Flash Forward – Story World and Speculative Design teaching

By Jakob I Wille and Arthur M Steijn

Story World Building or the creation of imaginary worlds is mostly thought of in the context of the making and designing of fictional worlds especially within the context of visual media entertainment and trans media franchises. In addition, the idea of story worlds is most often related to genres of fiction as fantasy and science fiction. The potential of story world building however reaches beyond media entertainment and fiction and touches on present design methodologies or approaches addressing (so-called) real-life design problems. A way to examine possible upcoming real-life problems in the design world is through speculative and/or scenario design. This paper investigates the intersection between story world building and speculative design (and science fiction and design fiction) in relation to a series of artistic experiments conducted with students of Visual Design at the Royal Danish Academy in 2020-21. The experiments were part of an artistic research project and workshop based course in story world, installation and interaction design, entitled Flash Forward. At the Flash Forward workshop phenomena as design fiction and diegetic prototyping was discussed and additionally story world and speculative design methods was used in order to produce a series of interactive prototypes exhibited at the Academy. This paper discusses the methods used at the workshop and the resulting prototypes in order to show the potential in science fiction and story world building methods in and outside the world of media entertainment.

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