KELLER EASTERLING (Yale, US)
Medium Design

Abstract: Medium Design inverts the typical focus on object over field, to work on the medium: the matrix space between objects, events and ideological declarations. And it disrupts some habitual modern approaches to the world’s intractable dilemmas, from climate cataclysm to inequality to concentrations of authoritarian power. In a series of case studies dealing with everything from automation and migration to explosive urban growth and atmospheric changes, Medium Design offers spatial tools for innovation and global decision-making to challenge the authority of more familiar legal or economic declarations. From this perspective, solutions are mistakes and ideologies are unreliable markers. Rather than the modern desire for the new, designers find more sophistication in relationships between emergent and incumbent technologies. Encouraging entanglement, medium design does not try to eliminate problems but rather put them together in productive combinations. It offers some special activist tools for outwitting political superbugs and modulating power and temperament in organizations of all kinds.

Bio: Keller Easterling is an architect, writer and the Enid Storm Dwyer Professor of Architecture at Yale, US. Her most recent book Medium Design: Knowing How To Work on the World (Verso, 2021) inverts an emphasis on object and figure to prompt innovative thought about both spatial and non-spatial problems. She is also the author of Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructure Space (Verso, 2014), examines global infrastructure as a medium of polity.