

DANIELLE BRATHWAITE-SHIRLEY


# THE DELUSION

COMMISSIONED AND PRODUCED BY  
SERPENTINE ARTS TECHNOLOGIES  
CURATED BY TAMAR CLARKE-BROWN

SERPENTINE NORTH  
30 SEPTEMBER 2025  
18 JANUARY 2026

SERPENTINE

THE DANCE OF  
YOUR FINGERS ARM  
THE WEAPONS



WE LIE  
TO YOUR  
FACE  
AND TELL  
YOU  
WHAT  
YOU SEE  
IS JUST  
WHAT  
THEY  
DESERVE!

# TERMS



# CONDITIONS

YOU ARE ENTERING A HUMAN ENGINE  
 IN ENTERING THIS SPACE YOU  
 UNDERSTAND THAT COMMUNICATION  
 IS CENTRAL  
 TO THIS EXPERIENCE  
 DONT BE AFRAID TO SPEAK OUT LOUD  
 YOU ARE NOT ENTERING ALONE  
 THE OTHER VISITORS WILL BE PIVOTAL

**THERE ARE THREE RULES TO HELP  
 GUIDE YOU THROUGH THIS SPACE**

1\*JOIN OTHERS,  
 EXPERIENCE THIS TOGETHER

2\*TALK, SHARE, LISTEN  
 AND QUESTION OUT LOUD

3\*RESPECT THE  
 BOUNDARIES OF OTHERS

## REMEMBER

DO THINGS TOGETHER  
 SHARE YOUR OPINIONS WITH  
 THOSE AROUND YOU

USE YOUR VOICE, EYES AND EARS

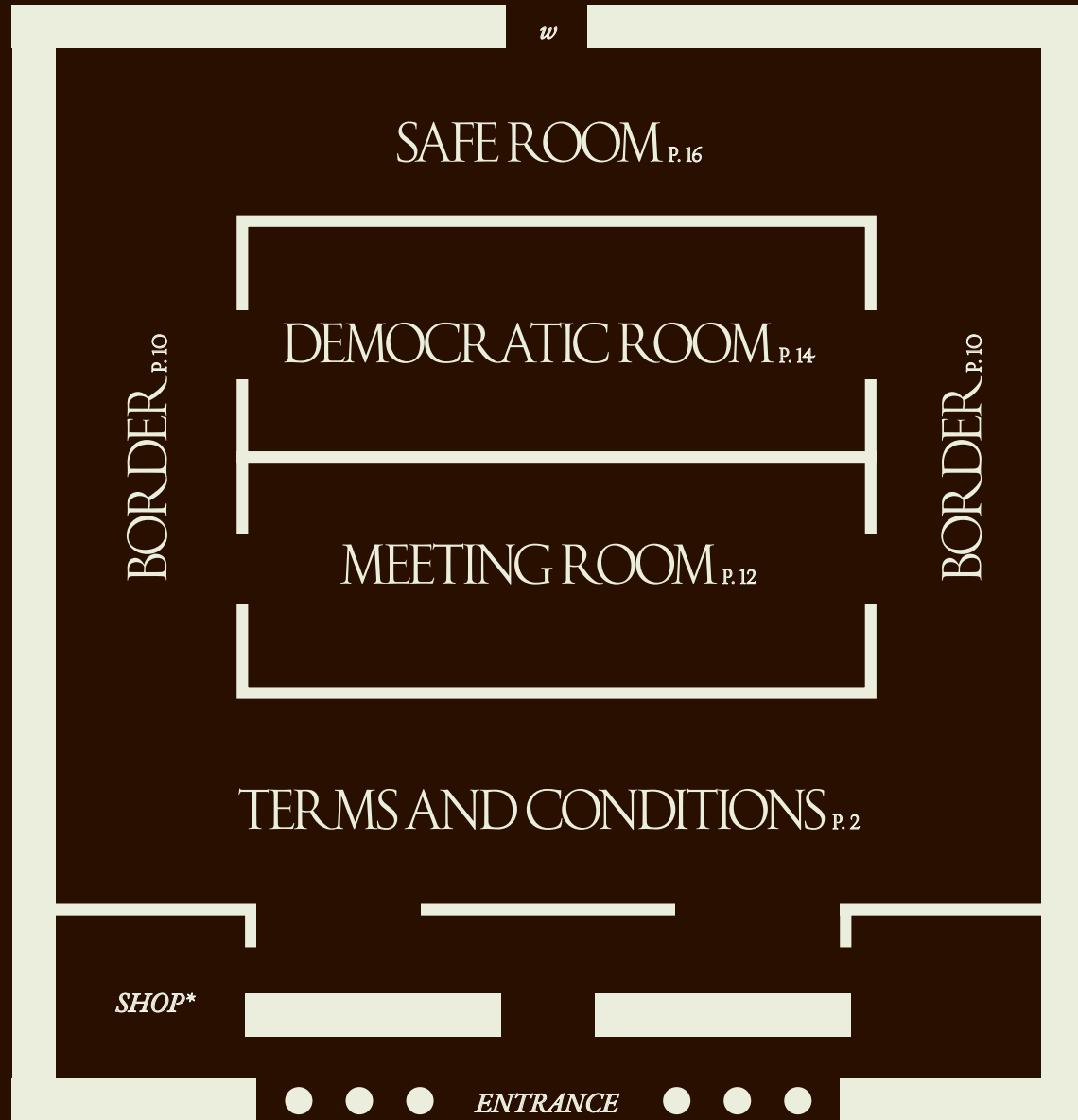
THIS SPACE CONTAINS  
 A COLLECTION OF VOICES  
 OPINIONS HAVE BEEN SOURCED FROM  
 ONLINE FEEDS & OFFLINE FORUMS  
 YOU MAY HEAR OPINIONS THAT MAKE YOU  
 FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE  
 YOU MAY HEAR OPINIONS  
 THAT SOUND LIKE YOUR OWN  
 DONT BE AFRAID  
 TO ADD YOUR OWN TO THE SPACE  
 SPEAK, LISTEN AND RESPOND  
 YOU ARE IN THIS TOGETHER  
 BE TOGETHER

**IF YOU AGREE, TAKE THE FIRST STEP  
 INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO A STRANGER**

\*\*\*\*\*

IF YOU NEED A BREATH  
 HEAD TO THE BACK OF THE SPACE  
 COME BACK WHEN YOU ARE READY

YOU ARE NOT BEING RECORDED



\* Project Documentary  
Limited Editions  
Catalogue

The SAFE ROOM offers a space to pause, reflect or step away from play. It includes a library of books, zines and original materials connected to *THE DELUSION*.

YOU CAN EXPERIENCE THE EXHIBITION THROUGH THREE DIFFERENT EMOTIONAL STATES, CALLED 'DELUSION LOOPS'.

EACH LOOP PRESENTS SCENARIOS INSPIRED BY THE EMOTIONAL STATES OF HOPE, FEAR AND HATE.

WHICH LOOP COMES NEXT DEPENDS ON HOW VISITORS INTERACT WITH THE GAMES WITHIN THE EXHIBITION SPACE.

EACH LOOP IS ACCOMPANIED BY ITS OWN SOUNDSCAPE, DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE GAMES AND CHANGING ELEMENTS IN THE GALLERY ENVIRONMENT.

YOU WILL FIND ONE MULTIPLAYER GAME IN EACH ROOM. COLLABORATE WITH OTHER PLAYERS.

THREE GAMES,  
THREE LOOPS,  
INFINITE WAYS TO PARTICIPATE.

