

# SECONDSIGHT<sup>SS2</sup>

ON TANGIBILITY

ISSUE # 40 | SPRING 2015

THE  
LIVING HEART

RETURN TO  
THE OBJECT

MONOLITH

BEAUTY  
OUT OF DATA

REFERENCE  
POINTS

JOLIE2024

IN OTHER  
WORLDS

A TACTILE  
EXPERIENCE

SS2

*"It's really there... It  
is what it is, nothing's  
hidden"* PAGE 19

**TACTILE**  
*THE REAL*  
*THE VISCERAL*  
**EMOTIONS FLESH WARMTH**



# ON TANGIBILITY

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# CONTRIBUTORS

**Andrea Wiegman** is founder and editor of Second Sight. She is a historian with a special interest in the changing society. For this issue she delved into the topic of TANGIBILITY, the real and visceral, in immersive media and all what really touches. Read more about this in the magazine and her editorial Into Other Futures on page 7.

**Anouk Groen** is Design Trend Forecaster at GK Design Europe. She makes reports for automotive, motor and sport brands. In this issue she reports about her first experiences with the Oculus Rift.

**Steve Levine** is Dassault's System's Chief Strategy Officer, based in the US. For this issue we interviewed him about the simulation project called The Living Heart, read about this groundbreaking project on page 14.

**Martin Birac** is founder of Monolith. Monolith has crafted the ActionBoard which advises retailers on actions that improve shopping experiences and bottom line by using behavioral data from in store sensors and existing sales and loyalty data.

**David Schwarz** is an awardwinning creative leader and found-

ing partner of HUSH, a design agency. He's spent over a decade working with brands to design valuable experiences using content, interactivity, architecture and technology. At Hush, he has developed numerous projects across sport, luxury, beauty, technology and entertainment categories, we interviewed him about his work and making the intangible tangible, and beautiful. Read the interview on page 19.

**Steven van den Haak** is a trend researcher and art historian, he works at Second Sight for 2 days a week and others he works at Droog Design. His work is focused on art, design and architecture.

**Andrea Hasler** was born in Zürich, Switzerland, and currently lives and works in London, UK. She holds an MA Fine Art from Chelsea College of Art & Design. Her wax and mixed media sculptures are characterized by a tension between attraction and repulsion. Her work depicts the emotional body, often working with skin as the physical element that divides the self from the other, as well as the potential container for both and what happens if you open up those boundaries. Read more about The Burdens of Excess

and the idea behind her work on page 28.

**Steven Mark Klein** has spent the past five decades experiencing first hand and then translating experimental aesthetic theories and procedures into forward leaning solutions for lifestyle corporations on a global scale. He is based in New York and started together with Andrea Wiegman SIXTYSECONDS. The nexus of SIXTY SECONDS is to author statements that are big with possibilities and that contain as many different eventualities as possible - to use foresight studies to bring new messages to the world.

**Frans van der Reep**, a strategist and business forecaster. For this issue he shares the importance of reference points related to our financial markets, read more about this on page 38.

**Shakur Cadmus** is a new contributor and columnist at Second Sight. With his Indian background he shares his global views and vision on the world we live in. Cadmus lives in New York.

**Margaret Atwood** is a Canadian poet, novelist, literary critic, essayist, and environmental activist. In this issue more about her

# CONTRIBUTORS

book *In Other Worlds*.

**Lynn Kaplanian Buller** is director of the American Book Center in The Netherlands since 1977.

As she knows, longtime colleagues and a wealth of books make this the nicest job she has ever had, and why she writes for this issue about tangibility and the importance of literature and books. *A Tactile Experience* is on page 53.

**Ronald Hunneman** is art philosopher; he teaches Art, Culture and Media at Faculty of Arts at University of Groningen, for this issue he wrote an article about the upcoming value of enactivism, enactivist insights.

**Sanne Carrière** is a strategist and storyteller at So Now. For this issue she shares a future story about Shaman's Kiss.

**Guto Requena** is a Brazilian architect and designer; graduated in Architecture & Urbanism from the São Carlos Engineering School. In this issue he is interviewed about his work based on human's emotions - read about his work and experiments on page 63.

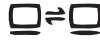
**Tozama Dyantyi** is a trend researcher on fashion and design, she works for Second Sight and

the Neo Noir Agency. For this issue she delved into the past, present and future of denim. Read her story on page 69.

**Bartele Holtrop** is a young Dutch farmer re-inventing the art of natural farming - read the interview called *It's all Nature!* on page 72.

**Bryna Hellmann** is a writer and editor. Having founded a college, The New School for Information in Amsterdam, she had the pleasure of teaching Writing in English to her Dutch students. Since her retirement in 2007, she has written six books. For this issue, she shares her insights into the richness and the intangible and ineffable force of poetry: *If It Be Truly Made* is on page 75.

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## INTO OTHER FUTURES

To be honest, I have a problem with the way THE FUTURE is often interpreted by the mainstream now. I lost my heart to future studies as a subject I wanted to understand twenty years ago. I'm a historian, and I wanted to work in publishing, so I impulsively started a magazine about trends and trendwatching. Making predictions is an abstract activity; there's no yes or no, no good or bad, but above all we can test and exaggerate events that have not happened yet. Of course, we can prefer some, but in general it is about our lives in another context - one we can imagine but can't accurately predict. Impossible! Even the well-trained can't do that. As a Nobel Prize physicist joked once, 'Prediction is very difficult, especially if it's about the future.'

### THE REAL AND VISCERAL

What makes forecasting and futurising so fascinating is that there are so many angles, so many interpretations and so many parameters that can unexpectedly change. We call them soft spots or weak signals, because they are still too ambiguous to understand. Media trendwatchers were a small group when I entered the field. Today there are many more, all proclaiming the same

'future'. It feels as if we're promoting the wrong future now. It's as if businesses own our destinies. The way our media work, they are the most heard, most quoted, most trusted. It's as if the future of commerce is the only one we must assure. It's as if their consultancies are the only ones we should listen to, as if 'key performance indicators' and 'return on investment' prove the health of our societies. They're not talking about our real and visceral world. And not about that new future that's not here and now yet.

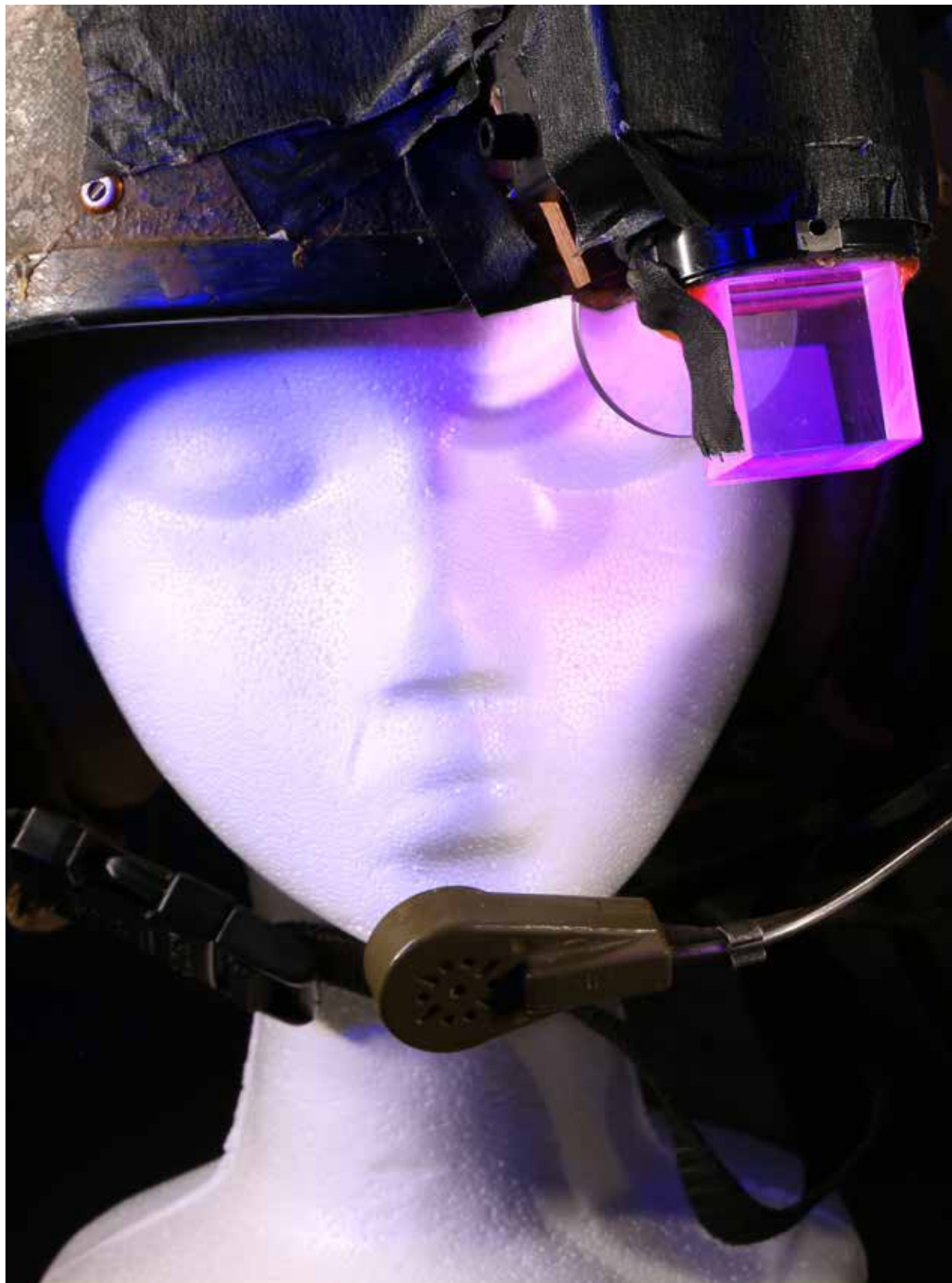
The managers of our universities ignore the study of philosophy, cut the other humanities in half, and make strategy even more the field that matters. For me strategy is fiction, and that's the best I can say about that. I believe we need other tools to see alternative and attractive futures. We need reference points to understand things, some of them not visible at first sight. Designers can do that, architects can, creative thinkers, writers, the theater and film industry can. Art, the humanities, philosophy: so many disciplines train us to make new ideas and new artefacts tangible. So that's my problem and the reason why this is an issue that explores the many facets of tangibility.

In an earlier Second Sight we wrote about the power of skin. We all know the phenomenon of goose bumps and the power they have to tell us a truth. We feel the world, we smell it, taste it and hear it. We see it, but the world is not always what we see at first sight. We need to trust other senses than our eyes to experience the tangibility of our lives: the distinct, solid, objective reality we can't ignore, distort or lie about. The mass media are powered by some extremely powerful people. We need to have other sources, other spots to get in touch with what is really happening. I believe and like to show you those spots are there, and that they can give us the knowledge and the faith to build alternate, sometimes - I hope - better futures. We, as trendwatchers, forecasters and futurists are invited to think about those futures and help to make them tangible too. Let's go for that!

*Andrea Wiegman,  
founder Second Sight*

‘We all know the phenomenon of  
goose bumps and the power they have  
to tell us a truth’





STEVE MANN'S DIGITAL EYE GLASS (1980)

# MEET ME ON THE HOLODECK

## Experiencing the Oculus Rift

BY ANOUK GROEN

As I stood in the middle of a Cirque du Soleil show, acrobats flying at me from all directions close enough to touch, I turned around to look at the rest of the theater. All the way in the back aisle, I spotted an usher sweeping between some seats with an old-fashioned dustpan. For some reason, I found this even more fascinating than the circling acrobats. Just as one of them was about to land on my head, I disappeared. Well, I didn't disappear; I took off the Oculus headset and was back face to face with the Samsung Gear VR sales guy at the Samsung stand at the IFA Consumer Electronics Show in Berlin (September 2014).

### **INSECT EYE**

Although the helmet and headphones were a bit heavy and the resolution of the film could be improved, the total immersion experience convinced me that I was looking at the next big personal entertainment trend. To make an Oculus film, you have to use a 360° camera that looks like an enlarged insect eye. The CGI environment, actors or sets need to be designed and filmed from all angles. Besides the acrobatics I was watching, there was an Avengers film, a Cold Play concert, Dreamworks cartoons and Hunger Games, as well as a visit to our solar system.

The possibilities seem endless for this technology: from escapisms into the world of gaming and movies, to educational experiences and exploration, to meeting up with friends in virtual spaces.

The retail price for the Samsung Gear VR headset will reportedly be around \$200. The catch is that you need to click your Samsung Galaxy Note 4 phone into the headset to make it function, but the helmet is also available without the phone for a higher price. This brand collaboration gives Oculus a great promotional platform via Samsung, which had the biggest most impressive stand at the show. For Samsung, it's a chance to link its name to this technology.

The Oculus headsets were widely used as a promotional tool for the first time this year at the Paris Car Show 2014 (October 2014). Thousands of show visitors eager to see and feel the latest car models were treated to virtual rides in their favorite car interiors.

Volvo took the virtual tour one step further by offering not only a virtual ride in the new XC90, which was the only 'real' car on their stand. The brand also opted to show the rest of its line-up in a full sized holograph booth, which you could control via an iPad, flipping between giant 3D cars as if flipping through a magazine. (video Link: [www.goo.gl/cDMo0S](http://www.goo.gl/cDMo0S))

### **BLADE RUNNER-ESQUE**

Although the lines were long for these virtual tours, I managed to have my five minutes of escapism at both Volvo and Lexus. Other Oculus tour offerings were at Seat, Kia, Peugeot and Nissan. Nissan even

went as far as to let the viewer run on a treadmill to “Chase the Thrill” of the new Nissan Juke through a Blade Runner-esque city environment.

Becoming fully immersed in a virtual world, even having the feeling of walking through it, is now a reality. You may think the sense of touch is still missing, but there is a new glove by the robotics company Dexta for that. The glove is attached to your hand and fingers like an exoskeleton. If you pick up a virtual object, your fingers are held back by the glove. Having been a closet ‘Trekkie’ since Captain Picard ordered Data to ‘meet me on Holodeck 3’, I see that once again creative dreams of the future are becoming a reality.

‘I see that  
once again  
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a reality’







DASSAULT SYSTEM'S LIVING HEART PROJECT

# THE LIVING HEART PROJECT

INTERVIEW BY ANDREA WIEGMAN

The heart is an organ with many still 'unknowns' and secrets. The constant contractions and impulses of a living heart make it a difficult organ to investigate or research testing it using new and unproven medicines and devices is not safe and often prohibited by law. But what if physicians, medical doctors and surgeons could virtually analyze their patients' health and plan therapies and surgeries, using the same advanced simulation technology that the automotive, aerospace, energy and hi-tech industries rely on to test their product before they are built? What if medical devices could be designed and safely tested in the virtual world before ever being tested in the real world? These are questions that the French design and simulation software company Dassault Systemes asked themselves when they introduced The Living Heart project in 2014. Within a year, they have learned much more about rebuilding a 3D virtual image of a human, beating heart. We talked with Dassault System's Steve Levine about this groundbreaking project.

## 3D SIMULATION

Dassault Systemes has a lot of experience in digital research, simulation techniques and advanced product design by 3D simulation technology. They know that the mechanics of both things and the human body are different from what you see from outside. They can observe the physics of a product from a design perspective. Now they want to look beyond the engineering world in order to harmonize product life and nature. Their mission is to bring their software, experience and technology to new

areas like the medical services.

In 2014, they built a 3D reconstruction of the living heart. Reconstructing mechanical behavior starts with figuring out its mechanics, so they started from the basics, replicating a prototype of the heart within the mechanical environment of the body. Having built a one-layer tissue, they added electro movement to it and investigated, in a series of evolutions and together with specialized experts and doctors, how to get the electro mechanical activation and the network model of a beating heart. Doctors and researchers shared their knowledge from their own specific domain. In a year's time, more than thirty experts cooperated to build this model. Fast work indeed!

Now that Dassault has built a simulation of the heart, they can share the information and insight that the data their device produces to advance their research. This is an insightful scientific crowd-sourcing project, a real 3D experience. They can look inside the heart, cut the heart in half, take sections of the heart apart. There's a virtual operating room, and doctors can literally walk through the heart and share their knowledge and observations as they go into the cave. They even feel the heart beating. The experience stimulates them to think about what is possible; the 3D experience and environment enhance the visualization of possible research or medication.

This project is a big step forward, Steve Levine says, but there are still gaps in our knowledge. The

numbers about heart diseases don't lie. It is the number one cause of death in the world, 30% of us will suffer from cardio-vascular disease. In the US it already costs \$445 billion a year, and that will rise to more than one trillion in 2030. And here's something we'd rather not know: 95% of the medical devices being used today are never tested on a human body before they come to the market.

### **ZOOM IN AND OPEN UP**

The power of collaboration is immense. To zoom in at the heart and open up the heart virtually gives us new insights. A new ecosystem is created, fueling that collaboration and the research on and development of multiphysical heart therapies. Surgeons and physicians are impressed by the results of sharing information and knowledge in real time. This is the power of collaboration: it starts with communication, with asking simple questions in the forum, then delving into details and working together to understand them. Immersive interaction and virtual reality (VR) technology make the complexity of the heart understandable, even seizable. They make it easier to talk to patients and students. One medical teacher said: 'I need this to explain how the heart works. Before it took me days to explain that, now it is tangible.'

