Welcome everyone to Designcon 2019 hosted by TiEcon Kerala in partnership with Avani Institute of Design. The 'design huddle' is going to be a busy two days which will connect people in the creative industries and from different fields. But above all, the theme of the conference is Dreams for Building Future.

The idea of the future is an outcome of cultural modernity where societies started to be concerned with what the future generations will be inheriting and experiencing. To that end then the idea of imagining the future is a selfless act as it imagines a reality that the person envisioning may possibly not be able to inhabit. Yet as designers and citizens of civil society we are entrusted with the desire to leave the world a better place than we found it. The idea of the future captures hope and aspiration. It captures openness and a field that is wide open. But it never is. And the visions of future are never meek. They are bold and brave.

Different periods of history have had different imaginations of the future. For the nineteenth century it was the technological future. For the twentieth century it was the return to nature. For the times we live in the imaginations are a lot more complex and often conflicting, where a neat compromise between profit and social good; design ideality and social fit; and commercialization and local production and job creation; the idea of the customer versus civil society is never easy.

The times we live in is witnessing climate change and the destruction of habitats, displacement of people from places they have been born, the refugee crisis, greater political instability across the globe and the emergence of conservative ideologies. In such troubled times, I hope a gathering such as this will deliberate on how we define good design. Good design cannot be design perfection, a self absorbed self referential discourse. It needs to be outward looking.

However what makes design capable of being the space where imagining the future is possible. This is because the field of design even though we are able to discern specialisations, is almost always transdisciplinary, which is saying that it is not just a combination of many disciplines but that design is beyond its own disciplinarity.

Even though the event is called Designcon, it is really a celebration of the creative industry. I highlight the word industry because over the past few decades we have seen a slow but steady shift from a society interested in production to a society interested in design and creativity. I have witnessed this shift in my own lifetime.

As the Dean Academics of Avani Institute of Design and in my new adopted home of Calicut, I am very proud that we have been able to curate such an event. I wish the delegates a wonderful two days and congratulate the conference organisers in advance on their wonderful achievement.

Thank you