**DANIELLE BRATHWAITE-SHIRLEY (B.1995) IS A LONDON AND BERLIN-BASED ARTIST AND GAME DESIGNER WHOSE PRACTICE PRIORITISES ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT. USING INTERACTIVE DIGITAL MEDIA IN INNOVATIVE WAYS, THE ARTIST CREATES PARTICIPATORY SPACES THAT CENTRE VOICES THAT ARE TOO OFTEN IGNORED OR ERASED, SUCH AS THOSE OF BLACK TRANS PEOPLE, TO ENVISION MORE INCLUSIVE FUTURES.**

*THE DELUSION*, Brathwaite-Shirley's most ambitious work to date, emerges from concerns around polarisation, censorship, the rollback of civic rights, and the artist's own experiences with online hate. Bringing together artists, technologists, researchers and members of Brathwaite-Shirley's

Black Trans and Queer community, the exhibition explores the creative and civic potential of video game technologies.

By combining cooperative gaming with participatory theatre, Brathwaite-Shirley transforms the gallery into a meeting ground and live community play. Mixing satire and absurd humour, *THE DELUSION* blends factual and fictional content taken from the daily news cycle. It archives recent news headlines, social-media posts and community testimonies drawn from online forums and in-person focus groups to reflect a diversity of perspectives, opinions and intersectional concerns that exist in society.

The narrative of *THE DELUSION* is inspired by the artist's 2024 graphic novel *BELOW THE BLUE LINE* and unfolds in a near-future scenario where every negative online comment ever posted has become real. This apocalyptic event—'The Day of Division'—is followed by an era called 'Peace by Isolation', defined by the rise of factions—groups who band together around shared opinions as a way to shield themselves from harmful comments. Influencers from these factions travel 'Below the Blue Line'—a collective subconscious and new internet—to bend thoughts and desires to their will. The machine to travel there is called 'The Delusion'. This immersive gaming experience welcomes the

# **THE DELUSION IS ABOUT HAVING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS— IT'S A PLACE TO VIEW YOURSELF AND A MIRROR OF SOCIETY.**

**—DANIELLE BRATHWAITE-SHIRLEY**

audience to activate and complete the work. At the exhibition's core is a series of new multiplayer games that have been conceived by the artist for the exhibition to act as mirrors to society, utilising technology to foster civic participation through personal and collective transformation.

*THE DELUSION* reimagines a present-day condition: we are held hostage by our screens, quarantined in media bubbles and clouded by delusions of our own objectivity. Developed in collaboration with exhibition designer Lydia Chan, the exhibition imagines a family home characterised by elements of personal history, religious and spiritual paraphernalia, propaganda-style posters, and family photos. A stained-glass window at the entrance narrates the story of 'The Day of Division', while screens hidden in windows, doors and picture frames reference the 'Overton Window'—a framework for mapping which political ideas are considered acceptable to the general public.

Each room contains one multiplayer game that invites players to examine their own ethical, political and moral choices, while considering broader societal structures and histories of marginalisation. Falling somewhere between personal quest and collective ritual, *THE DELUSION* explores the challenges of navigating individual and community decision-

making, contending with bias, exclusions and ideological impasses. The gallery becomes a living, responsive space, where players' actions determine the next *Delusion Loop*—essentially setting the emotional state and conversation topics within each room—and staging the messy reality of what it truly means to live together.

The exhibition design is influenced by the artist's love of retro games and the horror genre, especially 'The Backrooms'—a murky liminal space that originated from a 2019 thread on the anonymous bulletin board 4chan and has since been embraced by the online horror storytelling community. Rather than monsters or ghouls, the corridors in this space are inhabited by *CALLINGS (2025)*—four sculptures named in honour of Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park. These animated figures direct players and issue calls to action by delivering broadcasts that contextualise the emotional state, or *Delusion Loop*, that visitors encounter in the gallery.

*THE DELUSION*—which the artist calls a 'human engine'—aims to create a space to rehumanise connection and enable honest exchange amid the deep social polarisation that characterises today's online interactions.

# ORIGINAL WORLD LORE

The following text features extracts from Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley's 2024 graphic novel *BELOW THE BLUE LINE*, which served as the foundation for *THE DELUSION*, shaping its world and ideas.

THERE WAS NO WARNING. NO FLASH OF LIGHT. NO WHISPERS OR PREMONITIONS OF ITS COMING. BUT THERE WAS TENSION. A MIX OF FEAR, THE INABILITY TO ACT AND THE LOSS OF INTENT. LOST IN ITS SHORT-SIGHTEDNESS, HUMANITY HAD ONCE AGAIN SPRAYED FIRE AT EACH OTHER WHILE THE LIGHT FROM THEIR SCREENS LIT UP THEIR FACES. THEIR HANDS DANCED ACROSS KEYBOARDS. THE HIDDEN WEAPONS WIELDED BY ANONYMOUS HANDS HUNG POISED, WAITING FOR A COMMAND TO DROP. EACH INTENTION TYPED OUT WOVE ITSELF INTO THE PRESENT, ARMED, WAITING TO BE UNLEASHED.

[...]

EVERY COMMENT CAME TRUE EXACTLY THE WAY IT WAS WRITTEN.

THERE WAS NO EPICENTRE.

THERE WAS NO ORIGIN.

IT WAS NOWHERE.

THEN IT WAS EVERYWHERE.

FISTS RAINED DOWN FROM INVISIBLE BODIES. FIGURES APPEARED FROM NOWHERE TO KILL. NUCLEAR BOMBS SENT BY NO COUNTRY EXPLODED. ETHNIC GROUPS WERE WIPED OUT AND ROSE AGAIN. UNDESIRED SUICIDES. UNJUSTLY MURDERED SOULS CAME BACK TO AVENGE THOSE WHO HAD MURDERED THEM. THE POLICE WERE DEFUNDED.

THE SOUND WAS UNBEARABLE.

[...]

TYPED CONTENT WAS LOOKED UPON AS A WEAPON. THE FEAR OF HANDS DANCING ACROSS KEYBOARDS BECAME A GLOBAL FEAR. ONLINE ACCESS WAS SEVERELY LIMITED.

IT WAS COMMONLY BELIEVED THAT REMAINING WITHIN GROUPS THAT THOUGHT ALIKE WOULD LIMIT THE CHANCE OF SOMEONE USING THEIR HANDS AS WEAPONS. THUS, PEOPLE SPLINTERED OFF INTO HOMOGENOUS GROUPS, REFUSING TO INTERACT OR COMMUNICATE WITH ANYONE WHO HAD A DIFFERENT WAY OF VIEWING THE WORLD. PEOPLE KEPT THEIR FACES COVERED AND THEIR NAMES AND IDENTITIES HIDDEN SO THAT THEY WOULD BECOME DIFFICULT TO TARGET.

IN THESE GROUPS, DEVIATION OF THOUGHT WAS A DEATH SENTENCE. EVERYONE HAD TO SHARE THE SAME THOUGHTS. DISAGREEMENTS WERE DEADLY ENCOUNTERS.

PROPAGANDA REACHED A NEW ALMOST RELIGIOUS FERVOUR. SELF-EXAMINATION OF IDEAS AND SOLE IDEOLOGIES WERE DISBANDED FOR GROUPTHINK.

THIS LED TO EXPERIMENTS INTO NON-PHYSICAL PROPAGANDA AND IDEA IMPREGNATION. IT WAS THOUGHT THAT IF THEY COULD DISCOVER A WAY TO INJECT IDEAS INTO THE MINDS OF OTHERS THEY COULD KEEP EVERYONE SAFE.

AND DURING THEIR EXPERIMENTS, THEY DISCOVERED A GOLD MINE. EVERYONE ON EARTH, NO MATTER WHAT DISTANCE SEPARATED THEM, SHARED THE SAME PLANE OF SUBCONSCIOUSNESS.

AND THROUGH THAT SHARED SUBCONSCIOUS, EVERYONE COULD BE INFLUENCED UNBEKNOWNST TO THEM. THEY COULD CARRY AN IDEA PLACED INTO THEIR MINDS AND BELIEVE IT TO BE THEIR OWN.

THIS SHARED SUBCONSCIOUS WAS COLLOQUIALLY KNOWN AS

**THE PLACE BELOW THE BLUE LINE.**

THIS PLACE WAS AN OCEAN OF ALL THE THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, DREAMS AND EMOTIONS OF HUMANITY.

[...]

IN ORDER TO ACCESS THE SHARED SUBCONSCIOUS, A MACHINE WAS DEVISED KNOWN AS THE DELUSION.

THE DESIGN OF THE DELUSION REPRESENTED THE SHAPE OF A FOETUS. SIX OPEN EYES. ITS SKIN WRAPPED IN PROPAGANDA POSTERS. AROUND IT A ROTATING GROUP OF WORSHIPPERS WOULD SHOUT THEIR PRAYERS AT IT. YET ONLY A SELECT FEW WERE ALLOWED TO BOARD THE DELUSION.

THOSE THAT WOULD BOARD WERE KNOWN AS INFLUENCERS. THEY REPRESENTED THE PILLARS OF IDEOLOGY WITHIN THE COMMUNITY. THEY HAD GAINED FAVOUR THROUGH PREACHING, AND PEOPLE WOULD LISTEN TO THEM TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THEIR POINT OF VIEW SHOULD BE. THEY BELIEVED THAT A WISE INFLUENCER WAS THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE.

IT WAS AN HONOUR TO BE AN INFLUENCER. ALL EYES WERE ON THEM. THEIR WAY OF SEEING WAS PROJECTED OUT INTO THE SUBCONSCIOUS OF OTHERS, TO REVEAL THE TRUE WAY OF THINKING.

THE DELUSION WOULD FACILITATE THIS. IT ALLOWED THE INFLUENCERS TO STEP BELOW THE BLUE LINE TO PRODUCE WAVES OF CHANGE. THE ENGINE OF THE DELUSION WAS NOT POWERED BY ELECTRICITY. IT FED ON EMOTIONS TO CONNECT THE INFLUENCERS TO OTHERS WITHIN THE SUBCONSCIOUS. ANYONE CHANNELING THE SAME EMOTION WOULD BE CONNECTED TO THE INFLUENCER WITHOUT BEING AWARE.

[...]

**YOU ARE IN CONTROL OF THE SUBCONSCIOUS OF THE INFLUENCERS**

**YOU WILL DETERMINE WHAT THE ENGINE FEEDS ON**

**YOU WILL DETERMINE WHICH EMOTION TO CONNECT WITH THE WORLD ON**

**YOU WILL DETERMINE WHAT IDEAS YOU WANT TO IMPLANT INTO THE MINDS OF OTHERS**

**THE MESSAGE YOU SPREAD IS UP TO YOU**

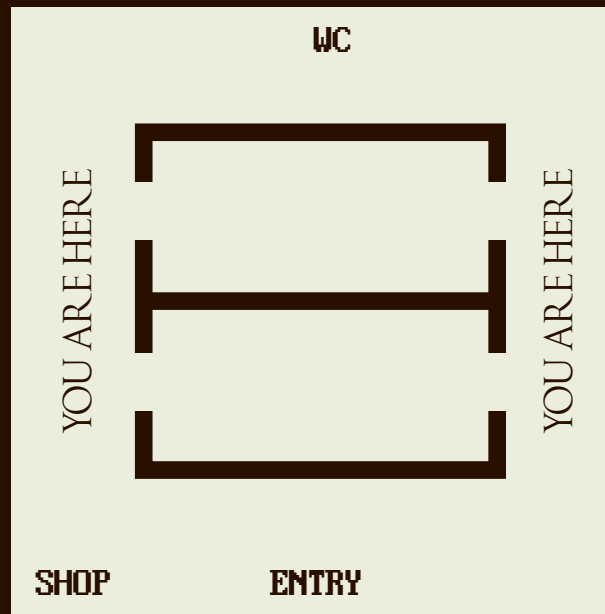
**THE EFFECTS YOU SEE ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY**

# I DIDNT REALISE YOU THOUGHT LIKE THAT

(2025)

## INSTRUCTIONS

PLACE YOUR HANDS ON THE DOOR HANDLE.  
WHEN CHARACTERS APPROACH THE DOOR  
LISTEN TO WHAT THEY SAY.  
OPEN THE DOOR TO LET THEM IN.  
CLOSE THE DOOR TO KEEP THEM OUT.  
SHOUT YOUR OPINIONS AND ANSWERS.  
YOU CONTROL THE BORDER TO THIS SPACE.  
CHOOSE CAREFULLY.  
WHAT KIND OF VIEWS WILL YOU LET IN?  
BE HONEST.



GAME CONTROLLER:  
*THE BORDER*

## HOW TO PLAY

During gameplay, animated characters will approach the doors, asking to be let in. Based on each character's appearance and statements, players must decide whether to open or close the door—or the 'border'—to allow them entry.

## ABOUT THIS GAME

In order to build 'safe' communities, this game asks you to make judgments about who is allowed into your space and who is kept out. In today's digital world, life is often shaped by updated forms of exclusion reinforced by algorithms. The rapid speed of decision-making in this game mirrors the speed, pressure and reactive 'hot takes' that dominate our online lives.

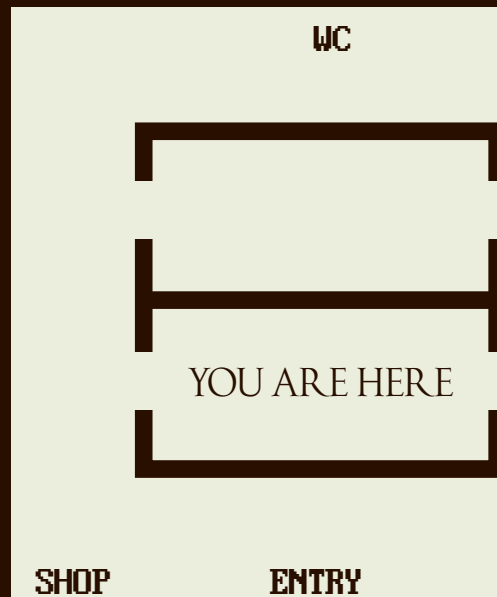
Inspired by empathy-based games such as *Papers, Please* (2013), in which players take the role of a border-control officer, this game asks us to reflect on how our values shape the lives of others and whether we are truly thinking for ourselves or simply following instructions.

**DETECT THREATS. DEFEND HOPE.  
PROTECT YOUR BELIEFS.**

## MEETING ROOM

## INSTRUCTIONS

PLACE YOUR HANDS FLAT ON THE TABLE.  
 TILT THE TABLE TOGETHER TO MOVE.  
 WORK WITH THOSE AROUND YOU.  
 COORDINATE.  
 COOPERATE.  
 COMMUNICATE.  
 HOW WELL CAN YOU WORK TOGETHER?  
 BE HONEST.



GAME CONTROLLER:  
*THE UNIFIER*

## I CANT MOVE WITH YOU

(2025)

## HOW TO PLAY

Take a seat around 'The Unifier'. Using the table as the controller, players must cooperate and work together to win the game. Move a ball through maze-like levels, navigating obstacles and bumping into non-playable characters to advance. Tilt the table in different directions to guide the ball. The more the group cooperates, the easier it becomes.

