

Speculative and Critical Design and Libraries

Schedule

What is speculative and critical design?

Examples—Daniel Weil, Superflux.

Case Study: speculative design and climate reading group

A partnership with LATITUDE, an arts organization in Chicago.

Discussion

Radio in a Bag, Daniel Weil



<https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O85208/radio-in-a-bag-radio-weil-daniel/>

Yellow Chair Stories, Anab Jain



<https://vimeo.com/2935189>

Song of the Machine, Superflux



<https://vimeo.com/22616192>

Case Study— LATITUDE's Speculative Design and Climate Reading Group



How might we...

use design methods to help artists produce
work that responds to climate?

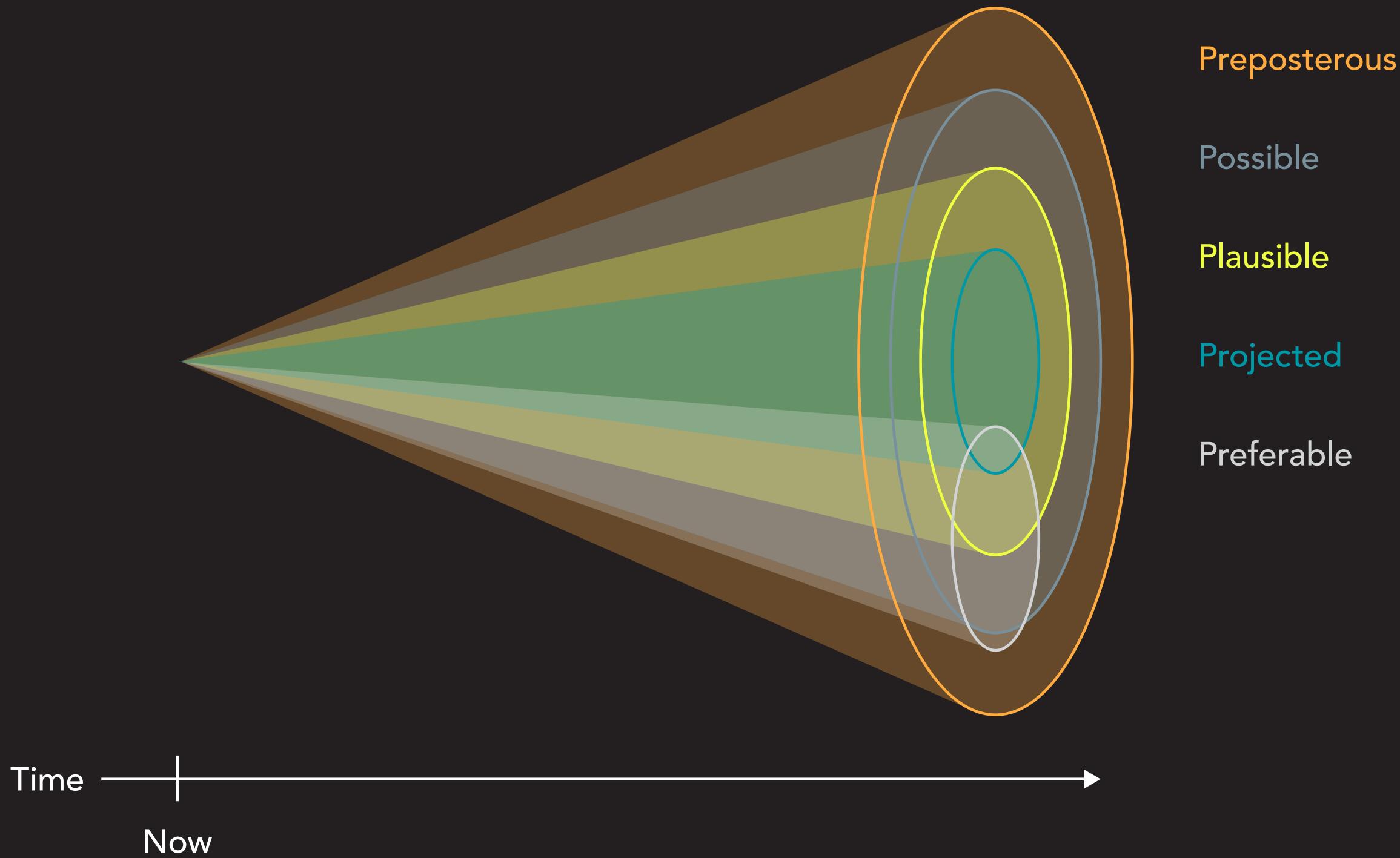
identify methods that are not good at
helping artists in this way?

identify better methods?

