

# Speculative Strategy

\_\_\_\_\_ and why we need it more than ever





The future success of brands will depend upon their readiness to anticipate and respond to cultural change.

Organisations will need to imagine and execute more agile and anticipatory strategies.

In this way we can increase the likelihood of creating more desirable and meaningful futures.

**This is**

**Speculative Strategy.**





# There are many possible futures

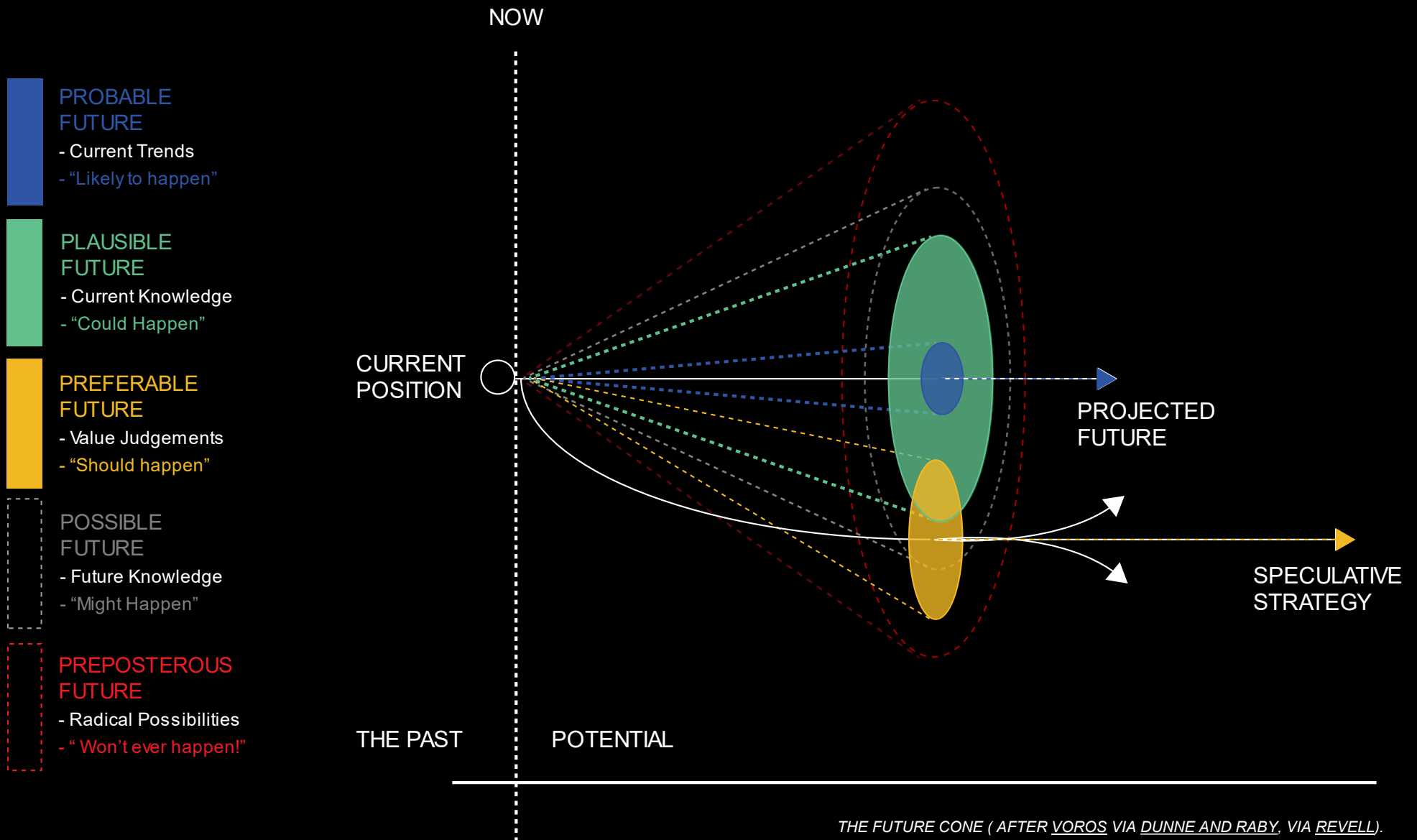
In an uncertain and chaotic world, we can not rely on one likely future.

