

P / REFERENCES OF DESIGN



PRACTICING ORDINARY SPECULATIONS: MUNDANE PROTOTYPES FOR MORE-THAN-HUMAN COHABITATION.

Antonio Bernacchi^a, Alicia Lazzaroni^{*a}

a Aarhus School of Architecture, Denmark

* abe@aarch.dk

DOI: 10.63442/CAOW9497

KEYWORDS | MORE-THAN-HUMAN COHABITATION, DIY, CO-CREATION, ORDINARY

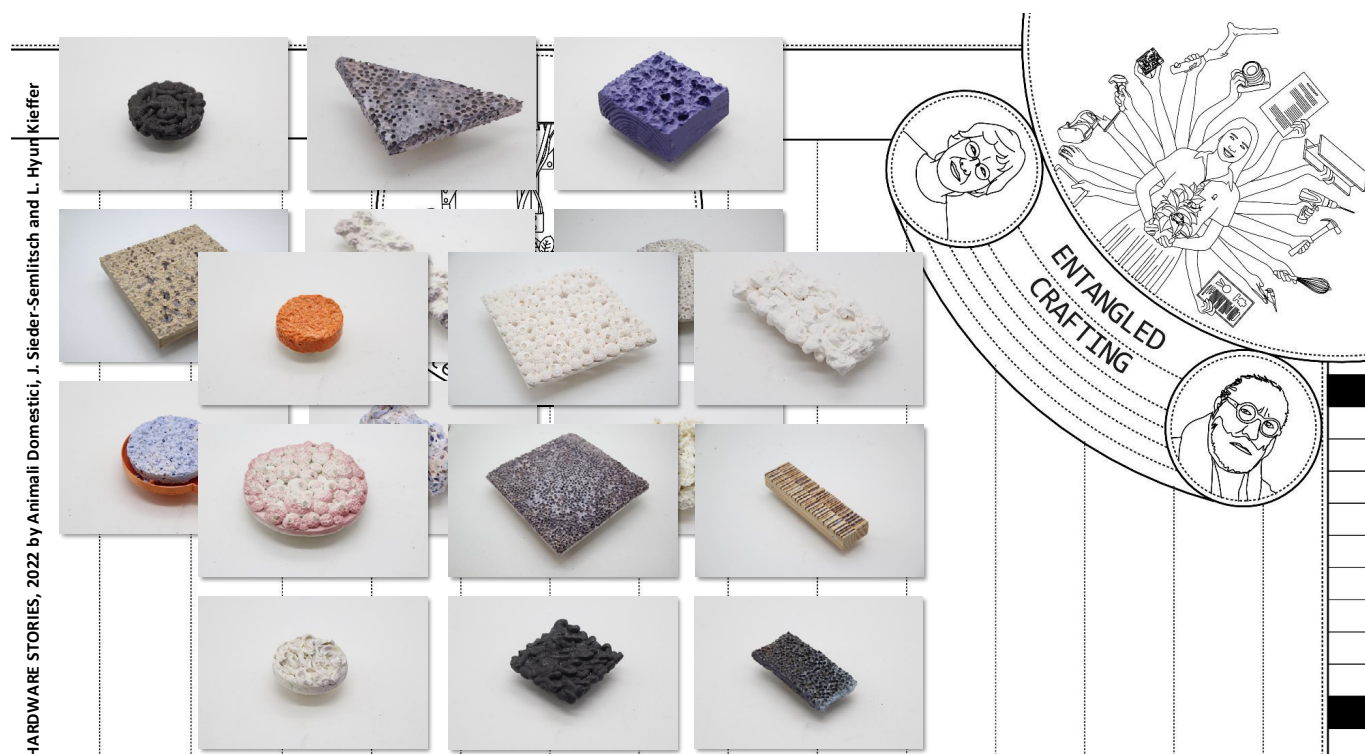
ABSTRACT | In titling a book about the work of their architecture practice, “It’s small, it rains inside, and there’s ants,” F. Soriano and D. Palacios (original title “Es pequeño, llueve dentro y hay hormigas,” 2000) somehow provocatively hinted at a question at the very core of the discipline, which concerns the inclusion or, more often, exclusion of bodies and substances that were not welcome in architecture’s modernist conception of space. The cohabitation and coexistence with a wide range of non-humans is a relevant sphere for exploration, where techniques of speculative design can be very instrumental. This paper elaborates on these ideas through a critical overview of the conception, development, and dissemination of a project of speculative prototyping originally developed by the authors in Denmark for an exhibition on the topic held in 2022 in Berlin.

