



DOORS OF PERCEPTION XSKOOL 2001- (ONGOING)

A programme of place-based workshops in which diverse experts, together with project leaders from the bioregion, explore new opportunities and take a first step – such as a prototype or pilot – towards making a new enterprise happen <http://www.thackara.com/xskool/>

XSKOOLS SO FAR (@ 26 August 2018)

Back To The Land 2.0 Hjulsjö, Sweden

Our annual summer school with Konstfack, in Sweden, combines online work with a week on site in August at Hjulsjö community. We craft and test small actions to do with soil fertility, ecological and economic value, tactile & haptic food experience, biodiversity & food webs. We will ask: what actions are needed to support sustainable hubs in rural and urban situations? Is there a role for a more poetic form of activism in food systems?

<https://www.konstfack.se/Utbildning/Fristaende-kurser/Design-for-Sustainable-Co-Creation-75-hp/>

City-Rural Connections, Catania, Sicily

We led a short course called *City-Rural Connections* @Abadiracademy in Sicily as part of its Relational Design masters course. We identified diverse ways for city people to reconnect with rural places, and discussed the difference between *transactional* connections (such as different kinds of agritourism) and *relational* connections which involve a two-way exchange of value. The course combined an online element with a week in Catania.

<http://www.relationaldesign.it/modulo/city-rural-connections-en/>

Ecological Restoration by Design, South Devon, England

In the new 'leave things better' economy that is now emerging, ecological restoration will be an important new opportunity for planning and design. But what does this mean in practice? This workshop was for those seeking to understand the different ways that design can contribute to ecological restoration. Our group included the full range of disciplines that ecological restoration can involve - not only designers, architects and planners, but also geographers, ecologists, economists, and more. <https://www.schumachercollege.org.uk/courses/short-courses/ecological-restoration-and-design>

Pontio, North West Wales

John Thackara cast a fresh eye on the social, technological and ecological assets of the region in order to provoke a discussion: In what ways might Pontio Innovation act as a pollinator or seed disperser among the complex network of interactions in North West Wales? How would these new connections position the region as a living laboratory for territorial development? A follow-up to <http://www.doorsofperception.com/city-eco-lab/from-druids-to-biorefineries-innovation-in-a-small-nation/>

Back To the Land 2.0, Copenhagen

Together with Chora Connection, we ran a two day workshop in 2016 for 12 pioneering project leaders – real-world examples of how local living economies work. We started a new conversation about the fact that city and rural are dis-connected – and what to do about it. Chora is now planning a series of learning journeys on which pioneers will help each other connect with new partners: regions, municipalities, associations, guilds. <http://choraconnection.dk/event/english-2-day-workshop-with-john-thakara/>

Back To The Land 2.0, Stir To Action, England

Our weekend workshop was about new ways for city people to re-connect with the land—and how to make them happen. Ways that are part-time, but long-term. Ways that involve an exchange of value, not just paying money. Ways to share knowledge, land, and equipment in new ways. Ways based on historical links between town and country—but reinvented in an age of networks and social innovation. <https://www.stirtoaction.com/workshops/redesigning-back-to-the-land-john-thackara>

Bioregions by design, South Devon, England

A bioregion re-connects us with living systems, and each other, through the unique places where we live. It acknowledges that we live among watersheds, foodsheds, fibersheds, and food systems – not just in cities, towns, or ‘the countryside’. Together with Isabel Carlisle and Regenesi we helped to run a two week course at Schumacher College. <https://www.schumachercollege.org.uk/courses/short-courses/bioregionalism-by-design>

Ask Me Anything, Copenhagen

We were invited by the [Danish Design Centre](#) to run an “Ask Me Anything” workshop at Copenhagen’s latest creative innovation lab, Space 10. It was a thrill to follow in the steps of [Tomorrow’s Meatball](#). Our free-ranging discussion revolved around design thinking, business models, emergent technologies, disruption, complex challenges and sustainability.

The Futures of Seating, Oslo

The futures of work are being shaped by dynamically changing factors: nomadism and precarity; a mix of formal + informal work; technical disruptions; hackers and hubs; and new economic models. Together with [Transplant](#), we organised a two-day design strategy workshop for Scandinavia Business Seating.

Re-thinking urban mobility, Vienna

To develop a new story about Vienna, mobility, and infrastructure. this workshop featured the green city research group [Biotope City; Komobile](#), who design decision-support software for cargo bike systems; and [Cargo Bike Collective](#). Our hosts were [StadtFabrik](#) (City Factory) – MAK Vienna’s real-time research lab.

