

# **Enquête/Création joypads, smartphones et Anthropocène**

**nicolas nova  
6.11.2024**

**— HEAD  
Genève**

**Sciences naturelles**

**Anthropologie**



**Technologie**

**Art/Design**







Enquête : une démarche de compréhension du monde qui s'appuie sur :

(1) La clarification d'une posture spécifique, qui peut être liée au contexte de recherche (production de connaissances, recherche-action, conception... (2) La construction d'un objet de recherche étudié autour d'un questionnement, (3) Un mode d'appréhension et qui implique la présence des chercheurs au plus près des situations "naturelles" des acteurs, dans leur vie quotidienne, leurs habitudes, leurs rapports aux objets usuels, et leurs conversations en vue de produire des connaissances situées qui rendent compte des pratiques des acteurs, des représentations ordinaires, et du sens qu'ils donnent aux situations qu'ils vivent (4). Des formes de restitution.



Game Design Today, Museum für Gestaltung Zurich, 2023



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세일!!









DONKEY KONG

GAME  
&  
WATCH

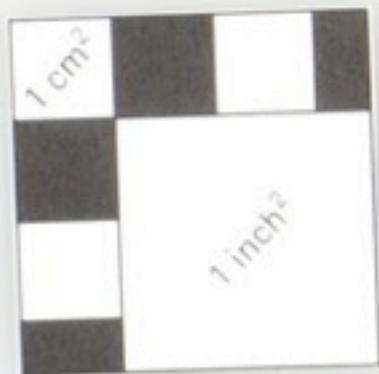
CONTROLLER

Nintendo®

GAME A  
GAME B  
TIME  
ALARM  
ACL

START

JUMP



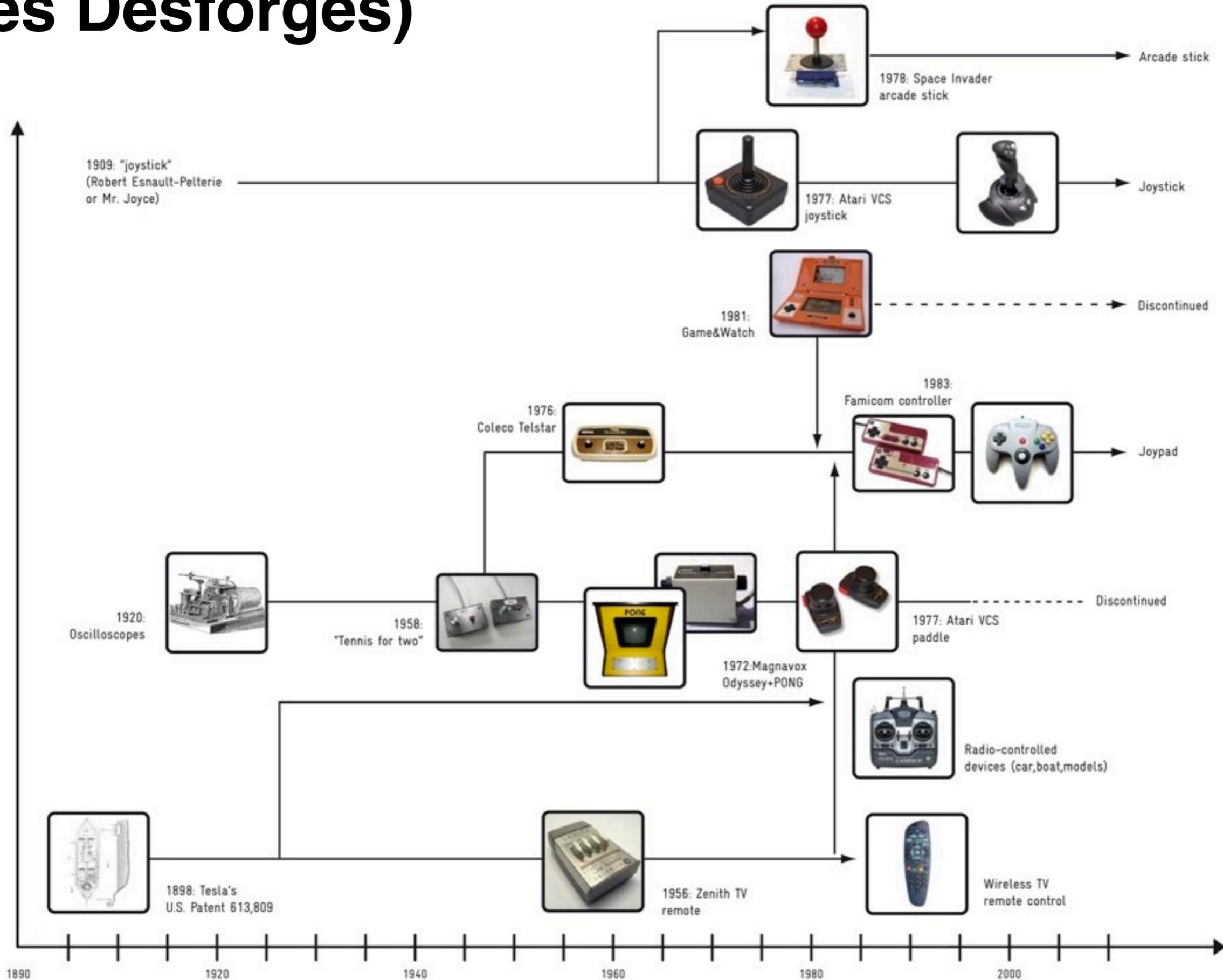
MEGA DRIVE CONTROL PAD

START

SEGA

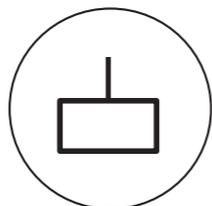
TRIGGER

# “Lignées techniques” (Yves Desforges)



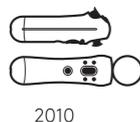
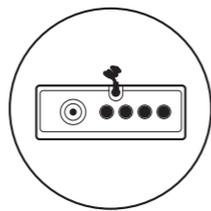
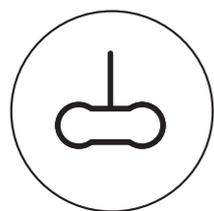
# “Lignées techniques” (Yves Desforges)

La forme de base, une petite brique, a été développée sur le modèle des jeux électroniques Game&Watch.

