



Room 2050

Experiential futures and policy design

Anni Leppänen

futures mundane

21 Jan 2026

Futures Studio

Estonian Institute
for Futures Studies





Anni Leppänen

anni@futuresmundane.com

www.futuresmundane.com



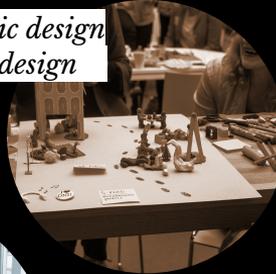
@annileppanen



@annileppanen

Design in government

*Strategic design
& service design*



International development

Social sciences



2005-2013

Policy officer, UK Science and Innovation Network
National Institute of Health and Welfare, Finland
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland
SOAS, University of London & Uni. of Sussex

Sustainable futures

Policy design



Cities



2024-

Founder, Futures mundane
Policy designer, Falay Transition Design
Agent member, Puistokatu 4

2019-2024

Design lead at Strategy
Department, City of Helsinki

Chair of International Design
in Government Conference

Communities:

- Nordic Baltic Design in Government
- EU policy design

2014-2019

Aalto University: strategic design
and sustainability transitions

Service designer at Tax Administration, Finland
Lead Experimentalist at State Treasury, Finland

Founder, Finnish government design community

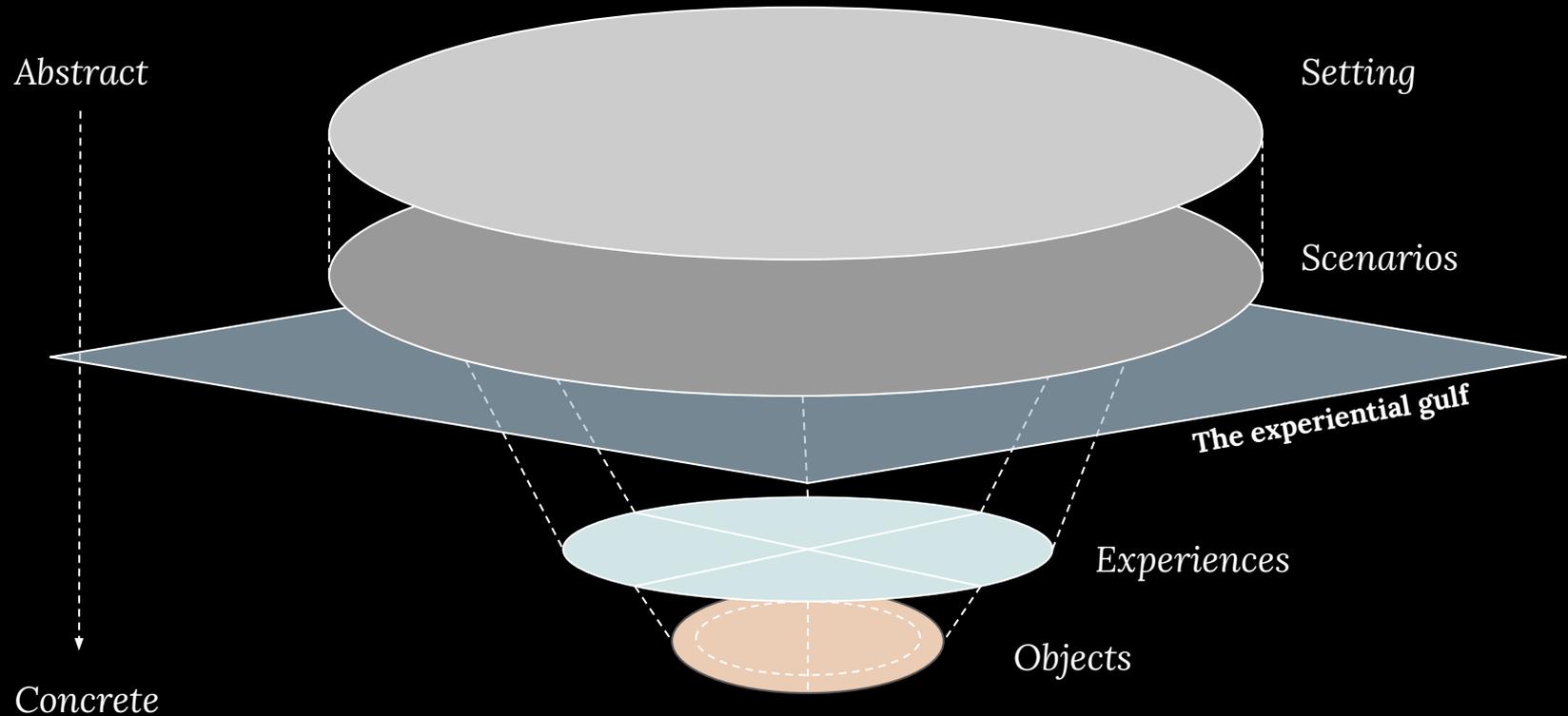
Futures mundane is an oxymoron, because the future is by nature nothing but mundane. Future is something calling for us to reimagine today's world in a radical way. Mundane is about reminding us how all meaningful change is a journey, a systems transition, that transforms completely the way things are done today. And arriving in the future, it all feels mundane - like we should have been doing all along.

