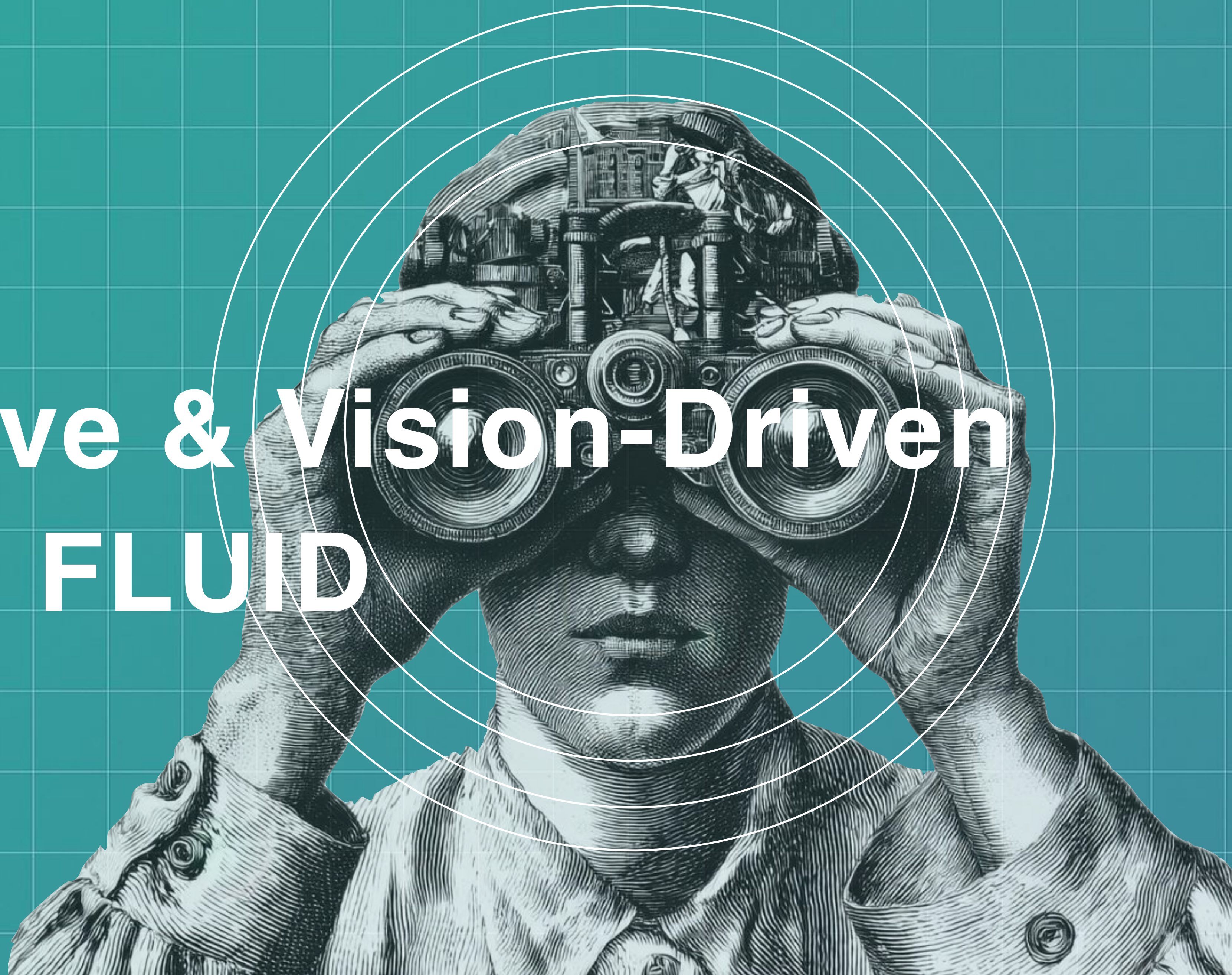




FLUID INSIGHT

Speculative & Vision-Driven Design at FLUID

09 | 2025



We believe that design is not just about solving the problems of today - it's about anticipating the opportunities and challenges of tomorrow. That's why speculative, vision-driven design is a core part of our practice. It allows us to think beyond current limitations and to help our clients prepare for a world that doesn't yet exist - **but is rapidly approaching.**