## ABOUT THIS GAME

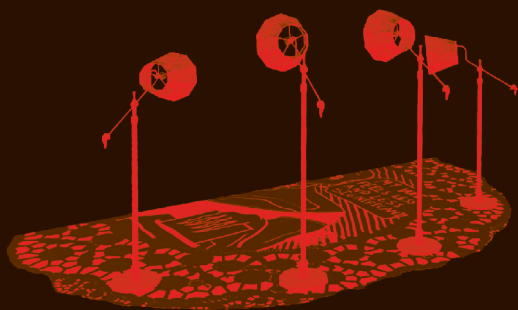
This game is a homage to both ouija boards—or 'spirit boards', believed to convey messages from spirits—and the classic marble-platformer *Monkey Ball* (2001), which popularised the game mechanic of tilting a level to control a ball. Circular gathering spaces—from the Greek Agora to King Arthur's Round Table to the United Nations—have long symbolised representation, inclusion and diplomacy. In this game, the tilting table becomes a metaphor for negotiation, cooperation and collective action.

ESCAPE DANGER. DESTROY ENEMIES.  
 FIND YOUR WAY BACK TO THE HEART.

## DEMOCRATIC ROOM

## INSTRUCTIONS

PLACE YOUR HANDS ON THE LAMP.  
 TURN THE LAMP TO AIM.  
 PULL THE TRIGGER  
 TO COLLECT AND CAST VOTES.  
 ANSWER THE QUESTIONS OUT LOUD.  
 AIM CAREFULLY.  
 WHAT YOU CHOOSE WILL BE A REFLECTION  
 OF YOUR VIEWS.  
 A REFLECTION OF HOW YOU THINK.  
 A REFLECTION OF WHO YOU ARE.  
 WHAT VIEWS DO YOU HOLD?  
 BE HONEST.



GAME CONTROLLER:  
 THE VALIDATORS

I DONT KNOW IF I CAN BE  
 HONEST IN FRONT OF YOU

(2025)

## HOW TO PLAY

Lamp-shaped guns—the validators—are this game's controller. Each controller is represented by a reticle on screen. The game unfolds through a series of questions, using the language of voting: players decide what to shoot, or who to censor, with each shot they take.

executions, along with the final speeches of the condemned.

The game references 1990s first-person shooter arcade games such as *The House of the Dead* (1997) and one of the artist's personal favourites, *Doom* (1993)—a point-and-shoot, rail shooter with mounted guns and a fixed movement path. *Doom* caused a media sensation on release, sparking congressional hearings over its alleged use of violence—but it also inspired a fan-driven 'modding revolution'—with players creating their own modified versions of the game, making alterations to its content, creating new features and building on top of the developer's original design.

## ABOUT THIS GAME

This game invites players to take their turn on the soapbox, drawing on the history of public debate at Hyde Park's famous Speakers' Corner, established in the mid-19th century. Speakers' Corner is one of the last surviving site of over 100 original public spaces for free speech in London. Over the years, speakers have included Jamaican political activist Marcus Garvey, British Black Panthers leader Altheia Jones-LeCointe and members of the Suffragettes. Hyde Park was also the site of the Tyburn Gallows (c. 1196-1783), hosting tens of thousands of public

This game challenges players to think critically about judgement, censorship and power in both historical and contemporary contexts.

DEHUMANISE. CENSOR.  
 VOTE FOR WHAT'S RIGHT.

## SAFE ROOM

## INSTRUCTIONS

IN DRAWING IN THIS BOOK YOU  
 ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THIS IS A RECORDING  
 OF YOUR FEELINGS.  
 THE DRAWING IN THIS BOOK WILL STAND  
 AS A RECORD OF YOUR EXISTENCE HERE.  
 IT WILL BE SHOWN ALONGSIDE EACH  
 PRESENTATION OF *THE DELUSION* AND AS  
 A MEMORY OF THOSE WHO ENTERED IT.  
 TAKE YOUR TIME.  
 YOU MAY FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE.  
 BE FRANK. BE UNCENSORED.  
 BE HONEST.



SHOP

ENTRY

GAME CONTROLLER:  
*I THOUGHT ID LET YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL*

## TO REMEMBER YOU BY (2025)

## HOW TO PLAY

Take a break and record your thoughts. This bonus game offers a private space for confession or reflection. Contribute to the book *I THOUGHT ID LET YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL*—a collective, intimate and growing record of public opinion.

## ABOUT THIS GAME

This game honours the artist's original *REACTIONARY WORKS* series that sparked the project. It gives visitors space to capture their personal thoughts and feelings in response to the exhibition. Inspired by the classic Surrealist game *Exquisite Corpse*, it builds on the power of juxtaposition—where each contribution is hidden until the final reveal.

## ABOUT THIS ROOM

The SAFE ROOM brings together texts from Brathwaite-Shirley's community and selected zines, including the artist's graphic novel *BELOW THE BLUE LINE* that inspired *THE DELUSION*.

Browse the library curated in collaboration with Reference Point. Please return titles when you've finished reading.

RECORD THOUGHTS. ACKNOWLEDGE FEELINGS.  
 CONFESS YOUR TRUTH.

The characters in *THE DELUSION* archive and remix elements from Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley's Black Trans and Queer community, the artist's *REACTIONARY WORKS* series, conversations, recent news and social-media headlines.

# THE FUTURE

## LEGACY ANCESTORS

PLACE OF BIRTH: THE MEMORY OF THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE  
HEIGHT: 5'8



**POLITICAL OPINION:** "Even when all is lost and there is nothing left to hold on to, if you focus on your own community and do everything in your power to uplift them, hope will continue to spread outwards".  
**JOB:** Building community for Black Trans people to thrive.  
**IDENTITY:** Black and proud.  
**PURPOSE:** To put on a brave face when everything is falling apart.  
**LIFE EXPECTANCY:** Legacy doesn't die.

**ABOUT:** After witnessing many fall, a prayer was offered—calling for the souls of the departed to rise from the earth and remain present for those in need. From this prayer, the souls converged and took form in this figure.

## CANCELTHECANCELLING

PLACE OF BIRTH: YOUR HIDDEN FEARS  
HEIGHT: 14'2



**POLITICAL OPINION:** "No one should be cancelled for anything".  
**JOB:** Spread information about being cancelled and how to deal with it.  
**IDENTITY:** Delusionally optimistic and trusting.  
**PURPOSE:** Quell people's fear of being cancelled.  
**LIFE EXPECTANCY:** Unknown.

**ABOUT:** In this world where everyone is perpetually offended and people can get cancelled for anything, this figure finds its way onto your screen to give you unreliable advice, often laden with mistakes and clear leaps of faith. They exist to make money out of your fear during dark times.

## MANIPULATIVE INFLUENCER

PLACE OF BIRTH: SOCIAL MEDIA  
HEIGHT: 6'2 BUT ACTUALLY 5'9



**POLITICAL OPINION:** They pretend to have reasonable views but want to convince you of their extreme opinions.  
**JOB:** Manipulating the minds of those who need guidance.  
**IDENTITY:** Contrarian.  
**PURPOSE:** Influence minds that are desperate and depressed.  
**LIFE EXPECTANCY:** Short-lived.

**ABOUT:** At a time when people are having a hard time finding their purpose and place in life, this person comes in to mould them using toxic ideas that are easily digestible. These ideas are hidden in jokes and jabs, but as they grow, the toxicity spreads throughout the body.

