



E N E R G A I A

IMAGINING ENERGY FUTURES

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FOREWORD

Curators **Dr Stuart Bender** and
Associate Professor **Rachel Robertson**
School of Media, Creative Arts and
Social Inquiry, Curtin University

Do we move toward the future, or does an inevitable future roll back toward us? Will climate change dictate an inescapably dystopic experience, or will humans harness our imaginative capabilities to discover and create alternate energy solutions? Can art and science synergise to drive ideas, understandings and developments about the future of energy?

These are the questions at the heart of the challenge presented to artist-academics in Curtin's School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry in 2021, and the result is the immersive exhibition *Energaia: Imagining Energy Futures*. Aware that Curtin University is planning a major pivot toward becoming a world leader in research and education around alternative energy, we asked a group of creative artists to respond to the theme of energy futures.

While much memorable art has germinated from dystopian visions, as commissioning curators of *Energaia*, we wanted to take another direction. We encouraged artists to turn their aesthetic responses to the critical task of being inspired by, and simultaneously trying to inspire, scientific advancement in this area. Our intent is to engage imaginatively with the inevitability of energy futures. We emphasise plural futures, foregrounding the value of human imagination in actively shaping our social, political and experiential future. This exhibition of work from visual artists, filmmakers, designers and writers challenges the audience to consider how their life may change as we transition away from a dependency on fossil fuels.

The exhibition deliberately positions collisions between artworks that may at once portray a didactic take, but then in the next moment leave a question unanswered. The works range from speculative fiction and *frottage* art to interactive and holographic documentary, from a hybrid book with magic bookmarks to virtual reality and game experiences.

The works that make up the *Energaia* exhibition are significant because of their intentional repositioning of—and affective friction between—questions around industrial, political, social and experiential aspects of a green energy future. There is no place more relevant than Western Australia for interdisciplinary research and creative production on the future of our planet's hydrogen, wind, solar and ocean energy.

This exhibition was generously funded by the Research Office and the School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry at Curtin University. We are grateful to staff at the John Curtin Gallery and the many artists, scientists, creative technologists, and community members who came together to generate this unique perspective on our futures.

This exhibition takes place on the land of the Whadjuk people of the Nyungar nation and we pay our respects to traditional custodians and elders, recognising that their traditional knowledge and cultural practices can offer us deep learning about conservation, sustainability and the power of nature. We hope exhibitions such as this may help non-Indigenous Australians learn from our First Nations people.

Student artwork from
Michelle Johnston and Sally
Goldrick, *My Green Planet*,
2022, Digital media – online

‘The most tragic form of loss isn’t the loss of security; it is the loss of the capacity to imagine that things could be different.’¹

¹ Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope* (1954) MIT Press, 1986.

² Szeman, I., & Boyer, D. (2017). Introduction: On the Energy Humanities. In I. Szeman & D. Boyer (Eds.), *Energy Humanities: an anthology* (pp. 1-13). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 3.

³ Libby Robin, #arts_for_survival, *Humanities Australia*, 12/2021, p. 3.

In a time of severe crisis, how can we retain our ‘capacity to imagine’ that things can, indeed, be different? *Energaia: Imagining Energy Futures* demonstrates how artists from diverse disciplinary backgrounds can play a vital role in revealing new and different futures. The exhibition focuses on the issue of energy and the need to move away from our reliance on fossil fuels. *Energaia*—with a title that joins earth and energy—offers innovative views of our current situation and intriguing glimpses of possible low carbon futures.

The work in this exhibition results from collaborations between scientists and sustainability experts, community activists and young people, and artists and humanities scholars. It showcases work from the creative arts, in particular work by filmmakers, visual artists, designers and writers.

While the causes and consequences of climate change have been made clear by science, the challenges of addressing this are not fundamentally scientific or technical so much as cultural. In their influential book *Energy Humanities*, Imre Szeman and Dominic Boyer assert that this work will need to be led by the humanities and social sciences: ‘from those disciplines that have long attended to the intricacies of social processes, the nature and capacity of political change, and the circulation and organisation of symbolic meaning through culture’.²

As humanities scholars have begun to explore energy—especially the role, ubiquity, meaning and future of fossil fuels—analyses in terms other than purely technical or commercial emerge. This has

facilitated new knowledge that articulates meanings and expands public discourse, including critique, about decisions relating to energy.

