ED FORNIELES
S E E D

22 September — 28 October 2
Private view 21 September, 6— pm

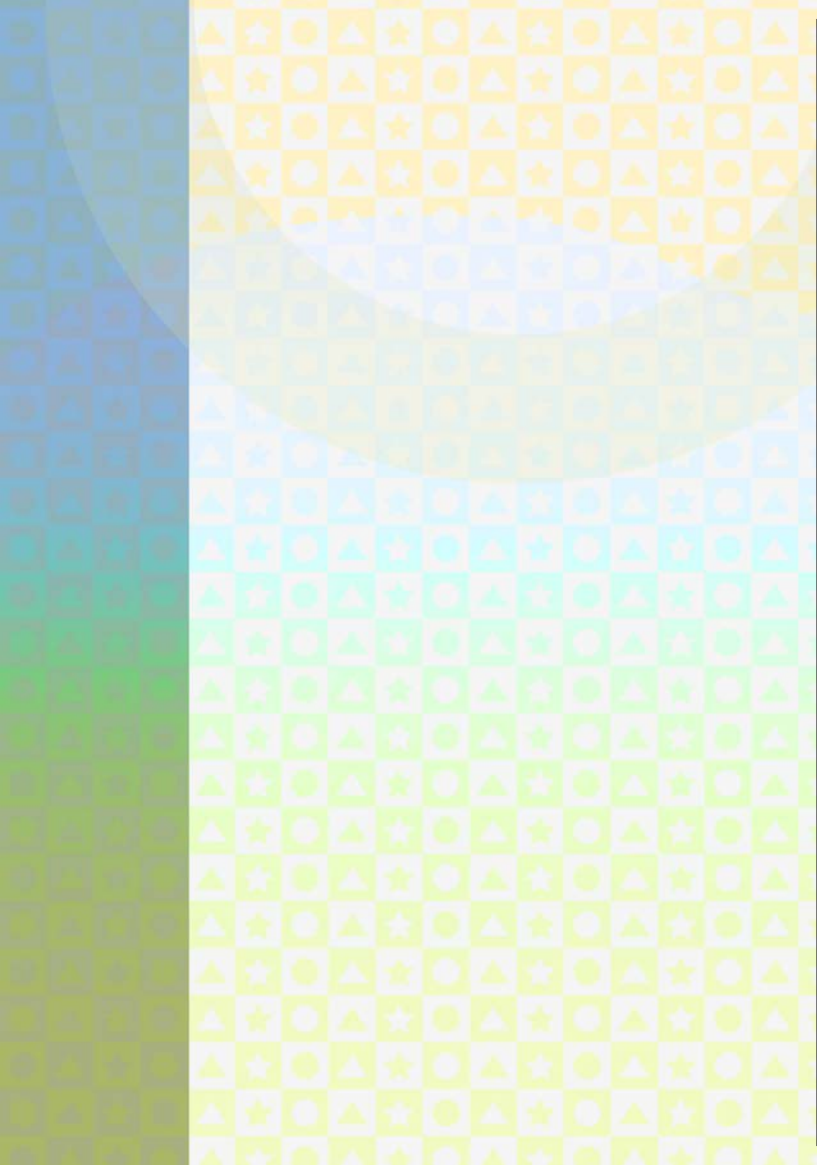# CARLOS/ISHIKAWA

it 4, 88 Mile End Road
on E1 4UN
w.carlosishikawa.com
4 (0) 20 7001 1744

At its best the gallery is an imaginarium, a place in which ideas can be fostered, modelled and tested. In this current juncture it feels art can cross its parameter line with more ease than before; accidentally or with intent finding itself in radically different contexts, being used in radically new ways.

It's this capacity to cross lines, to bleed that is most interesting to me at the moment, it's a point in which a work risks collapse, losing a certain vital plane of ambiguity in exchange for becoming real in someone else's hands.

But perhaps another plane might be opening up at this point, a different register of ambiguity that seeds itself firmly in affect, however small that might be. Untethered from the object work becomes active, its contours, complexity and core registered in the trickle of thoughts and actions activated in the viewer, their groups and the structures they inhabit.

An idea is seeded, then taken up, then stripped back and repurposed for its new environment; but yet something still remains. This new form, a truly collaborative one flows back into the gallery with ease, a form that sits somewhere between the authentic and found and resonates with its interactions.

The gallery at this point has changed function, operating as a memetic platform, a place of exchange in which art is defined as proposition, that once realized can be deployed, held, felt, taken on or rejected.

