Australia Council for the Arts Design Futures Workshop

Darling Quarter, Sydney
22 June 2018
Post-event Package

Tristan Schultz, Relative Creative

This post-event package is written, prepared and visually designed by Tristan Schultz of Relative Creative. It has been commissioned by Australia Council for the Arts for the purposes of providing a report of the Australia Council for the Arts Design Futures Workshop held in Darling Quarter, Sydney, June 22, 2018. Tristan Schultz was also the facilitator of the event.

Prepared July 2018.

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Introduction

The Australia Council for the Arts is exploring the role and place of arts, artists and creative occupations across industries and society now and in the future. The event adopted a design thinking process to explore how change and disruption might be navigated. Participants from a variety of industries including arts, science, medicine, business, education, technology and law worked in interdisciplinary teams for a collective navigation of the socially and ethically-complex web emerging from an increased global focus on disruptive technologies. Visual maps were constructed through the course of the day as a record of the thinking and future scenarios imagined. Transcribed presentations,are presented here along with graphic overlays of the original maps to be able to see the patterns of information for further analysis and future use.

Attendees

Facilitator:
- Tristan Schultz, Director, Relative Creative

Australia Council Facilitators and Attendees:
- Dr Rachel Perry, Research Fellow
- Kevin du Preez, Director Capacity Building
- Laura Harris, Peer Services Officer
- Wendy Were, Executive Director, Strategy Development and Advocacy Bogdan Meunier, Evaluation Associate

Participants:
- Tim Jones, Seymour Centre
- Nina Miall, Independent curator
- Julia Mendel, Information and Cultural Exchange
- Rhine Bernadino, Independent artist
- Angellina Zucco, Australian String Quartet
- Josh Harle, Tactical Space Lab
- Debra Keenahan, Independent artist
- Professor Sarah Miller, University of Wollongong
- Jane McCredie, NSW Writer's Centre
- Magdalena Moreno, International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA)
- Jane Stratton, Think & Do Tank
- Dr Shari Parker, St Vincent's Hospital/ UNSW
- Lloyd Prescott, Maximl Health Consulting
- Clara Edwards, Arts Law
- Hannah Tooley, Johnson and Johnson
- Wendy Mather, We Are Generate
- Professor Niki Ellis, Monash University
- Justine Bellamy, Fizzics Education
- Craig Murphy, IBM
- Anthony Brown, Health Consumers NSW
- Paula Hardie Griffith University
- Ashley Ringrose, SMG Studio

Setting the Scene
Design Futures Facilitation

Just as the world is in flux, so too is Design. We are coming to terms with how powerful design has been in both the creation and destruction of worlds. We are coming to terms with how technologies and other designs, design back on us as individuals and as a society in previously unconsidered ways. Moreover, as the technical abilities of designers become more democratic—that is more accessible to everyone because of technological automation—one particular skill remains for designers (and artists); to amplify their critical, strategic and creative thinking skills as process enablers and help people think, talk and map out their situatedness in this rapidly shifting world. It is from this position that we apply design futures facilitation processes that have been developed and proven helpful in many contexts over several years. The following sets the scene for the kinds of processes participants underwent at the Australia Council for the Arts Design Futures Workshop.

Entry Provocation
Much of below was presented in a provocative visual presentation followed by a curation of video content, spanning Charlie Chaplin's Modern Times, through to hyperreality virtual futures animations.

Yarning and Visual Dialogue
Yarning circles are conducted under the simple rules that each person speaks in turn, holds authority for the time they speak, and reciprocates by speaking responsibly from self and not about others. Wiradjuri man Norm Sheehan describes how this simple sequencing structure provides a safe space that enriches the creative potential of a group because, as the speaking role moves, individual statements become more spontaneous, merging and connecting to become an emergent and creative conversation between minds. For Sheehan, visual dialogue is an Indigenous Knowledge extension to yarning. In visual dialogue, knowledge often emerges and fits with the actions and intent of groups. As he has written, this outcome is not just magic and special; it is simply inherent to the structure that a visual and relational outcome will emerge from a visual and relational process in a way that reveals a visual and relational world.

Mapping
Tracking patterns of information and knowledge production in visual and relational ways has always been an Indigenous Knowledge process. In the West, mapping as a rationalist historic practice has transformed the way we think about and understand the world often in overly reductive ways. Today it is becoming increasingly clear that in the face of the complex and interwoven world we exist in we lack the cognitive mapping skills required to 'see' alternative future options. Therefore contemporary relational mapping processes are urgently required, while honouring relational Indigenous Knowledge techniques that have otherwise been concealed.

Practical steps in the process we employ follows that the present is named first. At least three narratives might be explored. The narratives named in the present depend what the map is trying to explore. Then, since participants need to be able to see how sourced information can back their cognitive insights, understand contexts more and quickly engage at an individual and group level, knowledge cards are introduced. Presents are always brought-forth from pasts. This step is about tracking back in time to name what in the past might have caused their appearance in the present. This step might look as far into the past as is necessary. For example, in Australia beyond the arrival of the boats to naming what came with the boats; as far back as Western Enlightenment, or even further to the formation of homo sapiens as technological beings. Next participants are asked to highlight key narratives. This helps with hierarchy, sequencing and flow and is important for legibility,

As the map unfolds it becomes possible to develop an understanding of how 'things' are gathering in time, which inevitably gather in the future at both a local and global level. If nothing were to change, no interjections or redirections, there is a current direction that 'we' are heading towards.

As well as current directions travelling forward that can be drawn into the map, there are futures arriving travelling back. The future is full (not empty) of current directions in place and immovable (sea level rise is an easy example). These directions can be drawn into the map by pointing back towards the present. The closer to understanding futures arriving, the closer a process is to not being the stuff of sci-fi, but rather the stuff of real human contexts taking into account real, inescapable concerns. The collision in space and time between current directions (if nothing changes) and futures arriving is key to identify alternative pathways forward. This marks a crucial moment in the mapping process; to ask the question, "am I happy with this clash?" It is here where designing futures begins.

Design Fiction Creation and Sharing
Design Fictions are beneficial for conceptually testing ideas as if they are already in existence, without wasting the time, money and resources they might consume in reality. They can also test the fusion between people, technologies and things without the consequence of bringing that hard to separate fusion into actual material existence. They can put options on the table that can no longer be ignored and provide realities to work towards, offering relatable, human scale, emotional character loaded narratives. Design fictions are a powerful transformative design method frequently employed today by companies and orgs in a spectrum as wide as for neoliberal colonising contexts to decolonsing contexts. Contrary to utopian or dystopian science fiction futures writing, design fictions should aim to take into account the pasts, presents, current future direction and futures arriving and to what extent the fiction articulates what is unable to change, what can be mitigated, adapted and redirected around. Along the way, it is best to continue introducing knowledge cards, images and other curve balls and triggers for different kinds of participant engagement.

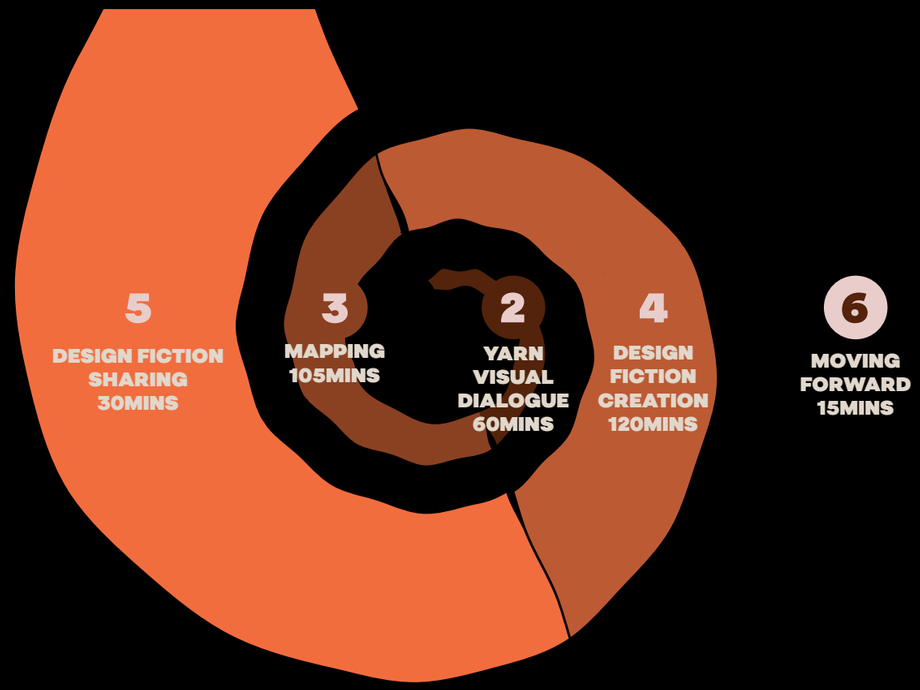
Any good facilitation process ends in participants having the space and time to share with each other their experiences of the day. With the creation of maps and design fictions as tangible artefacts, particpants are able to use these as tangible mediators to express what they've been thinking, talking and mapping.