Design Matters More as Technology Speeds Up

Over the past decades, the time from invention to widespread adoption of major technologies has significantly decreased. This compression of innovation cycles is driven by several factors:

- 1 **Digital infrastructure:** Cloud computing, open-source tools, and global networks allow developers to build and scale new technologies faster than ever before.
- 2 **Global connectivity:** New ideas and technologies spread instantly across the world via the internet and social platforms.

- 3 **Increased computational power:** Moore’s Law and advances in AI accelerate experimentation, simulation, and development cycles.
- 4 **Massive investment:** Venture capital and corporate R&D funding help push innovations to market readiness faster.
- 5 **Tech-layering:** Many new technologies are built on top of existing platforms (e.g., apps on smartphones, AI models on cloud platforms), reducing the need to start from scratch.

As a result, the average time from invention to mass adoption - once 20 to 30 years- is now often under 10 years, and in some digital domains, just 2 to 5 years. This trend is expected to continue, especially in software, biotech, and AI, where the pace of innovation is exponential.

As technology cycles shorten, speculative design becomes more urgent: it allows us to think ahead not only about what can be built, but what should be built - and for whom.

Technology	Initial Development	Broad Adoption	Timeframe
Internet	1960s/70s	Mid-1990s	\~25 years
Electric Vehicles (modern)	Early 1990s	Around 2020	\~25 years
Smartphones	Early 1990s	Around 2007 (iPhone)	\~15 years
Cloud Computing	Early 2000s	Around 2015	\~10-15 years
Generative AI (e.g., GPT)	2018 (GPT-1)	2023 (ChatGPT, etc.)	\~5 years



Innovation doesn't happen by accident.

Innovation requires space to imagine, to provoke, and to experiment. Speculative design gives us the freedom to explore "what if" scenarios - without the pressure of immediate implementation - so we can uncover unexpected insights and radically new directions.

By stepping outside of existing constraints, speculative design allows us to challenge dominant assumptions and test alternative futures. It shifts the focus from solving today's problems to rethinking the conditions that created them. This approach surfaces the cultural, ethical, and systemic dimensions of innovation - making it a powerful tool not just for ideation, but for strategic foresight and long-term impact.



Design shapes culture and behavior.

As designers, we influence how people interact with technology, environments, and each other. If we only react to current trends, we miss the chance to shape future values, ethics, and user expectations.

Responsible design means anticipating not just how something works, but what it *means* - socially, emotionally, and ethically. When we project forward, we can question whose needs are being prioritized, what norms are being reinforced, and what unintended consequences might arise. This broader lens helps ensure that the systems and experiences we create don't just *function*, but align with the kind of future we want to help build.



Clients need future readiness.

In times of rapid change - climate crisis, AI disruption, shifting economies - businesses can no longer afford to be reactive. Through vision-driven design, we help clients explore potential futures and develop strategic narratives that inform more resilient, adaptable products and services.

Future readiness isn't about predicting what comes next - it's about building the capacity to respond with clarity and intention. Vision-driven design helps organizations rehearse change, identify blind spots, and align their teams around a shared sense of possibility. By making abstract futures tangible, we empower our clients to move beyond short-term fixes toward long-term strategies grounded in adaptability and purpose.



Imagination fuels progress.

Much of what is now mainstream once started as a provocation. Touchscreens, ride-sharing, digital assistants - all began as ideas that sounded speculative at best. We see vision-driven design as the early R&D of human-centered innovation.

Treating imagination as a strategic asset means making space for ideas that might seem improbable today but transformative tomorrow. Vision-driven design enables teams to prototype not just new products, but new paradigms - challenging conventional thinking and opening up pathways that traditional R&D might overlook. In this way, imagination becomes not a luxury, but a necessity for staying relevant in a world of accelerating change.



