

A large, dark, porous rock sculpture is the central focus, positioned in the corner of a room with white tiled walls. Two small, light-colored wooden cabinets with double doors are placed on either side of the rock, one on the left wall and one on the right wall. A simple metal frame stands on the floor in front of the rock. The text is overlaid on the rock.

Narrative Pathways and Defamiliarisation:

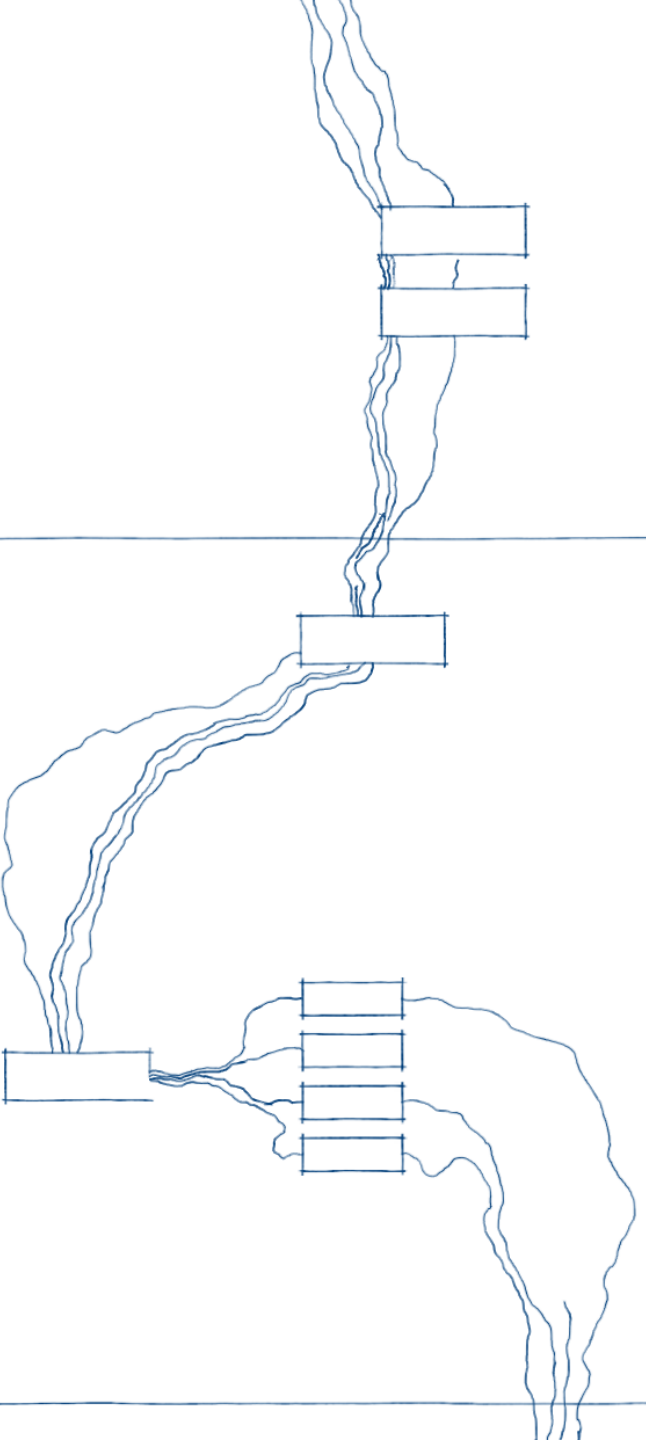
using speculative fiction for
reflection and creative
collaboration.

Framing Speculative Fictions.

Creating Narrative Pathways.