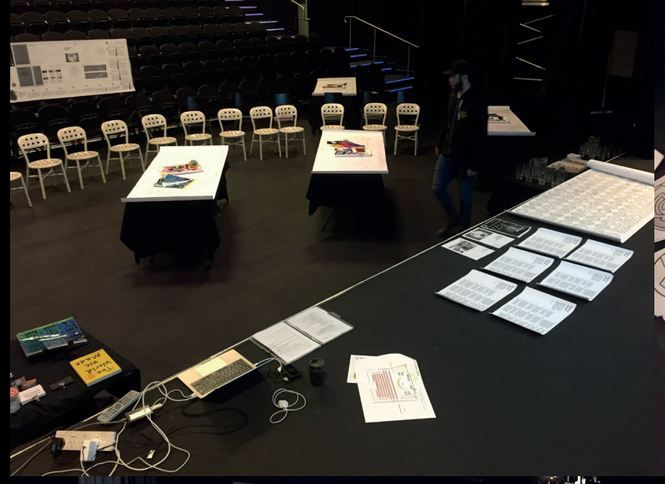
Post Event
Tangible artefacts from a facilitation process combined with traditional visual comunication design skills also provide a means to deliver back to participants insights from the day, namely this document. This document, including the maps made legible and aesthetically persuasive, can now become mediating objects for future use in subsequent events.

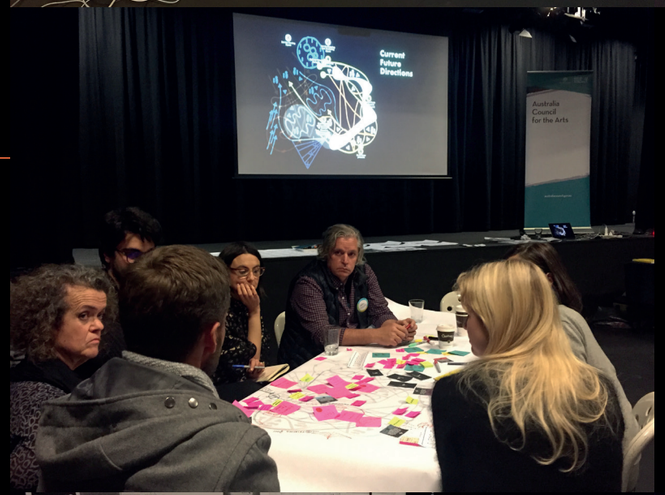
Tristan Schultz
B.Des, M.Des, PhD. Cand.
Co-director / Founder Relative Creative
Tristan's Gamilaroi Aboriginal and European Australian heritage shapes and forms his extensive interdisciplinary design experience, which you can track at relativecreative.com.au

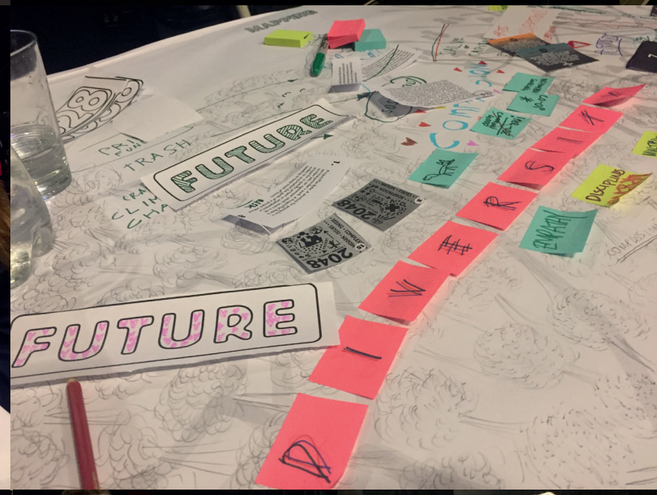
AMIDST RAPIDLY SHIFTING SOCIOTECHNICAL WORLDS, HOW MIGHT WE **TRACK** AND **ARTICULATE** RADICAL, SPECULATIVE, EXPERIMENTAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF OUR CREATIVE, CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC

FUTURES?









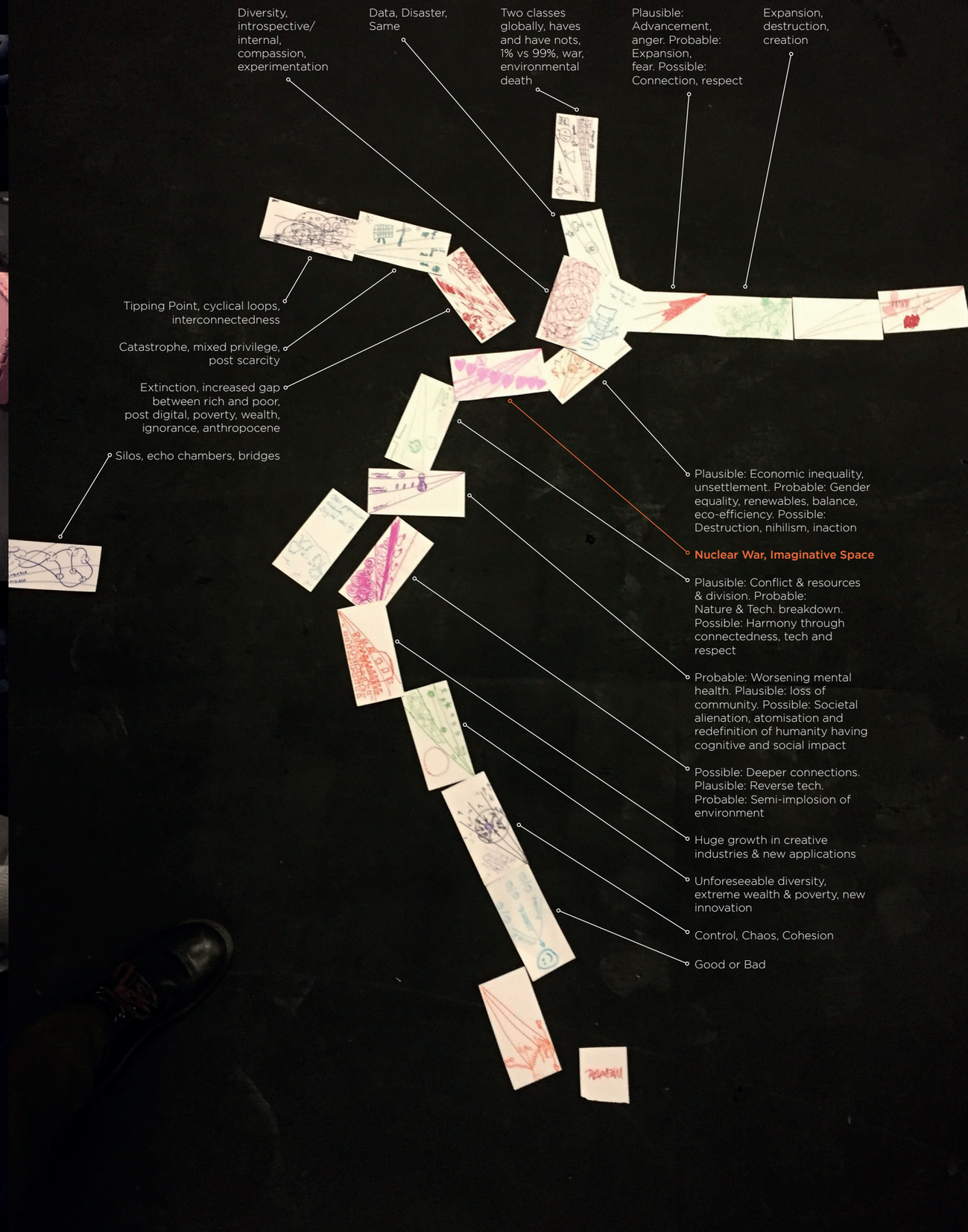
Yarning Session:

During the visual yarning process the participants were asked to consider probable, plausible and possible futures based on the opening video and talk.

Participants were then asked to place their card, image side up, on the floor pointed at different coordinates emanating from the centre (a ‘Connective Art’ method developed by Wiradjuri man Norm Sheehan).

We then reflected on the overall form of the totality of the cards. It was agreed that most participants saw a man running, while some others saw a spiral.

Taking the man running image, we proceeded to pick up cards participants were interested in reading what was on the other side. For example, we picked up the leading hand card (detailed at right). and remarkably, the middle card which we took to be the heart, and on closer inspection had heart images on it (detailed at right).



Mapping and Design Fictions:

After the yarning process participants mapped and created Design Fictions.