Limits of traditional foresight

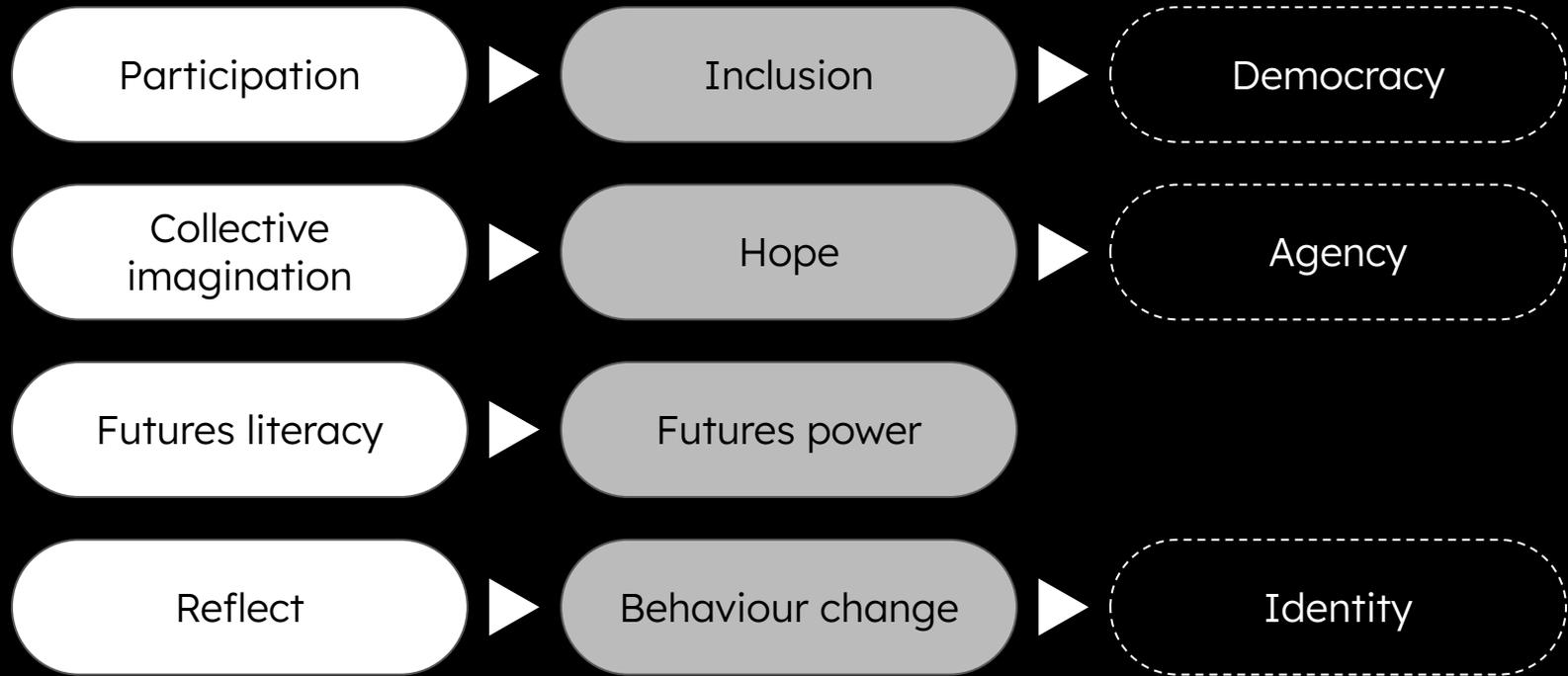
- Too abstract
- Boring (too distant from everyday life)
- Expert-centric
- Low emotional engagement
- Weak sense of agency