How does friendship perform itself, what does it give us, can we have a meaningful relationship with an anonymous entity, service or A.I, how are unconventional interactions such of these distinct and what are the implications of such relationships?
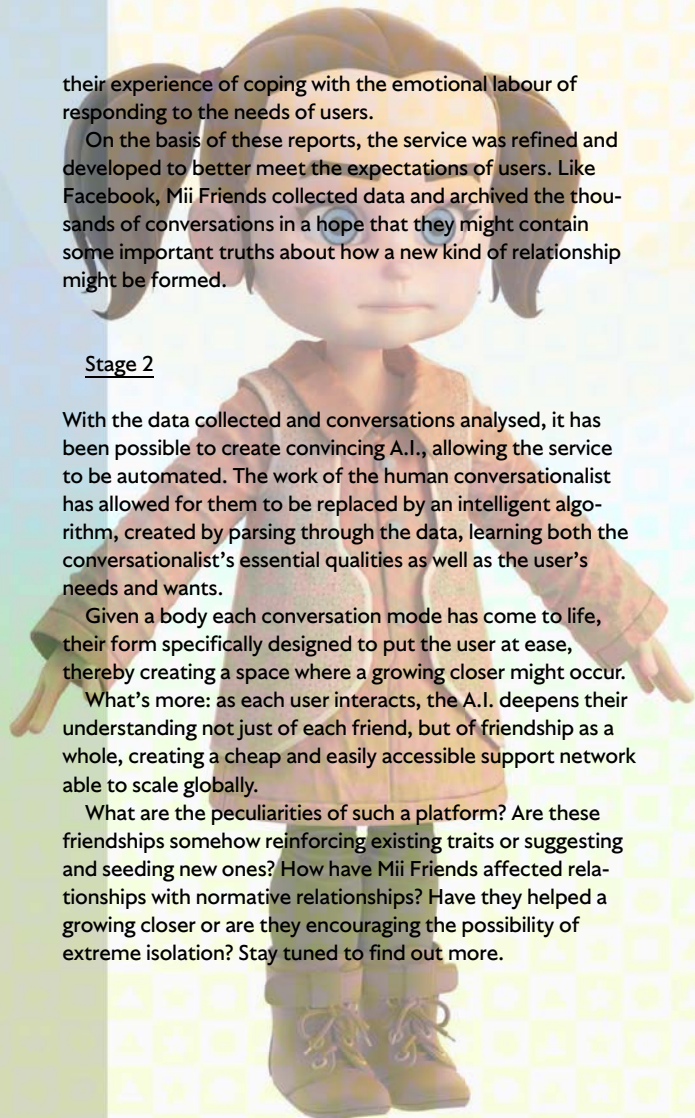
Mii Friends

Stage 1

Hello, I'm your Mii Friend and I'm here to chat. Operated by a team of conversationalists, I'm here to respond to your needs as a friend. Please select the tone and direction of our conversation from the following options:

*   *<Conflict>*
*   *<Shoulder to cry on>*
*   *<Ego stroke>*
*   *<Inquisitive listener>*
*   *<Brainstorm>*
*   *<Flirtatious/Sexy>*

Your information will remain anonymous and detached from your 'real' identity yet will become the basis for research and production of new works of art. If you are comfortable with starting this conversation, please reply "yes" and your chosen tone. If not, simply do not answer, or respond with "no". To stop the conversation at any point, please just type "stop conversation" and we will not continue the conversation until otherwise requested.

*   *If you have chosen a direction before, please remind me what it was.*

Over a period of six months, Ed Fornieles' Facebook account was used by a team of hired conversationalists to test and develop a friendship service. Users could choose between different conversation modes before entering into a dialogue with a 'conversationalist' who performed the role assigned to them. Weekly reports by the conversationalists analysed the results of each interaction, and included information about

their experience of coping with the emotional labour of responding to the needs of users.

On the basis of these reports, the service was refined and developed to better meet the expectations of users. Like Facebook, Mii Friends collected data and archived the thousands of conversations in a hope that they might contain some important truths about how a new kind of relationship might be formed.

Stage 2

With the data collected and conversations analysed, it has been possible to create convincing A.I., allowing the service to be automated. The work of the human conversationalist has allowed for them to be replaced by an intelligent algorithm, created by parsing through the data, learning both the conversationalist's essential qualities as well as the user's needs and wants.

Given a body each conversation mode has come to life, their form specifically designed to put the user at ease, thereby creating a space where a growing closer might occur.

What's more: as each user interacts, the A.I. deepens their understanding not just of each friend, but of friendship as a whole, creating a cheap and easily accessible support network able to scale globally.

