[ij]

idea journal

idea journal

**fictions, fantasies, and fabulations:
imagining other interior worlds**

vol. 19, no. 01

2022

about

idea journal recognises interiors and interiority as an emerging, discursive, and interdisciplinary field of research concerned with conceptual, material, and social relationships between people and environments. It identifies the study of interiors and interiority as necessarily expanded and non-canonical, derived from the confluence of knowledge distributed across many spatially oriented design, art, and architecture fields. Promoting the production of new knowledge and critical practices of interiors and interiority, *idea journal* provides a space of scholarly engagement for text- and visual-based research. *idea journal* serves an international academic, professional, and student readership and welcomes contributions from those involved in bolstering theoretical and creative discourse.

www.idea-edu.com

The objectives of IDEA are:

1. Objects

3.1 The general object of IDEA is the advancement of education by:

(a) encouraging and supporting excellence in interior design/interior architecture/spatial design education and research globally and with specific focus on Oceania; and

(b) being an authority on, and advocate for, interior design/interior architecture/spatial design education and research.

3.2 The specific objects of IDEA are:

(a) to be an advocate for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at a minimum of AQF7 or equivalent education in interior design/interior architecture/spatial design;

(b) to support the rich diversity of individual programmes within the higher education sector;

(c) to create collaboration between programmes in the higher education sector;

(d) to foster an attitude of lifelong learning;

(e) to encourage staff and student exchange between programmes;

(f) to provide recognition for excellence in the advancement of interior design/interior architecture/spatial design education; and

(g) to foster, publish, and disseminate peer reviewed interior design/interior architecture/spatial design research.

membership

Institutional Members:

Membership is open to programmes at higher education institutions in Australasia that can demonstrate an on-going commitment to the objectives of IDEA.

Current members:

AUT University, Auckland
Massey University, Wellington
Monash University, Melbourne
Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane
RMIT University, Melbourne
University of New South Wales, Sydney
University of South Australia, Adelaide
University of Technology Sydney, Sydney
Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington

Affiliate Members:

Affiliate membership is open to programmes at higher education institutions in Australasia that do not currently qualify for institutional membership but support the objectives of IDEA. Affiliate members are non-voting members of IDEA.

Associate Members:

Associate membership is open to any person who supports the objectives of IDEA. Associate members are non-voting members of IDEA.

Honorary Associate Members:

In recognition of their significant contribution as an initiator of IDEA, a former chair and/or executive editor: Suzie Attiwill, Rachel Carley, Lynn Chalmers, Lynn Churchill, Jill Franz, Anthony Fryatt, Susan Hedges, Roger Kemp, Tim Laurence, Gini Lee, Marina Lommerse, Gill Matthewson, Antony Pelosi, Dianne Smith, Harry Stephens, George Verghese, Andrew Wallace, and Bruce Watson.

IDEA
Interior Design/
Interior Architecture
Educators Association

idea journal editorial board

Dr Julieanna Preston, Executive Editor, Professor of Spatial Practice, Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand

Luke Tipene, Lecturer, School of Architecture, University of Technology Sydney, Sydney, Australia

external advisory panel

Dr Lilian Chee, SDE, National University of Singapore, Singapore

Dr Helene Furjan, Westphal College of Design, Drexel University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Vlad Ionescu, University of Hasselt, Belgium

Tiiu Poldma, University of Montreal, Canada

Dr Jana Scholze, Kingston University, UK

Peter Thule Kristensen, Royal Danish Academy, Denmark

cover image

Nonsensical Virtuality, 2022, digitally rendered collage, Sophie Forsyth

copy editor

Madeleine Collinge Publishing Services

design + production

Dr Ir Renske Maria van Dam

correspondence

Correspondence regarding this publication should be addressed to:

Dr Chris Cottrell
Chair IDEA
chris.cottrell@monash.edu

this issue's provocation

While the world reels, reconfigures, and recovers from the drama and trauma of 2020, wishing to thwart the effects of grief and comprehend what was once incomprehensible, there is all good reason to turn our imagination to 'what ifs', dreams, and other speculations as an antidote to hopelessness. This issue, *Fictions, Fantasies, and Fabulations*, calls for contributions that consider the unlikely, improbable, or downright impossible in spatial design. In recent history, fictions, fantasies, and fabulations have offered productive opposition to the rampant instrumentality of pragmatism and functional planning. Their impact has instilled optimism, sparked alternative visions, and been sites of countless critiques of conformity and the status quo. Loosely defined impulses towards the unrealisable and the most illogical of things approached in the most logical of ways have led to unparalleled episodes of creativity in drawings, poems, and material production. From Piranesi, Peter Greenaway, Kurt Schwitters, Dora Maar, Hans Op de Beeck, Ursula Le Guinn, John Hejduk, to Daniel Libeskind, explorations of the impossible have led to new interpretative frontiers that move the limits of interiority and spatial practices. Lest we forget or become complacent with the contributory and often unrecognised impact of contemporary social media, advertisement, and technological surveillance that continues to shape interior worlds, experiences, and values. In many ways, there is as much focus on unpacking, making sense of, and disproving the dangerous impacts of fictions, fantasies, and fabulations as there is on setting the scene for dreams and magical realities.

This issue recognises the complex story of fictions, fantasies, and fabulations in spatial design, not as counter-productive forces, but as the necessary counter-balances that offer liberty from convention, propriety, and rational assumptions about behaviour, space, time, and material — the core elements of interior worlds. Far from retreating into solipsistic escapism, fictions, fantasies, and fabulations serve as crucial sites for speculative invention, futuring, and critical reflection. Resistant to the reductive inertia of pragmatism, these generative properties reign in that mercurial shadow world of meaning and value not directly associated with cause and effect.

This call for papers and projects is intended to frame an open examination and exploration of the fictions, fantasies, and fabulations in spatial and interior practices. It prompts us to draw, write, perform, and record the critical edge of the unrealisable in an era that has literally experienced the limits of reason. As described by poet Franny Choi, there is no more time for poetry without stakes because 'people are literally dying'. There is no more time for creative practices that don't ask questions that we 'truly don't know the answer to'.[01] Choi's sentiments air a sense of urgency for relevance as much as they point to the value and agency of poetic meaning and making in artistic, spatial, and interior practices.

reviewers for this issue

Charles Anderson, RMIT
Jen Archer-Martin, Massey University
Thea Brejzek, University of Technology Sydney
Daniel Brown, Victoria University Wellington
Rachel Carley, Auckland University of Technology
Lilian Chee, National University of Singapore
Chris Cotrell, Monash University
Christina Deluchi, University of Technology Sydney
Helene Furjan, Drexel University
Olivia Hamilton, RMIT
Susan Hedges, Auckland University of Technology
Ed Hollis, University of Edinburgh
Cathryn Klasto, University of Gotenburg
Linda Matthews, University of Technology Sydney
Belinda Mitchell, University of Portsmouth
Tiiu Poldma, University of Montreal
Remco Roes, Hasselt University
Jana Scholze, Kingston University
George Themistokleus, Leeds Beckett University
Peter Thule Kristensen, Royal Danish Academy
Jiangmei Wu, Indiana University

01 https://www.youtube.com/
    watch?list=PLYUdgQtOLXIc7HW
    Ic3nBH7VNNvt5hDTA&v=iwoS-
    -CB7k8&ab
    channel=PBSNewsHour

in this issue

imagining a more inclusive world: notes on difference, disability, and space in *the shape of water*

