

Researching the Future Everyday

02023 ↔ 02038

TU/e



Rijksdirectie Tijdreizen Nederland
werkt namens de Europese Unie
en de Verenigde Naties

Wateringsebosweg 26a
Oude Waalsteerweg 10
2397 AK Den Haag, aan Zee
Nederland, Europese Unie

April 24, 02038

TIME-TRAVEL ASSIGNMENT | VEREISTE TIJDREISDIENST
DO NOT IGNORE THIS LETTER

Dear citizen,

You have been identified by the UN Time Taskforce Model (v7.2b) as a leading designer within your field (as verified by archive data from the former TU Eindhoven) due to your excellent track record in the design of systems with emerging technologies in a societal context across all five expertise areas.

Under the powers vested in the Rijksdirectie Tijdreizen Nederland by Regulation (EU) 02037/5600MB of December 11, 02037 on the Governance of Time Travel and Climate Action, you are hereby required to participate in a Time-Travel Assignment, in your professional role as a designer. Under the collective title of the Imagination & Climate Futures Studio, you and a selected group of elite colleagues will travel back to the year 02023, to your former place of education, TU Eindhoven.

Your assignment will involve intervening within the cultural milieu of student life in 02023 to bring attention to an issue that you believe, from your 02038 perspective, is essential that people in 02023 treat as important, given the events that (as you know) happened in the years between then and the present day.

Please report to the room as communicated to you by the university authorities, at 13.30 hrs (UTC+2) on Tuesday April 25, 02023, and be ready to:

- 1) Introduce yourself: your name, and something about your current work as a designer in 02038, to the group
- 2) Discuss the issue that you want to bring to the attention of citizens in 02023

Your cooperation is appreciated in the above assignment, which is however mandatory without a valid exemption as provided for in the regulations. The full rules of time travel are beyond the scope of this letter but are common knowledge and should be self-explanatory.

Yours in peace


on behalf of the Rijksdirectie Tijdreizen Nederland

! You might get a fine of up to €100,000 if you do not comply with a citizens service summons or you lie to avoid service.

The Netherlands Time Travel Directorate is an equitable opportunities employer.
Non-human actors are encouraged to apply to all open positions.

Welcome
to your
future(s)?
Imagination &
Climate Futures
Studio

Welcome to Researching the Future Everyday, an Industrial Design Master's elective at TU/e. You are about to see six glimpses of 2038—or, rather, 02038, to use the notation proposed by the Long Now Foundation—from design students who have spent the last eight weeks exploring different ways of imagining change over the next 15 years.

When we imagine “the future” we are not acting in isolation: we are doing our imagining in a broad sociological and cultural context which influences what we believe to be possible or desirable. As designers,

we are also often in a position to make “our” visions of futures come into being, in conjunction with technological innovation, but also against a backdrop of a world facing significant crises and transitions, in climate, health, inequality, social justice, and biodiversity loss. How can we negotiate these vast questions responsibly?

This course combines a speculative and critical design approach, drawing on work in experiential futures, with insights from other disciplines, in the arts, humanities, and social sciences (and in fiction) addressing aspects of how people imagine everyday life in different futures. This enables using design methods to explore alternative, transformative perspectives on futures, with a foundation of knowledge and insights beyond design itself.

The three broad theme briefs set for the projects each engages with research being undertaken by the teaching staff, and we have made use of these links during the course, for example with visits from researchers on the IMAGINE: Contested Futures of Sustainability and the Centre for Unusual Collaborations ‘Playing With The Trouble’ project. Not everything we have covered over our eight weeks together has been directly applicable to the projects, but we hope that it has increased the students’ repertoire of ways of thinking about the world, ultimately informing their practice.

Mainstream design education and practice often carry taken-for-granted ideas about relations between design and changes in everyday life, usually centred on a model of “the user” which neglects wider societal and cultural dimensions, and questions of responsibility. Interaction designers have much to learn from other disciplines, in terms of insights on the impact of design on everyday life, and theoretical perspectives on these relations; equally, designers, by materialising imagination and making it experiential and engageable-with, and using design methods to enable others to imagine and express their own imaginations, have something distinct to offer the field of futures.

By combining knowledge from other domains with designerly approaches to ‘futures’, the course (hopefully) guided and equipped students with knowledge, skills and attitudes required to address our current and future societal and global challenges in new ways.

We’re proud of what they have created. We hope you will enjoy these six glimpses of possible futures—but also that they will make you think.