Our Approach

At FLUID, we integrate speculative thinking into our projects through:

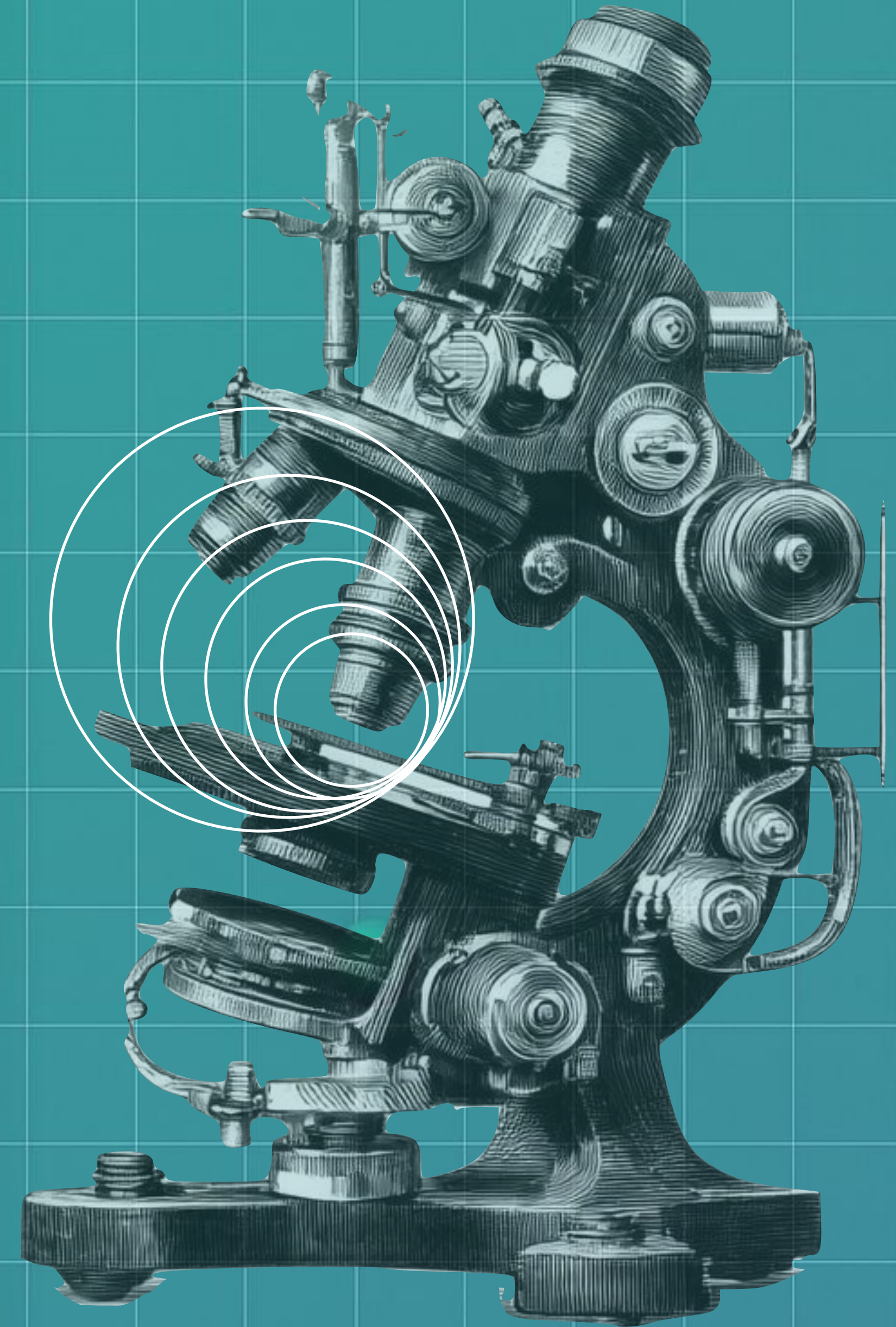
Future Scenarios: Designing concepts grounded in plausible technological, social, or environmental shifts.