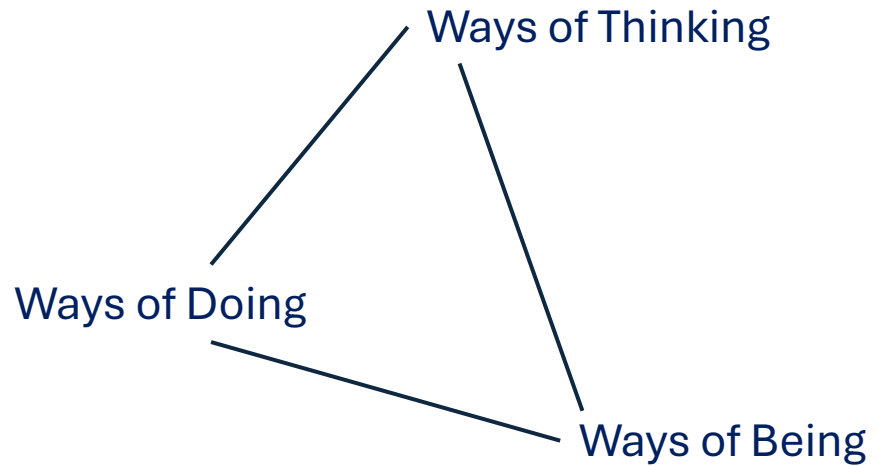
Reflecting on the Case Study Workshops.

Impacts on our Practices.



Practice.

Building speculative places through writing and modelmaking, which hinge on the concept of *palimpsests*, each constructed as a process of *thinking through* research (and researching in itself) on cities, place, housing, vacancy and data.



Practice.

‘So, when I came to write science-fiction novels, I came lugging this great heavy sack of stuff, my carrier bag full of wimps and klutzes, and tiny grains of things smaller than a mustard seed, and intricately woven nets which when laboriously unknotted are seen to contain one blue pebble...’

Ursula K Le Guin, ‘The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction’ (1986)

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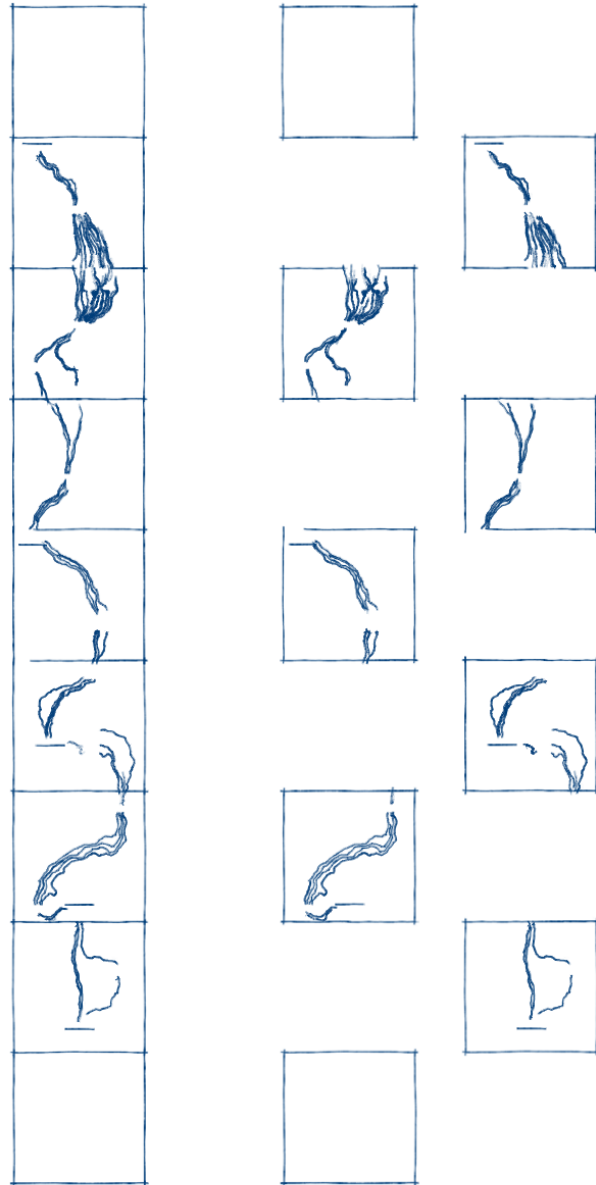
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‘We build our thinking on previous ideas we have gathered’

Ursula K Le Guin, ‘The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction’ (1986)

Camilla Groth and Nithikul Nimkulrat, ‘Making as reflecting through interaction with the material environment’ (2024)

Speculative Fiction.



