

scope

Contemporary Research Topics

art & design 29:
Hospitality & Tourism
July 2025

Editorial

<https://doi.org/10.34074/scop.1029021>

UNLEARNING HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM: TOWARDS PRACTICES OF REFUSAL AND REGENERATION

Adrian Woodhouse

Published by Otago Polytechnic Press.

CC-BY the authors.

© illustrations: the artists or other copyright owners or as indicated.

UNLEARNING HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM: TOWARDS PRACTICES OF REFUSAL AND REGENERATION

Adrian Woodhouse

This special issue of *Scope (Art & Design): Hospitality and Tourism* is both a provocation and an offering. It throws down a challenge: to rupture the tired orthodoxies shaping the fields of hospitality and tourism, and to resist the normalised assumptions that continue to govern how we teach, lead, serve, and imagine within them. For too long, dominant logic has rewarded exploitative systems, siloed expertise, and sterile metrics of success. What happens when educators, practitioners, researchers, and creatives stop nodding politely and instead begin to push back? When the myth of limitless growth is interrogated? When our places of service, leisure, learning, and care become sites of cultural resistance and philosophical reckoning?

As editor of this issue, it has been my pleasure to collaborate with a group of contributors who, like myself, are committed to disrupting the status quo. I have spent the past two decades advocating for pedagogical and professional models that challenge the servile and hierarchical paradigms so often embedded in hospitality education. My research has focused on dismantling those systems that prize obedience over originality and reinforce outdated notions of customer service and professional identity. This special issue is a continuation of that work, and a celebration of a growing community of thinkers and doers who are refusing to replicate what no longer serves us.

The contributions in this issue do not merely theorise disruption—they perform it. They emerge from kitchens and classrooms, resorts and runways, bushwalks and boardrooms, and from moments where the personal and political collide. They are international in scope and diverse in voice, but they share a refusal to replicate. Instead, they ask: what if we imagined otherwise?

Across this collection, you will encounter themes that provoke and unsettle, with a deliberate intention to confront the structural foundations of our disciplines. In one thread, the integration of AI into hospitality education raises critical questions of authenticity, craft, and the erosion of tacit knowledge. What vanishes when human intuition is outsourced to a machine? What values are being quietly undermined under the guise of efficiency? In another, the looming threat of over-tourism and unchecked development is laid bare, revealing how the commodification of culture and place risks hollowing out both meaning and mana. The spectre of another “Bali 2.0” is not a distant possibility—it is a crisis already unfolding.

Equally potent are the threads that interrogate the academy itself—its complicity as an institutional gatekeeper, its privileging of traditional academic epistemologies, and its tendency to marginalise experiential and practice-based knowledges. These pieces challenge us to question who is allowed to speak, whose knowledge is deemed legitimate, and what it would mean to dismantle those exclusions from within.

Elsewhere, contributors to this issue reimagine hospitality and tourism as deeply relational and embodied practices, grounded in whenua, whānau, and manaakitanga. These perspectives move beyond the reductive and transactional logic of hospitality-as-service and instead offer radical visions of hospitality-as-relationship. Across these reflections, well-being is not presented as a soft or secondary consideration—it is central, ethical, and profoundly political.

One critical strand of this conversation turns its gaze inward to interrogate culinary education itself. The standardised, Eurocentric curriculum is scrutinised for its marginalisation of non-Western culinary traditions and its role in sustaining colonial hierarchies of knowledge. Contributors offer searing critiques of how the professionalisation of culinary training often excludes students' lived culinary experiences, reifying a narrow and hegemonic conception of gastronomy. Through storytelling and critical autoethnography, these pieces call for a reimagining of culinary pedagogy—one that honours intergenerational knowledge, sensory learning, and the multiple worlds our learners bring with them. Here, decolonising education is not an abstract ideal; it is a grounded practice that begins by restoring dignity, visibility, and agency to those long marginalised by the academy.

We are reminded, again and again, that our classrooms and workplaces are not neutral spaces. They carry histories, worldviews, and power dynamics that must be surfaced if transformation is to be meaningful.

What links these articles is not a single methodology or lens, but a shared restlessness. A desire to challenge the status quo—not only for disruption, but because the status quo is no longer fit for purpose. These contributions demand that we ask better questions of our field: Who benefits from the way things are? What histories are being upheld or erased in our curricula, our dining rooms, our tourism experiences? What would it mean if values such as care, indigeneity, ecological connection, and self-determination were no longer sidebars but centred as structuring principles?

This edition also invites self-reflection. As readers, educators, operators, travellers, and consumers, we are not outside the systems we critique. We are implicated in them. The seductive logic of growth, standardisation, and techno-solutionism lives within us.

Disruption, therefore, is not just noise. It is method. It is refusal. It is ceremony. These contributions are offerings—sometimes raw, sometimes rigorous, always courageous. They speak of pedagogy as activism, of tourism as cultural memory, of hospitality as a site of ethical engagement, and of practice as resistance.

Let this issue unsettle you. Let it provoke your practice, stretch your thinking, and seed new kinds of conversations in your classrooms, commercial kitchens, tour operations, community hubs, and cultural sites. Let it move you beyond compliance and towards courage.

The wider fields of hospitality and tourism do not need more standardisation; they need radical imagination. And here, within these pages, that reimagining has begun.

Adrian Woodhouse (ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6282-2542>) is a multiple award-winning tertiary educator and the current Head of Programmes at the Food Design Institute, Otago Polytechnic/Te Pūkenga, New Zealand. With over two decades of leadership in vocational and higher education, Adrian is recognised for pioneering future-focused, work-integrated, and culturally responsive culinary programmes. His research is grounded in critical theory with a focus on decolonising hospitality education to create equitable learning environments and prepare graduates for the dynamics of a rapidly evolving industry. He has a particular interest in the power relationships embedded within the explicit and implicit structures of vocational education.