The recognition of the fundamental importance of energy and the role that the humanities and creative arts can play in understanding and shaping energy usage presents new opportunities. It is apparent now that the humanities must be deeply involved in public policy and debates around energy futures and larger sustainability issues. Since 2015, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has turned to humanities scholars, recognising that their disciplines are required to influence both the content and form of the knowledge released by the IPCC.

In a world that is no longer predictable, where discontinuity and crisis dominate, it is urgent work for the humanities to assist the community in coming to terms with this situation, both intellectually and emotionally. The creative arts disciplines play a key role here. The creative arts can do more than articulate, critique and interpret the current situation. The arts also offer a way to acknowledge and share grief; they can build courage, empathy and solidarity between people and communities; they can offer comfort and a way forward. The creative arts work across time and place, personal and planetary scales, human and non-human perspectives, demonstrating that other worlds and selves are possible.

‘Creativity has no limits. Creativity has a future. It remains a place for hope, for meaning and... for economic, cultural and human growth.’³



FarNearFutureNow explores trans-scale encounters between Extinction Rebellion and Australia's long-term emissions reduction plan.

⁴ Christof Mauch, *Slow Hope: Rethinking Ecologies of Crisis and Fear*, *RCC Perspectives, Transformations in Environment and Society*, 1/2019, p. 37.

In this exhibition, viewers will be struck by the immense scale of Susanna Castleden's *1:1 Wind Turbine Blade*, consisting of over 100 individual pages of paper, summoning the scale and force of a wind turbine. Wave power, too, is on a massive scale and under-recognised as an energy source. In *Wavelength* by Stuart Bender and Mick Broderick, viewers will enter the future by way of virtual reality: a coastal town in 2050 entirely powered by the ocean.

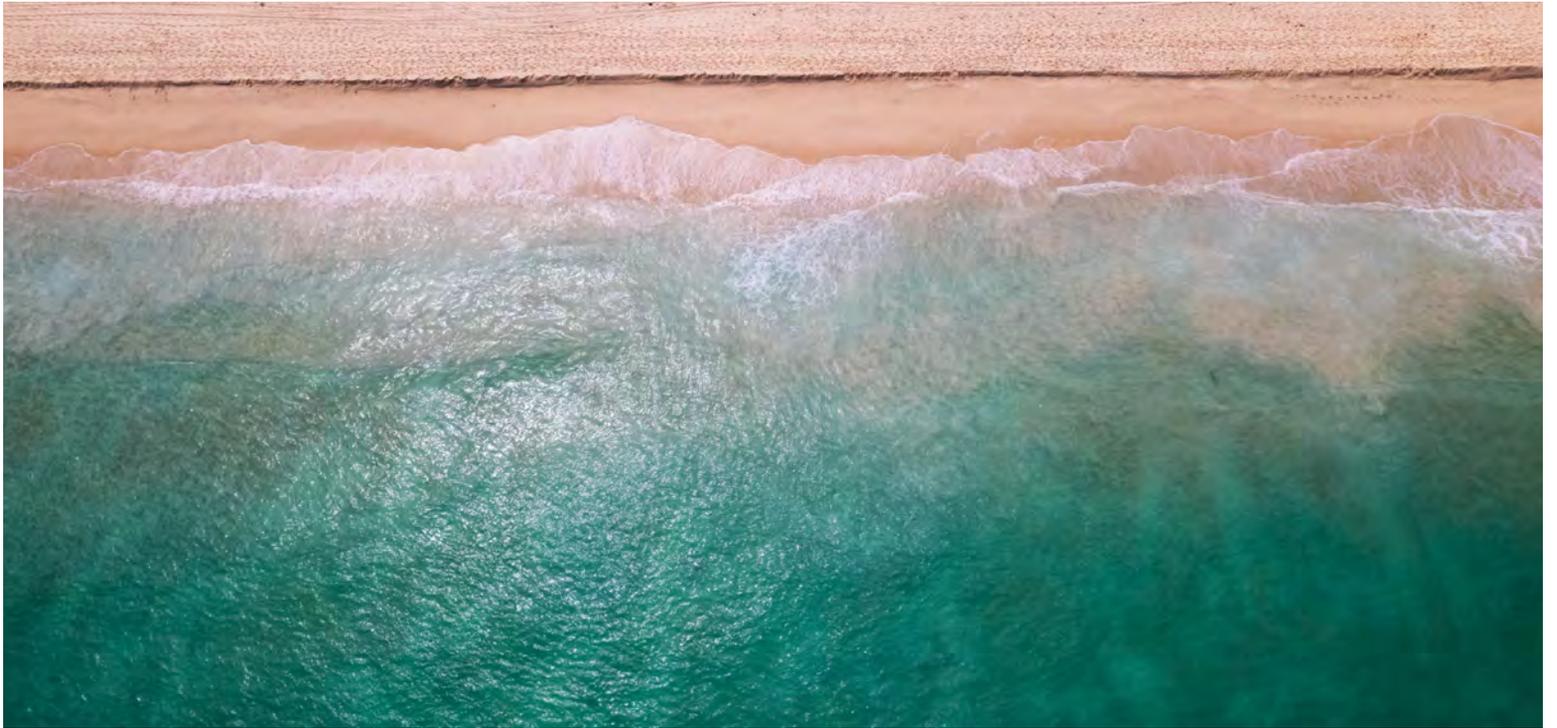
A second virtual reality experience is offered by Kath Dooley's *The Future of Houses*, in which viewers watch a virtual reality documentary about a circular economy house, and then go on a quest in a three-dimensional model of the building to locate sustainable features for themselves. This gamification aspect enables us to engage with recycling and re-use in a playful way.

