

2097: We Made Ourselves Over

Production Design brief

27 April 2017

Introduction

The films explore some possible changes in the next 80 years influenced by the ideas of ten experts and the people of Hull and Aarhus.

The five films and five app episodes are set in 2097 in a city that is a composite of Hull and Aarhus. In the 80 years between now and 2097 these cities have developed in some remarkable ways but they are still recognisably the cities we see today. They are as distant from today as 1937.

This world is decidedly not dystopian. It shows possible radical changes in society but this is a future that we might want to live in.

Reference points

The films have a gritty sense of everyday life that is realistic. The women and men we meet are recognisably similar to our current selves. Their clothing, their language, their diets, their homes are all grounded in contemporary experience.

For example, reuse and recycling is embedded in every corner of life. Materials are treated with care, they are often worn but are not discarded.

Pattern and colour are important to these people. Small decorative objects are treasured. Mobility and movement are much more central to everyday life so compactness and lightness are prized properties. Vehicles are barely used, seen as an affectation by most people.

This is a science fiction world rooted in everyday experience with a pace, stillness and rhythm to match. Alphaville by Jean Luc Godard and Stalker by Tarkovsky provide reference points for this. While some features of the world – the molecular harvester, for example – are surprising to our eyes, plenty of it is not.

Aarhull

The films are set in an imaginary north European city called Aarhull. Elements of both Aarhus and Hull are seen in the city. That the cities are combined is an imaginative leap inspired by The City Is The City by China Miéville.

Consciousness Transfer

The technology to capture consciousness has existed for a few decades now. Originally these were recordings of a person's memories, then it became possible to capture the synaptic connections and thus thought processes themselves. More recently, these consciousnesses became transferable, first via implants, then via laser pulses into the eyeball.

The sudden surge of 'personhoods' that resulted and the possible immortality for every person caused great social and psychological instability. Campaigns to stop the capture and/or prevent the transfer from one person to another were widespread. In this febrile atmosphere, a social norm emerged that has now become firmly entrenched: each consciousness is captured once at death and it is given to just one younger person, the 'nominate' before it is destroyed. Traditionally it is given from an older relative or mentor to a young person in their teenage years. Sometimes the consciousness will be stored until the nominate is old enough to receive it. It is stored on an elaborate, decorative object called a Fist. Following consciousness transfer some people keep the empty Fist, others bury it or destroy it, sometimes ritualistically.

The three decision makers

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In this part of the world giving power to younger people is common. As the nation state withered and cities acquired greater self determination, a proliferation of types of rule grew. In this city, the power to make decisions is given to three young girls. They are eligible as soon as they can show reason and they must step down before they can become corrupted. The girls are prized for their clarity, their fresh sense of moral purpose, their ability to side step entrenched ideas and customs. They sometimes choose to step down themselves; at other times a petition for a girl to step down is launched. In any case, it is studiously observed that if a girl takes someone else's consciousness she will step down before doing so. Once Hessa receives the Fist from Ariadne, she knows she will step down.

Rebuilding the city

Societies have struggled with inequality for centuries. In the mid 21st Century a consensus gradually emerged that radical measures would be needed to address this. Whatever was tried, existing inequalities soon reemerged. Once the system of three decision makers was established, the girls were determined to do whatever was needed to tackle this once and for all. Inspired by the [Shinto Jingu Shrine in Ise](#), they decided the whole city would be moved every 20 years to create a level playing field.

Given the unpredictable weather in the current seafront location and the rise of new building techniques made possible by molecular printers, there were many supporters for the idea. The movement started during the course of the films is the first time that this has happened.

Molecular Harvesters and printers

3D printing has developed to a molecular level and it is now possible to destroy any material molecule by molecule. Similarly it is then possible to print structures at almost any size using the reverse process. The harvester seen in the first film has been delivered to undertake the enormous scale of destruction required.

The vast molecular printers seen in the third and fifth films were also delivered (unseen) by the Molok.

The climate

Although we do not see the explicit impacts of climate change in the films, temperature rises have taken place. Weather is more violent and unpredictable. Sea rises have happened and adaptation has happened. Seafronts are no longer desirable places to live and only the poorest are left exposed to the sea, with wealthier people having decamped to the interior.

Clothing

People are dressed for hard and unpredictable weather. They are ready for a baking hot blast of sunshine and torrential, freezing rain coming off the sea. They come from generations of sailors, dockers and fishermen and women. They aren't put off going outside whatever the conditions; it's a source of pride and identity that they do so gladly. They love a cap, a headscarf, a neck scarf, boots, overshoes, gloves, gaiters to keep them protected. And they are ready to strip off their many layers without a thought as the weather shifts; putting garments into bags or pouches or around their waists or over their shoulders.