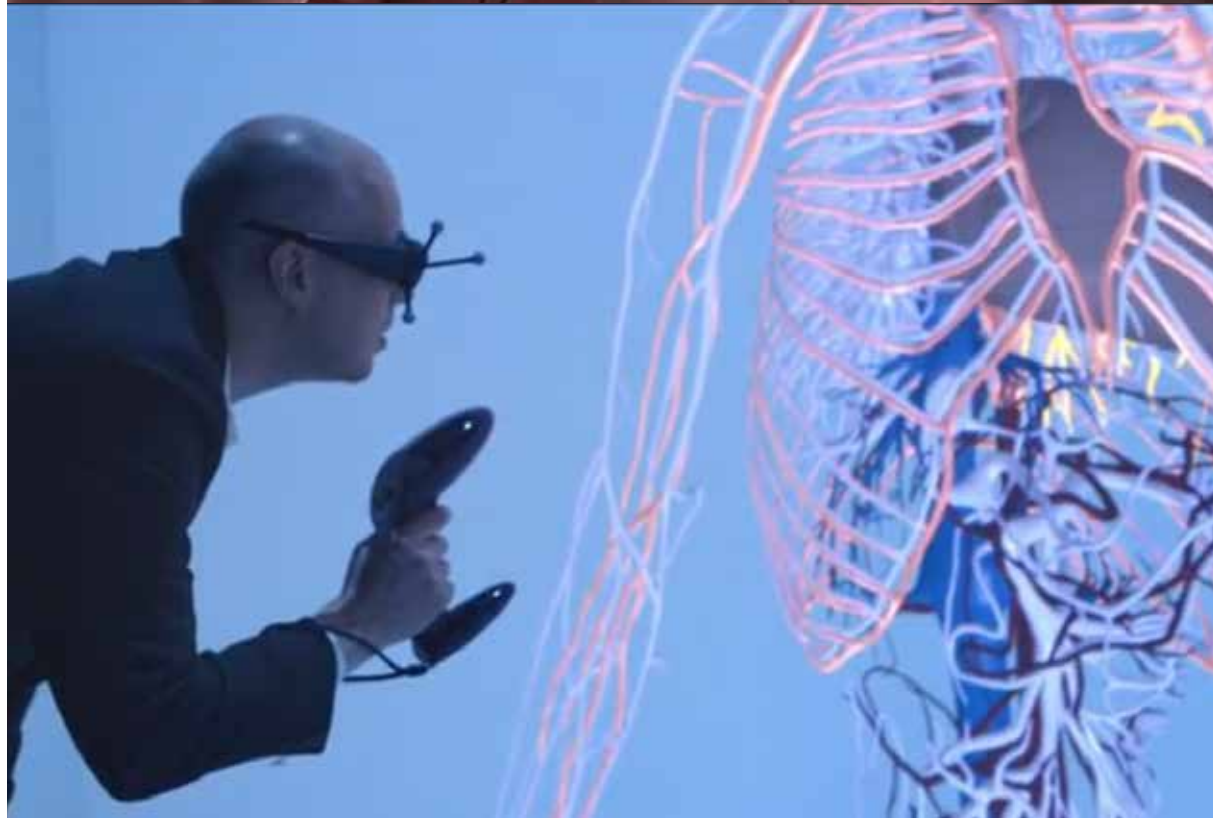
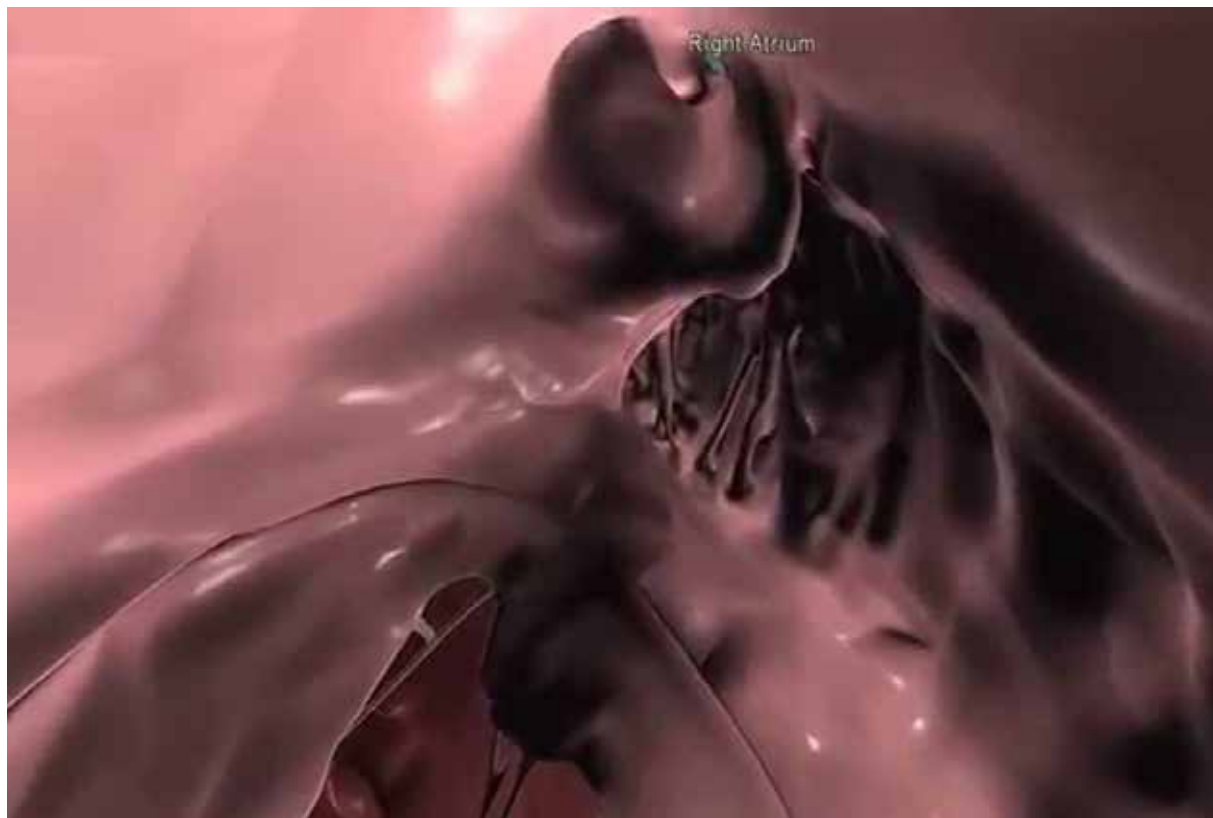
Now that the FDA has adopted the concept, Dassault can experiment with medicines. Medical, pharmaceutical and biological industries have joined in the research, and there are many other ways to connect diverse industries and regulatory institutes. Dassault Systems is renowned for their simulation software by the automotive, aerospace, energy and other hi-tech companies. Caring for the human body is an interesting new area to work on and use their simulation technologies for. They have created a safe test environment in which to test and simulate surgery and the efficacy of new medicines.

They have learned enough to predict biological responses in this test environment. This project is creating a path for rapidly translating cutting edge innovation into improved patient care. The next step might be personification of the medicines.

Now that it's possible to build the human body in VR, think about other organs such as the liver, the lungs, the eye; all of them can be built digitally. Think about what this means for medicines. Digital experiments don't harm the body; they are safe and easy to manipulate and investigate. There is no incorrect outcome and there is less legislation. You learn more by computational modeling, and you can easily share the information with other researchers, doctors, pharmaceutical companies and patients.

We know there are many 'known unknowns' in the human body. The Living Heart Project is a game changer. Life sciences is a new and expanding area where Dassault Systemes can contribute its experience and knowledge. Challenges in the life sciences and improvements in technology are converging to help squeeze out inefficiency and close those unknown gaps. Living in the experience economy, there is much to learn, to know, to share, to gain from immersive interaction and VR technologies. Using new technology and tools for scientific innovation and investigation, Dassault Systemes makes it happen. The Living Heart project, with its complex mechanical structure, is just a beginning. It is a big step toward unraveling the known secrets of the human body. Now that more scientists and medical doctors are interested and involved, Dassault can go on with its groundbreaking medical research. More will follow, absolutely... it is just a beginning.

[3ds.com/products-services/simulia/solutions/life-sciences/the-living-heart-project](https://3ds.com/products-services/simulia/solutions/life-sciences/the-living-heart-project)



DASSAULT SYSTEM'S LIVING HEART PROJECT



# MONOLITH

## Into the black box of brick and mortar retail

In this world, we know that what's being measured has a meaning. We also know Google's and Amazon's power to measure all that we as consumers or users do. From statistics we get better insights. Last year, I met some young Croatian entrepreneurs building a start-up in Amsterdam to bring an online measuring software tool back to the offline world. They were sure that, if retail doesn't do that or is not able to analyze the hidden behavior of consumers, they will definitely lose the battle against the web.

The start-up is called Monolith, a name inspired by the fictional advanced machines built by an unseen extraterrestrial species that appears in Arthur C. Clarke's Space Odyssey series. It's the name given by humans to the mysterious black slabs found scattered throughout the Solar System. A kind of black box – that's what Monolith Amsterdam is working on.

Today retailers only measure visitor counts and sales results. Much more is known online about consumer behaviour. Online you can measure what people do, where they are, what they touch and when they leave the store. Mostly commodities are bought online, often new products or fashion is not. 70% of decisions what to buy are made inside the physical stores. At the same time zero percent of business decisions are based on in-store behaviour.

### DWELL TIME

Delivering the same research and consumer insight

tools for offline retail, Monolith wanted to know more about dwell time. 'It is common wisdom that longer visits result in more sales. Measure dwell time and extend the stay of your customer. Time is on our side. Yes, it is,' they say. 'Make every shelf a top shelf' and 'Every store is a different story'. So you cannot use the lessons learned from one for another. When we spoke to one of the founders, Martin Birac, he told us about many emotional frictions - such as waiting too long - and physical frictions – such as putting the best trousers on the very high shelves. All these frictions can be solved if you know your store better and your customers well, for instance, as well as online shopkeepers know their customers. At Monolith they are interested in consumer behaviour. They count the touched and sold, the sold though not touched and the touched and not sold. In all of these segments, information is hidden. All important messages. All the information is brought to and saved in software tools and, using these tools, shopkeepers and big retailers have more insight into their clients' behavior and prospects and can create a vision out of these insights.

### TOUCH

For instance, in a typical fashion store in a high street, if every garment is perfect folded, people won't touch it. And that's not good. 'Touch is really important, even most important, and it's the biggest advantage between an online and a physical store,' Martin tells us. 'Most people like to touch the garments, they want to feel the fabric, before they



buy. That's universal. We can compare lots of data now.' Since shopping is still one of the top three leisure activities, physical stores won't disappear. We know the power of the High Street, and it's now up to the shopkeepers and retailers to know their customers again and get them back to buying in their shops. Make their shops a perfect place to touch and buy stuff. If 'every shop is another story', Monolith's unique information helps the retailer to bring that untold and unseen information back into their strategy and vision development.

[www.mnlth.co](http://www.mnlth.co)

# BEAUTY OUT OF DATA

## Interview with Hush's David Schwarz

We know Hush from some incredible campaigns, events or experimental retail interiors. Together with a team of diverse disciplinary researchers, they work months on designing new visualization tools to give insight into hidden, sometimes abstract data, words or issues. For Nike, they worked nine months on the visualization of the concept of 'speed', and for the Under Armour brand they created a shop with 80% experience and 20% product. They worked on the beautiful project Made by Numbers, and their newest project, Weevmee™, is based on Instagram relations. We asked David Schwarz, partner at Hush, some questions about the importance of design in relationship to tangibility and its opposite, hidden data.

'Hush is a multi-disciplinary design agency. Rather than asking for a single design skill, clients hire us for design challenges that necessitate a complex mixture of tools, disciplines and methodologies. Most notably, we work at the intersection of art direction, digital innovation and spatial design. This territory is rich in creativity, because it's a delicate balance of design skills, none more important than the other. Commercially, it's also where brands have to answer big questions about their businesses: what's the "future of retail", how do people "experience" our brand, and how do we define "interactivity" with our customers?'

### *What does tangibility mean to you?*

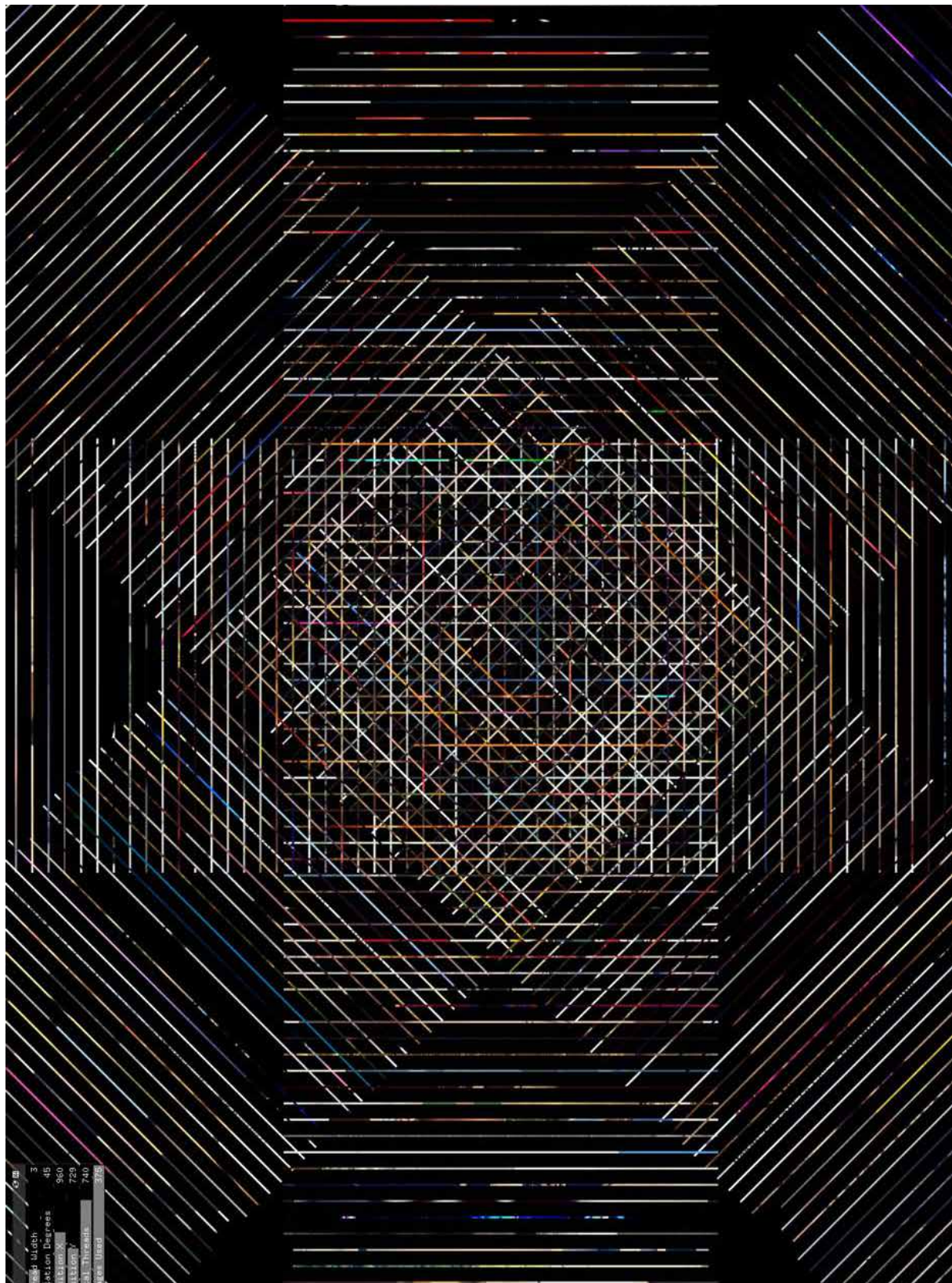
'Tangibility feels like the opposite of digital. For all of the invisibility of digital in our world - invisible wi-fi signals, Bluetooth communication, sensors, data transmission, and always-on mobile devices, the connotations around Tangibility feel quite refreshing. It's like sitting on a tree stump. It's really there. It really works. It takes a load off. It is what it is, nothing's hidden.'

### *And in relationship to your work?*

'In regards to the type of design work that our agency produces, tangibility is an important component. We're often associated with the "digital" agency perspective, and are reasonably known for leveraging innovations in hardware and software. However, this misses a huge part of our design practice - the tangible, tactile, structural and material pieces that we often integrate into interactive/technology-based experiences. Often, that mix of things that are solid and things that ephemeral is where the most interesting work happens.'

### *Is the meaning of design changing now?*

'I don't believe that the core concept of Design will change over time. Design as a practice and an area of academic study has been around for decades formally and centuries in a more abstract sense. It continues to be a method of looking at problems and finding visual, tangible and aural solutions



WEEVMEE TM, ARTWORK BASED ON INSTAGRAM RELATIONS

# ‘Tangibility can’t be looked at by itself - we see it as inextricably linked to software and visualization tools that are the canvases’

using an understanding of human perception. Over time, tools and technologies have changed consistently, yet the core ideology of the design practice remains. This will continue, and at an accelerated pace, as our methods of fabrication, software development and visualization move at the speed of light.

'Our love of design is ever-present. We simply cannot see the world without this lens. But we know this isn't the case for everyone. I would argue that, in the last century, the general public's understanding of design - and its value - has also increased dramatically. People now understand it as much more than aesthetics. Parallel to that, our world is becoming exponentially more complex. More information, more choice, more conversation, more data, more personalization, more overall knowledge, and in many ways, more risk. To tackle this complexity, there is no better practice than design.

