

Speculative design

Who am I?

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**All design is
speculative until fully
developed as an
artefact**

Design

Creativity

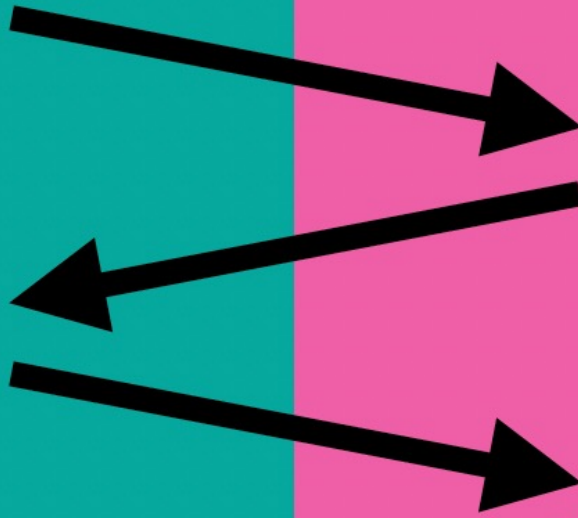
Critique

“Ideation”

“Prototyping”

“Testing”

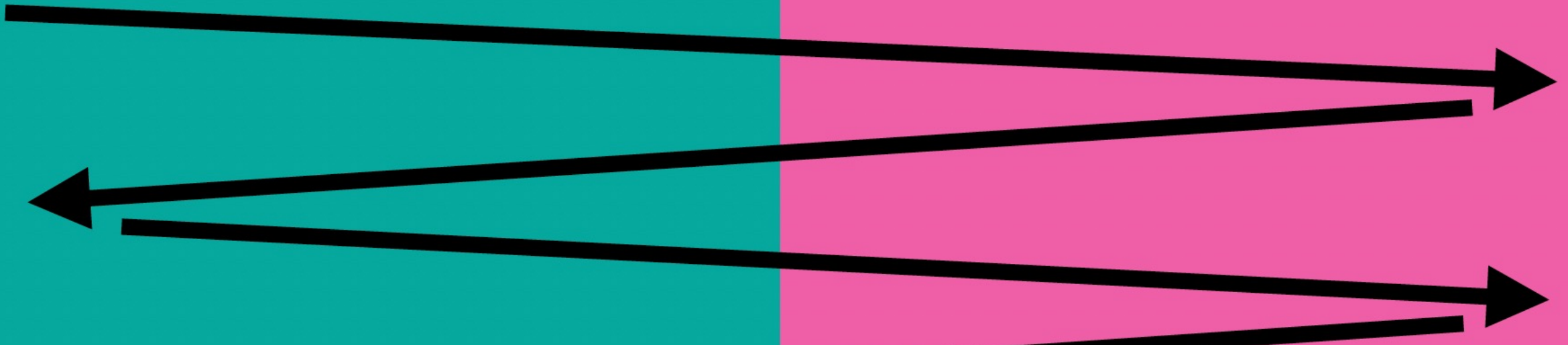
“Empathy”



Speculative design

Creativity

Critique



Creativity

Critical design

Speculative design

Discursive design

Design fiction

Design for 'controversial contexts'