**We must consider many possible futures** – and our potential responses to each one.

- **A probable future**  
[ *likely to happen* ]
- **A possible/plausible future**  
[ *could happen* ]
- **A preposterous future**  
[ *impossible!* ]
- **A preferable future**  
[ *what we'd most like to happen* ]

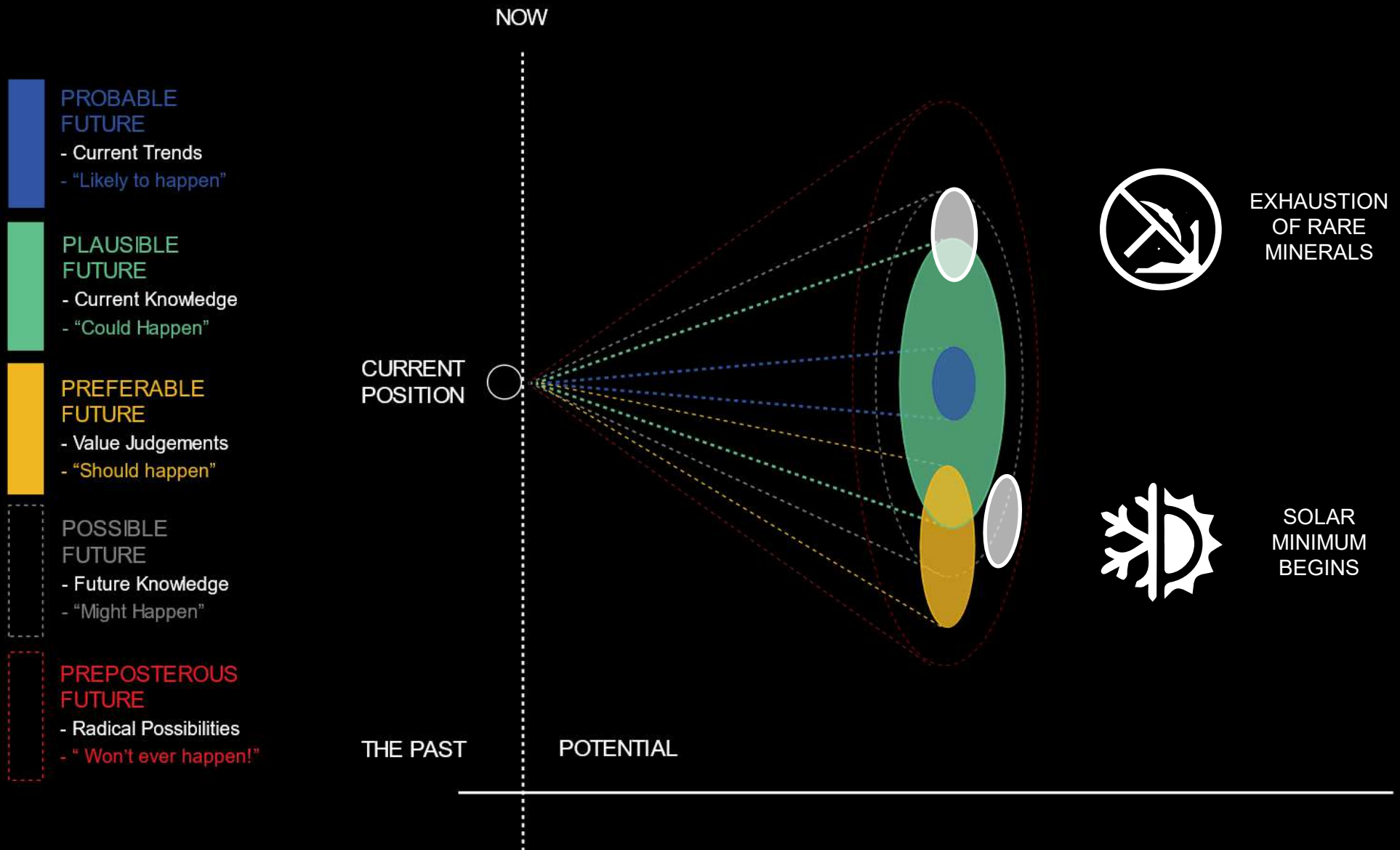


# The 'Futures Cone' is the core framework we use for considering different possibilities





# Let's take a moment to think about laptops\_\_\_\_\_



# EXAMPLE\_Speculative scenarios to drive laptop innovation

## Device



Laptop

## Speculative Scenario



EXHAUSTION OF RARE MINERALS



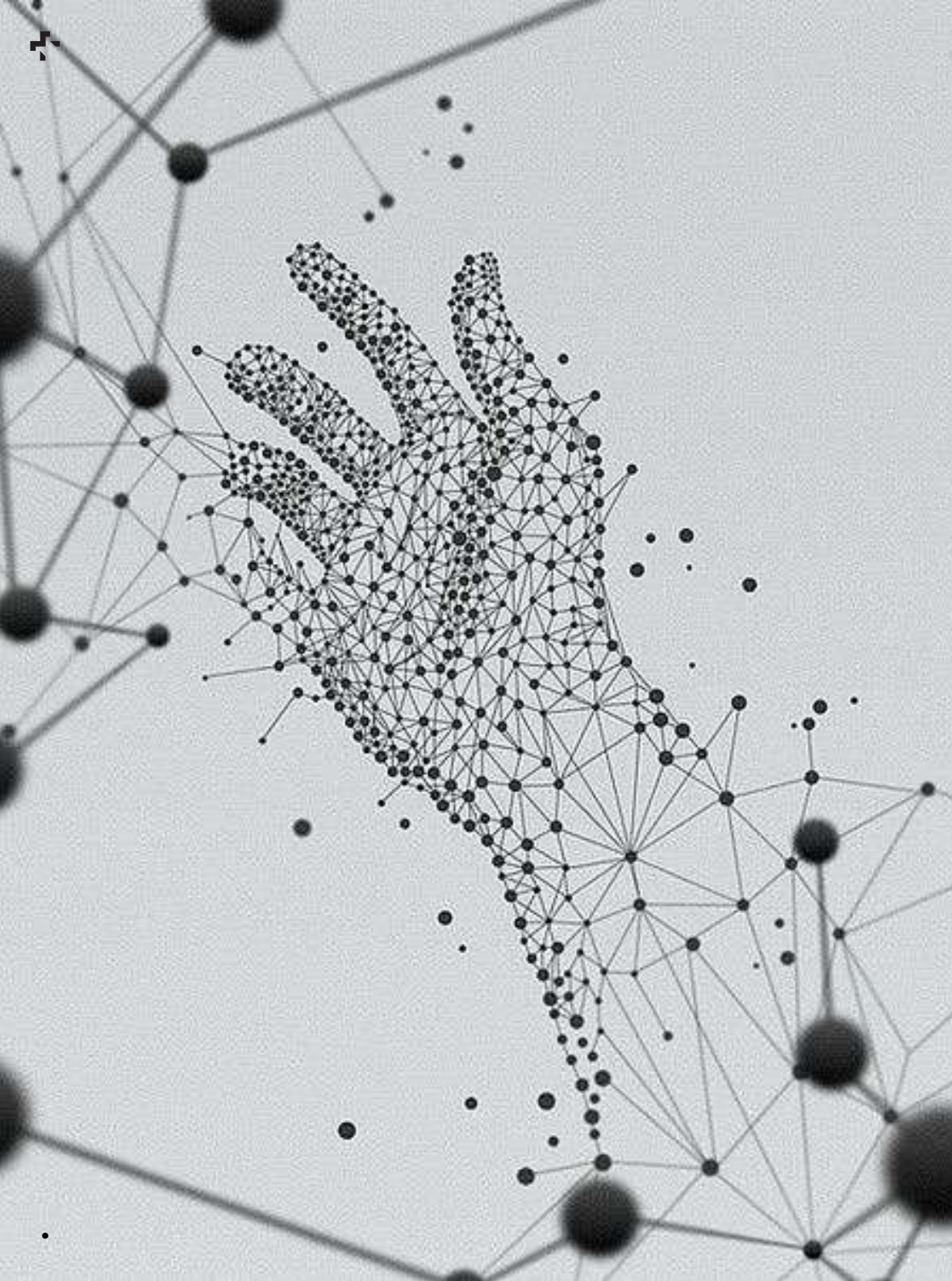
SOLAR MINIMUM BEGINS

## Potential Futures

- Re-using hardware materials becomes essential, **upcycling is commonplace**
- Laptops become too resource intensive, devices are linked together through peripherals. **Design becomes modular**
- Device **thermal output** harnessed to heat room etc.
- Laptop screen doubles as **ambient light**
- Everything becomes multi-functional **as we need to do more with less**

## Implications for Strategy

- Explore data and processing **synchronization** between multiple devices from different origins
- Make **easy switching** out/upgrading of components accessible to users
- Creating more powerful, less thermally efficient devices to heat homes as byproduct. **Explore different models of efficiency.**



# Our interdisciplinary methodology combines

- **Semiotics and Cultural Insight** understanding cultural meaning and how it's evolving
- **Futures** exploring potential futures through different kinds of forecasting
- **Speculative + Critical Design** using critical methods and speculation to challenge the role products, concepts or experiences have, or could have, on our lives
- **Strategy** developing new ways forward for resilience and impact