'Staying with the theme of Tangibility, we are certainly witnessing a unique moment in the way “real” things are brought to life. Software processes that allow for a seamless blend of the design and fabrication process are changing prototyping, R&D and manufacturing pipelines. Structures and forms exist today at a scale that could never have been built just a decade ago. What's happening is as fundamental to Tangibility as the mass production of steel or the invention of the elevator was to building skyscrapers at the turn of the century.

Tangibility can't be looked at by itself - we see it as inextricably linked to software and visualization tools that are the canvases of today's designers.'

*Can you tell us something about your work, the projects you have done?*

'The Under Armour project began with the mandate: devote 80% of what could be pure retail space to “experiential brand” theater and limit the amount of retail space and product options. It was this inversion of the expected retail space (and within the context of a luxury mall where UA was juxtaposed with many luxury, but normal, retail experiences) that led to the success of that project. The Nike project was much less theatrical or cinematic and much more about a translation of data, products, and brand themes into interactive experiences. Our audience was able to experience Nike's dedication to speed in both abstract and literal ways. In both cases, the consideration of tangible structures, materials and forms was as important as any digital software, content or interactive experiences happening within them. Those tangible pieces were the overall guides of user experience.'

*You are working on the conceptualization of speed, with movement and sonic design. You employ technology, computers and imported data and translate them into artworks and design. Weevmee, for example, also comes from the abstract digital world. All include beautiful artwork, but it seems to be data conceptualization*



# 'It's always designed in the sense that it can never be chaotic or sloppy. It's artwork within bounds'

*too. Can you tell us something more about that?*

I'm glad you put it that way, because you're quite right. We want to make things beautiful, but it's almost as if we're trying to do that in a hands-off manner. We set up some visual or sonic parameters that we know will be strong design guidelines, but then we let data or chance or chaos take over to create unique outputs. With Weevmee™, we figured out a strong metaphor of a "woven image" that would be assembled by your own social media photos. The idea of weaving something together from things that are intrinsically yours felt right. It felt personal and intimate. We then wrote some software that would do that within certain parameters. While the visual Weevmees are quite similar from afar, you can see your own life in the nuances of the image. And while it's "yours" - impossible to replicate, never to be created again, it's always designed in the sense that it can never be chaotic or sloppy. It's artwork within bounds.

'In some of the other projects, like Release 2014 and the latest one, Made By Numbers, we've explored similar processes. We take data inputs and produce visual/sonic outputs that are quite beautiful because they are intentionally very controlled. In particular, Made By Numbers resulted in a highly tangible, fabricated sculpture that was created through a data-driven design process. Beauty came out of pure data.'

*Is this new?*

'No. One of my favorite artists is Sol Lewitt, and the

German/Swiss minimalist graphic design schools and the European architects of the mid-20th century are great too. Anyone who produces work that is rigorous. That doesn't mean it needs to be complicated, but rigorous in craft, repetition and dedication.

'Take Sol Lewitt. I see direct parallels between his way of producing artwork through analog processes and our work with digital processes. He set up explicit rules for his makers to follow, rigorous, repetitious actions that could be reproduced anywhere but never repeated exactly. He was effectively a software programmer before software existed. He wrote the code and his assistants ran the program. We're exploring a similar rule-based design methodology, and are injecting data feeds and subjectivity into it to see what happens. It's design through data, but with a beautiful, controlled output.

'As a studio, we're inspired by everything. We certainly don't lean stylistically one way or the other, although there is a general affinity with minimalism. I think as a designer, you have to love minimalism, because it's about a power to do more with less. Maximalism has its place, sometimes "more is more", but we're often quite critical of every piece of the puzzle. Can we make it simpler and be just as good?'

[heyhush.com](http://heyhush.com)

# BUILDING LANDSCAPES

BY STEVEN VAN DER HAAK

In contemporary art, the genre of landscape painting has completely disappeared. Painting itself is becoming a rather difficult area, but landscapes are a very rare sight these days. Visiting a museum for contemporary art, we see conceptual sculptures, abstract or hyper-real paintings, grand and imposing installations, rooms filled with flashing lights and walls covered with mirrors. The white cube has become a landscape itself, where one can wander about to see far-stretching art-filled vistas, and therefore the art of landscape paintings has also altogether disappeared. The once great genre has dissolved in the entirety of an art exhibition. But landscapes have found another way into our lives, and they pop up ever more often and with more and more effect. Strong examples of this trend can be found in architecture. On Second Sight's blog, we spoke about 'Utopia in Progress', an architecture with striking influences from nature, organic lines and shapes, and luscious gardens both inside and outside. The planned extension of Changi Airport in Singapore features an indoor jungle and is centred around a waterfall; the iconic Highline in New York has morphed from a derelict railroad into a landscape; and in car-cluttered São Paulo plans are being made to transform an elevated motorway, the Minhocão, into a much-needed stretch of greenery. Landscaping is happening everywhere. Last year Per Kristian Nygård created rolling green hills inside Noplace Gallery in Oslo. and that same year the king of installation art, Olafur Eliasson, made a river flow through several rooms in the Danish Louisiana

Museum of Modern Art. There are tons of other landscapes to be seen if we avert our eyes from a mere genre in painting.

## COMPLEXITIES

What does this notion of landscaping, if it's not happening any longer in painting, mean for our times? Landscapes are open spaces that allow us to see further than the walls of an office, the borders of a country or the carefully choreographed complexities of, for example, airports. If one tends to see an interior rather as a landscape than as an arrangement of furniture, walls and floors, a myriad of possibilities arise. Landscapes let us see and feel more freedom, and sometimes this is a genuine freedom and at other times only a simulation, because the landscape goes as far as said space extends. The landscape of a carefully curated cd is limited to the start and end of the music and so is the landscape on top of the Highline or inside the Changi Airport, but the fact that the white cube of a gallery or the interior of public buildings is being regarded as a landscape allows more creativity in terms of innovating the space. A landscaped airport might be much more comfortable than the long corridors filled with stressed commuters, and a gallery filled to the brim with green hills could give us new insights as to how we should treat landscapes. By escaping the picture frame, these landscapes might broaden our view and relax our senses in a globalised and cluttered world.

Source:

[www.designboom.com/architecture/moshe-safdie-project-jewel-changi-airport-singapore-12-08-2014/http://noplace.no/index.php?/fragments/not-red-but-green/](http://www.designboom.com/architecture/moshe-safdie-project-jewel-changi-airport-singapore-12-08-2014/http://noplace.no/index.php?/fragments/not-red-but-green/)

# RETURN TO THE OBJECT: a new tangibility in art

BY STEVEN VAN DER HAAK

Art is a rather peculiar phenomenon. It is one of the very few man-made things that has become entirely without practical use. Most of our society's products have some functional purpose: a spoon is an important tool to eat soup and a car to transport one from A to B. Art, however, no longer shares this functionality. Whereas it was once used as a religious instrument to concentrate the prayers of the faithful, or to showcase the might or wealth of this king or that merchant, these days it is no longer a promotional tool of any kind, whether for religious or profane matters. Losing its practical function, an artwork has, in a way, lost its tangibility. Today, we are regaining that tangibility, though not, fortunately, the practical function of art.

All through its history, art has developed in such a way that, eventually, its tangible properties were no longer of importance. The idea or concept had become the artwork: art had become theory and 'everything goes' was the credo tightly connected to its appearance. Modernism deftly stripped art from its ornament while searching for Universality and Absolute Truth and, as a result, the art object itself became almost superfluous. In some cases it did in its entirety, like performance art where the performance, performed by the performer, acted as the 'object' but, as soon as the performance was finished, the 'object' was gone.

## A FALSE CONCEPT

Modernism became Postmodernism, and the grand narratives that functioned as the theoretical frame upon which all the peculiarity and pluralism was

hung disappeared, and we had reached, according to Arthur Danto, 'the end of art': randomness prevailed. Now, the looming idea of the end of art has given us the impulse to strive once more for meaning, significance and relevance in art. In *Ironical Enough*, published in *Second Sight* 2015 and *Beyond*, Ricardo Dijkhuizen argues that this striving and longing for relevance is doomed to end in disappointment, because the modern idea that the world can be rationally understood is a false concept.<sup>1</sup>

## ART & SCIENCE

This striving for relevance and meaning is particularly noticeable in the Art & Science movement of recent years in which artists try to give recent scientific results a body for its viewers to relate to. The 'theatrical' Minimal Art of the '60s, called thus by Michael Fried, was comprised of shapes of ultimate uniformity, quite human in size, yet so clean and sterile that its viewers would feel rather ominous around them, as they were unable to relate themselves to an object that felt slightly, but not completely, familiar. Art & Science tries to translate abstract scientific and technological discoveries and developments into tangible objects, transforming data into matter to feel and experience. Yet, while the basis of these artworks is scientific facts, they create a realm of subjectivity on top of this base, like a beautifully carved frieze resting on a strong and steady architrave. This realm of subjectivity, that is part of every artwork, lets viewers express an opinion about the data that originally shaped the artwork.

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<sup>1</sup> Read more on this subject in *Second Sight*'s previous issue #39, 2015 and *Beyond: Beyond Beyond*.



Forming opinions about concrete facts is, logically, impossible: a fact is, and always will be, a fact, while an opinion is subjected to flux and can always change. With artworks that can be understood as being part of the Art & Science movement, this subjective realm generally consists of two opposing views. One is the romantic vision of a speculated future in which science will save the world, the other a rather gloomy and dystopian idea of society ruined by science gone wrong. However, these opposing views are rarely completely dialectic. Often they are intertwined and, more often, the artist's expressed opinion is not so obvious. The beauty of art is that its viewers can project their own ideas onto the object. It allows them to decide whether or not – in the case of Art & Science – the scientific data made tangible are 'good' or 'bad', and thus it does not function as propaganda for or against scientific development.

### RENEWED TANGIBILITY

Conceptual art, which does not necessarily need an object, but whose concept itself is the artwork, has long ruled the art world, but tangibility is returning. This is notable in new movements like Art & Science, but also digital art seems to be working towards a renewed tangibility. This is surprising, because digital art is so strongly connected to the Internet, a world that is, at the same time, both tangible and intangible to us. Tangible because we use it and need it everyday, we know our way around in it, and we know our place in it just as well as we know our place in the real world. Intangible because we cannot actually see the Internet, we cannot feel it or sense it in any other way than the way we use it. The digital world is always entered with a particular goal in mind: entertainment, communication or information. Digital art does not use the digital realm quite like

that. It creates artworks that neither aid us or are of any practical use. They try, however, to make the digital realm more tangible. Digital art makes us realise how strange this thing called Internet actually is, an autonomously growing entity made of billions of connections.

### LANDSCAPES

Landscapes are perhaps one of the strongest examples of this new tangibility in art. These are not landscapes as we know them: far-stretching vistas of mountain ranges complete with waterfalls and mirroring lakes. These are landscapes inside the white cube, like Olafur Eliasson's *Riverbed* in the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Denmark. A river ran through several rooms in the museum, flowing through a rocky landscape. It was a very tangible landscape, not a view within the borders of a picture frame – not to be touched, but with a river whose water one could feel and hear and rocks that could be climbed. Another example is the landscape *Not Red But Green* that Per Kristian Nygård installed in the Noplace Gallery in Oslo. Green hills filled the gallery space, striking a strong contrast with the white walls that enclosed the space.

This new tangibility in art can be seen as a reaction to the abstract and conceptual art that emerged during Modernism and was then randomised during Postmodernism, as well as the expression of a striving towards relevance and significance. The landscapes I mentioned above are a strong example of just how tangible art can become, striking simulations that can be touched, felt and wandered through but are still enclosed by the stark white walls of the gallery.



NOT RED BUT GREEN BY PER KRISTIAN NYGÅRD



BURDENS OF EXCESS BY ANDREA HASLER

# BURDENS OF EXCESS

## The next step in consumerism

We interviewed Andrea Hasler, the London-based artist who specializes in wax sculptures and installations characterized by a tension between attraction and repulsion. Talking about her work in relationship to its tangibility, the flesh, rawness and exaggeration, Andrea explains the idea behind it. 'I grew up in Switzerland, which is famous for its understated take on "anything". When I moved to London to attend Art College, I was not prepared for the brashness and logo obsession for luxury goods that awaited me here. My recent installation *Burdens of Excess* started by analyzing my own growing obsession with these items. I became fascinated with the psychological aspect of consumerism and its emotional link to "Abject," something that is aesthetically desirable, yet revolting. The viewer's attraction is replaced by repulsion.'

Hasler is particularly drawn to the body: how to depict the emotional body and work with skin as the physical element that divides the Self from the Other. What happens if you open up these boundaries? 'In *Burdens of Excess*, I play with visions of the future, along with scenes of surgical fetishes and glamour, to unsettle the viewer. These carefully staged and naturalistic wax reproductions of human organs are in the form of luxury fetish. I play with the aesthetic codes of a chic, seductive luxury boutique with its black walls, glittery flooring and the way the organ objects are presented on plinths, hermetically sealed behind glass boxes. Both the desire for luxury items and the darker side of plastic surgery's intestine-liposuction filled

accessories are what Hollywood glamour represents for me in order to be accepted, to be part of the "tribe." It was very fitting to show this particular body of work in Hollywood.'

*You exaggerate the flesh, the visceral. What's the idea or story behind that?*

'How to depict the emotional body is the red thread in my work. I dissect moral concepts generated by the media and deeply entrenched concepts in our society, without reassembling the dissected, separated and ornamented pieces into a new or different whole - thus confronting the viewer with his or her own feelings of attraction and repulsion. It's fascinating how people are often repulsed by the abject quality of a sculpture but can't help themselves but to touch it. My work often hovers around intangible notion of fantasies, so the viewer's instinctive desire to touch the artwork is an interesting element to make the work physically more tangible as they shift between reality and fantasy.

'I pushed the notion behind *Embrace the Base* further with new works I created for the *Verbier 3D Sculpture Park* in the mountains above Verbier, Switzerland. (Installed 2014-2016). The works touch on the seclusion, exclusivity and hybridity of the luxury mountain resort.

'*Avant/Après* consists of a 50-meter long red carpet scenario draped over the mountain landscape with no indication which boundary is the VIP side to aspire to be on or which one we may be held back

from. The intestine-like rope made of resin and wax references the non-physical aspect of desire, highlighting the fact that underneath we are all the same.

'Perishable Goods is a wooden pallet of compressed flesh (utilising the same process) bulging out, yet held together and, at the same time, adorned with luxury chains. With the impression of the work being crudely dropped into the Sculpture Park, the work suggests the intensity and intrusion of the change of population in Verbier in the winter months, whilst referencing the stark contrast of the need for emergency aid food pallets dropped off in disaster zones. The work touches on the notion of global migration and the stark differences within that. The sculptures will "decay" over the period of two years, a bit like rotting meat.

## **BORE**

'Together with Mark Even, I work with him in the conceptual meta-narrative entity on a new body of work called BORE. These collaborative large scale images want the viewer to confront as abstractly as visually possible both the person reduced to just a name [data] and to be placed upon an image of flesh experienced from the inside of the human form: the decomposing guts. The physical nature of the proposed works is based on digital files and digital processes of visualization. Our aim for these portraits is to possess a tangible nature in which to confront the subject from the inside out and a visceral nature to confront the viewer.'

## ***And about tangibility? What does it mean for you?***

'My work is an attempt to make intangible notions more tangible. As our lives have become dominated by technology and intangible virtual realities, I think the notion of how to express luxury and status will completely shift in the near future and become very

intangible. Luxury is an excess that holds a great fascination for me. My work poses new questions in relation to the craze for luxury and status: How much can our bodies take? Will we sacrifice everything for beauty? What kind of person do we wish to be tomorrow? How much money will we spend on it? In the future, I think the ultimate luxury accessory will not be a Rolex on your wrist, but your kidneys embellished with diamonds. A step ahead ...

'Once the exterior has been completely molded, plastic surgery of an internal organ is a logical consequence. This is the peak of exclusivity. The intervention is not visible, only on x-rays! We live in a nomadic society. Brands are a reflection of the "tribe" we desperately want to belong to. They help us identify with other nomads, to become part of the group. The philosopher Julia Kristeva links this desire to recreate the symbiotic mother-infant relationship in response to the sense of loss when we realize we are independent beings. I think the craze for luxury is a longing for one's nurturing mother.

## **AN ÜBER-STATUS**

'I have just read an intriguing article about the psychology behind the culture of "Izikhothane", where groups of young, often poor South Africans drape themselves head-to-toe in designer brands, which they frequently destroy. Money is no object. Destroying symbols of luxury and value gives them recognition and status. The bigger the display of abundance and the ability to destroy it, the bigger one's status becomes. This, of course, resonates with my installation *Burdens of Excess* and the deconstruction of luxury goods to symbolize an "Über-status".'

[www.andreahasler.com](http://www.andreahasler.com)





BORE BY ANDREA HASLER AND MARK EVEN

# ‘SPOTTED’ TECHNOLOGY & SCIENCE

## NEW MATERIALS - GRAPHENE

The thinnest material currently known to scientists is graphene. About a million times thinner than paper, this material has promising characteristics. 'At the atomic level, graphene is made of a single layer of carbon atoms [that] (...) are bonded together in a repeating pattern that is shaped like a hexagon.' It is extraordinary strong, has the ability to create electrical conductivity (creating energy out of thin air!), is super flexible and has an amazing energy transferring ability.