Critique

Design Critique

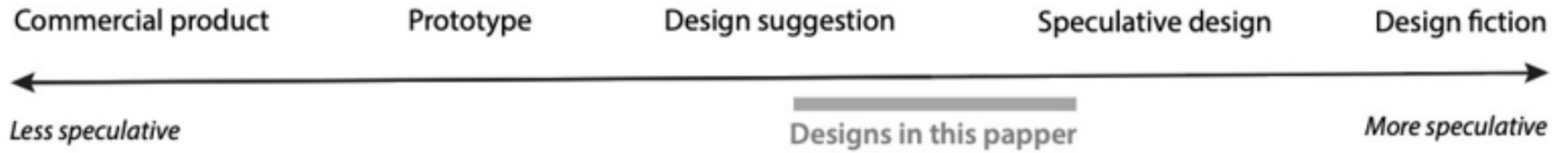
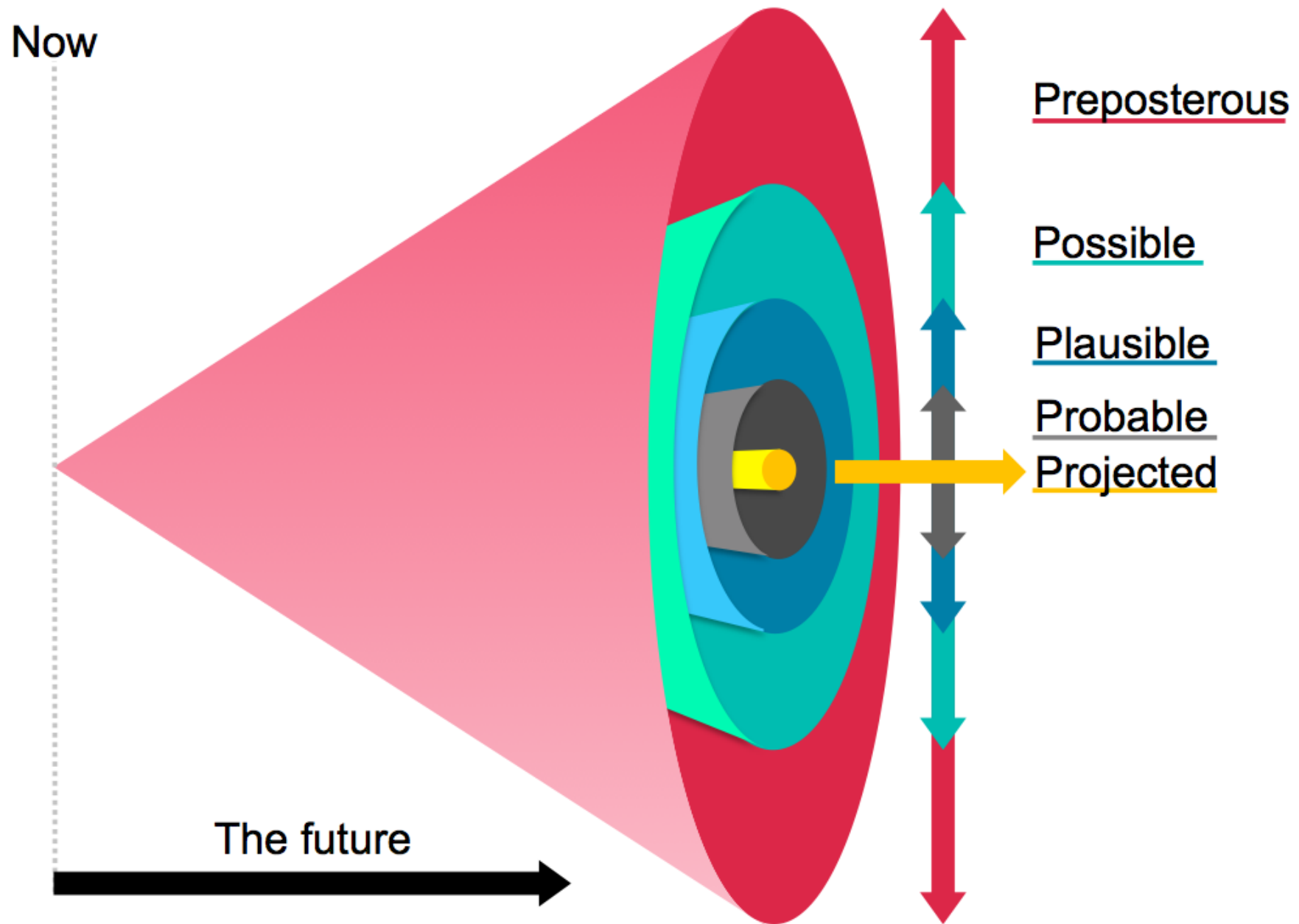
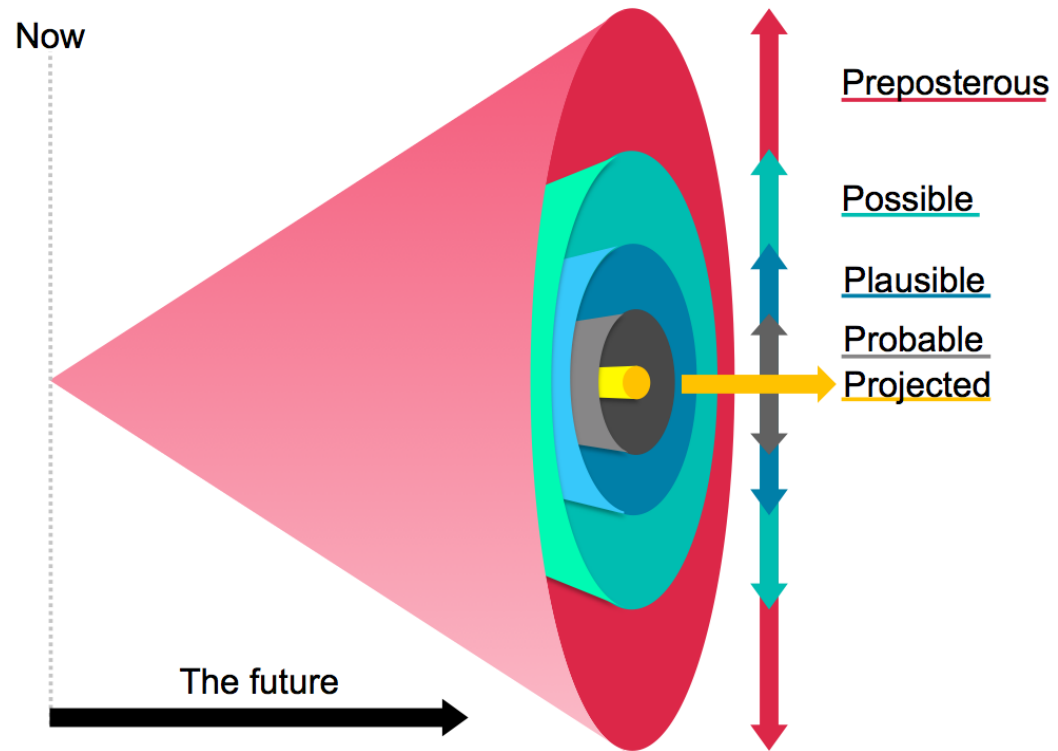


