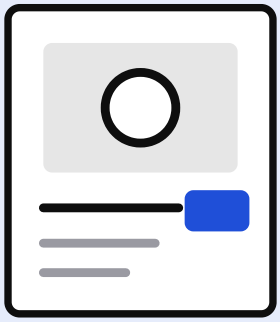
Specialty

Design fiction

Uses prototypes that work inside a fictional world, such as ads, catalogs or manuals, so a future change seems believable and can be discussed.



In Spanish
Ficción de diseño

Origin
Sterling (2005); Bleecker (2009)

What problem it addresses

A future shown as a concept or a render feels distant, which makes it hard to debate its consequences before it arrives.

Principles

Inside a world
The prototype is shown in the context that would make it real.

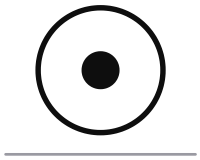
The ordinary convinces
Details like a price or instructions make the future believable.

To discuss, not to sell
It seeks to open a conversation about the consequences of the change.

An example

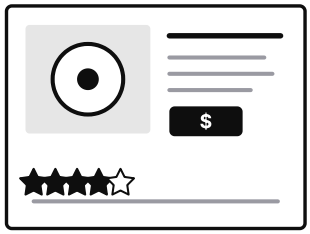
Two ways to present a product that doesn't exist yet.

The render



A polished image of the object, alone, on a white background. **It looks like a concept.**

The catalog



The object on a catalog page, with price, instructions and reviews. **It looks real.**

The same product, placed in its world, invites questions about what would change. That is how Near Future Laboratory's TBD Catalog (2014) works.

How it works

1 

The object appears in its world, with the details of daily life.

2 

The ordinary makes believable what doesn't exist yet.

3 

Once we believe it, we can discuss what would change.

Applications in design

✓ Use it like this

Present an idea of the future as something everyday (an ad, a bill, a news story) and see what questions it raises.

✗ Avoid

Making it so realistic that it deceives: always say it is fiction.

👁 Don't fall for it

Don't use it to justify a decision already made: it is for exploring.

Connections

Builds on

- Diegetic prototype

Authors and works

2005	**Bruce Sterling**	Coined the term in Shaping Things.
2009	**Julian Bleecker**	Linked it to diegetic prototypes and turned it into a design practice.
	Near Future Laboratory	Created the TBD Catalog, a catalog of products from a near future.

Sources

Original sources

- Sterling, B. (2005). Shaping things. MIT Press.
- Bleecker, J. (2009). Design fiction: A short essay on design, science, fact and fiction. Near Future Laboratory. View source (https://nearfuturelaboratory.com/2009/03/17/design-fiction-a-short-essay-on-design-science-fact-and-fiction/)
- Near Future Laboratory (2014). TBD Catalog. Near Future Laboratory. View source (https://nearfuturelaboratory.com/projects/en/tbd-catalog/)

Secondary sources

- Bosch, T. (2012, March 2). Sci-fi writer Bruce Sterling explains the intriguing new concept of design fiction. Slate. View source (https://www.slate.com/blogs/future_tense/2012/03/02/bruce_sterling_on_design_fictions_.html)

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