Several works here juxtapose the voices of climate activists with government and policy documents. *My Green Planet* by Michelle Johnston and Sally Goldrick is an interactive documentary showing how young people imagine the future in art and storytelling and how government representatives respond to this. In contrast, *FarNearFutureNow* by Thor Kerr, Raymond Grenfell, Hafizur Rahaman, Maureen Boyle, and Richard Eames explores energy transformation and the voices of Extinction Rebellion members as a holographic encounter between futuristic visualisations, colonial resource exploitation, and science fiction.

Two books round out the exhibition. *The Climate Domesday Book* edited by Philip Ely and David Frohlich is a hybrid print-digital device which uses a magic bookmark to trigger video or audio on a nearby screen. The book addresses how we can harness and use energy to live sustainably with all species in mind, and includes contributions from scientists, artists, writers, designers and musicians. *Phase Change: Imagining Energy Futures* edited by Matthew Chrulow is a print anthology of speculative fiction by established and emerging writers, and accompanied by a video of the authors reading extracts from their works.

'What we need...are stories and histories of change and transformation: stories of ecological alarm and stories of slow hope.'⁴

It is all too easy, as Christof Mauch notes, to find stories and images of 'ecological alarm' and crisis. But such stories and images may cause us to retreat and neglect to take action to protect our planet. Stories and images of hope—ways to imagine our future hopefully—may help us to engage with the reality of our situation and work together towards a better world. The stories and images here are, at turns, playful, thought-provoking, confronting, optimistic, and beautiful. They are the result of a collaboration, sometimes even a collision, between science and art, and between the individual and the community. Through this exhibition, we hope to make a small contribution to a fair and just transition towards imagining better ways of living now and in the future.



STUART BENDER & MICK BRODERICK *WAVELENGTH*

Images from Stuart Bender & Mick Broderick, *Wavelength*, Technical support: 3D Modelling and VR Coding by Wesley Lamont, 2022 | Interactive Virtual Reality

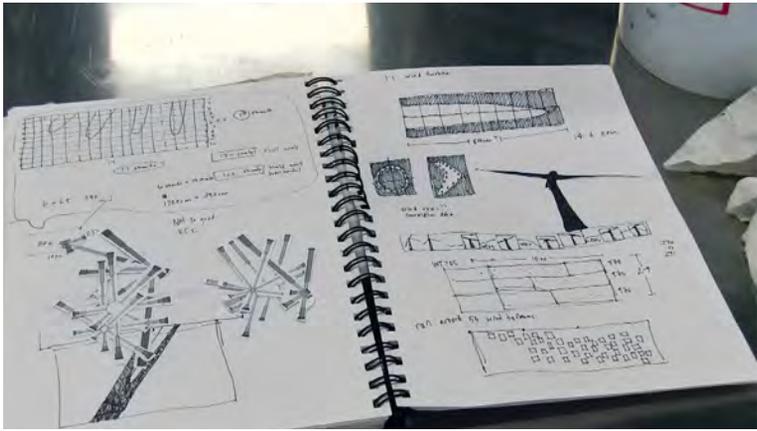
Wavelength uses the novel medium of immersive Virtual Reality to challenge the viewer's notions of the future of energy and its impact on everyday life. It explores the theme of water-powered energy production, but in doing so the experience activates the viewer's imaginative capacity to wonder how life can be positively impacted by the opportunities afforded by natural energy production. Australia boasts 34,000 kms of coastline, with wave swell capable of generating much of its energy needs. The technology to do so already exists, enabling us to imagine a future in which any coastal town or city can harness the natural environment's opportunity for power generation from ocean waves.