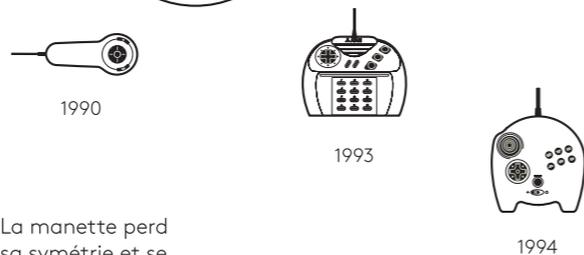
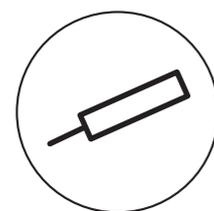


La recherche d'une prise en main plus ergonomique, le développement des interfaces 3D et l'ajout de boutons d'action ont contribué à l'évolution des formes.

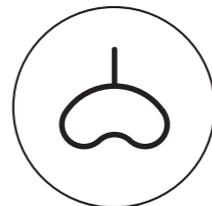
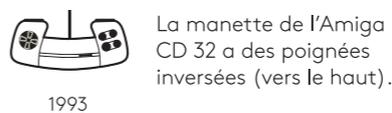
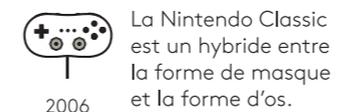
Des formes géométriques sont ajoutées à la brique de base, lui donnant un aspect d'os.



Par rotation de 90°, la forme de base devient une manette à une seule poignée.

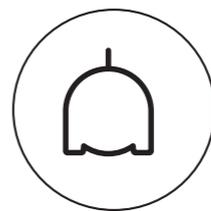
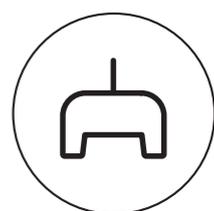


La manette perd sa symétrie et se scinde en deux.



La brique de base se courbe et rappelle la forme d'un masque.

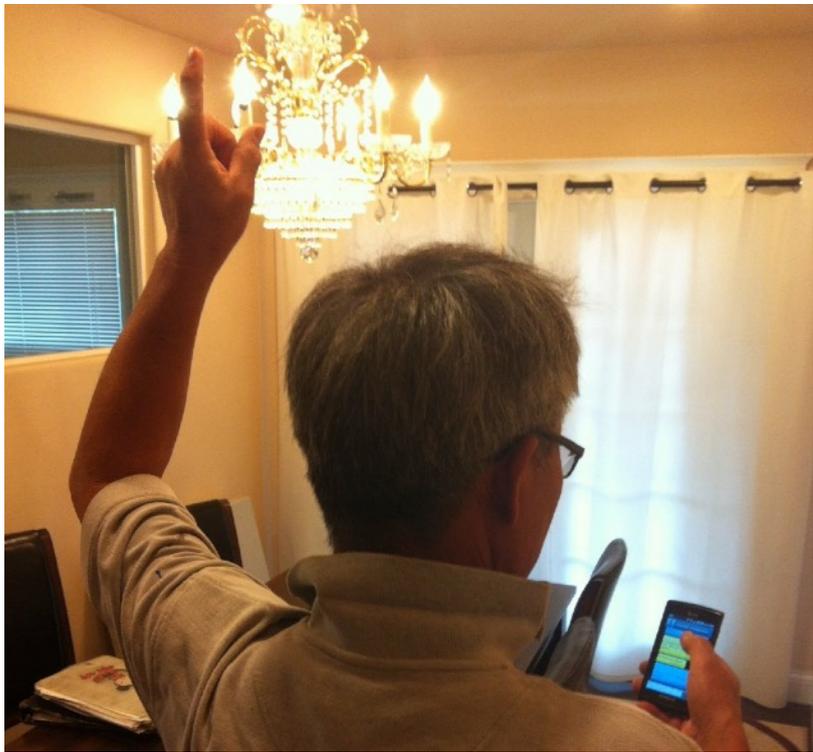
Les manettes deviennent des objets aux formes et à la technologie complexes. Leur ergonomie et les matières utilisées sont étudiés avec une grande attention.



Les poignées sont intégrées dans le corps de la manette. La surface intégrant les boutons augmente radicalement.