'Due to graphene's unique characteristics, it can be used in many different fields, including but not limited to biological engineering, quantum computers, nanotechnology, alternative energy and space travel. It can also be used to improve the performance of thousands of products, such as cell phones, TV's, computers, sports equipment and cars.'

[www.the-open-mind.com/how-graphene-can-be-used-to-create-energy-out-of-thin-air/#xmA5a88BMeVMI5IB.99](http://www.the-open-mind.com/how-graphene-can-be-used-to-create-energy-out-of-thin-air/#xmA5a88BMeVMI5IB.99)

## NEURODOME -

### A TOUR THROUGH THE BRAIN

'New technology is changing the way that scientists view the brain. At a microscopic level, researchers can visualize sparks of electrical activity in individual neurons and resolve motifs of neural connectivity that ultimately support consciousness, emotions, and complex thought. At a macroscopic level, researchers use clinical imaging technologies to identify (...) brain regions that underlie this

broad repertoire of higher cognitive processes.'

The Neurodome project brings this 'new knowledge and imagery to the public in dome format. This will allow people to understand how the brain works and how the different parts of the brain are connected.' By visualizing the brain in a planetarium, they create real-time 3D image tours of the brain that unfold the 'untold depths of the brain'.

[www.neurodome.org](http://www.neurodome.org)

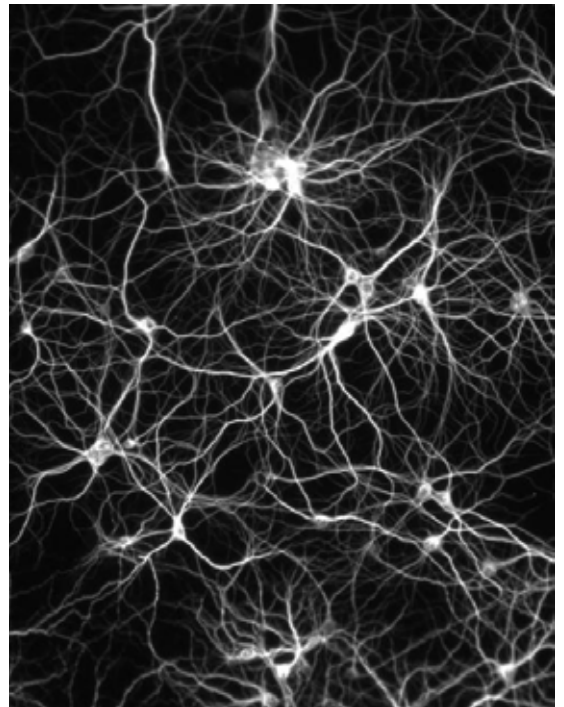


IMAGE FROM THE NEURODOME PROJECT

# ‘SPOTTED’ IDEAS & VISIONS

## **'IF YOU ARE NOT WILLING TO CHANGE, YOU'RE OUT!'**

We are living in a fast changing society where the Internet and big data are the focus of our economy. According to Chris Surdak – author of Data Crush – this is changing the position of the worker. Where average workers now still have their jobs, they will probably lose them some time in the near future. Machines and new business models are replacing jobs, and there is a higher demand for excellent workers or ‘experts’, as people call them nowadays. These excellent workers already hold a strong position but will be in an even stronger position in a few years, Surdak predicts.

So how do you stay relevant? Diversifying your job skills and constantly acquiring new capabilities seems to be the answer to that. Nine to five jobs are not a naturally safe position anymore. ‘We have to change our way of thinking, if we want to add to the world,’ Chris Surdak says.

[www.wfs.org/futurist-interviews/predictive%E2%80%94and-persuasive%E2%80%94technology-interview-chris-surdak-author-data-crush](http://www.wfs.org/futurist-interviews/predictive%E2%80%94and-persuasive%E2%80%94technology-interview-chris-surdak-author-data-crush)

## **HOLLOW AMBITION**

‘Passion has become a goal in itself, rather than a by-product of interest,’ Jeroen van Baar from De Prestatiegeneratie (2014) says. The South Korean cultural theorist Byung-Chul Han also writes about a fatigue society, where achievement and performance are dominating factors. ‘Interdiction,

commandment and control made place for project, initiative and motivation.’ This made people work harder than they did before.

All this put together to say that the upside is ‘a generation that bursts with ambition, motivation and drive’. The downside, however, is a lack of clear direction. Ambition has become hollow and thinks today's generation can be seen as marathon runners who are just running to run. They don't seem to know what they are running towards, but they are becoming exhausted.

[www.decorrespondent.nl/2474/In-onze-prestatie maatschappij is iedereen een-marathonloper maar waar rennen we heen-/188425055192-7c8dca4f](http://www.decorrespondent.nl/2474/In-onze-prestatie maatschappij is iedereen een-marathonloper maar waar rennen we heen-/188425055192-7c8dca4f)





6<sup>TH</sup>

# 6TH ESTATE OF MEDIA

The 6<sup>th</sup> estate of media is a kind of branded, engaged media. It is about sharing relevant messages. As the company SixEstate mentions: 'We believe that journalism created by private companies can be every bit as valuable and engaging as journalism by so-called independent media outlets. Corporate journalism, transparently produced, can be and often is more accurate and insightful than supposedly unbiased journalism. All journalism has a slant - serves a master, if you will. We wear our slant on our sleeve, for everyone to see, and we focus on quality. I believe that ultimately consumers and search engines prefer news made this way. Only time will tell.'

The 6<sup>th</sup> estate of media is the next step after the 5<sup>th</sup> - the bloggers - and the 4<sup>th</sup> - the societal or political force or institution, most commonly refers to the (news) media; especially print journalism or "the press". Technically the other three are the clerics or church, the nobility excluding the King and the peasantry, all originated back in the Middle Ages.

Sources:

SixEstate website, Wikipedia, [www.cs.stanford.edu/people/eroberts/cs201/projects/2010-11/Journalism/index7f0d.html?page\\_id=16](http://www.cs.stanford.edu/people/eroberts/cs201/projects/2010-11/Journalism/index7f0d.html?page_id=16)

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WEST HOLLYWOOD JANUARY 2015

# JOLIE 2024 IMAGINE

BY STEVEN MARK KLEIN

6IXTY SECONDS was founded by Andrea Wiegman and Steven Mark Klein in November 2014. Ms. Wiegman, based in Amsterdam, is the founder of SECONDSIGHT, a think tank focused on predicting societal changes and transformations. Mr. Klein is based in New York and has spent the past five decades experiencing first hand and then translating experimental aesthetic theories and procedures into forward leaning solutions for lifestyle corporations on a global scale. The nexus of 6IXTY SECONDS is to author statements that are big with possibilities and that contain as many different eventualities as possible.

## SIXTY-SECOND SWEEP

6IXTY SECONDS is a kind of algorithm which has on multiple occasions been able to determine that coordinates of events, once grasped, lead to a definable inevitability. Foresight is an invaluable process in a world that evolves drastically with each sixty-second sweep of a watch's second hand or digital readout. In the late twentieth century each of us was given fifteen minutes to define ourselves. In the twenty-first century our systems and tools have accelerated that event to sixty seconds.

The founders of 6IXTY SECONDS decided to announce its formation with their prognostication that actress, film director and social activist Angelina Jolie could be President of the United States [POTUS] in 2024. To announce this idea, we created the

JOLIE 2024 t-shirt. Using a generic font, the message is printed on the back to discourage selfie activity. It also respects Ms. Jolie's courageous decision to undergo preventive double mastectomy surgery in 2013. The project's message is political and not brand-based.

Ms. Wiegman and Mr. Klein are students and transformers of the processes, tactics and strategies that define both The Fourth and The Fifth Estates. We believe that The Sixth Estate, the global entertainment industry, has become the defining spectacle [mass reality] of Web 2.0 society. American politics, especially since the election of John F. Kennedy as the 35th President in 1961 and his subsequent assassination, has become a Debordian happening. The current left-wing and right-wing narratives are most effectively experienced and comprehended as the Disneyfication of American politics.

**JOLIE 2024** is a message authored by the intersection of a set of important societal coordinates. The 21st century has already become the century of women. The traditional American political parties are beyond repair in terms of who they are for and how they survive financially. They are controlled by Wall Street and only pay lip service to Main Street at election time. Why JOLIE 2024? She has, over the past twenty years and with much candor, lived her life in public. She has revealed her

# ‘She has revealed her humanity over and over again through her work and her personal life’

humanity over and over again through her work and her personal life, and with her dedication to supporting causes and people that have little access to power and in most cases no means or channels to express their views, their challenges and their need to live their lives not as victims but with dignity and hope. She has shown her support for children, the family and women's rights with her time and with deep conviction.

## A SEA-CHANGE

SIXTY SECONDS has taken the position that the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections are the dying moments for both the Bush and Clinton political dynasties. No more American political aristocracies. Once they have exhausted with these elections what is barely left of the optimism inherent in the American political system, something new will awaken. Baby boomer women, by their work, talent and inheritance, will control the vast wealth and societal influence of the top 1% with a direct trickle-down leading to their grandchildren, the first-time voters born in 2006. The 2024 presidential election will cause a profound shift in who decides the candidates running for election, the way that those candidates will be funded, how they will communicate their message and, at the polls, which emerging demographic will lead them for the next four and potentially eight years. American politics will experience a sea-change. At that moment, 24 years into the 21st century, people - not corporations - will have the opportunity to elect a person as President who symbolizes their needs

and their dreams and begins to erode the control of a presidency directed by the Fortune 500. A White House as envisioned for the people and by the people and not the financial establishment! Maybe naive. Maybe a fantastic and impossible event.

**JOLIE 2024:** Angelina Jolie for President of the United States in 2024. Who of us reading that pronouncement does not want to envision Ms. Jolie being inaugurated with Brad Pitt and their children by her side. Who does not want to imagine the level of optimism and cultural support that her presidency would provide. Who does not want to feel that there would be someone in the White House who is openly concerned about and involved with the issues that truly are at the center of life not only for the citizens of The United States but also people globally who look to America as a place, a process and a way to be in the world. Let us take a moment to imagine President Jolie delivering her first State of the Union Address. Her first appearance at the G20. Her first appearance addressing the General Assembly of the United Nations. Who does not want to envision that first meeting between Madam President and Vladimir Putin at the Kremlin!

SIXTY SECONDS has authored a slogan for the projected JOLIE 2024 presidential campaign: IMAGINE

[www.sixtyseconds.com](http://www.sixtyseconds.com)

# REFERENCE POINTS\*

BY FRANS VAN DER REEP

*We need mental and physical reference points. We need physical reference points such as signposts to show us which way to go, for example to the airport or the hospital, and we need reference points to show us where we are. Why? If you don't know where you are, it's quite a difficult job to find your way, thus landmarks and "lieux de memoire" play an important role in our lives.*

We need physical reference points like the meter to be able to 'feel' distance, to be able to measure and to be able to communicate the results of such measurement. We also need emotional and mental reference points. If you see someone laughing, it should be a safe conclusion for you to deduce that he is enjoying himself. We need reference points like currency to pay our bills. This currency allows us to have a feeling of value. The step towards the euro has caused a lot of benefits but also a lot of trouble as people have had to change their reference points. Although not always reluctant, some of us have needed many years to adopt to this new Euro reference point.

Culture can also be perceived as a set of reference points: how we behave, the way we define a social situation, good and bad, nice or ugly. Reference points may be formal or non-formal internal programs (also known as 'cognitions' or 'frames') and may take the form of rituals, e.g. the ritual that you don't discuss business during holidays, or that you don't embark on a certain topic before the first cup of coffee. There are lots of reference points in social life; for example, such things as your education, membership in Rotary-like clubs or the

newspaper you choose to read may be understood as establishing different social reference points. We can't function without them. My view, even though I am not an anthropologist, is that reference points shouldn't change too often. A change of reference point or set of rituals may be really confusing, and it takes time to adopt the new ones.

That, for example, is the reason why 'timing' is so important and why avant-garde artists often have difficulty selling their art: they don't sell art. What they are selling is, in fact, a worldview, albeit one based on very different reference points than those you and I probably have. That's why the Bauhaus<sup>1</sup>, built almost a century ago, still looks 'modern'. What about reference points in your life? Do you know them? Are you aware of them? Major events in a person's life are usually reflected by a shift in reference points. A divorce, a serious illness, a sudden loss of a beloved. Winning the multimillion jackpot. All these events may be looked upon as a reset of various reference points.

## **MANY MASSIVE CHANGES**

I will not systematically survey what reference points we have or need in life, although I'm sure there are many in various aspects of life, even in its most intimate parts. My intention is simply to give you an outline of what a reference point is, describe how it serves you and explore our limitations when it comes to changing them. This paper will focus on the banking crisis to illustrate my arguments. As I see it, we experience so many massive changes in numerous aspects of our lives nowadays in Western Europe that many of us face the experience of having no reference points. In the business realm,

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\*This article is first published in 2010.

in politics with respect to the sociological viewpoint of society, and even in day-to-day family life, many of us really don't really know where we are or don't understand what we see, with the consequence that we dare not derive conclusions from what we see. Consequence? We get stuck. Paralyzed. We 'regress' to our ideologies. We don't act and don't take decisions, as we fear they may be wrong. How many of us are really capable of defining their own context to derive their own meaning? Perhaps this capability is one of the most vital of the 21st century. Perhaps this capability, to shape one's own personal context, is entrepreneurship in this century.

### MEANING

If many reference points change in a short period of time, there is no context to give meaning to facts. And without context there is no communication. And without communication and the feeling of being part of something, fear and uncertainty enter the picture, and the feeling of personal significance is lost. With this fear, the ego enters the picture as well, being one of the human mechanisms to cope with fear, uncertainty and the sensation of being or feeling meaninglessness.

I shall give you one more example of how changing reference points affects communication. Communication depends on established reference points: if I don't know whether you are a friend intending to help me or an enemy focused on damaging me, there will not be much exchange of thoughts, you will not leave your comfort zone, and we will not enter a real relationship or connection. But, in this comparison, what about politicians, what about banks, what about visiting China looking for new business? Business has to do with interrelating and communication, where all types of reference points are at stake. This is the reason video conferencing usually works fine when we know each other: established relationships need clear

reference points.

### FIXED POINTS

Fixed points may be very concrete and very abstract; for example, the definition of the 'physical meter' is fixed. What also should be fixed, to give a few more examples, is the administration of property, the municipal individual records, and the rule that we drive on one side of the road (whether to the left or right I don't mind). Each society needs a set of these fixed rules, and our political convictions, as well as practical considerations, determine how broad and extensive this set is.

Flexibility is always rooted in some way on stability. If there were a new ideology that everything should be flexible, jobs, families, companies that would come and go, the societal challenge would come from how to fulfill our need for stability. I consider this question an urgent one in our part of the world. Most people respond to a massive change of context by doing nothing. It is just a minority of us who have the ability to define and renew our own context and give ourselves a renewed sense of meaning. Perhaps this gift is the real sense of entrepreneurship in the 21st century, the ability to shape your own life context without losing connection with your environment.

Sometimes quirks of national character may be used to shape effective solutions. I give you the Chinese example of how they have organized tax paying. As in other countries, people in China don't like to pay taxes, so there is a tendency to avoid them. How did the Chinese leadership solve the problem? If you ask for a formal invoice, the Chinese salesman has to glue a receipt stamp on your bill reflecting the tax being paid. However, this stamp also serves as an instant lottery ticket. So they encourage the payment of tax by using the enthusiasm for gambling of many Chinese: each correct invoice is a gamble and

# ‘Currency without a state doesn’t work. A currency needs a state’

a promise of a huge amount of money. This is an example of how reference points and rituals may shape and serve formal policy.

## MATHEMATICAL SYSTEMS

Let’s turn to the financial system and find out whether reference points have a role to play. As I have already stated, every system needs reference points: legal systems, mathematical systems, banking systems<sup>2</sup>. My question here is: does the financial system now have clear reference points and at least one fixed point?

First of all, money itself functions as a very important reference point. It is a well and commonly understood ‘language’, actually a code system, that objectivises and expresses value. Everybody understands money and its related earning power as a code of communication. There are even many songs about money<sup>3</sup>. If this objectivity is harmed, it immediately causes social unrest and a revival of barter, and many usually flee to the last financial reference point: gold.

What we also know is that currency without a state doesn’t work. A currency needs a state. Local currency like the Bristol Pound needs a city-state. If Bitcoin, no state, worked, it would be a change of context for money. Let’s see whether it will work.

Today, it might be a good idea to create that transparency with respect to gold and to express all currencies like the dollar, euro and yen in the related quantity of gold on a daily basis, putting us in a ‘Bretton Woods extended’ situation<sup>4</sup>. But what about banks as social reference points? My guess is that banks, in general, have a severe

problem with how they are seen. People seldom love banks (of this I am certain) and are unsure as to how they should be evaluated. Are they social? Are they friends? Is it okay to visit that party organised by a bank?

On the other hand, many of us consider the actual bank representative we meet as a friendly, cooperative person acting in our service. Most of us are not willing to accept that a commercial bank is just a company striving for profit the hard way, even at our cost. The mental concept that the bank is a shark we should be aware of just doesn’t enter our minds. Fascinating, isn’t it? We know it, but many of us don’t still feel that way. That’s the very reason banks do not have to change their behaviour. Our banks now have a lot of work to do to restore their credibility. Until now, however, their actions still do not reflect a sense of urgency, and I’m sure this will translate into high costs for banks, which will ultimately be paid by the consumer: PR costs for damage control, HRM costs as people become less willing to accept bank jobs and strive for compensating risk premiums when they do. Nothing has really changed since 2008. The banks’ shareholders will become less like ‘shareholders’ in the strictest sense and more like ‘sharehoppers’, confronting the banks with the dynamics of the international financial markets and making them even more vulnerable.

