Portfolio   Julien Thomas

Design Research / Installation Art

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Cloudnet (2023)

Cloudnet is an 85 square metre camouflage net, handwoven with the image of a cloudy sky. The installation interweaves thermal blankets, funerary shrouds and camouflage netting to fabricate a space of protection, mourning and concealment in anticipation of future climate changes.

The work was presented during *The Disappearance of Clouds*, a presentation of artistic research on future cloudscapes during the 2023 Jan van Eyck Open Studios made in collaboration with Ekaterina Volkova.

Over the duration of the exhibition, an array of programmed elements were hosted under the netted structure to fuse scientific, artistic and activistic practices and approaches toward the future of altered cloudscapes.

Ruptured Render (2023)

Ruptured Render is a video installation that uses cloud modelling software to imagine future cloudscapes. Climate models project that higher concentrations of CO2 and rising ocean temperatures could produce a tipping point in which marine stratocumulus clouds could break up, leading to a catastropic 12 degree rise in global temperatures. The video work applies scientific abstraction to invite viewers beyond the binaries of hope and despair when imagining incomprehensible futures. The work was presented during the 2023 Jan van Eyck Open Studios, in collaboration with Ekaterina Volkova.

[Link](#) to video documentation
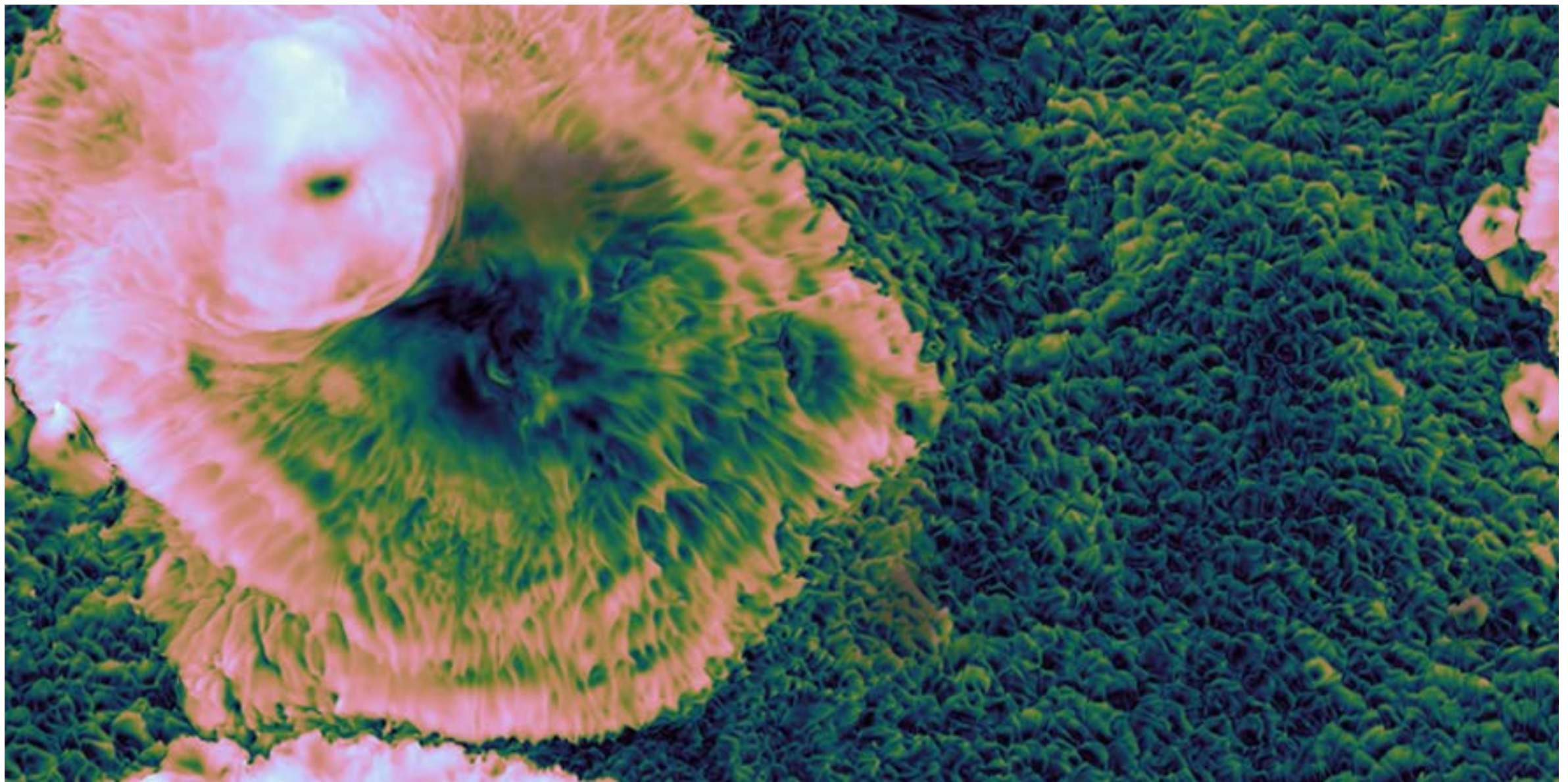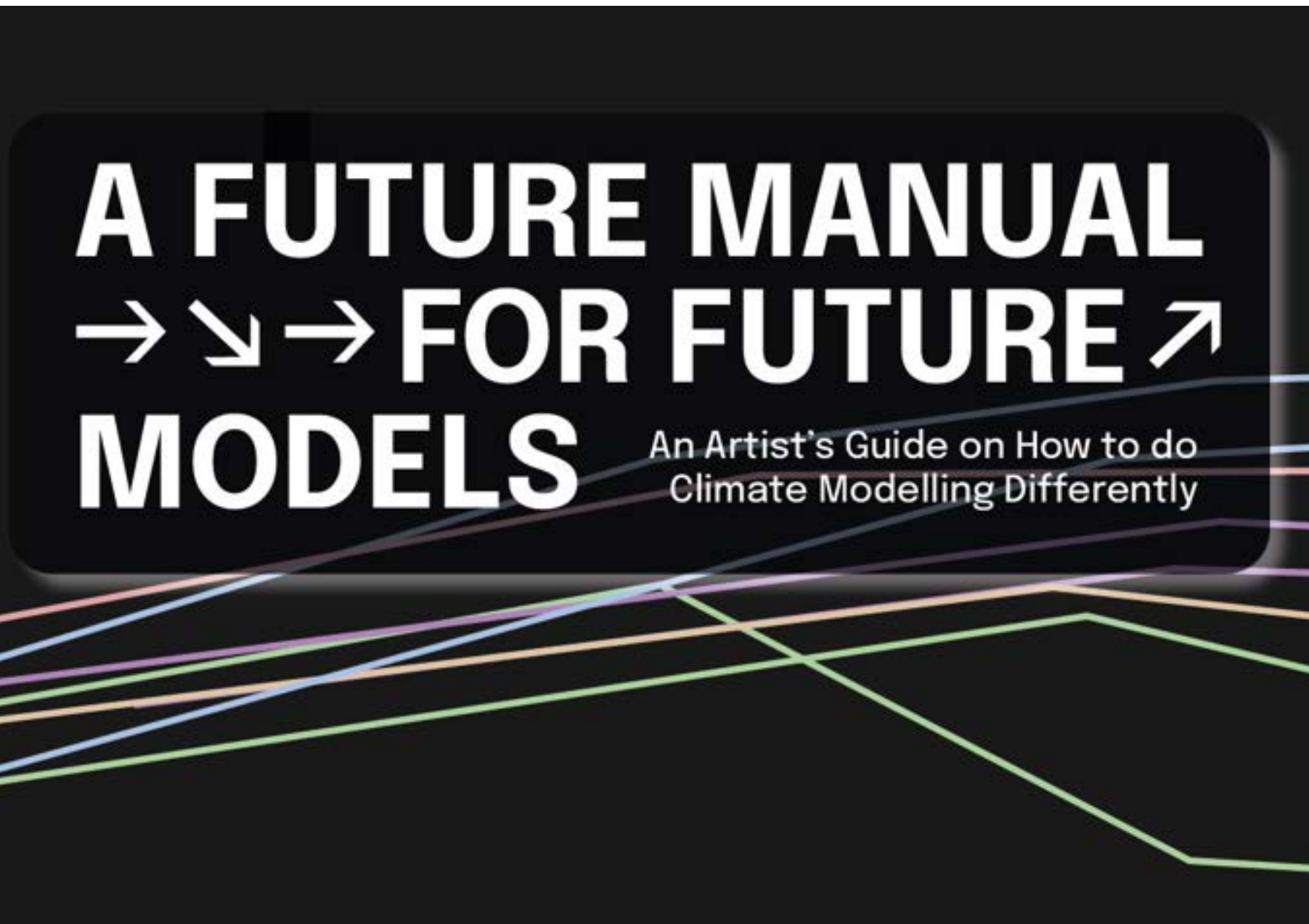
Digital Foreshadow (2023)