# Speculative Strategy can imagine tomorrow AND optimise today

**Imagining Tomorrow**

**Speculative Scenarios**

What we Know Now

- Emergent Culture
- Demographic Data
- Technology
- Resources
- Internal Capability
- Purpose, mission

Potential Future

- Cultural trajectory endpoints
- Extrapolations
- Unknown Variables
- Unexpected Consequences

**Speculative Strategies**

**Optimising Today**



We use many methods help us think more critically and creatively\_\_\_\_\_

## Speculative Scenarios

### Outbreak Scenario:

Unseasonal rainfall has led to flash flooding in nearby areas and an increase in various insect populations. Not only has the volume of insects increased but an unknown vector borne disease is causing serious illness, with the earliest known infected person also becoming the first fatality. With details of the infection largely unknown, mosquitoes, fleas and cockroaches are all suspected of carrying the disease, and are causing widespread panic.

You arrive home from work, and the stories of the disease are all over the news.

## Wild Cards

As rains return, your town is beginning to flood, and you've been ordered by local authorities to evacuate.

**How does the functionality of the device change as it becomes mobile?**

## Design Fictions

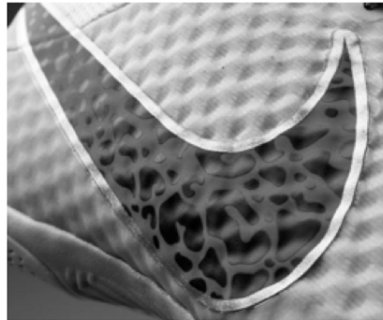


### NikeSKIN

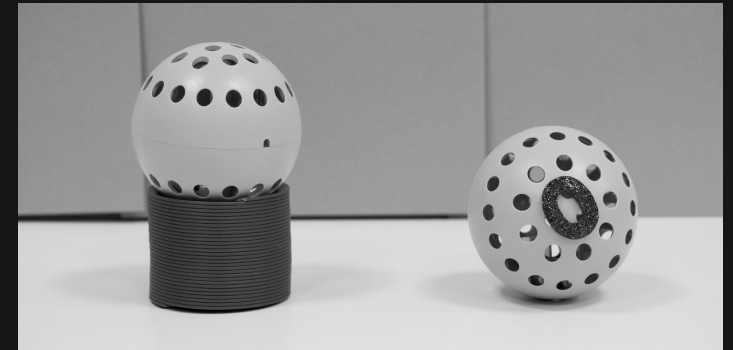
*The NikeSKin razor is a revolutionary new concept that redefines 'comfort' in shaving.*

*Using patented air cushioning technology alongside facial scanning, each razor and blade is sculpted to fit the exact contours of your face.*

*Each model can then be personalized down to the finest detail – from the design to special features. Do online using the next gen ID portal, or come into store for the ultimate experience, and watch it being 3D printed in store.*



"Inspired by astronauts bounding weightlessly on the moon to deliver lightweight responsive cushioning"



## Extreme + Evil Users:



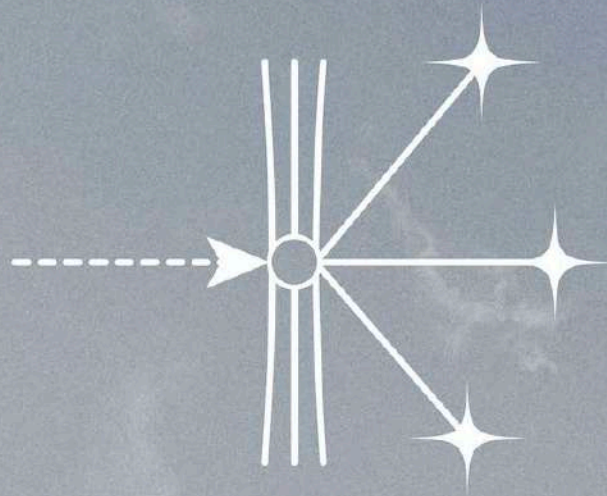
## Rapid Prototypes

## What are the added benefits of this approach?

- Specifically **targeted future scenarios** which are relevant to the brand, category and challenge
- **Challenges assumptions and considers consequences**, brings provocation AND pragmatism
- **Human centered** – real people and their needs and behaviours in context
- **More creative and robust ideas** and concepts from the outset, **spot weak spots quickly, saving time, money and effort**
- More creative, engaging and **collaborative process** which intentionally bakes in **diverse perspectives**



Get in touch\_\_



**SPACE  
DOCTORS**

Creating Meaningful Futures

**Fiona McNae\_\_CEO**  
f.mcnae@space-doctors.com