It would be wise for bankers to re-establish social and commercial reference points. These are vital for customer intimacy and, without them, a bank cannot survive. It would be wise, for example, to reduce the 70% proportion of trades now performed



unattended in isolated bunkers and controlled automatically by spreadsheets, and I am sure it would be wise to prepare for peer to peer banking, already put in place by smava.de, zopa.uk and many others, using social currencies like the VEN or LETS. In the paper finance2.0<sup>5</sup> there was a plea for companies to eschew legal entities, because personal business creates personal responsibility. The recent decision of the Americans to forbid banks trading with money that is not theirs may be seen in that perspective. I believe this is a step in the right direction, forcing banks to act and to seem much more responsible.

### THE FINANCIAL SYSTEM

One can analyze the last six years, and the way the international political and business arenas have sought solutions for the financial crisis, as a singular cry for fixed points. Banks are no longer fixed points, and so countries have served the international financial system in this respect and, by means of their Central Banks, provided a last resort. Nevertheless, Central Banks are finding themselves increasingly extorted by commercial banks that are 'too big to fail'.

I'm sure we all have an interest in extending research into the issue of reference points, especially in the context of the systemic pressures produced by a capitalist economic (banking) system. Is, e.g., Mr Kerviel, former employee of the Société Générale, really an archetype, a reference point? The next move: as some European countries have met more challenges in this field than expected, the Central Banks of some of them are no longer able to serve effectively as fixed points. So an EU supporting structure of 720 billion euros has been developed to solve this problem and the German Central Bank has taken over from the Greek. This European structure now serves as the fixed point, a safety net for the financial sector, communicating to all of us that there is a fixed point that has the capability to pay in the end.

The question now, however, is how long this extended financial capability can survive serving as a new fixed point. The Dutch National Bank has already sold more than half of its gold supply, and there are even rumours that our Fort Knox is empty. It would be a very good idea for the European Monetary Authority to check the quality of the balance sheets of those banks that are 'too big to fail' at once and bring an end to the current lack of transparency. The leadership of those banks must understand that their public responsibility is much more profound than their responsibilities towards their shareholders and must act and decide accordingly. If not, and their power is not offset by responsible behaviour, we will run into problems which I fear will be far beyond those of the first part of the financial crisis.

Perhaps some infrastructures serving the public are just too important to leave to the market system.

### A FUTURE SCENARIO

As financial and political planners always tend to expand their outlines to the bitter end, I now give you a picture of the future of this scenario. First, realize that many of us are not really aware of what's going on: this is my view as someone who is also one of the many. Secondly, realize that in this world of distributed power no-one whatsoever, no person and no institution, has the real power to set the right agenda. So, as the 'planet' is lacking the power to set the agenda and solve the problem, things will continue as they are.

The next stage, therefore, will be to intensify the role of the IMF as the new fixed point, with gold also taking over as a reference point. Then, of course, the question will be how long the IMF will be perceived as able to pay the bill.

What will follow? What's next? I don't know. Sure, the Chinese will have to fund the IMF, since they have all the money. But would they be willing to

do so, and at what price? As an alternative, are we willing to accept a lower standard of living for many years?

I'm almost sure that IMF stability has to be bought. This will further accelerate the transfer of both welfare and political power from west to east and probably a shift towards Chinese viewpoints in the European region<sup>6</sup>. I am quite sure we severely underestimate the effects these viewpoints will have, as they do not fit into our current system of reference points. Nevertheless, I expect we will have to face these developments as long as Western democracy doesn't solve its problems and continues to face its challenges.

Perhaps 2016 will be the very important year some of us already believe it will be. If a big bang were to come, we would probably end up starting new small P2P village banks where people know each other and share clear reference points. Perhaps there is reason for optimism. and we should look beyond 2015 to 2016?<sup>7</sup>

I repeat, responsibility should always follow power. Those who become more powerful, and many empowered citizens and institutions do have real power, should behave with more responsibility. If their power comes without a sense of personal responsibility, we are in deep trouble.

## RESPONSIBILITY

At the moment, there is little alternative than for countries and governments to take responsibility as quickly as possible and to communicate a planned action. Otherwise, our current financial system needs drastic reconstruction. Perhaps the Euro will turn out, in the end, to be a currency as artificial as many African borders. These borders have caused a lot of trouble over many decades, being artificially defined without consideration to national and local conditions. Perhaps we need currencies that reflect our value reference points again.

What could we do as 'empowered citizens'?

Influencing the macro-system and the big picture is always difficult. We might, however, become much less naïve and act as responsible consumers, demanding transparency and integrity from banks. The good news for consumers is that, in the end, they have a choice.<sup>8</sup> So, be aware and go for it. I will leave things at that, as I'm not yet prepared to consider other consequences. We certainly live in interesting times ...

### Sources:

1 [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bauhaus](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bauhaus) 2 [www.incrowd.info/PDFincrowd/Incrowd%2019\\_p08-10.pdf](http://www.incrowd.info/PDFincrowd/Incrowd%2019_p08-10.pdf). [www.managementsite.com/509/Financial-Management-Finance-2-Crisis.aspx](http://www.managementsite.com/509/Financial-Management-Finance-2-Crisis.aspx) 3 [www.businesspundit.com/30-best-songs-about-money](http://www.businesspundit.com/30-best-songs-about-money) 4 [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bretton\\_Woods\\_system](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bretton_Woods_system) 5 Here the Chinese leadership has an advantage, as they are, more than in the European world, in a position to implement an action with force. Sometimes it seems as if ordinary people in China have a lot of freedom, while the leading class is supposed to follow the rules. In The Western world, especially in Europe, it seems to be the other way around. 6 China takes over in Africa, the Africans not really expressing gratitude to the Europeans for 40 years of aid. Why don't we build a plant for producing aids drugs in Africa? 7 [www.sonypictures.com/movies/2012/](http://www.sonypictures.com/movies/2012/) 8 E.g. Clay Shirky, Here comes everybody, Revolution doesn't happen when society adopts new technology, it happens when society adopts new behaviors, New York, 2008.

**START  
WITH  
BETTER  
HEROES**

# *JE NE SUIS PAS CHARLIE!*

## On vulgar anti-authoritarianism and civilization

BY SHAKUR CADMUS

*If you are going to pound the frigid air for free speech, start with better heroes! To the placard-toting hordes in the streets of capitals from Paris to New York, I say: Chill. Unfurl your yoga mats ... Take a few deep breaths.*

It is one thing to express sadness at the death of twelve human beings or to condemn the senseless violence visited upon them. It is another to clamor for the instant (if unwitting) martyrdom of a gaggle of faded white geese who struggled to hawk forty thousand copies of a weekly rag, one the Dean of London University's Paris Institute called a 'museum piece'.

He, Andrew Hussey, also professor of cultural history, added: '... for most Parisians ... (Charlie Hebdo was) a quaint relic of the 60s and 70s that had long since lost its power to shock.'

The dead cartoonists did not lose their power to shock because they forgot how to mock, or draw. The joke has a way of turning on ex-self-proclaimed shit-kickers who somehow fail to notice (or acknowledge) that they have turned into the shit. To inveigh against Mohammed in 21st century Paris is not some gallant Gallic tilt against Power, just insufferable pretense; satire is the mask that bourgeois condescension wears to mouth off against the beliefs (and prejudices) of those who lack the ability and means to object.

Unless you can picture our Islamic-terrorists-du-jour as nice assimilated Frenchmen. Bastard-great-

grandchildren of the Enlightenment's rape of the Black, Brown and Yellow, yet somehow still appreciative and grateful participants in the great big democratic debate ... pausing thoughtfully between rounds of delivering pizza to compose letters-to-the-Hebdoitors complaining about the gratuitous insults aimed at their prophet, their religion and, by extension, their very Mecca-facing, pizza-distributing selves.

It took Prof. Hussey (author of *The French Intifada: The Long War Between France and its Arabs*) but one paragraph (in his NYT op-ed) to effectively, if unintentionally, kneecap the twin narratives of Heroic Satirists and Islamic Terrorists:

'... a member of the establishment for a very long time ... this is how the magazine is viewed out in the banlieues – the enormous and often wretched suburbs that surround all major French cities and that are home to a huge immigrant population, mainly from former French colonies in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. What is seen in the center of Paris as tweaking the nose of authority – religious or political – is seen out in the banlieues as the arrogance of those in power who can mock what they like, including deeply held religious beliefs ...'.

### SECULARISM

We are reminded, over and over, that Charlie did not just have it out for Mohammed, that Jesus and Yahweh got theirs too! In a state ruled by an official and officious secularism, you can mock all religions equally, or you can mock the idea of secularism

# ‘We live in a world where Buddhist monks chase Muslims in Central Myanmar alongside mobs armed with machetes and swords’

itself. You only get to call one kind of mocking anti-authoritarian.

Born out of a people's history of struggle against the Catholic Church (and commendable as such), French secularism has kept up with modern times as much as Islam! Its view, that the best way to prevent religion from having undue sway over the populace is to ban all religious expression from the public sphere, is infantile in theory and far from fair in practice. Voila, headscarf bans even as the Interior Minister proclaims, 'Yes, France's jews can wear the kippeh with pride.'

A better way to put religion in its societal place may be to invite every religion into the public sphere, equally, including the religion of those who disavow (organized) religion. This more civilized secularism has actually existed, to various degrees, over thousands of years in places like India (not today), Thailand and Syria (before the French got there).

We live in a world where Buddhist monks chase Muslims in Central Myanmar alongside mobs armed with machetes and swords; I would not recommend the Contemporary East to any alien tourist.

But if we're talking ideals, would you prefer your state as a sponsor of dialogue and mutual understanding? Or as schoolmasterly enforcer of bogus neutrality, grim-faced, with the Pope's scepter stuck permanently up its ass?

And if we are just comparing spotty record to spotty record, let us cut the 'Western values' bit, shall we? The last spill of said virtues left a stain on history that took five hundred long years to wash out. So Clash of Civilizations? The Free West vs. Islamic Terrorism? Non, merci.

This is no tirade against those who died, not even against the puerile way they made a living at Charlie Hebdo; no offense is meant to the departed spirit of old Cabu or a Wolinski (or any of the others). Nor is it a glorification or pardoning of random violence. This is a lament for the loss of common sense and judgment among a public riled up by the media and shrilly insistent on elevating a cabal of sad clowns – rebels in their own heads (only) and neck-deep in nostalgia – to the canon of supreme satirists silenced by the rat-a-tat of the Barbaric Brothers Kouachi.

Sorry, but I do not see much (French) humor or tragedy in this cautionary tale, only hypocrisy. I do not hear a nation in mourning; I hear a nation in denial. Vive la France! Vive le Spectacle!

# DIGITAL NATIVES

BY ANDREA WIEGMAN

My kids were born in the digital era. They experience media completely different than we adults do. At the age of ten, they are little day traders: they trade in football players or furniture, it depends on which game they're playing. My son and his friends spend thousands of FIFA coins to build their teams and organize the best football transfers. Together. This is the game they play. I remember when Second Life started the idea of being an avatar and trading in Linden Dollars. Your second life has become a commodity today, whether you play Sims, FIFA or GTA. The game industry is a billion-dollar business. Even buying digital stuff has become a commodity for this generation.

My ten-year-old son tells me, 'I'm not interested in toys anymore. I play games online together with my friends and, when I don't do that, I'd rather go to YouTube and Twitch to see others.' 'Others' are young experts playing games and showing him and his friends the best way to play them. Even Lego has started a digital platform, Minecraft is today's Lego, and Disney, with their Disney Infinity, has started its own online, playing-a-hero-yourself community. These kids still play football outside, but they have a completely different idea of the media, one that tells us something about who they are (to refer to Marshal McLuhan). These kids watch fewer superhero action movies: they dive into that online world to be one of the superheroes themselves. It's called immersive media. They literally dive into the world of the game, using all their human potential and emotions. They are present within the game and are fully engaged while playing it.

## HEROES AND CROOKS

This means that they are heroes every day. They experience a '60 seconds of fame' everyday, sometimes every hour. Yes, they are little football brokers and football heroes. They live in a do-it-yourself, make-it-yourself or even be-it-yourself era. This is different from the time when we played Pacman or Donkey Kong. If you can imagine it, it was not easy to identify yourself with that monkey or Pac-man. When we, our parents, even our grandparents were young, we needed a lot of fantasy and dreams to imagine that we were the superheroes ourselves. Now it is all designed for the kids. I'm not negative, not at all. Not even when they play crooks in Grand Theft Auto. I've watched them doing it and, because these games are open worlds, nonlinear games with an infinite number of possibilities and keys to play with, they need all their creativity, imagination and even empathy to play those games. It is interesting to see what they are learning now.

For instance, take GTA, which was chosen the very best game of 2014. The game focusses on an open world, where the player can choose missions to progress through an overall story, as well as to engage in side activities, all consisting of action-adventure, driving, third-person-shooting, occasional role-playing, stealth and racing elements. There are so many options that it's not easy to finish the game in six or seven hours. It takes at least twenty hours to play one chapter. Games like GTA are nonlinear and include infinite possibilities. Players have to open many boxes before they know even where to

go and where to find clues and hunches. So players have many doors to open before they understand a bit where they lead.

### **SOLUTION SEEKERS**

You can call it an entire world that you have to understand to be able to extract more out of it than just to play it. As a layman, it's not easy to find your way in Los Santos. You can do many things there and play many roles. I've heard that some players function as undercover cops in the online network. They don't like cruel players and have started a hub to share information about the cruelest. There is also a group of players who do everything by cross bike to make it more attractive. They call themselves the bikers. These creative gamers are heroes too. They find and build their own community within the community. In this open world game, there are many other characters to choose from and to manage. There are more ways than one to become a hero. It's about opening boxes and seeing opportunities to change the situation. It goes much deeper than you can see at first sight.

Today's gamers look for opportunities and new ways to explore the open world. Players who chose a nonconformist style are heroes within their own network. Often you can't play the game alone. Gamers work together to end missions or share tips and clues online, so there's much more happening in these worlds than you can imagine at first sight and also more than its negative critics can imagine. These kids, but also adults, are real solution seekers. They have skills.

These virtual worlds are built like the real world in every detail and, with the new generation consoles and powerful machines, game developers are able to create very precious details like faces and small buttons on shirts. This goes beyond expectation. Another interesting game to mention here, also from the makers of GTA, is L.A. Noir, a neo-noir detective

game set in Los Angeles in 1947. It challenges its players to solve a range of cases. They must investigate crime scenes for clues, follow up leads and interrogate suspects, and their success at these activities will impact how much of each case's story is revealed. So you are set in a kind of open Cluedo-world where you, as a police officer, have to solve a murder. The plot and aesthetic elements are film noir style, and you enter a really beautiful other world when you open the game. You become part of it. Unlike watching a movie, you are a character on the set yourself.

### **EMOTIONS**

What's really exciting in L.A. Noir is that it uses new face recognition technics in the game. Characters can share emotions, and you can read their faces while they react. As a matter of fact, you need to do that to finish the game successfully. Rockstar Games (the makers of L.A. Noir) introduced this technology in 2011. It's not in many games yet, because it's an extremely expensive technique, and to build a game like this is not easy. Characters are well-established and well-researched and, like making animated movies, motion scans using real people and real sets build the world together with the main characters. Like a Hollywood film, it costs millions to make and build this immersive world. It's called a social game, because you can't solve the problems alone. You need to build a team and work together to investigate the crime.

In L.A. Noir, every murder case is an episode. Games, like today's television series, can't stop; the stories must continue. Today, the media are teleporting people to other worlds and other spaces and putting them in touch with the characters. Actually it's bizarre that this is still called a game; it would be more exact to talk about online living worlds.

### **NOT STATIC**

Users add data to reality, so that these worlds are



‘Today, the media are teleporting people to other worlds and other spaces and putting them in touch with the characters’

at all not static. Now, with the newest generation game computers with lots of playing power, game developers can create worlds like movies. With the big difference that users and consumers are part of the play. With new techniques and new consoles, like the Oculus Rift, characters are becoming more realistic and emotions more real.

While these media has become immersive and comprehensive, the game industry has developed in other ways. Both the content and context of the story have become more important. The story cannot finish. People want to stay in that open world and reach the next chapter. Open worlds, open ends. Details are important, and game makers have constantly to think that this generation's gamers are smart and have their eyes everywhere and, not to be missed, they work together to find clues and share all they know online. To work for and with these young smart digital natives, game developers have to be a step ahead all the time as they create their new worlds. Researchers, character builders, storytellers and designers on a very high level, young and old, smart and naïve, they must all work together to satisfy these new media users.

