



# A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FUTURE

by Oona Strathern

“This book is wise and witty with great stories about the characters who would see the future and their sometimes outrageous ideas. Best of all it illuminates the past of the future.” John Naisbitt

Predicting the future is a notoriously precarious, profitable and even dangerous business. In *A Brief History of the Future*, Oona Strathern explores the lives, works and mindset of some of the most interesting, important and influential futurists over the years; from Delphi's virgin visionaries, to pop futurists, science fiction writers, trend gurus and evolutionary experts.

Beginning with the formative years of futurism, Strathern shows how it evolved into a respectable discipline and explores how it later branched out to adapt to the changing needs and greed of civilization. In trying to predict how we would live, work and even love, some of these futurists were spectacularly right, some were embarrassingly and hilariously wrong, and some really gave the future a run for its money.

Many of their predictions were of a practical, technical and scientific nature - Leonardo's flying machines, Darwin's evolutionary theory, Mendeleev's periodic table. Some were political - from Marx's political futurism and Orwell's *Big Brother* to von Neumann's game theory that nearly led to a Third World War. All of them however, had something interesting and poignant - if not controversial or unusual to say about what was and is to come.

Along the way, prediction has become an integral part of business and politics - Shell used scenario planning against oil shocks in the 1970s, cool-hunters prowled the streets in the 1990s and today Nokia has a 'foresight' department. Even the government of Lichtenstein has a shiny new futures department. Ultimately, we must ask whether we can 'make' the future, or does the future make us?

Rich with detail and anecdote, *A Brief History of the Future* is a unique and fascinating book that looks behind the scenes at how tomorrow's trends are being identified, 'made' and marketed today.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Oona Strathern is a journalist and futurist who currently lives in Vienna with her German futurist husband and two sons. A writer and journalist, she now works as a writer and consultant for the Europe's leading future and trend consultants the Zukunftsinstitut.

**For more information, to read the introduction, or to order a signed copy (€ 13,90 plus postage) please go to:**

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