craft around these agents shape trust, authority, energy footprints, and cultural inclusion across ubiquitous contexts. This half-day, in-person workshop mobilizes relational design theory, feminist HCI, and ecological critique to hack, embody, and re-situate AI personas for plural, sustainable futures. Through counter-persona card-storming, embodied role-play, and situated teardown mapping, participants will create speculative artefacts and a collective zine. Outputs, optional short papers, and datasets will be published in the ACM DL and an open online archive. The workshop advances UbiComp's agenda by offering hands-on, community-building methods to interrogate and redesign AI personhood in the everyday computational fabric.

CCS Concepts

• Human-centered computing → Empirical studies in interaction design • Human-centered computing → Ubiquitous and mobile computing design and evaluation methods • Computing methodologies → Artificial intelligence • Applied computing → Media arts

Keywords

AI personas, wearable computing, visual identity, interface design, color and shape, relational AI, calm technology, HCI

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1 Rationale & Objectives

Mark Weiser's vision of calm computing presupposed invisible infrastructures; today's generative-AI agents render those infrastructures personified. Yet prevailing persona toolkits remain anthropocentric and carbon-blind. Building on relational design (Escobar 2018) and post-human critiques (Braidotti 2019), we ask: How can designers & researchers repurpose AI personas as more-than-human, context-aware assemblages that enrich, rather than exploit, everyday life?

Workshop objectives:

- Critically surface ecological, cultural, and power dynamics in current AI-persona practices.
- Teach & test embodied, craft-based methods for persona redesign across ubiquitous/wearable settings.

Seed a network for cross-disciplinary collaboration between HCI, design, ethics, and sustainability scholars.

2 Relevance to UbiComp/ISWC 2025

UbiComp/ISWC audiences grapple daily with agentic systems in smart environments, AR/VR headsets, and on-body wearables. Our focus on relational AI personas links directly to:

- Ubiquitous interfaces: voice, vision, and haptic agents embedded in IoT, smart homes, and urban infrastructures.
- Wearable AI: persona framing in spatial computers (e.g., Vision OS devices) and context-aware accessories.
- Sustainability & ethics: carbon and cultural costs of large-scale AI services.

3 Target Audience & Expected Attendance

This workshop is designed for designers, creative technologists, visual communication specialists, HCI researchers, and practitioners interested in AI personas, visual identity, and small-screen interactions (wearables and mobile devices).

Expected attendance is 10–15 participants, with registration through the main ISWC conference platform. No paper submissions or position statements are required. Participation is on a first-come, first-served basis until capacity is reached.

4 Workshop Format & Schedule

Time (min)	Activity	Lens & Output
0-30	Welcome + Framing Talk	Participants are primed to see visual identity as a key interface for AI behavior.
30-45	Mini-Lecture: Communicating Persona with Shape & Color	Participants understand how to embed tone using visual primitives.
45-95	Hands-on: Visual Identity Hooks	A set of simple visual tiles that suggest different AI personas.
95-115	Gallery Walk & Critique	Participants observe how different visual choices shape perceived persona; gain feedback on clarity, consistency, and emotional impact of their designs.
115-130	Wrap-up & Discussion	Shared reflections on design takeaways; participants articulate how shape and color influence AI trust and usability. Optional opt-in to post-event community channel.

Pre-workshop: short readings + optional position paper.

5 Logistics & Equipment

Overhead camera, projector, white board + color markers, and Wi-Fi. Participants use their mobile/laptop/tablet for access to the AI Persona model and note-taking.

6 Publication & Follow-Up

After the event, we will provide the following:

- A recap slide deck summarizing the design activities and key heuristics.
- A link to an opt-in shared folder for uploading photos, style-tile PDFs, or notes they wish to share.
- An optional Slack/Discord channel for informal post-event discussion.

No formal publication is required. Organizers will prepare a brief companion note documenting the workshop process and outcomes.

7 Organizers

Julius Yls is the lead organizer of this workshop and a Lecturer at the Institute of Creativity & Innovation (Xiamen University, China / University for the Creative Arts, UK). He has over two decades of academic and industry experience in digital media arts, AI-driven spatial computing, and interactive design across Asia-Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East.

Julius's current research focuses on AI personas and visual storytelling in ubiquitous computing contexts, drawing from both his academic work and practical expertise in creative technologies.

Dr. Yeoh is an Associate Professor of Graphic Design at Indiana University Southeast (USA) and a pioneering co-founder of the Visual Communication program at Nanyang Technological University's School of Art, Design, and Media (Singapore). As a scholar-practitioner with 20+ years of experience, he bridges academia and industry through research in visual anthropology, sociolinguistics, and interdisciplinary design innovation work thriving at the theory-practice nexus.

His investigations explore how visual communication intersects with societal frameworks, focusing on sustainability, cultural narratives, and cross-disciplinary collaboration. Published in peer-reviewed journals and exhibited globally (China, Australia, UK, US, Malaysia, South Korea, etc.), he treats travel as both methodology and mindset, advancing design research into culturally grounded solutions.

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