

## Prologue

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This prologue is carried by a Design Mailboat. It was originally destined for the opening of the 2012 Design and Displacement conference (organized by the Society for Social Studies of Science and the European Association for Studies of Science and Technology) in Copenhagen, where the exchange was performed. Here the Design Mailboat has been redirected, serving as a prologue to the coming marginal notes on innovation, design, and democracy. Mailboats are message-sized vessels, originally sent from remote islands to reach unknown shores, designed to carry words on the tide from one beach to another, to send questions and receive floating replies. The Design Mailboat is one such word-bearing ship. We have been sending it back and forth between three coasts with a passion for design and its futures. The Design Mailboat has floated from the islands of Orkney (off the northeast coast of Scotland), through the Öresund (between Denmark and Sweden), to Silicon Valley (in California). Silicon Valley is the mythic place of origin of the design of the mouse, the graphical user interface, and the big green button on the photocopier. Öresund is a mythic center of Scandinavian Design, the place of origin of the ‘white style,’ a home of legendary designers and beautiful functional objects, but maybe also the home of the Thing and its agonistic collectives. The islands of Orkney are a mythic place of origin for wave and tidal renewable energy, and for the design of monumental stone circles, built more than 5,000 years ago. From our various locations as the future archaeologist, the collective designer, and the anthropologist of technoscience, we have been asking one another what “design” is in these far-apart places.

### From the Future Archaeologist—Message 1

I write this message to be taken in the ocean currents to that far-off continental coast, to that mythic place of Silicon Valley. You echo in the wireless network wind on my cheeks, from the metal chamfers around my keyboard, in logos that litter my web windows, in the very essence and existence of my mouse.

I know your world by its absent presence in mine. You haunt me. Your home haunts me. Where does Silicon Valley not haunt?



**Figure P.1**

View over the European Marine Energy Centre, wave energy test site, Orkney. Laura Watts (CC:BY-NC).

You live in that place where my future is imagined and rolled-out from, rolled over my bones, over my home, my hills, my islands.

I wonder what you imagine my home looks like (for without imagining there can be no design). What do you know of the islands of Orkney, apart from their location above the northeast coast of Scotland, and their shape, the wings of a diving Osprey? My home is mythic, too. A world center for prehistoric stone circles. A world center for marine renewable energy. But what do you know? What of my home affects your thoughts, your imaginings, your designs for the future?

What does the future mean to you? What does it mean to design a future in your world, on your coast?

But who might you reply to, you may wonder.

So let me introduce myself over the Atlantic flow of the Gulf Stream, which separates us.

I am the future archaeologist.

Yes, an archaeologist, of sorts.

Archaeologists reconstruct the past from fragments of found evidence. They make the past from the flotsam and jetsam left behind when people make the world.

I make a *future* from the flotsam and jetsam left behind when people make the world—people like designers, whose choices, whose sociomaterial practices, imaginings, stories, and digital ink, make the world one way and not another.

Maybe you don't see design that way.

I see it as a future-making practice (and Pelle Ehn, a design researcher from Copenhagen and Malmö, would agree with me). Every practice has residues. I just collect those residues from design and paste them together, play with them, try out lots of different ways they go together, and reconstruct them in lots of different ways. If design is a future-making practice, then I reconstruct design futures in lots of different ways. Send me some residues and I'll show you what I mean.

I wish I knew what design is in your world.

Whatever it is, its effects are felt here. Someone, perhaps in an urban, techno-centric place like yours, once designed a broadband wireless network for the islands. But in that designer's world there was no tide, no rising and falling of the sea, no curve of the Earth between wireless antennas. So every time the tide came in, the sea rose and broke the signal. Knowing about tides matters to design here.

Tell me about design in your world, help me understand.

And tell me about you.

Yours, from Orkney,  
The future archaeologist

## From the Anthropologist of Technoscience—Message 2

Dear future archaeologist,

I was walking on the beach at Pescadero this morning (a rare time out from work—"work hard, play hard" is the program here, but somehow I always seem to implement only the first of those) when I found your message. I had no idea where the islands of Orkney were (before I used Google to find out), but of course I've seen images of those stone circles, and I have a feeling they would be a welcome change from here.