Wild work: connecting the social and ecological by design, San Francisco

An explosion of new economy models is surfacing all around the world: Sharing. Peer-to-Peer. Commons’ ownership. Mobility as a service. Bioregions. Local money. Transition Towns. Something is happening – but is there a pattern? John ran a week of workshops at [California College of the Arts](#), San Francisco (shown with [Leslie Roberts](#)).

Lab for Change Makers, Amsterdam

What is an economy actually for? Together with [deWaag](#), we invited social change makers, inventive life hackers and enthusiastic self-organized communities to explore the power of small actions to transform the bigger picture. <https://waag.org/en/event/meeting-john-thackara-lab-change-makers>

Next Steps In Service Innovation, Santiago, Chile

We ran a Pro-Am workshop on service design during the Service Design Congress held in 2015 at the Universidad Católica de Chile

School of the Moon, Alyff, Scotland

We ran a workshop with Clare Cooper from [Cateran’s Common Wealth](#) to help develop her School of the Moon project. We explored new ways for residents and visitors to connect with the ecological and cultural assets of ‘Big Tree Country.’ Our group included a blacksmith, a digital arts producer, a land owner, a raspberry farmer, a soldier turned master mead maker, an expert on the ecosystems to be found in dry stone walls, a service designer, an artist who makes outfits that disguise you as a rock, the tutor at a forest school, and a designer of water cleaning systems

Leathershed Lab, Bangalore, India

Together with our friends at the [Unbox Festival](#) in Delhi, and designer [Mansi Gupta](#), we went the heart of India’s largest leather-producing region. We discussed ways to develop products and

services that combine clean forms of leather making with direct connections between producers and customers.

Systems Thinking In Stockholm's Archipelago

Fifty designers, artists and architects spent a week at our Xskool on Grinda to explore two questions: What does this food system taste like? and, How does this forest think? One team performed the Soil Tasting Ceremony shown above; we were invited to compare the tastes of the teas and soils in silence. <http://thackara.com/transition-and-resilience/what-does-this-soil-taste-like-how-does-this-forest-think/>

Edible Campus, Växjö, Sweden

What would it take to transform a campus covered in hard surfaces into a resilient social-ecological ecosystem? Our Xskool at Linnaeus University, named after a founding father of ecology, developed-campus wide proposals for what could grow where, who would do what, and the business models to sustain this transformation across future generations.

Ecological Learning, Katoomba, New South Wales

Together with the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre, we brought together local government officials artists, designers, environmentalists, teachers, students, architects, tourism operators and business people. The outcome was a shared commitment to develop forms of tourism that involve ecological learning.

Informal Economies And Service Innovation, Barcelona

When Claro Partners hosted the first [Informal Economy Symposium](#) in Barcelona, we ran an xskool about the opportunities for service innovation in food systems.

Social Enterprise Hub, Fremantle, Australia

In Fremantle we explored practical ways to accelerate the growth of social micro-enterprises – with a special focus on the kind of hub, lab, or platform needed to sustain this kind of work through time. The highlight was a visit to Myre, a former department store now occupied by a thriving community of designer-makers.

Sustainable Tourism, Brisbane

We brought together (below) five eco-tourism businesses for a hands-on day that combined a lecture, brainstorm and service design clinic. For David Morgans, Queensland's Director Destination & Market Development, the day "helped me to seek opportunities outside the square for solutions & inspiration"

Ecotourism, Carinthia, Austria

For the Austria Tourist Board's [ATB Experience](#), we briefed 300 international delegates on emerging forms of eco-tourism from around the world. The cheese was freshly-made by the nuns who welcome visitors to a [16th century convent in Wernberg](#).

Living Systems Design, Grinda, Stockholm Archipelago

In what ways can design help people interact with living systems in ways that help both of them thrive? Our [xskool on the island of Grinda](#) was a partnership with [Konstfack](#) with the participation [KADK](#) in Denmark as part of the [FuturePerfect Festival](#)

Cycle Commerce As Ecosystem, Delhi

At the [UnBox Festival in Delhi](#) we brought together service designers, cargo bike designers, and city planners to explore practical steps needed to accelerate the growth of cycle commerce as an ecosystem

Service Design, Rovaniemi, Lapland

During Rovaniemi Design Week, we visited small and large companies to identify ways that service design can improve their work. In our coldest xskool so far, we discussed sustainable forestry with forest managers and experts from [Ponsse](#).