## BOOKS

Ahmed, Sara. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. 2004.  
 Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. 1983.  
 Anthropy, Anna. *Videogame Zinesters*. 2012.  
 Butler, Octavia. *Kindred*. 1979.  
 Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *The Message*. 2024.  
 Danielewski, Mark Z. *House of Leaves*. 2000.  
 Ebner, Julia. *Going Mainstream: Why Extreme Ideas Are Spreading, and What We Can Do About It*. 2024.  
 Ed. Egan, Jemma, Layla Gatens, Elizabeth Graham, Amal Khalaf, and Alex Thorp. *How We Hold: Rehearsals for Art and Social Change*. 2023.  
 Everett, Percival. *The Trees*. 2021.  
 Bartle, Richard A. *How to be a God: A Guide for Would-Be Deities*. 2022.  
 Nagle, Angela. *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from Achan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-Right*. 2017.  
 Ronson, Jon. *So You've Been Publicly Shamed*. 2015.  
 Russell, Legacy. *Black Meme*. 2024.  
 Sarkar, Ash. *Minority Rule: Adventures in the Culture War*. 2025.  
*Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*. 1985.  
 Snorton, C Riley. *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity*. 2017.  
 Van Reybrouck, David. *Against Elections: The Case for Democracy*. 2013.  
 Wark, McKenzie. *Gamer Theory*. 2007.  
 Wynter, Sylvia. *On Being Human as Praxis*. 2014.  
 Wynter, Sylvia. *No Humans Involved: An Open Letter to My Colleagues*. 2017.

## FILMS / TV SERIES

Anno, Hideaki, dir. *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. 1995.  
 Giorgio Angelini and Arthur Jones, dir. *The Antisocial Network: Memes to Mayhem*. 2024.  
 Miura, Kentaro. *Berserk*. 1997.  
 Lynch, David, dir. *INLAND EMPIRE*. 2006.  
 Lynch, David, dir. 'Zen, Or the Skill to Catch a Killer.' *Twin Peaks*. 1990.

## VIDEO GAMES

Arbitrary Metric. *Paratopic*. 2018.  
 goop lord. *Freak Hunter*. 2024.  
 Grasshopper Manufacture. *Flower, Sun, and Rain*. 2001.  
 Grasshopper Manufacture. *Killer7*. 2005.  
 Kitty Horrorshow. *Anatomy*. 2016.  
 Kojima, Hideo. *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty*. 2001.  
 Kojima, Hideo. *PT*. 2014.  
 Midway Studios. *DOOM 64*. 1997.  
 Nelson, Steve. *MYHOUSEWAD*. 2023.  
 Pope, Lucas. *Papers, Please*. 2013.  
 Pope, Lucas. *Return of the Obra Dinn*. 2018.  
 Procedural Arts. *Façade*. 2005.  
 Raven Software. *Hexen*. 1995.  
 Sunset Visitor. *1900x/Resist*. 2024.  
 Yager Development. *Spec Ops: The Line*. 2012.

## RESOURCES &amp; SUPPORT

[www.allaboutlaw.co.uk](http://www.allaboutlaw.co.uk)  
[www.freespeechunion.org](http://www.freespeechunion.org)  
[www.writetothem.com](http://www.writetothem.com)  
[www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)  
[www.mermaidsuk.org.uk](http://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk)  
[www.allabouttrans.org.uk](http://www.allabouttrans.org.uk)  
[www.genderedintelligence.co.uk](http://www.genderedintelligence.co.uk)  
[www.switchboard.lgbt](http://www.switchboard.lgbt)  
[www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org)  
[www.transreads.org](http://www.transreads.org)

## RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

*THE DELUSION* continues Serpentine Arts Technologies' engagement with Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley's practice, following a significant period of research and development (R&D) in 2021. During that time, the artist developed prototypes and experimental hybrid gaming projects, including *WE CANT DO THIS ALONE* (2022), *YOUR PRESENCE ALONE CHANGES HOW OTHERS BREATHE* (2022) and *THE LACK* (2023)—co-commissioned by

Art Night, NEoN Digital Arts and Serpentine Arts Technologies for Art Night Dundee, 2023. A year in the making, *THE DELUSION* brings together artists, researchers, technologists and members of Brathwaite-Shirley's Black Trans and Queer community. With a strong R&D focus, the project combines advanced technologies with 'obsolete' techniques, including 2D and 3D sprite animation and the community-run game engine UPBGE (Uchronia Project Blender Game Engine).

## DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

## AUTUMN 2024, R&amp;D

Through advisory sessions with researchers, technologists and writers, the artist and Serpentine Arts Technologies' team workshopped the game design.

## FOCUS GROUPS

A series of focus groups led by Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley with faith leaders, social activists and members of the Black Trans and Queer community recorded perspectives on the state of the world which were then archived in *THE DELUSION* alongside news headlines and social-media posts.

## GAME CHARACTER PHOTOSHOOTS

Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley directed photoshoots with members of London's Black Trans and Queer community, whose images were integrated into the games as characters.

## WINTER 2024, WRITERS' ROOM AND GAME JAM

The dialogue and narrative scenarios of the games were produced through a Writers' Room in early 2025, led by writer and performer Travis Alabanza, Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley and Serpentine Arts Technologies. During this week of exchange a group of writers including Alabanza, Tatenda Shamiso, Shaznay Martin and Brooke Maggs responded to Brathwaite-Shirley's graphic novel *BELOW THE BLUE LINE*.



GAME CHARACTER PHOTOSHOOT FEATURING HELEN STARR, HAROLD OFFEH, AIN BAILEY, RABZ LANSIQOT AND BOLANLE TAJUDEEN. PHOTOGRAPHER: STEFANO VENTURI

## SPRING-SUMMER 2025, GAME DEVELOPMENT AND PLAYTESTING

In the months leading up to the opening of *THE DELUSION*, the games were refined through public playtesting, game revisions and further stages of development with the game's technical team.

# IT SEEMED RIGHT TO USE AN ENGINE THAT ALSO MIGHT FAIL IN INTERESTING WAYS

—DANIELLE BRATHWAITE-SHIRLEY

## UPBGE GAME ENGINE

*THE DELUSION* is built using the game engine UPBGE, an open-source tool based on the popular 3D design software Blender. Unlike bigger engines such as Unity and Unreal, UPBGE is designed to be more intuitive, using visual systems that make it easier to experiment and prototype, making it an open alternative for creating interactive projects.

The engine was named 'Uchronia'—a term for speculative fiction that reimagines history—reflecting the open, collaborative spirit of its development. UPBGE is maintained by a volunteer community of developers who work on it in their spare time, sharing knowledge and support through the UPBGE Discord. This grassroots, community-driven approach strongly resonates with the artist's own practice.

For *THE DELUSION*, significant investment and updates were developed for the UPBGE ecosystem and will eventually be integrated into the engine. This includes workflow and stability improvements, a dialogue system, video playback, networking, project configuration and logging tools as well as dedicated content integration and deployment tools.

## FUTURE ART ECOSYSTEMS (FAE)

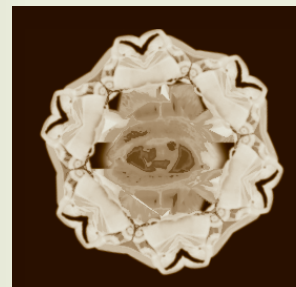
*THE DELUSION* is supported by the Future Art Ecosystems (FAE) initiative in the development of technical, legal and creative R&D to be shared with the wider cultural sector led by Victoria Ivanova, R&D Strategic Lead, and Tommie Introna, R&D Producer.

FAE is an initiative by Serpentine Arts Technologies that supports the development of the art and technology ecosystem for the

public good through research, reports and experimental projects.

Since 2020, FAE has released five strategic briefing reports that identify the dynamics and opportunities for the cultural sector to take a more proactive role within emerging technology spaces, such as blockchain, video games and AI. *Future Art Ecosystems 5: Art x Creative R&D* was released in 2025, featuring insights gathered from many voices, including Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley. The briefing focuses on Creative R&D—a unique format that integrates artistic experimentation, technological innovation and cross-sector collaboration. All Future Art Ecosystems books are available in the Serpentine shop and online at [shop.serpentinegalleries.org](http://shop.serpentinegalleries.org).