‘Science fiction properly conceived, like all serious fiction, however funny, is a way of trying to describe what is in fact going on, what people actually do and feel, how people relate to everything else in this vast sack, this belly of the universe, this womb of things to be and tomb of things that were, this unending story’

Ursula K Le Guin, ‘The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction’ (1986)

Speculative Fiction...

...is about the present.

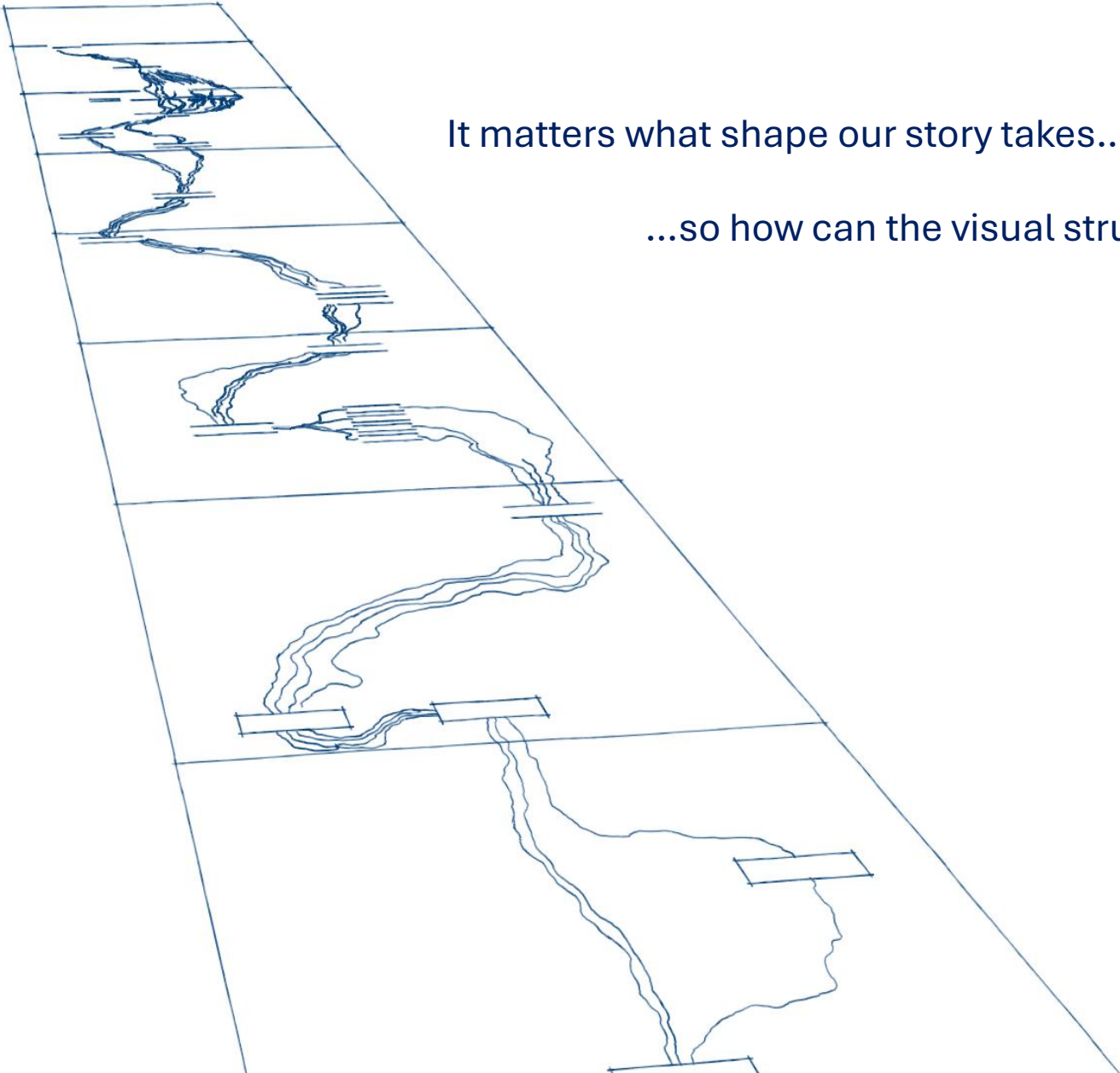
...asks the audience to step outside of their usual frame of reference, building new paths into familiar ideas.