Curious Rituals, The Near Future Laboratory, 2012

THE CLASSICS

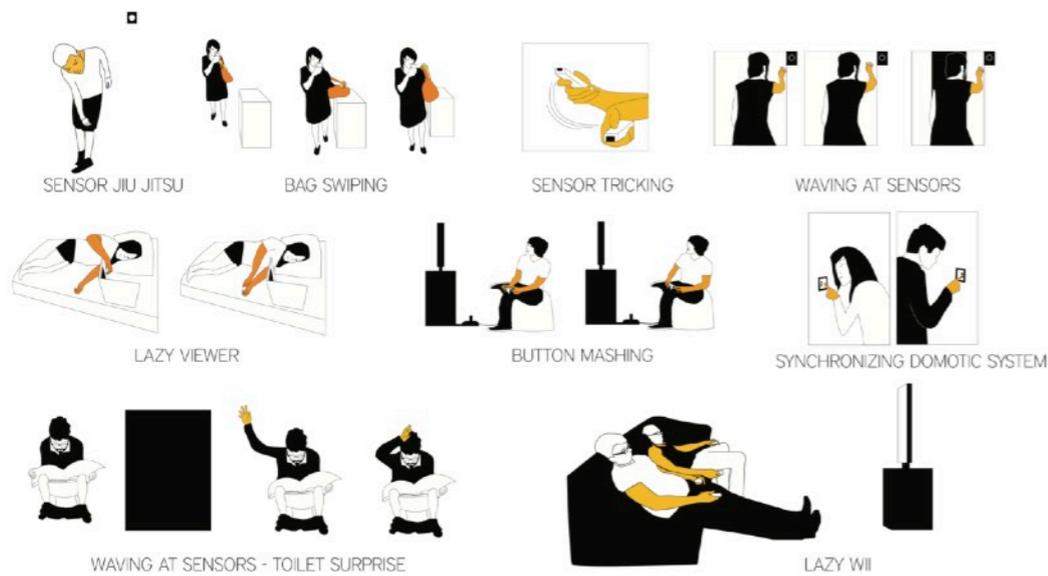


PRESENTATION OF SELF

PHONE HOLDING HABITS



PERSONAL TACTICS



RENEWED SOCIAL INTERACTIONS



THE VENTING SPECTRUM



DIGITAL PLUMBING



PRESET GESTURES



# THE CLASSICS



CLICKER CASTING



VIDEO GAME HAUNTOLOGY



THUMB TEXTING



DEVICE JUGGLING

# PRESENTATION OF SELF

## PHONE HOLDING HABITS



PRAYER BOOK



ACTIVE COMPANION



BUSY SHOPPER



UNDER THE RADAR



THE THIRD ARM



FUSSY OWNER SYNDROME



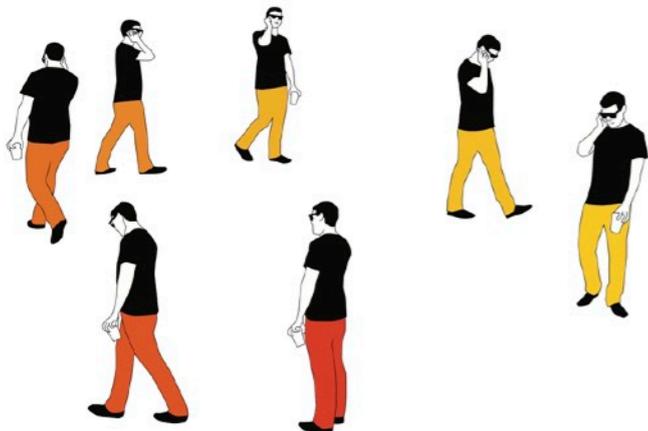
BABOON'S FACE



LOW DOSAGE



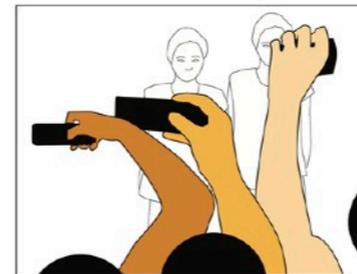
OBSESSIVE CHECKER



CELL TRANCE



CELL TRANCE -  
WALL STANDING





# CURIOUS RITUALS

GESTURAL INTERACTION IN THE DIGITAL EVERYDAY