Ann Heylighen
KU Leuven, Research[x]Design
0000-0001-6811-3464

Daniel S. Friedman
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
0000-0003-0102-5819

abstract

Fiction can stimulate empathy toward others by deepening sensitivity to difference. Pragmatist philosophers like Richard Rorty and John Dewey consider imaginative capacity the root of empathy and promote fiction as a source of ethical insight. Understanding others who are different is fundamental to designing more inclusive spaces. Based on these connections, we explore how *The Shape of Water* illuminates the current discourse on inclusive design, particularly how design practices influence encounters between and among diverse bodies and environments. *The Shape of Water* is a non-trivial, award-winning, commercial film about the inter-species romance between a mute janitor, Elisa Esposito, who works in a top-secret, 1960s military research facility, and her love interest, the captive Amphibian Man, a tall, green, biped, bi-respiratory humanoid. We explore the film's ethos as a speculative (even magic) 'realm' in which excluded individuals find agency and power in their very marginalisation and exclusion. This is most evident in its depictions of mutism and non-normative communication, which inspire fundamental reformulations of the nature of otherness and disability in relation to the material environment. We address both the film's narrative action and its scenography, with interest in how production design embodies the protagonists' exclusion and agency. *The Shape of Water* illuminates the discourse on inclusive design in multiple respects. First, through narrative depiction of individuals' interactions and lives, it demonstrates how divisions between 'us' and 'them' materialise in objects and spaces, and how differences considered a deficit in one context may manifest as an advantage in another. Second, through the agency of magical realism, the film invites us to explore the potential of spaces that accommodate such a/symmetry through environmental hybridity. Finally, while social and material environments are are known to disable or enable, *The Shape of Water* represents how they interact, highlighting the role of everyday design(ers) in making spaces more inclusive.

[ij] vol.19, no.01   fictions, fantasies,   research essay   ann heylighen   imagining a more inclusive world: 76
2022   and fabulations   daniel s. friedman   notes on difference, disability, and
space in *the shape of water*

beginning in the middle

The way he looks at me. He doesn't know what I lack … Or how I am incomplete. He just sees me for what I am. As I am. And he is happy to see me, every time. Every day.

— Guillermo del Toro and Vanessa Taylor (2016)[01]

Midway through *The Shape of Water*, the film's chief protagonist, Elisa Esposito, a mute woman in her early thirties, desperately signs to her next-door neighbour and friend, Giles, a gay, lovelorn commercial artist, who translates as she gestures. Elisa begs Giles to understand that her prospective lover, Amphibian Man, sees her as she really is, free from the prejudicial assumptions that often accompany perceptions of people unable to speak. Difference is the crux of this unconventional love. Strictly speaking, Amphibian Man is not human, but rather a sentient, river-dwelling humanoid, held captive in a top-secret 1960s US military research facility, where Elisa works as a janitor.

The romance between Elisa and Amphibian Man is the love story at the heart of Guillermo del Toro's film. Based on a screenplay he co-authored with Vanessa Taylor,[02] *The Shape of Water* earned nominations for thirteen Academy Awards, winning Oscars in four categories: Best Picture, Best Director, Best Original Score, and Best Production Design.[03]

The film has attracted interest from scholars in various academic domains, not least because of its representation of otherness and disability.[04] While this representation is also what drew us to *The Shape of Water*, our analysis focuses on what the film can teach us about designing more inclusive spaces.

In this work-in-progress, we explore the ethos of *The Shape of Water* as a speculative 'realm' in which excluded individuals — mute, gay, black, poor — find agency and power in their very marginalisation and exclusion. Its depictions of mutism and non-normative communication inspire fundamental reformulations of the nature of otherness and disability in relation to the material environment. Our analysis therefore addresses both the film's narrative action and the diverse spaces that accommodate it, with attention to how the director crafts production design to reflect the protagonists' exclusion and agency. We further explore how the film illuminates current discourse on inclusive design,[05] particularly the way today's design practices influence the encounter between and among diverse bodies and environments. After sketching the background of our analysis, we highlight three themes: a/symmetry, hybridity, and everyday design; and we connect these themes to selected real-world artefacts and spaces.

[ij]

vol.19, no. 01
2022

fictions, fantasies, research essay
and fabulations

ann heylighen
daniel s. friedman

imagining a more inclusive world:
notes on difference, disability, and
space in *the shape of water*

77

otherness, fiction, and inclusive design

Together, Elisa and Amphibian Man constitute what legal scholar Aviam Soifer calls 'a category of individuals much feared, manipulated, and discriminated against throughout our history.'[06] Problems of discrimination, exclusion, and inequity involve a diverse spectrum of perceived differences that people regard negatively. Besides bodily differences, western society identifies differences related to age, class, education, employment, gender, health, and race, but problematises only some of their features. For example, in the case of human beings, the inability to see ultra-violet light is considered neither a lack nor a difference worth anyone's concern.[07] The inability to *speak*, however, represents a noticeable, often exclusionary deficiency — at least among speaking people. Such negatively valued differences form the basis of 'othering', that is, the establishment of divisions between an 'us' and a 'them.'[08]

Although established by people, such divisions are materialised in the fabric of objects, spaces, and buildings. When architects or other designers anticipate future use, too often they build deeply habituated assumptions or under-examined hypotheses into the materiality of their designs, frequently based on their own day-to-day experiences and implicit aesthetic bias.[09] The last fifty years have seen important efforts to encode rights to accessibility in policies that govern architecture and other design domains.[10]

Yet, studies show that even well-considered legislative measures are insufficient to produce truly inclusive environments.[11] On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), American architect Karen Braitmayer pointed out that an architect's or designer's compliance with the letter of the ADA is not the same as their internalisation of its civil rights goals. We align with Braitmayer's argument that what remains for architecture is 'to lift itself into the next realm.'[12]

Of equal value to existing policy and social theory is insight offered by ethical and moral references articulated through fiction — novels, poetry, plays, and film.[13] American philosopher Richard Rorty advocates for novels based on their unique power to render alternative realities without the encumbrance of specialised academic vocabularies and parochialism. 'Something that has actually worked' to eliminate 'the cruelty to which human communities treat one another,' Rorty argues, 'is identification across boundaries by imaginative projection.'[14] He builds upon the work of philosopher John Dewey, who considered imaginative capacity the root of empathy. Dewey used the terms interchangeably, calling imagination empathic projection and defining empathy as 'entering by imagination into the situations of others.'[15]

[ij]   vol.19, no. 01   fictions, fantasies,   research essay   ann heylighen   imagining a more inclusive world: 78
2022   and fabulations   daniel s. friedman   notes on difference, disability, and
space in *the shape of water*

Research in psychology suggests that engaging with fiction indeed may help navigate the real social world by improving one's social-cognitive ability.[16] Meta-analyses of studies in this area show that frequent fiction reading not only *correlates* with higher scores on empathy and theory of mind — the ability to think about others' minds[17] — but causally *improves* social-cognitive performance.[18] Engaging in fiction's simulative experiences can facilitate understanding others who are different and can augment people's capacity for empathy and social inference.[19]

Understanding others who are different is fundamental to inclusive design. Although inclusive design thinking has evolved differently in different contexts, the common ambition is to accommodate the widest range of people possible.[20] According to Professor of Engineering Design P. John Clarkson and Professor of Inclusive Design Roger Coleman, this ambition derives from two premises:[21] first, 'there is such considerable diversity in mental and physical capability both across the population and over the length of the life-course that the association of "normality" with "able-bodiedness" is neither accurate nor acceptable'; second, 'disability arises from interactions with the surrounding environment that are amenable to design and structural interventions, and not inherently from capability levels, health status, or associated degrees of impairment.'[22]

The latter premise resonates with contemporary understandings of disability. Whereas traditional conceptions consider disability as an individual physiological disorder, situated in a person's body, more recent social-relational models conceptually distinguish between impairment — a bodily dysfunction — and disability, which is socially constructed on top of that.[23] By placing the explanation of its changing character in the organisation of the society in which it is found,[24] including the spaces shaping that organisation, these models recognise the two-way relationship between a disabled person and their socio-material environment.[25] Conceiving disability not as an attribute either of a person or environment but as an effect implies a shift from static to dynamic understanding: 'disabled is not something one is, but something one becomes.'[26]

More recently, inclusive design has evolved towards a wider understanding of diversity beyond age and ability, including aspects related to cultural and social differences;[27] gender;[28] sexuality;[29] and their varied intersections.[30] Together, these developments in the scholarship on human diversity have progressively shifted the focus in inclusive design 'from THEM—the elderly and disabled in academic parlance—to the US.'[31] It is this shift that forms the background for our analysis of *The Shape of Water*.