Dan Lockton, Lenneke Kuijer, and Emilia Viaene
June 2023

The Time-Travellers

Prefigurative Hindsight or Imagination Interventions

Theme leader: Dan Lockton, d.j.g.lockton@tue.nl

You and your team have been sent from 2038* back to 2023. You are time-travellers, sent specifically to intervene—via design—to enable people to imagine new ways of thinking and living.

In the 2030s, with the effects of climate crisis and how societies are dealing with it being a major part of everyday life, a huge political, social, and cultural need has grown around hindsight—if only people in the 2020s had been able to imagine [topic]* differently, and taken action accordingly! And not just politicians, but everyday people, and especially students and researchers at a technical university. The reasons will become clearer as your projects progress.

There are topics in 2038 that are endlessly talked about as being so obvious in hindsight, yet which somehow people in the past didn't think about very imaginatively or take seriously, until the problems had become very difficult to manage and we were stuck in particular paths. Sometimes it was just that the issue didn't seem important or worth reimagining, but sometimes it was also that a shift in imagination, mindset, worldview, or beliefs was needed. Sometimes new information or

discoveries—or older wisdom, rediscovered—put previous ways of thinking and acting into a new context, offered creative new lenses on understanding the world. Sometimes there were different ways of living, variations of everyday life that were “adjacent possibles” (Björneborn, 2020) to our own, or which some people were already living in other cultures, other places, but which we only realised in retrospect could have been much better for ourselves, others, or the planet, if only we could have imagined them. This was just as true in 2023 as it is 15 years later.

You are part of one of the first practical applications of time travel: sending groups of motivated, socially and environmentally engaged designers back to the 2020s, to try to create an imagination intervention. Your goal is to create an experience of aspects of everyday life in 2038* so that people in the 2020s can get a kind of prefigurative hindsight (Monticelli, 2021), enabling them to imagine new ways of thinking and living. It turns out that the way time travel works, this kind of intervention—affecting imagination and ideas—is possible, but direct change is not. I don't make the rules.



*Each group might be from a slightly different version of 2038, or perhaps you're all from the 'same' 2038 but you have different interpretations of what it's like, and what's important (just as in 2023 people would have had different interpretations of what 'the present' was like). The topics you consider important will, I am sure, be different.

Your task is to design and create an experience of what the future in 2038 is like, focused on enabling people in 2023 to imagine and think differently about a topic relevant to everyday life. You choose the topic (based on research and extrapolation / your memories of the later 2020s and the 2030s) but it should be something relevant to everyday life. The IMAGINE project (<http://imagine.oslomet.no>) with which we'll be collaborating highlights possible futures of eating, moving, and dressing as topics which

imaginaries of more sustainable future everyday life often involve, but of course these topics weave through many aspects of everyday life, consumption, and design.

The experience is intended to be something that visitors to the Researching the Future Everyday exhibition on 20 June 2023 can take part in. You can plan this as an exhibit that people visit in their own way, a kind of timeslip into the future, a curated experience with a particular time slot, an activity, or a performance.

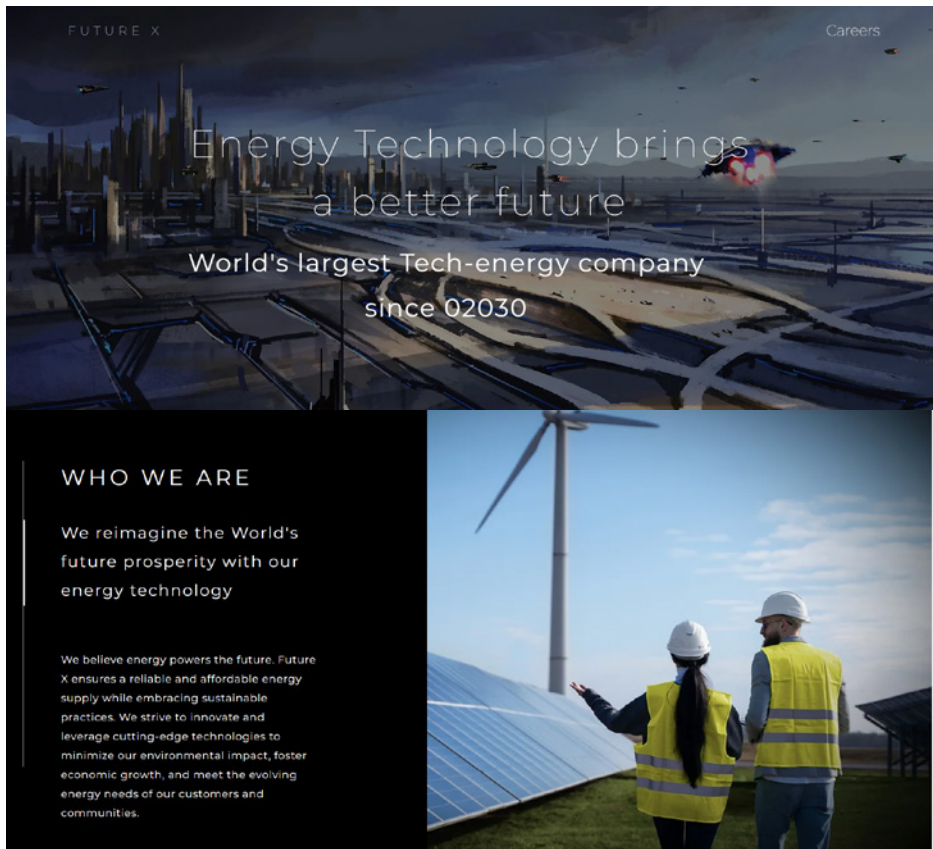
This brief is inspired by lots of different influences, including the John Titor story, J.W. Dunne's *An Experiment With Time*, Juli Sikorska's *Urban Heat Studio*, the format of the *Pathways to Sustainability* conference organised by Utrecht University's Urban Futures Studio, and Stuart Candy's 'Time Machine' courses.

