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79

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Contents

Editorial

Open Debate

Designrama

Forum and Reviews

Design as/for Common(s): Decolonial Participatory Experiences for Post-Capitalist Resilient Future(s)

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Abstract
The catastrophic effects of the Anthropocene are evident. Manifestations of crisis are not only environmental, but also economic, social, political and ethical: combined with the dystopian imaginaries of the future, they suggest the need for a paradigm shift. The Commons are seen as an alternative for a transition to a post-capitalist economy. Yet, Design for social innovation is understood as a humanitarian action and remains linked to the logic of commodification; reason why some call for decolonizing Design from Western abstractions. The focus is on the relationship between Design and Commons, with particular attention to decolonial thinking. Following an action research approach that consisted in "inhabiting" the oasis of Chenini in Tunisia as a Commons in crisis, the idea was to understand the role of Design in the paradigm shift from an extractivist growth economy to a resource economy; Design as attached to situations rather than objects.

Capitalism & Crises: The involvement of Design

The latest report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2021) confirms that human activities have been responsible for global warming since the late 19th century, and that we have limited time to reverse the current trajectory to stay within the 1.5°C warming limit to avoid uncontrollable changes. The term Anthropocene refers to the current geological era, in which our species is the primary driver of global environmental change and the primary geological force on Earth (Crutzen, 2000). However, we should go beyond the geological specification of the Anthropocene to view our industrialised present as part of a much longer timeline in the planet's history. The crisis is not only environmental but also economic, social, political, and ethical, suggesting the need for a paradigm shift. In the context of the Anthropocene, Design is called upon to reinvent itself. It is at the centre of unsustainable production/consumption systems; however, in many of its contemporary forms, it aims to improve the habitability of the world as a projector or corrector (Bonnet et al., 2019). Papanek (1971) sounded the alarm about the need for responsible and sustainable Design. Theory and practice around social Design evolved since the 2000s, indicating a movement toward change in the Design practice (Manzini & Jegou, 2003; Margolin & Margolin, 2002; Meroni, 2007; Thorpe, 2010). However, Human-centred Design and Design Thinking are still intrinsically rooted in artefact-centred Design and solution-centred paradigms (Tonkinwise, 2015; Tunstall, 2013). Designers seem to maintain a dual posture of guiltiness and bipolarity when addressing the question of sustainability. They are trying to pursue a "socialist" and a "capitalist" practice at the same time (Vial, 2010). The idea of doing Design for the "good of others" became real but also lucrative (Taboada et al., 2020). Design for Social Innovation appears to be more about achieving a feel-good effect than actually producing meaningful political change. Elzenbaumer (2013) denounces such practices, which are devoid of a political sense, taking for granted the social problems that the designers want to solve, not questioning the broader global mechanisms that produce them. Fry (2010) asks how designers can be providers of care by transforming themselves into politicised agents of change.

Many are dissatisfied with the term Anthropocene, considering it to be reductive, because it evades the real question i.e. what policies can anticipate the catastrophe enough to keep our futures open. Alternative terms, such as Capitalocene, Eurocene, or Technocene (Moore, 2016; Sloterdijk, 2015) have been suggested to highlight the side effects of capitalism and technological advancements on the planet, which should be laid at the door of European civilization and its technocratic elite. It would therefore be necessary to learn to die — as a civilization — to adapt to this strange new world, have new ideas, new myths, and new stories, a new way of thinking about our collective existence beyond and against capitalism (Scranton, 2015). The unsustainability of capitalism as a system of endless accumulation and compound growth has been denounced by many scholars, claiming it would lead to collapse (Meadows et al., 1972; Klein, 2014; Harvey, 2017; Patel & Moore, 2017). Inequality, injustice, and unsustainability have clearly been aggravated by capitalism's

recent phase of accelerated expansion (Rockstrom et al., 2009; Piketty, 2014; Steffen et al., 2015). The fact is that neoliberalism is not in crisis; crises seem to play a constructive or even constitutive role under neoliberalism (Saad-Filho, 2019). The rise of neoliberalism and Design are inter-connected, as Design serves the dual purpose of producing commodities for sale and making social, economic, and political changes appear reasonable (Julier, 2017). However, Heskett (2017) argues that the neoclassical (neoliberal) economic approach and Design are incompatible in terms of the notion of value. Neoclassical economics fails to grasp the true essence of Design, which is concerned with pushing boundaries and envisioning the future and reduces it to a mere production of commodities. However, critical social engagement in Design is often sacrificed to meet market demands, highlighting the precarious qualities of Design within contemporary capitalism (Elzenbaumer, 2013). This would be due to a crisis of imagination, where all values are subordinated to the value of money, and where even creativity has been integrated into the capitalist imagination through the rise of the creative economy (Haiven, 2014) or what Harvey (2017) calls "cognitive Capitalism."