Digital Foreshadow is a carousel projector installation that presents Google Maps' 2012 erasure of clouds to forell the future disappearance of clouds due to climate change. The work was presented during the 2023 Jan van Eyck Open Studios. Collaboration with Ekaterina Volkova.

[Link](#) to video documentation

In 2019, an article in the scientific journal *Nature* predicts a new climate tipping point.

A Future Manual for Future Models (Fall 2022)

Link to website

A Future Manual for Future Models is an artist's guide to Integrated Assessment Models, computer programs that indicate future consequences of climate change and form the scientific basis of climate change discourse and policy.

The manual takes the form of a website, and explores climate models from the perspective of creative practices such as film making, graphic design, storytelling, and translation in order to propose alternatives to current climate modelling practices.

The research was conducted in collaboration with Ekaterina Volkova during the *Imagining Low Carbon Futures* residency, Jan van Eyck Academy and Urban Futures Studio, Utrecht University.

Timescapes (2021)

Timescapes considers the historic and contemporary role of light as a keeper of time. The work was developed in collaboration with architect Marie Prunault, and utilises parametric design to craft a series of large wooden screens hung in the Grote Zaal of Pictura Gallery in Dordrecht. The installation was presented as part of a duo show with designer Marije Vogelzang as part of the Dordrecht Museum's retrospective of Albert Cuyp on his 400th birthday anniversary.

Conversations in Darkness (2020-21)

[Conversations in Darkness](#) is a web application that hosts spatialised conversations in which the voices of others appear directionally - coming from the side or in front - so that participants feel as if they are sharing space together. The project was initiated as a response to social distancing regulations due to the Coronacrisis.

