

# THE FUTURE IS TODAY. SCRIPTING PUBLIC DEBATE ON DESIGN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ENCOUNTERS

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This interactive exhibit engages with the question what the implications are of 'scripting' the documentation on design anthropological encounters during a participatory design process with an eye on generating public debate. This question is inspired by citizens who have been engaged for ten years in participatory activities related to spatial planning in the village Godsheide. They find it hard to trace how and if their contributions were actually used in the plans. To create a more transparent participatory process, our research group engaged for a long period with the context. Together with the citizens we scripted and publicly spread a newspaper with spatial proposals for Godsheide in 2024, a realistic horizon in spatial planning, while giving room for imagination. The future scenarios were described in the articles and performed in space to be depicted in still images. The newspaper, titled the *Future is Today*, documents the design research process leading to the spatial scenarios. At the same time, it deliberately invites public debate by policy makers, property developers, media and the broader community by playing with the language of newspapers and with time. The scripts gathered in the newspaper narrate about participatory actions that started in 2004, our design anthropological encounters in 2014 and resulting imagined actions in 2024 that were presented as if they took place today.

How would you approach this scripting process in your own projects? Formulate a take-home message in one of the empty rectangles and pin it on the cardboard.

Subquestions that can support you are:

- What should the article at least tell about the actual design anthropological encounters with the research context for others to understand the process, discuss it further and contribute to it (**present**)?
- What should researchers at least share about what preceded the design anthropological encounters for others to understand them, discuss them further and contribute to them (**past**)?
- What aspects of the design anthropological encounters would you fictionalise to stimulate interesting debates about and contributions to the **future design**?

#### NOTE

We might use interesting experiences or comments that are shared here and in the workshops in future paper publications.

## DOCUMENTING PAST & PRESENT ENCOUNTERS

## CONSTRUCTING FUTURES

2004

In 2004 the inhabitants of Godsheide made a plan for the green character, mobility, parkings, recreation, school and services of their village and organised cultural and sport activities to share their plans with the world, under the title **MOVE**.

2008

In 2008 an **urban\_studio\_BLUUR** set up a new participatory process, concluding that residential expansion is necessary, but that it should take into account the remarks of the citizens.

2013 2014

In 2013 the Government undertakes a study concluding Godsheide is one of the areas that will undergo a rise of households. The resulting **spatial implementation plan** is open by means of a 'public investigation', in a period of 60 days, using a 'public declaration' printed on yellow posters in the neighbourhood.

In February 2014, 27 inhabitants sign a **notice of objection** to express their concerns about this declaration.



In May 2014 some citizens, collected in the **Unie Godsheide**, ask our research group to organise a **collective mapping**, supplying the group with tools and methods to document the different agenda's, plans, policy documents, former studies, issues, challenges and interests at stake.

2015

In 2015, after the newspaper has been publicly shared, policy makers become interested and put us in touch with property developers to **set up a participatory process** with the citizens in preparation of a new housing project in Godsheide.

In November 2014, we set up a **co-design workshop** in collaboration with art collective FoAM and our students to create spatial scenarios for Godsheide in 2024. Because policy-makers of Hasselt feel uncertain about how to handle the Godsheide case they do not participate.

This newspaper is a collaboration between the residents' association Unie Godsheide, research group Arck (Faculty Architecture and Art of Hasselt University), FoAM (network of trans-disciplinary labs for speculative culture). It is a record of the Future Fictions Godsheide workshop (imagination of the future of Godsheide 2024) 2014 and published on the occasion of the exhibition Future Fictions which runs from October 5 until January 4, 2015 in Z33, Hasselt.

[www.foam.be](http://www.foam.be)  
[www.fac.arch.uhasselt.be/arck/](http://www.fac.arch.uhasselt.be/arck/)  
[www.z33.be/en/projects/future-fictions](http://www.z33.be/en/projects/future-fictions)  
[www.godsheide.be/de-unie-godsheide/](http://www.godsheide.be/de-unie-godsheide/)

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