...offers ambiguity, playfulness, interpretation; a space to ask '*what if*'?

Narrative Pathways.

It matters what shape our story takes...

...so how can the visual structure of the writing space be used?

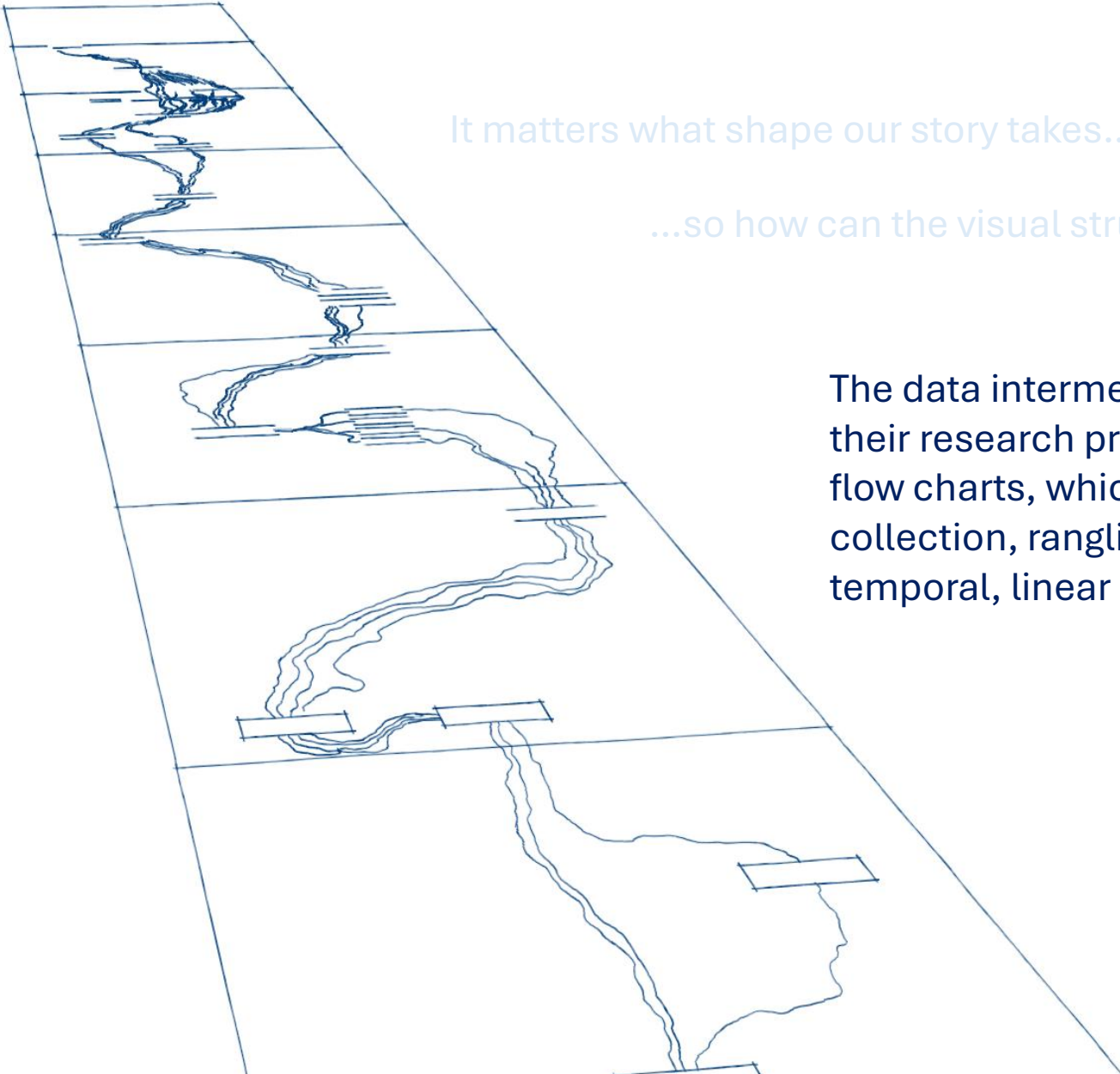


Narrative Pathways.