We mapped pasts that have brought-forth presents, and are gathering as futures. We then mapped redirective future opportunities and identified the beginnings of future scenarios; design fictions. Along the way, images, quotes, words, and other curve balls were introduced, particularly related to arts futures and technology.

Using their Design Fictions participants moved to explore creatively expressive ways to share and articulate their Design Fiction to the rest of the group.

"The arts reminding people, with and without technology, what it means to be human"

"Creatives are critical because they make us think differently about how we approach a New Order"

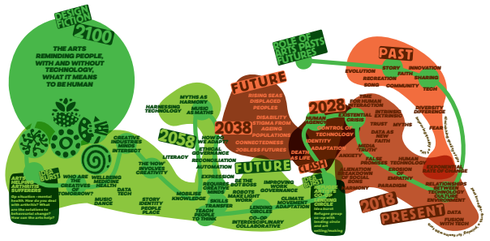
"The arts creAIDives to prepare the world for an equitable sharing economy and to envision equitable cyborgs"

"Arts co-ops leveraging through being technologically enmeshed with and across local urban living spheres"

Group One

"The arts reminding people, with and without technology, what it means to be human"

Team Presentation Transcription



For full page view see pages 16-21

"Our journey took us from an acknowledgement in the past of what the human being intrinsically is versus extrinsically. For us, this is all about the communication of personal stories and expression of self, faith, religion, innovation, and song. When we track this through, we see more diversity and pluralism along with a lot more fear in the face of technology. With the exponential rate of change; more data from more technology, for example, we can see a positive influence of empowerment to the individual. Peoples expressions can be noticed more and more, However, we started to really focus on the heightening anxiety coming from things like the dialectic between fakes news on one hand and media perpetuating myths of objective truth on the other. We see false promises, data as a new faith, a loss of meaning; a real existential crisis hurtling towards us. Heading into this clash we have a series of future threats, a real debate around ethics and governance and how we make a way forward. Of course we found it very easy to fall into catastrophising which we are not going to go into anymore now. What we decided to focus on was the role of arts in humans as reminding us we are connected social beings. We know this is true from the past, we know this will be true in the present, so through the meshing of all different parts of humanity we believe this will be true for the future as well. For us, the role of the arts is to interrogate the 'how' we keep people attached to what it is to be human. This is very important; that the 'how' involves creativity. Through this lens, and looking at the role of the arts as story, identity and movement, we could see the pivotal part of the role of creatives tomorrow.

So, I'll read the design fiction: The role of the artist and the creative will be broadened to embrace technology in the face of future challenges. The tools will change, that is, the way the artist expresses themselves, but their role will be very consistent in reminding people what it is to be human and making people feel connected and healthy".

Interpretation of the group map focussed on the role of arts in futures and technology

The Role of arts pasts and futures is mapped here through conversations of pasts stories and sharing, through recreation and song, and technologies that have always been, brought-forth into the present. These stories illuminate relationships between technology, culture and environment. However, this gathers into the present as an existential crisis of human agency. Where to from here? How do we adapt? This narrative shows that co-op collaborative situations should be paramount. Places where we can creatively teach people to think, deliver creative skills transfer and more. This in the face of mitigating negative effects of automation and instead amplifying autonomous expression. Music will be key to this. It is recognised that there are a great deal of urgent pressing future challenges arriving at our feet. Creatives need to play a crucial role teaching us all 'how' to adapt, mitigate and redirect around these challenges. This will also require ethical governance. Two propositions include; an artists refugee co-op lending circle, and the arts helping arthritic sufferers for the increasingly ageing. In summary, the arts will play a crucial role in reminding people, with and without technological mediums, what it means to be human in an increasingly fluid definition of what it means to be human world.

Group Two

"Creatives are critical because they make us think differently about how we approach a New Order"

Team Presentation Transcription

For full page view see pages 22-27

"First we looked at all of our assets and realised that there was a really interesting group of people that came from a whole range of different angles. But we very quickly came to the idea that 'ecology' was at the heart of what we were all about. We realised that we had to go back to looking at our past and three things kept coming up: tribes, technology and conflict. At one point they all came together in that the conflict between tribes and within tribes and between tribes and their ecologies is what has gotten us into trouble. That is, for us, the vertebrae, the key thread that connected all of it. We had a really ripe discussion around what all of that looked like in the present. We realised that the status quo isn't acceptable and that it was looking pretty bleak. We started discussing annihilation, new wars, the breakdown of society and community. A robust discussion around tribes and community both as a positive and a negative in terms of what is strong and important in terms of our collectiveness was also present. We also looked at how technology is both positive and negative. For us it was very much wanting to protect ecology and diversity. We recognise that the diversity the internet brings is very critical. We then reached a discussion that took us to this 'annihilation' critical space where we could see these narratives arriving; futures arriving, Futures that we couldn't look away from; around the discplacement of people, climate change, sea levels and waste. We looked at responsibility in terms of when you purchase something, using words like stupidity and ignorance when describing the way actors seem to see the longer picture in terms of where that product has come from and what our responsibility is and the real value when you purchase something. So what do we do with waste? How do we bring that into a strong ecology? These were big questions for us. So the future was pretty red and horrible. A discussion continued around the role of government, with various views settling on the proposition that there needed to be some sort of body or system that helped regulate all these mounting issues.

We went into a whole a future scenario, created a character and then ditched it, because that didn't work for us because we already knew that we needed a New Order. And for us it was really clear, it was embedded around creative solutions, to look at everything (health, technology, government, protection and shelter). We recognised we needed a more equitable distribution of wealth and of penalising waste. We concluded that creatives are critical because it makes us think differently about how we approach this New Order. We urgently need the creatives involved!"

Interpretation of the group map focussed on the role of arts in futures and technology

The Role of arts pasts and futures is mapped here through conversations of tension between 'tribes' and ecology. This tension has increased to a breaking point in which new knowledge and solutions are required. As much as technology is providing ways forward in health, governance, protection and shelter, creative solutions are urgently needed for these spheres too. Creative solutions that provide different ways to value the planet and people, to encourage more equitable distribution of wealth, to discourage waste and importantly, to provide visions of entirely new economies of exchange. But it is not only up to traditionally perceived 'creatives'. All disciplines, including the arts, are creatives. And all disciplines urgently require embarking on creative solutions. Creatives can help us rethink our definition of entertainment; to be 'serious entertainment'. Creatives can help us see things from entirely new perspectives. Creatives can bring compassion to relative solutions. In summary, across all these disciplines, creatives are critical because they make us think differently about how we approach a New Order.

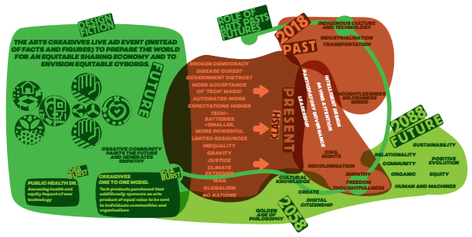
Group Three

"The arts creAIDives to prepare the world for an equitable sharing economy and to envision equitable cyborgs"

Team Presentation Transcription

"Our table definitely wanted to focus on the positive side so here is our positive spin! We know we're here in the present and for us the goal is to get to a place where we have a positive evolution of humans and machines together to allow the organic growth of Earth to survive. That was our goal and obviously there are paths to destruction, but we wanted to get there. As we were planning this out we realised the biggest problem to get to this utopian dream would be inequity around the world so you don't want the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' divide increasing. Luckily when we rolled the ('models of impact' design fiction dice game) dice one of the models was the 'one-to-one' model. We used this model to solve the inequity which would be the barrier to us reaching our utopia. In summary of this model, for every person that moves up and evolves, there is a person that would miss out as well and therefore require aid to alleviate the inequity this creates in their worlds. How do you convince the world to share? The world is very greedy and that was a big thing we kept coming back to; greed and selfishness is the barrier.

So we put the 'U' in Future. We're going to use 'creAIDives'; the live aid for the next generation (Jay-Z, Steven Spielberg, Scorsasi). The total goal is to get the empathy level up and convince people over time that the sharing economy and the one-to-one model is the way to go to make the Earth a better place. Oh, and we created Smart Soil to help people grow their own food in small moveable houses. Think roving cyborg nomads (sustainable cyborgs). But no matter what everyone can still participate remotely. Everyone's going to be there because we're going to share it (in the cloud) thanks to CreAIDives!"



