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Over, Under and Beyond: weaving weird design futures with Chiara Vigo the world's last 'Maestro di Bisso'

As late Modernity's progression creates deeper levels of disorienting strangeness (Latour 2016, Tonkinwise 2015) it seems that this is also having a weird affect on the objects, ideas and practices of design. By adapting the concept of 'Weird Media' developed by Galloway, Thacker and Wark (2014) I am currently researching whether it might be possible to use weird as a verb to help us understand design's 'other' dimensions.

Meanwhile my existing practice has also undergone a transformation. After a chance encounter with Chiara Vigo — the world's last Master weaver and custodian of the ancient art of the Bisso — I decided to become one of her students, learning to weave and spin according to a direct oral and gestural transmission that has been passed from one Maestro to the next through 26 generations.

This paper weaves together these different threads of thinking and practice to develop a critically weird position on Modern Craft Futures.

I propose that by using the verb weird to activate craft we can generate other ideas about its place within disciplinary limits. Furthermore, bringing my current experience of weaving to this process should contribute some other, radical design and craft-based futures that are rooted in over 2000 years of continuity.

To do this I will take the terms 'Modern', 'Craft' and 'Futures' and put them next to the otherness of being 'Over', 'Under' and 'Beyond' to create a series of discursive pathways that are weird, recalling its etymological sense of turning, winding and becoming.

This produces three different combinations that offer three potential modes of presentation.

Over-Modern Under-Craft, Beyond Futures?

A standard historical/theoretical paper engaging with the literature to develop an idea of the Craft Hypo-Object in an age of the visible Hyper-Object (Morton 2013) and the Futures this forecloses.

Over-Futures of the Under-Modern, Beyond Craft...

Extends the above through a discussion of the Praxis-led case study of working with the Maestro, this could also include a hybrid workshop element that engages with the act of weaving.

Over Craft and Under Futures from Beyond-Modern:

A third possibility with an unconventional approach whereby Making Futures invites the world's last Master of Bisso to give a presentation and demonstration of the art of spinning and weaving the sea-silk.

Presented in tandem with the above paper this ambitious approach offers a rich experience as it would also be the first time that the Maestro, who is currently nominated to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list and often gives presentation to various Universities and cultural institutions, would attend a design-based conference supported by a peer-reviewed paper of this kind.

GALLOWAY, Alexander R. ,Thacker, Eugene. & Wark, McKenzie. (2014), Excommunication: Three inquiries in media and mediation, The University of Chicago Press.

LATOUR, Bruno. (2016), Reset Modernity!, MIT Press.

MORTON, Timothy (2013) Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World, University Of Minnesota Press.

TONKINWISE, Cameron (2015) Post-Normal Design Research: The Role of Practice-based Research in the Era of Neoliberal Risk, Draft uploaded to [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu)