

# UPDATE – SUMMER 2017

July 2017.

While over the last few months I've neglected posting my ideas, thoughts, news and commentary here at mshanks.com, I've had a fascinating series of encounters with some wonderful people, organizations and businesses.

And I am preparing some posts – I greatly value the process of logging this learning journey I am so lucky to be following. The rumination certainly gets me thinking.

From the field of “design”, and my perspective as a kind of design archaeologist, my attention has really shifted to understanding creativity and innovation, and yes, under a long term human centered archaeological perspective.

It seems so important that we embrace human creative capacities to reframe and renew, in a world of runaway change and so-called disruptive innovation.

The great book with Gary is still underway, and definitely has a major theme of social and cultural innovation in antiquity, and much more explicitly now using the tool kit I share in the growing activities of Stanford Foresight and Innovation [\[Link\]](#). I've been working with all sorts of organizations large and small to understand and implement creative cultures of learning and innovation – including SAP, Tesla, Elon University, Roskilde University, Brazil's National Confederation of Transport. A favorite remains the world of automotive design; I am proud of my affiliation with the [Historic Vehicle Association of America](#). We ran a pop-up museum in Manhattan last December 2016 and then Mark Gessler and I hosted an event at the Detroit Motor Show in January on the future past of the automobile. This year too my work with the [International Advisory Board in Rotterdam](#) took on a review of culture and the arts in this extraordinary Dutch city, where I also continue to work with Janne Vereiken's [Spring Company](#).

Our group Foresight and Innovation has established great new relationships with old friends in [Stanford Continuing Studies](#) with an online program, d.global, offering classes in strategic foresight and design innovation. We also have a fruitful

relationship with [Stanford's MediaX](#) around futures – of learning, of mobility, of the past.

My authoring and composition has definitely taken not so much a fresh turn to what Connie Svabo and I are calling “scholartistry” (the convergence of experimental research and scholarship with arts practice), but certainly I am making a new much enlarged investment in creative scholarship. I have been so inspired by the performance design group at Roskilde, and the long term field project in the English Scottish borders is taking on a curious life of its own as I pursue my deep mapping of the prehistoric and Roman north, and everything before and after – not so much psychogeography as a cosmogenic mythogeography – inspiration from Hesiod to Sebald via Ovid and John Wallis (the obscure 18th century antiquarian and curate whose alchemical itinerary continues to fascinate).

In December Mike Pearson and I were artists in residence at Bard Graduate Center – five works of theater archaeology on the theme of staging evidence.

The studio lab in Stanford – Metamedia|Pragmatology has undergone a complete clear out in the wake of this shift to exploring creativity. A saturated creative maker space. I am looking forward to a new class next year – *Design thinking for the creative Humanities*. There are great collections of Lego blocks ready to stimulate wild model making (courtesy of Benjamin Finley Shanks). Old friends and colleagues will nevertheless still recognize what it's all about – the ongoing conversation around fresh thinking and intervention in matters of common and pressing human concern.





Prehistoric carvings at the extraordinary corporeal rock at Routin Linn, Northumberland. June 2017.