Virtually transporting the viewer into an interactive scenario that takes place 30 years in the future, *Wavelength* is an immersive Virtual Reality presentation which invites the audience to step inside a fictional coastal town in the year 2050 to tour the water turbine facility generating the population's entire power supply. At present, Australia's population predominantly lives by the coast and over the coming decades the nation must confront the question of whether to expand housing vertically or horizontally. The electronic diegesis of *Wavelength* offers a vision of the future where it is possible for any community to live self-sufficiently. This prompts the audience to question the kind of future they would like to inhabit, and how this can be achieved using clean alternative modes of energy production that are afforded by the unique natural environment of Australia.

Using a hybrid composition of 360-degree stereoscopic video augmented by advanced 3D modelling and water simulation, *Wavelength* represents a unique contribution to the *Energaia* exhibition by visualising one possible future of energy production. Its fictional scenario draws inspiration from present-day opportunities and technology, offering viewers the embodied experience of an imaginative, and above all positive, future.

Stuart Bender is Senior Lecturer in the School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry at Curtin University. His work specialises in the aesthetics of high-emotion media, and his research has been published in numerous monographs, journal articles and book chapters. His creative media productions have been exhibited in national galleries and screened by invitation at international film festivals.

Mick Broderick is Adjunct Professor of Media & Creative Arts at Curtin University, Adjunct Professor of Media & Communication at RMIT University and the 2021-22 Smithsonian Chair of Aerospace History at the US National Air & Space Museum in Washington DC. He has produced over 100 scholarly outputs including research monographs, journal articles, book chapters, curated exhibitions, artworks and digital media productions.



SUSANNA CASTLEDEN *1:1 WIND TURBINE BLADE*

Video stills from Susanna
Castleden and Kit Messham-Muir
Making 1:1 Wind Turbine Blade, 2022
Single channel video (10:30)

SUSANNA CASTLEDEN & KIT MESSHAM-MUIR *MAKING 1:1 WIND TURBINE BLADE*

Created on site at a wind farm near Geraldton, this artwork was made in and with the environment. The position of the 54 turbines along the coastal ridge orients the turbine blades to capture the power of the prevailing winds. By extension, that same wind energy impacted on the laboriously prepared handmade washi paper sheets that make up the artwork, as it was bruised and creased by the wind while pressed against the turbine blades. There was a brutal and powerful transfer of energy evident when making the work on that windy ridge.

The artwork, created on the site over three days, is made using a process of reduction where the image is created by removing a layer of dark gesso to reveal the lighter surfaces below. Here the white turbine blades appear to emerge through a dark and somewhat turbulent sky. The tip of one of the turbine's three blades has been printed five times, emphasising the repetitive motion of the turbine as—wind extremes notwithstanding—it perpetually turns at exactly 14.4 revolutions per minute.

Wind turbine sites are usually only experienced from a distance, which makes them conceptually and physically remote. The wind turbines themselves are at a scale that is almost beyond comprehension; the rotor diameter on this turbine is 82 metres, and the tower hub 80 metres from the ground. The reference to scale in the artwork title *1:1 Wind Turbine Blade* brings both an architectural and mapping perspective to the work, as a way to emphasise a human physical relationship to the object. The blades are no longer an abstraction, at 1:1 scale they come into proximity with both the space of the gallery and to our own physical consciousness.

From a distance, wind farms have a serene and benign beauty that belies the force of the wind and the corresponding power it generates. In this artwork, I wanted to engage with the sheer scale of the turbine blades—as well as their location in one of Australia's windiest regions—as a way to understand, and consequentially visually relay, the physical and atmospheric registers of this immense energy source.