Will you work for Future X?

Selling your soul to capitalism and forsaking a sustainable future

Enzo Li, Luna Snelder, Ioana Ștefănescu

Future X has come from 02038 to recruit. Are you their next image consultant or green procurement specialist? They offer well-paid jobs with irresistible benefits that allow you to change the future...



FUTURE X Careers


Energy Technology brings
a better future

World's largest Tech-energy company
since 02030

WHO WE ARE

We reimagine the World's future prosperity with our energy technology

We believe energy powers the future. Future X ensures a reliable and affordable energy supply while embracing sustainable practices. We strive to innovate and leverage cutting-edge technologies to minimize our environmental impact, foster economic growth, and meet the evolving energy needs of our customers and communities.

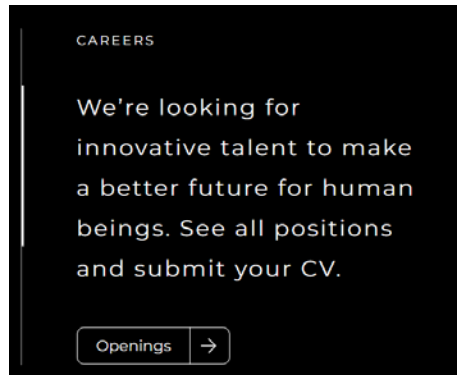


But wait a minute... Why are they here? Isn't this too good to be true? What does 02038 look like that they have come 15 years back in time to find employees?

Find out by visiting us, checking our vacancies on the website and filling in our survey!

This project creates an experiential future by posing as a company that presents itself at a fair in order to recruit new employees. Through roleplay and a supporting website, posters and a futuristic form of a business card, people emerge in the situation to be studied on their critical attitude and morale in relation to this scenario.

Data is gathered through a survey that is presented with the purpose of reviewing the company. This will be supported by observations and possibly unstructured interviews.



Help us improve the future!
Scan the QR or follow the link to the survey: <https://forms.gle/E67BUXNqNmk7BvTK8>

Children's book from the future

What if your future child sends you a book to read?

Elke van Dael, Hanna van Rixtel, Anusha Ravishankar, Vere Vreeswijk

"Dear reader, it's me, your future child. I am sending you some books we read together in 02038. There is a lot in them about my daily life and your future, which you need to start preparing for. I hope that together we can have a beautiful future. See you soon, your future child."

We brought this package to 02023, a package full of children's books that your future child believes you already should see. These books are bedtime stories for children aged 4 to 10 years old living in 02038. Imagine, you are bringing your child to bed and reading a little story. Wrapped in an engaging, child-friendly story, it teaches moral lessons like appreciating your unique self. Besides a moral that is never outdated, the story also covers emerging, contemporary issues that are part of everyday life. Children are introduced to these topics at an early age, as they will soon encounter them.

These books can unravel complexities for you living in 02023. Understanding what is starting to happen now and will accelerate in the future. Knowing and understanding makes it possible to think about what we need to prepare for. So imagine your future child sending you this, take a moment for a conscious reflection, can you think of growing towards these futures?