Figure 2: A continuum of speculation in design.

Speculative design aims to anticipate the future.

In what ways can we anticipate the future?





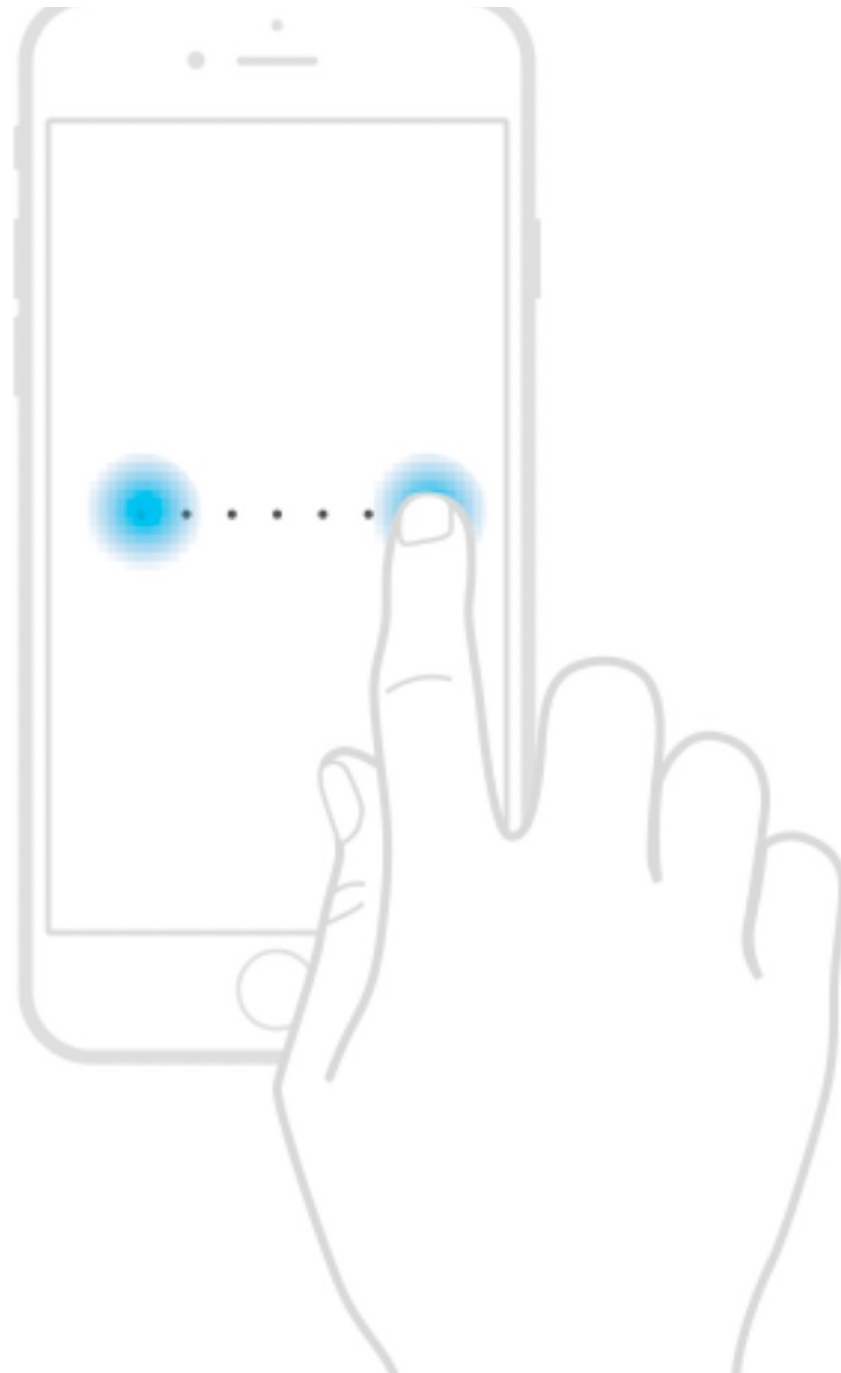
**What's the difference
between science fiction
and design fiction?**