Food As Green Tourism, Ljubljana

For the Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region, our talk and workshop identified a short-list of new business opportunities in food and tourism at the scale of a bioregion.

Watershed Regeneration, Sao Paulo, Brazil

Together with Box1824, we organized a learning journey to favelas, organic kitchens, watersheds – and a creative digital hub. Our visit to a favela called Brasiliandia focused on ways to combine social enterprise with the regeneration of damaged local watersheds.

Food Systems, Istanbul

Growing The BioCity was a workshop for architects, city developers and planners. We developed proposals for new ways to share food knowledge between city and country.

Social Design, Ambedkar University, Delhi

One of India's newest universities occupies one of the country's oldest and most beautiful sites. We ran a faculty workshop to develop projects for AUD's new social design masters programme.

From Gated Lagoon to Bioregion, Venice

Together with a team of urbanists and ecologists from TU Graz, we ran a workshop in Venice around the proposition: *From Gated Lagoon to Bioregion*. Our report on the workshop is [here](#).

Soup + Bike + Service: Zurich, Switzerland

In Zurich Eco Lab we sought out grassroots social innovators and asked them: what aspect of your business could be improved with the help of service design? One of the green gems in the Zurich's ecology scene, Suppen und Pedale have grown their soup delivery business from 10 litres to 1,000 litres a day.

Living Systems, Dundee, Scotland

What happens when social innovation meets living systems in the city? Together with Dundee's [Fleet Collective](#), we gathered together the best projects from the city and asked: in what ways might service innovation help them do better? One of the highlights was meeting Dundee Urban Orchards.

Rural Hub, West Lexham, England

We took 18 social innovators to explore the concept of a rural enterprise hub at an old Norfolk farm. We cooked meals in a cob oven (below) met with local brewers, and built a path.

Rural Innovation, Bangor, North Wales

For an xskool entitled [Innovation In A Small Nation](#), we explored how a resilient economy can emerge in a region with one foot in a rural economy, its other in a world of universities and nuclear power.

Post-Car Mobility, Fiat Isvor, Sao Paulo, Brazil

In Brazil, we challenged forty designers and managers from Fiat Isvor to construct a manifesto on the theme mobility – with the instruction not to design any cars. They responded brilliantly!

Design And Permaculture, Angsbacka, Sweden

At the first [Future Perfect Festival](#), in Sweden, our conversations were face-to-face, not face-to-screen – sometimes in the permaculture garden.

Social Asset Hunting, Luzern, Switzerland

In an xskool event called [Asset Hunting](#), we sent young designers to find a neglected social or ecological asset somewhere in Luzern. One group developed the idea for a business that will enhance one church's revenues by opening it up to [bouldering](#) in the city.

Power Station As Social Hub, Iceland

During a [Who Needs Oil Road Trip](#) we explored new service ideas for *the* coolest new social hub – this disused electricity power station in Reykjavik.

Off-Grid Water, Stanford

Together with Stanford University's 'Design For Change' programme, we ran a professional design

clinic on the theme of “[off-grid water](#)”. It focused on entrepreneurs in the Palo Alto region who were developing tools to help citizens manage water sustainably.

City Eco Lab, St Etienne, France,

City Eco Lab was a two-week festival of projects that took place in 2008 in St Etienne, France. 80,000 people came to engage with participants in 50 projects that involved productive urban gardens; low energy food storage; communal composting solutions; re-discovery of hidden rivers; neighbourhood energy dashboards; de-motorized courier services; and a wide variety of software tools to help people share resources. The event was hosted by the St Etienne [Cite du Design](#); its designers were Exyzt and Gaëlle Gabillet. http://www.doorsofperception.com/archives/2008/11/city_eco_lab_su.php

Designs of the Time , Newcastle, North East England

In 2007 Thackara developed the content of [Designs of the time \(Dott 07\)](#), a year of community design projects in North East England that explored what life in a sustainable region could be like - and how design can help us get there. It was an initiative of the UK Design Council and a regional development agency, One North East. More than 200,000 citizens engaged with Dott, including 20,000 who came to the concluding two week festival on the banks of the River Tyne, and 15,000 school students who took part in Eco Design Challenge. <http://www.dotto7.com/>