The project attempted to incorporate more-than-human perspectives through speculations grounded on different sources, from academic research to practical tips and hacks gathered from the web. “Hardware Stories” is a prototype of a floor, constituted by a patchwork of DIY-crafted tiles of different materials, textures, and geometry, which respond to the very diverse needs and spatial understandings of different beings, from African snails to small spiders, like barn funnel weavers.

The specificity of the Danish context, which often hosts crafting communities that exchange knowledge and experiments among friends and neighbours, shifted the perspective from a more conventional DIY to notions of Do-it-together (DIT) or Do-it-with-others (DIWO), allowing to extend of the speculation beyond an individual creative endeavor, as a form of “shared care” and collective co-creation. Manufacturing the tiles together over a long period, in weekends and marginal moments, the authors attempted to “practice” the speculation themselves first-hand, incorporating it into the sphere of the familiar and the ordinary.

To articulate methodological reflections through comparative assessment, the project is contextualized within a broader inquiry on more-than-human coexistence by the authors through previous and successive explorations.

Three other projects of speculative prototyping are recalled, in that sense, and briefly introduced for comparison through the description of material sourcing, properties, manufacturing processes, testing, and installation: a festival pavilion with artificial vegetation made of e-waste used as perching spots for dragonflies (exhibited at Venice Biennale in 2021); a set of construction details for hosting insects and mosses on the envelope of ordinary houses (exhibited at Seoul Architecture Biennale in 2020); and a second chapter of the floor project with drywall of stacked recycled bricks with soil substrate.