In the twenty years that I've spent here, I've become preoccupied with undoing Silicon Valley—not in the sense of denying its existence or consequence, but in a different sense that sending some messages back and forth might help to articulate. To get started, let me bring in a muse whose voice probably has traveled the distance between us:

A peculiar attitude to history characterizes those who live in the timescape of the technopresent. They (we?) tend to describe everything as new, as revolutionary, as future oriented, as a solution to problems of the past. The arrogance and ignorance of this attitude hardly need comment. ... However, if revolutions here are mostly hype, discontinuities and mutated ways of being are not.

Categories abound in technocultural worlds that did not exist before; these categories are the sedimentations of processual relations that matter. (Haraway 2008, 135)

This “peculiar attitude” expressed itself vividly to me one evening around 1995 as I was driving my car down Hillview Avenue in Palo Alto listening to National Public Radio. “The future arrives sooner here,” said the Silicon Valley technologist who was being interviewed. His words constituted a place—a “here”—that, in indexically referencing his location in Silicon Valley, performed the existence of that place once again through the naming of it. And in positing a singular, universal future, his words also reiterated a past, in the form of a diffusionist model of change. The anthropologist Johanes Fabian, in *Time and the Other*, describes this as a form of temporal distancing that “involves placing chronologically contemporary and spatially distant peoples along a temporal trajectory, such that the record of humanity across the globe is progressively ordered in historical time” (Fabian 1983, 13). The kind of spatial and temporal distancing enacted in a statement like this is always, in other words, a colonizing move.



**Figure P.2**  
*Manifest Destiny*, John Gast, 1872. Public domain.

So I hear this statement as reproducing the geographies of center and periphery, and temporalities of development, that in the mid 1990s underwrote Silicon Valley's figuration as central to the future of everywhere. But postcolonial scholarship has taught us that centers and margins are multiple and relative, and futures can be enacted only in what Anna Tsing (2005, 1–2) calls “the sticky materiality of practical encounters ... the makeshift links across distance and difference that shape global futures—and ensure their uncertain status.” Locally enacted effects are made to travel less through easy flows than through messy translations, and, as Tsing observes, those who claim to be in touch with the universal are notoriously bad at seeing the limits and exclusions of their own knowledge practices. Postcolonial forms of future-making, it follows, require geographies that have less certain centers (see Redfield 2002, 794).

So one way of relocating future-making, I'm thinking, could be an anthropology of those places now enacted as centers of innovation that shows the provincial contingencies and uncertainties of their own futures, as well as the situated practices required to sustain their reproduction as central. How would that fit, I'm wondering, with your project?

Yours from the Valley,  
The anthropologist of technoscience

### From the Collective Designer—Message 3

dear archaeologist of the future  
and anthropologist of techno-science  
  
this morning  
during my daily morning bath  
by the sound that  
out of denmark, sweden, norway  
cut scandinavia  
together and apart  
your beautiful  
immutable mobile mailboat

crossed my path

your mailboat intra-actions

your thoughts on design

and care for futures being made

across the (orkney) islands

and the (silicon) valley

fill me with curiosity

and spark my imagination

but also make me want to share

the futures being made

by the waters where i fare

a collective designer (of sorts)

that's what i am

an oxymoron of course

but please bear with me

there is more to come

in contemporary

techno-science lingua franca

the collective designer

is not the omnipotent maker

of isolated objects (of desire)



**Figure P.3**

The collective designer (part of). Upper left: public domain. Upper right and lower left: Copyright Pelle Ehn; published in *Design at Work*. Lower left: Copyright Pelle Ehn; published in *Design at Work*. Lower right: Copyright Pelle Ehn; published in *Work-Oriented Design of Computer Artifacts* (Erlbaum 1988).

but more a passionate participant

among many

in multiple unfolding

things of design

these socio-material

“collectives of humans and non humans”

are designerly appropriations

of ancient nordic things

political assemblies

rituals and places

making futures

through controversial

“agonistic” “matters of concern”