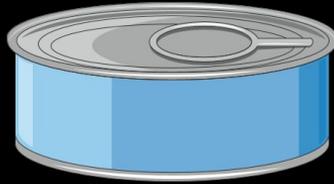


The experiential gulf



Participatory futures





Objects as glimpses of systems

“Synecdoche”
by Dunne & Raby
in Speculative Everything, 2013

**Fictional experiences
influence real decision-making**

Case study

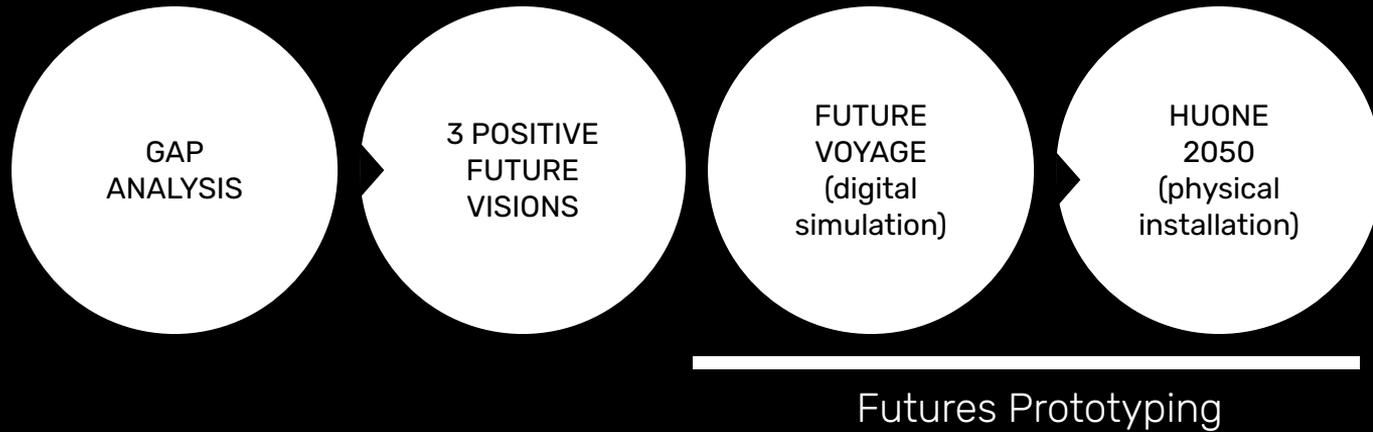
ROOM 2050
HUONE 2050

ROOM 2050
HUONE 2050



Positive futures Widening participation

Process



Gap analysis

- Changes needed in institutional or economic structures
- The interdependencies between societal development and technical solutions
- Citizens are seen as users of solutions instead of societal influencers driving the sustainability transformation.

The screenshot shows a spreadsheet with the following columns: Tr, Name, Author/Organisation, Source, Type (Academic article, policy report, project, fiction), Meta Category 1 (Conceptual framework, solutions bundle, transition narrative, future present), and Meta Category 2. The rows list various articles related to sustainability, such as '20 Visions of Tomorrow: Exploring what Society will', 'A Good Life for All Within Planetary Boundaries', and 'Circular Economy'.

Tr	Name	Author/Organisation	Source	Type (Academic article, policy report, project, fiction)	Meta Category 1 (Conceptual framework, solutions bundle, transition narrative, future present)	Meta Category 2
2	20 Visions of Tomorrow: Exploring what Society will	Valerie Forgaard	https://brilliantio.com/inspri	Academic Article	Transition Narrative	Future Present
3	A Good Life for All Within Planetary Boundaries	Daniel W. O'Neill, Andrew L. Fanning, William F. Lamb	https://www.nature.com/article	Academic Article	Method/ Process	Solution Framework
4	A home for all within planetary boundaries: Pathways	Sophus O.S.E. zu Ermgassen, Michal Piotr Drewniok	https://www.researchgate.net	Academic Article	Method/ Process	Geographics
5	A safe and just space for humanity. Can we live with it?	Kate Raworth	https://www.researchgate.net	Academic Article	Method/ Process	Solution Framework
6	Achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals with	Jorgen Randers, Johan Rockstrom, Per-Espen Stokne	https://www.cambridge.org/	Academic Article	Method/ Process	Solution Framework
7	An assessment of different transition pathways to a	Sohell Shayegh, Severin Reissl, Enaz Roshan & Matth	https://www.nature.com/article	Academic Article	Method/ Process	Transition Narrative
8	Beyond building back better: imagining a future for H	Emilia Aragón de Ledo et al	https://www.thelancet.com/j	Academic Article	Method/ Process	Transition Narrative
9	Beyond GDP	Will Steffen and Katherine Richardson, European Con	https://ec.europa.eu/news/eu	Academic Article	Method/ Process	Solution Framework
10	Building within planetary boundaries: moving constan	Matti Klittinen	https://journal.buildingscities	Academic Article	Method/ Process	Solution Framework
11	Circular Economy	Nadja Hahn & Bas van Ruijven	https://iassa.ac.at/beers/octo	Academic Article	Method/ Process	Solutions Bundle
12	Circular futures: What Will They Look Like?	Thomas Bauwens, Marko Heikert, Julian Kirchner	https://www.sciencedirect.co	Academic Article	Solution Framework	Transition Narrative
13	Cities of the Future: Envisioning Better Urban Food S	Daniel Skaven Ruben, Cities of the Future: Environin	https://www.rockefellerfound	Academic Article	Geographics	Solution Framework
14	Climate change and the imagination	Kathryn Yusoff & Jennifer Gabrys	https://wires.onlinelibrary.wi	Academic Article	Method/ Process	Transition Narrative
15	Climate Change Imaginaries? Examining Expectation	Andrea Whiteley, Angie Chang, and Edna Einsiedel	https://journals.sagepub.com	Academic Article	Transition Narrative	Method/ Process
16	Common-pool resources and institutions: Toward a r	Elmor Ostrom	https://www.sciencedirect.co	Academic Article	Method/ Process	Method/ Process
17	Demand-side solutions to climate change mitigation o	Felix Creutzig, Leila Namiir et al	https://www.nature.com/article	Academic Article	Solution Framework	Transition Narrative
18	Digital and Smart Economies	Simon Elias Bibri & John Krogstad	https://eqjournal.futuresesee	Academic Article	Method/ Process	Solution Framework
19	Energy futures as societal futures: Co-evolutionary sce	Paul Burgin, Romy Emmenegger, Annika Sohr	https://www.sciencedirect.co	Academic Article	Solution Framework	Transition Narrative
20	Environmental sustainability of European production	European Commission	https://publications.jrc.ec.eu	Academic Article	Geographics	Method/ Process
21	Envisioning nature positive futures for Europe: Inspiri	Antia Lazurko et al	https://eartharxiv.org/reposti	Academic Article	Method/ Process	Solution Framework
22	Exploring desirable nature futures for National Park A	Jan J. Kuiper, Dianneke van Wijk, Wolf M. Moij et al	https://www.tandfonline.com	Academic Article	Transition Narrative	Future Present
23	Exploring Transformative Policy Imaginaries for a Sust	Alexandru Giurca, Nicolas Belfort, Amos Taylor	https://www.sciencedirect.co	Academic Article	Transition Narrative	Solution Framework
24	Food systems: seven priorities to end hunger and pre	Joachim von Braun, Kasoar Afana, Louise O. Fresco	https://www.nature.com/article	Academic Article	Method/ Process	Solutions Bundle
25	Future imaginings: organizing in response to climate	Christopher Wright, Daniel Nyberg, Christian De Cock	https://journals.sagepub.com	Academic Article	Solutions Bundle	Method/ Process