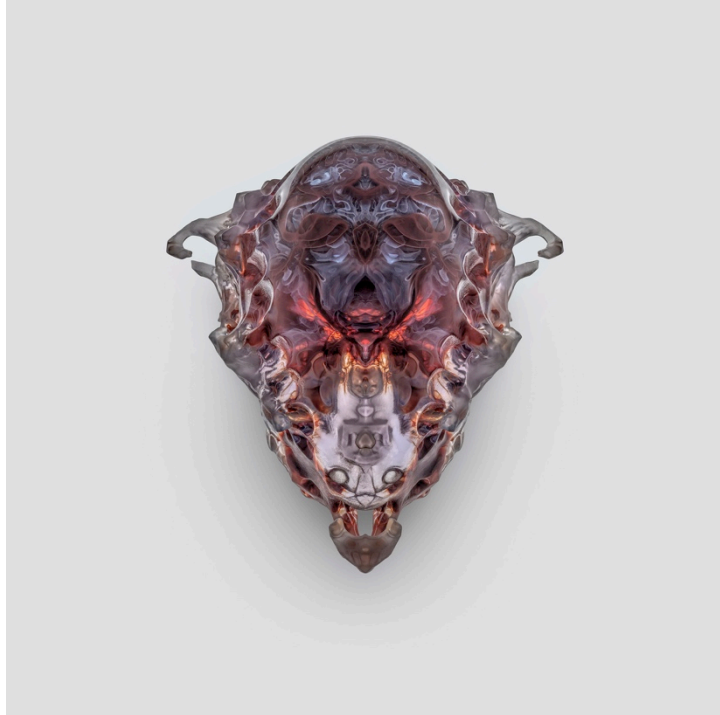
They love colour and high performance fabrics. Smart jackets are reminiscent of farming clothes from the 20th century or cycling wear from the early 21st. The younger people especially have a casual edge.

Reference Images

Film 1: Eternal data



Extreme example of seafront damage 1



Inspiration for the look of the Fist 1

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Film 2: Her last permit



EXT Decision making chamber 1



Looking out over the city 1

Film 3: The handover



Machines on the horizon 1



LOCATION: coal mounds, dock machines 1

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LOCATION: chemical plant in distance 1



LOCATION: jetty 1

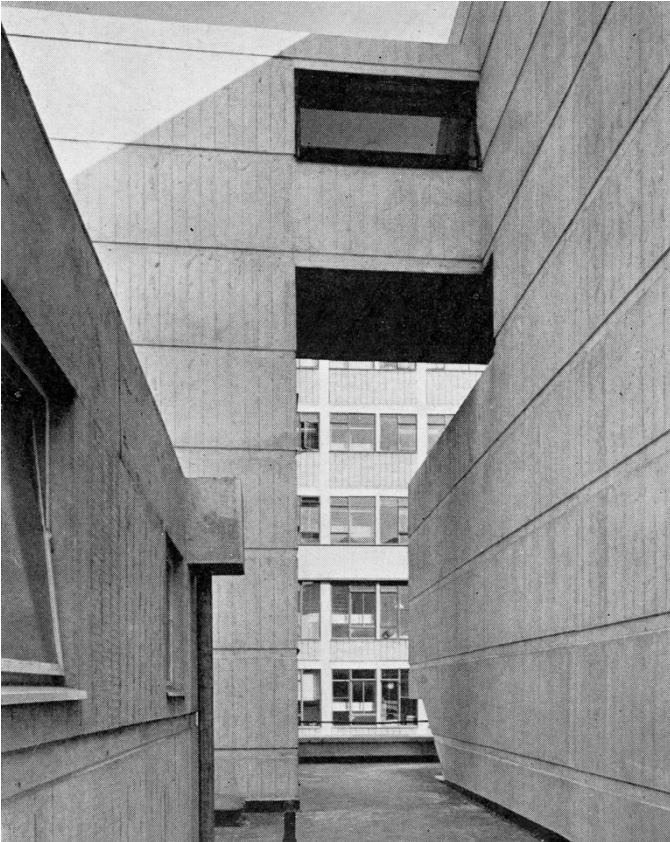
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Film 4: Got to go



LOCATION: bridge 1



Apartment block 1

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Film 5: A new city



New city 1

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New city 2



New city 3

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Travelling 1



Tarkovsky mist 1