Ariel with her family

The little twin



Written by Elke van Dael and Hanna van Rixtel
Illustrated by Anusha Ravishankar and Vere Vreeswijk

Published on 01/06/2038

Explore the story of a curious girl named Ariel. Her digital twin meets a prince in the metaverse, but is her digital self the same as her inner beauty? Read the story and find out...



Will the prince
fall in love with
the digital twin
or Ariel?

Meet The (Un)Predictables

Theme leader: Emilia Viaene, e.m.j.j.b.viaene@tue.nl

The smart home sector has made great promises in the pursuit of comfort, convenience, and control for decades now (Aldrich, 2003). Even industries' future visions of long days past had the same idea, for instance with the fifties' RCA Whirlpool Miracle Kitchen and the Westinghouse Total Electric House. Although we do not entirely live in such visions of the future –which is now the present, we are surrounded by similar technologies sometimes more often than we realize. Think for instance of the popularity of robot vacuums, smart doorbells, smart home cameras, smart fridges, smart speakers, smart lighting, smart TVs, smartphones... Additionally, one thing those things have in common, is their potential for data collection. The possibilities with this data hold promises to shift the smart home into a learning smart home. This also ties to the more recent promise to cater to sustainability ambitions in the home by providing automated solutions and informing households of their resource consumption (Strengers, 2023).

These promises however, are usually catered to personas with lifestyles and applications that have been idealized in many ways. In this light, Strengers paints a picture of the Resource Man and the Smart Wife (2023). Resource Man being a smart

home inhabitant that is a “rational and efficient micro energy manager, who optimizes energy and water demand with data and automation” but with a life that is often “devoid of life”, with along his side the Smart Wife as a form of “feminized AI and robots [...], designed and marketed to perform a variety of domestic, care, and intimate functions (Strengers, 2023). In many ways, the domestic life of the Resource Man would be characterized by predictability and routine. However, in reality, everyday domestic life is much more rich and unpredictable as envisioned in the industries' smart home visions. Real life encounters many “crises of routine” (Reckwitz, 2002), these are unexpected situations that are non-routine and pose challenges for learning technologies.

Meet the Predictables, a family of four with a dog. They live in the year 2038 and they reside in a learning smart home. To the outside world, they project everyday domestic lives that are characterized by routine. Seemingly, their home knows everything about those routines, and caters to this knowledge to provide the ultimate comfort, convenience and control for its inhabitants.

If we didn't know any better, the Predictables lead a perfectly organized life. There's just one thing

that puzzles the Predictables to no end. And that thing is their across neighbors, **the Unpredictables**.

The only thing the Predictables and the Unpredictables seem to have in common is their household composition, in every other way the Unpredictables seem to be the polar opposites of the Predictables. The Unpredictables' lives are characterized by crises of routine. The technologies in the Unpredictables' home cannot possibly know everything about the their (sometimes lack of) routines. Luckily, their home knows how to deal with the frictions the crises of routine pose for catering to the Unpredictables' lives.

You would assume that the Predictables lead a more organized, tech-friendly, and thus ultimately more sustainable household, right? Well, you would assume wrong! In reality, the resource consumption of the Predictables is almost double that of the Unpredictables. How is that possible, you ask? Well for starters, perhaps the Predictables might not be so predictable after all, unbeknownst to the home they live in. To find out more, let's take a peek through the cracks of the Predictables' routines, in comparison

to the Unpredictables' crises of routine.

With this topic, your challenge is to zoom in on an everyday practice in the lives of the Predictables in the year 2038, contrasted to the same practice in the lives of the Unpredictables. Both of these practices involve some form of technology that uses data to inform its actions and possibilities. The Predictables' experience will likely be heavily inspired by mainstream discourse about what future life would be like in a learning smart home. A focus here should be on how this future vision poses challenges when faced with the cracks in the Predictables' predictability and efficiency. The Unpredictables' home, then, will pose an opportunity for you to be creative in thinking of ways in which the practice (characterized by crises of routine) can be better adjusted to the households' rich and unpredictable lives and their sustainability goals.

Examples of practices you could zoom in on are cooking, cleaning, morning routines, entertainment, pet care, etc. This practice can be materialized in the form of artefacts that embody the households' technologies, a performance, an interactive experience, a set of scenarios, or any other form that shapes the lived experiences of both households. The deployment of your practice should enable a critical reflection on how either experiences may influence everyday domestic life.



