



# DESIGN ANTHROPOLOGICAL FUTURES

Edited by  
Rachel Charlotte Smith  
Kasper Tang Vangkilde  
Mette Gislev Kjærsgaard  
Ton Otto, Joachim Halse  
Thomas Binder



B L O O M S B U R Y

**Design  
Anthropological  
Futures**



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# Contents

List of Figures	vii
Contributors	ix
Acknowledgements	xiv

<b>1</b> Introduction: Design Anthropological Futures	1
<i>Mette Gislev Kjærsgaard, Joachim Halse, Rachel Charlotte Smith, Kasper Tang Vangkilde, Thomas Binder and Ton Otto</i>	

## **Section I Ethnographies of the Possible**

<b>2</b> Cultures of the Future: Emergence and Intervention in Design Anthropology	19
<i>Rachel Charlotte Smith and Ton Otto</i>	
<b>3</b> Design and the Future: Temporal Politics of 'Making a Difference'	37
<i>Ramia Mazé</i>	
<b>4</b> Different Presents in the Making	55
<i>Mike Anusas and Rachel Harkness</i>	
<b>5</b> The New Design Ethnographers 1968–1974: Towards a Critical Historiography of Design Anthropology	71
<i>Alison J. Clarke</i>	

## **Section II Interventionist Speculations**

<b>6</b> Design Interventions as a Form of Inquiry	89
<i>Joachim Halse and Laura Boffi</i>	
<b>7</b> Jostling Ethnography Between Design and Participatory Art Practices and the Collaborative Relations It Engenders	105
<i>George E. Marcus</i>	
<b>8</b> 'Conversation <i>Dispositifs</i> : Towards a Transdisciplinary Design Anthropological Approach	121
<i>Zoy Anastassakis and Barbara Szaniecki</i>	

<b>9</b>	The Irony of Drones for Foraging: Exploring the Work of Speculative Interventions <i>Carl DiSalvo</i>	139
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### **Section III Collaborative Formation of Issues**

<b>10</b>	Para-Ethnography 2.0: An Experiment in Design Anthropological Collaboration <i>Kasper Tang Vangkilde and Morten Hulvej Rod</i>	155
<b>11</b>	Design Anthropology On the Fly: Performative Spontaneity in Commercial Ethnographic Research <i>Brendon Clark and Melissa L. Caldwell</i>	169
<b>12</b>	Politics of Inviting: Co-Articulations of Issues in Designerly Public Engagement <i>Kristina Lindström and Åsa Ståhl</i>	183
<b>13</b>	Collaboratively Cleaning, Archiving and Curating the Heritage of the Future <i>Adam Drazin, Robert Knowles, Isabel Bredenbröker and Anais Bloch</i>	199

### **Section IV Engaging Things**

<b>14</b>	Design Anthropological Frictions: Mundane Practices meet Speculative Critique <i>Mette Gislev Kjærsgaard and Laurens Boer</i>	217
<b>15</b>	Things as Co-Ethnographers: Implications of a Thing Perspective for Design and Anthropology <i>Elisa Giaccardi, Chris Speed, Nazli Cila and Melissa L. Caldwell</i>	235
<b>16</b>	Design Anthropology as Ontological Exploration and Inter-Species Engagement <i>Tau Ulv Lenskjold and Sissel Olander</i>	249
<b>17</b>	The Things We Do: Encountering the Possible <i>Thomas Binder</i>	267
	Index	283

# List of Figures

2.1	Reflecting the teenagers' digital worlds	23
2.2	Transforming digital cultures through the design process	25
2.3	Developing the 'Portraits' installation	30
2.4	Audiences at the 'Digital Sea' installation	31
3.1	Sampling from our methods documentation	43
3.2	Five 'superfictions'	45
3.3	'Energy Futures' exhibition event	46
4.1	A typical working environment of a UK product design studio	58
4.2	Project timeline drawing showing linear left-to-right progression of time and tasks across months	59
4.3	A typical product design process diagram	60
4.4	Left: The south face of a relatively newly built Earthship home, New Mexico, 2006. Right: An Earthship builder 'mudding' a wall with adobe (earthen) plaster	63
4.5	Images from Earthship homes in New Mexico, United States	64
5.1	Victor Papanek, <i>Miljø for Millioner</i> , (Gyldendal: Copenhagen, 1972) cover design	78
5.2	'The Design Team' from 'Big Character' Poster No.1: Work Chart for Designers (1973)	80
6.1	Laura, a nurse, is using a partly imaginary, partly mocked up, messaging station in the garden of the hospice to write a message to her patient	97
6.2	Lorena, a nurse, is using a blanket symbolically representing the tree in the garden	98
7.1	'214 Square Feet' Exterior	115
7.2	'214 Square Feet' Interior	115
8.1	First set of experiments	128
8.2	Second set of experiments	130
8.3	Third set of experiments	132–3
8.4	Fourth set of experiments	135
9.1	Checking a tree for fruit with ladders and crew	143
9.2	Drone in flight, looking for fruit	144
11.1	Sketch of body with house as a head	173
12.1	Participants gathered in 'Threads'	188



