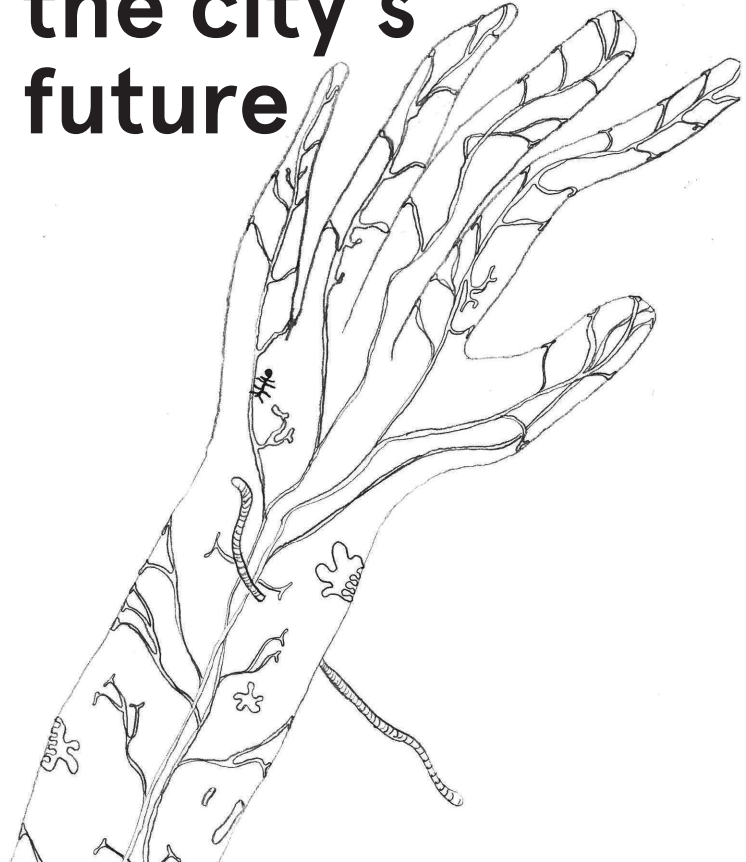


Denaturing the city's future



Ra-ra: What about you? What is your dream?
Jun: I had one a long time ago, but not any longer. Ra-ra: Why not?
(Korean drama series *dodosolsollalaso*, chapter 5)

Jun: In order to dream, you need to look back on your past, be aware of your present, and imagine your future. But I do not want to think about any of them now. What about your dream?
Ra-ra: My dream is to have prime beef tendon.
Jun: What kind of dream is that, goshi?

Ra-ra: What? Dreams don't have to be grand. You can dream of whatever you want.



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THANKS TO EVERYONE ;)

“In this world, it is not so much the case that the possibility of a future is ascertained from the point of view of the present, but that reality is always already entangled with the ‘not-yet’, the ‘yet-to-come’, the ‘what-if’, the ‘already-here’, that is, with a sense of the (im)possible. (...) Because it is impossible to know in advance just in which direction the future will unfold, our obligation is to experiment, to travel, to explore the contours, the possibilities.” (Speculative Research: The Lure of Possible Futures, by Wilkie, Savransky & Rosengarten, 2017:8)

Our current crisis is not only about the environment and the climate, but it is also a crisis of the imagination. **By expanding how we imagine futures, we can see the present differently and change what we think or do now.**

For five days (24-29/03/2023), eighteen students of the ULB Faculty of Architecture accepted the invitation to collectively dream of futures that would help us suturing the “great scission” between humans and the living earth, between culture and nature. This scission is a legacy of modernity and is at the root of the construction of contemporary cities.

This exhibition shows the stories and hand-drawings produced during those days while listening or partaking in the discussion with a group of guests and among the students themselves, in a humble attempt to anticipate a more-than-human urban future.

The typical day started with a pitch presentation by a guest. Participants were sketching or scribbling while listening, trying to capture in their drawings some of the one-liners generated during the pitch or the subsequent discussion. Those first drafts were reworked either in the library, researching further some of the statements, or out in the public space, using those statements to interview people or simply testing them in real life. The perfected drawings were subsequently used as material for an informal conversation with new guests in the evening. The five days dealt with:

- DAY 1 - exploring the past and present of URBAN NATURE
- DAY 2 - inventing and imagining the future of URBAN NATURE
- DAY 3 - exploring and developing the future of URBAN NATURE
- DAY 4 - simulating and performing the future of URBAN NATURE
- DAY 5 - returning and transforming the present of URBAN NATURE

Every day, we would sit together and organise a round to answer the following questions:

WHAT IS THE FUTURE FOR YOU?
 WHAT IS NATURE FOR YOU?
 WHAT IS NATURE IN THE CITY?
 WHAT IS THE CITY?
 WHICH ANIMAL WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME?
 WHAT DO YOU NEED TO BECOME IT?

The answers provided by the participants changed throughout the days: if the first day someone would want to become a bird, by the third day, we had learned some of the names of the many birds inhabiting our city. Remarkably, if the future looked pretty much doomed in the beginning (e.g. collapse, I refuse to think about it, dystopian, heavily polluted, chaotic, a form of aggression, etc.), the more we approached the end of the week, the more engaging it became (e.g. a mystery, a question, imaginable, learning to be vulnerable, constructed in the present, reconciliation, a puzzle, an opportunity).

Our journey was guided by the book “GRIMOIRE: Futurology of cooperation” (<https://grimoire.futurology.be/>). On DAY 2, we thought of RANDOM QUESTIONS (<https://grimoire.futurology.be/r/Publication::100-Tirer-des-Questions-au-Sort-en.md>) about a city whose future would be entangled with the more-than-human. We wrote them on separate pieces of paper and folded them. We then picked some to produce a drawing. DAY 3 started with a TAROT FROM THE FLUX (<https://grimoire.futurology.be/r/Publication::370-Tarotfromtheflux-fr.md>). Everyone had to bring a selection of images of A5 format that they found representative of the future. Then we picked them in turns and produced a story based on 3 to 4 images of this collective tarot. We ended the day by pinpointing a dreamed city's future, after the tarot and the story-making exercise.

Based on that city's future, everyone had to come the day after or DAY 4 with a souvenir of their visit to their city's future, and tell us what they saw, following the example of the INTERSTELLAR SCOUTS (<https://grimoire.futurology.be/r/Publication::235-Interstellar-Scouts-en.md>). We spent the rest of the day drawing the future. On DAY 5, we attempted a RETRO- AND BACKCASTING (<https://grimoire.futurology.be/r/Publication::290-Retro-casting-en.md>) in the morning. Because we already had produced images of a preferred future, we simply listed the ideas, places or situations from this preferred future that we would like to implement in the present. Alas, we did not get to make a plan to make this possible!



FILMS



What is Nature?



Reading our future in tarot cards



Projecting into our future cities