Reading & Thinging session at FACT http://alab.space/reading-and-thinging-3/ :

Reading materials:
http://xenopraxis.net/readings/uexkull_foray.pdf
http://heavysideindustries.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/The_Cybernetic_Brain_Sketches.pdf
& Brett Victor http://worrydream.com/ClimateChange/

We had a discussion which was wayward & wide-ranging. We did not manage to take up the cybernetic game that I'd arrived with - it made me inspect the tension between letting communication flow in a self-organised way and organising self-organisation(!) & placing some constraints and experiment with group output.

I was interested in testing out a syntegretic approach to evolving a protocol for holding a meeting. The idea is that the specific agenda can emerge from the group & questions for discussion come out of the shared focus.

Plan was: Each group member writes down a question that might provoke original perspectives on issue relating to the theme of technology for ecology & post-internet futures. Each one puts forward a question - we then discuss - move to choosing one question - & then create an object that enacts a perspective on the chosen provocation.

Felt like we got to the threshold of this and barely begun, but it's a long process to do properly. Feel there is a usefulness to provoking divergent thinking within workshops & shifting out of the comfort zone.

Could go further %

Action suggestions.
For next session - creating objects & making rough & ready objects in response to discussion?

Notes from the reading >

Brett Victor article

"People say "this is a Manhattan Project, this an Apollo Project". Sorry, those are science projects. Fusion is a Manhattan Project or an Apollo Project... The rest of this is more like retooling for World War II, except with everyone playing on the same team."
— Saul Griffith, on converting the world to clean energy

Buckminster Fuller's point about serious technical innovation coming out of a time of war. Can we see the clean energy battle as a war that demands cooperation? At present, the "war" meme is being played out in reference to AI / crypto issues / privacy

> "what's needed is not throwing up a few solar panels, but a major industrial shift comparable to retooling for World War II… In order to avoid the more catastrophic climate scenarios, global production and adoption of clean energy technology will have to scale at similar rates — but continuously for 15 years or more."

To me, it feels like a personality driven way of making this point. A hard experience can be styled as giving birth, as a war, as a healing from dysfunction, as a breaking of an addiction. Is the war language useful? In art practice I find my best work is done when I am in love with a project and know exactly why I'm doing it, not from a point of stress and conflict. Can we consider about the motivations for making & creative action?

Community building - shift from speculation to doing - bold creative action married with knowing facts and working practices http://www.poc21.cc/
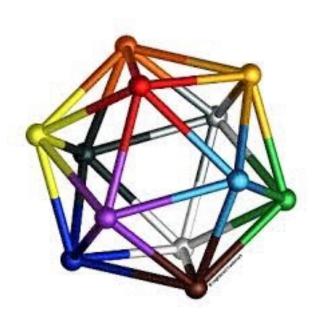
Communities on outskirts of Barcelona http://www.reconomy.org/the-barcelona-interviews-free-money-precariousness-and-alternative-living/

organic / permaculture farming, solar arrays, local networks

creating structures: own networks - own money - own ecologies

TEAM SYNTEGRITY -

Stafford Beer structured discussions in the form of a geometric figure, the icosahedron

a little exercise in thinking with objects:

The internet was made possible by the idea of moving from centralised circuit-switched networks to distributed packet-switching protocols, switching data from sender to receiver.

Can we make non digital networks that share some of these qualities?

Expanded notion of networks - Thiago's example of dog's trained to smell piss!

A foray into the world of animals and humans

 http://xenopraxis.net/readings/uexkull_foray.pdf

organism - organon - Greek for instrument

life as a natural thermodynamic process

human striving as a reflection of being caught in a "more efficacious, but constantly threatened, process of gradient reduction by complex systems."

"function-orientated systemic process that occurs unconsciously and underconsciously, and includes learning"

Belousov-Zhabotinsky reactions / manmade Taylor vortices that "remember" their past states

"Because of a new wave of mechanical understanding of living things based on molecular biology and replicating DNA and RNA, Uexkull's emphasis on the importance of integrating purposes, function, and nonrandom directionality is if anything more germane now than when first he enunciated it."

remember voracious energy extraction does not equal wisdom - quite the reverse…

"The most confounding quality of our "intelligence" is its lack of wisdom: we use our know-how to plunder as quickly and greedily as possible, cheating each other, hoarding luxuries…"

"The two primary activities in which living beings are involved are gradient reduction and survival."

??? There's a serious critique of this kind of techno-bias "get real" thinking

Creativity / the question of relationship / love beyond personal survival. Scientific studies on survival & loveless environments - it all goes far deeper than a nice romantic notion & does not seem to register in these let's all get to ground zero arguments.

Bret Victor

Where is magic needed?

"In this essay, I've tried to sketch out a map of where such magic is needed — systems for producing, moving, and consuming clean energy; tools for building them; media for understanding what needs to be built."

Important emphasis on the level of self knowledge required to make transition - eg. quotes Feynman on delusion - "The first principle is that you must not fool yourself — and you are the easiest person to fool."

& a need to share this awareness - eg. companies to reveal their open problems

Rich info texts - writing embedded with facts - moving past a data aesthetic into data studded critiques.

AND magic is needed somewhere else too >

Despair as paralysis - need for humans to inhabit a space and have a frame of mind that aids concentration on work.

Humanity has a long history of "hard work" - evolution has always been tough.

Can we expand from the idea of "work" as being mad slog? - feels like it concedes to the whole war rhetoric - which, in my view, is very much wedded to capitalism, masculine conflict mode and crisis culture. What about considering healthy & unhealthy functioning - congruence & ecological health. Or the birth pangs of the new - there's drama in that. - KG