[ij]

vol.19, no. 01
2022

fictions, fantasies,
and fabulations

research essay

ann heylighen
daniel s. friedman

imagining a more inclusive world:
notes on difference, disability, and
space in *the shape of water*

79

a/symmetry

> *zich als een vis in het water voelen*
> [feel like a fish in water]
>
> be in one's element,
> feel (perfectly) at home
>
> *like a fish out of water*
>
> als een vis op het droge,
> niet in zijn element
> [like a fish out of water,
> not in one's element]
>
> — van Dale (2022)[32]

In *The Shape of Water*'s screenplay, del Toro and Taylor introduce inter-species relationships to familiar asymmetries of power characteristic of othering.[33] Amphibian Man (Doug Jones) is a towering, green, biped, bi-respiratory humanoid, worshipped by indigenous Amazonian tribes as a god. He possesses supernatural abilities, including the power to heal grievous wounds, restore hair, and raise the dead by touch. He is kidnapped by Richard Strickland (Michael Shannon), a sadistic, cattle prod-wielding Army intelligence officer, whose superior, General Hoyt (Nick Searsy), orders a vivisection against the advice of Dr Robert Hoffstetler (Michael Stuhlbarg), a lab scientist who is secretly a Soviet spy.[34] Elisa Esposito (Sally Hawkins), a lonely, lowly, mute janitor with mysterious, gill-like scars on either side of

her throat, falls in love with Amphibian Man. She succeeds in freeing him, thanks to the assistance of her gay next-door neighbour, Giles (Richard Jenkins), and her protective black co-worker, Zelda Fuller (Octavia Spencer). What excludes Elisa, Giles, and Zelda in their work and homelife — ableism, racism, sexism, and homophobia — also strengthens their courage and solidarity. Amphibian Man's supernatural abilities and the narrative action that flow from his captivity and liberation frame an alternative ethics of immediate relevance to contemporary realities beyond cinema, to which del Toro makes continual reference through poetic layering and skilful juxtaposition of speech, imagery, history, and popular culture.

communication

> But you cannot use persuasion if you cannot talk. No imagination, no language. No linguistic change, no moral or intellectual progress.
>
> — Richard Rorty (2004)[35]

The Shape of Water shows that attributes negatively valued in one context may be positively valued in another, and vice versa. For example, among the many representations of 'otherness' in the film — class, gender, race, sexual orientation — the one that drives the central storyline is the inability to speak. Elisa's mutism is generally considered to be a deficit; even her trusted neighbour Giles

offhandedly notes, 'my best friend is not much of a … conversationalist.'[36] Yet within the filmic universe of del Toro's magical realism, her mutism becomes a kind of super-ability, an ability that 'exceeds a norm.'[37] Having adapted effective and expressive methods of alternative communication, Elisa exhibits sensitivities and insights that transcend conventional speech. She engages Amphibian Man through signing, enriched with a 'syntax' of fluid gestures and actions, eye contact, facial expressions, music, and dance.

From her first encounter with Amphibian Man, Elisa seems transfixed by the sounds emanating from the steel-reinforced tank that staff deliver to the research facility. She establishes trust by setting hard-boiled eggs on the edge of the small laboratory pool, where his captors keep him chained. Amphibian Man shyly takes the eggs, then quickly learns from Elisa how to sign them, along with signs denoting the music she plays for him on her portable turntable.[38] Their correspondence continues and intensifies. Elisa brings yet more records and more eggs, signing back and forth with Amphibian Man, inviting him to choose among the albums she presents to him; soon they respectively dance and swim in happy unison to the sounds of Benny Goodman's 'Moonglow.'[39] Elisa presses her open hand against the glass; Amphibian Man replies in kind. 'Her smile turns wistful,' the screenplay notes. 'She keeps her hand there. Leans her forehead against the glass';[40] Amphibian Man responds by activating and changing the colour of his phosphorescent, piscine markings.

Unbeknown to Elisa and Amphibian Man, Dr Hoffstetler observes their romantic exchange while hiding in the shadows of the lab. Caught off-guard by their effortless communication, he recognises Amphibian Man's extraordinary, even 'human' qualities. Hoffstetler excitedly reports to his handlers: 'this creature … may be able to communicate with us … I have reason to believe,' he adds, that Amphibian Man 'is intelligent. It … responds to language [and] to music.'[41] Later, in his role as lab scientist, he objects to the creature's vivisection. 'Sir,' he says to General Hoyt, 'you cannot — under any circumstances — kill this creature. You cannot';[42] and to Strickland, the film's principal antagonist, he pleads, 'I don't want an intricate, beautiful thing destroyed. The creature — and I am certain of this — is intelligent. Capable of language, of understanding — of emotions.'[43]

accommodation

Besides Elisa's interaction with Amphibian Man — the social context — the material context likewise affects what constitutes a significant lack. In this connection, disabilities studies scholar Alison Wilde and co-authors wonder: 'Is "mutism" Elisa's most significant impairment or is it her inability to breathe under-water?'[44] As they point out, the three scars on each side of her neck suggest that her natural home may have been aquatic. When Strickland interviews Zelda and Elisa, he inquires about Elisa's name: 'Doesn't Esposito mean "Orphan"?' Zelda replies, 'They found her — by the river — in the water.'[45] Moreover, Elisa's melancholic demeanour and outsider status suggest

[ij]

vol.19, no. 01   fictions, fantasies, research essay   ann heylighen   imagining a more inclusive world: 81
2022   and fabulations   daniel s. friedman   notes on difference, disability, and
                                                                               space in *the shape of water*

that, in her human life, she is literally (like Amphibian Man) 'a fish out of water'. Finally, while Amphibian Man makes no attempt to cure Elisa of her mutism, during the film's violent and tender conclusion, as they float upright in the water, the touch of his webbed palm heals her gunshot wound and opens her scars to reveal the gills she needs for her aquatic 'rebirth'.[46]

The fact that material contexts affect what constitutes a significant lack also characterises the mise-en-scène of *The Shape of Water*, which unfolds during the peak of US/Soviet military tensions in the 1960s. At that time aerospace research and nuclear proliferation were strategically indistinguishable. To extrapolate the effects of weightlessness on human physiology, the US and Soviet Union launched animals (dogs, monkeys, chimps) into orbit. The film's storyline builds on the aggressive military competition over control of Amphibian Man. Once fully understood, the creature's ability to alternate between two separate breathing mechanisms represents a strategic advantage. General Hoyt orders Strickland to expedite a vivisection: on terra firma Amphibian Man is no more than a lab rat; in outer space he is a military 'asset'.[47]

