Rehearsing the Future
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This book is a treatise on the Design Anthropological Innovation Model (DAIM). When I was invited to write its Foreword, I was honored, flattered, even slightly embarrassed. But I also found myself wrestling with a certain degree of trepidation. After all, my professional commitments, not to mention a large portion of my personal sense of identity, have been strongly tied to my sense of portion of my personal sense of identity, commitment, not to mention a large portion of my personal sense of identity, commitment, not to mentioning a partial, to advocating the use of “design and ethnography are both concerned with subject matters that are not given” 

To remind you, design and ethnography are both concerned with subject matters that are not given. Design thinking. Great stuff, design thinking. The value of emphasizing that the possibility of rethinking, recombining and creating new things (and things anew) comes from the processual and transformational is clear. The clarion call to suspend focus on the end product at the expense of the becoming offers a welcome respite. But I find that the name alone, design thinking, not to mention some of the abstracted hype that moves it, draws attention away from a dimension so vitally asked throughout this work, and that is the act of design doing. It is true that neither design nor ethnography is concerned with subject matters that are given, they are instead made. That is why anthropologists have so often turned their attention to matters of ritual and the unfolding of action, for example, and why theories of performativity and techné (to gesture towards just a few), have so resonated in accounting for cultural practice. I can’t say for sure what kind of anthropological encounter this is. But I welcome the tasty morsels it provides to ponder that. How are we defining and using notions of culture is changing – might this work suggest tools that allow us to more fully grapple with those changes? As the end of this politically-laden first decade of the 21st century draws to a close, concerns for forms of engagement in its catalyzed, if not in some cases nearly paralyzed, the anthropological quest. Does the radically participatory form of engagement present itself as a kind of design challenge and program proposed here help sharpen the dimensions against which to rethink matters of ethnographic and anthropological relationship?

At the same time I am excited for the kind of design challenge and program that Reharsing the Future suggests, and to entertain, within that, what anthropology does. In the appeal of techné, I am grateful for the performative role played by the anthropological in this approach. Reharsing the Future presents a design program perhaps rari-fied and not without difficulties, to be sure. But it is one that seems to want to engage and honor the profoundly social and relational basis of everything from objects to organizational forms to design practices themselves. Curtail up?

Melissa Cefkin
Editor, Ethnography and the Corporate Encounter
It is hopeful that you read this book because you are eager to reflect on your own practices while learning about ours. We would like to address fellow practitioners of design research who are equally committed to reflection and effective practices.

By mixing in high-level visions and discussions with very concrete project experiences we hope to convey an overall coherent approach, where the practical examples serve as precisely that: a repertoire of different ways this approach can be practiced. But it comes with a demand and expectation that particular procedures and techniques always be re-invented to suit the uniqueness of your present situation.

Don't expect procedural techniques to produce certain results from this book. It is not a handbook and it does not contain step-by-step introductions to specific techniques. The content is organized in the style of a collage, and to guide your reading experience, these are the types of contribution you will find:

PROGRAMMATIC VISION
This is a visionary, sometimes provocative, text that presents the major points of the book. While rooted in project experiences, it goes beyond reporting on the well tested and points to further potential that we, the collective DAIM partners, believe to see.

ESSAY
The essay reflects on various issues and experiences of individual authors from the DAIM project, while expanding the discussion to broader topics and related work.

MODEL
The models are abstract visualizations of major points, sometimes accompanied by explanatory text. A common feature of all the models is the emerging landscape, the contours of which only become visible as we meticulously move through it, as we do with design projects.

PRINCIPLE
During the tool seminars the DAIM partners formulated six principles for design researchers, consultants and clients concerned with carrying out exploratory design projects. The principles are brief but central encouragements to think and act the future as something to be rehearsed.

REPORTAGE
The reportage brings you close to a concrete project experience. It is written by a participant in a particular situation and seeks to provide flesh and blood to the account.

INTERVIEW
This is a dialogue between a DAIM researcher and a bureau partner about topics that especially link the commercial and academic practice of design research.

CASE
The DAIM project includes three mini projects on waste and four Golden Projects with bureaus. The case descriptions provide brief overviews of each of these. The case descriptions are referenced from several other contributions as background material.

TOOL
This is an example of how the DAIM approach can be used. The tools should not be regarded as stand-alone methods; they are resources for inspiration to readers who want to explore how the DAIM approach can be realized in their own context.

STATEMENT
During the mini projects and the Golden Projects we have collaborated with many different people in different situations. To tell a varied story of how different actors with particular points of view look at this field, we have collected some of these as short statements expressed in text or photograph form.

PROGRAMMATIC VISION / ESSAY / MODEL / PRINCIPLE / REPORTAGE / INTERVIEW / CASE / TOOL / STATEMENT