

Press Release, Thursday 21 May 2026

## DANIELLE BRATHWAITE-SHIRLEY *I DIDNT REALISE YOU THOUGHT LIKE THAT*

Launches 21 May 2026

Play online at [IDIDNTREALISEYOUTHUGHTLIKETHAT.COM](https://IDIDNTREALISEYOUTHUGHTLIKETHAT.COM) (web and mobile)

Further information: [press@serpentinegalleries.org](mailto:press@serpentinegalleries.org)



Image: *I DIDNT REALISE YOU THOUGHT LIKE THAT*, 2026, Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley. Courtesy the artist.

Serpentine is delighted to release *I DIDNT REALISE YOU THOUGHT LIKE THAT* an online game and shareable tool for critical thinking, developed by artist and game designer Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley, in partnership with nonprofit organisation Beyond Code Collective (Beyond Code), and supported by Glass Castle Foundation.

*I DIDNT REALISE YOU THOUGHT LIKE THAT* will be available to play on web and mobile. It marks the next chapter of *THE DELUSION*, the multiplayer video game project addressing polarisation and societal rifts, which was presented at Serpentine North from September 2025 to January 2026. The project's release on digital platforms signals Serpentine's continued commitment to supporting art beyond gallery walls, fostering space for public discourse, while advancing Beyond Code's mission to expand access to technological literacy and tools for future technologists and learners of all backgrounds.



Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley (b.1995) is a London and Berlin-based Black Trans artist, community archivist and game designer whose practice prioritises active engagement. One of today's most urgent voices, Brathwaite-Shirley embraces 'the audience as medium', creating bold, interactive digital projects that explore emergent identity politics by centring and archiving the marginalised voices and concerns of the public, especially those most at risk of erasure or persecution.

Their groundbreaking 2025 exhibition *THE DELUSION* at Serpentine North transformed the gallery space into a forum for difficult conversations about polarisation, censorship, and social connection.

*I DIDNT REALISE YOU THOUGHT LIKE THAT* was developed with Beyond Code, a nonprofit organisation that bridges the gap between inspiration, training, and employment in technology by connecting learners to educational content and opportunities to develop cutting-edge technologies.

*I DIDNT REALISE YOU THOUGHT LIKE THAT* immerses players in the post-apocalyptic world first seen in Brathwaite-Shirley's graphic novel *Below the Blue Line*, where every negative comment ever written online comes to life, and factions cling rigidly to their own versions of truth and justice.

**Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley says:** "*I DIDNT REALISE YOU THOUGHT LIKE THAT* is a reflection of our world, allowing players to reflect on their political opinions and beliefs to understand how their judgements shape and constrict the lives of others."

**Mica Le John, Executive Director, Beyond Code Collective, says:** "Beyond Code is dedicated to expanding access in technology so that the next generation of builders and innovators have the space and tools to create. We're grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with Danielle and the Serpentine team to develop such important work that fosters dialogue and consideration of alternative futures. The project embodies our vision for a more thoughtful world, and we are delighted to see this work come to life in this new form."

**Suneil Setiya, Chair, Glass Castle Foundation, and Serpentine Trustee, says:** "Danielle has a visionary way of creating safe spaces for self reflection and provides an antidote to the polarisation of social media, which can drown out the moderate and reasonable."

**Bettina Korek, CEO, Serpentine, and Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director, Serpentine, say:** "We are thrilled to release *IDIDNT REALISE YOU THOUGHT LIKE THAT* - and to do so in partnership with Glass Castle Foundation and Beyond Code Collective, brought together by our new Trustee Suneil Setiya. This project embodies how we work with artists: from R&D through exhibition and now into an entirely new format and audience. Our relationship with Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley shows what long-term commitment to an artist's practice makes possible, work that travels beyond the gallery, beyond the exhibition, and into the world. At Serpentine, we believe collaboration multiplies what art can do and who it can reach."

Available for the first time on digital platforms, this release extends the project's reach, providing access to Brathwaite-Shirley's vision of art as infrastructure for civic dialogue and creating more opportunities for online and expanded audiences to engage with urgent questions.



*I DIDNT REALISE YOU THOUGHT LIKE THAT* invites players to confront moral complexity through a deceptively simple mechanism: a door. Through it, fictional characters, conspiracy agents or “Influencers”, request entry based on their stated beliefs. The game draws on the aesthetics of contemporary populist politics as seen on social media. It explores how language and ideas once considered fringe can move into public debate and policy.