Design Fiction: Creating artifacts from the future to provoke discussion and debate.

Strategic Prototyping: Rapidly visualizing future solutions that guide today's decision-making.

This work isn't abstract - it's actionable. Vision-led design helps our clients align their innovation efforts, communicate a bold future internally and externally, and build credibility as pioneers in their industries.

Speculative design is not just a creative exercise - it's a strategic tool. It enables our design teams at FLUID to stay ahead of change, inspire innovation, and guide others through uncertainty. The future doesn't wait. So, we choose to meet it with intention.



SPECULATIVE & VISION-DRIVEN DESIGN



FLUID LAB is our internal think tank, which deals with future possibilities and visionary design projects. Below you will find links to a series of case studies from various fields:

- [ORBIS](#)
[HEIMA](#)
[ONETIME](#)
[ONETIMER](#)
[OPERA](#)
[MEDEASY](#)
[ATMO](#)
- [SOUNDWEAR](#)
[WEARABLES](#)
[PLAY](#)
[FLOW](#)
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[TERA](#)
[VELA](#)



ABOUT FLUID

FLUID is an independent, award-winning design and innovation studio based in Munich. We are creatives, strategists, researchers, developers and innovators.



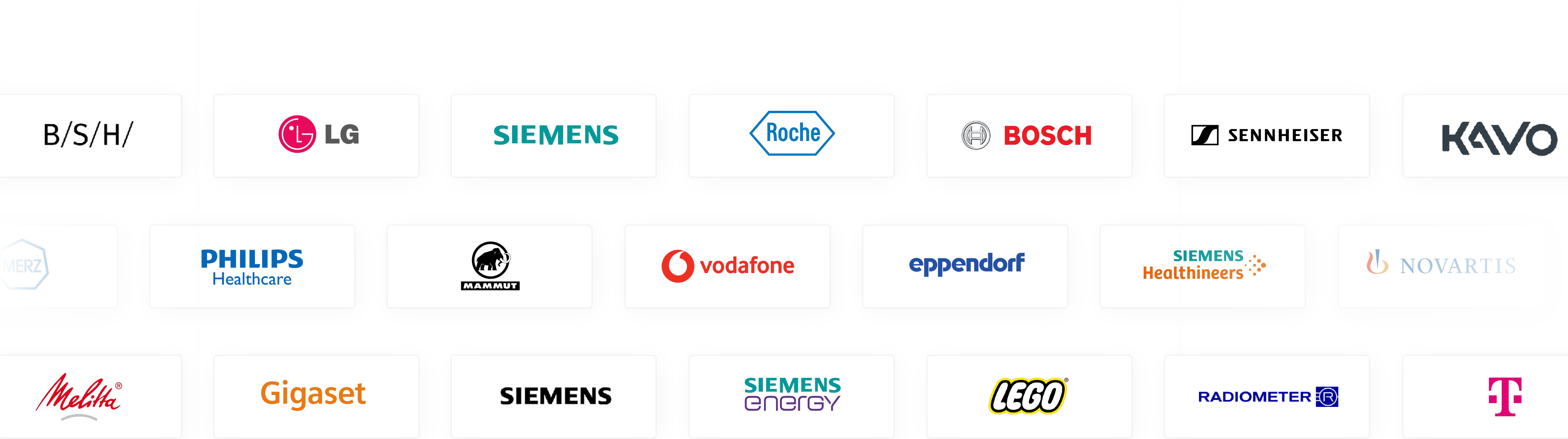
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6 Disciplines
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FLUID DESIGN GMBH

FRAUNHOFERSTRASSE 23H
80469 MUNICH, GERMANY
WEAREFLUID.COM

LET'S EXPLORE THE FUTURE TOGETHER!

RALPH BREMENKAMP

DIRECTOR INNOVATION STRATEGY

RALPH@WEAREFLUID.COM

CLAUDIA BERGER

DESIGN DIRECTOR UX

CLAUDIA@WEAREFLUID.COM

MATTHIS HAMANN

MANAGING DIRECTOR

MATTHIS@WEAREFLUID.COM