The website, made in collaboration with Ekaterina Volkova, contains a podcast series featuring conversations among artists using the software to make sense of the (embodied and social) movement in relation to COVID.
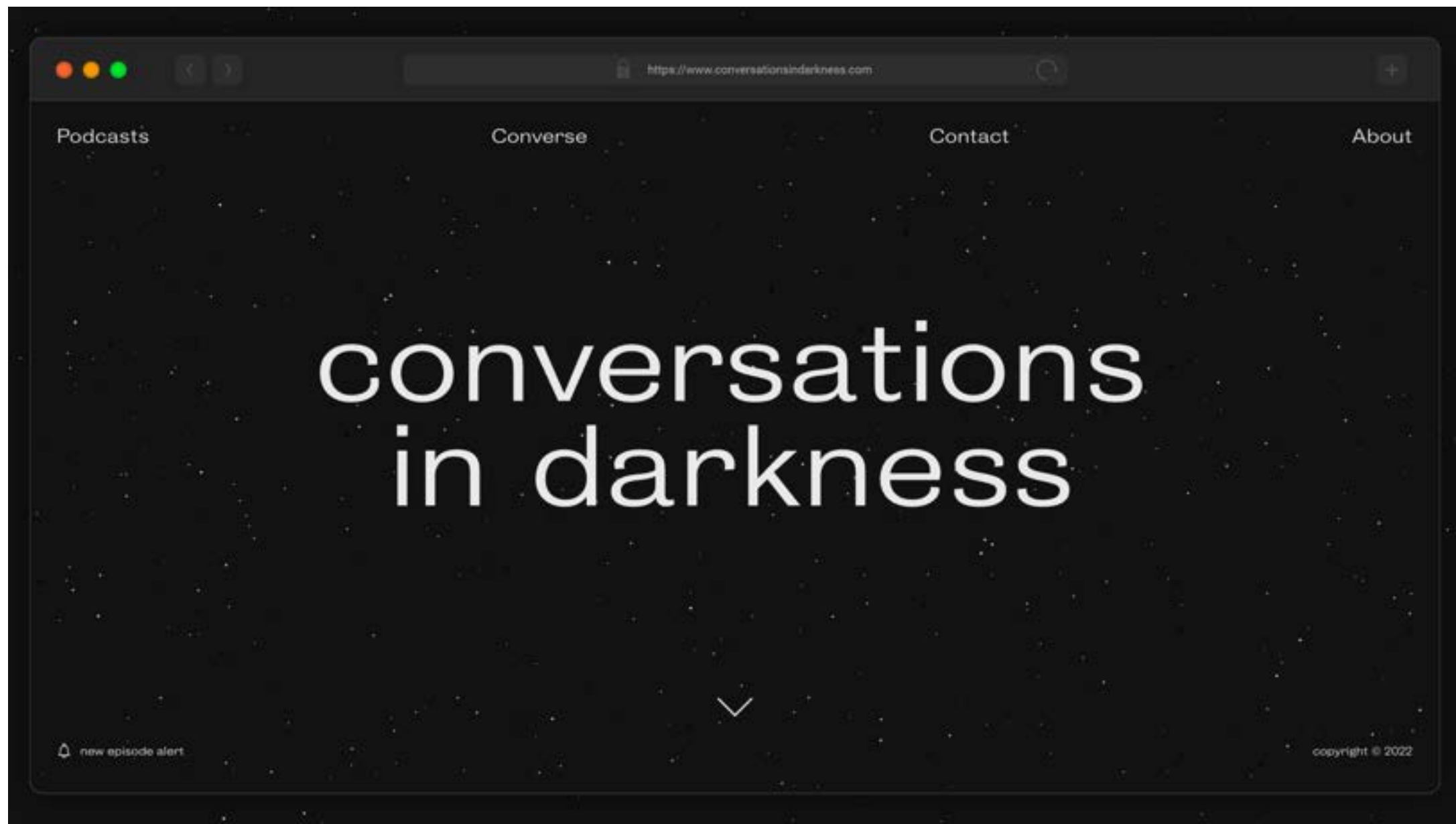
Perception Design Studio *(2020)*
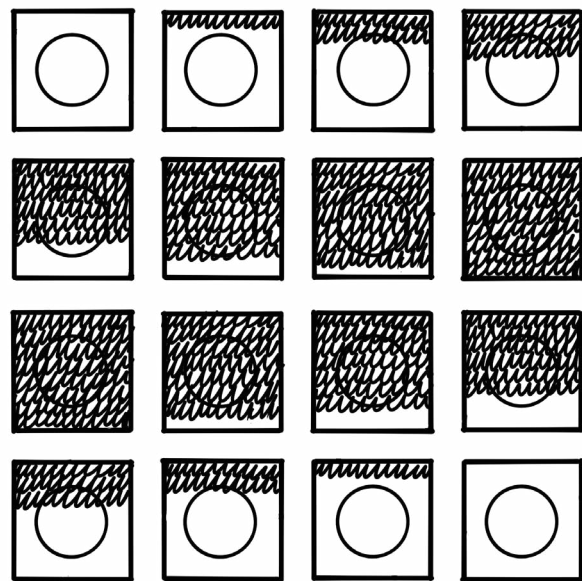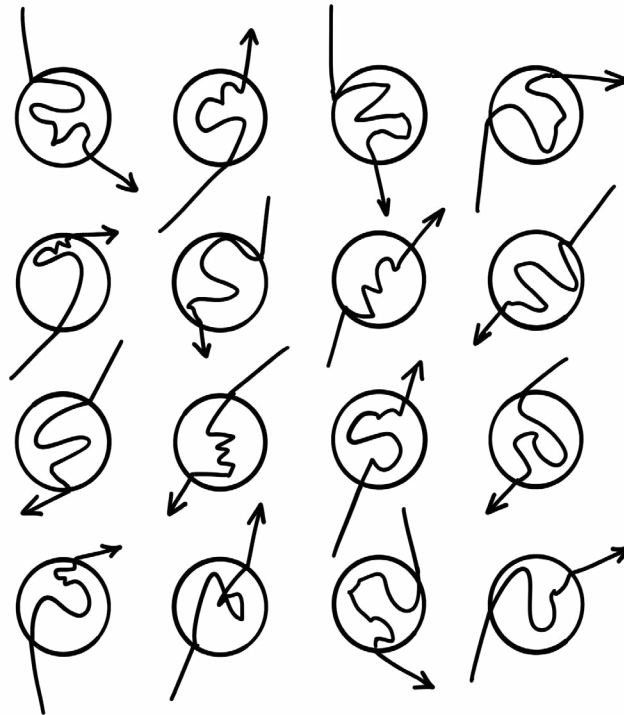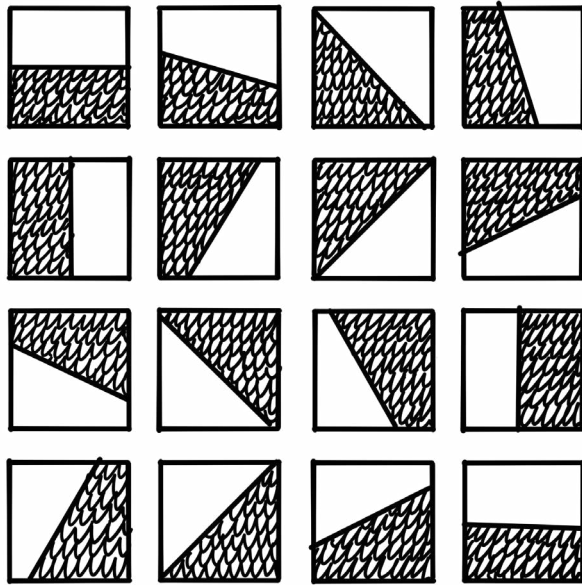
The [Perception Design Studio](#) explores the potential of design strategies to assist policy-actors working in complex situations.