The decolonisation of imagination has been proposed as a means to challenge the paradigms of modernity and development, which are seen as instruments of colonisation perpetuating the culture of consumption and mass production that originate in a Western-centric worldview (Latouche, 2002; Shiva, 1989; Sachs, 1992; Escobar, 1995; Rahnema, 1997). Examining structures such as colonialism can help to creatively reimagine the social relations that have led to the Anthropocene. Mignolo (2009) calls this epistemic disobedience, which involves refusing modernity and the "illusion of the zero-point epistemology" (Castro-Gómez, 2005). It assumes that European colonialism exercised violence not only physically and economically but also epistemically. Design, as a product of modernity, reproduces these mechanisms and serves a homogenising ontology that negates the aesthetic, functional, and cultural values of non-Western Design, craft, and art traditions, acting as a collaborative and oppressive force that reproduces ideas through symbolic violence (Boenhert et al., 2016; Tlostanova, 2017).

The (Re)Emergence of the Commons & Utopia: Implications for Design

Haraway (2016) proposed the concept of Chthulucene as a way to learn to live and die in response-ability on a damaged earth, to replace the Anthropocene. The question for designers is how to approach the state of the Anthropocene. One possibility is for Design to recognize the structural unsustainability of human fabrication and start at the end (Fry, 2020), acknowledging the process of defuturing as a new Design philosophy. This would entail the negation of world futures for humans and non-human entities. It has been suggested that we are entering an era of mutual aid (Servigne & Stevens, 2015) where collapse may not lead to chaos but instead create conditions in which humans act altruistically. New materialist environmental movements (Schlosberg & Coles, 2015) are also challenging the status quo by building small systems that can better withstand future economic,

social, and ecological shocks. The Degrowth movement and the Transition Town Network are examples from the Global North, while in the Global South, the Buen Vivir movement (Merino, 2016), Via Campesina (Martínez-Torres & Rosset, 2008) and Ecological Swaraj (Kothari et al., 2014) are promoting alternative societal concepts based on pre-capitalism, peasant agriculture for food sovereignty and permanence. Sharing, simplicity, conviviality, care, and the Commons are the terms used to describe these alternative futures (D'Alisa et al., 2015). The Commons is recognized as a link between all these different narratives and visions of transition that attempt to think beyond the logic of development or growth (Escobar, 2015).

The concept of the Commons has been explored in three different themes: Common Pool Resources (Ostrom, 1990), New Commons, and activist/political Commons. Common Pool Resources refer to shared natural resources vulnerable to social dilemmas (Hess & Ostrom, 2007), while the emergence of the network society and the internet gave rise to the New Commons, which embraces free software and Creative Commons licences (Hess, 2008). The activist/political conception sees the Commons not as shared resources, but as a relational quality that promotes social, ecological, economic, and political change (De Angelis, 2017; Midnight Notes, 1990). The community economies approach challenges the conventional use of the economy and focuses on commoning as a process (Gibson-Graham et al., 2013). These perspectives may lead to a new attitude in designers. The emergence of movements around the Commons presents political alternatives that respond to the imagination of collapse. These initiatives call for a new attitude among designers, such as Denoual's (2020) proposal for a Designer "objectant" who adopts an active reflexive approach. Designers need to resist, to slow down and give people pause. Rigot and Strayer (2020) propose a return to the '70s, as a pivotal moment in the history of Design that offered a very relevant point of view for positioning Design and economy in the face of collapse. Through a re-evaluation of Meadows's report on the limits to growth and a re-reading of Maldonado and Papanek, they propose an idea of Design that involves an economy of resources and not of growth. Like a growing number of Design theorists, they emphasise the need for a rapprochement between economics and Design (Boehnert, 2018; Heskett, 2017; Julier, 2017). In this sense, new approaches in Design are emerging; the most interesting phenomenon is Design for Permaculture or better yet the Permaculture seen as a particular form of Design activism (Fuad-Luke, 2009). The connection between Design and Permaculture was most recently made clear (Cassel & Cousineau, 2018). Permaculture has influenced and inspired the Transition Town movement, which in turn has influenced the birth of Transition Design (Irwin, 2015). The new approach calls for compelling future visions as a requisite of societal transition, by reframing wicked problems, as a first step, within larger space-time contexts. As with natural systems, Transition Design acknowledges the importance of knowledge and a slow pace in order to achieve resilience. From the Global South, the Autonomous Design proposed by Escobar (2018) centres on autonomy and the realisation of the communal, where designers could play a constructive role in the ontological and political reorientation of Design as an element in the struggles for autonomy.