(maybe as it was once

on the islands of orkney)

the contemporary

scandinavian collective designer

some forty years of age or so

norwegian of origin

focusing on democracy

and worker participation

actively searching

alternative futures

through collaborative

design things

at the time when computers

entered the shop floor

threatening to deskill workers



and tighten managerial control  
pioneered at  
“kongsberg weapon factory”  
(maybe not the most likely place  
for an experiment in  
democracy and participation)  
but here is another paradox  
at that time  
the collective designer  
traveled over the seas  
actually made it to the valley  
but not as a  
controversial design thing  
foregrounding trade unions,  
class struggle, and democracy  
but as object-oriented design  
a computer simulation language  
with active data objects  
that inherit properties  
from data classes  
rumors have it

that translated into  
the programming environment  
“smalltalk”  
it became part  
of technological futures  
being made in the valley  
a decade later  
the scandinavian collective designer  
embarked on travels to “utopia”  
not another “nowhere”  
but the most socio-material interventions  
in the controversial “now here”  
a nordic design thing addressing  
the potential technological destruction  
of the typographer and his union  
by an alternative design of  
“computer tools for skilled workers”  
and “collaborative work organization”  
this was in the wake  
of the mac apple revolution in the valley  
and the collective designer

actually traveled there  
for technological inspiration  
(yes he was there thirty years ago incognito)  
the outcome of “utopia”  
resembled the mac as object  
with mouse and graphical display  
but was a different kind of thing  
a participatory design thing  
a typographer and designer collaboration  
prototyping and exploring  
alternative socio-material futures  
through technological  
class-struggle devices  
and political actions  
  
of this utopia  
“where workers craft new technology”  
the international technical press  
wrote with appreciation  
and much exaggeration  
“today scandinavia  
tomorrow perhaps

the rest of the world”

paradoxically

they were partly right

thirty years later

this political utopian

future-making practice

still travels the world

but now politically marginalized

translated into a cornerstone

of mainstream neo-liberal

“user-driven innovation”

today the collective designer

still concerned with matters of

democracy and participation

has moved beyond the workplace

and into ongoing evolving

controversial design things

centered around innovative actors

from the outskirts of the city

and the margins of society

what about the peripheries of

your island and your valley?

yours sincerely

out of scandinavia

the collective designer (part of)

### From the Anthropologist of Technoscience—Message 4

Dear future archaeologist and collective designer (part of),

In the Valley it's all about invention and newness. So here's a question: What does it mean to think about invention not through the figure of the light bulb (whether it's in the hands of Thomas Edison or floating in a thought balloon over someone's head), but as an effect of generative connection among things not previously associated? And



Figure P.4

The moment of invention. Permission granted by SRI International.

to think about newness not as a property, but as a relation? A good strategy is to look for the rhetorical/material practices through which collectives and things are translated as individuals and objects. Within this repertoire, as many of my technoscience studies colleagues have pointed out, the *demonstration* is a pivotal event.

I'm thinking about demos because I just got back (well, in 1998 actually) from an event at Stanford University celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of "The Mother of All Demos." You can watch the original demo yourself online—here's the description:

On December 9, 1968, Douglas C. Engelbart and the group of 17 researchers working with him in the Augmentation Research Center at Stanford Research Institute in Menlo Park, CA, presented a 90-minute live public demonstration of the online system, NLS [standing for oN-Line System], they had been working on since 1962. The public presentation was a session of the Fall Joint Computer Conference held at the Convention Center in San Francisco, and it was attended by about 1,000 computer professionals. ... The mouse was only one of many innovations demonstrated that day, including hypertext, object addressing and dynamic file linking, as well as shared-screen collaboration involving two persons at different sites communicating over a network with audio and video interface.

To characterize the demo as pivotal is not to say that its success is guaranteed; on the contrary, the demo system is always a shaky proposition that has to prove itself in and through its enactment, often in the face of a skeptical audience. At this event in 1998, a panel of speakers—specifically, those who worked with Engelbart to stage the event in 1968—are reflecting on the experience—the labors and the thrills—of configuring the system and making it work on the day of the demo. Which makes sense because it was on that day, I'm suggesting, that the assemblage was made into the oN-Line System, not only by its makers but by those who assembled to witness it in the Convention Center. So how, then, is the system demo positioned as coming after the object, rather than as its founding moment? Other speakers at the Stanford celebration 30 years later recall The Demo's effects. Alan Kay, famous as an early visionary of hand-held computing and credited (along with Abraham Lincoln and a number of others) with the edict that the best way to predict the future is to invent it, puts it succinctly: "This demo changed my life. I was never the same afterwards." If we take the demonstration seriously, it shifts the settlement of questions of newness from objects to events, and to the marks that the latter leave on their participants, both human and nonhuman.

