

CRITICAL REFLECTION

Our Symbiotic Life: An Exploration of Interspecies Relations

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<https://github.com/A-Zahra/Cart-360/tree/master/Critical-Reflections>

<https://a-zahra.github.io/Cart-360/Website/index.html>

According to my understanding, Katja Budinger and Frank Heidmann are two artists researchers at the Potsdam University of Applied sciences who would like to explore how the quality of the human-plant interaction can be improved and developed in the future considering climate change. Design fiction is the method they took advantage of to design four different scenarios in which the future of the human-plant relationship is pictured. Design fiction is a field that helps to visualize and sense the theories that are presented by the science fiction field.

In their experiment, each scenario was established based on a set of concepts. The first scenario was based on democracy, collaboration, and sustainability and they called it the green road. The second one was based on nationalism and protectionism and was called the rocky road. The third one was based on inequality and stratification and was a divided road. And finally, the last one which was the highway was based on consumerism and economic progress.

Each scenario contained three main parts. In the first part, it was explained that what the project is about, what the final artifact is supposed to look like, how it is supposed to work and be used in the future, what would be its influence on the environment and people, and what its relationship is with the scenario's selected concepts. In the second part, the scope, and the context that the project was going to be implemented was covered. And finally, in the last part, the background of the project and how they came to define this project was expressed.

Then, they concluded that the main purpose behind executing this project has been to make the future picture of the human-plant relationship more approachable, tangible, and visible. They wanted to make people feel related to the future that they are about to experience. They also stated that in this project, what mattered to them has been the process in which they learned and gained valuable knowledge about the topic, not the result since this is not the essence of design fiction.

Personally, I found the On Demand and the Bottle Garden scenarios very interesting. I think these projects' ideas are very creative and futuristic. The artists have tried to look at the concepts from a totally new perspective. Something unique about these scenarios is that the artists did not limit themselves to the idea that whether these projects are feasible to happen in the future or not. They have let themselves explore the concepts in all possible directions and then, through the prototyping levels, could illustrate how these scenarios can be implemented.

Recently, I did online research on reusable materials for one of my projects and I found some interesting projects. One of the projects was a competition that was held by the collaboration of Dezeen and Samsung companies and the goal has been to make artworks out of Samsung television echo-packages. In this project, they were aiming to encourage their customers “to create innovative household objects by repurposing corrugated-cardboard packaging.” (1) The other project that drew my attention was the RECURF project done by the collaboration of Materials Experience Lab, the Hogeschool van Amsterdam (HvA), various local SME’s and TU Delft. In this project, they collected the textile waste fibers of the Amsterdam residents and combined it with bio-based plastics to produce a new material with unique features. The main focus of this project has been to process this new material “in attractive circular products for interior and exterior uses” (2) and “find suitable product applications for it” (2).

Although the main purpose behind these projects has been reaching to material efficiency and finding new, innovative ways to reuse the existing materials and reduce the number of waste materials entering the environment, the impact that they would leave on the environment would make them relevant to the matter of climate change. Indeed, both the projects done by Budinger and Heidmann and the projects done to emphasize the importance of material efficiency are being run for a shared purpose, resolving the problem of climate change. It does not matter which method is taken by the people who can be effective on the relationship between human beings and the environment, the main goal is to make a whole shift in the type of this relationship so that both of the parties would benefit from this interaction.

References

1. **Blauwhoff, Davine.** Re-Using Circular Urban Fibres. *Materials Experience Lab*. [Online] 2016. <http://materialsexperiencelab.com/recurf>.
2. **Hobson, B., Sarah Willemart And Matthieu Muller.** Transform Samsung Eco-Package Boxes Into Animal Toys. [Online] Dezeen, 2020. <https://www.dezeen.com/2020/08/31/endangered-animals-sarah-willemart-matthieu-muller-samsung-out-of-the-box-competition/>.