What are the peculiarities of such a platform? Are these friendships somehow reinforcing existing traits or suggesting and seeding new ones? How have Mii Friends affected relationships with normative relationships? Have they helped a growing closer or are they encouraging the possibility of extreme isolation? Stay tuned to find out more.

09/14/2016 2:57PM

Hello, I'm your friend, Ed Fornieles and I'm here to chat.
Operated by a team of conversationalists, I'm here to respond to your needs as a friend. please select the tone and direction of our conversation from the following options:
<Conflict> [This mode includes deciding on and discussing a topic that you would like to fight about. This should be a topic that you consider useful towards self-improvement, learning or self-realization.]
<Shoulder to cry on>
<Ego stroke>
<Inquisitive listener>
<Brainstorm>
<Flirtatious/Sexy>
Your information will remain anonymous and detached from your 'real' identity yet will inspire a series of new work. If you are comfortable with starting this conversation, please reply "yes" and your chosen tone, if not, simply do not answer or respond with a "no." To stop the conversation at any point please just type "stop conversation" and we will not continue the conversation until otherwise requested.
If you have chosen a direction before, please remind me of what it is.

Yes. <brainstorm>

TRUTH TABLE
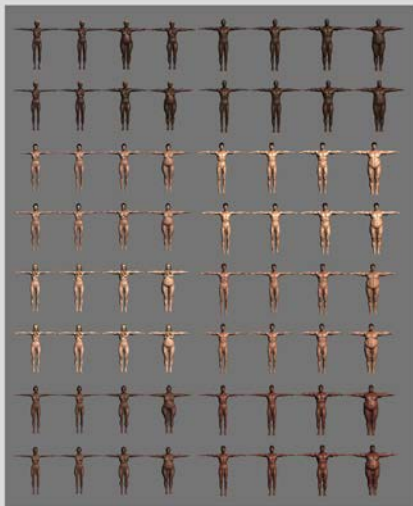
BE EVERYONE
FUCK EVERYONE

Oculus

Truth Table

truth table (noun)
electronics   a diagram of the outputs from all possible
combinations of input

Truth is a new VR product engineered for your enjoyment.
The latest fully immersive, experiential sexual technology
offers users the chance to occupy an ever changing host of
bodies locked in sexual embrace.

Within the cycle, the configuration of bodies constantly
shifts, as does the viewer's perspective. Variables are rand-
omized, moving from familiar to unfamiliar, possibly aligning
with a viewer's own tastes and preferences, until inevitably
drifting into the unknown and alien. In this experience, the
user's default assumptions of sexual taste are obfuscated and
abstracted, resulting in a leveling out, in which each type and
form is given equal emphasis.

In this way Truth Tables disrupts the norm of cultural and
social platforms that seek value through reinforcement of
pre-existing desires, beliefs and expectations. Instead an
attempt is made to forge an alternative paradigm grounded
in a mathematical and systematic approach to representa-
tion, that aims to distribute equally across the network.