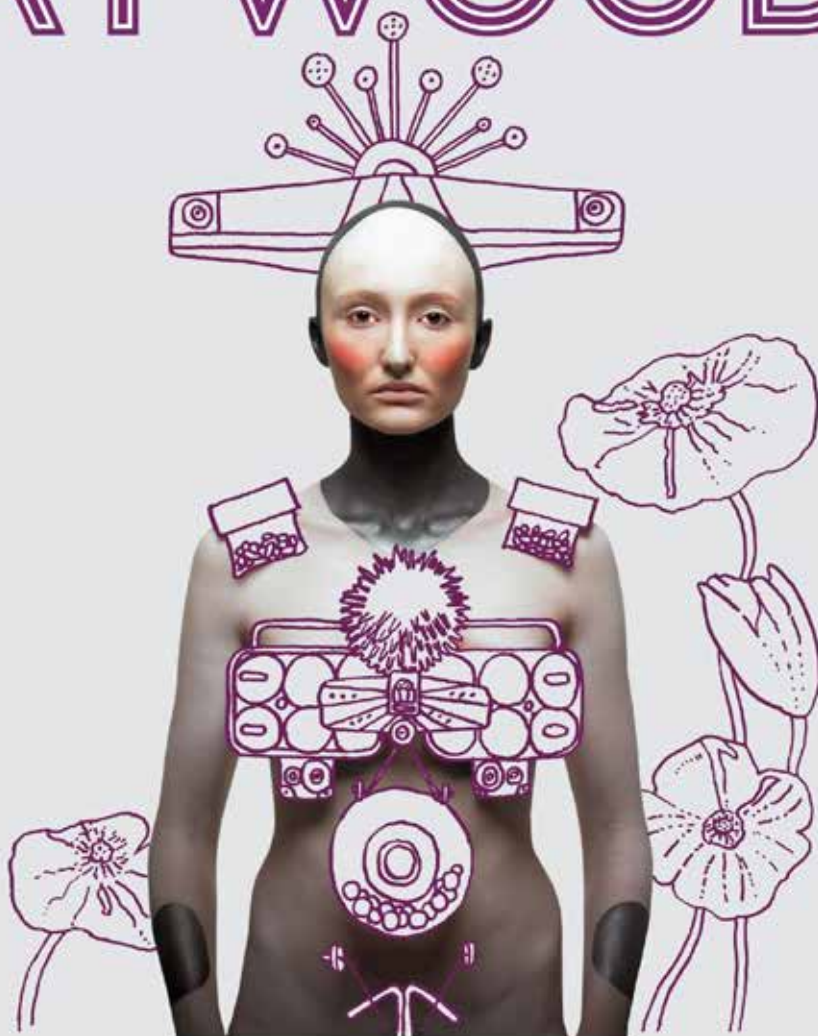
## SKILLS

Games have become mass media, and it's a big business, even for the kids who play them. You need to earn money or coins to invest in or buy your next step. It's an economy within an economy. When you have skills, you earn and save money. I can imagine that, when they're good at gaming,

they ought to put it on their CV's, because they can use these competences in real life too. From playing GTA, my son knows the city of Los Angeles and, although the streets are different than in real life, he could show me the way. He has developed skills online to use in real life. I'm not so pessimistic about this next generation who are real organizers and problem-solvers. I'm sure they will use what they have learned online in real life too. They are building their own reality and their idea about the heroes of tomorrow: a crook can be a good guy too.

BY THE AUTHOR OF *ORYX AND CRAKE*  
AND *THE YEAR OF THE FLOOD*

# MARGARET ATWOOD



IN OTHER WORLDS  
SF AND THE HUMAN IMAGINATION

# IN OTHER WORLDS

BY ANDREA WIEGMAN

This brings us into the world of fantasy and imagination, and the book that pops up in my mind is Margaret Atwood's *In Other Worlds*, about science fiction and the human imagination.

While we talk about new data, the new but not real worlds where we live so many hours a day - Facebook or the games where I wrote about in the former article - what about our human desires? What about humanity in general? This brings me to Margaret Atwood who writes both social fiction and science fiction. All her books refer to a near future that's half prediction, half satire. She doesn't want them to be labeled science fiction. In an essay called *Moving Targets*, she wrote that everything that happens in her books is possible and may even have already happened. It is not science fiction. She calls it simply 'fiction in which things happen that are not possible today.'

## WONDER-TALE

In the issue about Playfulness and Lightness, we refer to Italo Calvino and his ideas about the shaman and the folktale hero, that is transformed into lightness and makes possible a flight into a 'reality' where every need is magically fulfilled. It is the fantasy of the 'wonder-tale' world we know from Alice in Wonderland, Peter Pan and The Wizard of Oz, whose characters can help us understand our own needs and desires. But I wonder why imagination and fantasy worlds are such an important way to understand the world in which we live or, let's say, to make our lives in today's world more understandable. Why do we have to enter other worlds for that?

Atwood dived into this topic. Having herself written

about super-heroes, extraterrestrial flying rabbits, she gives us some answers. 'Our interest in other worlds and aliens comes from somewhere. Why are children afraid of that horrible monster under the bed? The ability to see things from the point of view of another being has been receiving a lot of attention lately. We are not the only natural living species that can imagine life from the position of another. That brought Atwood to the explanation that if you can image - or imagine - yourself, you can image - or imagine - a being not yourself; and you can also imagine how such a being sees the world, a world that includes you. It is as if you see the same world with other eyes, as Marcel Proust once declared. That is the only way to see a different landscape and see change, he said.

Another explanation. Other worlds with strange inhabitants have been in numerous human mythologies and literatures. Think of fantasy lands like Tolkien's C. S. Lewis's or in mythologies. Think of gods or supernatural beings. Think of a galaxy far far away. They all have in common that they are not here and not now. It is long long ago or far far away or in that nebulous region called the future. More's Utopia is a perfect example. Other worlds have existed in many cultures. Maybe in every culture?

Still we don't have a real answer to why we need these other worlds and times. Atwood has delved into the origins of stories and asks herself why we write and tell them. Are they only didactic? Do we need stories to understand the world we live in? Speculate even further: do stories free the human imagination or tie it up? Are we hardwired to enjoy hearing and reading them? Are stories pastimes, like the series we devour on TV? So many speculations

have been made about their origins and purposes and still many questions remain.

### MYTH SYSTEMS

Myths are immemorial. And to be honest, science, too, has created new myth systems. Realistic novels from the late 19th century include stories imagined – fictions. Is science fiction or fantasy fiction different from that? The terms are fluid, Atwood says. Some critics use 'speculative fiction' as an umbrella term for scifi and all the other hyphenated forms. It's interesting, Atwood writes, that 'SF may create patterns that purport to depict the relationship of man to universe, a depiction that takes us in the direction of religion and ultimately into the preoccupations of metaphysics and mythologies – the dispositions of gods, spirits, and demons, the origins of the universe and of the people or entities that compromise its societies, the longed for or feared spiritual landscapes or territories, and the nature of physic enemies.' This is universal and will bring fictional realism through conversations, reveries, stories told within the stories, hallucinations or dreams.

'When the future became an established location, writers could feel free to jettison the travel episode and the "reporter" figure, and to plop the reader right down in the midst of things. "It was a bright cold day in April and the clock were striking thirteen..."', Nineteen eighty-Four begins. Utopia, Futurism, Fordlandia, Singularity, we can go on and on ... ' Atwood doesn't give one answer. She simply shares the stories she has a relationship with. What she says is that you can't post such a wide and

varied genre under one heading, and maybe that's the message in this book.

Stories about other worlds have always been told, and always will be. They are attractive and safe, even when they're dark and foreboding and scary.

### LESS PERSONAL

They help us imaging and imagining. When we use another world to explore today's concerns and ideas, even if it is dark and scary, it's safer than the here-and-now. Add to that: to project makes it less personal. That's a story's function too.

When we go down the rabbit hole, through the back of the wardrobe, or sit down with Bilbo to enjoy a pipe and a cup of tea, we need to leave behind our insistence on the factual, the reasonable, the measurable and weighable. John Keats said that, to write poetry (and we can add fiction and fantasy), we need to accept mystery and uncertainty. He called it 'negative capability' and, of all living creatures, we human beings are the only species that is capable of it. So we are writers and readers, scientists and engineers, artists and architects, creating something new and wonderful out of our dreams and our sudden visions of 'Imagine that!'

Book: *In Other Worlds: SF and the Human Imagination*, Margaret Atwood (2012)  
ISBN 9781844087556

# BLUEBEARD'S EGG

## AND OTHER STORIES



MARGARET ATWOOD



# A TACTILE EXPERIENCE

BY LYNN KAPLANIAN-BULLER

*In 2011, I was asked to contribute to a book speculating on future forms of reading.\* At the time we had just purchased an Espresso Book Machine, capable of making a paperbound book within minutes right in the bookstore, and I was full of the opportunities it presents. I wrote: HOW WILL WE READ?*

As text appears everywhere – even beamed on the wall while we exercise or onto the ceiling as we lie in bed - we read faster and faster. In the 50's a technique for speed reading postulated that the brain can comprehend much faster than the eye can see. So training the eye to read a whole page, rather than by word or sentence, hugely increases the speed of comprehensive reading. We will all soon speedread, our eyes teased ever-faster forward by texts paired with images.

But besides reading faster and faster, a clearer division between warm and cold reading will emerge. Cold reading is for information-gathering involving head-thinking and fast eye movement. Gaming might even pump up the heart rate, but cold reading doesn't open the heart. For cold reading, hard cased electronic devices are fine delivery systems.

## WARM READING

Warm reading happens when we open our hearts. As the author's words move us emotionally, we give off an emotional charge which gets absorbed into the paper page. It's a private kind of reading, often done in bed, and we seem to sense that organic

materials like paper can absorb and keep the reading experience safe for another day. Books can act as "transitional objects" - objects which are able to attract, hold and release emotions that might otherwise overwhelm the person. Just as a teddy bear helps a child to survive the absence of its mother, we often treasure a book as a means to survive an otherwise hostile situation. We can "retreat" into a book and share with it our own feelings as we work them out, one step removed from real life.

We treasure leatherbound, vellum, and antique books because the materials seem to have absorbed the thoughts and emotions as well as the fingerprints of those who read that copy before us. Paperbound books can do this as well: children's books saved for the next generation, and journals written by hand. The authenticity of being able to run your hand over the page touched by the author or previous owner is a warm experience which we will increasingly crave as we are engulfed with cold texts.

The ability to print a personalized original manuscript or facsimile of an eclectic title will produce gifts overflowing with intention. For example: I know you like trains and that your family lives in Australia, so, for your birthday, I make a copy of *Locomotives of Australia 1854-2007* on the Espresso Book Machine. Or, "Mom, I had grandma's poems and diary made into a book for you. If you'd like to add your poems and diary, we can print extra copies for all the family members."

‘We will continue to read books printed on paper because the codex form suits our tactile senses. Paper is an interactive organic substance’

To receive such a gift feels very different from receiving a link to a “really good download”, doesn’t it? Small printing devices will let us fabricate and personalize digital texts on organic paper, creating unlimited warm reading experiences for us and to share. A haven to hold.

#### **EARTHINESS**

What has changed in my view on the future of books and reading since four years ago? A return to earthiness, tangibility if you will. Just because we are able to download 3000 books on a piece of plastic the size of a sandwich, doesn’t mean we want to read even one of them. Because everything is possible, less is desirable. Its easy availability gives each book a tinge of ordinariness. When we use energy to find and obtain book content, the extra investment makes us willing to read deeper. When we actively choose to read it, a book comes to life. When everyone in my American

junior high school read *The Diaries of Anne Frank*, I didn’t – out of contrariness. If all those people were reading it, it must not be a special story, I thought, age thirteen. Even then, a cultural snob.

I read the book much later, having just arrived in Amsterdam and staying in a student dorm on the Prinsengracht, under the bells of the Westertoren, which Anne described in her book. Suddenly, I wanted to find a copy and read this book. I was surprised how it entered me. When I read how she listened to the sound of trams 13 and 17 outside, I heard these very sounds from my room just across the canal, thirty years later. Suddenly I could identify with a story that, from my home base, had seemed outdated and exaggerated. By choosing when and where to read it, the story became real for me.

We will continue to read books printed on paper



because the codex form suits our tactile senses, as earlier described. Paper is an interactive organic substance.

### OUR EMOTIONS

People are cleaning out their bookcases of items which no longer feel relevant to their futures – books which hold no promise of being reread or lent out are now given away. Books will be recycled more often. Because they hold our emotions, we don't like to think of them being used as furniture or fire-starters. No matter how creative the invention or re-use, part of us cringes to see books reincarnated as paper objects. We prefer to place them in hands of people who will appreciate the content, than to use them for landfill. We feel free to do so because, should we ever change our minds, the content is always digitally retrievable. We can transfer content while respecting author's rights into a physical book on the spot.

And we will increasingly make our own books – writing or choosing the content, while perhaps imbedding QR codes so that digitally stored material can be experienced if we so choose, just as we now make footnotes referring to other books. But the basic, tactile experience of reading a story, while touching an organic substance which absorbs the emotions triggered by the story, will remain the standard of authenticity.

\*I Read Where I Am: Exploring New Information Cultures. Gerritzen, Lovink and Kampman. Valiz Publishers and Graphic Design Museum, Amsterdam. ISBN 9789078088554, used with permission.

[www.abc.nl](http://www.abc.nl)

# MOVING EXPERIENCE

## Enactivist Insights

BY RONALD HUNNEMAN

How dozens of kilos of bones, muscles, abdominals and a central nervous system can produce human experience is, contrary to what some may want you to believe, still a mystery. Certainly, the past hundred years have given us a wealth of factual and correlational knowledge about brains, behaviours and environments. After the Great War and with the help of X-ray techniques, physicians described which brain injuries as a result of bullet impacts correlated with which psychological syndromes. PET, MRI and fMRI scans allowed for quite detailed associations of brain anatomy and activity on the one side and behaviour on the other. But none of these advancements has brought us any closer to answering questions about the how and why of human minds: their experience, awareness or consciousness.

The only consensus, or perhaps near consensus, among philosophers and scientists is that the mind is not comprised of funny stuff. The mind is not a nonphysical entity. The mind arises out of the interaction between physical, in principle empirically observable, materials. But that consensus is by far not enough to secure any agreement on how this could happen, let alone how it does actually happen.

For that reason, when it comes to explaining the workings of the mind, people have resorted to metaphorical comparisons between minds and machines. During the 17th century, for example, the

mechanical clock was the bench mark for musings on the human mind. In later centuries, this metaphor was replaced by the steam engine comparison, giving us expressions like 'to blow off steam' and 'the pressure on her is too high'.

The 20th century saw the rise of arguably the most imaginative metaphor ever: the mind as a computer. Were the metaphor of the clock and the steam engine always recognized as metaphors, the mind-as-computer metaphor, on the other hand, inconspicuously developed into the brain-is-computer doctrine. From the 1970s onward, researchers and laymen alike began treating the brain as the computer that generated the mind. This shift weeded out the funny stuff (computers are hardware), and since computers are universal Turing machines (given unlimited memory they can perform every practical computation) it solved the riddle of the strength and beauty of the human mind. Who needs an ephemeral soul when you have got a programmable brain that can calculate everything sensibly imaginable?

### INTO THE BRAIN

The brain-is-computer doctrine brought along a series of interconnected attitudes and ideas. Here I will mention only three of them just to give you an impression of the enormous influence of what had started as a metaphor. First there is the idea that the brain delivers cognition. The term cognition is derived from the Latin *cognoscere*, 'get to know'.

## ‘Human understanding is based on this experience through action’

The brain delivers knowledge of the world. It does so by taking input from the senses, processing this information into representation of the outside world, and delivering output to our musculoskeletal apparatus. So, secondly, the brain is an information processor. Together, these two consequences inflamed, thirdly, an urge to look into the brain. Pictures of brains became the icons of the 21st century, connecting us to the seat of everything that is of importance to us. The better the scan, the more detailed our understanding of the mind.

Somehow experience, awareness and consciousness got lost in the transition to the brain-is-computer metaphor. Sometimes they were just put aside, seen as problems we could solve once we have come to understand how the brain processes information into a decent representation of the surrounding world. At other times, they were considered to be nothing more than epiphenomena, events that occurred in well-functioning brains, but without any calculable consequences. In circles of philosophy scholars, fierce debates were fought over the question whether there could be real zombies, creatures looking like humans, walking and talking like humans, but lacking human consciousness: creatures that did the information processing without epiphenomena.

It is, therefore, not completely incomprehensible that, at the turn of the century, flocks of researchers

wanted to restore the relevance of experience and consciousness and deliberately moved away from the mind-as-computer metaphor. And with the letting go of this metaphor out went representation, information processing and the holiness of every endeavour the designation of which begins with neuro. With the help of fields like biology, psychology from before the 1970s, evolution theory and philosophical phenomenology, a new window onto the human mind was opened, a window in which the mind appears out of an intimate connection between brain, body and environment. Some twenty years later, dissatisfied researchers from a diversity of sciences (biology, psychology, pedagogy, philosophy, humanities, teaching and human movement) are working to ground human experience on a more naturalistic basis. Central to their endeavour is the hunch that the experience of humans, as of every other animal, is shaped by the interaction of a moving body in a continuously changing environment. That is why I will denote these researchers with the epithet enactivist. It is through action that animals come to experience their world. Human understanding is based on this experience through action. Typically, human understanding does not precede action, except in some very specific cases, and even these cases would not occur without a multitude of preceding actions.

### **DANCE OR SEXUAL INTERCOURSE**

The metaphors of enactivists are not based on machines, but, as one might expect, on types of movement and interaction, like dance or sexual intercourse. Alva Noë, for example, writes: "A much better image is that of the dancer. A dancer is locked into an environment, responsive to music, responsive to a partner. The idea that the dance is a state of us, inside of us, or something that happens in us is crazy. Our ability to dance depends on all sorts of things going on inside of us, but that we are dancing is fundamentally an attunement to the world around us." Our experience arises out of this attunement and is, therefore, as much grounded in our muscles, fingertips, dancing partner, senses and heart as it is in our brain.