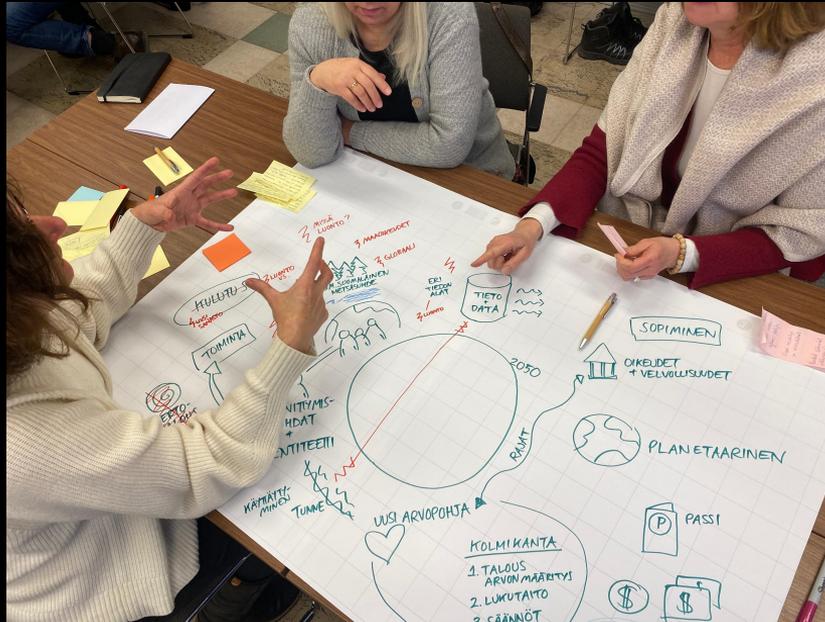
Three future visions

True-cost
economy

Planetary
rules

Sustainability
awareness
revolution

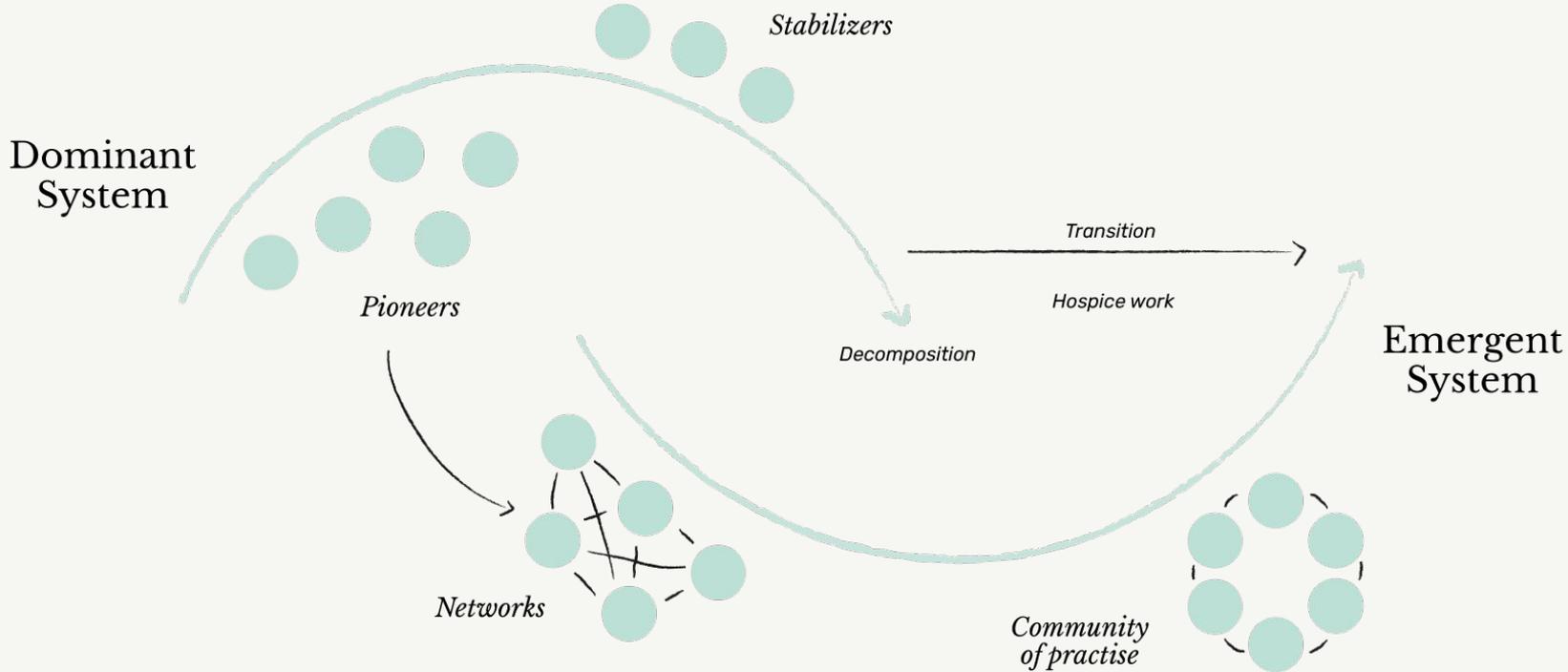
Working with the Sustainability Panel