The Anthropocene and its crisis of imagination challenge designers to adopt new approaches that recognize and resist the destructive forces of modernity and embrace a more sustainable and equitable future. The notion of Epistemologies of the South (Santos, 2014) offers critical anti-colonial, anti-capitalist, and anti-patriarchal visions to challenge the dominant Eurocentric view of Design. A shift towards a pluriversal perspective requires rejecting the illusion of objectivity and neutrality underlying scientific knowledge, and the idea of "help" in Design for social innovation (Busch & Palmås, 2016; Nussbaum, 2010; Tunstall, 2013) as a means of perpetuating power imbalances (Freire, 1970), as well as a recognition of the diverse and complex social relations that led to the Anthropocene (Ansari, 2016; Fry & Willis, 2017; Tunstall, 2013; Vaszquez, 2017). This shift requires a refusal of modernity and the illusion of objectivity, neutrality, and detachment underlying the universality of enlightened scientific knowledge. Some authors argue that real creativity is a collective and common pursuit (Haiven & Khasnabish, 2014; Marttila et al., 2014; Teli, 2015; Teli et al., 2020). This alters the perspective of Participatory Design moving it towards new forms such as Speculative Design (Dunne & Raby, 2013) or Design in the service of prefigurative politics (DiSalvo, 2016). Recalling the notion of Radical Imagination defined as a "common imagination" (Haiven, 2014), this rooted Design would involve three temporalities: past (searching for Commons as a historical actuality held in common memory); present (recognizing, enhancing and defending even the undercurrent of today's Commons); future (acknowledging that the ultimate horizon for humanity beyond capitalism is the Commons).
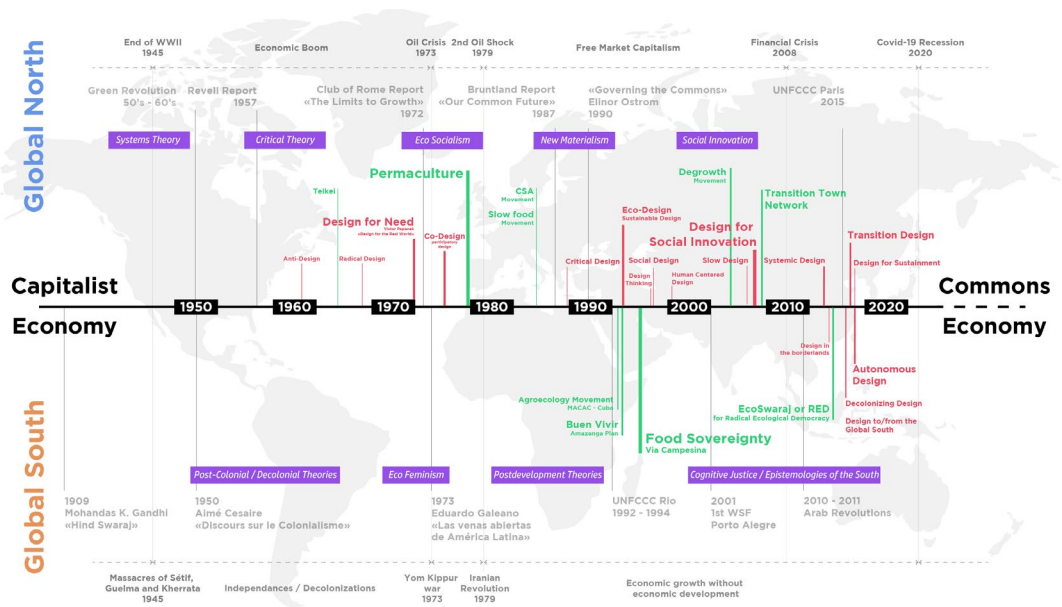
Fig. 1
New Materialist Movements and Alternative Design Practices in the Global North and South. Personal elaboration.