It matters what shape our story takes...

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The data intermediary in this case study visualises their research processes through a series of detailed flow charts, which place every stage of data collection, ranging, reporting and sales in a temporal, linear diagram.

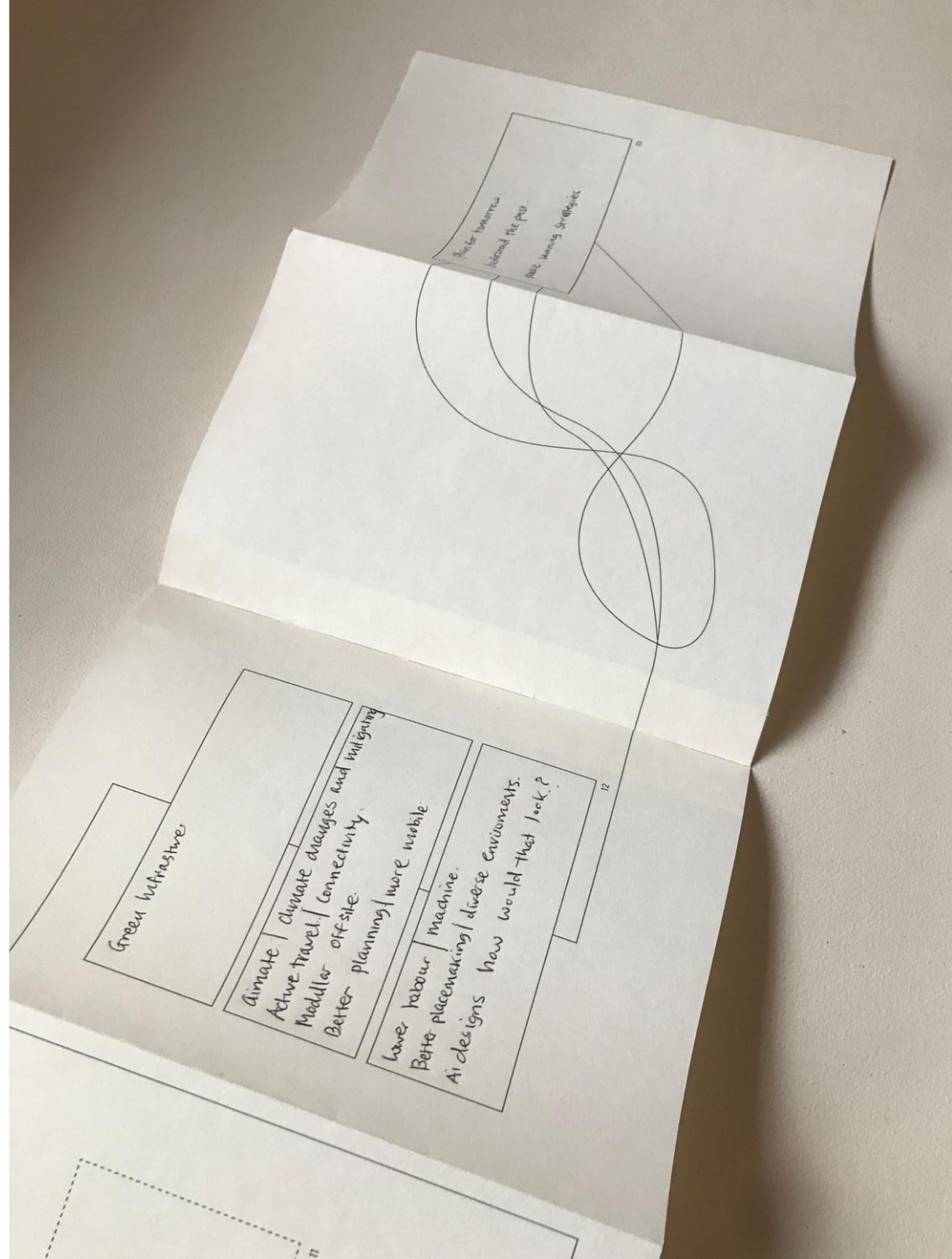


Narrative Pathways.