12.2	Invitations made through embroidered text messages hanging on clotheslines	189
12.3	Discarded mobile phones collected at a youth club	192
12.4	Technologies assembled to enable telecommunication through the Internet	193
13.1	The Video Installation in 'Cleaning Up After Gropius'	202
13.2	Cleaning equipment on a staircase in the Bauhaus building	208
13.3	Heritage materials in bags in the archive of the Bauhaus collection	209
13.4	Dirt for auction ( <i>Bauhaus Schmutzes</i> ) in the 'Cleaning Up After Gropius' installation	211
14.1	Build Your Neighbourhood	224
14.2	Data from Build Your Neighbourhood projected in the company office	225
14.3	Dystopian Bench as it might be used	228
14.4	Dystopian Bench in its imaginary future setting	229
15.1	Autographers attached to a kettle and a cup	238
15.2	Format of the photographs taken by Autographers (from a cup's perspective)	239
15.3	Things done while waiting for the water to boil (from a kettle's perspective)	241
16.1	Images of design experiments at Grønnehave	256
16.2	A resident is trying out the Talk-Into prototype	258
16.3	A resident is feeding the dove on the balcony	259
17.1	Dreaming up different offices	274
17.2	Reaching into a different everyday	277

# Contributors

**Zoy Anastassakis** is Associate Professor at the State University of Rio de Janeiro in the Superior School of Industrial Design (Esdi/UERJ), where she coordinates the Design and Anthropology Lab (LaDA). Anastassakis's research explores possible combinations between modes of knowledge production in design and anthropology and the implications for dealing with public issues.

**Mike Anusas** is a teaching fellow in the Department of Design, Manufacture and Engineering Management at the University of Strathclyde and a research associate in the 'Knowing From the Inside' project in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Aberdeen. His work focuses on practices of design and making and how these influence perceptions of matter, energy and ecology.

**Thomas Binder** is Professor of Co-Design at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Design. He is co-director of the research centre, CODE, engaging open design collaborations and participatory design in the context of design anthropology, interaction design and social innovation. His research includes contributions to methods and tools for experimental design research and open innovation processes. Binder is co-founder of the international Research Network for Design Anthropology.

**Laurens Boer** is Assistant Professor in Interaction Design at the IT University of Copenhagen. He studied industrial design at the Eindhoven University of Technology and holds a PhD from the University of Southern Denmark, where he constructed 'provotypes' as platforms for situated critical reflection in participatory projects. Currently he explores critical and speculative approaches to designing computational materials.

**Laura Boffi** is an interaction and service designer. She focuses on how people create their own culture around the context they inhabit, often by appropriating in a spontaneous way the material and technology artefacts that surround them. She holds an MA in design from Design Academy Eindhoven and is a graduate of the Interaction Design Programme at CIID, the Copenhagen Institute of Interaction Design.

**Anaïs Bloch** is a designer, design lecturer, and researcher with experience leading design projects and socio-cultural research. She works as a designer and anthropologist in the heritage sector and the education sector. She holds a degree in product design at the University of Art and Design ECAL in Lausanne, and an MA in anthropology from University College London. Her current work focuses on design thinking, social practices and digital technologies.

**Isabel Bredenbröker** is a PhD candidate at the Institute for European Ethnology, Humboldt University Berlin. She holds an MA in comparative literature from Freie Universität Berlin and an MA in material and visual culture from University College London. Her research focuses on aspects of material culture in relation to economic exchange, value creation, housing and design. Isabel works in the contemporary art field.

**Melissa L. Caldwell** is Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and Editor of *Gastronomica: The Journal of Critical Food Studies*. Her ethnographic research in Russia, publications and teaching have focused on the everyday politics and practices of material culture and social justice in state socialist and post-socialist societies.

**Nazli Cila** is a design researcher at the Applied University of Amsterdam in the School of Digital Media and Creative Industries. She holds a PhD in industrial design from Delft University of Technology. Her research combines data-driven design and design anthropology, with the goal of understanding people better and offering design solutions for wellbeing through the use of sensor data, participatory sensing, and citizen science.

**Brendon Clark** is Studio Director and Senior Researcher at Interactive Institute Swedish ICT and Adjunct Senior Lecturer of Design Anthropology at Umeå Institute of Design. His research focuses on knowledge (re)production practices in technology and service design processes in the public and private sectors. He co-led the DAIM project (Design Anthropological Innovation Model) and is developing a contextualized language-learning agenda, Language as Participation.