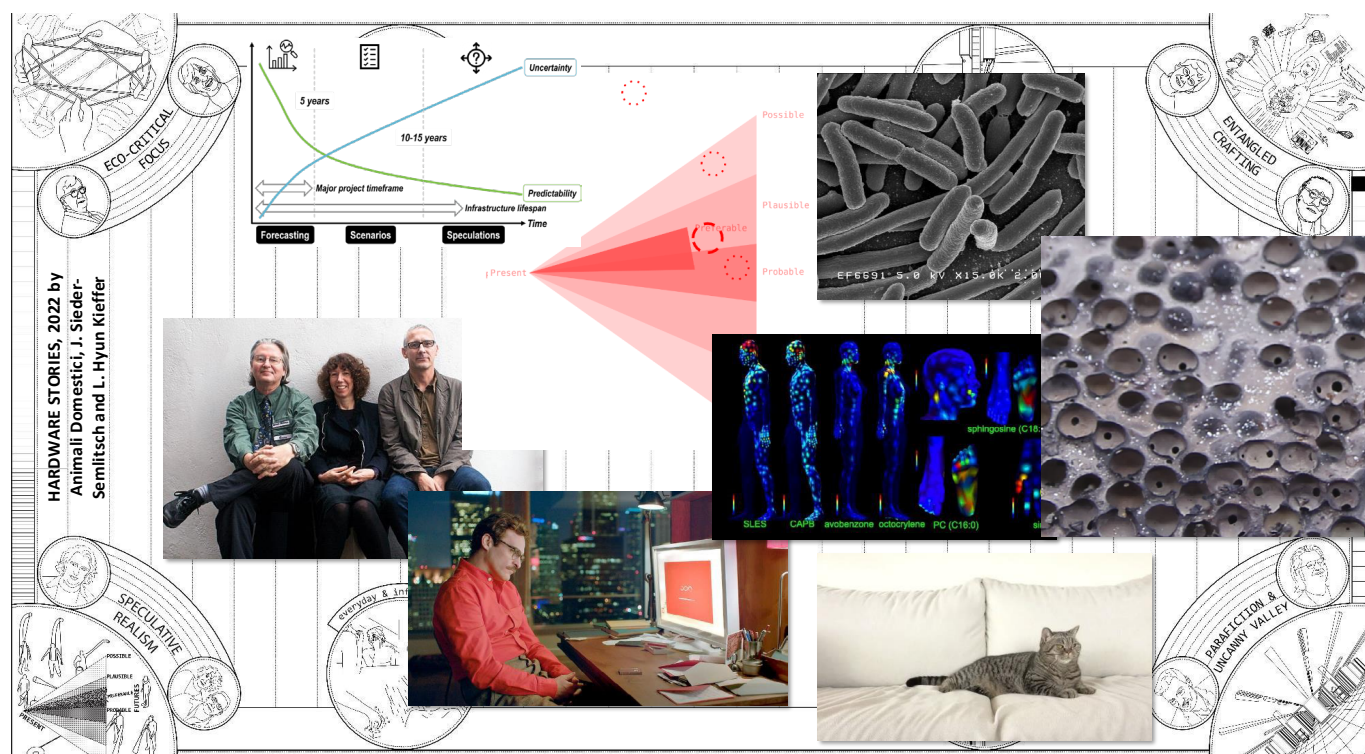


HARDWARE STORIES, 2022 by Animal Domestici, J. Sieder-Semlitsch and L. Hyun Kieffer



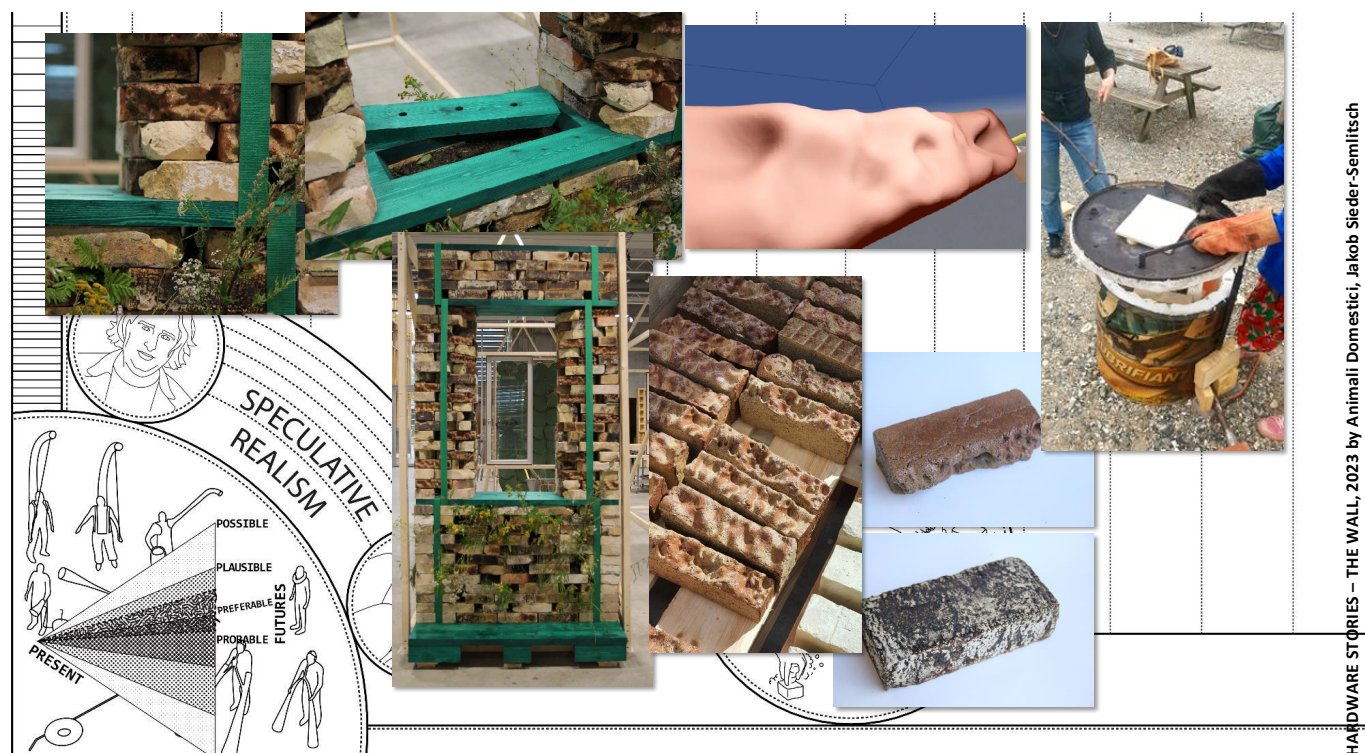
HARDWARE STORIES, 2022 by Animal Domestici, J. Sieder-Semlitsch and L. Hyun Kieffer