Yours from the Valley,  
The anthropologist of technoscience

### From the Future Archaeologist—Message 5

We three are kin, it seems. Coastal creatures that thrive at the edge, that seek the periphery where infrastructures of power are more fragile, and can be hacked; here at the edge, the undersea fiber-optic sound of Important Emails from the center can be "transduced," as Adrian Mackenzie (2002) or Stefan Helmreich (2007) might say.



**Figure P.5**

The Ring of Brodgar stone circle, Orkney. Aaron Watson (CC:BY-NC).

Here, at the periphery, there can still be dragons.

After all, those at the center seek the leading edge, the bleeding edge.

If the future has a place, then it is here, at the edge, where things change form, land to water. The future is a seascape.

But it was ever thus.

Archaeologists, such as Mike Parker Pearson, cite the Ring of Brodgar stone circle as the origin for the design of Stonehenge near London (Parker Pearson et al. 2007). Six thousand years at the leading edge of design and technology. Still there with the European Marine Energy Centre, and the world visiting, eager to learn of its wave and tide energy devices, those moving monuments in the sea.

Orkney has a timescape that is not in the technopresent like Silicon Valley, dear anthropologist of technoscience.

Orkney has a timescape that is mixed—diffracted, since we are borrowing from Donna Haraway (1994). Walk with me through the contemporary heritage management of a World Heritage Site, through a farmer's field sown with ancient organic wheat, and hear your footsteps echo over the concrete remains of a forgotten national wind industry.

The poet George Mackay Brown knew it when he wrote: "The Orkney imagination is haunted by time."

What if “The Mother of All Demos” had taken place here at the edge, where the technopresent is diffracted?

Do such demos require a center, a pivot, a fulcrum, around which to spin outward?

My friends at the European Marine Energy Centre, a test site for demo-ing, would say that it can be otherwise.

We three are kin in other ways, too. We are attentive to collaboration at the edge. You, collective designer, speak of democracy and participation. Here in Orkney some call it ‘Orkney PLC’, a Public Limited Company, not to invoke cold capitalism, but to invoke the warmth of a company, of people working together to pay the bills, of islanders who know that what we talk about when we talk about money is a future.

Orkney PLC has been around for a while, too.

The stone circles were community-building projects, the archaeologist Colin Richards (2004) argues. Each family, each company in the old sense, brought a stone to a place. Not monument-making but Orkney-PLC-making.

We are still haunted by those community-builders. Most islands have a community development trust with wind turbines that turn fierce tear-your-car-door-off-its-hinges weather into a bank balance for the island community. If the British Crown, owners of the sea, would let them, they’d do the same with wave and tide energy. But the sea is not a local resource, like the stones on shore. Step from the farmer’s field into the Atlantic Ocean, get your feet wet, and here there be vast, European Union monsters in the deep. Ask any fisherman.

This far from Brussels, this far from Silicon Valley, you have to work hard or you will sail off the edge of the map and no one will notice. The infrastructure of everyday living gets thin here. One big storm and the lights go out, the Internet goes out. An island community knows the length of copper that thins down their data.

Infrastructures are imagined by the center as centralizing forces. It would be cheaper, more efficient, for us all to live in London or Los Angeles or Beijing. Less copper, fewer oil pipelines, reduced leakage from the water system.

But what might centrifugal infrastructure look like? An infrastructure that was designed to force things to the edge, to the periphery? So that it took work for the center to pull it in?

We three should talk.

We three are kin.