Environmentalism of the Poor and Food Sovereignty in Tunisia: The Oases Context

The Tunisian context was chosen as a sample from the Global South suffering the effects of Global Capitalism. Recent literature clearly links migration to the challenge of food security and climate change (FAO, 2018). Indeed, one could guess the beginnings of a political ecology in Tunisia (Robert, 2021) with the rise of environmentalist movements fighting for their livelihood.

This Environmentalism of the Poor (Martinez-Alier, 2002), would lead to inevitable ecological conflicts which are legion in Tunisia, around access to resources and the living environment. Several voices are calling for real change in the trajectory of the country's economic model, to reflect on new ways of developing the agri-food system, build food sovereignty and remedy the effects of dependent/exporting agriculture (Schwoob & Elloumi, 2018; Abidi & Riahi, 2019), thus moving away from the methods advocated by the Green Revolution.

The research has been interested in the specific contexts of oases as perfect illustrations of resilience and sustainability; they have been present for centuries and have been able to adapt to the many shocks (climatic, political, economic, etc.) that the region has experienced throughout its history (Cheneval & Michel-Queirel, 2015). Oases are sustainable spaces by definition, where the Commons are fundamentally a tradition and constitute a rich historical and cultural heritage. Today, oases are experiencing the effects of climate change, but also those of Global Capitalism, which have disrupted the social fabric around Commons. We can say that they are Commons/community economies in crisis.

We focused on the case of Chenini as a landmark of the social and environmental movements that have developed in Tunisia since the revolution. Chenini is located in the coastal area of Gabes, known for the pollution it suffers (and protest actions against it), caused by chemical fertiliser production, where farmers continue to preserve local seeds and perpetuate ancestral practices of flat cultivation. Considering the recent developments in the field of Design, we have tried to question its role through the analysis and direct application to the case of Chenini.

Fig. 2
Robert, D. Report in Gabes: Immersion in the heart of the citizen fight against pollution. Stop Pollution Protests in Gabes. Source: www.nawaat.com

Method

This research was conducted in the context of a Ph.D. research study and took into consideration the intricacy of all the themes mentioned above. I was not clear about an appropriate approach to adopt, however, I felt inclined towards several approaches: Participatory Design and its concepts of infrastructuring and commoning (Marttila et al., 2014); Transition Design (Irwin, 2015) for its idea of long-term intervention and visioning by providing a process for stakeholders to transcend their differences in the present by co-creating visions of a shared and desirable long-term future; Autonomous Design (Escobar, 2018) since it focuses on the struggles of communities and social movements to defend their territories and worlds against the ravages of neoliberal globalisation; Design for Sustainment and what Fry (2009) calls "dig where you stand"; or Prefigurative Design (DiSalvo, 2016), Design that could make political speculation easier to live, experiment with, and ultimately implement, where designers are not personally called to speculate, but can be called upon rather to enable speculation.

Interestingly, all of these approaches adopt a decolonial stance, which is undoubtedly the attitude taken during this field experiment. What I did know, however, was that there was no uni-versal method or tools to apply as advocated by the Human Centred Design (HCD) and Design Thinking approaches. I also understood that Design for Social Innovation tends to frame problems within relatively narrow spatio-temporal contexts (Irwin, 2018). To help see more clearly, I contacted several researchers in and outside of Design working either on the same theme of applying Design in relation to Commons or more broadly on the different Design approaches mentioned above.

My conviction was that people in the context I was visiting already knew the problems. The initial hypothesis was that the role of Design was to enable speculation and co-envisioned futures that were relevant to them. The idea was a priori simple, I did not know what type of Design to practise or if it would still be Design, but I knew that faced with the future climate risks in addition to the damage already perpetrated by the chemical industry in the case of Chenini (Gabes), it was undoubtedly necessary to envision new horizons. "Radical Imagination", "Epistemologies of the South" and "Situated Knowledge" could be conceptual notions acting as land-marks to fulfil such a project. The chosen approach was finally that of "inhabitation", inspired by Rogoff's reflection on how meaning is produced differently through the multiple relationships that are gen-erated when living through things (Elzenbaumer, 2013).

The research carried out a collaborative Design experiment rooted in the present, adopting a post-development/feminist line of thought. It took into consideration the concepts of "Radical Imagi-nation", "Epistemologies of the South" and "Situated Knowledge" as conceptual notions. Following an auto-ethnographic process , obser-vation, conversations and unstructured interviews were developed. The Ethnographic Experiential Futures (EXF) cycle (Candy & Kornett, 2019), a hybrid framework between futures studies and Design, helped to structure the intervention on the field.