LATITUDE  CHICAGO



The Futures Cone



Adapted from Joseph Voros
<https://thevoroscope.com/2015/12/28/on-examining-preposterous-futures/>

a/b, Dunne and Raby

(a)

affirmative
problem solving
design as process
provides answers
in the service of industry
for how the world is
science fiction
futures
fictional functions
change the world to suit us
narratives of production
anti-art
research for design
applications
design for production
fun
concept design
consumer
user
training
makes us buy
innovation
ergonomics

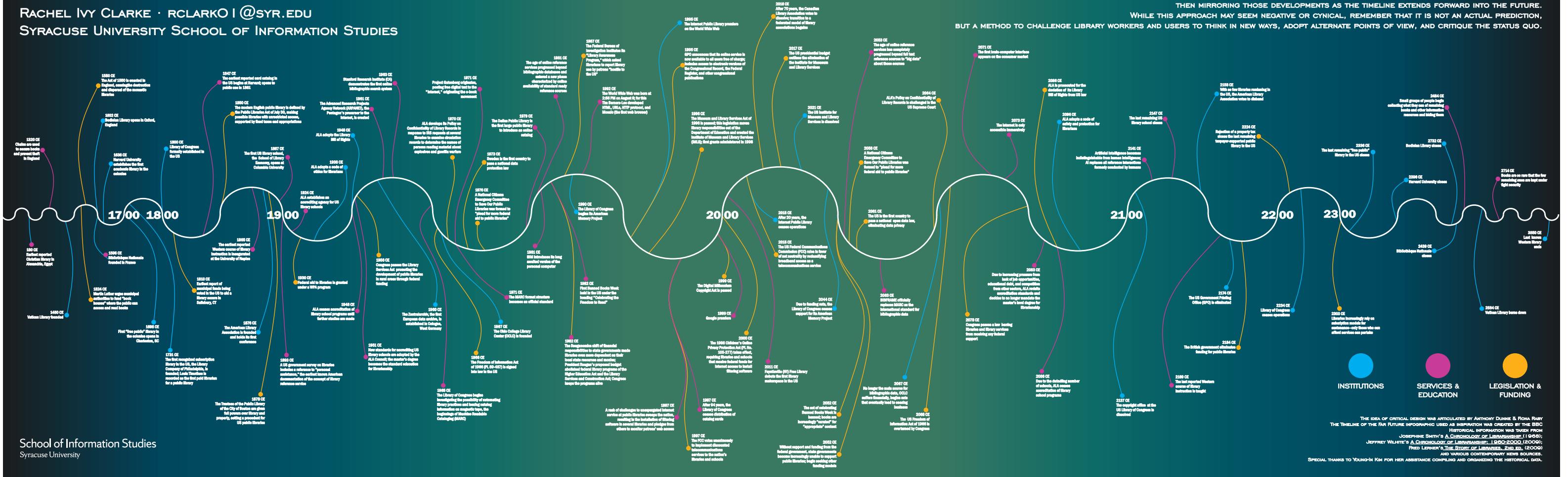
(b)

critical
problem finding
design as medium
asks questions
in the service of society
for how the world could be
social fiction
parallel worlds
functional fictions
change us to suit the world
narratives of consumption
applied art
research through design
implications
design for debate
satire
conceptual design
citizen
person
education
makes us think
provocation
rhetoric