Clearly, the American and Soviet military personnel in the story regard Amphibian Man as a sub-human 'monster'. As creative writer Alberta Natasia Adji notes, 'monsters' represent a favoured topos in del Toro's filmmaking — the *Hellboy* franchise, *Pan's Labyrinth*, *The Devil's Backbone*, *Pacific Rim*, among others.[48] The word 'monster' derives from the Old French, *mostre*: 'prodigy, marvel'; and earlier, by antiphrasis, 'something extraordinary or unnatural; an amazing event or occurrence', evolving only later into the meanings 'disfigured person' and 'misshapen being'.[49] Its current definition denotes 'a mythical creature that is part animal and part human, or combines elements of two or more animal forms, and is frequently of great size and ferocious appearance'; more generally, it means 'any imaginary creature that is large, ugly, and frightening'.[50] And yet its Indo-European root, *men-*, etymologically connects it to the word 'demonstrate', which means 'to show clearly [and] deliberately', from the Latin *monstrare*, 'to show', from *monstrum*, 'divine portent', from *monere*, 'to warn, advise', arguably the meaning with the deepest history and structure, and greatest relevance to del Toro's use of 'monsters' as thematic tropes.[51]

[ij]

vol.19, no.01
2022

fictions, fantasies, research essay
and fabulations

ann heylighen
daniel s. friedman

imagining a more inclusive world:
notes on difference, disability, and
space in *the shape of water*

82

hybrid beings, hybrid spaces

FADE IN:

INT. ELISA'S APARTMENT /
RIVER FOOTAGE – NIGHT.
We float at the bottom of a river.
Surrounded by water
Fish swim away.
Debris floating in the water –
And, then, a lamp floats by –
A coffee pot –
A shoe.

— Guillermo del Toro
and Vanessa Taylor (2016)[52]

To the floating lamp, coffee pot, and shoe,
the opening scene of del Toro's final cut adds
end tables, dining chairs, a clock, a watch,
and an antique daybed. Above these objects
floats the slumbering Elisa, in repose under
a marbled shaft of light, whose hair behaves

as though underwater but whose pillow,
which she tenderly hugs, behaves 'normally,'
that is, subject to the gravity of its terrestrial
context. We find ourselves adrift in the depths
of a hypnopompic hallucination, the type of
vivid dreams human beings experience when
transitioning from sleep to consciousness.
As she and the objects surrounding her
slowly descend into their 'normal' terrestrial
configuration, del Toro's oneirically underwater
environment gives way to a conventional
apartment, which we soon learn occupies an
old storeroom originally designed for the aging
movie palace immediately below. The waking
narrative begins when Elisa's alarm clock
sounds, followed almost immediately by sirens
wailing outside her apartment window, which
glows red as fire trucks rumble past along
the street below. Before leaving her makeshift
apartment for work, Elisa boils some eggs, fills
her tub to the brim, sets an egg-shaped timer,
disrobes, slips into the bath water, then 'goes
to work on herself, gently, slowly.'[53]

Figure 01.
Inside Elisa's dream, opening scene,
from *The Shape of Water*
(del Toro, 2017).

[ij]

vol.19, no.01   fictions, fantasies, research essay   ann heylighen   imagining a more inclusive world: 83
2022   and fabulations   daniel s. friedman   notes on difference, disability, and
                                                                             space in *the shape of water*

In this opening scene, which foretells the trans-zoomorphic, inter-species love story about to unfold, del Toro skilfully introduces the 'magically real' interior atmosphere of the story, including and especially Elisa's 'otherworldly' character and emotional motives. For the film's sets and scenes, he creates 'monstrous spaces', spaces that both show and warn. The spaces of *The Shape of Water* are therefore hybrid in nature, like its principal protagonists, who possess neither purely aquatic nor purely terrestrial bodies; rather, they are supernatural beings who inhabit supernatural space by virtue of supernatural physiology, perception, and sensoria. Del Toro synthesises the properties of one environmental regime with the properties of the other. In the spirit of magical realism, he does not add them together or integrate them so much as reconceptualise them as a continuity within the protagonist's unconstrained subconscious. Her dreams and memories seem to suggest a prior incarnation, a deeper truth about her mutism, the origins of the scars on either side of her neck, and her true identity.

The supernatural hybridity of the opening scene contrasts sharply with the top-secret military facility near Baltimore's industrial waterfront where Elisa works, which del Toro renders as an oppressive, almost carceral space. Later, at work, in the course of their janitorial duties, Zelda and Elisa enter a laboratory concealed by what the screenplay describes as a 'slaughterhouse-like' door marked 'T-4'; the lab is crowded with military personnel, scientists, and technicians, busy servicing the room's massive machinery, tanks, pools, industrial pipes and ducts, and related hydrological infrastructure.[54] As Wilde et al. note, 'T4' is also the name of a notorious WWII Nazi campaign resulting in the institutionalized murder of over 250,000 physically or mentally impaired German citizens, through a programme of involuntary 'euthanasia', precursor to the unimaginable holocaust soon to follow.[55]
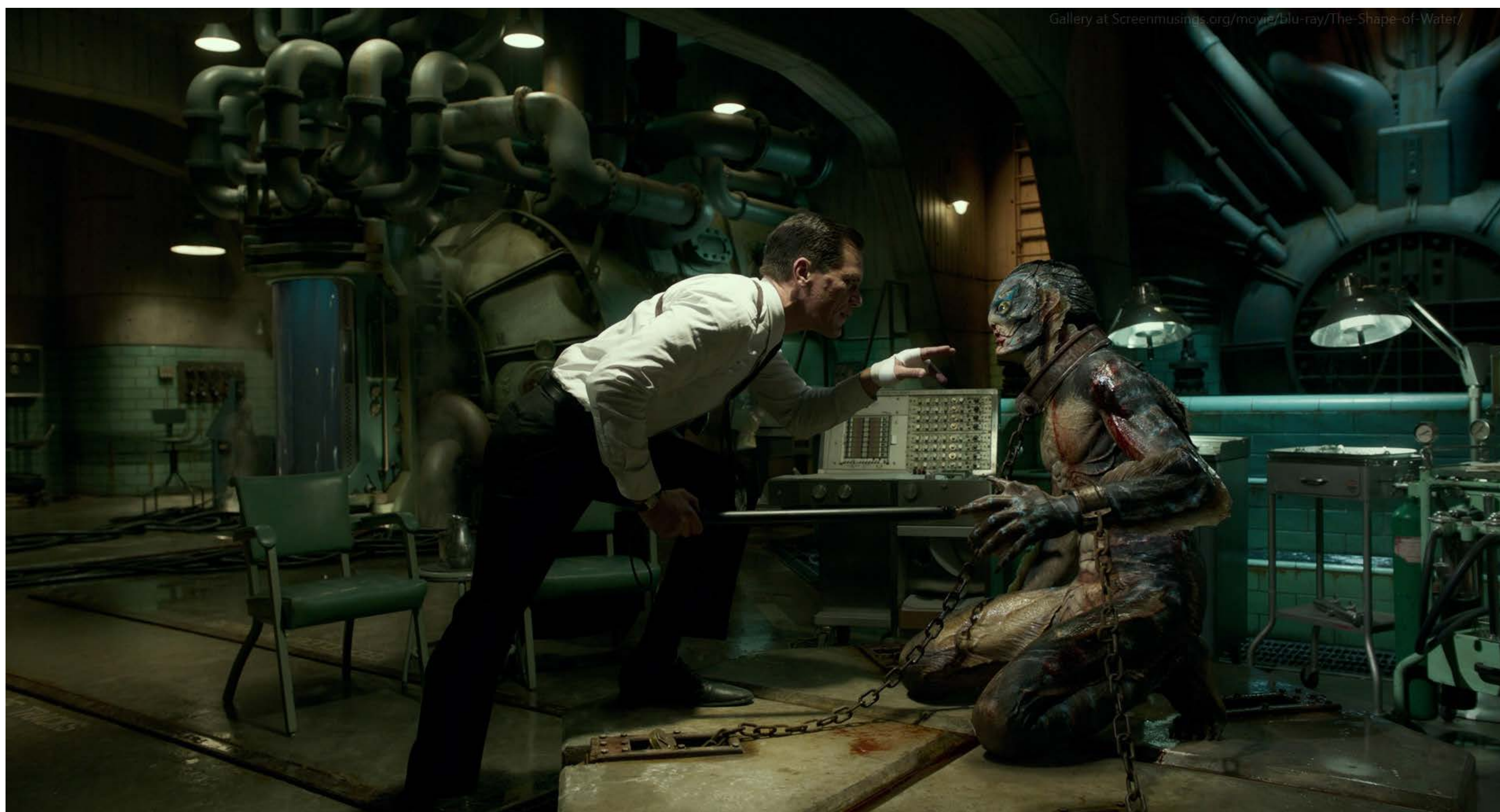

Figure 02.
Strickland torments Amphibian Man in T-4, from *The Shape of Water* (del Toro, 2017).