Westinghouse Total Electric Home (1959)

Morning Assist

Finding the best suitable 2038 AI system to achieve your optimal health

Robyn Huiting, Bram Willems, Hongbin Su

Artificial Intelligence can be a blessing and a curse. Using the right settings, it can predict your behaviour and connect it to your desires. It can be the guiding system for getting in the best shape ever with an efficient and healthy morning routine, but it does need some input to do so. The balance is up to you: how predictable do you want to be for your AI system to optimally guide you in becoming healthy? How much space is there for surprises?

We will give you advice on what AI system from our company Morning Assist fits best to your morning routine in 2038: the predictable Tablo, who can optimize your health and knows your all, or the unpredictable Uni, who can only give you randomized information, leaving the making sense and making progress parts up to you.

Knowing which device fits best right now gives you some time to change your routine predictability to make sure you purchase the best product in the coming years.

Only one question remains: what values matter most to you?

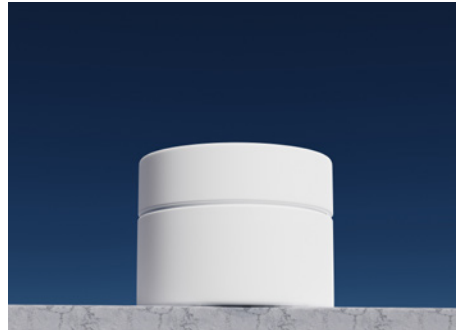


Image from Unsplash

Checking your phone

When would you check your phone after you woke up? *

1 punt



According to our test, you are an

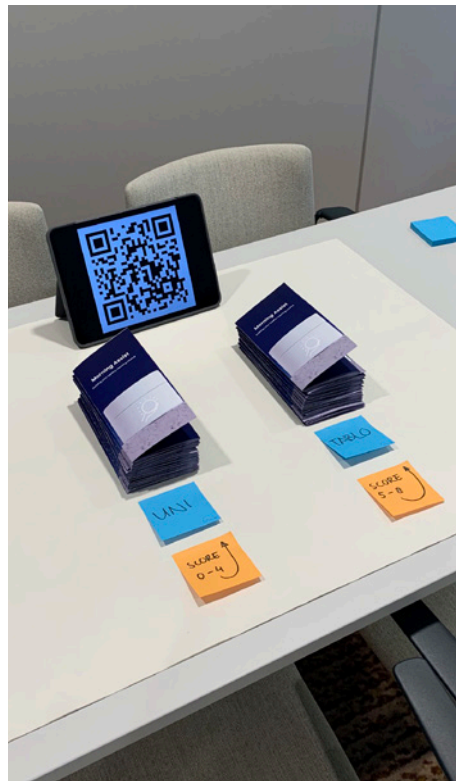
Unpredictable User



tracks your every move to elevate his knowledge



interferes by restricting to keep you on track



Virtual Nanny

Finding the best suitable 2038 AI system to achieve your optimal health

Geert Boer, Kaj Coolen, Hao-Xuan Lu

We live in a world where A.I. is becoming more and more integrated in our lives, but it's still in a very controlled or almost sandboxed fashion. We believe that with the increasing complexity and power of these A.I. systems, they will become more and more autonomous.

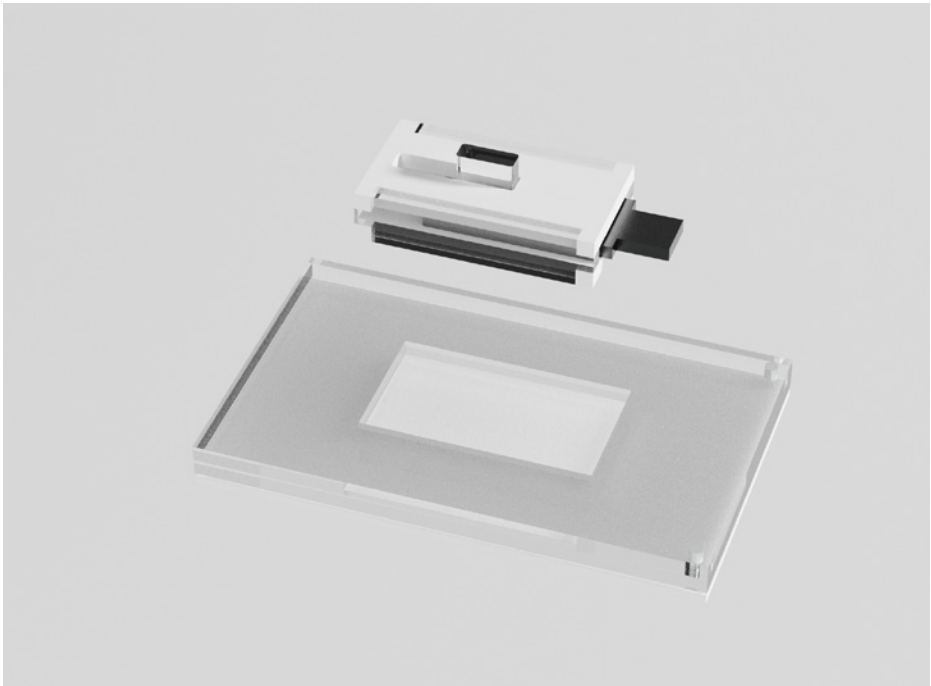
Yet, we don't really understand or know what this will mean for our daily lives. What will the place of an autonomous A.I. in our lives be? How will that feel?