A Timeline of the Far Future of Libraries, Rachel Ivy Clarke

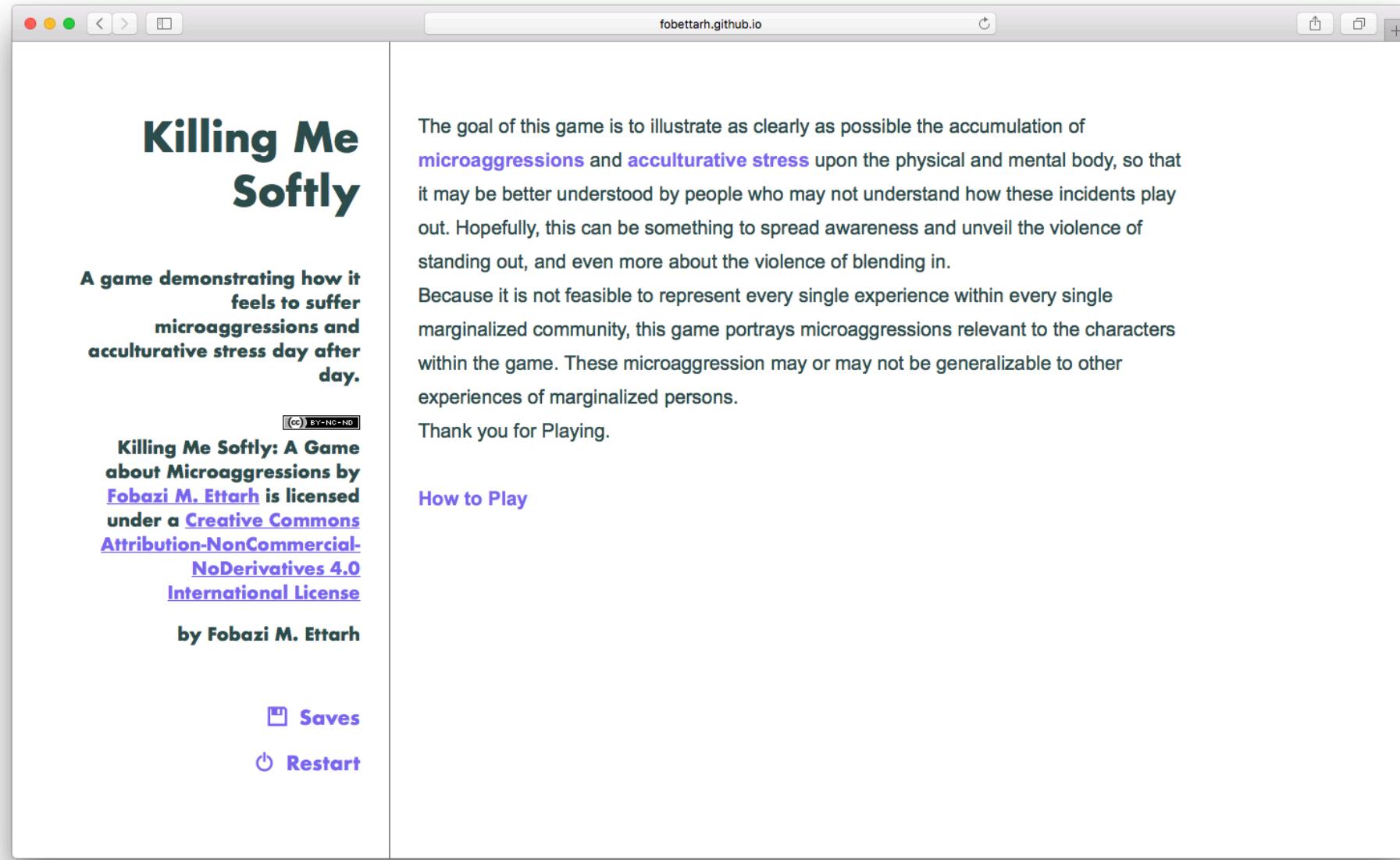
TIMELINE OF THE FAR FUTURE OF LIBRARIES A PROVOCATIVE ILLUSTRATION

RACHEL IVY CLARKE · RCLARKO1@SYR.EDU
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF INFORMATION STUDIES



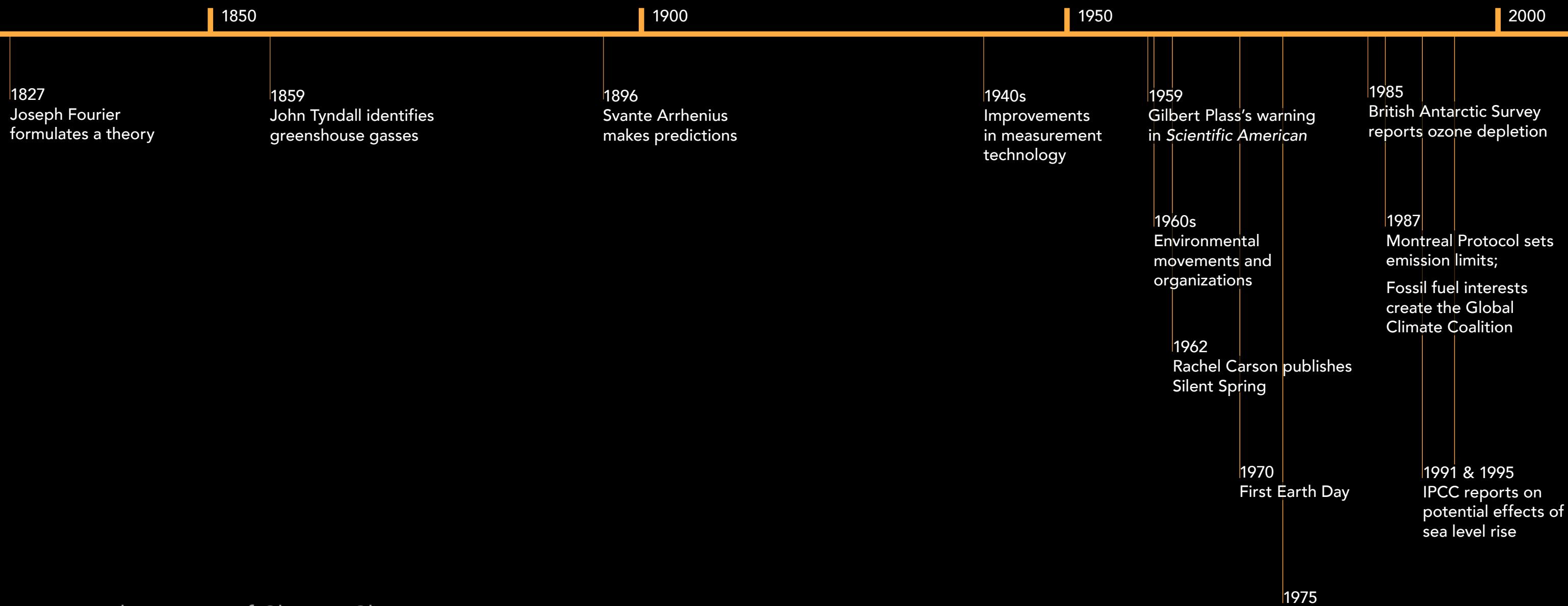
<https://ischool.syr.edu/people/directories/view/rclark01/>

Killing Me Softly, Fobazi M. Ettarh



<https://fobettarh.github.io/Killing-Me-Softly/>

A Brief History of Global Warming



Source: Imagining the Future of Climate Change:
World-Making through Science Fiction and Activism, Shelley Streeby

Reading Groups as a Method



Syllabus

Design After the End of the World

Readings & Activities

Week 1: a/b (Dunne & Raby)

Week 2: Speculative Everything, Dunne & Raby (chapters 1 & 2). "Design Fiction: A Short essay on design, science, fact and fiction," Julian Bleeker.

Week 3: Imagining the Future of Climate Change: World-Making through Science Fiction and Activism, Shelley Streeby (chapters 1 & 2).

Week 4: "Do Artifacts Have Politics?" Langdon Winner. "Do Politics Have Artefacts?" Bernward Joerges. "The Economics of Climate Change: Cocktails and Conversations with William Nordhaus," William Nordhaus.

Week 5: The Clock of the Long Now, Stuart Brand (excerpts).

Week 6: The Future Energy Lab, Superflux. The New York Times Special Edition, the Yes Men.

Week 7: The Thing From the Future, Stuart Candy. Brainstorming.

Week 8: The Thing From the Future, Stuart Candy. Brainstorming.

