

6. FOLD

- A thing does not exist until it is in the world.
Get things out of the workshop and into action
- Work has its own agency. It is not yours. Give things away. Observe what happens
- Find where your difference will make a difference and work to put work there
- *Create multiple implementations.* Test your novel practices by finding new ways of doing them. Use the ability to shift your parameters (re-tune your dials) to come up with totally new things/practices
- *Avoid reductive precision.* False precision makes for brittle worlds. Imagine that almost any part could be replaced. Do not trust things in which you can explain the logic and purpose of every detail. If this is the case then none of it is necessary
- *Prove that it works.* Don't drink the cool-aid. Don't believe your own hype. Does it actually work? Check that it works on even a simple level. Yes, milk that has spoiled is yogurt -- but now that it is yogurt, is it any good?
- You need to be in command of your practice -- but out of control -- don't control it
- Develop new sites, new ways of looking, new objects, new disciplines, new histories, new concepts and new futures (worldmaking)
- *Put the ladder down when done* (Wittgenstein). Remember that in articulating what kind of world/problem this "thing" is -- it becomes a doorway/ladder into that world -- you do not need to carry the door or ladder around with you once you are there...
- Know that you will have to move again. Nomads move but they do not leave
- Not to know whether we know or not (John Cage)
- Keep a private room behind the workshop
- Guard your humanity
- **Let life be its own answer**

THE MAKING AND INNOVATING FOR X LAB

The MIX Lab is The Feliciano Center of Entrepreneurship's new interdisciplinary hub for transformative innovation in the Feliciano School of Business at Montclair State University.

Making and Innovating for X means taking on today's big challenges. The X stands for the unknown, that which exceeds our grasp, the future, and the open-ended nature of creativity and good design. The MIX Lab is a catalytic agent for creativity, design and rapid prototyping to incubate powerful real world outcomes across the campus and deep into the world at large.

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GUIDE TO INNOVATION

1. PREPARING

- **Embrace contradictions** -- You need contradictory skills -- you will need to be different people at different times in the process of creating
- Understand creation to have phases -- be true to the phase (e.g. Encounter, Going Down, Surfacing -- see below)
- Do not focus on the known: *"You cannot make a transistor by trying to make a better vacuum tube"*
- And remember that much of the creative work of design is not design -- **cultivate diverse skills**

2. ENCOUNTER

- Begin from an encounter -- **begin anywhere**. But go. Be carried forward by the encounter with something that is odd, exciting, does not fit, moves you...
- The odd is "a difference that makes a difference" (Bateson)
- Let the encounter carry and shape you -- don't immediately turn it into some "thing". You cannot begin to take something seriously if you know who you will be at the end of the encounter and what the outcome will be. An encounter is not content for your existing practice -- let it sweep you along into the unknown

3. GO DOWN

- Follow a rabbit -- go down rabbit holes. Don't stop
- Be a follower and not a leader. Remember that **rabbits swerve** -- at each intersection multiple new directions will emerge
- "The line makes the territory" (Deleuze & Guattari)
- Let perplexity and curiosity guide you. Be seduced by the odd, the perplexing, the discordant in what you have done
- Strive to fail. Fail as none dare fail (Beckett'). Fail to be fixed. Fail to be an identity. **Fail forward** into emergence
- **Be dim witted** and slow to respond to 'purpose' and 'meaning' (the proper/the known) -- act as if you don't know what it "is" but can only learn what it can "do" -- make everything do new things
- Non-decipherment: Not *What does this mean?* But *What can this do?* What are its unintended capacities?
- Stay with the bad long enough to let it grow
- Do not jump ahead
- Move sideways -- find zones of adjacent possibilities. Switch worlds but take something with you. Co-opt and transpose
- Flip environments -- but at the wrong moment in a developmental process
- Graft
- Change in degree will lead to change in kind. This is where what is co-opted and transposed *transduces* an environment
- Creation/Creativity = repetition of differences till there is a difference that makes a difference. Cross thresholds, betray the past
- Move step by step (do not look ahead -- till you have move sideways). "The work comes from the work" (Cage) -- do not jump ahead
- Go. "When it becomes interesting it is obsolete" (in this phase)
- Find edges, **explore adjacencies** -- find new lands
- Study + **experiment exhaustivity**. Experiment. *Let the right one in*. Strive for perfection. Nothing less -- ever. But recognize that "perfection" looks like very different things at each stage of a practice. In this stage we are interested first in "failing as none dare fail" (our sideways experiments into newness)
- Do not reward identity -- that it "looks" like something you admire etc.

4. SURFACE

- Forget and learn new values -- emergence, autopoiesis, diffraction
 - Field situation -- surf. Draw out and be drawn along. Be "of" the situation -- no distinction
 - Accept what ever comes next -- deal with it (not with what you imagine you wanted)
 - **Ignore Communication**. Avoid Information. Bypass Identity. Heighten noise
 - Work collectively -- even if alone
- Take stock -- where are you? **What is going on?**
 - You are producing a novel problem worth having
 - **Become part of the problem**
 - **Build a laboratory**
 - Know the signature of the emerging reality. Draw experimental portraits, make diagrams
 - *Keep it simple*. But not too simple. The cliché "less is more" is not what we are interested in. *More is different*. But, in understanding a problem keep it simple and concrete. It will get crazy soon enough
 - Don't be fooled: Origin does not equal meaning or purpose. Essence is not in the thing. Essence is held in the relation (the liquidness of water is held in the relation to the diver)
 - The medium is the message/ the medium is the message -- work at the level of form and system
 - *Test and find emergence in multiplicities and variations*. **Do everything 100 times**. With each variation find new affordances -- now remake the thing around this affordance. **Vary again**.
 - *Imagine making things without impossible technologies*. One way we stop ourselves dead in our tracks of experimenting is to design ideas that we simply cannot afford with technologies that we have no access to. For the sake of developing a problem use what is at hand. Use actual things
 - Work at multiple scales and modalities
 - Build a **library**.
 - Go to the source -- call people up
 - *Document everything* (have a lab journal). Use it. Keep good notes
 - Just because it is true does not mean it is interesting. It is about the most productive question: is it interesting? (Be OK with the wrong)

- Different? Remember, a question generates it answers, be careful how you generate questions
- *Nest ideas and practices*. Notice how discreet practices will be inside of other practices. You might need to know the physics of light to make one piece of your problem and then you might need to know neurology to make another level
- Return **down** the rabbit hole. Do this loop: going down and surfacing many times before moving on (to step 3: Migration)
- *Beware of a "success bias"*. Remember you are making something new -- be aware that most people including yourself will recognize what you have made as a "better vacuum tube" -- they will always bring it back to the known. **You need to keep loving your ugly monsters and impossible failures**
- Change yourself. **Be changed by what you do**
- Invent new tricks
- Acquire new skills

5. MIGRATE

- As you follow a difference across a threshold into an emergent new world migrate fully into this way of life (worldmaking)
- If you are going to add something to the world -- where and how should this work? Go there. Begin there
- Build your **workshop** (studio) now -- for this event of stabilizing a world (the lab is for experimentation (finding the new), the workshop is for innovation (stabilizing and populating the new))
- Become a new person. Learn the new skills, logics, processes and theories associated with what you need to do. If they do not exist you will need to invent them
- Imagine that you are developing a style/ signature not a oeuvre
- Have an outcome in mind. Test, experiment, research -- but now towards a goal/within a world
- Evolve the paradigm(s) of your emergent world (worldmaking) in activity
- Keep your workshop separate from your lab and library (don't give them up -- they can be parallel processes)