### From the Collective Designer—Message 6

dear designboat fellow travelers

i get the point from the valley

that demos are



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what make the objects travel  
but then again  
is not “the mother of all demos”  
literally the people  
political collective things  
and publics in the making?  
  
for the scandinavian  
collective designer  
this public thing by preference  
takes the form of prototyping  
in “agonistic” “living labs”  
as local activities  
collaboratively “rehearsing futures”  
making and composing  
“matters of concern”  
  
maybe these “living labs”  
as performed here by the sound  
are more like  
the “centrifugal infrastructures”  
suggested from the island  
then central to such “living labs”  
as marginalized and designerly

“infrastructuring” intra-actions  
are immigrants like jila moradi  
and the herrgård’s women’s association  
counseling on violence in the home  
bitterly struggling  
for recognition by the city  
of their modest but beautiful design  
and social innovation prototype  
a collective of  
displaced and resourceful women  
producing catering services  
for unaccompanied refugee children  
a great offer  
the city wasted as of now  
another controversial thing  
of social innovation  
is the design and recomposing  
of the city buses  
from private advertisement planks  
to public places and hubs  
for musical exchange and reproduction

as appropriated by  
“the voice and face of the street”  
a movement of youngsters  
from the projects  
futures are also being prototyped  
and value production reassessed  
by “free labor” and in commons  
in maker spaces like fabriken  
situated in an abandoned shipyard building  
opening up and collaboratively exploring  
the secret workshop of production  
drawing together open software,  
electronics, bikes, and textile  
in do-it-yourself and craft intra-actions  
the collective designer  
also takes part in “agonistic” things  
not always with a happy ending  
like in exploring  
new forms of governance  
and publics in the making  
in designing a city social incubator

drawing together

grassroots movements

local social entrepreneurs

ngos and civil servants

venture capital and politicians

collaboratively prototyping

a future thing to implement

a distributed incubator

out there in the projects

where the action and the demos are

but so far business is as usual

hegemonic power opted out

and left the common thing

implementing their own

incubator vision

a central market driven

new jobs generator

infrastructuring and making things

in cultural production

is neither without friction

in creative class struggles

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there is marginalization  
but also future-making tactics  
things countering capital and state  
like the small indie team  
behind the film productions  
“nasty old people” and  
“granny’s dancing on the table”  
that by crowd-financing  
through the “pirate bay”  
and collaborating  
with the public  
in the making  
made their dream come through  
in the margin  
in rural places  
there are also demos  
coming together through  
“centrifugal infrastructures”  
like “threads”  
a mobile sewing circle  
patchworking

traditional craft and mobile phones  
stitching together  
matters of concern  
and prototyping  
emerging publics in the making  
these are but a few examples  
for contemplation  
of collective design  
and marginal futures  
as being made at this location  
they may raise questions of power  
and design agency distribution  
across humans and nonhumans  
but there should be more to it  
than acts of design delegations  
because collective design  
it seems  
becomes in the very making  
in everyday intra-actions  
in comings together  
in controversial

collaborative composing  
preferably performed as  
things of design  
more kin to ancient political assemblies  
on the island and around the sound  
than to the new speak of innovation  
and the modern object of design?  
  
from the sound  
  
your collective designer  
  
(part of)

### **From the Anthropologist of Technoscience—Message 7**

Dear future archaeologist and collective designer (part of),

I'm inspired by our mailboat exchange to think about questions of time, and how it folds into the work of making the problems for which design offers us its solutions. Here are two images to get us started.

On the left we see Brokaw Road, in San Jose, California, in the first wave of European-American settlement of the valley now known for its silicon, but then famously a place of agricultural abundance, called Santa Clara since its colonization. On the right we see the same place just over 100 years later, in roughly the present moment. I'm making a contrast in setting these two images side by side, of course—a contrast between an agrarian past and a (post?)industrial present, materialized in the shady greenness of organic plant life and the bare grayness of concrete. But I'm most taken by the sign that invites us to “Enter Here” through a door that will grant us access to the home of “Excess Solutions” (“E\$”), a reseller of surplus electronics equipment. How did it come to be that we have an excess of solutions? What is the process by which innovation creates its problems, first the need for information technologies, now their disposal?