Inhabiting the Oasis of Chenini

The stay in the city of Gabes lasted 5 weeks (from April 22 to May 29, 2021); people were coming out of a period of confinement and were required to respect a curfew imposed at 8 pm. These conditions played an important role in the organisation on the field. The bicycle was the most convenient means of transportation through the narrow tracks of the oasis. The first 4 weeks consisted of a series of bike tours where I went from meeting to meeting building up a substantial address book. I planned the meetings day by day according to the availability of each one.

The "ride" from Gabes to Chenini is about 7 km, which was quite practical to explore the oasis, and its different areas (urban, agricultural). Knowing the place, speaking the local dialect, and having family in Chenini (and in Gabes more generally) helped a lot to make the first contact. On the other hand, it was also complicated to maintain an objective distance during the different discussions. Very quickly, I met key people, active in civil society, who allowed me to understand the problems of the oasis in-depth and in a tangible way . I also met other researchers and activists who were interested in the case of Chenini, networking with local associations and institutions.

Therefore, while I saw all these people living their lives and fulfilling their activities, they saw me pursuing my research: meeting people, networking, and conducting interviews to explore the local culture and history of commoning practices in the oasis. Based on the conversations and stories of the past I had during the stay, I noticed that the oasis (and its water) were marked by two major events: the French colonisation in the first place, then the advent of independent Tunisia, and probably the most significant fact, the construction of the Tunisian Chemical Group (GCT). The elders recounted that during the French colonisation, Chenini was one of the bastions of the resistance and the last one to fall after Jara and Menzel. Chenini was strategic because of the water. Taking control of Chenini meant taking control of the water in the whole area and consequently taking control of the totality of Gabes. The French would have understood from the beginning the importance of water (which flowed at a rate of 700 L/s) in this region by forbidding digging or drilling in a radius of 30 km around Gabes. Elders also spoke of old practices of commoning such as "Raghata" (neighbours meeting on each other's plots to divide the work and go faster), "Kholleta" (a system of contributions to buy this or that commodity) and "Hassaba" (a system of sharing the meat in equal parts when slaughtering cattle).

When speaking about the past of the oasis and the question of solidarity, everyone agrees that it was better before. Before what? All of them situate the disappearance of water around the 1970s; just after the establishment of the Groupe Chimique Tunisien (GCT) in 1972. During the stay, I was able to discover a certain (albeit biased) history of water in Chenini and see the close links between this history and the ancestral practices of commoning and mutual aid. These practices were lost little by little after the introduction of the chemical industry in Gabes. In my opinion, Gabes and Chenini are simply the victims of the global capitalist system. As in all the peripheries, the local populations suffer the effects of extractivism and dispossession hidden in discourses of modernity and development (Federici, 2019)

After 4 weeks of Inhabitation, I identified the different actors in the territory using rapid ethnography, observation, and unstructured interviews; we followed Textor's (1980) Ethnographic Futures Research model (EFR), conducting a series of interviews to draw out participants' projections.

I also identified 5 recurrent problems:
1   Water scarcity and groundwater depletion
2   Land parcelling and the question of inheritance
3   Increasing anarchic urbanisation
4   Reluctance of young people to practise agriculture and loss of ancestral knowledge
5   Lack of coordination between the actors of the territory

Futur: Chenini 2050 Workshop
First Day: Discussing Issues and Challenges of the Oasis

The question was not to define the problems and to map them with their different levels of complexity, which the locals knew as much as we did, if not more. The workshop was rather about the transition of Chenini towards food and energy self-sufficiency by 2050, i.e., within a generation. This first day could correspond to the "critical phase" of a Future Workshop (Jungk & Müllert, 1987). We also had to take into consideration the barriers to dialogue between men/women and old/young people. We were aware that this first meeting was only the beginning of a long series of workshops to be organised in the future. The participants chose to sit in a semicircle in order to discuss and classify issues by importance but also to define responsibilities.

We thought it was appropriate to talk about the work of Meadows and the theory of collapse. The idea was to describe a possible future scenario of collapse and the risk of seeing the oasis disappear, given the increase of climatic risks in Tunisia and the MENA zone in general. This would correspond to the "map phase" of the EXF framework. We introduced the work of Gibson-Graham using the iceberg diagram, which is used to reframe the economy. We adapted the diagram to include all the ancient practices of commoning and mutual aid that the elders had told us about. The first day ended with the screening of a series of videos. This could in some ways correspond to the "multiply phase" of the EXF framework.