Susanna Castleden's artworks are held in numerous collections including the National Gallery of Australia and the Art Gallery of WA. She is the recipient of several national awards including the Linden Prize (VIC), Burnie Print Prize (TAS) and the BankWest Art Prize (WA). Susanna is acting Dean of Research in the Faculty of Humanities.

Kit Messham-Muir is a Professor of Art in the School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry. His expertise is contemporary art and visual culture with a particular focus on conflicts of various kinds, including political violence, terror and war.

Susanna would like to acknowledge research partner Iberdrola Australia for hosting this project at the wind farm in Walkaway Western Australia and give particular thanks to Greg Needham for his support for this project. Thanks to research assistant Sharon Baker for her assistance preparing the 532 layers of gesso on the 133 sheets of paper, and to Bevan Honey for technical preparations and assistance on site.



MATTHEW CHRULEW

PHASE CHANGE: IMAGINING ENERGY FUTURES

Matthew Chrulew (Editor) *Phase Change: Imagining Energy Futures*, Speculative fiction anthology (print/ebook). Twelfth Planet Press, 2022

Cover image by Perdita Phillips, *Dark satanic pink windmills*, 2022, Medium Digital print on archival paper, 26 × 37 cm

‘To weaponise this lush and abundant planet, the cop countries practiced a kind of crude necromancy. They kindled primordial plankton and plant-life that had lain compressed for millennia, to thicken the atmosphere and trap the heat of their star.’¹

¹ Walton, ‘Seven Non-Abolitions’, *Phase Change*

The global economy is powered by burning ancient organisms, releasing solar energy first photosynthesised millions of years ago, since decomposed under Earth’s heat and pressure, then, in a great industrial spike, extracted and processed for fuel and fibre, plastic and fertiliser at a rate of acceleration that has triggered catastrophic climatic changes. We must decarbonise; yet energy is not simply a matter of physics and chemistry, technology and innovation, but is socially entrenched and environmentally entangled, bound up with questions of history and culture, value and power, sovereignty and survivance. A just transition to renewable and sustainable energy use will demand more than new machines and markets that shore up neocolonial extraction and corporate profit. The fossil fuel industry shapes lives and selves, narratives, concepts and expectations, and constrains the space for divergent imaginations. Yet other energy systems are possible—and with them, other stories, worlds, futures.

For *Phase Change*, I sought diverse speculative fiction that experiments with alternative energy systems and the aesthetic forms that might accompany them. The resulting anthology, published by the award-winning Twelfth Planet Press, collects twenty-two original short stories from cult authors, prize-winning novelists, and emerging writers. Whether

transhuman planet-hopping, post-cyberpunk paranoia, or solarpunk ecotopianism, these are stories that defamiliarise modern energy systems and the exploitation and hierarchies they perpetuate.

There are large-scale solar arrays, bioluminescent fungi, low-orbit laser-transmitting satellites, a plasma sun-shield, nitrogen-fixing algae, semi-sentient artificial trees. There are floating islands, brawling buildings, protective biospheres, subterranean chambers. There are the scientists, inventors and engineers you might expect, but also politicians and bankers, architects and illustrators, anthropologists and activists, students and teachers, gardeners and tour guides, nurses and refugees—all struggling to transform or survive the energy systems that shape their worlds. These are stories that imagine and interrogate energy transitions and futures in all their complexities. These are stories of phase change.

Matthew Chrulew (@negenropist) is a writer and researcher. His short fiction has appeared in *Westerly*, *Cosmos*, and *Ecopunk!* and his essays in *New Literary History*, *Parallax* and *Biosemiotics*. He edits the book series *Animalities* at Edinburgh University Press, and works as a research fellow at Curtin University.



KATH DOOLEY

THE FUTURE OF HOUSES: A VR EXPERIENCE

Image from Kath Dooley
(Producer/Director),
*The Future of Houses: A VR
experience*, 2022, 360-degree
video and virtual 3D environment
Duration unfixed

Legacy Living Lab, Fremantle, WA.
Image courtesy Curtin University.

This two-part Virtual Reality (VR) experience allows the viewer to explore the future of sustainable housing. Viewers first watch a 9-minute VR documentary that introduces one example of a circular economy house. This building, located in Fremantle, WA, has been constructed according to principles of reuse so as to diverge waste from landfill. Secondly, the viewer can explore a virtual model of the building, locating further features of the building for themselves.