Combining visions and identifying tensions



Mapping transition pathway with Berkana two loops



5 days

15 min per day

100

political leaders,
NGO leaders,
business leaders



Future voyage

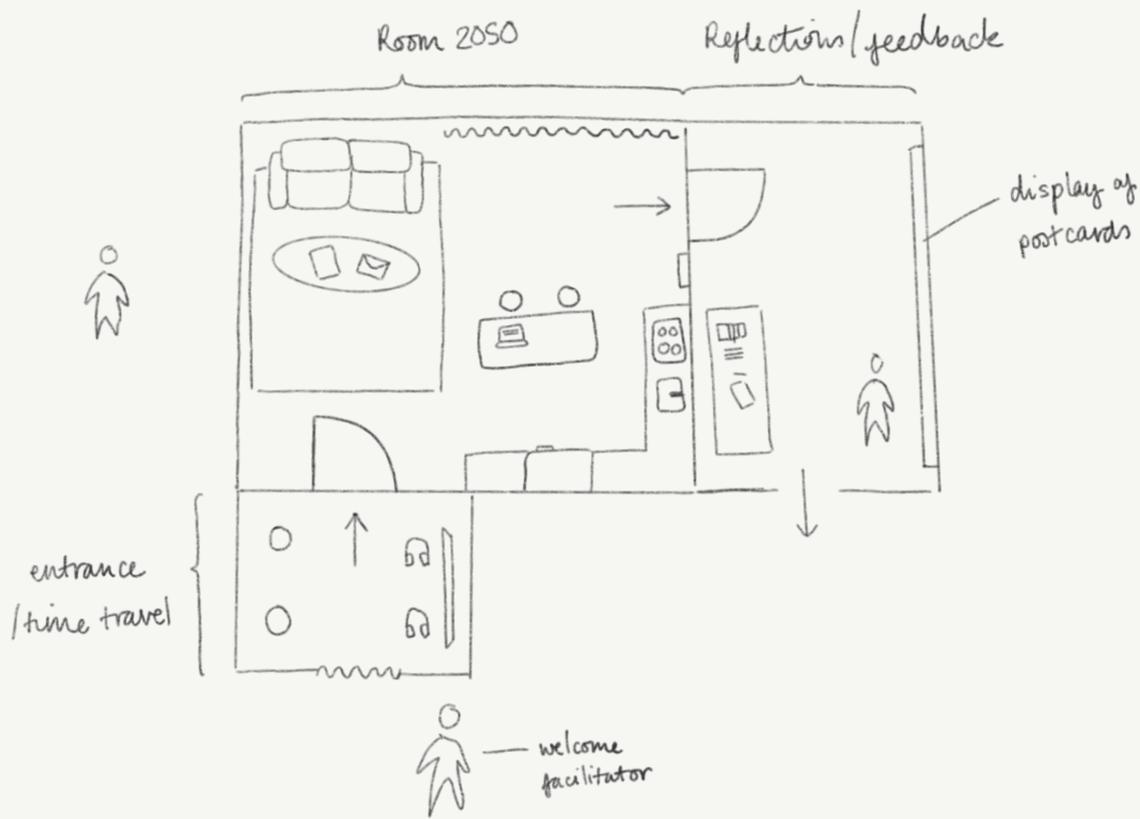
Nyt on vuosi 2050.