## SATURDAY TALKS



**25 OCTOBER 2025, 12PM**

Free, booking required

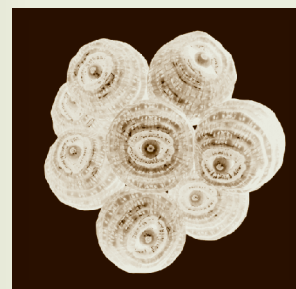
TAMAR CLARKE-BROWN, ARTS TECHNOLOGIES CURATOR, LEADS A TOUR OF *THE DELUSION*.



**22 NOVEMBER 2025, 12PM**

Free, booking required

RUTH WATERS, ARTS TECHNOLOGIES PRODUCER, LEADS A TOUR OF *THE DELUSION*.

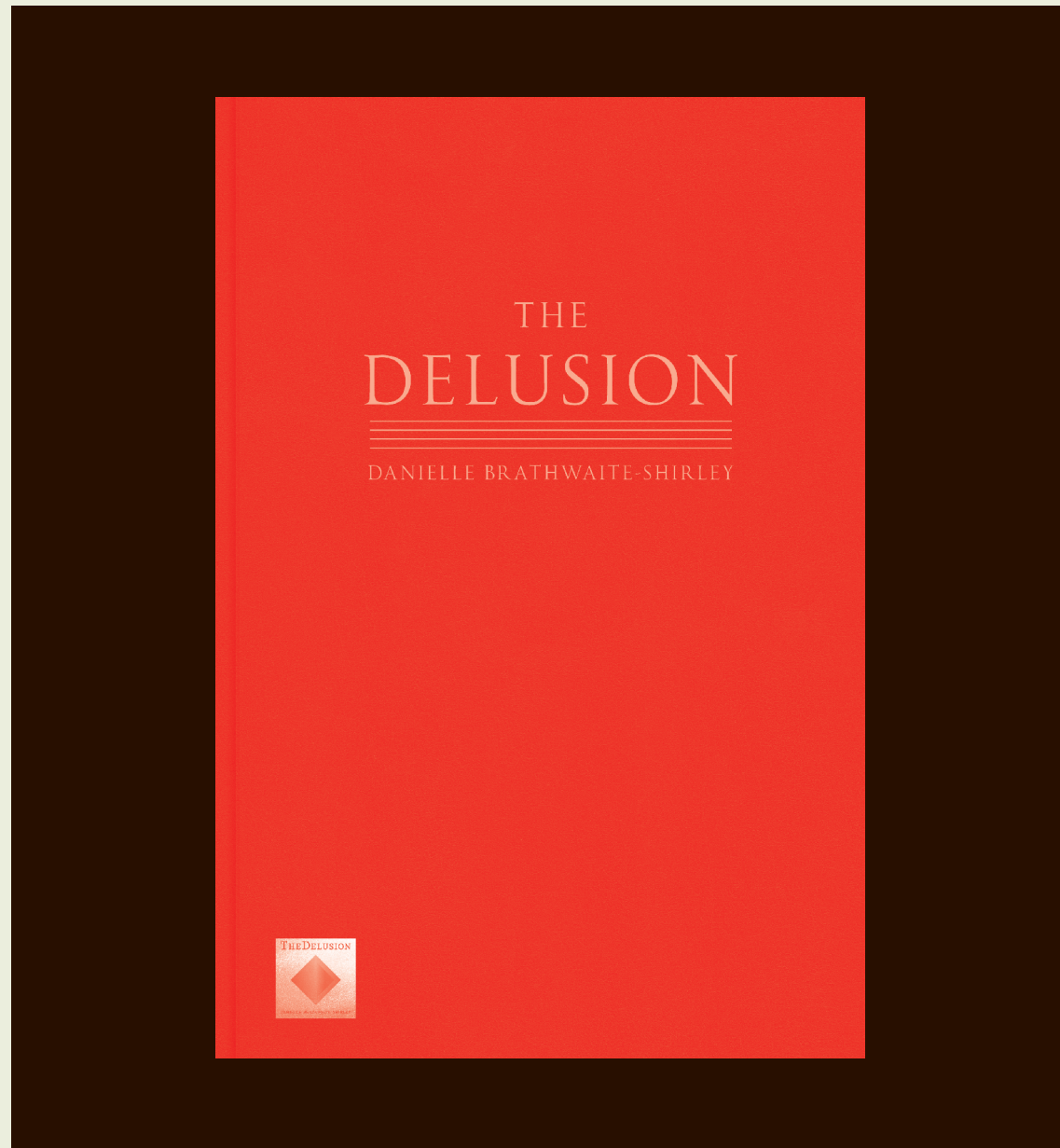


**6 DECEMBER 2025, 12PM**

Free, booking required

VI TRINH, ASSISTANT ARTS TECHNOLOGIES CURATOR, LEADS A TOUR OF *THE DELUSION*.

Please visit the Serpentine website to sign up for the free tours. BSL interpretation is available upon prior request for all of our Saturday talks. Check [serpentinegalleries.org](http://serpentinegalleries.org) for the latest information.



Coinciding with the exhibition, Serpentine and Archive Books have released the artist's first monograph—*THE DELUSION*. It imagines a 'new bible for emotional processing' and offers intimate insight into the project, as well as the artist's wider practice in a gamified interactive style. Contributors include Rebecca Allen, Barby Asante, Tamar Clarke-Brown, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Shenece Oretha, Legacy Russell, Mindy Seu, Ebum Sodipo, Helen Starr, Rosa-Johan Uddoh, McKenzie Wark and Kay Watson.

### *THE DELUSION*

Edited by Tamar Clarke-Brown in collaboration with *Managing Editor*, Cairo Clarke.  
Co-published by Serpentine and Archive Books.

Hardcover

Illustrated in colour throughout, 192 pp.  
Book design by Jamie Reid Studio  
£28

Serpentine ISBN 978-1-908617-95-8

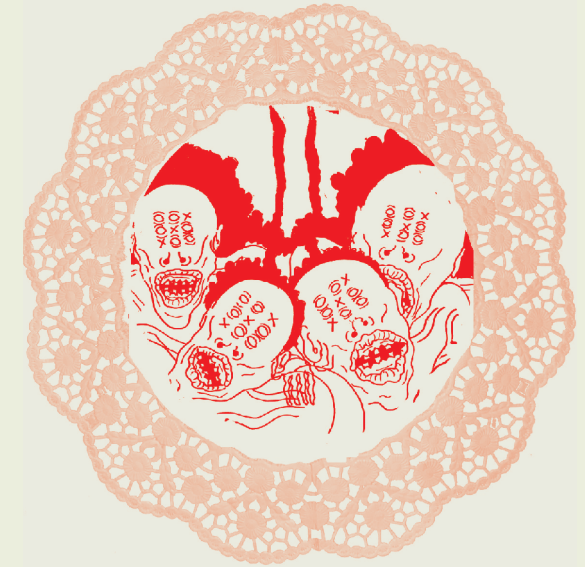
Archive Books ISBN 978-3-949973-97-0

Available in the shop at Serpentine North or online:  
[shop.serpentinegalleries.org](http://shop.serpentinegalleries.org)

## LIMITED EDITIONS



Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley  
*DO YOU STAND UP FOR OTHERS*, 2025  
Screenprint onto doily  
36×36 cm  
Edition run of 50 & 3 AP's  
Hand signed and numbered by the artist  
£150 (incl. VAT)



Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley  
*DOES YOUR SAFETY REQUIRE OTHERS TO FEEL UNSAFE*, 2025  
Screenprint onto doily  
36×36 cm  
Edition run of 50 & 3 AP's  
Hand signed and numbered by the artist  
£150 (incl. VAT)