The Studio's activities focus on the role of sensory perception as a basis for thought. Sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste all inform our ability to perceive the world, and provide the basis for language, meaning, and politics.

Through the design of speculative interior elements that incorporate light installation and kinetic sculpture, the Studio seeks to enable participants in exploring the sensoral aspects of politics.

The Studio is a collaboration between the artist, The City of Amsterdam, and Public Mediation, a consultancy which facilitates multi-stakeholder governmental processes.

Onzicht (Perception Design Studio)

Onzicht (from the Dutch words inzicht: insight and onzichtbaar: invisible) confounds the role of vision in interpersonal dynamics. The installation considers light placement, colour, and duration in replicating a process of dusk and dawn, and allows participants to experience how a lack of vision may influence the timing, intonation, and content of a conversation.

Over a one-hour duration, all light in the room fades out to create an experience of complete darkness, before returning to the original lighting arrangement. Through the subtraction of light, *Onzicht* reorients the sensoral hierarchy of conversations away from vision and towards other senses.

Link to video documentation

Refraction Table (Perception Design Studio)

Refraction Table translates sound into wave patterns on water. As the water ripples expand they create dynamic patterns of interaction. Through the propagation of these unexpected and unpredictable patterns, the object presents alternative interpretations of a conversation that exceeds mere representation.