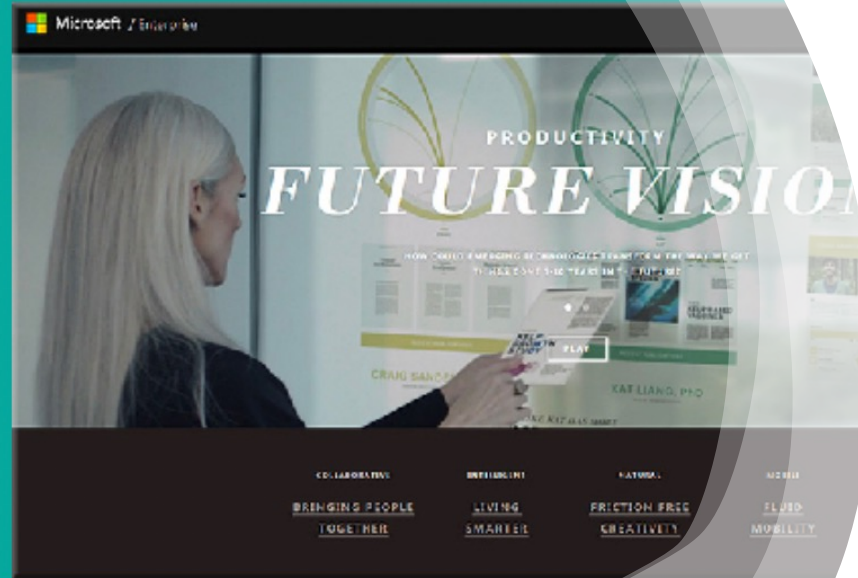




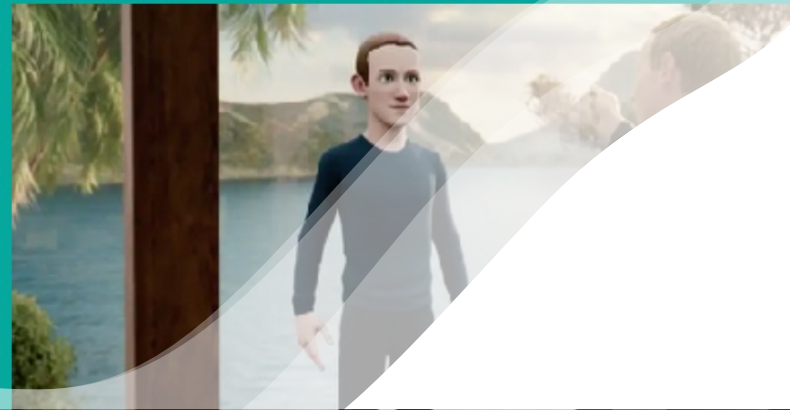
Swipe



Corporate visions



Buttons & controls can't change



The IKEA Catalogue: Design fiction in academic and industrial collaborations

Barry Brown, Julian Bleecker, Marco D'Adamo, Pedro Ferreira, Joakim Formo, Mareike Glöss, Maria Holm, Kristina Höök, Eva-Carin Banka Johnson, Emil Kaburuan, Anna Karlsson, Elsa Kosmack-Vaara, Jarmo Laaksolahti, Airi Lampinen, Lucian Leahu, Vincent Lewandowski, Donald McMillan, Anders Mellbratt, Johanna Mercurio, Cristian Norlin, Nicolas Nova, Stefania Pizza, Asreen Rostami, Mårten Sundquist, Konrad Tollmar, Vasiliki Tsaknaki, Jinyi Wang, Charles Windlin, Mikael Ydholm