To provide people with a glimpse of what this future could be, we've created the Virtual Nanny package. When purchased, this software package will install itself into the smart home of the future and acquire a permanent place in the home as a parent for your children. It has several 'skins' that make the people feel at ease with the software, like a city local, or a sweet old lady.

But the approach to the upbringing is data-driven: From the thousands and thousands of children it's raised, Virtual Nanny has learned what's best for the child.

We think this will lead to conflicts of belief: our take on the predictables versus unpredictable theme. What if something you've grown up to believe conflict with what VN's "experience data" says? And how will this manifest?

Our fictional product + flyer, and our short written story, will be the centerpieces of our exhibition. These are meant to provoke the conversation about this topic.



Challenging consumerism by design

Theme leader: Lenneke Kuijer, S.C.Kuijer@tue.nl

In this topic you will be exploring implications and opportunities for design to challenge consumerism by imagining alternative personas. The number of technologies normal living 'requires' today in Western societies is a multitude of those a century ago. Not only in terms of direct materials – next to ingredients sourced from all over the world, cooking today involves things like cookers, fridges, ovens, pineapple cutters, blenders, cooking apps, packaging, kitchen cabinets, counters and designated spaces –, but also in terms of the infrastructures enabling the activity; e.g. water mains, electricity networks, factories, shops, trucks, roads and waste infrastructures that weren't part of it in the past. Similar developments towards higher resource intensity can be seen in many other areas of everyday life, such as cleaning, parenting, personal care, studying, getting around, socializing, etcetera.

Part of this 'success-story' of technological innovation lies in the unique capabilities of technologies to perform tasks that humans cannot, or do not want to do. Washing machines take over part of the hard work of laundering (Kuijer, 2019), central heating systems take care of indoor climate management, smartphones remember our

schedules and motor vehicles relieve our legs and feet. Once such devices get adopted, life re-organizes itself around the new configuration; with the work of laundering made easier, people started to launder more often, and own more clothes (Schwartz-Cowan, 1976). This process of what Latour (1992) refers to as delegation, thus leads to technological lock-in (Sahakian, 2018). This is beneficial for technology developers, because it secures a steady market for continuously 'improved' versions of a growing range of devices, but not necessarily for the planet. What also happens when human tasks are delegated to technologies, is that more tasks can be performed in parallel. For example, due to the rise of washing machines, dishwashers, microwaves and smartphones, one person can now be doing the laundry, the dishes, the cooking, watch television and socialize with friends at the same time. As such, more 'living' (and consumption) can be squeezed into less time.

In parallel, research is showing that these increasingly resource intensive lives aren't necessarily 'better' lives. Beyond a certain point of affluence, the correlation between happiness and levels of consumption breaks off (Millward-Hopkins et al., 2020; Steinberger and Roberts, 2010). What is also increasingly argued is