Food systems: the design agenda, New Delhi,

Global food systems are unsustainable in terms of environmental impact, health, and social quality. Forty percent of the ecological impact of an 'advanced' city can be attributed to its food systems. But what to do? For [Doors of Perception 9](#) in 2007, John Thackara went to India in a search for inspiring new models and tools. The event was more of an expedition than a conference. During the day, Indian and international experts would visit markets, crocus farms, and street food culture. Each evening, we used these experiences to inform discussions of information systems; food miles; energy use; localization; Community Supported Agriculture. http://www.doorsofperception.com/archives/2007/03/doors_of_percep_7.php

Sustainable Daily Life Projects Clinic, Los Angeles

“What would life in a sustainable world be like?” Together with The Planning Center, Thackara organized this workshop in Southern California for grassroots organisations to share their experiences using creative ways to share resources: Jules Dervaes’ urban homestead, for example, was an inspiring example of a barrio-based economy that dealt with issues of land-use, group self-organisation, food coops, seed storage, and green jobs – to name just a few. Other highlights were Mud Baron’s edible schoolyards; Irene Pena’s community medicinal herb garden; the “place-based philanthropy” of Brian Bery; a ride-share scheme for 16,000 children in Orange Country. http://www.doorsofperception.com/archives/2009/01/sustainable_dai_1.php

Four Days Halifax Halifax Nova Scotia

In 2009, John Thackara co-produced Four Days Halifax - a time-compressed mini-festival whose aim was to help the city get its hands muddy in a green economy. Its starting point was that many elements of a resilient Halifax already exist in embryonic form - but not all of them are visible in their own backyard. The most important steps were to identify these local assets - people, mainly, but also projects and places; then, using a variety of event formats, we explored what practical steps might help these projects improve and multiply. Our partners were Breakhouse, a design firm, and The Hub Halifax. http://www.doorsofperception.com/archives/2009/06/four_days_halif_1.php

Interaction Design Institute, Ivrea

Thackara was a member of start-up team (and of the Steering Committee until the end of 2003) that established this new research institute in Italy, supported by an independent association of major private companies brought together by Olivetti and Telecom Italia. Thackara’s specific tasks were to help develop and articulate the institute’s basic concept and organisational form; define and articulate the roles of, and benefits to, industry sponsors; organize an international workshop of experts to refine the research programme; write job and person profiles for professors, researchers and students; create and implement launch phase communications and produce inaugural event; organize a workshop for researchers and industry on new business models for interactive products and services. For *Panorama*, the Institute is “a point of reference for the

generation of new ideas and a new design culture.” *Prestinzenza* called Interaction Ivrea “a model for the moribund Italian educational system”. And Francesco Gavazzi, in a cover story for *Corriere della Sera*, proclaimed that “at Ivrea, students design new ways of interaction between man and technology”.

Design Task Force, Hong Kong

Thackara was the expert advisor to the Hong Kong Design Task Force (chair: Victor Lo) which developed a new innovation and research policy for the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. The task force plotted the best way for Hong Kong and China to move up the value chain from a product-based to a service-and-flow based economy. Following the report, Hong Kong launched a "DesignSmart" initiative with the creation of a HK\$250million (25 million euros) fund.

Convivio: a new vision for Social computing, European Union

We were responsible for vision building in *Convivio* – an EU network for social computing whose members include such leading universities and companies as Xerox, King's College London, Philips, Deutsche Forschungszentrum für Künstliche Intelligenz, Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, Consorzio Roma Ricerche.

Virtual Platform, Rotterdam

Thackara served until 2006 as a member of this advisory group to Dutch government on new media cultural policy. <http://www.virtueelplatform.nl/>

Time In Design, Delft, NL

If the throw-away society is over, how do we design for longevity in products and services? Eternally Yours, a Dutch foundation, organised a round-the-clock, 24-hour event in 2003 to look at this timely question. Eighty different projects, case studies and scenarios - all dealing with time in design – were presented. The event experimented with a range of formats and tempos - from one-minute films, and 100-word lectures, to slow-food dinners and leisurely fireside chats. Doors of Perception, and The Long Now Foundation, supported the event by helping with speaker selection and publicity.

Quality time at high speed? Breda, NL

The High Speed Network Platform, an association of 15 European regions, and Urban Unlimited, a planning firm, asked Doors of Perception to organise, in 2003, a cultural expert workshop on the theme, “quality time”. What would it mean to design for fast *and* slow speeds? Today’s high speed train (HST) travel is a marvel of speed and profligate resource consumption. It is transforming the experience of space and time of 13 million travellers who already use it each year – and of citizens who live in places where the trains deign to stop. The outcomes included project ideas for services and situations that connect people, cultural resources, and places, in new combinations.