### **TOUCH SCREEN**

Enactivists depart from the idea that humans are information processors. That is their explanation for the failure of Google Glass and the success of the touch screen. Google Glass just brought more information into our eyes, while the touch screen brought our close friends and loved ones to our fingertips. Google Glass considered us to be information gatherers, while the touch screen

acknowledged our existence as playfully grooming apes, as experience hunters. What is at our fingertips is more important than what comes into our brains, if anything does.

The same type of enactivist reasoning explains the success of the Oculus Rift. A 3-D image, such as in a movie theatre, will never give a truly three-dimensional experience. Only when our most subtle movements are interactively connected to the image on screen will we experience the virtual reality as a reality, an environment physically similar to our everyday surroundings.

To be sure, enactivists do not deny that information can enable or enhance human performance, nor do they deny the importance of the brain. Enactivists simply state that the mind-as-computer metaphor made us underplay the world at our fingertips, the importance of connected movement and attunement. The decades to come will bring back the balance between information processing and human experience, in science as well as in the development of new technologies. At least, that is what we enactivists predict.

# SHAMAN'S KISS

## On the future of music

BY SANNE CARRIÈRE

The capsule kicked in – hard. His saliva dissolved the hull and activated the substance within. As the medicine entered his bloodstream, its effects started to emerge. His pineal gland roused, his brain waves altered. Pupils dilated, he started seeing geometric images; frequencies and music brought to vision and touch.

He recalled buying the capsules. 'Shaman's Kiss', the seller had called his product: 'A blend of revered herbs, once the realm of shaman and medicine men, now available to the public.' It had sounded too good to be true. Yet, after millennia of ritual use and decennia of scrutinizing medical studies, no side effects had been found. John made sure to double check; he did not want to waste his valuable life and health. Before imbibing them, he wanted to be absolutely sure of the safety of the capsules. But all his sources, both scholar and those at street level confirmed: these herbs would do him no harm. No brain damage, no depression. Merely an instant plunge into the dream-state, seeing the world through new eyes; understanding the patterns of nature, of life – and therefore of humanity. In times long gone, it would have taken him years of silent seclusion and meditation before reaching this state of bliss and insight. Now there was revelation for all. Kicking capsules, he indulged into vision.

The altered state of mind the street seller had promised actually materialized. 'Finally, a product that does what it says,' he told Jade, his girlfriend. '... and at a fair price, too,' she finished the sentence for him, nodding to the beat, entranced. 'You always

say that when you find a bargain that doesn't turn out to be crap,' she muttered, more and more encapsulated in her own visionary experience.

She did not need the supplements or capsules. Jade had been training, reprogramming her brain to strengthen the neural connections as the herbs aided his. Almost playing at the professional level, all she had to do was meditate and plug into the pathway in her brain that connected the pineal gland to the brain stem, revealing all that remained hidden for those who did not know, or did not remember.

Their sense of touch heightened, increased. The sonar waves of the music translated into waves of tingling emotions, first entering the energetic field of their body and then touching upon and rippling over their skin. All frequency was vibration, becoming pattern and geometry. The club around them changed. The dim and dark place it had been until moments ago transformed. Its morphogenetic field became visible, as did sound. Even the heartbeat of the other clubbers became perceptible. It showed as the fluttering, colorful image of electromagnetic pulse, emitted by the torus field of their hearts.

Amazed, he wondered at the symbols and patterns of Sacred Geometry. From both alchemy and math, he had learned of these building blocks of nature. From this perspective, all was connected. All was one. Source created the ten thousand things, amongst which he thrived. It was all so overwhelming. John held Jade's hands tightly,

afraid of losing his balance. She looked so beautiful tonight, making him fall in love with her all over again. Her inner calm and peace translated into a steady stream of vibrations. Love, light, love, light.

To his surprise, he felt the same wonder gazing at the other clubbers. The mere sight of their vibration moved him to tears. He looked straight into their souls. What he found there was pure beauty. His senses heightened, he let go and surrendered to light, sound, music, form. In their blend of vibrational bliss, all were equal.

Everything that remained hidden was revealed to him. He surrendered to the sound ... and understood.

Inspiration:

Hi-fi Mystery School:

[www.hifimysteryschool.com/nl](http://www.hifimysteryschool.com/nl)

Jeff Mills - Where light ends:

[www.youtube.be/iuuZP7UBsv8](http://www.youtube.be/iuuZP7UBsv8)

Sacred Geometry:

[www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacred\\_geometry](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacred_geometry)



THE IMMERSIVE AEOLIAN LIGHT EXPERIENCE BY SQUIDSOUP



# ‘SPOTTED’ ARTS, MUSIC & FILM

## GESTURAL MUSIC WARE

It was always Imogen Heap's dream to be able to literally shape sound with her hands. Now she and her team have invented unique Musical Gloves that make this possible. By using a gestural vocabulary, motion data-capture systems and user interfaces to parameter functions, the Musical Gloves connect a musician's inspiration directly to creation.

The gloves are both an instrument and a controller in effect, which gives the user 'immediate control of sounds recording and played through gesture'. To move freely without wires and be able to effect or amplify with your hands is 'like painting music rather than typing it into a spreadsheet', according to Imogen.

[www.imogenheap.co.uk/thegloves](http://www.imogenheap.co.uk/thegloves)

## IMMERSIVE AEOLIAN LIGHT EXPERIENCE

In Salford Quays (Greater Manchester, England) Squidsoup uses arrays of light and a 3D-space in their latest artwork – Aeolian Lights. 'Inspired by the windy location, the piece visualizes the wind as an illuminated chaotic force. Virtual debris and imaginary fields of energy pass through the work, carried on the wind in gusts and blasts. The strings and lights also sway physically in the wind, and people add a layer of illumination and turbulence as they walk through the piece.' The artwork holds 'around 12,000 individually addressable points of light suspended in space.'

[www.squidsoup.org/blog/2014/12/26/aeolian-light-at-salford-quays](http://www.squidsoup.org/blog/2014/12/26/aeolian-light-at-salford-quays)

## INSIDE OUT

Meet the little voices inside your head. In July 2015, Disney Pixar is releasing a new animated movie told from the perspective of the emotions in the mind of a little girl. 'Like all of us, Riley is guided by her emotions – Joy, Fear, Anger, Disgust and Sadness. The emotions live in Headquarters, the control center inside Riley's mind, where they help advise her through everyday life.' Will this movie become another animation success by Disney and Pixar, and will it give us an insight into the way we let our emotions guide or influence our lives?

[www.movies.disney.com/inside-out](http://www.movies.disney.com/inside-out)



IMOGEN HEAP'S MUSICAL GLOVES

# DESIGNING WITH EMOTIONS

## An Interview with Guto Requena

BY STEVEN VAN DEN HAAK

'It doesn't matter what scale the project is, it's about how we deal with memories and feelings, and how we can use digital tools to make them tangible.' So states Guto Requena, architect, designer and director of his own studio, Estudio Guto Requena. Using one of those digital technologies, I call him across the Atlantic Ocean, from cold and wet Amsterdam to warm and sunny São Paulo, Brazil, where he's based.

Guto is renowned for his use of digital technologies to transform emotions and memories into tangible products for daily use. 'We need to understand humankind in order to design buildings and products,' Guto explains. 'If we understand human behaviour we can then zoom out and talk about design and architecture, especially nowadays with the inclusion of digital technologies. We are the first generation of cyborgs, and this has to do with two aspects. On the one hand, we are getting more and more technological, we are the first generation that is adding prostheses to our body, prostheses that change the way we view humanity. These can be all kinds of prosthesis: one that corrects an organic problem; for example, if you have a heart problem you can use an artificial heart. But also if you think about the submarine, the submarine is a very interesting prosthesis, because it brings your organic body into the deep of the ocean, or a telescope that brings your eyes to the stars. All these prostheses are changing our sense of humanity.'

'The other aspect of cyborg culture is that digital technologies are getting more and more humanised. Interfaces are getting friendlier and easier to work with, and these digital technologies are spread all over our bodies, all over our cities, our houses, our cars, everywhere. These two aspects form the cyborg culture. I think somehow my work reflects this a lot; for example when I developed *Once Upon a Time* [a collection of four glass vases, red.]. I was invited to release a collection during the design fair in Milan, and I came up with this idea. I looked back to my childhood for my strongest memories, and I thought about my grandmother because I grew up listening to her stories. So I thought: why not ask her to retell the fables? Redo the ritual: I'm going to sit on the floor, and she will sit in the armchair and tell me stories. I recorded them, and I chose my four favourite stories. Then we developed an interface that analyses the narrative drama in her voice, recognising mood patterns, like happiness and sadness, and this data resulted in the shape of the vases. In the end we had four vases that represent the emotions that were part of those four stories while my grandmother was telling them.'

### PEOPLE'S EMOTIONS

Rather than dictating the shape of an object according to his own tastes, Guto is more interested in how other people's emotions can be used for his design practice. 'If people think it is beautiful, then I am very happy, but beauty is not what it is about. I'm much more interested in the process. Last year,

we released the 'Love Project', the most complex project I have done so far, and it took two years of development and a big team of people. I'm a person who loves love, and I am very curious about what people think about love and what it actually is, so I came up with the idea to invite people to tell their biggest love stories, so that we could collect the emotional data while they were telling these stories. We used three different sensors during this project: the first collects waves that your brain produces. We decided to focus on two waves, which are the low-beta and low-gamma waves that are extremely connected to our emotions. When we are angry, or happy or in love, these waves are very active. We also used the heartbeat, because we know that when we are emotional our hearts beat faster. The third sensor is the voice, because the voice can say a lot about your emotions. We understood that we should not record the love stories themselves – because I'm not interested in the story itself but much more in the physical data that our bodies produce.

### THE PARTICLE PRINCIPLE

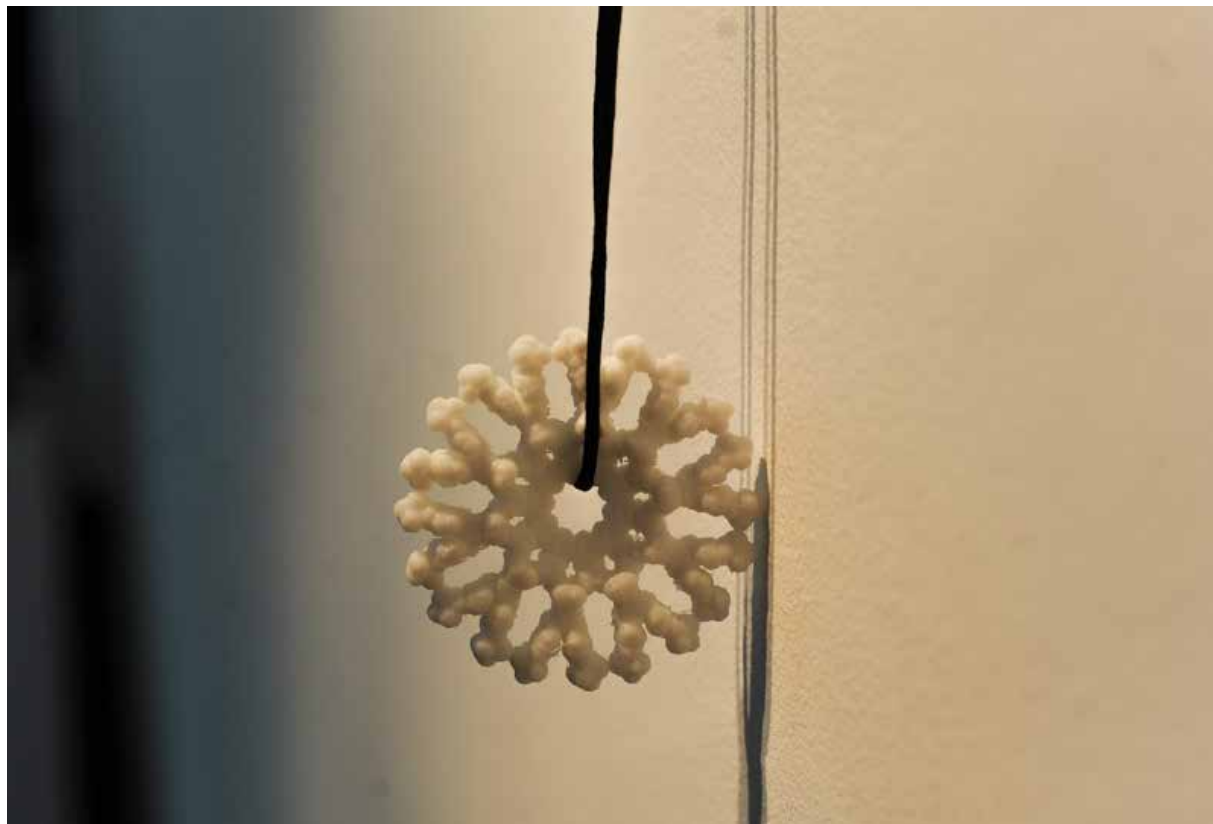
'After some experiments, we also discovered that, when people know that no one is listening to their stories, they tend to go much deeper into their emotions. Then we developed an interface, which I call 'The Particle Principle'. We created these objects through the use of emotional data, using these particles that start to grow as soon as the data of the three sensors come in. First we chose what kind of object we wanted to make, and then we decided a centre around which these particles will grow. Each of the sensors changes the behaviour of the particles: the brain waves change the attraction and repulsion between the particles, the heartbeat changes the thickness of the particles, and the voice changes the velocity of each particle. These shapes were then 3D-printed, so that, at the end of each

story, there would be an object. During the first experiment, we made three objects: a lamp, a vase and a fruit bowl. The second experiment we did in an art gallery here in São Paulo, last September. It was very beautiful; visitors participated by telling their love stories. While they were telling them, small mandalas were 3D-printed which we gave to the participants at the end of the performance. Right now we are working to show the Love Project for the first time in Europe during the Salone del Mobile in Milan.'

### THE INTERACTIVE FAÇADE

It is exactly this interactivity that makes Guto's work so distinct. The participation of the user is almost as important as his own ideas about a particular design. His latest project concerns an interactive façade for a 30-story-high hotel on Avenida Rebouças, one of the busiest streets in São Paulo. 'During the night it turns on and it holds what I call a "light creature", which inhabits the façade. This huge "light creature" behaves according to two impulses: one is the sounds around the building, the movement of the creature is affected by these sounds, it can get bigger or smaller or walk around on the façade. The other impulse is the air quality. Bad quality makes it angry causing it to turn red, orange or yellow. When the quality is better, the creature changes to blues and greens. This has a huge impact on the street because, even from far away, you see the lights changing. I think it is beautiful if a building can communicate. We are talking about architecture that can not only be functional but that can also communicate something. I would love to think that in the future São Paulo would have many buildings that could each communicate something different about our own behaviour to make it tangible.'

[www.gutorequena.com.br](http://www.gutorequena.com.br)



THE LOVE PROJECT EXPERIMENT BY GUTO REQUENA

# ‘SPOTTED’ FASHION

## MOOD COUTURE

Fashion studio The Unseen shines a new light on combining couture and technology. In February's London Fashion Week 2015, they present a sculptural jacket that changes color depending on the wearer's mood. 'The studio's founder, alchemist Lauren Bowker, collaborated with technology agency Holition on the project, which aims to bring a physical manifestation to digital data.'

The concept originated with the 'desire to visualize unseen connections between humans and how they drain or enthuse one another.' To translate human magnetism into visible color patterns, they used an electroencephalography (EEG) brainwave monitor and an app that converts the signals into color combinations that represent emotions.

[www.dezeen.com/2015/02/17/the-unseen-coded-couture-auras-jacket-london-fashion-week/](http://www.dezeen.com/2015/02/17/the-unseen-coded-couture-auras-jacket-london-fashion-week/)



THE UNSEEN COLLECTION BY LAUREN BOWKER

## PULSE FASHION

-SELF REPAIR FOR THE BODY SYSTEM-

Meditech wearables improve the quality of life in high performance activities of health care and fitness lifestyles. Previously, health-care mapping was about hygiene and health care or protection from germs and body fluids. Now it includes electronic therapy, rehab and bio-sensing innovations. Wearable technology covers small parts at a time for critical care (telemedicine) and fitness assessment for athletes. These clothes have electronic applications to telemedicate within the user's environment.

[www.marketwatch.com/story/ralph-lauren-introduces-the-next-evolution-of-wearable-technology-2014-08-25](http://www.marketwatch.com/story/ralph-lauren-introduces-the-next-evolution-of-wearable-technology-2014-08-25)



## SPORTECH FASHION

-HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORTSWEAR-

Sports clothing is performance enhancing clothes that help athletes compete at the cutting edge of performance in a highly competitive environment. Dramatic lifestyle changes in urban living, awareness of a rapidly aging population, increasing sports participation and health consciousness have created a huge demand for functional sports apparel. As the most versatile and fastest growing brand in performance, Sportech clothing is used to enhance stamina or reduce fatigue. It improves performance in high-speed sports, such as cycling, sprinting and swimming, by using aerodynamics and compression. It enhances performance in power-based activities by removing lactate, improving oxygen supply and speeding recovery after exercise and training.

A range of value-added clothing offering



temperature regulation, moisture management and odor reduction in stretch and light-weight materials is available for everyday sportswear. Compression and aerodynamics are methods used individually and in combination to increase blood flow while playing sports. Compression garments are used for protective performance. Aerodynamics can reduce or increase speed by altering the placement of seams, sections and fasteners of the clothing. Designer bags, sneakers and other fitness apparel are examples of this trend. See the Athos fitness website.