For full page view see pages 28-33

Interpretation of the group map focussed on the role of arts in futures and technology

The Role of arts pasts and futures is mapped here through conversations of the way Indigenous culture and technology have always been inseparable, as with all human cultures. However, along the way colonialism concealed and destroyed the validity of Indigenous Knowledge. Linked with histories of civil rights movements there is now undoubtedly a global decolonising movement underway. Empathy, thoughtfulness and breakdown of conceptions of 'the Other' is creating freedom from oppressive circumstances. Some say there is a return to a Golden Age of Philosophy in which the creation of cultural knowledge is based upon these new norms. If this is to be true, this is a strong sediment upon which we might begin to conceive responsible, ethical digital citizenship in an increasingly techno-mediated world. However, much work is to be done to prepare 'us' for this new paradigm. The creative community plays a crucial role in this, as they can 'paint' visions of these kinds of equitable futures and generate empathy. New revenue models afford new ways to create social impact in this new world. For example, the 'one to one' model might see tech products purchased that additionally sponsor arts initiatives of equal value to be sent to organisations. Consider the proposition CreAIDives, in which arts activate a global event of 'future painting' and prepare the world for equitable sharing economies (enabled by levelling technologies like Blockchain), and along the way, help us envision equitable cyborgs!

Group Four

"Arts co-ops leveraging through being technologically enmeshed with and across local urban living spheres"

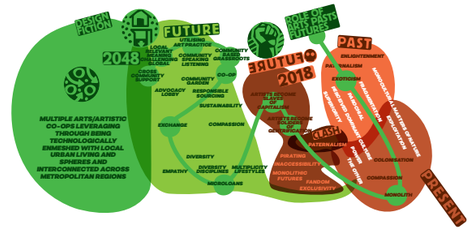
Team Presentation Transcription

"We started off with talking about colonisation, exoticism and the Enlightenment. For us being in a monolithic culture, all these things are connected and being problematic. They keep us in a closed sphere of thinking. So our group explored ways where we could break out of this mode of thinking. We talked about things like the intersection of gender, class, race and the concept of the 'Other'.

Where we arrived at as our current problem, the clash, was the start of capitalism. We identified the artist today (in a dystopian way) as the foot soldiers of gentrification. Overall, it felt difficult to engage in the context of a creative practice in ways that would be able to have teeth beyond this, for these really massive issues that we're dealing with.

So our speculative future is trying to look at ways in which we can both bring back creative practice and also whether it would work to deal with problems of sustainability and environmental change in ways that wouldn't be a grand narrative. Where we concluded is that it would be different communities of people and different groups that share common needs and knowledge with each other, developed from a local level. In this they would beacknowledging the knowledge that different cultures bring, different experiences bring, in building that future. We arrived at not just new technologies, but old technologies being useful and good towards sustainability. Our design fiction is:

A co-op model which looked at local level community and artistic practice being one within that. So the artist is not separate in society. And the artist leverages through this platform".



For full page view see pages 34-39

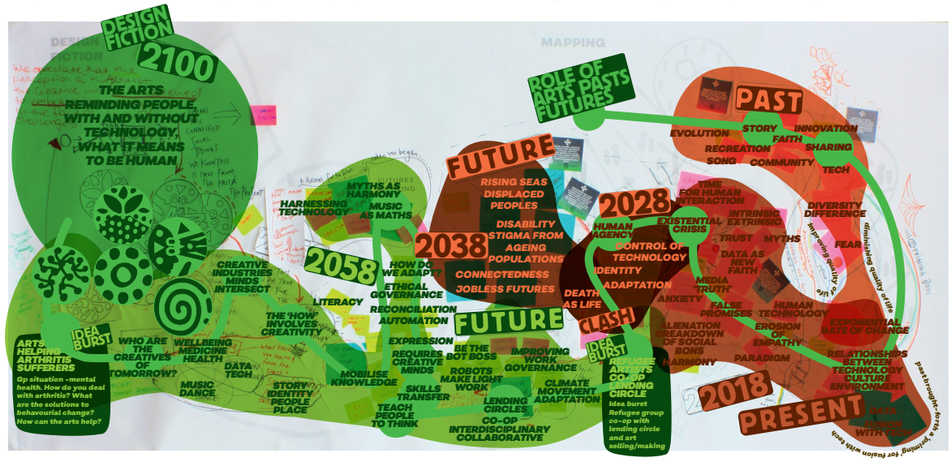
Interpretation of the group map focussed on the role of arts in futures and technology

The Role of arts pasts and futures is mapped here through conversations of the arts as they were embroiled in notions of exoticism. In the present this appears as a monolithic gaze perpetuated by the commodification of culture enabled by technologies. When used for exploitative purposes this is gathering in the future as artists becoming soldiers of gentrification and slaves of capitalism. So how might we redirect that? For this group, different economies of exchange are urgently required. Emerging technologies can assist this. Blockchain, for example, might assist in trustworthy microloan systems. Disciplines might be better able to collaborate and build alliances through more efficient exchange platforms. Co-ops and other community based grassroot actions with arts practice as central might give localised economies resilient viability, while forcing new terms of a conversation with global economies. Cross community support through these platforms will also be easier. In summary, there is opportunity for multiple arts co-ops leveraging through being technologically enmeshed with local urban living spheres, yet interconnected across vast metropolitan and global regions.

Group One

"The arts reminding people, with and without technology, what it means to be human"

Graphic overlay respecting original map spatial and textual arrangements. Original map underlay included.



Workshop day original map

Group One

“The arts reminding people, with and without technology, what it means to be human”

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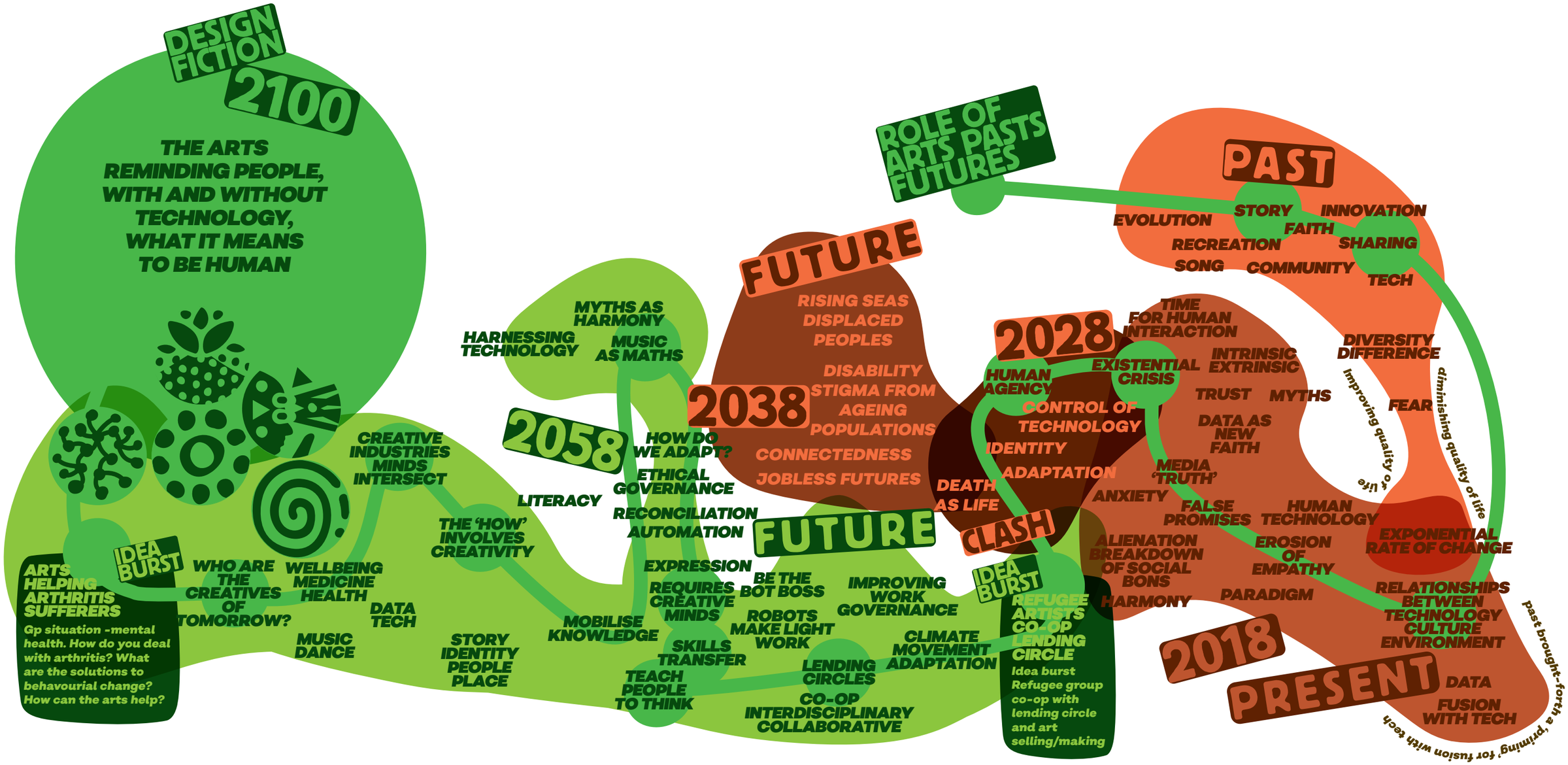