Link to video documentation

Antique Prototype *(2019)*

Antique Prototype considers the relationship between traditional and contemporary fabrication techniques. An antique chest is carved with a robotic arm and milling head to create a hybrid object which combines traditional joinery and veneer work with parametric design and precision milling. Collaboration with architect Marie Prunault.
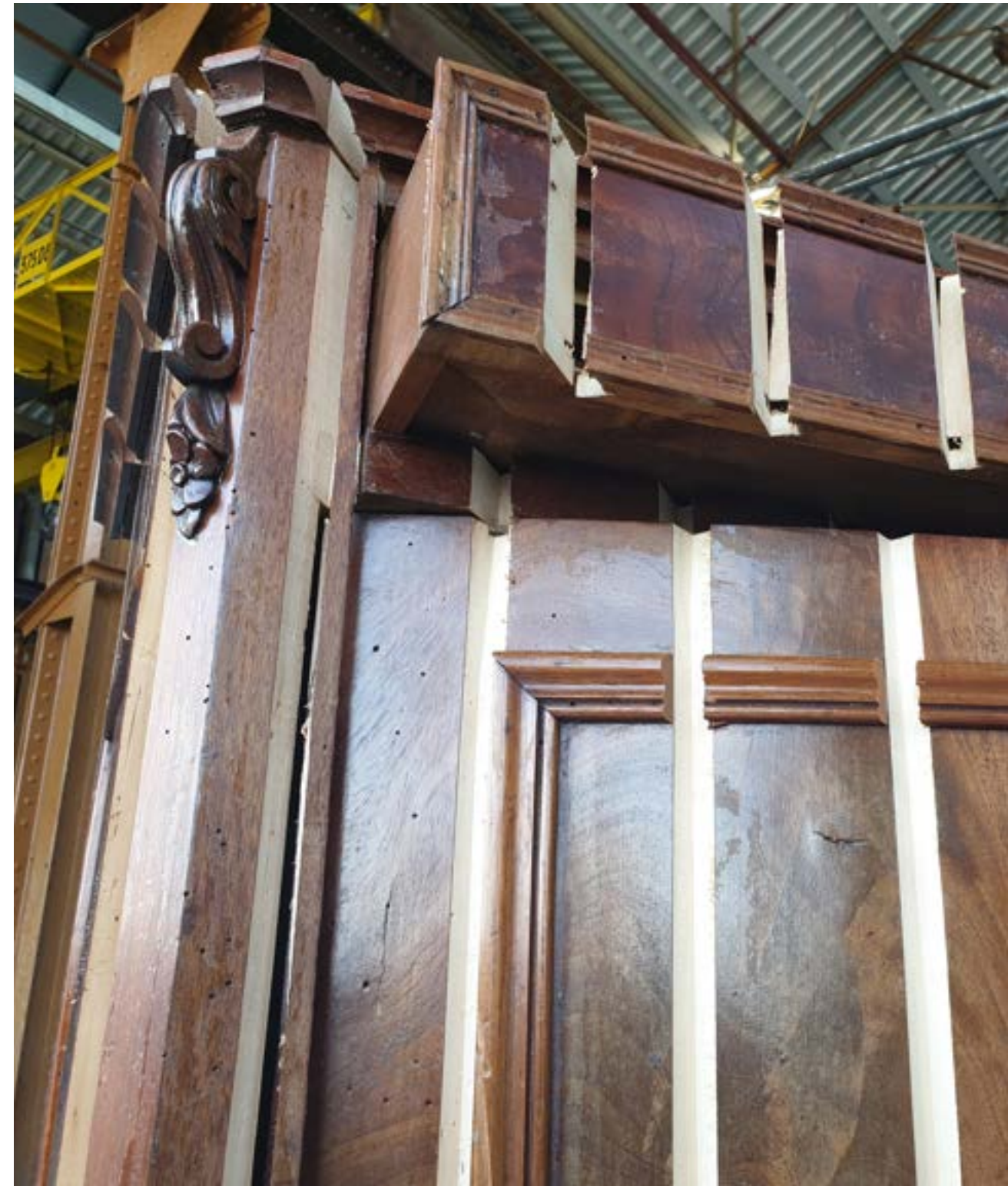
Conversation (Im)balance *(2018)*

Conversation (Im)balance is a second iteration of *Conversation Balance* (2016), and embodies a series of formal amendments to the original design. The new platform is slightly smaller and responds to changes in weight and movement with more agility, and the centre is offset so that participants are continuously in a state of imbalance.