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I. INTRODUCTION

This paper is an introduction to the “Future IKEA Catalogue”, enclosed here as an example of a *design fiction* produced from a long standing industrial-academic collaboration. We introduce the catalogue here by discussing some of our experiences using design fiction with companies and public sector bodies, giving some background to the catalogue and the collaboration which produced it. We have found design fiction to be a useful tool to support collaboration with industrial partners in research projects it provides a way of thinking and talking about present day concepts, and present day constraints, without being overly concerned with contemporary challenges, or the requirements of

limitations of a lengthy academic paper or specific technical prototypes. The fiction acts as a sort of “boundary object” – between academics and practitioners, meaning different things to different groups. As Star and Griesemer put it, boundary objects are: “objects which are both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites.” [7].

From an academic viewpoint design fictions that can be seen as a way of experimenting with ideas and issues. Fictions are perhaps not as heavyweight as an academic publication, without the requirements of citation, verification and the like. This allows for more speculative and potentially innovative thinking. Design fictions can thus be used to illustrate and provoke ideas that are in

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The Limits of Our Imagination: Design Fiction as a Strategy for Engaging with Dystopian Futures

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over the desert. The film is saturated with similar images of waste: at one point the war rig is hitched to a dead tree in order to pull the vehicle free from a bog – the tree is pulled out by its roots during this maneuver, and dialogue from Nux indicates that he has never seen a tree before.



Figure 1 - The scale of waste here is mind boggling [23]

The recurring images of waste in *Fury Road* can make it hard to accept as a possible future at first. It's hard to imagine humans

the population has also robbed the survivors of any sense of a possible future. Surviving the apocalypse does not mean living a life in any conventional sense: it means wallowing in misery, cruelty, and pain until released by death. The only characters with real agency in the film are also characters who have lost something or have something to lose: Immortan Joe stands to lose his progeny, Furiosa stands to lose her reunion with her original clan, the wives have their first taste of freedom, and even Nux discovers that there is the possibility of love for him, which he then is forced to sacrifice. Throughout the film Max is haunted by the ghosts of the people he failed to save in the previous installments of the franchise, but he has very little left to lose, and very little agency for most of the film.

Fury Road is making a very explicit argument about the end of the world. The future it imagines draws less on pessimistic statistics about climate change and more on a cynical view of human nature. In spite of (or perhaps, *because* of) this fairly dire worldview, *Mad Max* was extremely successful, both commercially and critically. Of particular interest to us however, is that it has spawned a community of role-play and praxis that seeks to recreate a version of this future in the Mojave Desert. This weekend event represents a fascinating blend of design fiction, survivalist practice, and social commentary.

5.3 Wasteland Weekend

Connected to the *Mad Max* film franchise is the annual event

Karin Ehrnberger

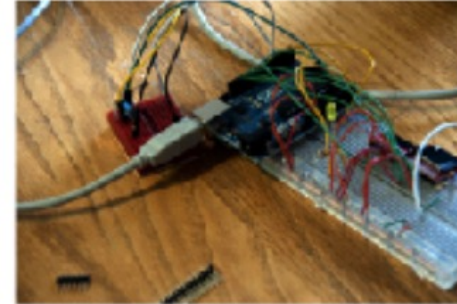


Industry design

Bardzell & Bardzell: Significant Screwdriver



Soldering Time!



Testing the arduino setup



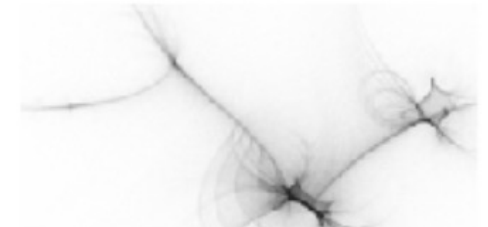
Constructing the prototype



The Screwdriver in Use



The use scenario



Example Visualization

Interaction design

Speculative policymaking

- Design beyond artifacts!
- Anticipating consequences in a system.
- Incremental change.



What are the limits of speculative design?