[ij]

vol.19, no.01
2022

fictions, fantasies, research essay
and fabulations

ann heylighen
daniel s. friedman

imagining a more inclusive world:
notes on difference, disability, and
space in *the shape of water*

84

everyday design

> GILES.
> […] There's
> nothing we can do. What are we,
> Elisa? You and I? Nothing. What can
> we do? Nothing.
> (beat)
> And – I am sorry. But it is not even
> human.
>
> She trembles in rage as she signs.
> Subtitled: 'If we don't do
> Something … Neither are we.'
>
> — Guillermo del Toro
> and Vanessa Taylor (2016)[56]

So far, we have highlighted how del Toro illustrates the relationship between othering and material context, e.g., aquatic versus terrestrial, orbital versus grounded environments; and how he employs imaginative set design to accommodate the protagonists' otherness/hybridity, e.g., by reconceptualising commonplace environmental regimes in the dreamlike opening scene. Besides demonstrating the force of his own imagination, however, del Toro also shows the agency and creative power of thoughtful characters in this connection: he shows how in performing day-to-day activities and fulfilling social roles the social and the material *interact*.

Del Toro and Taylor populate *The Shape of Water* with vivid examples of interdependent relationships, individuals taking care of each other regardless of whether they have an 'impairment'. Indeed, the film's stereotypical antagonists, brutes and bigots, target Zelda for being black, Giles for being gay, and Elisa for being mute; yet courage, interdependency, and kind-heartedness prevail. Consider how Zelda translates Elisa's sign language: 'I answer mostly, on account that she can't talk,' she explains to Strickland;[57] or how she takes care of her husband: 'Then I get home and I make him breakfast. Bacon and eggs and buttered toast. I butter the man's toast, Elisa. Both sides — As if he were a child.'[58] Likewise, Elisa tends to the needs of Giles as though he were a relative or spouse. 'Oh, darling child,' Giles says, when she brings him a plate of food. 'I'd waste away to nothing without you looking after me. I am the proverbial starving artist am I not?'[59]

Of particular significance for inclusive design, however, is how individuals take care of each other as 'everyday designers' of their material environment. While design is traditionally associated with professional designers, design scholars increasingly note that design does not stop when an object, space, or building leaves the drawing board; people creatively act upon objects and environments to adapt, appropriate, and redesign them or, alternatively, repair, repurpose, and resource them.[60] In doing so, they engage in ongoing design through use.[61]

[ij]

vol.19, no. 01
2022

fictions, fantasies, research essay
and fabulations

ann heylighen
daniel s. friedman

imagining a more inclusive world:
notes on difference, disability, and
space in *the shape of water*

85

A form of 'everyday design' that plays a central role in *The Shape of Water* is the practice of cleaning.[62] The janitor (from the Latin *janua*, door, entrance) is the caretaker of the building, who guards portals and surfaces against the effects of use — dirt, dust, grime, wear and tear. Janitors stand at the outside of activities; their duty is to sweep the floor and care for the ground. Strictly speaking, janitorial work is perpetual. We call janitors and the kind of work they do 'maintenance' (from the Latin *manure tenere*, to hold in one's hands). Roof leak? Call maintenance. Lost keys? Find the janitor. True to form, it is Elisa who finds Strickland's two severed fingers floating among the suds of the bucket of water she uses to douse the blood-soaked floor of T-4, after Strickland's continuing attempt to torture Amphibian Man backfires.

It should come as no surprise that del Toro elevates a janitor and her co-worker to the status of heroes, who by skill and cunning subvert Strickland's and Hoyt's power. Maintenance presupposes continuation and sustenance. Janitorial work derives from acts of cultivation, like soil preparation, plant care, or farming (the word 'culture' comes from the word meaning 'to cultivate', not unlike the way Elisa uses eggs to cultivate trust with Amphibian Man). Del Toro and Taylor express the irony of this inversion of power in a key dialogue. Toward the film's conclusion, when Hoffstetler lies dying, shot by his own comrades, Strickland tortures him for the names of the 'strike team' that

helped Amphibian Man escape. 'Names! Ranks! Now!' Strickland brutally commands; Hoffstetler laughs through his pain in reply: 'No names, no ranks, they ... they just *clean*.'[63] As literary scholar Michel de Certeau notes, 'Tales and legends [are *repertories of the schema of action*] . . . The formality of everyday practices is indicated in these tales, which frequently reverse the relationships of power and, like the stories of miracles, ensure the victory of the unfortunate in a fabulous, utopian space. This space protects the weapons of the weak against the reality of the established order . . . [T]hese "fabulous" stories offer their audience a repertory of tactics for future use.'[64]

Cleaning springs from clearing. Cleaning therefore re-enacts a return to beginnings, the recovery of a prior or original condition, which resonates with the mystery of Elisa's 'gills'. Each night the maintenance crew comes in, clears away the sediment of the day's activity — dust, debris, trash, smudges, or, in the case of *The Shape of Water*, flesh and blood — and restores or renews the building, noting any items for replacement or repair. Few activities embody architecture's theoretical origins and responsibilities more fundamentally than everyday acts of clearing and beginning anew.[65]

Beyond their work as janitors, the film's central characters engage in everyday design by using and transforming objects and environments in ways not necessarily

[ij]   vol.19, no. 01   fictions, fantasies, research essay   ann heylighen   imagining a more inclusive world: 86
          2022   and fabulations   daniel s. friedman   notes on difference, disability, and
                                                                                               space in *the shape of water*

intended by their (professional) designers. A phone becomes usable for Elisa thanks to Zelda's inventiveness: 'Elisa, honey, you gotta listen to me, make a sound in the phone if you can hear...'[66] The terrestrial environment becomes liveable for Amphibian Man thanks to Elisa, who (with the help of others) adjusts it so generously to his needs. She keeps the water in the bathtub at 75 to 85 percent salinity and adds algae to the bathwater every three days as instructed by Hoffstetler, who has been transformed after secretly witnessing the love expressed between Elisa and Amphibian Man. Elisa eventually designs a way to temporarily help Amphibian Man by sealing the door and filling her entire bathroom with water:

The tub's filling up.
The creature watches.

She opens and closes the HOT/COLD faucet. Tests the water.

She takes the box of algae that Hoffstetler gave her. She opens the box. She gets an idea. Smiles and looks around the bathroom.

— opens the faucet on the sink.

The sink overflows

She takes the towels — sealing the cracks — and uses a towel to stuff the space between the door and the floor. The water continues to run — […]

Elisa is floating, naked, next to the Amphibian Man — now the entire BATHROOM is immersed in water.

She embraces him — Eyes closed, feeling him underneath her and the water on her face. His markings move rhythmically like a melody.

She intakes and holds.

As the water goes above her head.

They float underwater. Contemplating each other.