NICOLAS NOVA | KATHERINE MIYAKE | WALTON CHIU | NANCY KWON



Curious Rituals, The Near Future Laboratory, 2012





**smart**  
phones

une enquête  
anthropologique

Nicolas Nova

MétisPresses

Carte de paiement

Liseuses ebooks

Lecteurs MP3

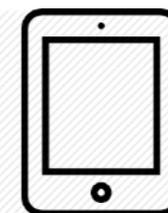
PDA

Console portable

Appareil photo

Pager

Téléphone mobile

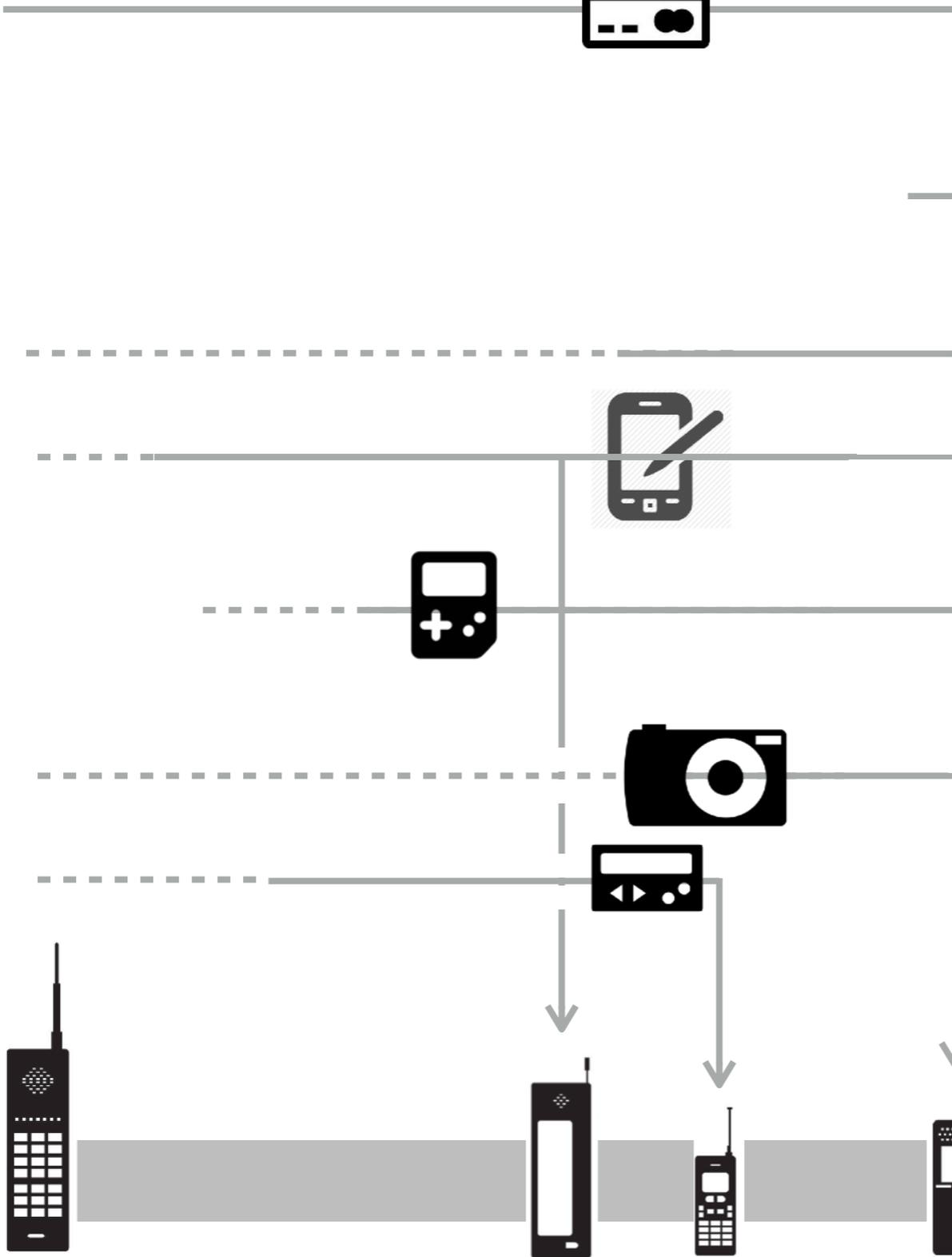


1980

1990

2000

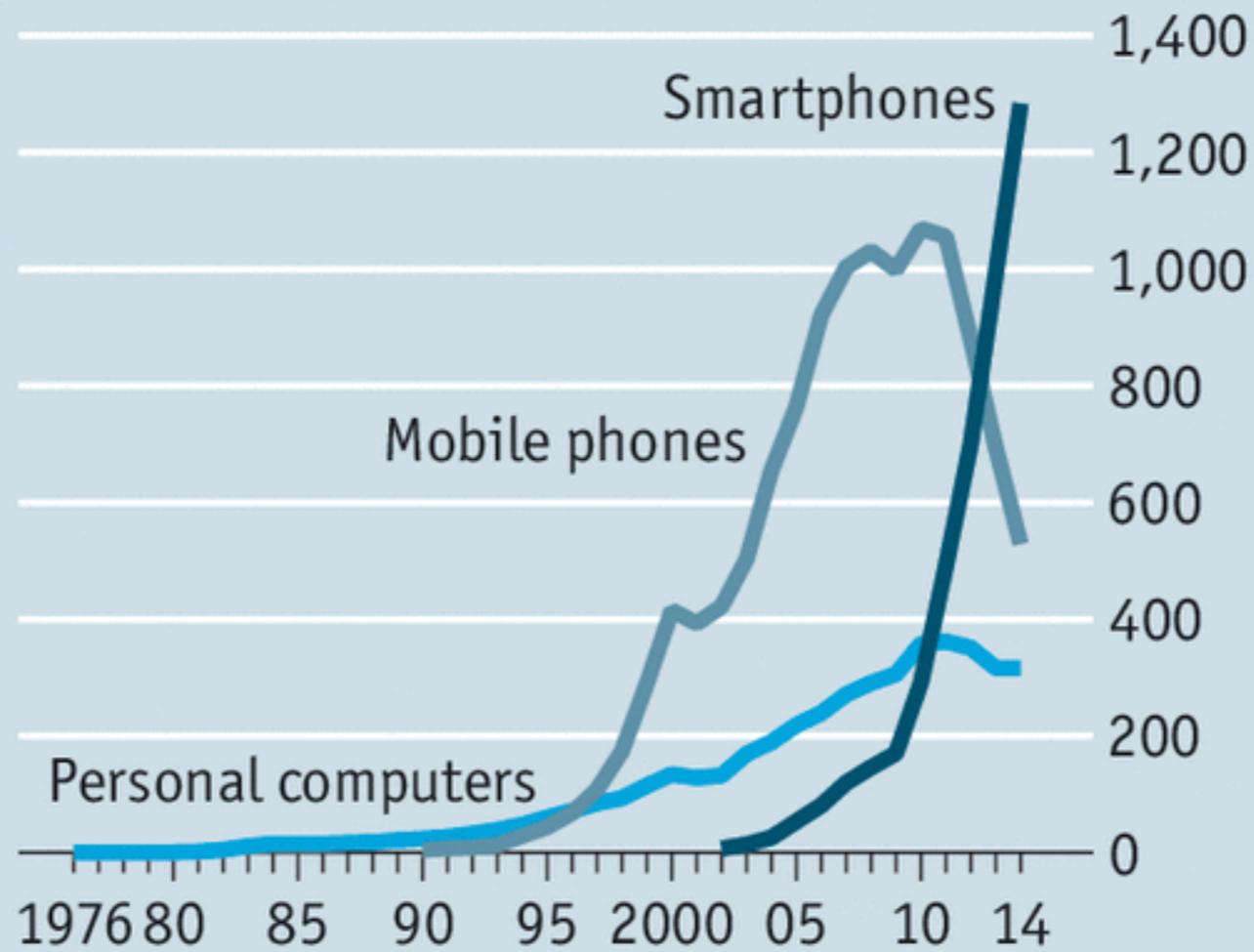
2010



# Unstoppable

Shipments, m

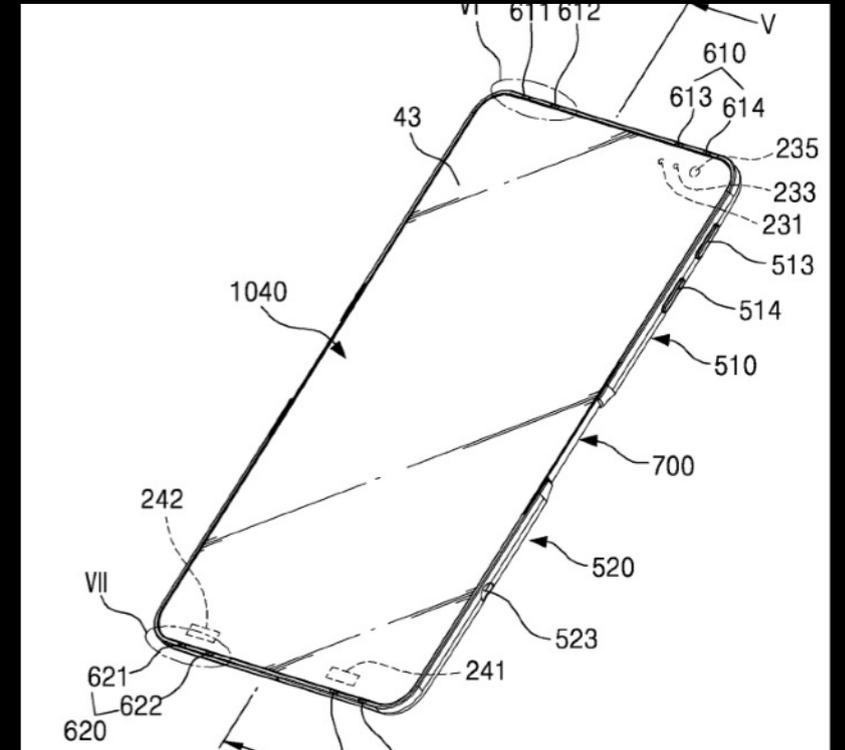
1



Sources: Gartner; Strategy Analytics

**Qu'est-ce que vivre avec un smartphone ?  
Qu'est-ce qu'il nous fait faire ou ne pas  
faire ? Quel sens les usagers donnent-ils  