Grounding speculation in the real world

Bridge the gap between practical challenges and user values

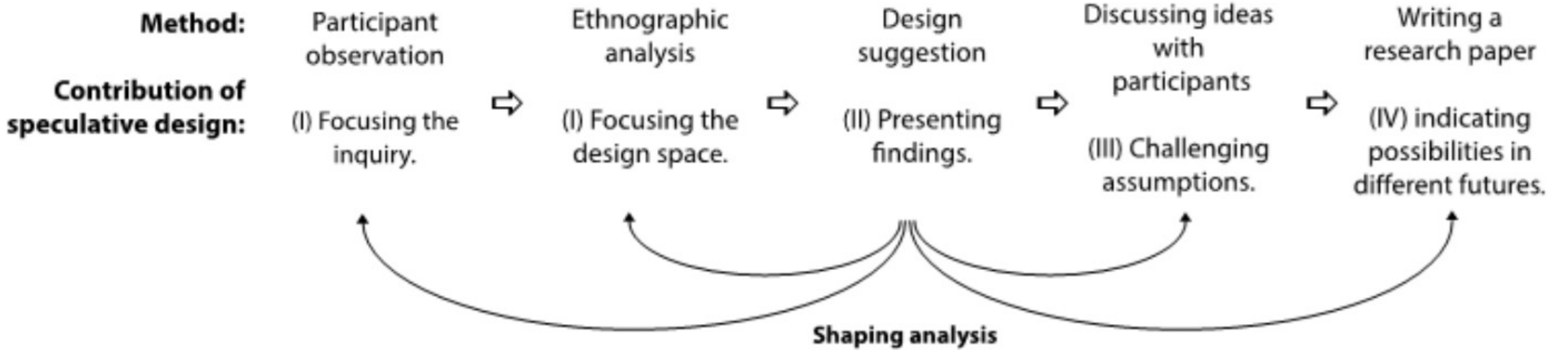
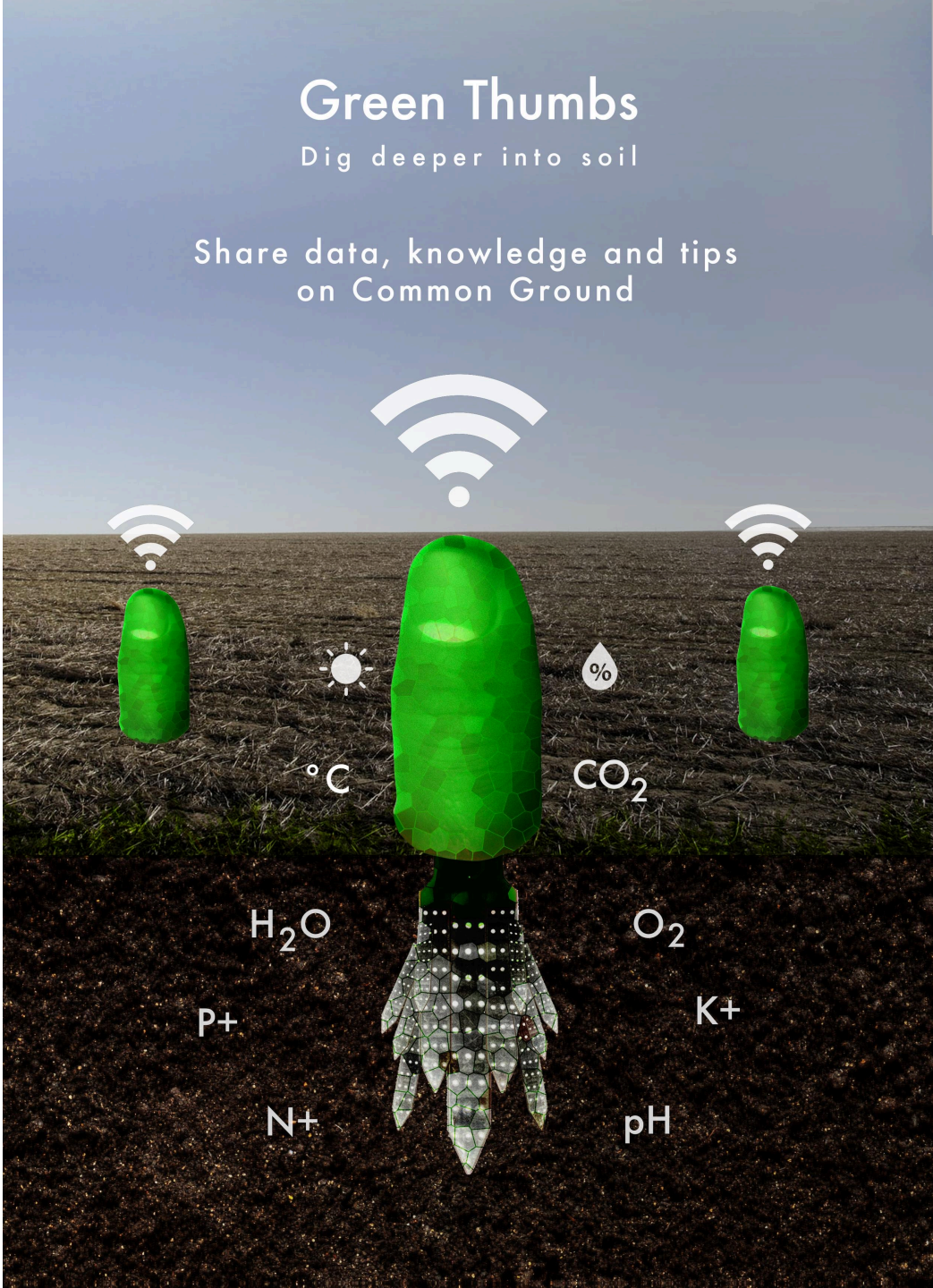


