



STREAM

## S14. Futures/Critical/Sense-Making

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### DESCRIPTION

This stream invites contributions that approach futures-making as critical sensemaking: a situated, ongoing, and affective practice through which people engage uncertainty and actively shape emerging possibilities through acts of making. We frame futures-making not as prediction, extrapolation, or risk management (futuring), nor as a purely cognitive or linguistic exercise (futures literacy [Miller 2018]), but as a material, embodied, and participatory process. It is a form of critical sensemaking, understood here as a creative, action-oriented practice through which people collectively render ambiguous, unfolding situations meaningful, attending to complexity, friction, and the margins where dominant narratives begin to unravel (Superflux; Weick 1995; Fuller & Weizman 2021). Used in this way, futures-making unsettles what is taken for granted, making visible the forces and assumptions that sustain the status quo, while opening space to perceive how the boundaries between the probable and the possible are flexible and negotiable.

By situating futures-making within critical sensemaking, we foreground the ways that making—whether through crafting artifacts, staging interventions, enacting situations, or designing materials—is not only a method for imagining futures, but also a means of sensing, negotiating, and reconfiguring meaning in the present. This approach emphasizes engagement with indeterminacy and multiplicity, highlighting the subtle disturbances, ambiguities, and edge conditions where established structures, assumptions, and narratives can be interrogated. Futures-making as critical sensemaking thus combines imagination with material practice, participation, and reflection, creating openings for collective exploration and intervention in the social, political, and material worlds we inhabit. We are interested in contributions that explore how futures-making enables broader civic participation, redistributes agency in shaping the future, and cultivates capacities to question and unsettle what has

been conditioned as immutable or inevitable. We welcome work that attends to the embodied, affective, and material dimensions of these practices, as well as their experimental, playful, or provocative potentials. Submissions might explore how futures-making generates tangible, evocative artifacts that function as sites for reflection, discussion, and negotiation; how different theoretical traditions of sensemaking explore futurity; or how critical approaches to method shift futures-making from attempts to maximise predictive reliability through the execution of research scripts, towards explorations of method's inventiveness (Lury & Wakeford 2012).

We also encourage critical reflection on the conditions of making itself: how futures-making is socially and technologically assembled, whose voices it amplifies or silences, and how it may reproduce or challenge existing relations of power. Contributions may draw from research, design, experimental, or hybrid methods, but should focus on the ways futures-making enacts critical sensemaking through material, embodied, and collective engagement.