à cet objet ? Et au fond, qu'est-ce qu'un  
smartphone ?**

# enquête de terrain



DC LITERIE



“laisse”





“cocon”



“prothèse”

禁  
No Smo

谷・品川方面  
Yamanote Line 14

“mirroir”



**“baguette magique”**



“coquille vide”



NICOLAS NOVA & DISNOVATION.ORG

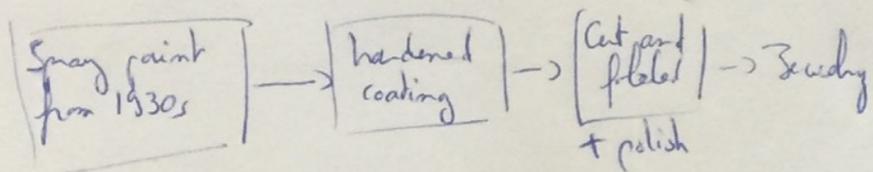
A BESTIARY OF  
THE ANTHROPOCENE



ONOMATOPEE

# FORDITE

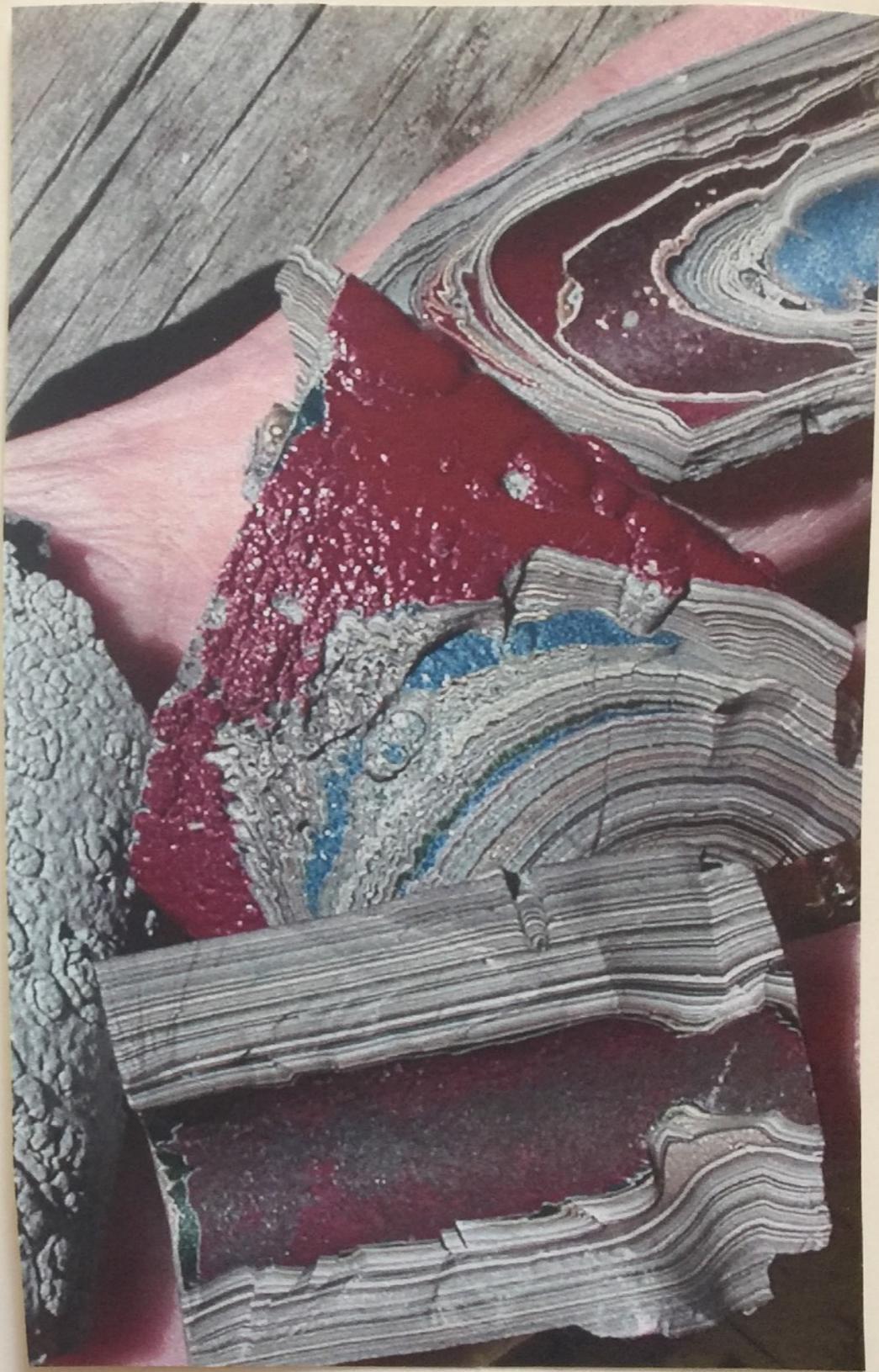
Aka Detroit agate or Flota agate is old automobile paint which has hardened sufficiently to be cut and polished. It was formed by the buildup of layers of enamel paint slag on tracks and skids on which cars were hand-sprayed-painted, which has been baked several times. In recent times, the material has been upcycled into eco-friendly jewelry.



