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 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.