The Future of Houses is a collaboration between director Kath Dooley (School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry), researchers at the Curtin University Sustainability Policy Institute (CUSP) and staff and students in Curtin's School of Electrical Engineering, Computing and Mathematical Sciences.

Researchers Roberto Minunno, Timothy O'Grady, and Greg Morrison developed and oversaw the construction of the Legacy Living Lab (known as L3), a circular economy building located in Fremantle, WA. This innovative building can be completely disassembled, relocated, and reused and is currently utilised as a research hub.

The Future of Houses seeks to communicate circular economy concepts in an engaging and interactive manner. After watching the documentary, the viewer can enter a 3D environment constructed using Unreal Engine, where they go on a quest to discover eleven features of L3.

Associate Professor Kath Dooley is a filmmaker and academic based at the University of South Australia. Her work as writer/director has screened at events such as the Edinburgh International Film Festival and FIVARS, Toronto. Kath is author of *Cinematic Virtual Reality: A Critical Study of 21st Century Approaches and Practices* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021) and co-editor of *The Palgrave Handbook of Screen Production* (2019). Her research interests include screen production methodology for traditional and immersive media, screenwriting, women's screen practice, and diversity in the screen industries.

Full project credits

PRODUCER/DIRECTOR
Kath Dooley

NARRATIVE DESIGNERS
Kath Dooley
Roberto Minunno
Torsten Reiners
Theodore Ransel Rondero
Angie Silva
Susannah Soon
Rui Qi Zhang

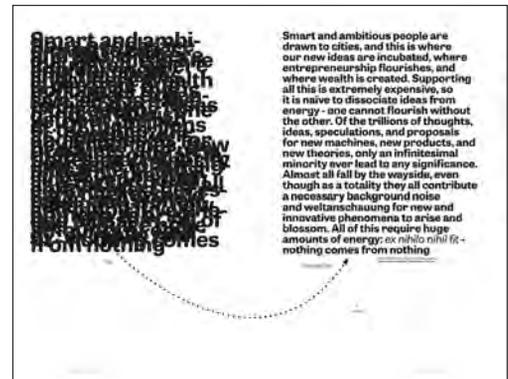
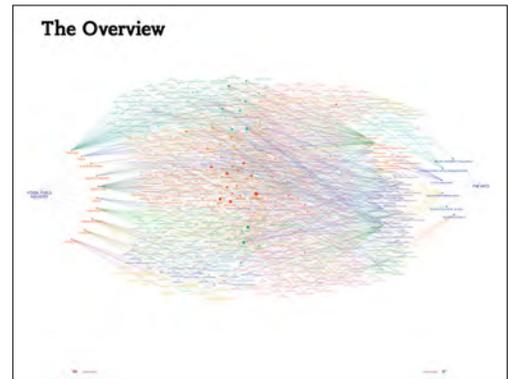
VR PROGRAMMERS
Theodore Ransel Rondero
Rui Qi Zhang

VR CONSULTANTS
Marcus Cozza
Camilo Idarraga Javela
Torsten Reiners
Susannah Soon

RESEARCHERS AND
WRITING CONSULTANTS
Roberto Minunno
Greg Morrison
Angie Silva

Book-of-the-Future

THE CLIMATE DOMESDAY BOOK



PHILIP ELY & DAVID FROHLICH *THE CLIMATE DOMESDAY BOOK*

Images from *The Climate Domesday Book*, Edited by Philip Ely & David Frohlich, 2021, Printed on Sovereign Offset Digital Indigo, bound in Buckram with Magic Bookmark silicon sensors and bluetooth transmitter (built by George Bairaktaris) and Android A-book app (developed by Haiyue Yuan). 251mm × 377mm, 190pp.

¹ See Buchanan, R. (1992). Wicked Problems in Design Thinking. *Design Issues*, 8(2), 5–21. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1511637> and Buchanan, R. (2019). Surroundings and environments in fourth order design. *Design Issues*, 35(1), 4–22. https://doi.org/10.1162/desi_a_00517

Book-of-the-Future is an international research team led by Philip Ely (Curtin University) with David Frohlich (University of Surrey), George Bairaktaris (University of Surrey), Haiyue Yuan (University of Kent) and Radu Sporea (University of Surrey), exploring the possibilities of next generation, augmented paper technologies. With backgrounds in design, human-computer interaction (HCI), electronic engineering, semiconductor devices and cyber security, the team came together on the back of previous research exploring the future of interactive newsprint.