— Guillermo del Toro
and Vanessa Taylor (2016)[67]

[ij]   vol.19, no.01   fictions, fantasies,   research essay   ann heylighen   imagining a more inclusive world: 87
2022   and fabulations   daniel s. friedman   notes on difference, disability, and
space in *the shape of water*

Figure 03.
Elisa and Amphibian amorously
adrift in Elisa's bathroom, from
The Shape of Water (del Toro, 2017).

navigating the real world

The insight that othering materialises in
architecture and interior design, and likewise
that the material environment can be disabling
or enabling, are not new: social-relational
models of disability have been out there
for several decades.[68] What *The Shape of
Water* adds, however, is first a different way
of communicating these insights, that is,
through narrative depiction of people's (and
other individuals') interactions and lives.[69]
Second, while scholarship on othering argues
that differences considered a deficit in one
context may be an advantage in another, this
film imagines *how* this may be the case —
see, for example, del Toro's aforementioned
representation of aquatic versus terrestrial
environments. Finally, while writings on social-
relational models of disability acknowledge
the disabling/enabling role of the social and
material environment, *The Shape of Water*

foregrounds how these two factors interact,
thereby highlighting the role of everyday
design(ers) in making environments more
inclusive.

In this connection, the film's narrative mode
and content hold great promise to facilitate
understanding of how different people and
environments interrelate.[70] The storyline
and scenography can be understood as
bringing Rorty's and others' ethics to life as
a kind of 'therapeutic philosophy', a form of
'low cunning' more authentically tool-like
and useful in its application to the design of
inclusive environments than high-minded
moralising or legislative measurements.[71]
Although derived from human consideration,
designers too often experience these
measurements as restrictive, compromising
their creativity and discouraging imaginative
design solutions.[72] In contrast, through the

[ij]

vol.19, no.01
2022

fictions, fantasies,
and fabulations

research essay

ann heylighen
daniel s. friedman

imagining a more inclusive world:
notes on difference, disability, and
space in *the shape of water*

88

agency of magical realism, *The Shape of Water* invites its audience to reimagine the world within an alternative context, and to explore the potential of accommodating a/symmetry creatively. Its central characters' otherness is accommodated, on the one hand, by del Toro's own imagination — the way he reconceptualises environmental regimes through the realistic depiction of dreams and imaginative scenography, including, for instance, the costume design of Amphibian Man and the gill slits on Elisa's neck.

On the other hand, it is accommodated through the agency and creative power of thoughtful characters who perform day-to-day activities and fulfil social roles, whether by cleaning and maintenance or by creatively repurposing and adapting ordinary objects and environments. In the tradition of celebrated Latin American writers and filmmakers, such as Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel García Márquez, Isabel Allende, and Alfonso Arau, del Toro 'commingles the magical and the real, the supernatural and the natural, which, in turn, illuminate aspects of the world that may have been previously hidden […]. By fusing seemingly divergent or contradictory elements the narrative mode entices […] to explore a third space, which is hybrid in nature because of "the purely natural way in which abnormal, experientially impossible (and empirically unverifiable) events take place"'.[73]

What motivated us to analyse *The Shape of Water* is the claim — advanced by pragmatist philosophers and psychologists alike — that engaging with fiction may help navigate the real world. Therefore we would be remiss not

to offer — by way of epilogue, and however briefly — at least some indication of how the film's invitation may relate to real-world professional and everyday design(ers).

The potential of creatively accommodating a/symmetry, for example, is already recognised by parents putting together a Halloween costume for their disabled child. Usually, other children do not know what to make of their child's condition, yet turning a wheelchair into a magical chariot, *Thomas the Tank Engine* or a *PAW Patrol* fire truck makes them genuinely jealous: 'This is epic. This is the costume I wish I was in.'[74] Expressions of hybridity — in effect, a 'third space' — can be found in a treehouse designed by a team at the University of Michigan's Taubman College of Architecture.[75] Differences between children with limited mobility and other users are minimised through an array of body prosthetics, including harnesses, ropes, tracks, and race car seats: 'Everyone entering the treehouse uses these prosthetics to be "launched" 22 feet into the air, leaving wheelchairs and other terrestrial implements behind.'[76] In another example, the Multisensory Museum at Van Abbe in Eindhoven (the Netherlands), an art exhibition space co-designed by architects and disabled people, minimises the differences between people in wheelchairs and other people. Its designers create a space that invites all visitors to experience the art from a seated position. The walls guide visitors towards seating alcoves positioned to orient museum visitors slightly towards one other, in a circle around the artwork that can be completed by visitors using a wheelchair.[77]

[ij] vol.19, no.01   fictions, fantasies, research essay   ann heylighen   imagining a more inclusive world: 89
      2022   and fabulations   daniel s. friedman   notes on difference, disability, and
                                                                                   space in *the shape of water*

Figure 04.
Craig VanLaanen, Treehouse and Woodland Retreat in Mayville, Michigan, 2004. Collage: Kristine Synnes.
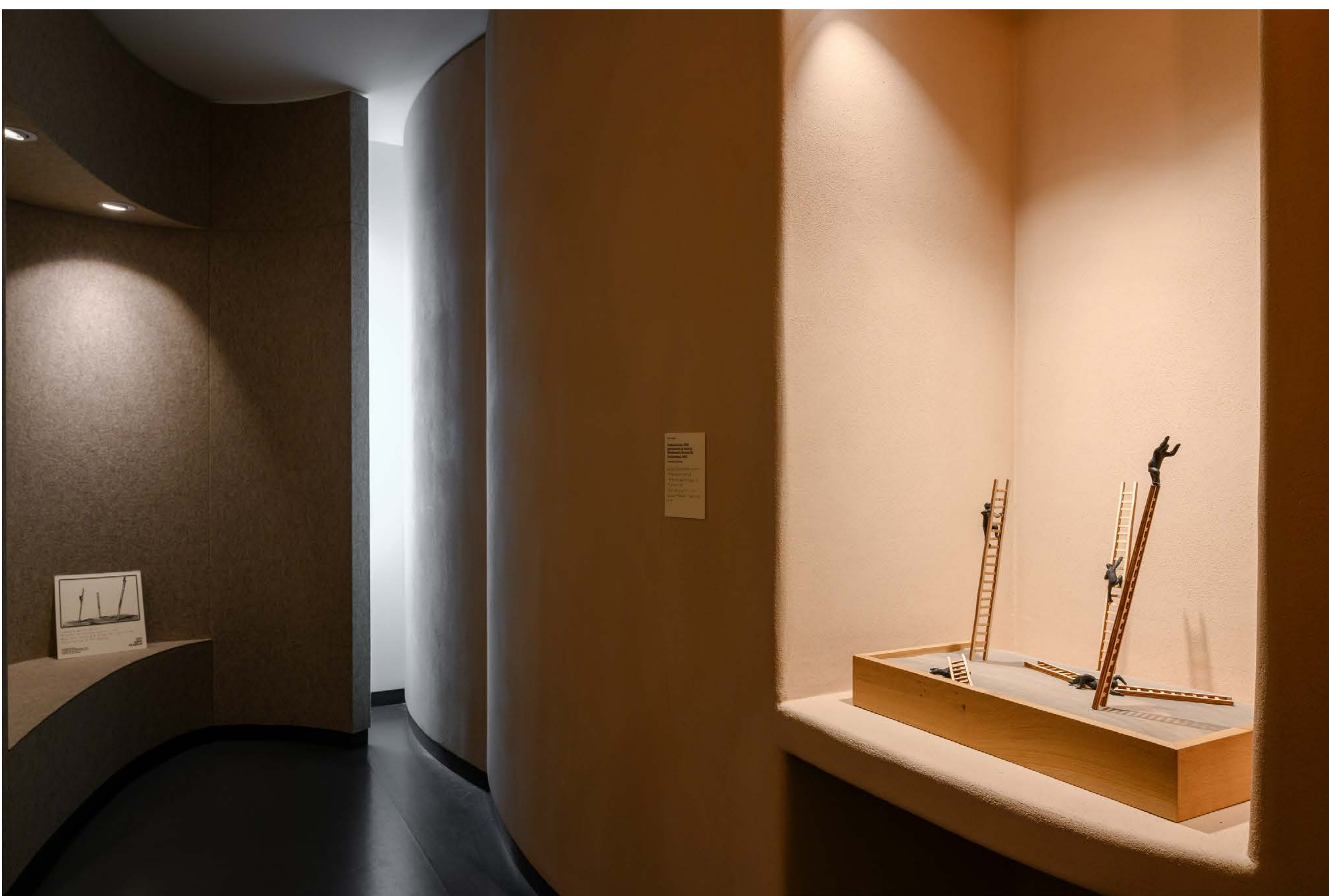
Figure 05.
Multisensory Museum at the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands, 2019. Photo: Peter Cox.