Sources of Inspiration

Imagining the Future of Climate Change: World-Making through Science Fiction and Activism,
Shelley Streeby

"Do Artifacts Have Politics?"
Langdon Winner

ONE

#NoDAPL

Native American and Indigenous Science, Fiction, and Futurisms

In the days leading up to the March for Science on Earth Day, April 22, 2017, more than eleven hundred Native American and Indigenous scientists, scholars, and allies endorsed the "Indigenous Science Statement for the March on Science," authored by four leading Native American scientists and scholars. In this statement, Robin Kimmerer, Rosalyn LaPier, Melissa Nelson, and Kyle Whyte emphasized the concept of Native American and Indigenous science as they encouraged "Indigenous people and allies to participate in the national march in DC or a satellite march." Naming the declaration "Let Our Indigenous Voices Be Heard," the authors insisted on the need to "engage the power of both Indigenous and Western science on behalf of the living Earth."¹ Nelson further elaborated on the concept of Indigenous sciences in an interview: "To successfully address our world's pressing ecological issues, it is critical that we look to the multiple place-based and time-tested sciences of Indigenous peoples."² The use of the term Indigenous science, like the

LANGDON WINNER

Do Artifacts Have Politics?

IN CONTROVERSIES ABOUT TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY, there is no idea more provocative than the notion that technical things have political qualities. At issue is the claim that the machines, structures, and systems of modern material culture can be accurately judged not only for their contributions of efficiency and productivity, not merely for their positive and negative environmental side effects, but also for the ways in which they can embody specific forms of power and authority. Since ideas of this kind have a persistent and troubling presence in discussions about the meaning of technology, they deserve explicit attention.¹

Writing in *Technology and Culture* almost two decades ago, Lewis Mumford gave classic statement to one version of the theme, arguing that "from late neolithic times in the Near East, right down to our own day, two technologies have recurrently existed side by side: one authoritarian, the other democratic, the first system-centered, immensely powerful, but inherently unstable, the other man-centered, relatively weak, but resourceful and durable."² This thesis stands at the heart of Mumford's studies of the city, architecture, and the history of technics, and mirrors concerns voiced earlier in the works of Peter Kropotkin, William Morris, and other nineteenth century critics of industrialism. More recently, antinuclear and prosolar energy movements in Europe and America have adopted a similar notion as a centerpiece in their arguments. Thus environmentalist Denis Hayes concludes, "The increased deployment of nuclear power facilities must lead society toward authoritarianism. Indeed, safe reliance upon nuclear power as the principal source of energy may be possible only in a totalitarian state." Echoing the views of many proponents of appropriate technology and the soft energy path, Hayes contends that "dispersed solar sources are more compatible than centralized technologies with social equity, freedom and cultural pluralism."³

An eagerness to interpret technical artifacts in political language is by no means the exclusive property of critics of large-scale high-technology systems. A long lineage of boosters have insisted that the "biggest and best" that science and industry made available were the best guarantees of democracy, freedom, and social justice. The factory system, automobile, telephone, radio, television, the space program, and of course nuclear power itself have all at one time or another been described as democratizing, liberating forces. David Lilienthal, in *T.V.A.: Democracy on the March*, for example, found this promise in the phos-