The Climate Domesday Book includes contributions from climate-conscious writers, artists, research scientists, designers and activists from Australia and the UK. The book is a speculative design, intended to provoke public thought and action on the climate emergency and to explore new ways of communicating through design and technology. It demonstrates how design research can bring together diverse disciplinary perspectives, to represent and amplify a plurality of voices from across temporal and geographic zones. As a speculative design with multi-modal forms of communication (writing, talking, reading, listening, watching), its final manifestation is intended to show the power of human ingenuity and common cause. It is a book as a curated event; as a programme; as a protest; as a survey of ideas.

In the creation of an experimental hybrid print-digital book on a topic as essential as the future of energy and the planet, design research becomes more than assembling and packaging (a 'first order' concern) but an uncertain, collaborative, and activist mode of knowledge-making (a 'fourth order' concern).¹

It attempts to make sense of a complex challenge, invite dialogue between readers and writers, and stimulate action. It is a speculative design that provides space for contemplation, for inspiration, for engaging the pragmatic *and* the imaginary.

But it's just a book. How can a book make a difference? To which we would respond: *What world-changing events in the world have not been book-inspired?* We want it to be the first book of many: for others to take our technology, our designs and our ideas and make their own Climate Domesday Book in their city. Our Book-of-the-Future is a book, podcast, music video, poem, a window onto ground-breaking science, a manifesto-in-the-making, a clarion call, a gallery-within-a-gallery, a cultural census, a design of possibilities. It is more than a work of art. It is a design with purpose.

Dr Philip Ely is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Design and the Built Environment at Curtin University where he leads postgraduate design programs and research.

David Frohlich is Professor of Interaction Design and Director of Digital World Research Centre at the University of Surrey, UK.

Contributors: Andrew Sunley-Smith, Angie Silva, Astha Sharma, Brenna Quinlan, Charlie Mgee, Chris Flack, David E. Nye, David Martin, Fiona Beck, Gabrielle De Vietri, John Kinsella, Lucas Ihlein, Mark Spencer, Sarah Aghmandi, Si-En Zhou, Timo Rissanen, Will Foster, Zoë Sadokierski.



MICHELLE JOHNSTON & SALLY GOLDRICK *MY GREEN PLANET*

Student artworks and video images from Michelle Johnston and Sally Goldrick, *My Green Planet*, 2022, Digital media – online

My Green Planet is an interactive documentary about how young people imagine the future of our world. While learning about sustainability and clean energy, high school students have communicated their vision of the future through the creative arts. Art transcends language and cultural boundaries, and has the potential to communicate complex and sometimes uncomfortable ideas about the future.

‘Science is how we are going to create this change and how we are going to do it - but art is entirely the messenger on how we are going to get this to all the people and make it accessible for everyone.’

(Mel Graham – year 10, Governor Stirling Senior High School)

Interactive documentary offers a mosaic of stories and provides the opportunity for listening as well as speaking. Students participating in the documentary are eager to speak to a broad audience about their vision for the future and their anxieties about climate change. We want them to know they have been heard and so the filmmakers asked government representatives to view the art, listen to the students’ stories, and reply to them. These responses are included in the documentary.

My Green Planet is a non-linear documentary, so users navigate their own way through the stories and other content, choosing how much time will be spent with each element. Making the documentary has provided the opportunity for the filmmakers to explore a relatively new participatory form of filmmaking and to better understand how interactive documentary design and aesthetics influence the user experience.

Michelle Johnston and **Sally Goldrick** are Curtin University colleagues and friends who have collaborated previously on documentary and television productions, and do so once again with the production of *My Green Planet*.

Michelle is a Screen Arts academic who is passionate about creating media for social change, and working with communities who are misrepresented or excluded by the mainstream media. Prior to her academic career, Michelle worked in television production, spending the majority of her time with the ABC. She now enjoys teaching screen production and doing research in the fields of participatory documentary and Indigenous media. She is the co-author of a book called *Working Two Way: Stories of Cross-Cultural Collaboration from Nyungar Country* (2020, M. Johnston & S. Forrest) and is currently producing a documentary with a Fremantle community of activists.