Tämä video on spekulatiivinen harjoitus,
joka on kehitetty yhdessä tulevaisuus-
ja kestävyysasiantuntijoiden kanssa.

Videon tarina on täysin kuvitteellinen,
mutta se pohjautuu jo nykyään
havaittavissa oleviin kehityskulkuihin
ja keskusteluihin kestävästä elämästä.

**KESTÄ
VYYS
PANEELI**

**FALAY
TRANSITION
DESIGN**



Huone 2050 booklet

ROOM 2050
HUONE 2050



ROOM 2050
HUONE 2050



ROOM 2050
HUONE 2050

Family home in 2050
- Who lives here?

Physical
objects

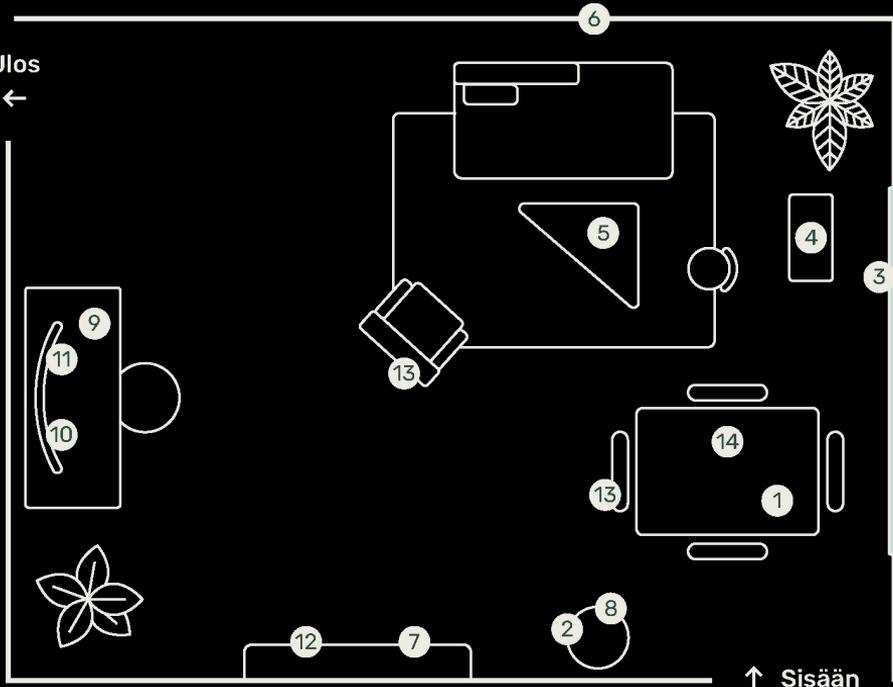
Immersion



Everyday
life

All senses

Ulos



↑ Sisään

Artefacts

Find out more about the different objects and artefacts belonging to our future 2050 family. As you move around the room, feel free to pick up and interact with the labelled objects - though please don't sit on the furniture.

1 Wallet

Emma's wallet reflects the civic and economic shifts of 2050. A planetary bank card handles global exchanges, while a free community card grants access to shared infrastructure and benefits through local participation. Her handwritten list reminds us: the future is still deeply human, full of neighbours, errands, and care.

2 True Cost Textile

A price tag reveals the hidden costs behind our clothing. What if the price included water, emissions, labour and biodiversity impact? In 2050, real cost pricing helps make the unseen visible—and shapes what we choose to purchase.

3 Window and sound

Listen through an open window to a regenerative future Helsinki. Birdsong chimes, pollinators and electric public transport buzzes. Soundscapes are subtle indicators of change. What would a healthy urban ecosystem sound and look like to you?

4 Child's drawing

Our 6-year old Apila, has drawn their home and all those who dwell there. Their drawing reflects the co-habitation of species and communities in 2050. Children are often the first to see systems as interconnected.

