

SARA NEJAD

**Biodesigner +
Researcher**

Sara Nejad

Brooklyn, NY 11231

sara.nejad@nyu.edu | www.saranejad.design | [in/saranejad-design](https://in.saranejad-design)

Personal Statement

I am an interaction designer and researcher with a multidisciplinary background in HCI, biodesign and entrepreneurship. I explore the convergence of design, biology and engineering to develop bio-digital interfaces, systems and experiences with applications on earth and in space.

As a designer and researcher, I work to advance sustainability and equity through careful bio-digital design. As synthetic biology enables ever new potential, my goal is to contribute to the work I believe is necessary for the development of ethical and technological frameworks for all organisms to interact and thrive, humans and non-humans alike.

Education

New York University / MS in Integrated Digital Media

SEP 2018 - MAY 2020, New York

Concentration: Human Computer Interaction, Biodesign, XR

California State University Northridge / BS in Marketing

AUG 2009- DEC 2011, California

MIT Media Lab - How to Grow Almost Anything / Synthetic Biology

FEB 2021 - MAY 2021, Massachusetts (virtual)

Research Experience

Research Assistant / New York University

SEP 2018 - MAY 2020, New York

Worked closely with Dr. Elizabeth Henaff, and helped to set up and run the [Laboratory for Living Interfaces at NYU](#), where we studied the interaction of organisms and their environment through the lens of architecture and urbanism.

Contributed to ongoing research on the microbial communities of NYC by collecting environmental samples, extracting DNA from the samples, and analyzing the sequenced DNA data through bioinformatics to gain insight to the urban microbiome

Engaged in ethnographic research to help conceive of digital and physical tools that empower local communities and promote citizen science

Research and Development Intern / Bell Labs - Nokia (E.A.T)

JUN 2019 - AUG 2019, New Jersey

Worked within an interdisciplinary team to investigate the convergence of neuroscience, music theory and haptic technology to prototype and test a wearable interface that communicates and evokes emotions through tactile feedback

Independent Research & Collaborations

2020 - present

Ongoing research on future food + food HCI, and applications of biodesign and synthetic biology in space exploration

Collaborations

[Nab Biosciences / Harvard Biotech Incubator](#)

Designing the user interface for a portable biosensor device

[Spira Inc. \(NASA Grant proposal\)](#)

HCI research for a closed loop system to produce spirulina algae in space

[Global Listening for BDC x Google design sprint](#)

DNA-based data encoding system to track substance flows worldwide

Professional Experience

Creative Consultant / Sara Nejad Design

2017 - PRESENT, Los Angeles + New York

- HCI strategies for web, mobile and emerging technologies
- Creative strategies for sustainable practices

Creative Director / Zoovila Inc.

2017 - 2018, Los Angeles + San Francisco

- Developed creative strategies for multiple digital products
- Created the product story and pitch decks to communicate the vision with different stakeholders
- Led UX/UI design and collaborated closely with engineers to prototype and develop products

Co-founder + Creative Director / Inspo

2015 - 2017, Los Angeles

- Designed and developed a fashion & lifestyle discovery mobile application from concept to market
- Continually performed user interviews, AB testing and usability testing to improve the user experience with each product update

Associate Art Director / Daughters of Culture

2014 - 2015, Los Angeles

Content Manager / Lori Michele Fitness

2013 - 2016, Los Angeles

Designer / Mister L.B.

2012- 2013, Los Angeles

Community and Leadership

Alumni Board Member / [BioDesign Challenge](#)

2021- present

Fellow and Organizer/ [MIT Global Community Bio Summit](#)

2021- present

Community Organizer/ NYU-IDM

2018-2020

- IDM Grow Lab (2019)
- IDM Showcase Organizing Committee (2019)
- Interactive studio exhibition at BAM (2018)

Fellowships and Awards

Fellow / MIT Media Lab Global Community Bio Fellowship
2021-present

Semifinalist- [Material Provenance Project](#) / BDC x Google Design Sprint
2021

Winner- [Microbial Memories](#) / BDC Science Sandbox Prize
2020

Grant- [IDM Grow Lab](#), \$20k / NYU Green Grant
2019

Talks and Presentations

Presenter - [Aromata](#) / [MIT Olfaction Conference](#)
2021

Speaker / [BDC Alumni Curiosity Conversation](#)
2021

Presentation - Microbial Memories / [Buds](#)
2021

Workshop - Interplanetary Synbio / [GCBS 4.0](#)
2020

Panel Speaker / [BDC at Shanghai Fashion Week](#)
2020

Skills

Research / Qualitative & Quantitative User Research, Rapid Prototyping, Academic writing

Strategy and Leadership/Mentor, Project Lead, Organizer

Design / User Experience (UX), User Interface Design, Interaction Design, Adobe CC, Figma, Design Thinking, lo-fi Prototyping

XR/ Unity, the Unreal Engine, Blender, Leap Motion

Fabrication/ Arduino, 3D Printing, Lasercut, Vinyl Cutter

Fashion/ Sketching and Technical Design, Pattern Making, Sewing

Languages/ Fluent in English and Persian(Farsi)

Mentorship and Teaching

Instructor / Genspace 2021 - ongoing

Guest Critic / Augmented Reality, NYU's summer STEM program
2020

Guest Critic / Design Thinking, NYU Tandon School of Engineering
2019

Organizer and Facilitator/ IDM Portfolio Critique Workshops, NYU
2019 - 2020

Selected Press

Can Microbes Help Us Taste Alternate Worlds?

Issues in Science and Technology

2021

Biohackers in Space (Almost)

Neo.life

2021

NYU Tandon School of Engineering

2020