**Alison J. Clarke**, Professor of Design History and Theory and Director of the Victor J. Papanek Foundation at the University of Applied Arts Vienna, considers the intersections of design and social anthropology. Her publications include *Design Anthropology: Object Culture in the 21st Century* and a forthcoming MIT book project on the historical origins of design anthropology in 1960s/70s design activism.

**Carl DiSalvo** is Associate Professor in the School of Literature, Media, and Communication at the Georgia Institute of Technology, where he directs the Public



Design Workshop. He is the author of *Adversarial Design* (2012). DiSalvo's experimental design work has been exhibited and supported by the ZKM, Science Gallery Dublin, and the Walker Arts Center.

**Adam Drazin** is Lecturer in the Department of Anthropology at University College London, where he coordinates the MA in Materials, Anthropology and Design. His work focuses on two key areas: the material culture of professional design work, and consumption and care in the Romanian home. He is co-editor, with Susanne Küchler, of *The Social Life of Materials: Studies in Materials and Society* (2015).

**Elisa Giaccardi** is Professor and Chair of Interactive Media Design at Delft University of Technology, where she leads the Connected Everyday Lab. From her pioneering work in meta-design environments, to participatory technology and Internet of Things infrastructuring, her research reflects an ongoing concern with design as a shared process of cultivation and management of opportunity spaces.

**Joachim Halse** is Associate Professor at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, directing the MA programme in Co-Design and co-director of the research centre CODE. His work enables new forms of civic participation in future-making. Halse's main contributions to design anthropology include his PhD thesis (2008), the book *Rehearsing the Future* (2010), and the co-founding of the international Research Network for Design Anthropology.

**Rachel Harkness** is Research Fellow in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. She is part of 'Knowing From the Inside', a project exploring the shared territories of art, anthropology, architecture and design. Harkness' work with people involved in eco-construction projects in the US and the UK centres upon issues of building, environment, materials and politics.

**Mette Gislev Kjærsgaard** is Associate Professor of Design Anthropology at the University of Southern Denmark. She has worked with design anthropology in industrial and academic contexts for more than fifteen years. Her research focuses on relations between anthropology and design at the intersection between the social and the material, production and use. She is co-founder of the international Research Network for Design Anthropology.

**Robert Knowles** is an artist, anthropologist and engineering risk management professional. As an artist he has exhibited and participated in projects in London, New York, Beijing, Dhaka, Montreal and Milan with the collaborative group Knowles Eddy Knowles. His anthropological work has focused on the 'risk imagination' of engineers as they collectively come to grips with complex infrastructural installations.

**Tau Ulv Lenskjold** is a postdoc at the University of Southern Denmark, Department of Design and Communication, and holds a PhD in interaction design. His research follows two avenues: the first investigating how speculative design practices engage with political and societal issues, the second concerning a post-anthropocentric rearticulation of design by means of experimental and interventionist modes of investigation.

**Kristina Lindström** is a postdoc at Umeå Institute of Design, Umeå University. With Åsa Ståhl she conducted a collaborative, practice-based PhD across interaction design and media and communication studies on how hands-on making can facilitate collaborative co-articulations of emergent issues of living with mundane technologies. Her current research deals with public engagement, with a focus on hybrid matters.

**George E. Marcus** is Chancellor's Professor of Anthropology and founding director of the Center for Ethnography, both at University of California, Irvine. His work centres on the role of collaborations in transforming classic ethnographic research, the influence of design thinking and methods in the production of experiments alongside fieldwork, and the invention of alternative forms of analytic-descriptive 'results' of research.

**Ramia Mazé** is Professor of New Frontiers in Design at Aalto University, Finland. She specializes in critical and participatory approaches to design. Previously Mazé worked in Sweden at Konstfack College of Arts Crafts and Design, at KTH Royal Institute of Technology, at Designfakulteten, and at the Interactive Institute. A designer by training, she has a PhD in interaction design.

**Sissel Olander** is a postdoc at the Royal Danish Academy's School of Design. She holds a PhD in co-design and design anthropology. Her research explores participatory processes as experimental forms of knowing and making that tie together the empirical with the speculative. Currently, Olander works with Copenhagen libraries to explore everyday prototypical practices, representational procedures and larger societal issues.

**Ton Otto** is Head of the Ethnographic Collections at Moesgaard Museum, Aarhus, and Professor of Anthropology at Aarhus University, Denmark, and at James Cook University, Australia. Based on long-term ethnographic field research in Papua New Guinea he has published widely on issues of social and cultural change and the epistemology and methodology of ethnographic research, including visual, museum and design anthropology. Otto is co-founder of the international Research Network for Design Anthropology.