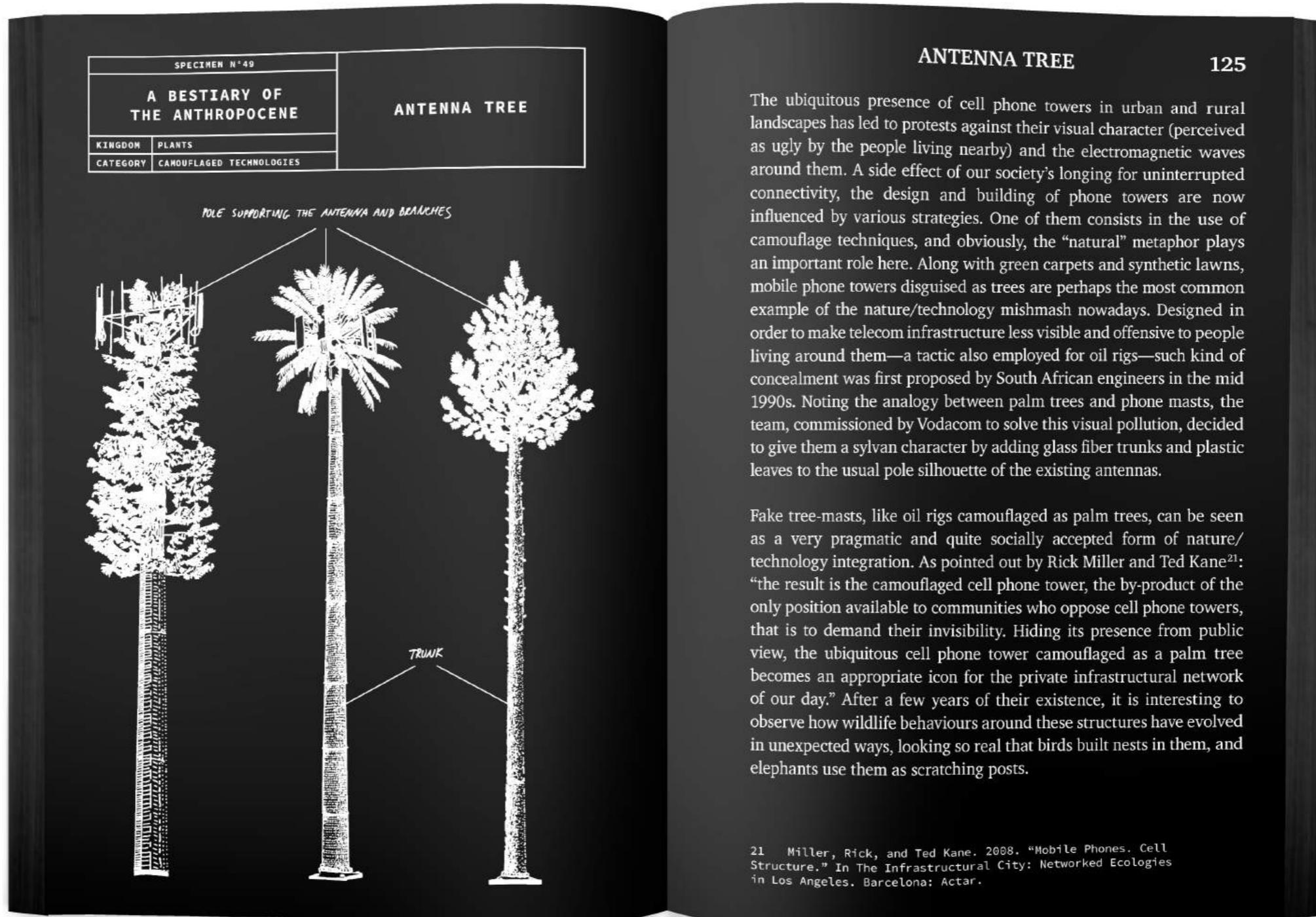
"Fordite comes in all sort of colors!"

"The Anthropocene's best gem"

"No one knows how much vintage fordite still exists"







## ANTENNA TREE

125

The ubiquitous presence of cell phone towers in urban and rural landscapes has led to protests against their visual character (perceived as ugly by the people living nearby) and the electromagnetic waves around them. A side effect of our society's longing for uninterrupted connectivity, the design and building of phone towers are now influenced by various strategies. One of them consists in the use of camouflage techniques, and obviously, the "natural" metaphor plays an important role here. Along with green carpets and synthetic lawns, mobile phone towers disguised as trees are perhaps the most common example of the nature/technology mishmash nowadays. Designed in order to make telecom infrastructure less visible and offensive to people living around them—a tactic also employed for oil rigs—such kind of concealment was first proposed by South African engineers in the mid 1990s. Noting the analogy between palm trees and phone masts, the team, commissioned by Vodacom to solve this visual pollution, decided to give them a sylvan character by adding glass fiber trunks and plastic leaves to the usual pole silhouette of the existing antennas.

Fake tree-masts, like oil rigs camouflaged as palm trees, can be seen as a very pragmatic and quite socially accepted form of nature/technology integration. As pointed out by Rick Miller and Ted Kane<sup>21</sup>: "the result is the camouflaged cell phone tower, the by-product of the only position available to communities who oppose cell phone towers, that is to demand their invisibility. Hiding its presence from public view, the ubiquitous cell phone tower camouflaged as a palm tree becomes an appropriate icon for the private infrastructural network of our day." After a few years of their existence, it is interesting to observe how wildlife behaviours around these structures have evolved in unexpected ways, looking so real that birds built nests in them, and elephants use them as scratching posts.

<sup>21</sup> Miller, Rick, and Ted Kane. 2008. "Mobile Phones. Cell Structure." In *The Infrastructural City: Networked Ecologies in Los Angeles*. Barcelona: Actar.