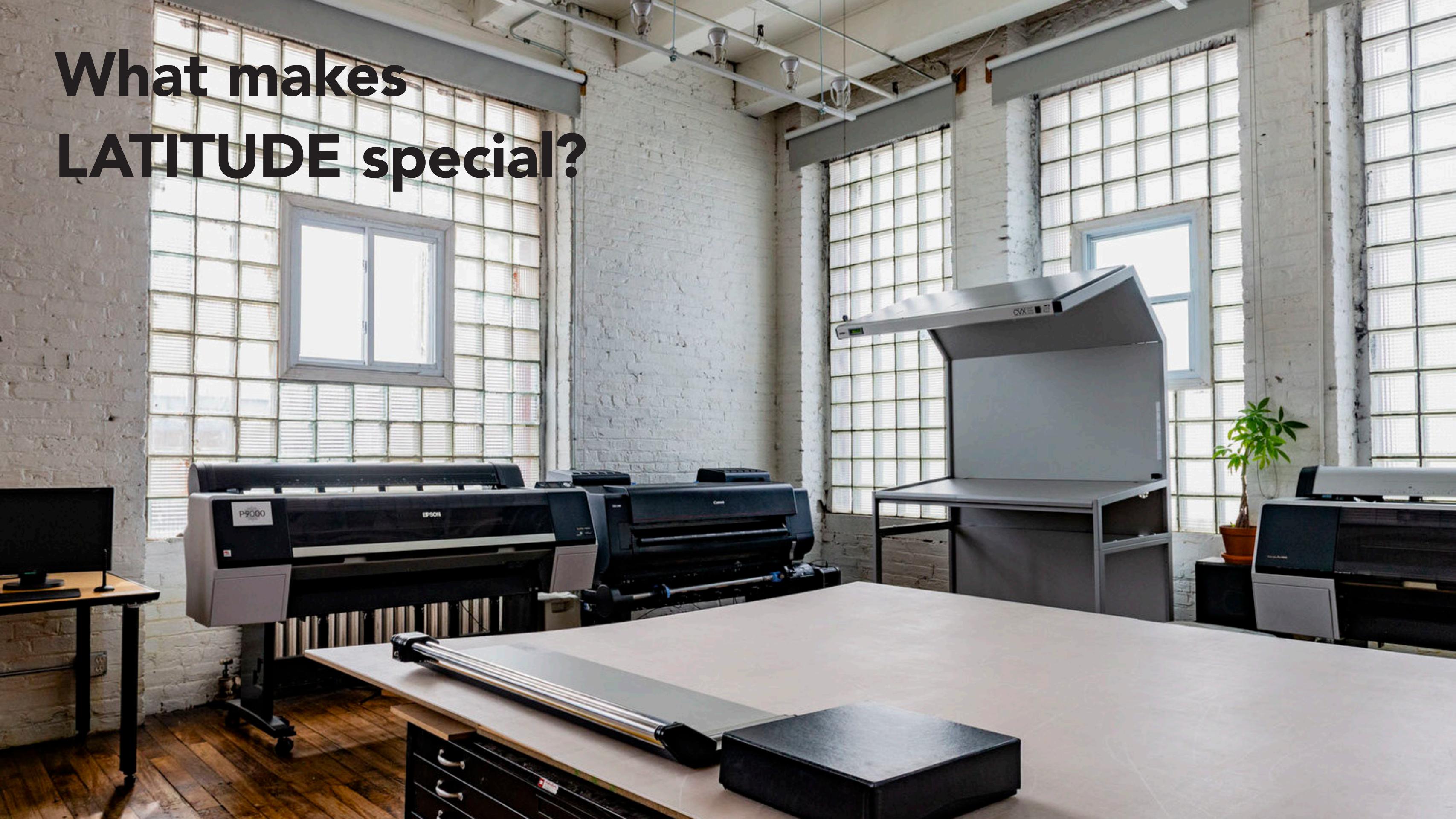
Sources of Inspiration

Project site:
<https://theyesmen.org/nyt>

Photo source:
<https://visitsteve.com/made/the-ny-times-special-edition/>



What makes LATITUDE special?



Group properties

open call	—	invitation only
open group	—	closed group
interdisciplinary membership	—	intradisciplinary membership
ongoing	—	set duration
virtual meetings	—	physical meetings
daytime	—	evenings
weekends	—	weekdays
no alcohol	—	alcohol
host network	—	leader network

Group properties



Next experiments

1. Free-form verbal brainstorming with facilitator taking notes
2. One hour of brainstorming
3. Open discussion with a facilitator taking notes
4. Pause discussion to sketch favorable ideas every 15–30 minutes
5. Short critical write-ups based on sketches from brainstorms
6. Mini-research projects based on sketches
7. Field work as input
8. News and social media as input

Discussion

What experiments would you like try to combine
making and critique?

Have you ever worked with someone who was very
good at providing **critical feedback**? How did they do
it?

How can you imagine **libraries** incorporating this kind
of design work?

Invitation—

A **virtual reading group** on speculative and critical design this September and October.

Please stay in touch.

Email: john@johnjung.us

Twitter: [@johnjungdotus](https://twitter.com/johnjungdotus)