Group One

"The arts reminding people, with and without technology, what it means to be human"

Interpretation of the group map focussed on the role of arts in futures and technology

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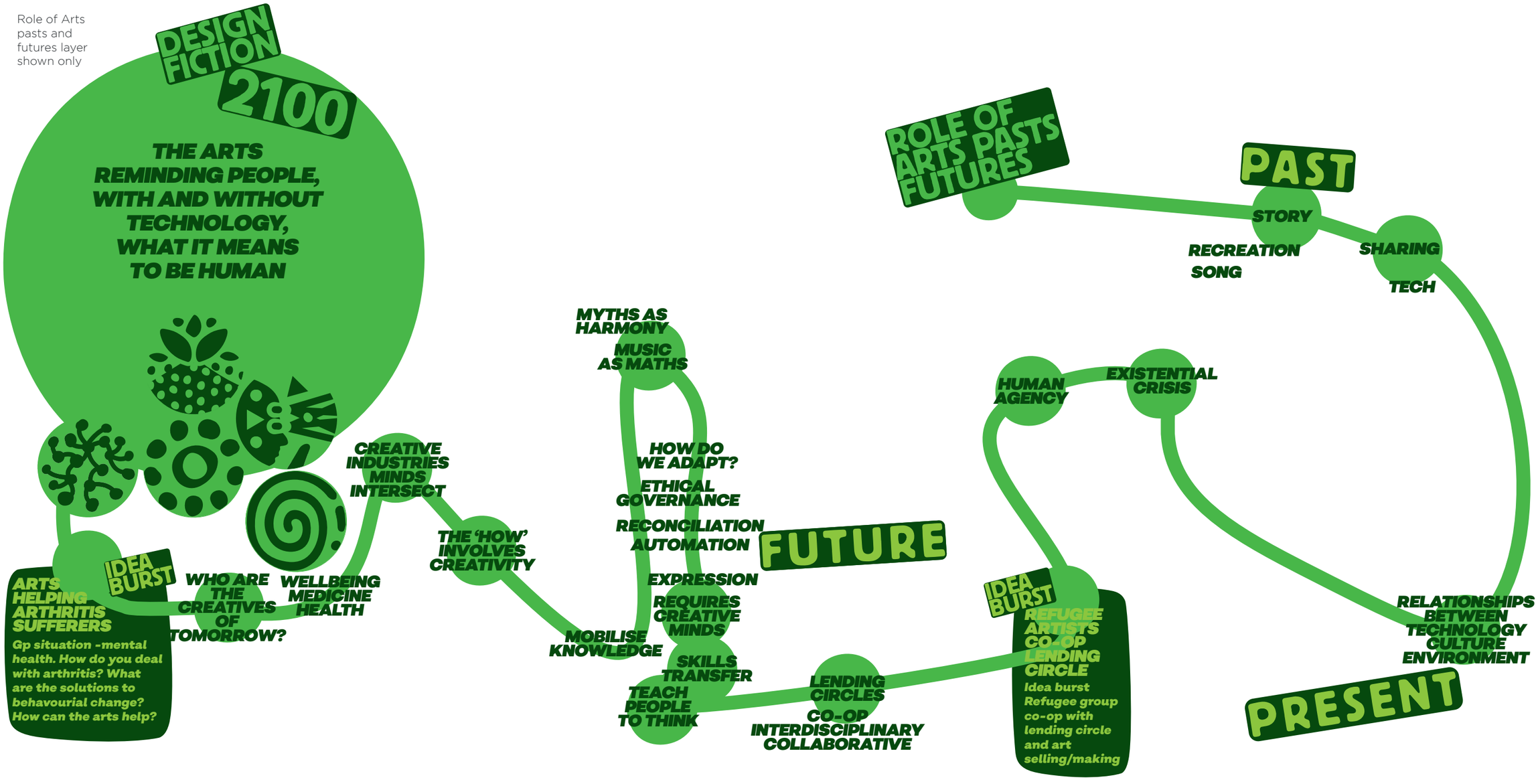
Role of Arts pasts and futures layer shown only



Group Two

"Creatives are critical because they make us think differently about how we approach a New Order"

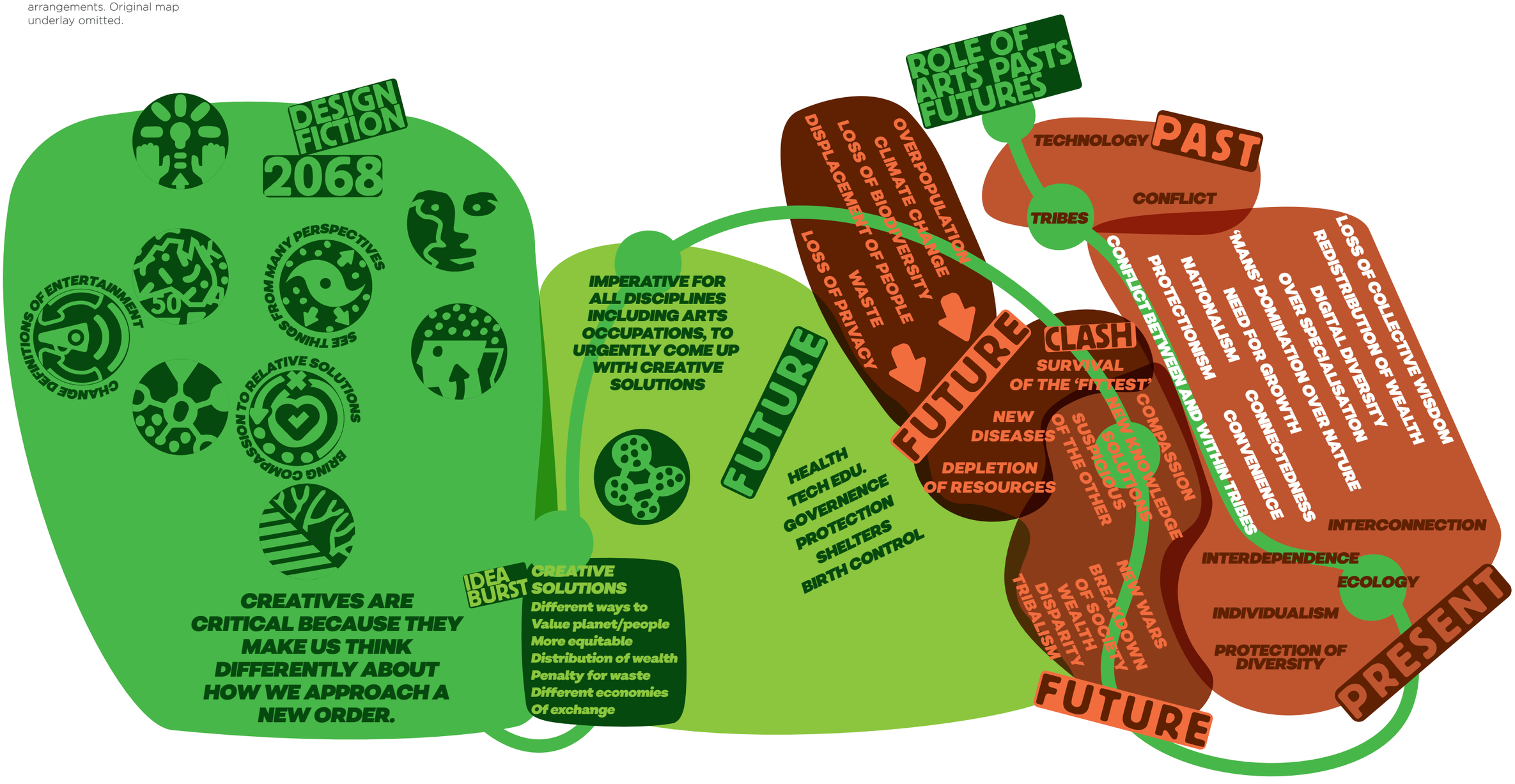
Graphic overlay respecting original map spatial and textual arrangements. Original map underlay included.

Workshop day original map

Group Two

"Creatives are critical because they make us think differently about how we approach a New Order"

Graphic overlay respecting original map spatial and textual arrangements. Original map underlay omitted.