Figure 1: Stages where the design suggestions iteratively contributed to knowledge production.

Green Thumbs

Dig deeper into soil

Share data, knowledge and tips
on Common Ground



DirtyNails

Listen to your soil



BeeNoculars

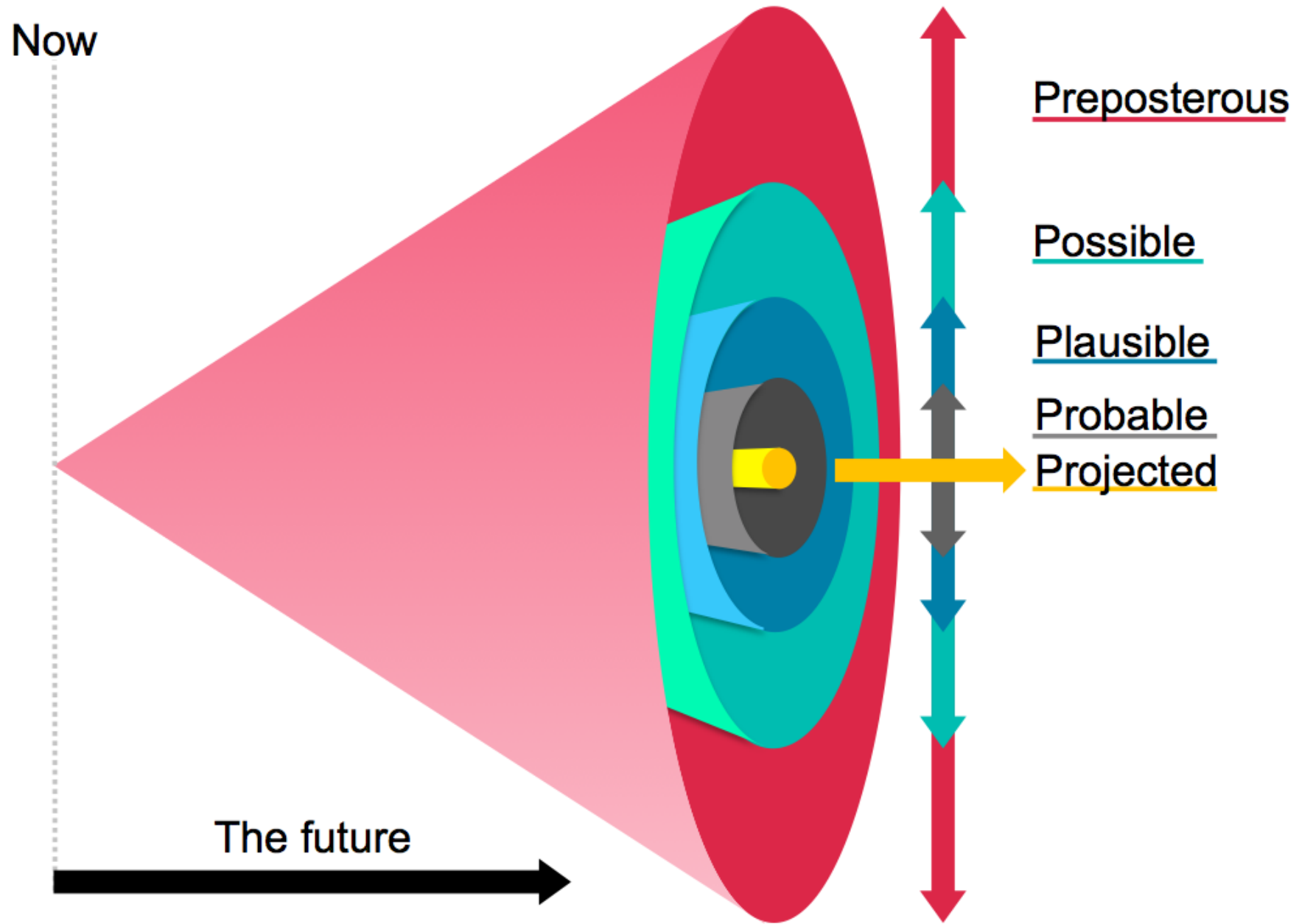
