

## **Research collaborator (f/m/d)**

### **Imagining Accessible Spaces Using Speculative Design**

#### **Topic**

Accessibility in the built environment is commonly understood as a functional problem, such as enabling basic mobility and usage of the space for disabled people, and primarily focus on the reduction of immediate obstacles through equipment. While this has made important contributions to the accessibility of the built environment, it is rooted in the status quo: (1) it is mainly driven by people without disabilities, and (2) it engages with current barriers, rather than asking what a more accessible world could look like if it were to be imagined from scratch. Yet, successful accessible designs are rare, and the question of how architecture can better accommodate the wide range of human capabilities remains. This project proposes to break away from current practices and reposition people with disabilities as the experts of their spatial needs in order to question what a more accessible and pleasant world might look like if it were to be imagined from scratch. The presence of technology and the extent to which it is desired for a comfortable spatial experience may also be addressed.

More concretely, the research could entail the following aspects:

- Designing and carrying out workshops with and for disabled people with a focus on accessibility, examining the role that the physical space could and should play.
- Developing low-fidelity prototypes for exploration in the context of user studies and further foundation for speculation
- Examining, adjusting and reflecting on the accessibility of hands-on design workshops and speculative methods for disabled people.

#### **Suitable candidates will have previous experience and/or an interest in the following:**

- A Master or PhD degree in design, social sciences, human-technology interaction or environmental psychology
- Willingness to engage with relevant theoretical frameworks and literature in critical disability studies, and to interrogate and examine your own positionality, biases, and experiences
- Good communication skills and an interest in working with people in the context of design sessions, or as part of evaluation studies
- Working command of the English language. Knowing German is no firm requirement, but would be helpful when working with stakeholders not part of the university

#### **Entry date and term of contract**

As soon as possible for a period of two years (extendable for a PhD).

#### **Organizational unit**

KIT Department of Architecture, Institute of Design and Building Technology (IEB), Professorship for Architecture and Intelligent Living (AIL)

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## Salary

The remuneration occurs on the basis of the wage agreement of the civil service in TV-L E13.



KIT has adopted equality, diversity and inclusion as core values. As we seek to balance female and male employees, we particularly appreciate applications from female candidates. If equally qualified, severely disabled applicants will be considered with preference.

## Application

For further information, please contact Prof. Caroline Karmann, Head of the Professorship for Architecture and Intelligent Living at: [caroline.karmann@kit.edu](mailto:caroline.karmann@kit.edu).

Formal applications shall include a letter of motivation, a CV of the candidate and the contact information of three references. These shall be sent via email as a single pdf file to Prof. Caroline Karmann (email address above) by **May 29<sup>th</sup> 2023**.

**Vacancy number: 2106/2023**