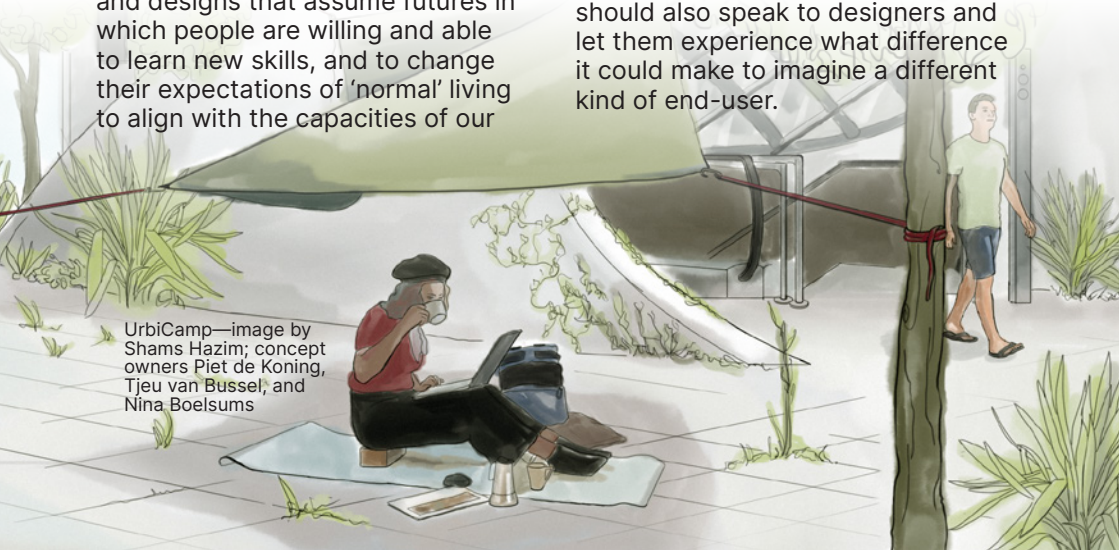
that halting climate change requires radical reductions in consumption levels, or rather, climate change is for big portions of the world population already limiting consumption levels – even below those required for dignified survival (Vita et al., 2019). Yet, reducing levels of consumption is not easy, in large part because the dominant neoliberal, techno-capitalist paradigm is cleverly geared towards increasing it (e.g. Pirgmaier, 2020).

Zooming in on the role of design in this system, Dahlgren et al. (2021) identify the lead figure of the ‘techno-hedonist persona’ towards whom design activities are dominantly geared. This persona prefers customized, pleasurable aesthetic experiences requiring low effort, and is therefore the ideal ‘user’ for technological innovations.

To break this cycle of accumulation and lock-in of technologies in everyday life, this topic asks you to challenge the techno-hedonist persona, for example by exploring alternative future visions, fictions and designs that assume futures in which people are willing and able to learn new skills, and to change their expectations of ‘normal’ living to align with the capacities of our

planet and the realities of a changing climate (see also Kuijer 2022). An central question that then arises is: What might this alternative persona and future mean for design practices and their outcomes?

You are free to choose your own resource intensive practice (cooking, laundering, travelling, showering, etc.) which helps to make the design activity and future context concrete. Take this practice and imagine a persona that is opposite to the techno-hedonist persona described in Dahlgren et al.. What would it mean to design for this persona? What kinds of futures emerge for this practice if this kind of persona would become mainstream? And what would it mean for design practices if this persona would become mainstream in your future? Turn your alternative future into something that can somehow be experienced by visitors to the course exhibition. Think about prototypes, but also more broadly about things such as future newspaper articles, new habits, different norms and daily schedules. Eventually, the exhibit should also speak to designers and let them experience what difference it could make to imagine a different kind of end-user.



UrbiCamp—image by Shams Hazim; concept owners Piet de Koning, Tjeu van Bussel, and Nina Boelsums

Powerless politics

Unplugging energy dependency: how would you choose to live without electricity?

Youp Ferket, Floris Thoonen, Nathalie Kamp

What if, every two weeks, you had a week without electricity? In 2038, this is the new reality that has been implemented in Europe to conserve energy and to prevent the grid from overloading. Caused by an ever-increasing population living more technologically rich lives in the 2020s, the demand for electricity began to threaten outpacing the supply near the end of 2025. Thirteen years later, it has completely altered the way people live and how energy is treated.

The distribution of the limited energy available during loadshedding varies between countries. Most hold elections (local or country-wide) to decide on the distribution. In the Netherlands, the distribution gets decided on a local level, within each province, through voting on political parties who have made energy distribution their main campaign point.

During the experience you can see proposals from different political parties and cast a vote on them. Afterwards, there are different scenarios which might cause a shift in your priorities – would you still vote the same?



Image by user15285612 on Freepik, Photo by Shane Rounce on Unsplash



Image by berlionemore_contributor on Freepik, Photo by Tyler Nix on Unsplash



Image by Vectonauta on Freepik, Photo by Tom Swinnen on Pexels, Photo by Nathan Dum-lao on Unsplash

HeartRinse

If technology convenience leads to separation in relationships, what can we do to offer an opportunity to connect with others in the future?

Bente Derksen, Jules van Gorp, Leqi Wang

Automation is everywhere and is often seen as desirable for the sake of convenience. However, are we forgetting the benefits we can get out of these seemingly looking mundane tasks? In the year 2038, people stepped away from automation, which lead to products such as HeartRinse. This is the name of a line of products that tries to transform daily mundane tasks into meaningful experiences that foster human connections. Its goal is to challenge the once prevailing notion that convenience should always take precedence over human relationships. These products are from a future where technology enhances our lives without sacrificing the fundamental need for connection and engagement with others.