SPECIMEN N°96		PLASTIGLOMERATE
A BESTIARY OF THE ANTHROPOCENE		
KINGDOM	MINERALS	
CATEGORY	ROCKS	



## PLASTIGLOMERATE

31

Coined by a team made of a geologist, an oceanographer, and a sculptor,<sup>4</sup> the term “plastiglomerate” refers to a new kind of rock made of melted plastics, marine debris, basalt, and wood combined into a single substance by bonfires. Such a kind of geological formation, neither stone, nor plastic, was recently found on Hawaiian Beaches, possibly a terminal point in the worldwide circulation of garbage. Plastiglomerates can be seen as one of the many disturbing-yet-material markers of the Anthropocene, this new epoch viewed as the period during which human activity has been the dominant influence on the climate and the environment. Plastic is a century old but these peculiar Hawaiian rocks show that it can quickly be integrated with other matter through geological forces. They give us the impression that both consumer society and metamorphism can be combined to forge the relics of our industrial civilizations. Such process happens almost in real-time, compared to geological timeframes. Labelled as “plasticrust” by geologists, a similar phenomenon has been observed in Madeira, where a coating of plastic particles, originated in the ocean, adhered directly onto rocks along the shoreline<sup>5</sup>.

To some extent, plastiglomerate is the visible manifestation of a phenomenon that exists at a much smaller level almost everywhere on this planet: the integration of micro-plastic particles in our environment, in the food we eat, in the water we drink, and eventually in our bodies. This is why plastiglomerate embodies the general condition of our world, a hybrid of synthetic polymers and organic compounds.

<sup>4</sup> Corcoran, Patricia, Charles Moore, and Kelly Jazvac. 2014. “An Anthropogenic Marker Horizon in the Future Rock Record.” *GSA Today* 24: 4-8. <https://doi.org/10.1130/GSAT-G198A.1>.

<sup>5</sup> Gestoso, Ignacio, Eva Cacabelos, Patricio Ramalhosa, and João Canning-Clode. 2019. “Plasticrusts: A New Potential Threat in the Anthropocene's Rocky Shores.” *Science of The Total Environment* 687: 413-15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2019.06.123>.



A BESTIARY OF THE ANTHROPOCENE is an illustrated compilation of hybrid creatures of our time, equally inspired by medieval bestiaries and observations of our damaged planet. Designed as a field handbook, it aims at helping us observe, navigate, and orientate into the increasingly artificial fabric of the world. Plastiglomerates, surveillance robot dogs, fordite, artificial grass, antenna trees, Sars-Covid-2, decapitated mountains, drone-fighting eagles, standardised bananas... each of these specimens are symptomatic of the rapidly transforming "post-natural" era we live in. Often without us even noticing them, these creatures exponentially spread and co-exist with us.

A BESTIARY OF THE ANTHROPOCENE seeks to capture this precise moment when the biosphere and technosphere merge and mesh into one new hybrid body. What happens when technologies and their unintended consequences become so ubiquitous that it is difficult to define what is "natural" or not? What does it mean to live in a hybrid environment made of organic and synthetic matter? What new specimens are currently populating our planet at the beginning of the 21st century?

- > Foreword ..... Nicolas Nova
- > On Bestiaries ..... Pierre-Olivier Dittmar
- > On Classification ..... Matthieu Duperrex
- > On Artificiality ..... Benjamin H. Bratton
- > On Recombinant Commons ..... Aliens in Green
- > On Negative Commons ..... Alexandre Monnin
- > On Anthropogenic Landscapes ..... Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing
- > On Life With Non-Living ..... Michel Lussault
- > On Planetary Indigestion ..... Center for Genomic Gastronomy
- > On Ferality ..... Pauline Briand
- > On Temporalities ..... Geoffrey C. Bowker

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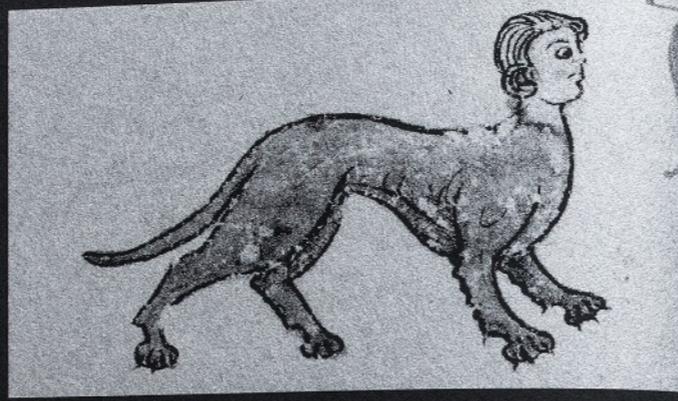
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# A BESTIARY OF THE ANTHROPOCENE



ON HYBRID MINERALS,  
ANIMALS, PLANTS, FUNGI...



A name, an image, a brief description and their moral significance. This is the canonical formula for bestiaries as they developed over the course of the Middle Ages. These compendiums bring together a body of knowledge about animals—though one also finds descriptions of humans, minerals and plants—that translate, compile and, above all, interpret the scholarly work of Greek and Roman authors (essentially Pliny the Elder).<sup>1</sup> While the majority of specimens that appear in these works are tangibly real—lions, ants, foxes and weasels—bestiaries also contain descriptions of creatures now considered to be imaginary, such as dragons, unicorns and griffons: animals whose existence was not questioned, but whose presence—like that of atoms in our times—had not been confirmed by individual sensory experience.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the omnipresence of fantastical animals in literary and figurative representations from the medieval era gives them a place of prominence that is anything but marginal.