The game simulates a real-time feed too. Its dynamic scroll makes abstract ethical dilemmas feel immediate and visceral. The mechanics mirror daily choices about who and what we platform online. The game references early 1990s video games, with labyrinthine environments and monsters, while speaking to digitally native generations and connecting to a broader cultural vocabulary.

Each interaction asks players to face difficult issues honestly. Mixing satire and absurd humour, the game combines real and fictional content from the daily news cycle. It archives headlines, social-media posts, conversations with spiritual leaders and activists, and testimonies from Brathwaite-Shirley’s Black trans and queer community. The artist’s autobiographical notes are also included, reflecting the wide range of perspectives in society. Players meet a unique cast of characters, experience different viewpoints, and reach bespoke endings based on their choices. The game asks: what kind of world will your actions create? It encourages reflection, dialogue, and new connections.

Imagined as a living archive, *I DIDNT REALISE YOU THOUGHT LIKE THAT* is an evolving, open-source artwork. It will continue to grow with new characters and conversations gathered from workshops, focus groups, and other community initiatives.

*I DIDNT REALISE YOU THOUGHT LIKE THAT* is commissioned and produced by Serpentine Arts Technologies, led by Kay Watson, Head of Arts Technologies. This project is curated and led by Tamar Clarke-Brown, Curator, Arts Technologies, with Isobel Peyton Jones, Arts Technologies Producer and Vi Trinh, Arts Technologies Assistant Curator. An area of focus for the department is game engines and expanded forms of gaming that exist between both digital and physical contexts. Previous projects have included: Ian Cheng, *Bad Corgi* (2015), *B.O.B.* (2018), Jakob Kudsk Steensen, *Catharsis* (2020); *Trust*, *Hivemind* (2022), and the acclaimed Gabriel Massan & Collaborators, *Third World: The Bottom Dimension* (2023) that has been touring widely since its first presentation at Serpentine North in 2023.

## Notes to Editors

### About Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley

Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley (b. 1995, London) is a Berlin-based artist whose interdisciplinary practice spans animation, sound, performance, and video game development. Their work centres on archiving and amplifying Black Trans experiences, intertwining lived realities with speculative fiction to reimagine and retell their stories. In their practice, Brathwaite-Shirley utilises interactive technologies to create participatory spaces that challenge traditional narratives and encourage active engagement. Their projects often take the form of immersive video games, where players navigate choices that confront their assumptions and biases, fostering deeper conversations about identity, privilege, and systemic oppression. Through their innovative use of digital media, Brathwaite-Shirley not only preserves the histories but also envisions inclusive



futures where the voices of those that are ignored are central. Their work serves as both an archive and a catalyst for dialogue, inviting audiences to reflect on their roles within broader societal structures. A graduate of the Slade School of Fine Art in 2019, Brathwaite-Shirley has presented solo exhibitions and performances at notable institutions, including Serpentine North, London (2025), Fundació Joan Miró (2024), LAS (2024), Studio Voltaire (2024), SCAD (2023), Art Night (2023), and FACT (2022). Their work has also been featured in group exhibitions at venues such as the Julia Stoschek Foundation (2022) and the Barbican (2018).

#### **Game Credits:**

Lead Artist and concept development: Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley

Commissioned and produced by Serpentine Arts Technologies

Developed in collaboration with Beyond Code Collective

Made possible by Glass Castle Foundation

Developer (Beyond Code Collective): Fonz Morris

Executive Director (Beyond Code Collective): Mica Le John

Curator: Tamar Clarke-Brown (Serpentine Arts Technologies)

Producer: Isobel Peyton Jones (Serpentine Arts Technologies)

Assistant Curator: Vi Trinh (Serpentine Arts Technologies)

#### **Original Game Credits:**

Technical Direction by Vincent Moulinet

Game Development by Florian Brueckner and Leo Auersperg-Castell

Writer's room by Travis Alabanza, Tatenda Shamiso, Shaznay Martin

Costumes by Anonymous Club (Shayne Oliver Group)

Music by Lorraine James

Sound Design and Arrangement by Guillaume Tiger

Game Narrative Design by Brooke Maggs

Movement Direction by Malik Nashad Sharpe

Animation Assistance by Harriet Blend

Voice Acting by Madison Moore, Robin Rutenberg and Catharine Cary

Research and Advisory Support from Julia Ebner, Megnha Jayanth, Christopher Summerfield, Dr Stephen Reicher, Celia Hodent, Alan Resnick and Brooke Maggs.