Forming the bases for the layout of the pathway, the diagram was held in a concertina booklet that folded out as it was worked across.

The prompts weren't displayed on the diagram (so that they couldn't plan ahead).

Each prompt was discussed by the group of researchers before they recorded their own responses in booklets.



Narrative Pathways.

Overarching themes of the workshops:

- Processes of sharing and collecting data.
- How data is put into context (especially that it isn't neutral).
- Research philosophies, and how they exist within and shape systems.

Narrative Pathways.

The session focused around the sharing and collecting of data utilised speculative fiction most directly, asking the researchers to map what data they collect, through what resources, and how it could be used or shared in the future.

Using the temporal form of the flow chart the narrative moved forward through three time periods (twenty, fifty and eighty years ahead), considering how that data is held, accessed and used over time.



Reflections.

- Whilst the small group size meant the participants were familiar with each other, it still replicated hierarchies within the private company, with a noticeable impact on how often people spoke for (or felt comfortable in getting their idea in). One of our three sessions did not include the manager, which provided an interesting point of comparison, with a much more equal distribution of input.
- The company was going through a significant period of change due to a merger, and whilst this offered a relevant theme to our discussions (on research philosophies and how they are impacted by and shape systems), on a logistical level it resulted in our time with the participants being limited to three two-hour sessions; a very narrow window to build discussions and reflections in.

Reflections.

- Participants feedback showed the sessions were successful in offering different perspectives into research practices, and that they were *‘taking something away that’s positive and curious’*. Whilst long-term impact from the sessions are much harder to measure, there is a significance in the practice and perspectives of individual people within systems and companies.
- *‘Looking through different lenses and teasing out threads of discussion generated were on lateral lines where I wouldn’t have given much thought. It’s for that reason that I thought the discussion was very valuable’*
- *‘With the complexity of the planning landscape in Ireland, the discussion highlighted the importance of engagement with different stakeholders and their diverse opinions to truly understand how interconnectedness could be achieved to overcome planning challenges. I was startled at how much the lack of “future planning” was exposed in our own planning system during the discussion—something to pay particular attention to’*
- *‘This collaborative environment fostered deeper discussions, more creative problem-solving, and detailed-oriented discussions’*

Impacts on Practices.

For Juliette three areas of interest or consideration came up:

- The format of the sessions helped the stakeholders to speak more freely; when doing the activities there were different responses in comparison to the interviews, even when the same topics were being addressed. What features can we bring from the sessions into other stakeholder interactions to support more open sharing?