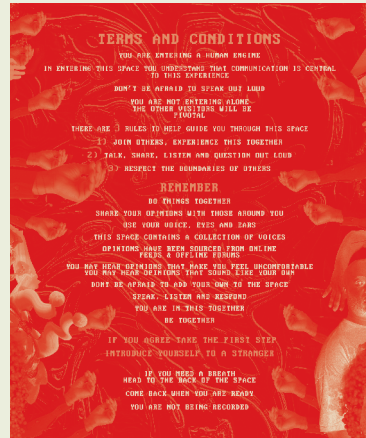
Serpentine has a rich history of publishing artists' editions for more than 30 years. Working with established and emerging artists, architects and designers, limited editions offer our community a unique opportunity to acquire works to support Serpentine's exhibitions, architecture, education, live and digital programmes. On the occasion of the exhibition, Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley has produced two limited-edition prints, which can be purchased in our shop or online: [shop.serpentinegalleries.org](http://shop.serpentinegalleries.org)



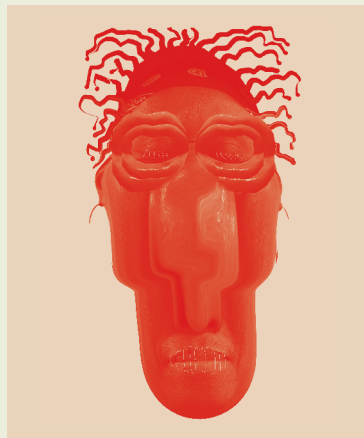
*THE MESSAGE* (2025)  
Posters, dimensions variable (detail)  
Courtesy of the artist.



*THE DAY OF DIVISION* (2025)  
Stained glass window, 120 x 175 cm  
Courtesy of the artist.



*TERMS AND CONDITIONS* (2025)  
Wallpaper (detail), 878 x 359 cm  
Courtesy of the artist.



*WATCHERS* (2025)  
Digital drawings in lightboxes (detail)  
90 x 101 cm (framed dimensions)  
114 x 141 cm (framed dimensions)  
Courtesy of the artist.

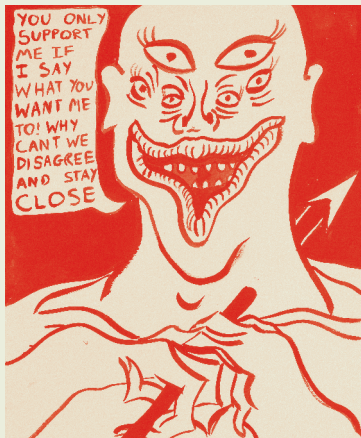


*WHERE DO YOU STAND* (2025)  
Graphic printed rug, 400 x 400 cm  
Courtesy of the artist.



*CALLINGS* (2025)  
Mixed media sculptures, dimensions variable  
Courtesy of the artist.

**DRAWINGS FROM DANIELLE BRATHWAITE-SHIRLEY'S REACTIONARY WORKS SERIES (2024)**



*YOU ONLY SUPPORT ME IF I SAY WHAT YOU WANT ME TO* (2024)  
Ink drawing on paper, 56 x 42 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Frank Krikhaar.



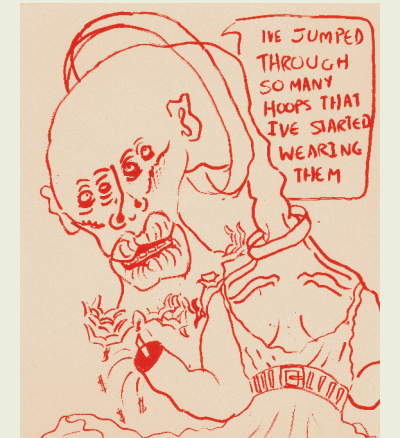
*NOUGHTS AND CROSSES* (2024)  
Ink drawing on paper, 56 x 42 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Public Gallery, London.



*I WATCH THE WORDS THAT LEAVE MY MOUTH MORE AND MORE THESE DAYS* (2024)  
Ink drawing on paper, 56 x 42 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Jason Santiago.



*JUST SWALLOW OUR TRUTH... OR SHUT THE FUCK UP* (2024)  
Ink drawing on paper, 34 x 24 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Public Gallery, London.



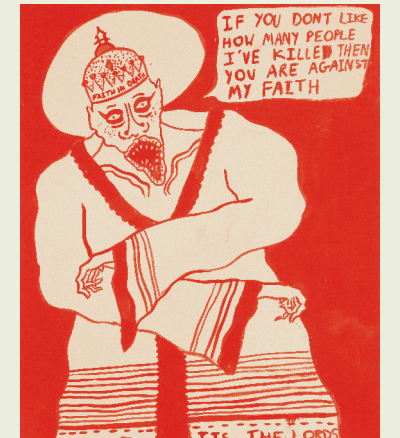
*I'VE JUMPED THROUGH SO MANY HOOPS THAT I'VE STARTED WEARING THEM* (2024)  
Ink drawing on paper, 34 x 24 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Michael N. Fein.



*WAR CRIME* (2024)  
Ink drawing on paper, 56 x 42 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Michael N. Fein.



*IT'S ONLY A SMALL ONE!!!* (2024)  
Ink drawing on paper, 56 x 42 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Public Gallery, London.



*IT'S NOT MURDER IT'S THE LORDS WORK* (2024)  
Ink drawing on paper, 56 x 42 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Public Gallery, London.



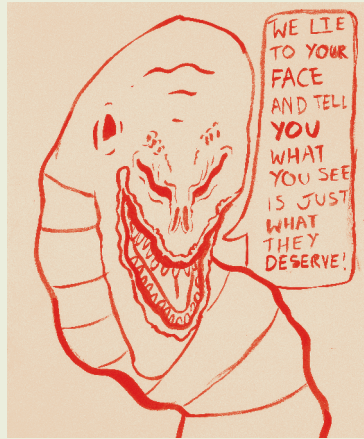
*WAR X PROFIT* (2024)  
Ink drawing on paper, 34 x 24 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Public Gallery, London.



*I PRETEND TO CARE IF IT MAKES ME LOOK GOOD* (2024)  
Ink drawing on paper, 56 x 42 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Public Gallery, London.



*SHOW US YOUR SMILE* (2024)  
Ink drawing on paper, 34 x 24 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Nicole Estilo Kaiser.



*WE LIE TO YOUR FACE AND TELL YOU WHAT YOU SEE IS JUST WHAT THEY DESERVE!* (2024)  
Ink drawing on paper, 34 x 24 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Public Gallery, London.



*WE ARE FULL OF HATE, ANGER AND HOPELESSNESS... WE NEED SOMEONE TO BLAME* (2024)  
Ink drawing on paper, 34 x 24 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Public Gallery, London.



*I'VE USED THE LANGUAGE OF MY VICTIMS TO MAKE MY OWN VICTIMS* (2024)  
Ink drawing on paper, 34 x 24 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Public Gallery, London.



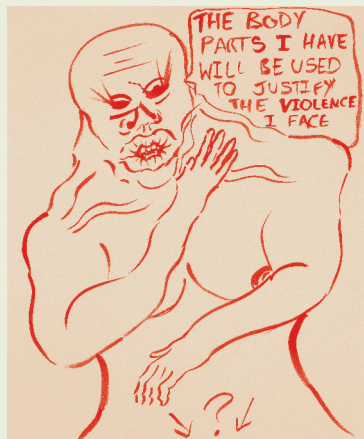
*WHEN I FEEL POWERLESS I POST ONLINE!* (2024)  
Ink drawing on paper, 34 x 24 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Gemma & Danielle Rolls-Bentley Wilde.



*IT WAS JUST A JOKE* (2024)  
Ink drawing on paper, 34 x 24 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Public Gallery, London.