Featuring: Bolanle Tajudeen, Harold Offeh, Ain Bailey, Rabz Lansiquot, Helen Starr

*I DIDNT REALISE YOU THOUGHT LIKE THAT* is intended for mature audiences. It contains strong language and adult themes. Parental guidance is advised.

#### **About Serpentine**

Building new connections between artists and audiences, Serpentine presents pioneering contemporary art exhibitions and cultural events with a legacy that stretches back over half a century, from a wide range of emerging practitioners to the most internationally recognised artists, writers, scientists, thinkers, and cultural thought leaders of our time.

Based in London's Kensington Gardens, across two sites, Serpentine North and Serpentine South, Serpentine features a year-round, free programme of exhibitions, architectural showcases, education, live events and technological activations, in the park and beyond the gallery walls.



The Serpentine Pavilion is a yearly pioneering commission, which began in 2000 with Dame Zaha Hadid. It features the first UK structures by some of the biggest names in international architecture.

Public art has emerged as a central strand of Serpentine's programme. Major presentations include a collection of Eduardo Paolozzi's sculptures (1987), Anish Kapoor's *Turning the World Upside Down* (2010), Lee Ufan's *Relatum-Stage* (2018/19), Christo and Jeanne-Claude's *London Mastaba* in the Serpentine Lake (2018), *I LOVE YOU EARTH* by Yoko Ono (2021) and Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster's *In remembrance of the coming alien* (Alienor) (2022), Gerhard Richter's *STRIP-TOWER* (2023), Yayoi Kusama's *Pumpkin* (2024), Esther Mahlangu's mural *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (2024) and Giuseppe Penone's *Albero folgorato (Thunderstruck Tree)*, 2012 and *Idee di pietra (Ideas of Stone)*, 2010 - 2024 in 2025.

Proud to maintain free access for all visitors, thanks to its unique location, Serpentine also reaches an exceptionally broad audience and maintains a profound connection with its local community.

In 2026, Suneil Setiya joins the Board of Serpentine with significant expertise in philanthropy, governance, and long-term institutional sustainability. With a strong interest in arts and technology, he has supported Serpentine's recent exhibition by Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley and Arts Technologies Research & Development work.

### **About Serpentine Arts Technologies**

Serpentine Arts Technologies programme explores the impact of technology through art, research and experimental projects. It supports artists to produce projects that use advanced technologies and convenes people working in art, technology, law, policy, and academia to share knowledge and develop new ideas about technology and society.

The foundation of Serpentine Arts Technologies' programme is in an evolving R&D Platform that nurtures innovation for future art ecologies by securing a crucial institutional space for pragmatic interventions and necessary risk-taking at the intersection of art, science and technology. This is achieved through dedicated research projects, knowledge-sharing with the wider sector through Future Art Ecosystems, and co-facilitation of a national Creative R&D Working Group.

### **About Glass Castle Foundation**

Glass Castle Foundation is a new philanthropic foundation aiming to provide catalytic support for artists and audiences of the future. We are committed to creating the conditions for extraordinary artists from across disciplines to thrive and experiment freely, and to empowering the infrastructure needed to realise new work that challenges, inspires, and connects us all.

### **About Beyond Code Collective**

When we asked the question, "Who is Coding Your Future?", we knew the answer should be all of us. Beyond Code Collective (Beyond Code) bridges the gap between inspiration, training, and






employment in tech, connecting learners to educational content, opportunities to develop cutting-edge technologies, and avenues to launch careers.

Beyond Code is a transformative new organisation designed to prepare learners of all ages and demographics to unlock the opportunities of a tech-powered world for long-lasting career mobility. Beyond Code's integrated ecosystem aims to create sustainable pathways to quality jobs while strengthening the digital infrastructure of organisations that drive community impact. With expertise from corporate leaders and technologists, Beyond Code is not only helping learners build the foundation but also supporting technical skills, career training, placement, and entrepreneurship. Learn more at <https://www.wearebcc.org/en>.

**For more information, please contact:**

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