
Foreword

This special issue consists of a collection of selected papers which originated in the International Conferences on Design & Nature organised every two years by the Wessex Institute of Technology. The success of these meetings has resulted in a substantial number of outstanding papers. This issue contains a number of edited and extended versions of some of the best papers.

The first of the conferences was held at the International Centre for Mechanical Sciences (CISM) in Udine, Italy in 2002, followed by one in Rhodes in 2004 with the participation of Greek institutions, a meeting in the New Forest, home of the Wessex Institute of Technology (2006), a further conference in the Algarve, Portugal (2008) and one in Pisa with the collaboration of the University (2010). The more recent meeting (2012) in A Coruna, Spain was sponsored by the local University.

Nature has always been the prime motivation for scientists and engineers who derive from it an inexhaustible source of inspiration. Learning how nature works ought to lead to a better development of our civilisation. The current trend of over exploitation of natural resources and degradation of the environment is leading us to the brink of a major ecological disaster. Harmonization of all our activities with nature is the only way forward.

We hope that this issue as well as its companion will make a contribution towards a better understanding of nature and in particular its relation to science and engineering.

Carlos A Brebbia
Editor