[www.liveathos.com/apparel/gear](http://www.liveathos.com/apparel/gear)

## OVERSIZED WOOL & SOFT SKINS

Céline, Stella McCartney, Acne, de Olsen Twins, Sonia Rykiel and TVortz all brought the oversized wool, cashmere and felt knitwear and soft coats back to the catwalk. Also for spring summer!



NICOLAS MARTIN GARZIA FOR NOT JUST A LABEL 2015



# THE TALKING JEANS

BY TOZAMA DYANTYI

Who does not own a pair of jeans these days? We dress them up for day wear, bling them out for nightwear and then switch to smart for casual Fridays. Remember the horrid fit of mom jeans? To this extent, they are, in fact, the most versatile item in today's wardrobe.

Jeans were founded by tailor Jacob Davis and businessman Levi Strauss in California 1873. The patented rivet design gave jeans its distinguishing reputation as hard wearing workwear. For many years, people from farmers to rockers have worn them for different reasons and occasions. The first advertisements used images of cowboys to appeal to pioneers who were travelling West. They were sold mainly to men working outdoors and, as the use of jeans expanded, first to children's coveralls before WW1, then to working women during WW2, they were issued to military employees by the U.S government. WW2 veterans who went to college were seen as heroes, and this increased the popularity of jeans among fellow students. In the baby boom era of the 50's, jeans were associated with being 'cool'. This image was made iconic for young people by movie star James Dean in the movie *Rebel without a Cause*. Since then, jeans have been favoured among youngsters as casual wear rather than workwear. If the zeitgeist is a painting, then jeans are the shifting canvas.

## THE VINTAGE TOUCH

In the mod era of the 60's, jeans became a symbol of youth and rebellion. Young people opposed systematic failure and wanted social change. To show their participation in social movements, students wore jeans as a uniform to meetings and

protests. Bell bottoms were synonymous with peace campaigning against the Vietnam war. Jeans were associated with social revolutionaries. In the following decade of glam rock jeans, rock band names are central to value themes spotting musical heroes like The Doors, Rage against the Machines and The Beatles. The need, it seems here, was to form groups against the 'machine'. So what these groups stood for was celebrated by wearing their names and songs on tee-shirts.

The 90's saw a break in designer casual wear that focussed on celebrity endorsements, with sporty Calvin Klein snatching the high end of the High Street market. Outdoor Lee/Wrangler jeans would have appealed to the low end of this market. Unique to these new brands is the use of heavy ads and branding, up-to-date product design and positioning themselves as 'designers'. It's not what the dress code is, it's 'Who are you wearing?' The entry of new brands that chip away at older markets always means that old retail giants have to share the market, and sharing can be painful. Strauss was battling to shake off the mom jeans image after President Obama was spotted in them at a weekend game. Once mom jeans were tagged and identified, there was room for other brands to be seen as youthful.

## INDIVIDUAL POP

Leading the speciality brands movement in 2000 were True Religion, 7 for Mankind and Rock Republic among others, opening up a new market of conscious consumers. These specialised brands were signified by social activism, academia, web travel and 'app' applications. 'Everyone is a brand, Everyone is special.' People wanted to

separate themselves from dishonest methods, so authenticated branding arose, self-endorsing, for example, because it was linked to professionals. Encrypted branding, appealing to inner crowds, is created through app clouds. No-name brands are for everyone and 'belong' to no-one. The very names appeal to social values like team work, while the attitude is that of an individual in the logomania 90's.

Designer jeans, especially, are trashed, washed, made lighter and softer, hand-finished and custom-fitted. It is a specialised and individualistic process. The market for designer jeans is the beat, hip and rock musical fanship. Stars such as Kanye West, Rihanna, and even oldies like Paul McCartney, can be major influencers of the Indie-pop brand culture. These names are not only music and fashion icons but generational icons. They are positioned as 'brand within the brand' to attract the upmarket online youth travel experience. I say this, because only the best versions of ourselves are avatars on the social media. Friends can share their favourite brands and how they consume them with different virtual families. Now that's going social.

### **FAIR BRANDS**

Where do branding ads go? In 2010, we begin to see the raging birth of social branding. Contrary to earlier individualistic brands, these new social brands want to engage the local community of their customers online. They want to bring and share our favourite things and experiences from anywhere through the phone. Social branding is the new stage for human contact. The capture and sharing of information within groups and among networks has never been easier. It's a super network of designer brands going global in a rural way. At this rate, awareness is inevitable. As our travels in the webworld increases, our awareness of other cultures grows. This knowledge is moulded by the values of the fair trade movement, whose beginnings can be traced to the middle of the 2000's. Conscious brands

have found yet another market in these emerging socially-aware lifestyles. This implies the practise of fair and accurate reporting of both past and present. It becomes important to make a statement with 'who you say you are' to all for all, so advertisers attach celebrity endorsements to social campaigns on Insta and Facebook. New social movements such as the Heart movement and the Shake the World movement, led by engaged entrepreneurs, are calling us to join social causes: the Ice Bucket Challenge was a good demonstration of the global power of the web. Social brands positioned themselves as the pioneers and ushers of a new age. These online brands leave behind the imprint of a determined settler whose goal is to leave a legacy through a characterized lifestyle.

### **2020 FUTURE**

The years ahead will mark not only shared organisational measures and sustainable positioning for jeans, but will alert us to organise shared information in a characteristic manner and with purpose and the weight of moral support ... whatever that moral may turn out to be. Clothes will be fitted to cultural functions, jumpsuits will not be just jumpsuits anymore. They will have more meaning as communication tools or even spacesuits. They will have more functions and convey more messages. As apps, organisers are not mere route mappers and problem solvers, they are also doorways to the alternate worlds of information, and so the function of fashion will change too. Pioneers and skilled orienteering will be needed to bridge, to connect and to guide the pathways between old and new social movements which can be easily shared and stored. These connectors will be expected to solve the problems of the unexpected and forge a way forward. These are frontiersmen. The brave and the bold. Connecting us to the Western icons and beyond.



BULLEIT BOURBON NOBLE DENIM JEANS

# *IT'S ALL NATURE!*

## Farmer Bartele Holtrop

Young farmer Bartele Holtrop is twenty-eight. Born into a big Dutch farming family - his father owned a dairy farm - he was used to helping out. Now, after years' working in the family business, he has bought his own farm together with his wife. His gut-feeling was that what he and his father had always done wouldn't take agriculture a step ahead. He thought, what if ...? Think, for instance, of what will happen if we run out of diesel and gas in twenty years.

Holtrop was a manager in his parents' company for six years. It was a business that worked with established ideas of farming, production went well, the cows were healthy and strong, but he was not sure that the system would be sustainable for the long term. He asked himself, 'Why are we farmers? Why did we start keeping cattle thousands of years ago? What was the reason for that?' He became less sure that what he had learned any longer applied. And he wanted kids himself, a step too far for his father, so he bought his own farm.

### **MIXOLOGIST**

If he can rediscover the tried-and-true, proven ways to farm with the help of nature itself, Holtrop thinks he can change agricultural methods and planning to fit the future. Working as a kind of natural mixologist, he's searching for the perfect ecosystem to get more out of his grasslands. 'It seems we've forgotten the simple idea of what farming is and its great benefits for the climate,' he says. 'Cows know exactly how to farm. Nature is so efficient. Cows can seed plants by stomping new seeds down into the ground. The way the cows graze allows the plants

to grow faster. Livestock, grass, clovers, herbs ... nature is so incredibly well-organized, that I think we human beings can't really believe that we make it smarter by technology.'

Holtrop has been inspired by Allan Savory, founder of the Savory Institute in Colorado, USA. A Zimbabwean biologist, farmer and environmentalist, Savory was troubled by the phenomenon of desertification and the problem of lost dry land. Desertification, grasslands turning into barren desert, affects an estimated one-third of the Earth's surface, land we need to feed ourselves and make the ecosystem healthy again. At this institute, they believe that holistic management principles will result in ecologically regenerative, economically viable and socially sound management of the world's grasslands, and that it will empower people to properly manage livestock to heal the land. Use the wonders of nature to reach that goal, they say; it is possible without machines.

When he found a video about this kind of farming on Youtube, it affected him strongly. Asked what the most important sources are for knowledge about the future of farming and how the ecosystem works, he answered, 'The internet, YouTube, forums, testimonials. Every day, after I've milked the cows, I use the big online library to learn more.' His goal is to use nature itself to optimize the ground and make his farm work most efficiently. 'We want to use almost everything between the cattle and the grass that is so rich and healthy that it is self-supporting, self-renewing. We think that the solutions for our

food and climate problems are not in technology.

## **GRASS**

'I call it forward-from-basics. I'm diving into the history of farming to learn more about the origins of agriculture. It's simple: we humans need products that we can't create or invent ourselves. Think about meat, eggs, milk. We can't eat grass, so we need to transform it into a useful product by helping cows convert grass into meat and milk. Understanding that, I learned that we're actually selling the grass when we sell milk or high quality meat. Our grassland is the most important source we have. That's the product. Day by day, I'm learning from nature itself. It's wonderful!'

'I'm interested in various grazing and pasture theories and systems. I know about new kinds of grasses, clovers and herbs and how to mix them to make them work together more efficiently and to increase the production of my fields. We work with less diesel for one reason: a cow works smarter. I believe there's not a machine smarter and more efficient than a cow. Every time she stomps the ground with her hoof, she stomps grass seeds into the ground. That creates a hole about half a centimeter deep, where a small amount of water can remain hidden from the wind. That's the perfect place for a grass, herb or clover seed to germinate. The only thing we farmers can add to that is our talent, knowledge and wisdom to make maximum use of these natural resources. At the right time of year for each, I seed the best herbs and other plants, so I need to know which seed is productive when. And I have to know something about climate and seasons. In this way, I utilize the soil optimally

throughout the year. Nature did it this way for thousands of years. I don't believe that we human beings are smarter than she is. I'm just giving her a helping hand, a boost.

'Cows graze without using diesel. A farmer today normally has to ride his tractor eight times to turn his fields into milk. At one farm in Rotstergaast, they don't need to ride the tractor at all to convert their grass into milk. Their cows mow it for them. The grass creates biomass by photosynthesis, using CO<sub>2</sub> and sunlight. It also creates oxygen and energy. Grasslands are a huge source of oxygen.

## **NATURE IS TECHNOLOGY**

'Lots of people think that technology changes the world but, basically, anything we invent was already discovered in the past. Nature is technology too. If this new way to farm works and we can prove it, it will change a lot.' Holtrop is sure there's more hidden wisdom in nature than we know now. For instance, insects are the protein source for chickens; why not for us? 'If we understand nature better, we can produce better food smarter,' he insists. 'This is what natural farming deals with. I run my cows outdoor and not in the barn. I start each day early. I milk in the meadow and am done working at the end of the day and can eat together with my family. I can say that I have a good life, a life without stress.' For Bartelee Holtrop, sustainability means durability and that means the enjoyment of being a future farmer.

This is a part of the book *Future Farmers*, made and published by Second Sight and Rabobank. The book will be published in May 2015.

# ‘IF IT BE TRULY MADE’

BY BRYNA HELLMANN

The subject is poetry. The word is derived from poiema, the Greek word for 'a made thing', a product. Like a man who made sandals, tables or clay pots, a poet was a maker of things, and a poem was just another item for sale. All a poet had to do was apply the rules to make his product a good thing. An English poet, Vita Sackville-West, wrote,

The poet like the artisan  
Works lonely with his tools, picks up each one, ...  
Rejects, and chooses; scores a fresh faint line;  
Sharpens, intent upon his chiseling;  
Bends lower to examine his design,  
If it be truly made,  
And brings perfection to so slight a thing.

So that slight thing, ink on a page, is as tangible an object as a pair of jeans, although we know which end of our Levi's to put our legs into, and we might not know 'which end is up' when we encounter the ambiguity of a poet's metaphors. Maybe you've read the first line or two of a poem in a magazine, thought, 'What?' and turned the page to an article about how we're wearing scarves this year or why we should be hopeful about the Middle East (illustrated and footnoted). Poetry daunts sometimes, though it needn't. So I hope to convince you that what someone called 'the language of stuff' is not the only way we human beings should communicate with each other.

The visual and digital noise that surrounds us, the 'language of stuff', is the speech of commerce: of makers, sellers and buyers, marketing and public relations, journalism that's more gossip than facts. Heard today, forgotten tomorrow. In her introduction

to this issue, Andrea Wiegman wrote that we need 'other sources, other spots to get in touch with what is really happening ... to experience the tangibility of our lives: the distinct, solid, objective reality we can't ignore, distort or lie about.' Poetry is one such source. (Here comes a metaphor; well, actually it's a simile, but that's a matter of phrasing.) Think about light. We don't see sunlight until something brightens under it, or lamplight until a dark room becomes a solid reality when we flip a switch. Just so, a poem can cast its light on an ordinary event and illuminate it for us. We see the familiar in all its strangeness, its ambiguity, its this-and-that-too, and life is just that much more meaningful, more intelligible, maybe more bearable. One of the poems I included when I wrote a book about English life and literature, is called ***Snow***. Here's part of it:

The room was suddenly rich and the great  
bay window was  
Spawning snow and pink roses against it  
Soundlessly collateral and incompatible:  
World is suddener than we fancy it.  
World is crazier and more than we think,  
Incorrigibly plural. ...  
... world  
Is more spiteful and gay than one supposes  
On the tongue on the eyes on the ears in  
the palms of one's hands -  
There is more than glass between the snow  
and the huge roses.

'World is suddener, world is crazier.' Sometimes it is. We've all had moments when it's just too much, where do I start, who needs this, why me? When Louis MacNeice's poem reminds us of the crazy

sudden spiteful gay of more, he also shows us how beautiful even the simplest things can be, how rich our lives are, if we stop a minute to acknowledge it.

Having used the word beautiful a couple of times, I should add that it is, as we all know, a matter of a *chacun son gout*, to each his taste. But for each of us, when we encounter it, it's the same emotional experience, the same sense that something is satisfying. (That's a working definition of beauty that I just made up.) It has nothing in common with the other five senses that report the physical, tangible world. The sense that makes sense of a poem is the sixth, the one that registers the intangible and ineffable and makes us sigh or smile or come close to tears. Its messages are as important as what our fingers, noses, tongues, ears and eyes tell us. The American poet E. E. Cummings wrote,

I thank You God for most this amazing  
day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees  
and a blue true dream of sky: and for  
everything which is natural and  
which is infinite  
which is yes  
(I who have died am alive again today,  
and this is the sun's birthday;  
this is the birth day of life  
and love and wings: and of the gay great  
happening illimitably earth)  
how should tasting touching hearing  
seeing breathing any - lifted from the no of  
all nothing - human merely being  
doubt unimaginable You?  
(now the ears of my ears awake and  
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)  
I'll end with that: yes.

# **SIXTH SENSE**



# ‘SPOTTED’ DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE

## LOCAL ESCAPES

The newly created TRIBECA PENTHOUSE at The Greenwich Hotel manages to calm, soothe and quieten. With a strikingly modernist design that reflects its surrounding industrial neighbourhood and its stone floors and reclaimed wood, mostly sourced from the New York area itself, it's a real urban escape that manages to both reflect and respect its locale.

[www.whitelinehotels.com/blog/a-refuge-of-luxury-and-style](http://www.whitelinehotels.com/blog/a-refuge-of-luxury-and-style)



# ‘SPOTTED’ DESIGN

## SUGRU

In London, adults are playing with a new kind of play-doh. 'Sugru is the world's first moldable glue that turns into rubber.' It's fun and easy to use for several kinds of things, but it originated in the idea to 'fix, modify, adapt and improve almost anything mass-produced'. The silicone technology of Sugru is unique: 'It bonds to almost any other material and cures just by exposing it to air. Its durable cured properties mean it'll stay strong and securely bonded anywhere from the freezer to a steamy hot shower, from the home to the great outdoors.'

So, if you want to reduce waste by fixing things that are broken, or if you would like to transform or improve existing products, check out their website. Sugru comes in 10 colors and with no creative limits. Awaken your innate creativity and make your ideas tangible.

[www.sugru.com](http://www.sugru.com)

## TACTILE TYPING

For the digitally savvy, typing on a keyboard has become instinctual. We can send emails while multi-tasking based on muscle memory alone. Unfortunately, that same ease and simplicity fails to translate to typo-free conversations on our miniature devices and tablets. The experience of touchscreen activations is not as natural as the tactile trigger of a physical button. That's where Phorm comes in — the world's first morphing touchscreen that makes typing on your iPad almost effortless. A case slides over your device and places a transparent film over the face of your screen. An adaptive keyboard emerges when users activate it to type and disappears completely when they're finished.

Read more:

[www.getphorm.com/](http://www.getphorm.com/)

[www.psfk.com/2015/02/phorm-shape-shifting-touchscreen-keyboard-tactus-technology.html](http://www.psfk.com/2015/02/phorm-shape-shifting-touchscreen-keyboard-tactus-technology.html)

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## **DIGITAL AND HARD COPIES**

Second Sight is a quarterly magazine. A digital annual subscription costs 75 euro a year.

Hard copies cost 19 euro each, all ex VAT and postage. They are printed via the Espresso Bookprint Machine, go to [www.secondsight.nl/shop](http://www.secondsight.nl/shop) to order PDF or hard copies.

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SUMMER 2015

[WWW.SECONDSIGHT.NL](http://WWW.SECONDSIGHT.NL)