5 School prospectus

A prospectus from the Planetary Learning Institute outlines cross-age, cross-species, and cross-biome education. In a post-industrial education system, learning is lifelong, relational, and embedded in place. Knowledge is no longer hoarded, but cultivated and exchanged as a form of stewardship.

6 Stream of thoughts

We glimpse the interior monologue of a typical day for Emma: scheduling a repair swap, listening to the rain, checking carbon thresholds, and prepping for a citizen panel. Some thoughts echo the now, others feel like small clues from the future.



7 Health formulas

Displayed are liquid daily prescriptions for our three generations, blending preventative health and illness support. These formulas reflect a shift toward personalised, place-based health—balancing biotechnology.

8 Work ID

Emma's ID badge shows her job at the Nordic Bioregional Office. Founded in 2036, the office coordinates regional responses to climate, biodiversity and wellbeing goals. What kind of tasks do you think a Sustainable Lifestyles Advisor might have?

9 Repair leaflet

This public information flyer outlines the three paths of Korjaa+: repair, refurbish, replace. Based on circular economy principles, the system values longevity, material traceability, and transparency. Where price finally favours the right to repair, which path would you choose?

10 Council meeting

A planetary citizen panel in session. Juha represents the Helsinki Capital Bioregion's ecology, alongside human citizens, future generations and non-human life. With planetary democracy in practice, whose voices shape decision-making in 2050?

11 Koti AI

A built-in household AI agent that tracks carbon emissions, energy and other resource use. It guides daily decisions—adjusting heating, suggesting travel swaps, helping to stay in carbon budgets, and monitoring food levels to help make sustainable choices.

12 Pantry items

Refillable oats, tins of fish, coffee and non store-bought items sit waiting to be shelved. The price tags show real costs and impact of carbon, water, labour, and biodiversity. What we eat, and how it is made, shapes the world we live in.

13 Furniture log

These certificates show enrolment in a future Artek service, where each item is catalogued with ownership and repair histories. Such systems support circularity and emotional durability, so objects are maintained and valued over generations.

14 School work

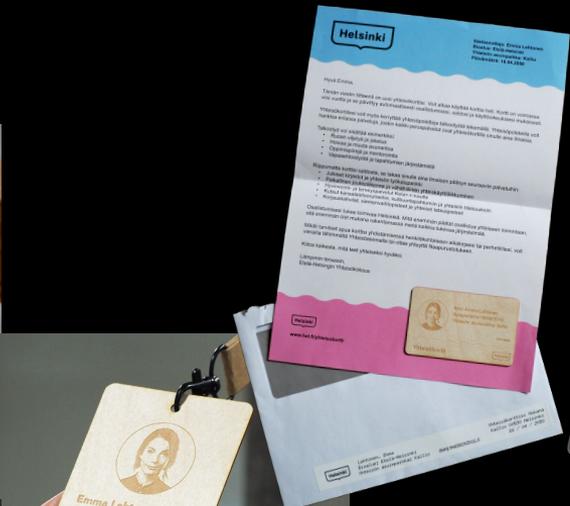
Apila's workbook from "Luonnon Elämä" (Living Systems), a subject co-taught by elders. It blends nature and education, asking students to understand ecosystems and their role in planetary health.



ROOM 2050
HUONE 2050



KESTÄ
VYYS
PANEELI



Koko	XS	S	M	L	XL	XXL
Tämä on bioCo2-tuote						
Materiaali on valmistettu kokonaan elinkaaren ajalta ekologisesti kestäviksi materiaaleiksi						
Käsitellyt materiaalit						
Yhteensä						
Reijälänselkä ja kuljetus						€ 18
Vesi						€ 32
Välikäsitellyt tuotteen materiaaleihin						€ 275
Jätteenhoito						€ 525
Eettinen tuotantoprosessi						€ 683
Yhteensä						€ 141
Tuotteen voi palauttaa sen elinkaaren lopussa kierrätyspöydästä vastaan. Puhdistus- ja ympäristövaikutusten vähentämiseksi.						€ 8101



FALAY
TRANSITION
DESIGN

Write a postcard from the future

You have now seen and experienced one glimpse of a sustainable future. Please, write down your first thoughts on a postcard you receive from the staff and imagine that you would send the postcard from the future to your present self. You can use the following questions as a source of inspiration:

How did the future in the room sound, look and feel like?

What thoughts and feelings did it evoke in you?

What would your own daily life look like in a similar future?

What was particularly different in the room compared to the present?

Was something missing from the room; should something be added there?



