Negotiating the Possible Through the Artificial

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Relating the concepts of value-sensitive design to decolonial theory, we will describe our attempts to activate resistance to the foundations of modern technicity through a game called Reimagining the Now, which we designed for the Digital Democracies Institute in Vancouver, BC, Canada. We argue that, as digital technologies become embedded in every facet of society, any hope of a digital democracy requires sustained public discourse, imagination, and action that goes beyond an understanding of how digital technologies work, towards a comprehension of the value systems, contexts and consequences of their creation. To do this we devised a custom card set and large paper playmat as a speculative prompt to help participants rethink existing technologies in through different value sets, to imagine with us what a digital democracy — and the world it brings with it — might look like. As part of a larger research endeavour, the game experiments with using speculative design methods as fertile spaces for generating a critical imaginary as a productive way to invite publics to think past taken for granted ideas of ‘what is’ towards ‘how what is’ and ‘what could be’.

Ontologically Orientated design; Value-sensitive design; techno-social futures; Speculative design.
About the Authors:

**Dr. Gillian Russell** is a SSHRC postdoctoral fellow with the Digital Democracies Institute at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver. She works as a designer, curator and researcher whose practice explores how design can be used as a method for actively engaging publics in unveiling present realities and future possibilities. Her work has been featured at the Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology, Portugal, in the Porto Design Biennale, Helsinki Design Museum, Design Museum London, London Design Festival, Milan Furniture Fair and the Victoria & Albert Museum. Gillian holds a PhD in History of Design at the Royal College of Art, London (2017) which was undertaken with AHRC funding in collaboration with the Victoria & Albert Museum.

**Craig Badke** is an Assistant Professor at Emily Carr University of Art + Design, in Vancouver, and has taught undergraduate and graduate studies in ecological literacy, critical/speculative design, design futures, design culture and theory, design research, as well as design studio. My research explores the ways that critical and speculative design can serve as a pedagogical tool for designers and non-designers alike to investigate and navigate the complex networked societal issues we face today, from social justice to our relationship with technology and climate change.