Group Two

" Creatives are critical because they make us think differently about how we approach a New Order "

Interpretation of the group map focussed on the role of arts in futures and technology

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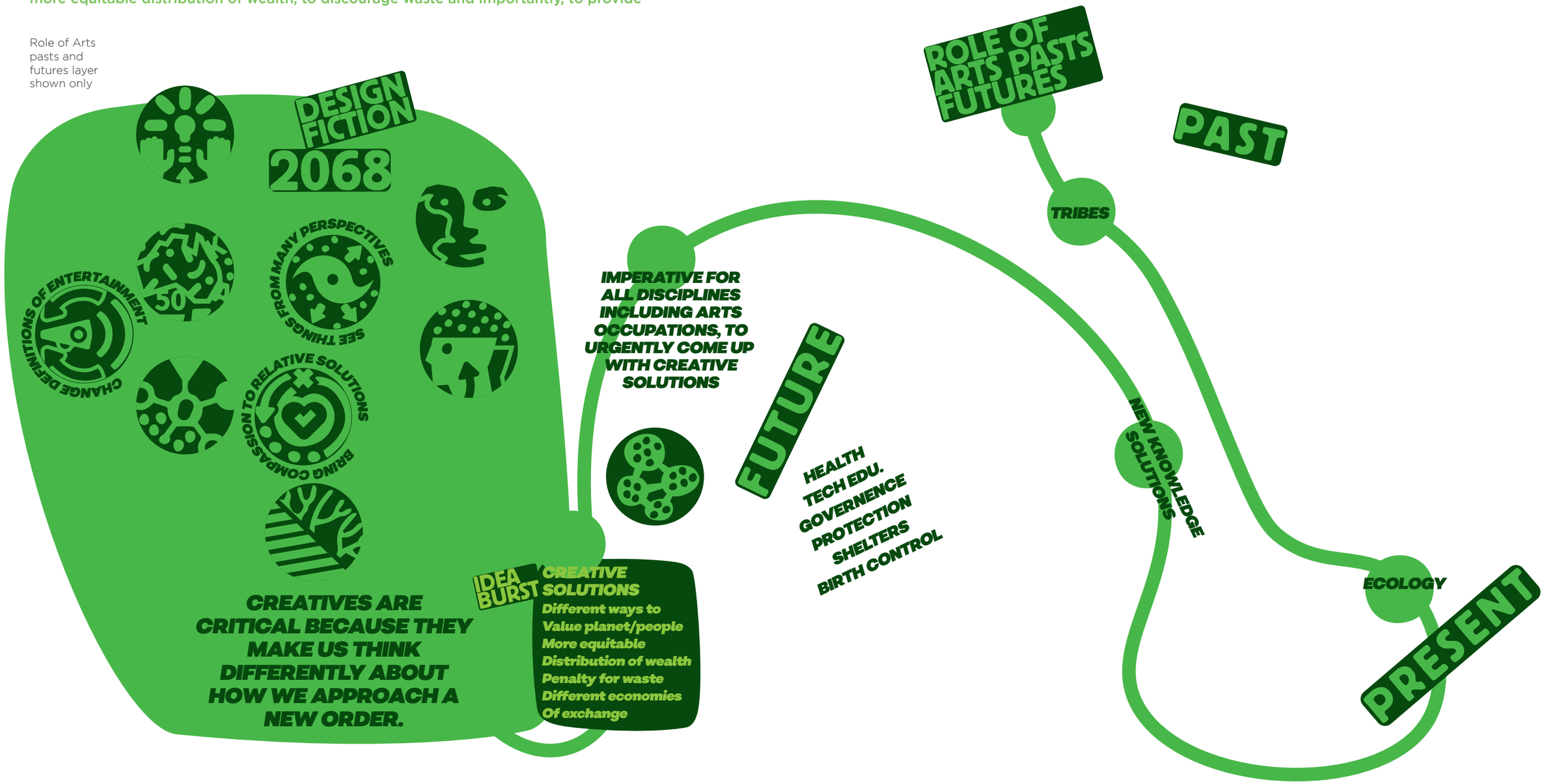
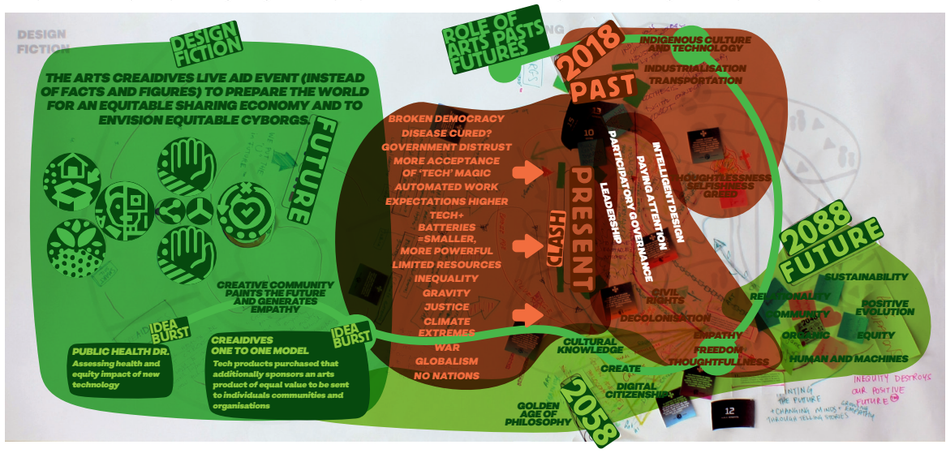


Group Three

"The arts creAIDives to prepare the world for an equitable sharing economy and to envision equitable cyborgs"

Graphic overlay respecting original map spatial and textual arrangements. Original map underlay included.

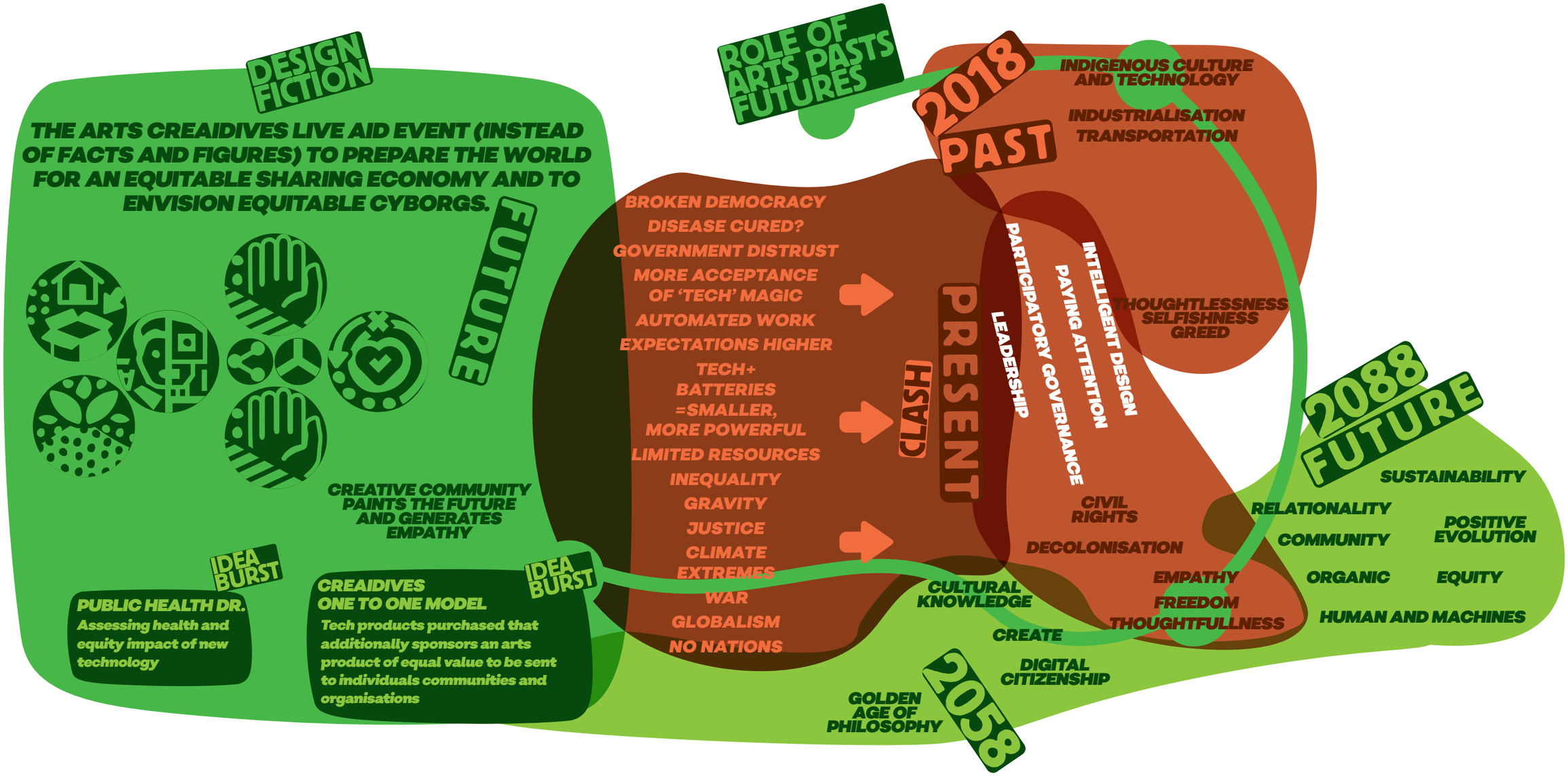


Workshop day original map

Group Three

"The arts creAIDives to prepare the world for an equitable sharing economy and to envision equitable cyborgs"

Graphic overlay respecting original map spatial and textual arrangements. Original map underlay omitted.