From a formal perspective, bestiaries are a series of texts and illuminations that depict their specimens through short descriptions covering a mix of physical, behavioural and moral characteristics. This structure, which remained relatively stable over time, aimed to create order within a natural world that was experienced as being chaotic and degraded through the fault of humankind. The animal world, as one could experience it every day, was thought of as defiled in comparison to the ideal ecology created by God for Heaven. A place where vegetarianism was the rule for all creatures and in which relationships between them were always benevolent. The presence of evil and violence in the animal world was clearly thought of as the consequences of human error. It was through the fault of Man, his *Fall* and expulsion from paradise, that certain animals became carnivores and violence spread in the natural realm, losing part of the perfect order of Creation. Augustine, in his *Literal Exegesis*—the authoritative text on the subject throughout the entire Middle Ages<sup>3</sup>—gives animals a special status in Creation. Because they are capable of violence and are potentially bringers of death, animals serve as *symptoms* of what was experienced as a major ecological catastrophe: the *Fall* (*symptoma*,

# BESTIAIRE DE L'ANTHROPOCÈNE



SPECIMEN N°23

**A BESTIARY OF  
THE ANTHROPOCENE**

**TRAPPED HERMIT CRAB**

KINGDOM	ANIMALS
CATEGORY	ANIMALS WITH PLASTIC

LIGHT BULB BASE  
USED AS A SHELL

HERMIT CRAB



**conclusion**

# Une gamme d'activités nourries par l'anthropologie

**Enquête**



**Description**



**Spéculation**

# Une gamme d'activités nourries par l'anthropologie

**Enquête**



**Description**



Livre  
Livre de photos  
Exposition  
Fanzine?  
...



**Spéculation**

# Une gamme d'activités nourries par l'anthropologie

**Enquête**



**Description**



**Spéculation**



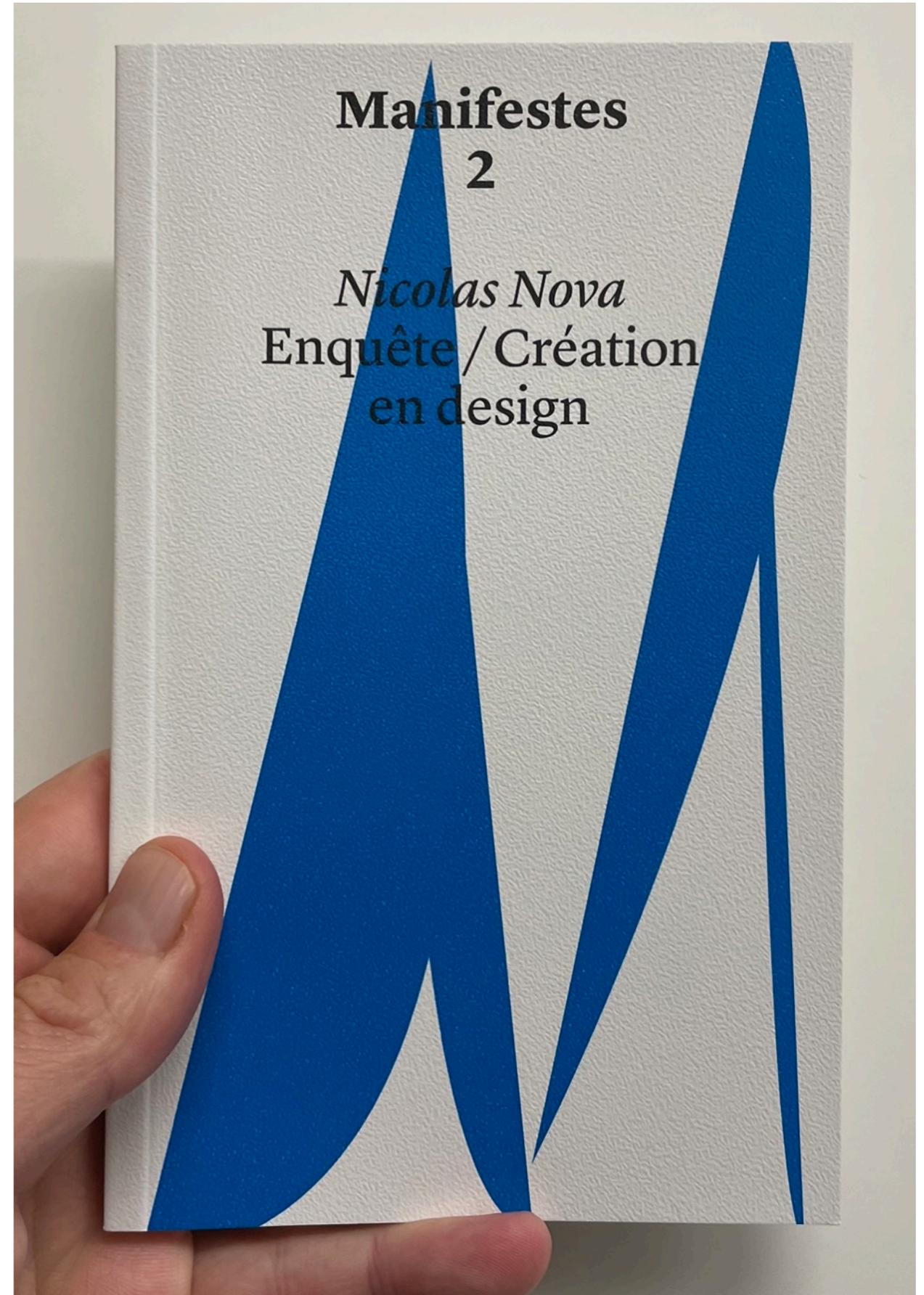
Court-métrage  
Design Fiction  
...

**“Les transformations très complexes que je voulais mettre en lumière, je n’arrivais à me les représenter qu’au terme d’un travail manuel autant qu’intellectuel. Avec du carton, du papier et de la ficelle, je construisais des modèles en trois dimensions dont beaucoup de mes schémas ne sont que des projections sur le plan. Pendant des mois et jusqu’à ce qu’il se détériore, un de ces modèles, haut de près d’un mètre, a pendu au plafond du laboratoire d’anthropologie sociale, comme un mobile de Calder.”**

**De près et de loin, conversations avec Claude Levi-Strauss (Didier Eribon, 1991)**

# Enquête/Création

démarche d'investigation combinant les approches d'observation des sciences humaines et sociales avec les manières de faire des pratiques artistiques, qui s'appuie sur l'élaboration d'un dispositif d'observation singulier et débouche sur une forme de restitution originale.



# De l'importance de l'observation

Observation : l'examen minutieux et plus ou moins systématique de situations, d'êtres et des choses, au moyen de différentes modalités perceptives afin d'en tirer des conclusions, et parfois de modifier ces situations



# **Merci!**

**[nicolas.nova@hesge.ch](mailto:nicolas.nova@hesge.ch)**