HeartRinse is the reimagining of dishwashing, a daily chore often viewed as tedious and unremarkable. Even in the most ordinary activities, there lies immense potential for human interaction and self-reflection. By integrating thoughtful design elements, mindful tools, and



sensory experiences, HeartRinse encourages you to take your time to do the dishes. It wants you to see it as a relaxing and fun experience that can be done to connect with yourself or others, such as your partner, children or friends.

Join HeartRinse in embracing a future where even the simplest tasks become connections, mindfulness, and personal growth opportunities.



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And some fiction

'Mother of Invention' by Nnedi Okorafor, read by LeVar Burton

Molly Crabapple / The Intercept: A Message From the Future With Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (2019) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d9uTH0iprVQ>

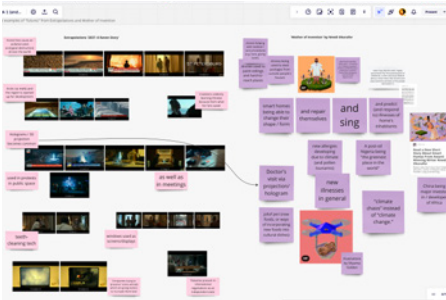
Westinghouse Total Electric House: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jyrTgtPTz3M>

RCA Whirlpool Miracle Kitchen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vui2CSEwOxQ>

Extrapolations (2023), '2037: A Raven Story' (link on Canvas)

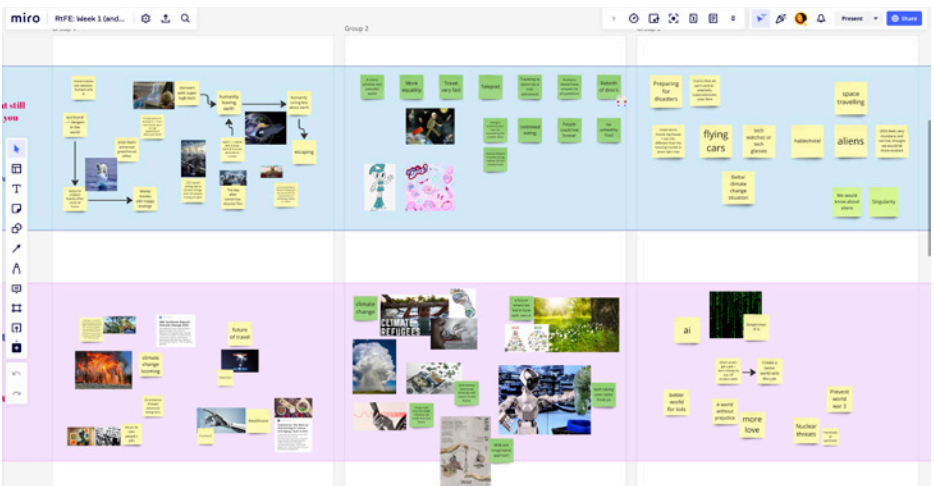


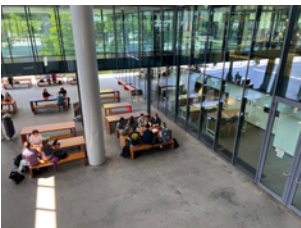
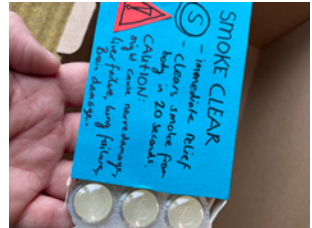
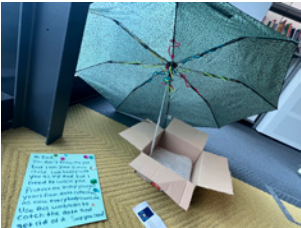
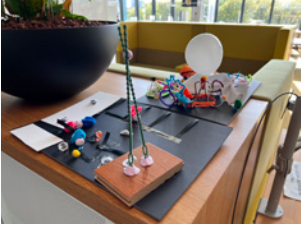
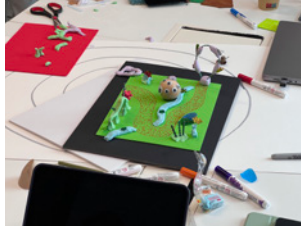
Some Miro moments from the course including exploring how our own imaginaries of futures have changed over time—and where those ideas have come from



Thank you

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