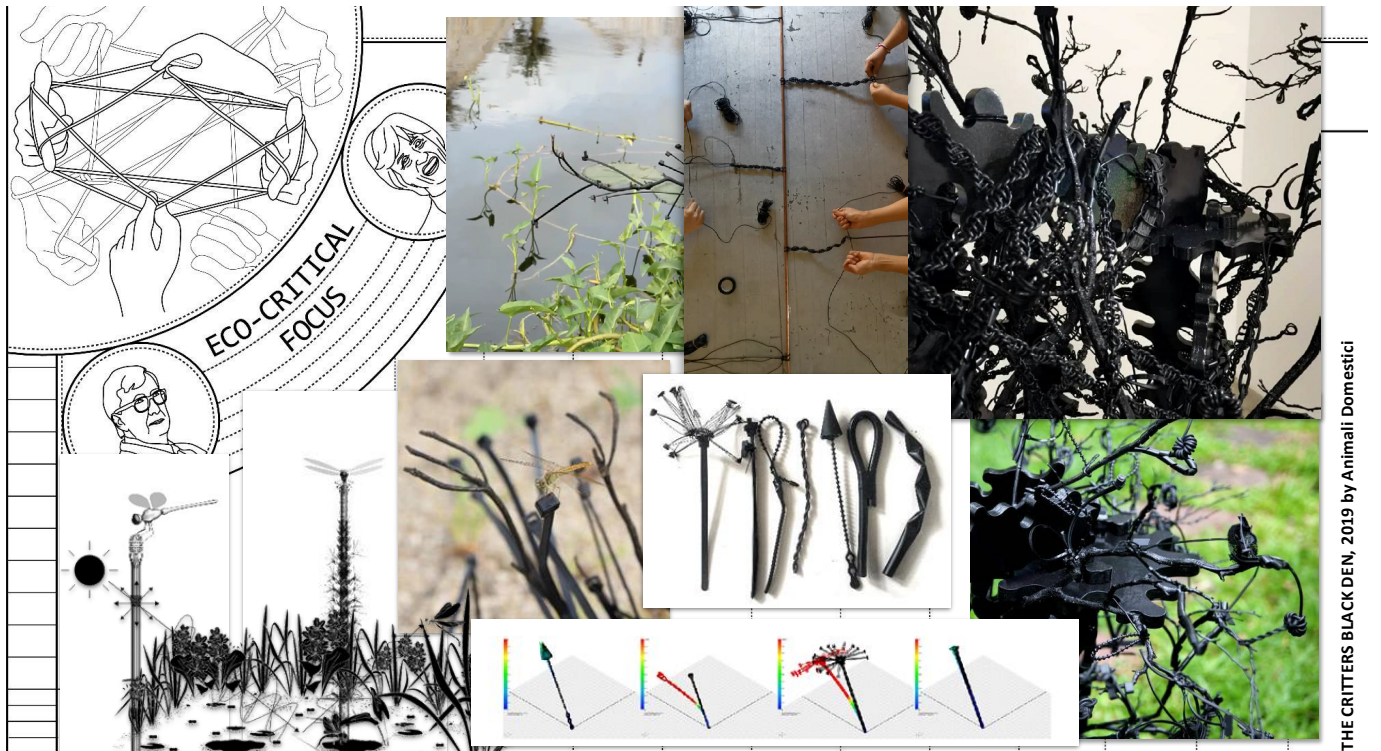




HARDWARE STORIES, 2022 by Animal Domestic, J. Sieder-Semlitsch and L. Hyun Kieffer



HARDWARE STORIES – THE WALL, 2023 by Animal Domestic, Jakob Sieder-Semlitsch



P / REFERENCES OF DESIGN

This contribution was presented at Cumulus Budapest 2024: P/References of Design conference, hosted by the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest, Hungary between May 15-17, 2024.

Conference Website

cumulusbudapest2024.mome.hu

Conference Tracks

Centres and Peripheries
Converging Bodies of Knowledge
Redefining Data Boundaries
Bridging Design and Economics
Speculative Perspectives
The Power of Immersion
The Future of Well-being
Taming Entropy: Systems Design for Climate and Change
Ways of Living Together
Cumulus PhD Network

Full Conference Proceedings

<https://cumulusbudapest2024.mome.hu/proceedings>

ISBN Volume 1: 978-952-7549-02-5 (PDF)

ISBN Volume 2: 978-952-7549-03-2 (PDF)

DOI Volume 1: <https://doi.org/10.63442/IZUP8898>

DOI Volume 2: <https://doi.org/10.63442/TADX4016>

Conference Organisers

Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest (MOME)

mome.hu

Cumulus Association

cumulusassociation.org