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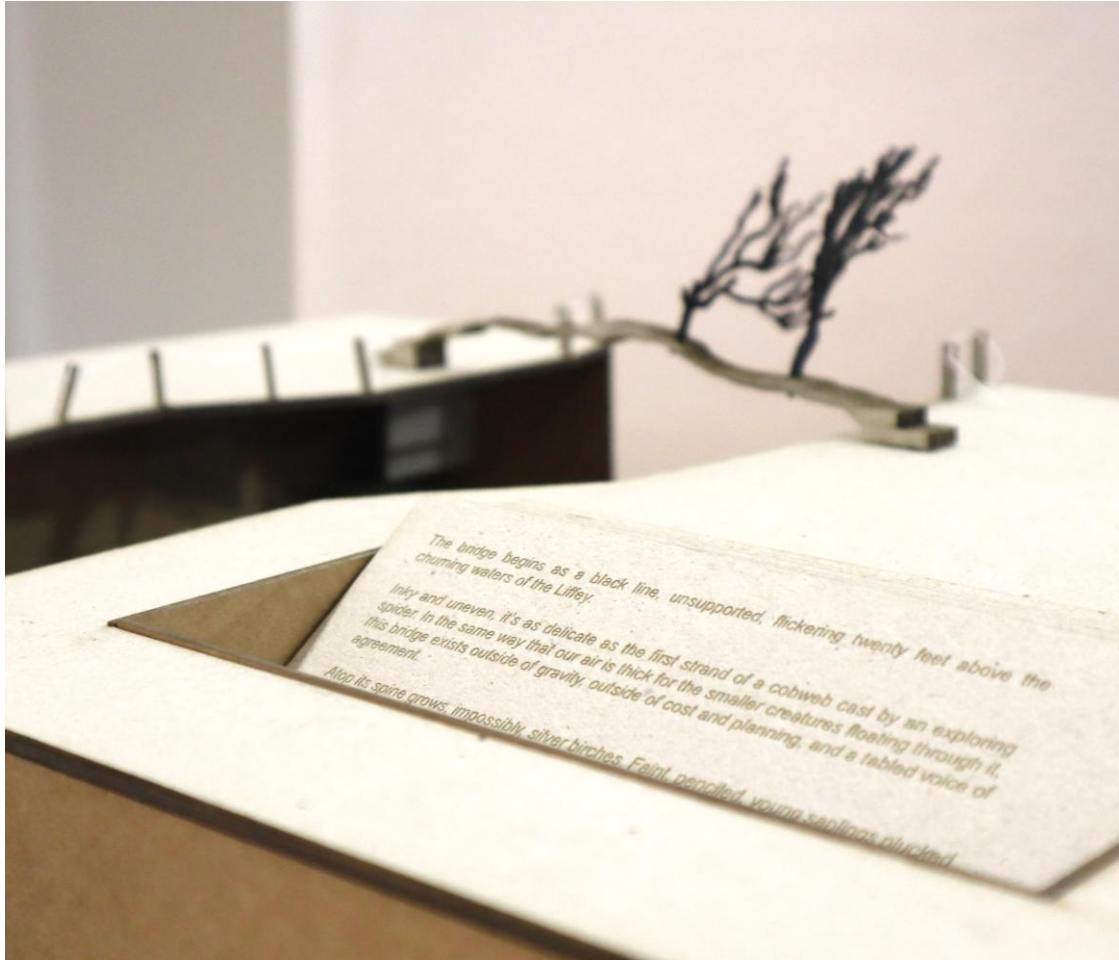
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- Whilst the researcher and artist collaborated closely in creating and preparing the workshops, as well as in reflection afterwards, during the session Juliette's role was largely assisting. How could we bring over that more collaborative working into the delivery of the workshop itself?
- The challenge in how this research-creation will be used after in ways outside traditional social sciences methods such as using quotes from interview or analysing of coding transcripts for publications. How could the outcome of the activity be used or shared differently (drawings, narratives)?

Impacts on Practices.



- How we collaborate, and how understanding different types of *practices* our collaborators hold is crucial in this.
- How to create work in response to research and as a method of *thinking through* the making.
- A continuing questioning of how speculative fictions can be used as pathways and frames for discussion and reflection.

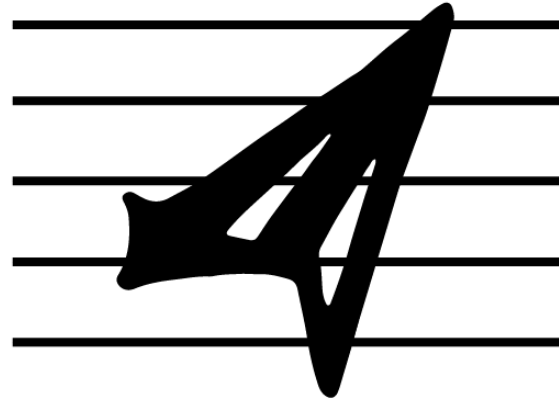
Impacts on Practices.

How we collaborate, and how understanding different types of *practices* our collaborators hold is crucial in this...

Sharing not only the processes that make up a practice but also the ways of doing these processes.

Handing over agency, and trust with it. Listening without replying.

Reaching an idea, process or work that we would not arrive at individually.



Impacts on Practices.