As we know, disposal is not actually about making things go away, but rather their displacement. The recycling of highly toxic e-waste is a globally though asymmetrically distributed industry, and, as Myra Hird reminds us, landfill is far from an inert source



**Figure P.6**

An excess of solutions (left: public domain; right: Flickr user mightyohm CC:BY-SA).

of environmental destruction; it is always also a blooming site of becoming for other organisms that thrive on what for us is deadly (Hird 2010, 36–39). But in design imaginaries the present is characterized not by its excesses (that’s left to the environmentalists), but rather in terms of the lack or emptiness to which innovation is a necessary and urgent response. The mark of a technological society, Andrew Barry (2001, 201) has suggested, is an orientation that privileges change and then figures change as technological innovation. Innovation, in turn, is embedded within a cultural imaginary that posits a world that is always lagging, always in need of being brought up to date through the intercessions of those trained to shape it—a world in need of design.

Postcolonial scholarship in anthropology, in science and technology studies, and in related fields makes it clear that, far from a universal good, the valorization of newness is a local preoccupation of certain actors invested in particular forms of property, within specific regimes of commodity capitalism. A more performative metaphysics of the new makes it evident that, just as translation invariably produces difference, novelty requires imitation or likenesses to familiar forms. Homi Bhabha (1994, 227) directs our attention to the indeterminate spatiality and temporality of the “in-between” as crucial to a postcolonial figuration of difference—an insight that I take to be generative for thinking about objects as well as subjects, and about relations of old and new so central to discourses of design.

So what if we think about the distance between our islands, valleys, and sounds not as the kind of difference that nostalgia makes, or disenchantment, but in terms of the in-between, and as places and material practices of future-making? “We move into the future,” Dorothy Smith writes, “as into a building, the walls, floors and roof of



which we put together with one another as we go into it” (1990, 53). This future isn’t a temporal period existing somewhere beyond the present, but an effect of discursive and material practices enacted always in the present moment, however much those practices may be haunted by memory or animated by imaginings of things to come. Relocating innovation, as we’ve explored it together, means putting innovation in its place, in a way that makes evident the multiplicity of places in which different but also potentially related future-making activities occur. (Relocating Innovation is the name of a collaboration among Endre Dányi, Lucy Suchman, and Laura Watts; see <http://www.sand14.com/relocatinginnovation/>.) This is a strategy that helps us to loosen the grip of unquestioned assumptions regarding what innovation is and where it happens, and to make room for more generative and sustainable forms of future-making.

What does it mean when our dragons turn into machines?

Yours from the Valley,  
The anthropologist of technoscience



**Figure P.7**

The collective designer (part of). Per-Anders Hillgren and Anna Seravalli (CC:BY-NC).

## From the Future Archaeologist—Message 8

Collective designer, anthropologist of technoscience (or whoever will intercept this on the predictable lunar tides and Transatlantic currents)...

You speak of dragons turning into machines, anthropologist of technoscience, but which is more mythical, I wonder? I am thinking of Arthur C. Clarke's famous law: any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic. To which I add my own corollary: any magical machine is indistinguishable from advanced technology. Both dragons and magical machines have mythic power, they fly wire-less only when severed from their infrastructures, designers, e-waste, and all that keeps them aloft.

Here are the remains of a myth—one perhaps familiar to you, collective designer. It will take you only a few minutes to hike through the cattle and grass, up the hill of Costa Head on the northeast coast of Orkney mainland. There you will look out over the blue sound to the other islands, and on the bog and heather summit you will find a derelict stone shed and a concrete plinth, as though once there were a statue. And you would be right. Here was a monument in 1955. For a while it was a world first in wind energy—a 100-kilowatt wind turbine machine that stood for two years, until the Orkney storms tangled the metal framework. For a while it was the UK's test site for a new renewable energy industry. Now it is a future archaeology. "We blinked," a worried proponent of another new renewable energy test site says. Now it is Denmark that is the home of wind energy.