Design and local knowledge, Bonholm, Denmark

The Bonholm Rooster, a superior kind of chicken, is a star product on "Food Island". So is the legendary white salmon, a ghostly creature that passes quietly by this misplaced Danish island (it sits between Sweden and Poland) only in winter months. This desolate but fertile spot was the location in 2004 for the final workshop in Spark!, a service design project in response to the question: when traditional industries disappear from a locality, what is to take their place? (Nexo, on Bonholm, is one of dozens of Baltic and European fishing ports where industrial fishing has become unsustainable). A conference in Oslo reviewed the lessons learned in this experiment, reflected on the concept of "territorial capital", and begin the design of new projects for the future. <http://www2.uiah.fi/virtu/spark/conference.html>

Want to be a design metropolis? Montreal, Quebec

What is a design metropolis? Should a city aspire to become one? This symposium (which was supported by Doors of Perception in 2004) cast a critical eye over the policies and programs of Montreal, Saint-Etienne and other aspirant design cities, and compared them with established international design capitals. Francois Barre (France) and Saskia Sassen (United States) together with John Thackara were keynote lecturers

Amsterdam Medical Centre (AMC)

Thackara was a member until the end of 2004 of a four person think-tank developing concepts for

its Director of a next-generation national childrens hospital

Schiphol Airport, “Air-To-Farm”, Amsterdam

Thackara contributed to a service design workshop for the Board of Schiphol Airport, and the Council of Haarlemmermeer, to develop new services to be delivered by the airport, the region and local entrepreneurs. With Urban Unlimited.

Creativity and the City, Amsterdam

An international conference in 2004 on "Creativity and the City" was held in Amsterdam's former gas works, Westergasfabriek - the latest urban project to transform a former industrial site into a public and cultural amenity. We supported the event with speaker suggestions and advance publicity and a keynote lecture, “The Post-spectacular City” which has been widely cited. <http://www.creatievestad.nl>

For 1000 professors – life in the learning economy, AMSTERDAM 2001

How will we learn when knowledge changes so fast? Will there still be a role for teachers, when students can learn for themselves? These questions faced 1,000 university teachers at Oro/Oro: TeachersLab, a unique event organised in January 2001 by the Hogeschool van Amsterdam (Amsterdam University of Professional Education). Our role was to organise a three-day conference which featured 36 Dutch and international speakers from inside and outside education. Each of the three days has a theme: ‘Seeking and Finding’; ‘Editing and Interacting’; ‘Teaching and Earning’. <http://www.oro.hva.nl>

[Travel Without Moving](#) (Design clinic on ‘sustainability immobility’ at Pixelache Festival, Helsinki, 2009)

[Eco Design Challenge](#) (Schools’ sustainability competition, North East England, 2006-2007)

[Platforms for social innovation](#) (Doors of Perception 8 on “Infra”, New Delhi, 2005)

[Mobility, Geography, Access](#) (DoorsEast2, Bangalore, India, 2003)

[Interaction Design Institute Ivrea](#) (Helping set up a new institution, Ivrea, Italy, 2000-2003)

[Post-spectacular tourism](#) (Eco-tourism workshop, Narva-Joensuu, Estonia, 2002)

[The design challenge of pervasive computing](#) (Doors of Perception 7 on Flow, Amsterdam, 2002)

[Life in the learning economy](#) (conference for 1,000 professors, Amsterdam, 2001)

[Quality Time at High Speed](#) (Service innovation workshop, Breda, The Netherlands, 2000)

[Local knowledge: the design and innovation of tomorrow’s services](#) (DoorsEast 1, Ahmedabad, India, 2000)

[Doors of Perception 6 on “Lightness”](#) (international design conference, Amsterdam, 2000)

[Design Clinic for Entrepreneurs](#) (Workshop, Highlands and Islands of Scotland)

[E-Culture Fair](#) (Marketplace of new media prototypes and research projects, Amsterdam, 2000)

Design clinic for entrepreneurs, Inverness, Scotland

The Highlands and Islands Development Board, in Scotland, exists to help hundreds of small and medium sized companies, over a very wide geographical area, innovate new products, services, and business models. We helped their Inverness office stage design scenario workshops in which entrepreneurs from different companies helped each other envisage radical scenarios and how they might be implemented.