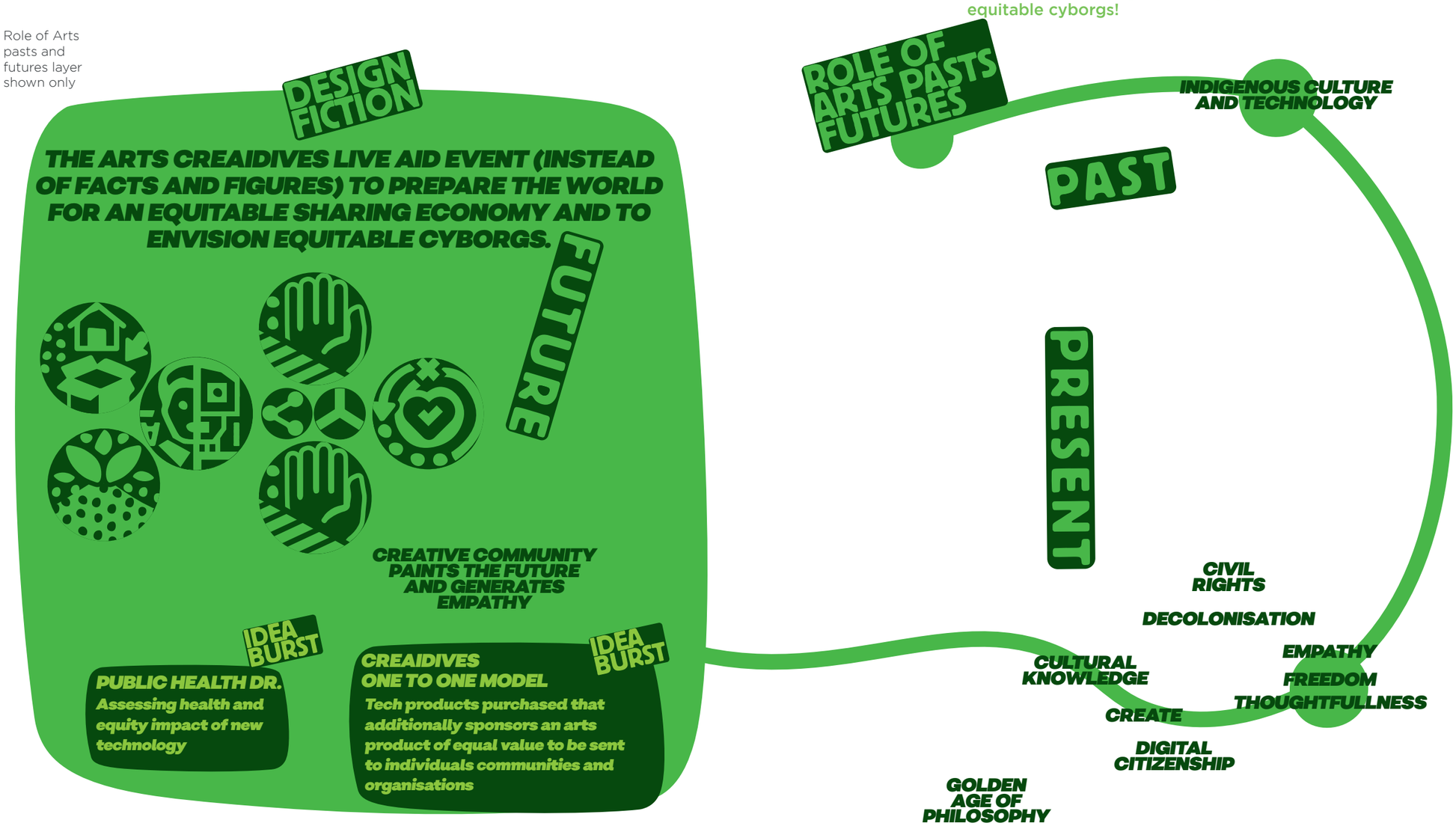
Group Three

"The arts creAIDives to prepare the world for an equitable sharing economy and to envision equitable cyborgs"

Interpretation of the group map focussed on the role of arts in futures and technology

The Role of arts pasts and futures is mapped here through conversations of the way Indigenous culture and technology have always been inseparable, as with all human cultures. However, along the way colonialism concealed and destroyed the validity of Indigenous Knowledge. Linked with histories of civil rights movements there is now undoubtedly a global decolonising movement underway. Empathy, thoughtfulness and breakdown of conversations of 'the Other' is creating freedom oppressive circumstances. Some say there is a return to a Golden Age of Philosophy in which the creation of cultural knowledge is based upon these new norms. If this is to be true, this is a strong sediment upon which we might begin to conceive responsible, ethical digital citizenship in an increasingly techno-mediated world. However, much work is to be done to prepare 'us' for this new paradigm. The creative community plays a crucial role in this, as they can 'paint' visions of these kinds of equitable futures and generate empathy. New revenue models afford new ways to create social impact in this new world. For example, the 'one to one' model might see tech products purchased that additionally sponsor arts initiatives of equal value to be sent to organisations. Consider the proposition CreAIDives, in which arts activate a global event of 'future painting' and prepare the world for equitable sharing economies (enabled by levelling technologies like Blockchain), and along the way, help us envision equitable cyborgs!

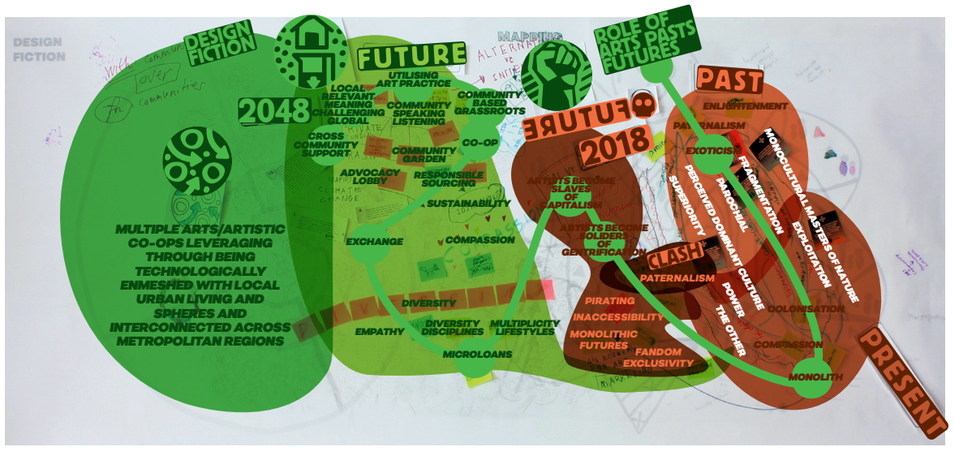
Role of Arts pasts and futures layer shown only



Group Four

“Arts co-ops leveraging through being technologically enmeshed with and across local urban living spheres”

Graphic overlay respecting original map spatial and textual arrangements. Original map underlay included.



Workshop day original map

Group Four

“Arts co-ops leveraging through being technologically enmeshed with and across local urban living spheres”