[ij]

vol.19, no.01
2022

fictions, fantasies, research essay
and fabulations

ann heylighen
daniel s. friedman

imagining a more inclusive world:
notes on difference, disability, and
space in *the shape of water*

90

In future work, we hope to further explore how *The Shape of Water* invites us to reimagine a more commodiously inclusive world, particularly ways in which 'ordinary' environments contain the kernel of extraordinary experience, which can beneficially influence, even restructure, encounters between and among diverse bodies and the diverse worlds we design to accommodate our differences.

author biographies
Ann Heylighen, PhD, FDRS, is design researcher and professor of design studies at KU Leuven, where she co-chairs Research[x]Design. After studying architectural engineering at KU Leuven and ETH Zürich, she conducted research at Harvard and UC Berkeley. She is currently Francqui Research Professor and associate editor of *Design Studies*.

Daniel S. Friedman, PhD, FAIA, is ACSA Distinguished Professor and immediate past dean, School of Architecture, University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa. Prior to joining the faculty at Hawaiʻi, Friedman served as dean, College of Built Environments, University of Washington, and director, School of Architecture and Interior Design, University of Cincinnati.

[ij] vol. 19, no. 01 fictions, fantasies, research essay ann heylighen imagining a more inclusive world: 91
2022 and fabulations daniel s. friedman notes on difference, disability, and
space in *the shape of water*

notes

01 Guillermo del Toro and Vanessa Taylor, *The Shape of Water*, screenplay (Los Angeles: Fox Searchlight Pictures, Inc., 2016) <https://www.scriptslug.com/assets/uploads/scripts/the-shape-of-water-2017.pdf> [accessed 2 May 2021] (p. 49). Note: we refer to del Toro and Taylor whenever we engage the text of the screenplay as published here; we refer to del Toro singularly when discussing the film in its final cut. We adjusted the customised punctuation del Toro and Taylor use throughout the screenplay to cue pause or hesitation in speech.

02 del Toro and Taylor, *The Shape of Water*.

03 Wikipedia, *The Shape of Water* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Shape_of_Water> [accessed 17 July 2022].

04 Alison Wilde, Gill Crawshaw, and Alison Sheldon, 'Talking About *The Shape of Water*', *Disability & Society*, 33 (2018), 1528–32; Alberta Natasia Adji, 'Falling for the Amphibian Man', *IAFOR Journal of Media, Communication & Film*, 6 (Summer 2019), 51–64; Ken Derry, 'The Shape of Water', *Journal of Religion & Film*, 21(2) (2017), art. 22; John Richardson, 'The Shape of Water', *The Conversation* (19 March 2018) <https://theconversation.com/the-shape-of-water-an-allegorical-critique-of-trump-93272> [accessed 13 July 2022].

05 Several design approaches — universal design, inclusive design, design for fall — aspire to take into account the largest range of users possible. Despite their differences, here we consider them interchangeably and refer to them as 'inclusive design', as this directly reflects their common ambition.

06 Aviam Soifer, 'The Disability Term', *UCLA Law Review*, 47(5) (June 2000), 1280–1331 (p. 1281).

07 Don Ihde, *Listening and Voice* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976), pp. 43–44.

08 Jean-François Staszak, 'Other/Otherness', in *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* (Vol. A12), ed. by Rob Kitchin and Nigel Thrift (Oxford: Elsevier Science, 2009), pp. 43–47; Gustaaf Bos and Doortje Kal, 'The Value of Inequality', *Social Inclusion*, 4(4) (2016), 129–39.

09 Dana Cuff, 'The Social Art of Design at the Office and the Academy', *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 6.3 (1989), 186–203; Rob Imrie, 'Architects' Conceptions of the Human Body', *Environment and Planning D*, 21(1) (2003), 47–65.

10 Sarah Elizabeth Williamson, *The Right to Design Disability and Access in the United States 1945–1990* (PhD dissertation, University of Delaware, 2011), referred to in Sasha Costanza-Chock, *Design Justice* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2020), p. 51.

11 Jill M. Franz and others, 'Inclusive Universal Design Practice and Activism', in *Proceedings of the 3ʳᵈ International Conference: Universal Design*, ed. by Masafumi Narikawa (Hamamatsu: International Association for Universal Design, 2010), pp. 1–9; Mark Iantkow, *Inclusive Design Education of Environmental Designers* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Calgary, 2015); Janice Rieger and Megan Strickfaden, 'Taken for Granted', *Societies*, 6(6) (2016), 1–11.

12 Michael Kimmelman, 'Building Accessibility Into America, Literally', *The New York Times* (20 July 2020) <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/20/arts/disabilities-architecture-design.html> [accessed 17 July 2022].

13 In this context, we prefer the specificity of 'novel', 'screenplay', and 'film' or 'cinema' to the more general but equally appropriate alternative 'literature', commonly used as a description of the total order of words surrounding a given subject, including scholarly and academic articles, essays, research papers, books, and other publications.

14 Richard Rorty, 'Persuasion Is a Good Thing', in *Take Care of Freedom and the Truth Will Take Care of Itself*, ed. by Eduardo Mendieta (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), pp. 66–88 (p. 74).

15 As cited in Steven Fesmire, *Dewey and the Moral Imagination* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), p. 133.

16 David Dodell-Feder and Diana I. Tamir, 'Fiction Reading Has a Small Positive Impact on Social Cognition', *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 147(11) (2018), 1713–27; Raymond A. Mar and Keith Oatley, 'The Function of Fiction is the Abstraction and Simulation of Social Experience', *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 3 (2008), 173–92; Keith Oatley, 'Fiction: Simulation of Social Worlds', *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 20 (2016), 618–28.

17 Micah L. Mumper and Richard J. Gerrig, 'Leisure Reading and Social Cognition', *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, 11 (2017), 109–20.

18 Dodell-Feder and Tamir, 'Fiction Reading'.

19 Mar and Oatley, 'The Function of Fiction'.

20 Elaine Ostroff, 'Universal Design', *Universal Design Handbook*, 2nd edn, ed. by Wolfgang F. E. Preiser and Korydon H. Smith (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011), pp. 1.3–1.11.

21 P. John Clarkson and Roger Coleman, 'History of Inclusive Design in the UK', *Applied Ergonomics*, 46(Part B) (2015), 235–47.

22 Clarkson and Coleman, 'History of Inclusive Design in the UK', 235.

23 Marian Corker and Tom Shakespeare, 'Mapping the Terrain', in *Disability/postmodernity*, ed. by Marian Corker and Tom Shakespeare (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2002), pp. 1–17.

24 Ruth Butler and Sophia Bowlby, 'Bodies and Spaces', *Environment and Planning D*, 15 (1997), 411–33.

25 Patrick Fougeyrollas, 'Documenting Environmental Factors for Preventing the Handicap Creation Process', *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 17.3–4 (1995), 145–53; David B. Gray, Mary Gould, and Jerome E. Bickenbach, 'Environmental Barriers and Disability', *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 20.1 (2003), 29–37.