Future Workshop (FW)

(1) Critique Phase
Determination of the current problem
Collection of critique points

(2) Fantasy Phase
Turn critique points into the opposite (bad to good)
Performing a role play, fable, painting etc.to a fantastic story

(3) Implementation Phase
Choose best concepts/ideas with regard to realistic conditions
Build an action plan: Who does what, where, when and how?

Ethno.Exp.Futures (EXF)

(1) Map
Inquire into people's actual images of the future
EFR: What dou you (1) Want ; (2) Fear, (3) Expect?

(-) Multiply
Generate alternative images (scenarios)
to challenge or extend existing thinking

(2) Mediate
Translate these ideas about the future/s into experiences;
tangible, immersive, visual or interactive etc..

(3) Mount
Stage experiential scenario/s to encounter for
the original subject/s or others, or both.

Fig. 3
A combination between the Future Workshop and the EXF protocols. Personal elaboration.

We moved to the "fantasy phase" which could also correspond to the "mediate and mount phases" merged into one step. We summarised the talks of the first day and stated the points we had discussed, taking care, following the Future Workshop method, to turn them into positive points; turn critical points into the opposite (bad to good) as starting points.

In the "fantasy phase", the participants had to imagine a preferable future in light of the present and future constraints. Rather than focusing this phase on the creation of artefacts, we wanted to bring back to the forefront the ancient practice of "Khrafa" (the practice of telling tales) and the figure of the "Hakawati" (the storyteller) focusing on the oral aspect. Far from a rigid and serious exercise, the intention was to push the participants to imagine their future in a participative way. Each group took one of the 5 themes and developed a kind of story. This would be in line with the first phase of the Transition Design approach and the idea of co-creating visions of a shared and desirable long-term future.

Fig. 4
First day of the workshop.

Fig. 5
Second day of the workshop.

1 The first group to tell their story was the one that dealt with the theme "Young farmers and intergenerational dialogue". In 2050 the inhabitants of Chenini would have agreed on an "ethical charter" based on the principles of mutual aid and governing the passage of ancestral knowledge between generations and between genders, blurring the differences between young and old as well as between men and women. The first Hakawati told us the story of Chenini becoming a "Smart Oasis" where IoT would be used, of a soilless agriculture that would respond to the constraints related to the narrowness of the plots, of machines that would help farmers pollinate the palm trees, avoiding the risks related to climbing the trees in view of the numerous accidents that workers often suffer. This use of IoT would also allow more efficient control of the water level as well as energy consumption. This would also make it possible to establish a database that would provide the locals with a comprehensive and detailed view of the situation in the oasis. We spoke of pooling the production and natural resources of the oasis. The resources and the production surplus would be shared in an equitable way between the inhabitants of the oasis.

2 The second group dealt with the theme of "pooling of plots and large farms". In 2050, the inhabitants of Chenini would have voted for a law/agreement based on good faith and transparency to pool land. In order to circumvent the constraints linked to the inheritance of the plots, the different families (tribes) would have reached an agreement allowing the exploitation of the abandoned plots to provide work for the young unemployed. The plots would remain the property of one family or another and the owners would be able to reclaim their plot of land whenever they wished. The seed bank would be developed further to encourage organic farming based on ancestral techniques, which has become the rule throughout the oasis.

3 The third group chose the theme "Organised and ecological urbanisation". In 2050 the houses in Chenini would be built like the old houses of bygone days. We would have returned to old techniques by mixing them with new ones. They would all be built of local materials that are easily found in the oasis such as lime, gypsum, sand, clay, or the "terss", a type of local stone which was heated to extract a kind of paste used as cement. The "lifa" for example is used as a natural insulator for small 3-storey houses built on stilts. The lower floor would be dedicated to chickens, the second to family members and the third to guests and tourists. Chenini would indeed be a destination for the followers of ecological, social and solidarity tourism.