When I walked up Costa Head, and stood before those cracked stone foundations, I wrote an *in memoriam* and tied it there:

mica encrusted  
tomb  
to an unknown  
turbine

There is no disposal here, only decay. Something mythic, a future renewable energy industry, flew here, for a while, and is now as much heritage as the 5,000-year-old Ring of Brodgar stone circle. Futures are effects of material practices, you say, anthropologist of technoscience. And standing here, in the remains of a future, I agree. Futures leave residues, as I said in my first message. I collect these residues, these fragments, and reconstruct them. Sometimes residues are dispersed. E-waste is just the relocation of archaeological stratigraphy. Machines can be imagined as seascapes, their manufacture from so many parts and materials, and their disposal into different parts, stretched over the sea, from where they are designed to where they decay.

Although drawing on archaeological theory, I am kin to science studies, and I live by the motto “It could be otherwise.” I am not interested in reconstructing some nationalistic story of the innovation ownership of wind energy. But I am interested when I talk to the director of the European Marine Energy Centre—the one who did not just say “We blinked” but said it to those who have responsibility for choosing whether to repeat the story for marine energy.

Along with my ethnographic collaborations that remake this past, such as the conversations with the director of EMEC, I collaborated with the poet Alec Finlay and the photographer Alistair Peebles to reconstruct Costa Head online as poetry, as photography, as memorial, as labels tied in the wind (<http://skying-blog.blogspot.dk/2011/07/costa-head-orkney.html>).

Futures are mythic machines, social and material, designed and made. Reconstructing them is to remember them, to give breath and flame to them. So it can be otherwise. ...

The future archaeologist



Figure P.8

View from Costa Head, Orkney, including memorial poem by Laura Watts (CC:BY-NC).

### **From the Anthropologist of Technoscience—Message 9**

Dear collective designer (part of) and future archaeologist

I've left the Valley myself (a purely topographical descriptor for a place transformed into a sprawling cityscape) and moved north to the mountains of British Columbia, so my reports are now retrospective but I hope still timely.

It's perhaps a testimonial to the (re)productive success of Silicon Valley that futures everywhere are now figured (at least by those who imagine themselves as universal future makers) as centers of the IT and media industries, home to an entrepreneurial creative class. Or at least that's the subtext of policy documents, with their apparently unquestioned acceptance of the inevitability of capitalist (rather than post-capitalist) politics. This is a market logic in which proper modes of relation are competitive ones (however much winning might necessitate collaboration), and success in one place requires failures elsewhere.

In Silicon Valley, democracy is taken for granted (as the brand trademarked in 1776 by the United States of America). One consequence is that discussion of the politics of design and innovation are silenced. In this respect, with a few notable exceptions, the Valley is in danger of becoming increasingly marginal (perhaps a good thing?) as it falls behind in the difficult, practical work of crafting durably heterogeneous collectives. The latter requires building long-term relations across the fault lines of social networks. This kind of making is about decentering design, in the sense that designers move outside of their own research-and-development enclosures and in the sense that professional design becomes, if still necessary, not a sufficient practice for future-making.

as ever,

The anthropologist of technoscience

### **From the Collective Designer—Message 10**

dear future archaeologist and anthropologist of technoscience

this is your collective designer

once again by the shore

now contemplating

the gentle lapping of the waves

it is summer in the city

and here up north  
those of us that are privileged enough  
go to the sea or to the countryside  
to enjoy our short summer  
with its long light nights  
  
this is also the time to finally get to grips  
with some of the books that have piled up  
during a hectic working year  
  
this year besides moby dick  
god, nature, ocean and the universe  
i also grapple with a manuscript  
filled with marginal notes  
close to my home and heart  
exploring design and innovation  
as being made by citizens and colleagues  
a heterogeneous collective  
formerly known as users and designers  
now maybe as makers of futures  
multiple futures—matters of concern  
  
this manuscript  
on future-making practices

localized and peripheral  
often marginalized  
by major infrastructures  
as well as the mainstream  
design and technological innovation  
that they challenge

these notes  
on designing and the social  
on opening production  
on emerging publics  
on creative class struggles

are the design things  
the matters of concern  
this immutable mailboat mobile carries  
keen to find the shores  
of your islands and your valley

do they travel well  
do they connect  
to design and innovation  
to publics in the making

to more democratic futures

being made at your locations?

your collective designer (part of)

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# Making Futures

## Marginal Notes on Innovation, Design, and Democracy

**Edited by: Pelle Ehn, Elisabet M. Nilsson, Richard Topgaard**

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