Sally Goldrick is a Producer/Director with an extensive background in the media industry. Working primarily at the ABC, Sally has worked on a variety of multi-camera national and international productions including Sports (*Sydney Olympics*, *Hopman Cup*, *National Netball*), News and Current Affairs (*7pm News*, *World at Noon*, *The Business Breakfast Show*), and Children’s TV (*RollerCoaster*, *Playschool*). Sally is currently working as a full time Screen Arts lecturer at Curtin University, where she shares her broadcast expertise and passion with students entering the ever-changing media industry. Sally’s recent creative outputs include directing the award nominated documentary *Whadjuk to Wadjemup* (2014 – NITV) and *Heart Coming Home* (2017 – NITV).



THOR KERR, RAYMOND GRENFELL, HAFIZUR RAHAMAN, MAUREEN BOYLE & RICHARD EAMES *FARNEARFUTURENOW*

Images from Thor Kerr,
Raymond Grenfell, Hafizur
Rahaman, Maureen
Boyle and Richard Eames,
FarNearFutureNow, 2022, audio-
visual recording projected up from
a television into holographic form
via an acrylic pyramid, 5 minutes,
220 × 80 × 130 cm

FarNearFutureNow explores energy transformation in Australia as a disruptive trans-scaler encounter where futuristic visualisations appear anachronistically within the colonial space of resource exploitation and science fiction representation. Mimicking the holographic plea by Princess Leia of the Rebel Alliance in *Star Wars* (1977), *FarNearFutureNow* appeals for viewer agency in a struggle against planetary destruction. In this holographic projection, a cosmic zoom into Ngarluma country is cut short by the transmission of future energy plans which are, in turn, disrupted by members of Extinction Rebellion and their appeals for immediate action.

The five-minute recording is projected upwards from a television screen and reflected into holographic form via a transparent pyramid. Juxtaposing scales and genres, the work addresses *Australia's Long-term Emissions Reduction Plan* (2021) while demonstrating the dogged persistence of colonial space in science fiction and planetary crisis.

FarNearFutureNow was created in the land of the Whadjuk people of the Nyungar Nation with support from Curtin University's School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry. The artists thank (in order of appearance) Tahlia Stolarski, Les Harrison and Emily-Oscar Siggs for being interviewed in the production of this work.

Thor Kerr studies temporal and spatial scales in environmental discourse, particularly trans-scaler encounters around infrastructure projects in communities on the Indian Ocean's eastern rim. A Senior Lecturer in Curtin University's School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry, Dr Kerr's books include *Indian Ocean Futures* (2016), *To the Beach* (2015) and *Setting up the Nyongar Tent Embassy* (2013).

Raymond Grenfell is a PhD candidate in the School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry at Curtin University. His doctoral research examines the impact platform capitalism is having on the creation and continuation of prefigurative, counter-hegemonic institutions within autonomist communities. He is a producer and presenter of the Indymedia radio program on community radio station RTRFM.

Hafizur Rahaman is a professionally trained architect specialising in advanced visualisation and digital/virtual heritage. Dr Rahaman has been actively involved in research and consultancy on heritage conservation, AR/VR/MxR, 3D modelling, photogrammetry, interaction design and user evaluation for the last 12 years. He has received awards from SIGGRAPH, CAADRIA, Journal of Archaeological Review and Humanities Research Awards at Curtin University.

Maureen Boyle is an experienced policy professional, with over a decade of experience in renewable energy, and a research interest in social justice and energy anthropology. Maureen completed a Doctorate of Sustainable Development at Curtin University in 2021. Dr Boyle's research has contributed to understanding the influence and discourses of transnational actors working on energy and development projects in Cambodia.

Richard Eames is a filmmaker and digital media artist working in the realms of the moving image and photomontage. Eames interrogates themes of power struggle and liberty with a darkly satirical dissection of current trend lines. He is completing post-production on his debut feature film, and teaches Vision Design at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA).

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Energaia: Imagining Energy Futures

John Curtin Gallery
28 March–8 May 2022

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Photographs: various as credited

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Scan this code to visit the exhibition page on the John Curtin Gallery website for further information.

Cover Image from Susanna Castleden
1:1 Wind Turbine Blade, 2022
Gesso and acrylic on washi paper

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