See with new eyes

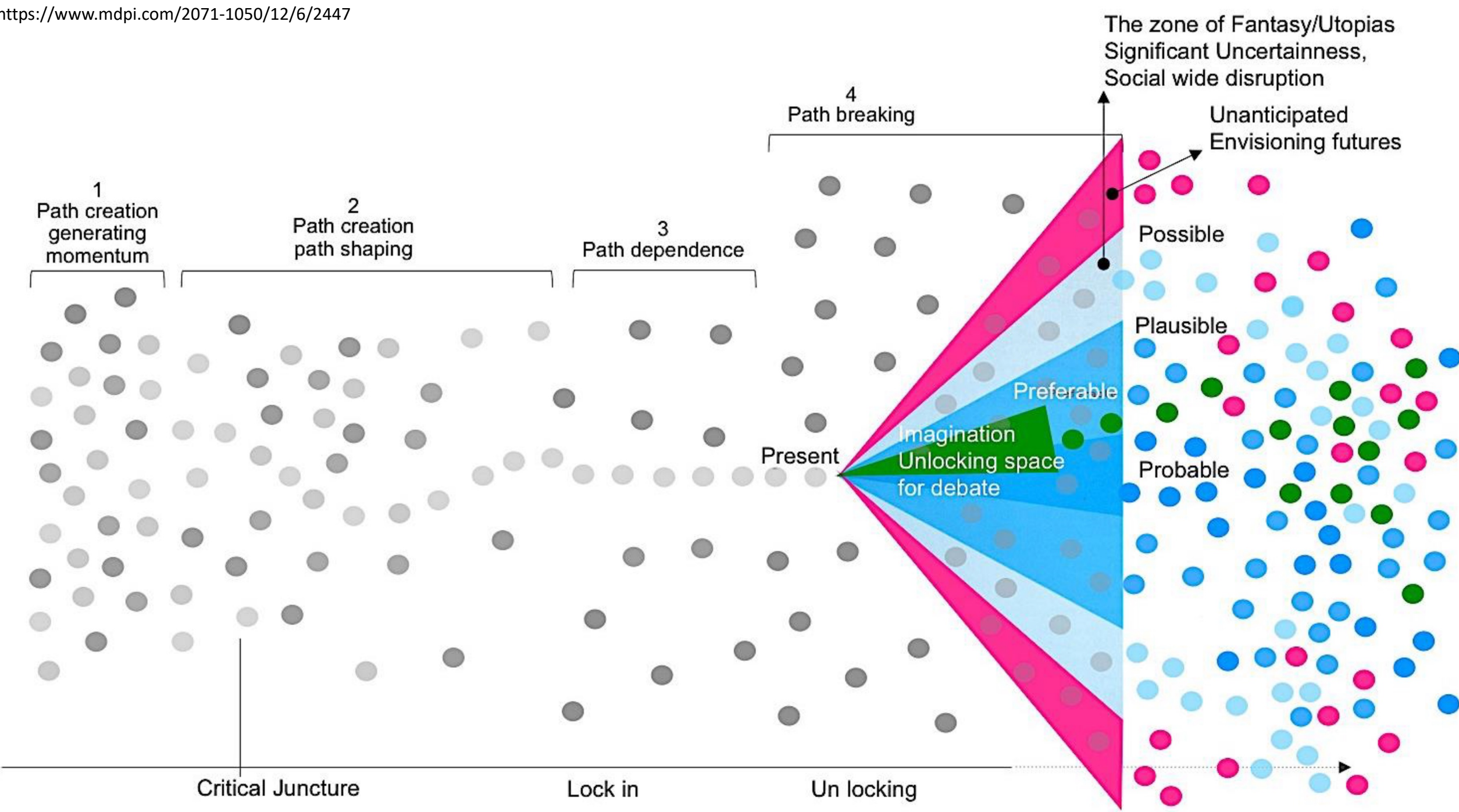
Insect Vison

2000 x Zoom

See flower patterns in ultra violet!

See microbes in soil!





Questions? Discussion!

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Thank you!