**Morten Hulvej Rod** is Associate Professor and Research Programme Director at the National Institute of Public Health, University of Southern Denmark. His research



is located at the intersection between public health and anthropology. He has conducted fieldwork with public-sector professionals and has published on organizational, ethical and political issues related to public health policies and interventions.

**Rachel Charlotte Smith** is Assistant Professor of Design Anthropology at the Centre for Participatory Information Technology (PIT), Aarhus University. Her research focuses on relations between culture, design and technology, specifically on social change through emerging technologies and participatory design. Smith is co-founder of the international Research Network for Design Anthropology and co-editor of *Design Anthropology: Theory and Practice* (2013).

**Chris Speed** is Chair of Design Informatics at the University of Edinburgh, where his research focuses upon the network society, digital art and technology, and the Internet of Things. He is co-director of the Design Informatics Research Centre, which is home to researchers working across the fields of interaction design, temporal design, anthropology, software engineering and cryptocurrencies.

**Åsa Ståhl** is a postdoc in design at Umeå Institute of Design, Umeå University. She explores hybrid matters in public engagement events, building on her work with Kristina Lindström in their joint, practice-led PhD across interaction design and media and communication studies on making in relation to collaborative co-articulations of emergent issues of living with mundane technologies.

**Barbara Szaniecki** is Associate Professor at the State University of Rio de Janeiro, Superior School of Industrial Design (Esdi/UERJ), and researcher at Design and Anthropology Lab (LaDA). Based on experience in graphic design and micro activism from Universidade Nômade, her research emphasizes the relationship between visual expression and socio-political concepts, as well as critical creative practices.

**Kasper Tang Vangkilde** is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Aarhus University. His research interests are within business, organizational and design anthropology, with particular emphasis on processes of creativity, branding, management and organization. He is coordinator of the MA programme 'Innovation, Organization and Work' in Anthropology at Aarhus University and a co-founder of the international Research Network for Design Anthropology.

# Acknowledgements

Seen from one perspective, this book is the material culmination of the international Research Network for Design Anthropology, generously funded over a two-year period by the Danish Council for Independent Research (grant number 1319-0017). Established in collaboration between the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Aarhus University and the University of Southern Denmark, the network objective has been to gather researchers from Denmark and internationally to identify potentials and challenges in the field of design anthropology. The network has explored important emerging modes of knowledge production and engagement at the intersection between design and anthropology, yet with constructive implications for both disciplines. To this end we convened three open seminars, focusing on Ethnographies of the Possible, Interventionist Speculation, and Collaborative Formation of Issues, as well as a closing conference on Design Anthropological Futures, to which we have met an overwhelming interest from around the world. If nothing else, this testifies to the growing interest in, and significance of, design anthropology as a distinct field of research and practice.

In this book we present sixteen chapters which constitute a selection of carefully developed contributions from the seminars and the conference. As editors, we would have liked to include all the papers and contributions – more than one hundred contributions – as we were thrilled by the perspectives and engagements that they represent. We are deeply grateful to each and every participant for their contribution and support and, not least, for the exceptionally good atmosphere at these events. In addition, we wish to thank the Danish Design Centre for hosting the opening conference reception, Brendon Clark, Sara Reinholtz and Nicholas Torretta of the Interactive Institute Swedish ICT for curating a number of interactive exhibitions as part of the conference, Moesgaard Museum for hosting one of the seminars, and the student volunteers and administrative personnel for assisting us whenever needed. In preparing this book, we have benefited from the assistance of Marie-Louise Christensen, who has done an excellent job in formatting the manuscript. Most of all, we sincerely thank each of the authors included in this book, without whose dedicated efforts and collaborative engagement the ambitions for this book could not have been realized. In this sense, the network may surely be said to have come to fruition in this book.

Yet from another perspective, nothing could be wider of the mark than to see this book as an end point. As will be clear in the chapters that follow, it is a key point

that while a designed thing – such as, for instance, a book on design anthropology – may often pretend to stage a certain closure, representing a product at the end of a process, it is in fact always in the making, continuously about to disclose itself for what it is. That goes for this book as well. It is our intention and our wish that this book will essentially open up rather than close down our conceptions and explorations of design anthropological futures, thus initiating new thoughts, questions and encounters to be pursued in the years to come. While the book explores futures from a design anthropological perspective, it also creates new platforms and opportunities for the futures of design anthropology itself. This is the spirit in which we hope this book will be read and discussed in the near and emerging future ...

New Year 2016

Rachel Charlotte Smith, Kasper Tang Vangkilde, Mette Gislev Kjærsgaard, Ton Otto, Joachim Halse and Thomas Binder