KESTÄ
VYYS
PANEELI

FALAY
TRANSITION
DESIGN

#Huone2050
kestavyyspaneeli.fi



KESTÄ
VYYS
PANEELI

FALAY
TRANSITION
DESIGN

Learnings about the impact of the methodology

1. Emotional engagement with sustainable future

Positive future images presented in realistic everyday contexts evoke hopefulness and provide potential for behavioral change

2. Contextual understanding of the future possibilities

Telling the story of positive future images with tactile everyday objects can foster new awareness, by translating the complex systemic transformations into relatable and meaningful lived experiences

3. Stronger potential for co-creation of the future

Emotional and contextual connection can enable more inclusive and democratic participation in the discussion of the characteristics of the future systems

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Challenges within traditional policy

- Gap and fatigue of positive futures
- Exclusion of voices and perspectives
- Silo perspectives
- Not enough agility in thinking that could allow transcending the present day political constraints
- Challenges in communicating complexity
- Stuck in a theoretical level
- Citizen side is dismissed in the policy level discussions

Potential of Experiential Futures approach

- ▶ Connecting high level and tangible near future solutions
- ▶ Engagement and participation of new audiences
- ▶ Representation of a systemic change
- ▶ Radically different futures and policy relevant transition work that is brought into tangible level and new audiences
- ▶ Relevant, human-centric everyday contextualization
- ▶ Generates emotional responses and behavioral change
- ▶ Showcases and promotes citizen agency

Team behind Room 2050



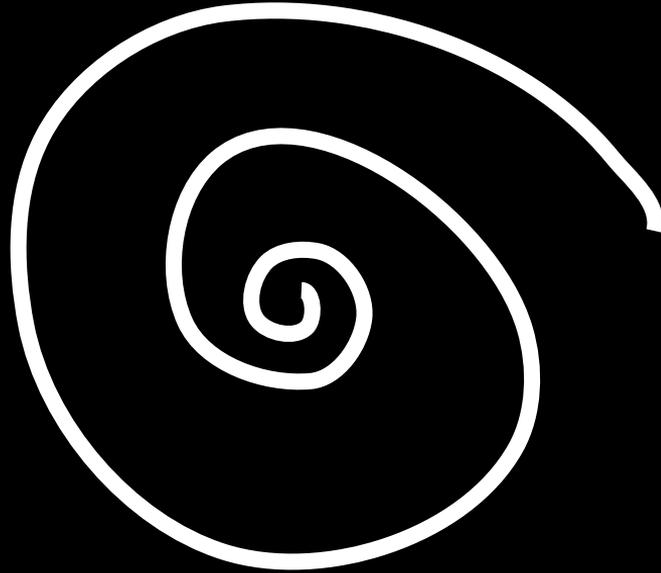
FALAY
TRANSITION
DESIGN

Iines Reinikainen, Anni Leppänen,
Zeynep Falay von Flittner,
Savannah Vize, Andrea Gilly,
Kirsi Hakio & Iina Santamäki.

Reflections

Desirable for
whom?

Always
political



Who designs?

Impact?

Connection to policy-making?

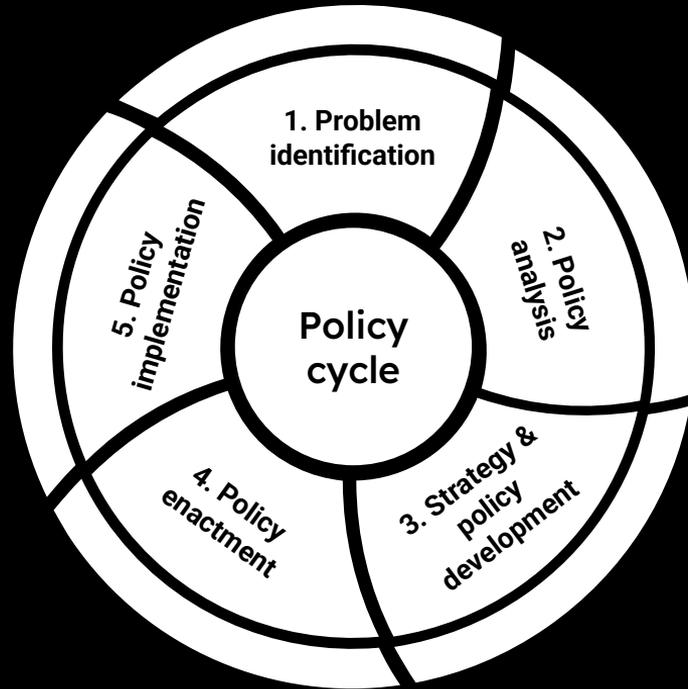
- Provoke conversations and bring in new perspectives / invite reflection and debate
- Expand knowledge and pre-test policy for impact
- Support democracy
- Drive hope and social imagination
- What if...? Explore alternatives



IGF Citizen Panel family photo
European Commission

EU Intergenerational Fairness Strategy

Experiential futures and policy process?



Examples of different types of policies

City Strategy or
Government Programme

Ministry of Environment
Strategy 2035

Sustainability panel
policy brief to government

National food strategy
2040

New law

Latvia
2050
strategy

Questions and discussion

- Where could experiential futures sit inside policymaking processes?
- What would you prototype next — and with/for whom?