

---

# Guest Editorial

## SUSTAINAISSANCE: Emotion . Expression . Identity

---

### *Sustainaissance in Practice: Quiet Materials, Loud Meanings*

Chee Weng Khong  
Guest Editor  
cwkhong@mmu.edu.my  
Multimedia University, Malaysia  
ORCID iD: 0009-0009-7825-9884

#### Abstract

This Special Issue aligns closely with the journal's focus on creative multimedia, practice-led research, and interdisciplinary inquiry by foregrounding artistic and design practices as critical lenses for examining contemporary issues of sustainability, identity, and human experience. In this issue, readers will encounter the following works: *Drowning in Silence*; *Bloom Through Time*; *The Hand of Life*; *Yang Last Siapa?*; *Life and Music*; *INKINERARY: 31 Journeys of Identity and Imagination*; *Shattered Dates*; *After the Leaves*; *Tapestry of Co-Creation*; *Frozen Whispers*; *Navarasa x Navagrahas*; *The Self that Still Survives*; and *Terlaksana*. Collectively, these works form a curated reflection on how emotion, expression, and identity operate as vital instruments for sustainable thought within contemporary art and design practice.

**Keywords:** Practice-led research; Sustainability; Interdisciplinary inquiry, Identity, Human experience; Expression; Design practice

## Guest Editor's Cover Note

In recent years, the discourse surrounding sustainability has been dominated by ecological metrics, technological innovation, and economic resilience. While these dimensions remain crucial, they often marginalise a less visible yet equally fundamental layer of sustainability: the sustainability of emotional life, creative identity, and cultural expression. This Special Issue of the *International Journal of Creative Multimedia (IJCM)* brings together thirteen practice-led contributions presented at the iNVENTX 2025 Creative Exhibition, Faculty of Creative Multimedia, Multimedia University. Framed under the umbrella theme *SUSTAINAISSANCE: Emotion. Expression. Identity*, the issue positions sustainability not solely as an environmental or technological imperative, but as a lived cultural practice negotiated through emotion, material choice, and creative identity.

The term *Sustainaissance* deliberately combines sustainability and renaissance. It does not imply a return to an idealised past, nor does it offer a technological fix for contemporary crises. Instead, it gestures towards a renewed attentiveness: to material choices, to emotional registers, and to the identities shaped through everyday acts of making. Within this Special Issue, sustainability is approached as a cultural and experiential condition, grounded in emotion, expression, and the persistence of creative life.

Several works confront environmental fragility directly, but do so through affective and symbolic means rather than didactic instruction. In *Drowning in Silence*, marine pollution is rendered as an image of quiet grief, where plastic becomes both physical material and moral metaphor. The stillness of the composition compels viewers to recognise absence, loss, and complicity rather than spectacle. *Shattered Dates* similarly addresses ecological urgency through the slow accumulation of everyday remnants. By assembling discarded bread tags and fractured organic forms, the work reflects on time, delay, and the incremental habits through which environmental crises emerge.

Other contributions locate sustainability in the act of sustaining practice itself. *INKINERARY: 31 Journeys of Identity and Imagination* frames daily analogue sketching as a disciplined, renewable creative habit within an overstimulated digital environment. Drawing becomes a form of care, maintaining emotional continuity and personal identity over time. A similar sensitivity to process is evident in *Frozen Whispers*, where biodegradable materials and slow printmaking techniques are used to explore subtle emotional states. Here, sustainability is not only ecological but experiential, grounded in attentiveness, touch, and repetition.

Questions of identity recur across the Special Issue, often in relation to time, technology, and change. *Bloom Through Time* visualises femininity and memory through a digital sculptural form that balances fragility with resilience, suggesting identity as something that evolves rather than stabilises. In

contrast, *The Self that Still Survives* reflects on hybrid authorship in an age of artificial intelligence, asking what aspects of emotional presence and creative intention must be protected as digital systems increasingly shape aesthetic production. These works resist simple oppositions between human and machine, instead proposing sustainability as the preservation of depth, agency, and reflective judgement.

Cultural memory and relational identity further extend the Sustainaissance framework. *After the Leaves* situates sustainability within a post-natural condition, where nature is encountered through memory, abstraction, and symbolic absence rather than direct experience. *Tapestry of Co-Creation* employs lichens as a metaphor for mutualism, framing sustainability as collective responsibility and ethical coexistence between ecology, technology, and cultural heritage. *Navarasa x Navagrahas* anchors emotional sustainability within cosmological traditions, mapping human affect onto celestial systems and affirming continuity of meaning across time. Works such as *The Hand of Life*, *Yang Last Siapa?*, *Life and Music*, and *Terlaksana* further enrich this dialogue by engaging with personal narrative, cultural reflection, and the ethical dimensions of lived experience.

Together, these thirteen contributions demonstrate that sustainability in creative practice is not only about what is preserved materially, but about what is sustained emotionally and culturally. The Special Issue affirms practice-led inquiry as a legitimate scholarly mode, where making operates as a form of thinking and artworks function as situated arguments grounded in lived experience.

## **Guest Editor Bio**

**Chee Weng Khong** is a senior academic at the Faculty of Creative Multimedia, Multimedia University. His work spans creative technology, interface design, and practice-led inquiry, with long-standing involvement in areas such as usability studies, interaction design, and 3D digital fabrication. Over the years, he has contributed to the establishment of key practice-led facilities and initiatives at the faculty, including rapid prototyping, motion capture, and cultural digitisation. His research and professional engagements emphasise the relationship between human experience, design practice, and cultural context. He also brings extensive experience in academic reviewing, editorial work, and publication processes, informed by direct involvement in producing and managing scholarly outputs. As Guest Editor, he framed this Special Issue to align exhibition-based creative works with reflective, interdisciplinary scholarship in creative multimedia.