4 The fourth group dealt with the theme of water: "Water abundance and good governance". In 2050 the local population would have succeeded after long struggles to put pressure on the GCT and the cement factory but not to dismantle them; the GCT would pay a kind of tax in order to accept the burden of their ecological and social responsibilities. Civil society and the local people would have succeeded in for-

mulating a plea in collaboration with researchers and experts of different fields to this effect. GCT and the cement company would now be funding various local projects, including helping the GDA improve the irrigation network and set up a water desalination unit, as well as building a water harvesting system in the surrounding hills. The pressure on the water table having diminished, the latter would once again become a common good shared by all in a sober and equitable manner.

5   The last intervention dealt with the theme of "Coordination and complementarity between the actors of the territory". The discussion was short but thoughtful. There was a hint of irony that is difficult to translate, but I have tried to get as close as possible to the original Arabic text: "Once upon a time, there was a hungry, thirsty and grumbling people came the malevolent one saying, that Chenini was lost, it is inescapable… the *Bouhattmya* palm tree [was] high and proud, [alongside] the banana trees, plum, apricot and other peach trees… the associations were present and the *Rais Baladya* (the mayor) with them, in the name of our *Mloukheya* (Knotweed) and our wheat, here is our new *Tansikya* (coordination) named Chenini *El Beya* (the queen)! A *Mahallya* (local) initiative united around the el *Wahya* (from the oasis) women."

Outcomes

Through the perspectives of the Commons and Radical Imagination we were able to ideate in a collective manner. We thus confirm that although Design was born and developed in the consumer economy, a Design practice to re-prefigure a Commons economy is possible. Design has a potential role in activating (and reactivating) diverse economies and has at its disposal a large set of practices and methods. All the approaches we cited seem valid; indeed, what this experience on the ground has shown is the relative importance of tools and methods. What was more important was the ontological posture of the Designer, being engaged in a specific situation of struggle i.e., communities and social movements defending their territories from the ravages of neoliberal globalisation.

It is possible to identify 4 levels of intervention for Design when dealing with the Commons, following the model proposed by Manzini and Margolin on the relation between Design and democracy:

1   Design of Commons, involved in the institutionalisation of the Commons;
2   Design for Commons, involved in the creation of devices/tools/means for the practice of commoning;
3   Design as Commons, intended as a common good in itself;
4   Design in Commons, involved in the development of initiatives inside the context of commoning to enrich the debate.

We see this research as a continuation of the discourses addressed by the Transition Design and Autonomous Design approaches, bringing a practical experience in the context of the oasis of Chenini; it also goes under the provisional category of Design by/for/from the Global South (Fry, 2017). We were aware of the shift in the posture of the Designer; in practice, we were not at the centre

of the project, instead playing a critical role as a facilitator or catalyst (Mages & Onafuwa, 2019). Speaking of new ways of Designing proposed by the Transition Design framework, we recognized ourselves, as the experience unfolded, in the figure of the "Designer questioner". We relied on the different representations of the past, present, and future to try and help the inhabitants make their future "visible" with words. Words were very important throughout the process, as we were convinced of the importance of orality in the local culture and tradition.

Regarding the practices, three profiles of the Designer emerged:

1 The Designer historian is interested in the past and seeks answers and solutions to present and future challenges;
2 The Designer commoner, works for the deployment of a diverse economy focused on the development of new Commons and the defence of old ones;
3 The Designer futurist recognizes the prospect of collapse and participates with citizens and communities to Design such a future now through radical imagination.

A first tangible result of this research work is the recent constitution (February 2022) of the National Collective of the Oases of the Gulf of Gabes, which is proof that the practice of such a Design is possible. The most interesting evidence that emerged from this experimental activity is the possibility of generating together a new/old economic imaginary in order to ground resistance in place (Tonkinwise, 2015) in the here and now: a different perspective that can indicate a new path for Design research and carry out not a collaborative Design approach that is not just theorised, but actually rooted in the present and able to carry the involved communities and contexts into a feasible future.

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79

This issue focuses attention on circularity and sustainability in the design process. It does so by casting light on the Packaging System that we have taken as a paradigm for the system of contemporary commodities because it is the sum total of everything that is designed around the commercial commodity in order to unleash its potential exploitable value. Tatjana Karpenja and Clara Giardina, who bring with them different backgrounds and sensibilities, accompany us through this journey with vertical investigations, highlighting the state of research at the various international, European and Italian national scales, where an alliance is being formed between all the most prestigious universities that have invested in these themes.

      Meanwhile *diid*'s journey of evolution continues, expanding the number of colleagues who from around the world support us in our Scientific Board, seeking to grow together and to cultivate the scientific conscience of our contemporary design cultures.
Flaviano Celaschi