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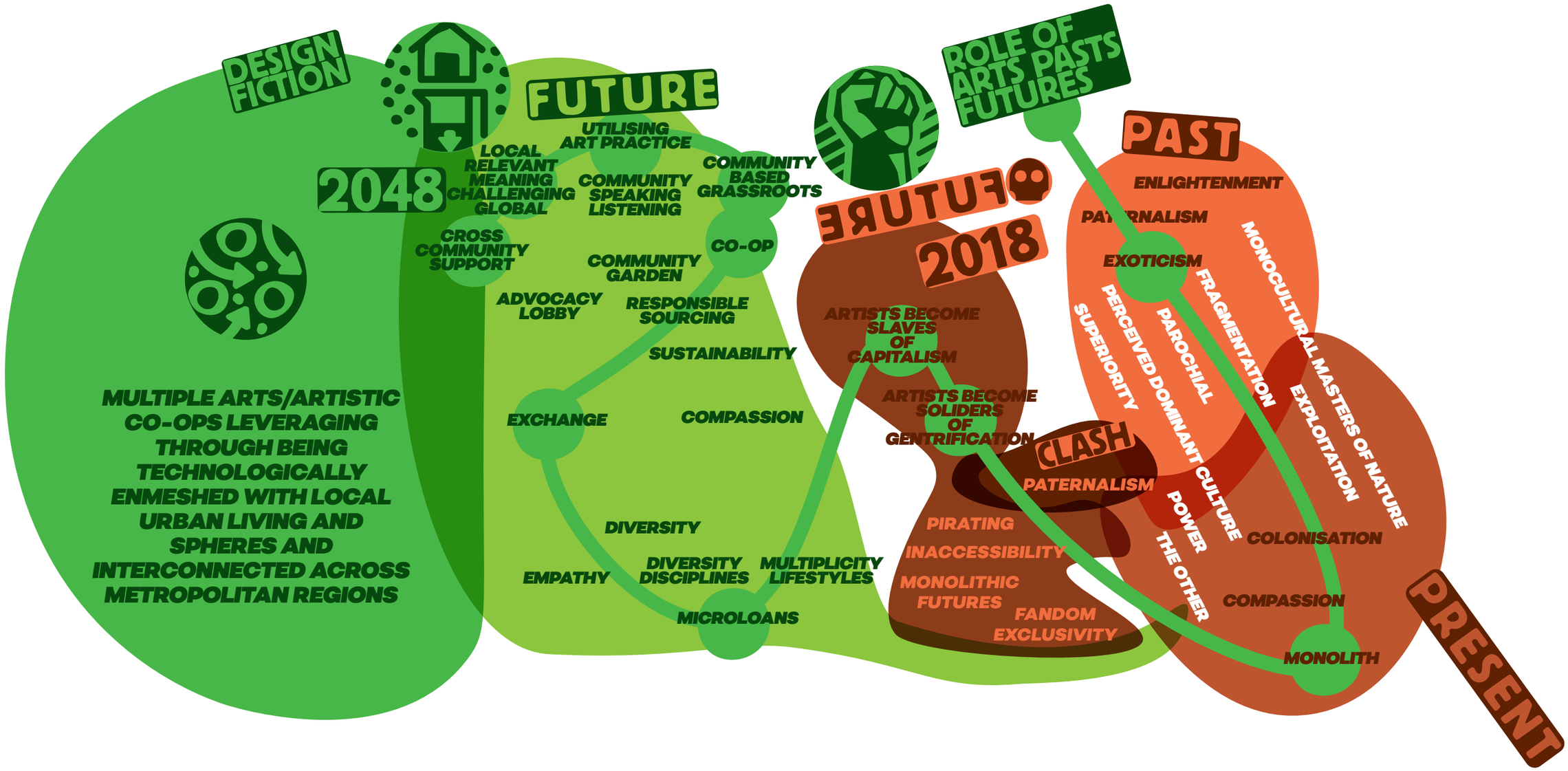


Group Four

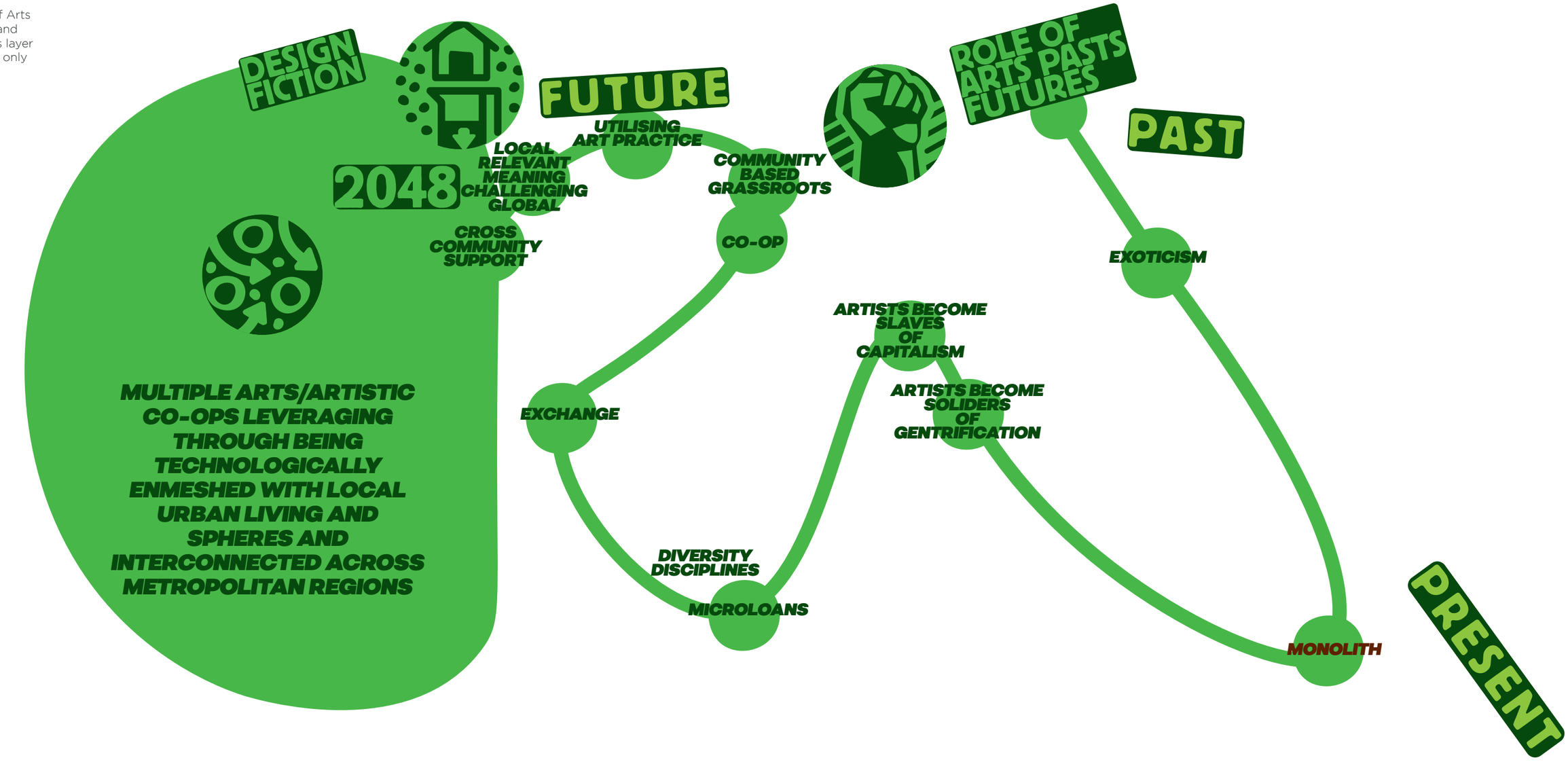
"Arts co-ops leveraging through being technologically enmeshed with and across local urban living spheres"

Interpretation of the group map focussed on the role of arts in futures and technology

The Role of arts pasts and futures is mapped here through conversations of the arts as they were embroiled in notions of exoticism. In the present this appears as a monolithic gaze perpetuated by the commodification of culture enabled by technologies. When used for exploitative purposes this is gathering in the future as artists becoming soldiers of gentrification and slaves of capitalism. So how might we redirect that? For this group, different economies of exchange are urgently required. Emerging technologies can assist this.

Blockchain, for example, might assist in trustworthy microloan systems. Disciplines might be better able to collaborate and build alliances through more efficient exchance platforms. Co-ops and other community based grassroot actions with arts practice as central might give localised economies resilient viability, while forcing new terms of a conversation with global economies. Cross community support through these platforms will also be easier. In summary, there is opportunity for multiple arts co-ops leveraging through being technologically enmeshed with local urban living spheres, yet interconnected across vast metropolitan and global regions.

Role of Arts pasts and futures layer shown only



Other General Yarning Debrief Transcription

“We are at a tipping point. We are going to have to do things differently and creatives have alot to contribute in painting the future differently, to bringing in ideas. That seemed to be something that was common in all of the stories.

There is a resistance to the idea that artists own creativity. Many people are creative, and we end up in this situation where we almost go back to that paternalistic thing if we don’t recognise that. So who is the artist? We have creatives in nursing, in health, in every field. It’s a thing about language I guess, and how we use it. Its come up a number of times during the day, do we need the word artist? Do we need this or that? We had a discussion about that the fact that it has already come up in curatorial practice. Indeed we’ve had videos curated today, lunch curated...at some point it becomes semantics.

There is a semantic thing here. The powerful thing about today (being transdisciplinary) is the neutralising of the semantics. The shifting in language as the day progressed in groups and teams and people coming together and finding a common language in which people can articulate some of these things. A big question arises here: Who has the responsibility to shift semantics? There is a tipping point. Who has responsibility for that change?

I totally bought the cyborg, that was a good marketing presentation! We are all ambassadors for change. We can work with influencers, we can all be influencers.

Creatives are in every industry. For example in hackathons the teams that started winning were the ones not full of developers but ones with vastly different experiences”.

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