Conversation Balance *(2016)*

Conversation Balance explores the nature of political agency through movement. Through its shape the installation enables participants to feel the movement of others in space, and to expand their repertoire of nonverbal communication from gesture - a tilt of the head, a shift of the wrist - towards whole body movement. The installation thus facilitates participants in embodying and performing certain gestures, scenarios, and concepts in an effort to enable latent forms of political to expression to emerge.
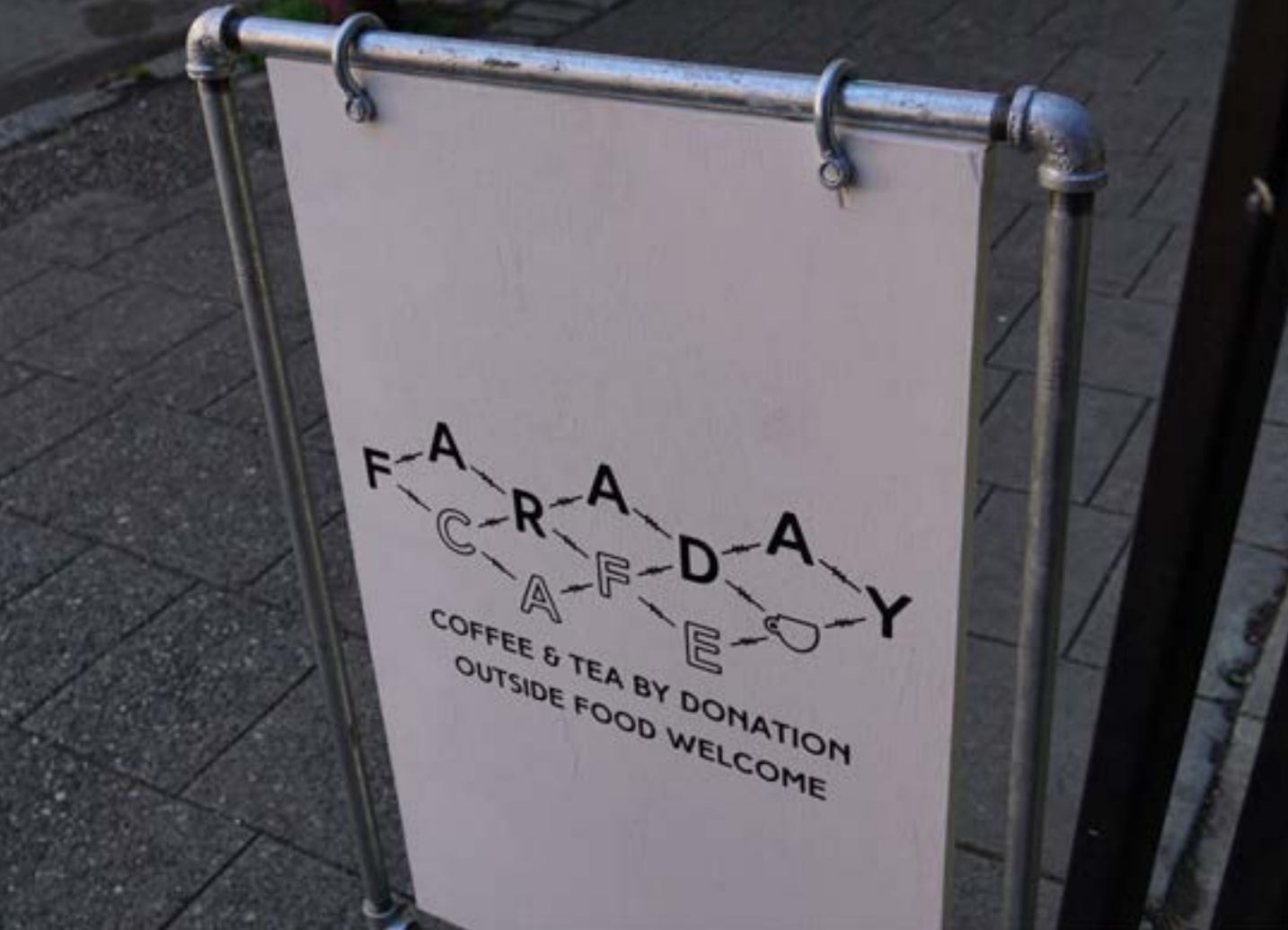
[Link](#) to video documentation

Faraday Cafe (2014)

The Faraday Cafe was a pop-up coffee bar that repelled wireless signals. Upon entering the cafe mobile phones lost their signal, reminding patrons of a time before ubiquitous wireless coverage. By giving visitors the option to disconnect from their devices, the project proposed alternative relationships to digital technology.

Located in Vancouver's Chinatown, the Café served a rotation of artisanal coffees by donation while hosting a variety of events including morning meditation sessions, afternoon DJ sets, dinner and dessert parties, and evening storytelling gatherings.

Media Vancouver Sun, Province x2 (syndicated to Calgary Herald, Ottawa Citizen, Regina LeaderPost and more across the country), Huffington Post, CKNW Radio x2, Global TV, CTV BC, CTV National, CBC BC, CBC Radio Vancouver, CBC Radio Victoria, CBC Radio National, Ming Pao Daily News, Globe and Mail, Sun News Network, Pop-Up City, Fast.Company, Monocle Podcast

Link to video documentation

Rainblossom Project (2014)

Park-a-Park (2013)

Park-a-Park was a pilot initiative to transform a roll-off disposal bin into a mobile community space. The project was an invitation to reimagine our relationship to streets and the public sphere by repurposing conventional urban forms.

The bin was dropped at nine locations throughout Vancouver over the summer of 2013, hosting weekly potluck gatherings and acting as an open space to convene and catalyze community initiatives.