26 Ingunn Moser, 'On Becoming Disabled and Articulating Alternatives,' *Cultural Studies*, 19.6 (2005), 667–700 (p. 669).

27 Annette Pedersen and Christopher Crouch, 'Introducing Universal Design to a Colonial Context', in *Universal Design*, ed. by John Christophersen (Drammen: Norwegian State Housing Bank, 2002), pp. 289–314; Nicola St John, 'Towards more Culturally Inclusive Communication Design Practices', in *Proceedings of DRS 2016*, Design Research Society 50ᵗʰ Anniversary Conference (Brighton: DRS, 2016), pp. 1–18.

28 Tanya S. Goldhaber, Patrick Langdon, and P. John Clarkson, 'Gender Issues in ICT Adoption', in Inclusive Designing, ed. by Patrick Langdon and others (Cham: Springer, 2014), pp. 59–68.

[ij] vol.19, no.01 fictions, fantasies, research essay   ann heylighen   imagining a more inclusive world: 92
2022 and fabulations   daniel s. friedman   notes on difference, disability, and
space in *the shape of water*

29 Rannveig Skjerve, G. Anthony Giannoumis, and Sumaira Naseem, 'An Intersectional Perspective on Web Accessibility', in *Designing Around People*, ed. by Patrick Langdon and others (Cham: Springer, 2016), pp. 13–22.

30 Skjerve, Giannoumis, and Naseem, 'An Intersectional Perspective on Web Accessibility', pp. 13–22.

31 Clarkson and Coleman, 'History of Inclusive Design in the UK', 235.

32 *Van Dale Woordenboeken*, s.v. 'vis'; 'fish'. <https://vowb-vandale-nl.kuleuven.e-bronnen.be/> [accessed 17 July 2022].

33 Central to othering is an asymmetry of power relations: 'only the dominant group is in a position to impose the value of its particularity (its identity) and to devalue the particularity of others (their otherness) while imposing discriminatory measures.' Staszak, 'Other/Otherness', 44.

34 See Adji, 'Falling for the Amphibian Man', 52: 'In one of his interviews, del Toro claims to have been inspired by *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*, Jack Arnold's 1954 film, in which the amphibian creature falls for the female protagonist, but they end up separated.'

35 Richard Rorty, 'Getting Rid of the Appearance-Reality Distinction', in *Philosophy as Poetry* (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 2016), p. 15.

36 del Toro and Taylor, *The Shape of Water*, p. 50.

37 *American Heritage Dictionary*, Third Edition, *s.v.* 'super-.' (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994).

38 For a discussion of the theme of eggs and fertility in the film, see Wilde, Crawshaw, and Sheldon, 'Talking About *The Shape of Water*', 1529.

39 del Toro and Taylor, *The Shape of Water*, p. 34.

40 del Toro and Taylor, *The Shape of Water*, p. 34.

41 del Toro and Taylor, *The Shape of Water*, p. 37.

42 del Toro and Taylor, *The Shape of Water*, p. 44.

43 del Toro and Taylor, *The Shape of Water*, p. 62.

44 Wilde, Crawshaw, and Sheldon, 'Talking About *The Shape of Water*', 1530.

45 del Toro and Taylor, *The Shape of Water*, p. 27. Note the parallel with Moses, another liberator.

46 del Toro and Taylor, *The Shape of Water*, p. 116.

47 del Toro and Taylor, *The Shape of Water*, p. 10.

48 Adji, 'Falling for the Amphibian Man', 52.

49 *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. 'monster' (Oxford: University Press, 2021) <http://www.oed.com/> [accessed 20 July 2022].

50 *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. 'monster' (Oxford: University Press, 2021) <http://www.oed.com/> [accessed 20 July 2022].

51 *American Heritage Dictionary*, Third Edition, s.v. 'demonstrate'; and (in the appendix, 'Indo-European Roots'), s.v. 'men-' (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994). The distinction between who is and who is not the 'monster' — and how we commonly perceive 'monstrosity' — is central to the film's storyline.

52 del Toro and Taylor, *The Shape of Water*, p. 49.

53 del Toro and Taylor, *The Shape of Water*, p. 3.

54 del Toro and Taylor, *The Shape of Water*, p. 8.

55 See Wilde, Crawshaw, and Sheldon, 'Talking About *The Shape of Water*', p. 1529.

56 del Toro and Taylor, *The Shape of Water*, 48.

57 del Toro and Taylor, *The Shape of Water*, p. 27.

58 del Toro and Taylor, *The Shape of Water*, p. 9.

59 del Toro and Taylor, *The Shape of Water*, p. 4.

60 Ron Wakkary and Leah Maestri, 'Aspects of Everyday Design', *International Journal of Human–Computer Interaction*, 24.5 (2008), 478–91.

61 Wakkary and Maestri, 'Aspects of Everyday Design'.

62 Shanti Sumartojo and others, 'Atmospheres of Care in a Psychiatric Inpatient Unit', *Design for Health*, 4.1 (2020), 24–42.

63 del Toro and Taylor, *The Shape of Water*, p. 108.

64 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1984), p. 23.

65 David Strauss and Kevin Kane, 'Building Maintenance', *Column 5, Journal of the University of Washington College of Architecture and Urban Planning* (1993).

66 del Toro and Taylor, *The Shape of Water*, p. 112.

67 del Toro and Taylor, *The Shape of Water*, p. 93.

68 Corker and Shakespeare, 'Mapping the Terrain'.

69 Keith Oatley, Robin Dunbar, and Felix Budelmann, 'Introduction', *Review of General Psychology*, 22.2 (2018), 121–4.

70 Film and novels have already been employed to explore how aging transforms the body's relationship to quotidian space, or how poetic gastronomy and community transformation interrelate. See Daniel S. Friedman, 'Place in Aging', in University of Arkansas Community Design Center, *Third Place Ecologies* (Novado, CA: ORO Editions, 2017); Daniel S. Friedman, 'Cuisine and the Compass of Ornament', in *Eating Architecture*, ed. by Jamie Horwitz and Paulette Singley (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 2004), pp. 115–30; Tenna Doktor Olsen Tvedebrink, and others, 'Tales of Past Tables', *Localización: ICDHS 10th+1 Barcelona 2018: Conference Proceedings*, edited by Oriol Moret (Barcelona: Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona, 2018), pp. 554–8.

71 Rorty, 'Persuasion Is a Good Thing', p. 135.

72 Gray, Gould, and Bickenbach, 'Environmental Barriers and Disability', 29–37.

73 'Magical realist fiction re-evaluates different knowledge systems that have generally been rejected within dominant Western discourse through its realistic depiction of myths, metaphors, dreams and belied in the supernatural or magical. In this manner, writers utilize magical realism to reimagine the world within another integrated context, emphasizing a biocentric, holistic view that acknowledges the interconnectedness of all things in the universe.' Ben Holgate, *Climate and Crisis* (New York: Routledge, 2019), p. 9.

74 Dani Blum, 'When a Wheelchair Becomes a Magical Chariot', *The New York Times* (29 October 2021) <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/29/well/family/halloween-costumes.html> [accessed 17 July 2022].

75 Peter von Buelow and Kristine Synnes, 'A Tree for a House', *Journal of Architectural Education*, 58.1 (2004), 45–53.

76 von Buelow and Synnes, 'A Tree for a House', 45.

77 Peter-Willem Vermeersch, Jeandonné Schijlen, and Ann Heylighen, 'Designing from Disability Experience', in *Proceedings of the Participatory Design Conference 2018* (New York: ACM, 2018), Paper No. 22.