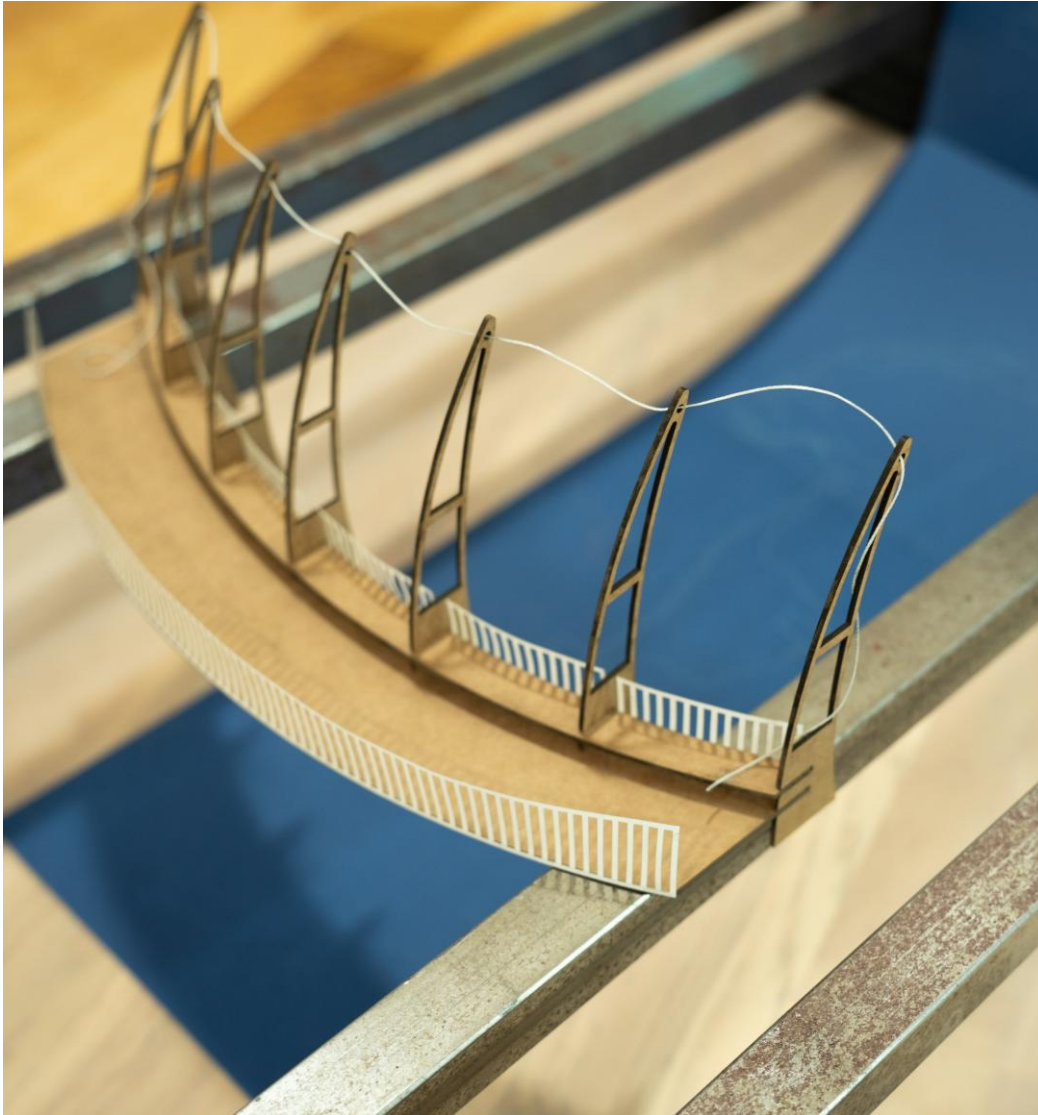
How to create work in response to research and
as a method of *thinking through* the making...

We are ‘*sensing [our] environments and making
sense of it through acting in and interacting with
it and learning from this interaction*’.

Camilla Groth and Nithikul Nimkulrat, ‘Making as reflecting
through interaction with the material environment’ (2024)



Impacts on Practices.



How to create work in response to research and as a method of *thinking through* the making...

How we create room for the audience to exist within the work with space for questioning and interpretation, each particular to the person.

‘Uncertainty is generous, and hope can prosper there – it can tackle the inevitability of things’

Rebecca Solnit, quoted by Rosie O’Reilly in her session at Rewild Dublin? Rivers, Community and Food (2025).

Impacts on Practices.

A continuing questioning of how speculative fictions can be used as pathways and frames for discussion and reflection...

‘It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories’

Donna J. Haraway, ‘Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene’ (2016)