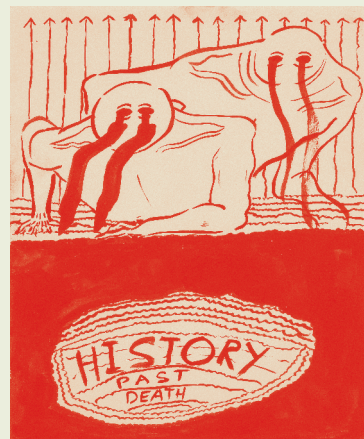
*CAN A WOMAN HAVE A VOICE THIS LOW* (2024)  
Ink drawing on paper, 56 x 42 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Jason Santiago.



*THE BODY PARTS I HAVE WILL BE USED TO JUSTIFY THE VIOLENCE I FACE* (2024)  
Ink drawing on paper, 34 x 24 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Public Gallery, London.



*THERE ARE NO WINNERS* (2024)  
Ink drawing on paper, 34 x 24 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Public Gallery, London.



*RESURRECTION OF ERRORS* (2024)  
Ink drawing on paper, 34 x 24 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Public Gallery, London.



*OUR EMOTIONS FEED THE ENGINE* (2024)  
Ink drawing on paper, 34 x 24 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Private Collection.



*INTENT* (2024)  
Ink drawing on paper, 34 x 24 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Private Collection.

GAMES

*I DONT KNOW IF I CAN BE HONEST IN FRONT OF YOU* (2025)  
*THE VALIDATORS* (2025)  
Video game and controller  
Courtesy of the artist.

*I CANT MOVE WITH YOU* (2025)  
*THE UNIFIER* (2025)  
Video game and controller  
Courtesy of the artist.

*I DIDNT REALISE YOU THOUGHT LIKE THAT* (2025)  
*THE BORDER* (2025)  
Video game and controller  
Courtesy of the artist.

*TO REMEMBER YOU BY* (2025)  
*I THOUGHT ID LET YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL* (2025)  
Game and controller  
Courtesy of the artist.

## VIDEO GAME & CONTROLLER DEVELOPMENT

*Conceptualised, animated, developed and directed by* Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley.

*Technical direction, game & controller design by* Vincent Moulinet

*Game development & engine integration by* Leo Auerberg

*Game development & network programming by* Florian Brückner

*Writer's Room led by* Travis Alabanza, with Shaznay Martin and Tatenda Shamiso  
*Game narrative design by* Brooke Maggs

*Controller engineering by* Ivaylo Getov

*Controller fabrication by* The White Wall Company

*Game music composition by* Loraine James

*Cutscene music composition by* Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley

*Sound design by* Guillaume Tiger

*Sound assistance by* Lea Van Hall

*Animation assistance by* Harriet Blend

*Voice acting by* Madison Moore, Robin Rutenberg and Catharine Cary

*Assistant direction by* Valerie-Malin Schmid and Hildegard Oehler

*Movement direction by* Malik Nashad Sharpe

*In-game costume design by* Shayne Oliver Group:

Anonymous Club

*Featuring/Archived:* Ain Bailey, Rabz Lansiquot, Harold Offeh, Helen Starr and Bolanle Tajudeen

*Photography by* Stefano Venturi

*Focus group casting by* Orlando Robinson

*Focus group participants:* Kiera Coward Deyell (Mellow-dramatics), Faissal El-Malak, Chloe Filani, Fossilfreedom, Jerry Flynn, Adam Huizomil,

Rosie Latchford, Kumbirai Makumbe, Asha Mitra, Naomi Notice, Nadine Nour el Din, Sola Olulode, Spiros Philippas, Joel Simpson, Sarah Sheehan, Gabriella Spencer-Hope, Bolanle Tajudeen, Starr Thomas and Rosa-Johan Uddoh  
*Consultant Therapist:* Melanie Brown

*Research and advisory support from* Julia Ebner, Celia Hodent, Meghna Jayanth, Dr Stephen Reicher, Alan Resnick and Christopher Summerfield.

*Playtested by* Katie Baynes, Alex Boyes, Mélanie Brown, V Buckenham, Cami, Kieran Clarke, Jonathan Coryn, Mélanie Courtinat, John Cruwys, Joel Dent, Gecana De Silva, Jemma Egan, Faissal El-Malak, Lou Fauroux, Cloe Ferguson, Joshua Ferguson, Andrea Gillespie, Declan Gilsenan, Lisa Gray, Sarah Hamed, Alex Harrison, Léa Herbeth, Nicole Kaiser, Mara Karagianna, Jamie Kodera, Bettina Korek, Rosie Latchford, Kieran Long, Tadeo Lopez-Sendon, Hannah Lord, Annette Mees, Asha Mitra, Yannis Mohand Briki, Nick Murray, Naomi Notice, Nadine Nour el Din, Sola Olulode, Ilena Pegan, Spiros Philippas, Xavier Pillai, Joste Proud, Jamie Reid, Rebecca Ribichini, Derek Richards, Joana Schliemann, Suneil Setiya, Xin Song, Winnie Soon, Florie Souday, Rhiannon Stanford, Yaku Stapleton, Helen Starr, Mia Stern, Symoné, Tabitha Thorlu-Bangura, Alex Thorp, Gucci Warlock, Ella Wilks-Harper and Jaime Young

## EXHIBITION CREDITS

Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley: *THE DELUSION*, 2025 is commissioned and produced by Serpentine Arts Technologies. Curated and led by Tamar Clarke-Brown, *Arts Technologies Curator*; with Ruth Waters, *Arts Technologies Producer*; and Vi Trinh, *Assistant Arts Technologies Curator*; with additional support from Liz Stumpf, *Assistant Exhibitions Curator*.

*Research and development by* Serpentine Arts Technologies (led by Kay Watson, *Head of Arts Technologies*) and the Future Art Ecosystems initiative (led by Victoria Ivanova, *R&D Strategic Lead* and Tommie Introna *R&D Producer*).

*Exhibition production by* Honor Bailey-Rosse, *Production Manager*; Richard Install, *Head of Production*; and Alice Houghton, *Registrar*  
*Exhibition design by* Lydia Chan (New School represents)  
*Lighting design by* Rob Prouse  
*Lighting installation by* Steve Wald  
*AV provided by* ADi  
*Exhibition build by* Beyond Surface  
*Technicians:* Charlotte Buckler, Isabel Pina Ferreira, Giacomo Layet, Rolo, Anthony Sylvester and Kenji Takahashi

*Project documentary produced by* Partizan, directed by Yasser Abubeker.

*With special thanks to* Princess Chance, Goethe-Institut London, Calum Knight, Kunstraum, Igal Nassima, Lugh O'Neill, Public Gallery, Southby Productions and Clément Thibault.

## BLOOMBERG CONNECTS

Printed in conjunction with the exhibition Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley: *THE DELUSION*, presented at Serpentine North, 30 September 2025—18 January 2026.

*Edited by* Tamar Clarke-Brown and Liz Stumpf, *copy-edited by* Hanna Girma and Melissa Larnet, *designed by* Kees de Klein, *printed by* Newspaper Club.

© 2025 the artist and Serpentine. Unless otherwise stated, all visual material included in this publication © Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley.

Serpentine is a charity and we need your support to continue our work more than ever. Please donate today to help keep our programmes free and open to all.

Discover more @SerpentineUK  
serpentinegalleries.org  
+44 (0) 20 7402 6075  
information@serpentinegalleries.org

Learn more about Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley: *THE DELUSION* in our free digital guide on Bloomberg Connects. Available in over 40 languages.



**Bloomberg Connects**

## THE DELUSION MADE POSSIBLE BY

Suneil Setiya

ADVISORS

**AECOM**

**Weil**

**GALLOWGLASS**  
Health & Safety

SERPENTINE SUPPORTED BY

ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND

Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

**Bloomberg  
Philanthropies**



DANIELLE  
BRATHWAITE-SHIRLEY