What happens at this point, What does a world look like
where equality of representation is achieved through a math-
ematical leveling out. What could be the cultural and social
impact of such an environment? Is the subject freed from
their identity suddenly able to morph and shift on impulse?
Or is the subject's loss of structure a trauma, a psychedelic
hell in which no sense of self can be constructed and held?
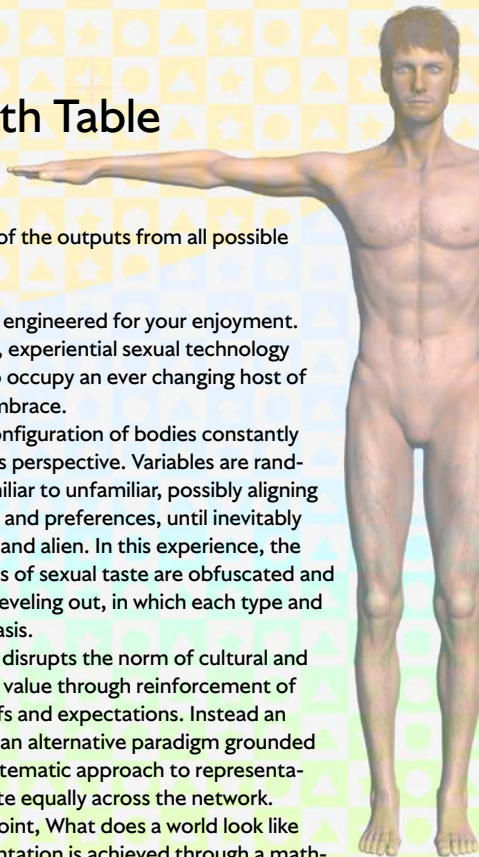
Will relationships be stripped back to their core as the aesthetic loses all meaning or will relationships falter? Can culture grow in such an environment, or will it mark a stasis in which ideas of progress give way to a state of unrelenting flux?
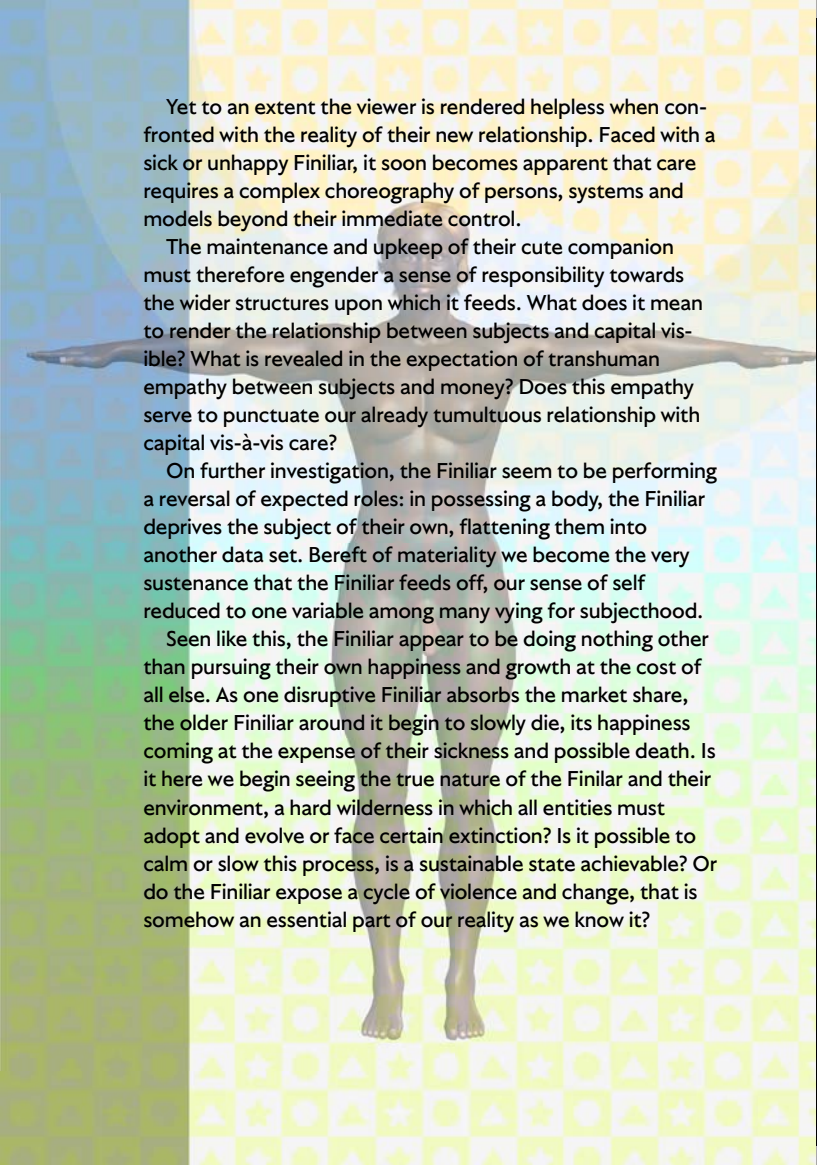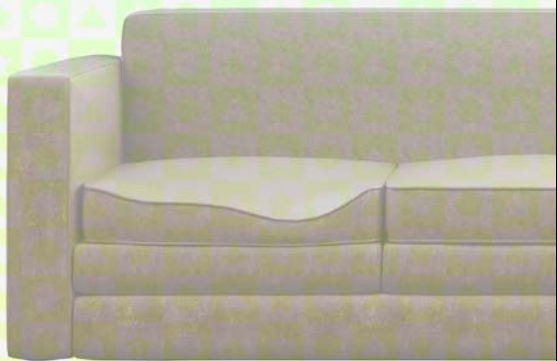
Finiliar

Fi-nil-iar (noun)
trademark   digital entity feeding off data sets produced by companies, currencies, and other large institutions, using a cute facial interface to elicit emotional attachment from the human subject

"Hello. I'd like to introduce you to Finilar, a new empathy tool designed to allow a close and intermediate understanding of the large and often illegible structures that surround us. The Finiliar connect any data set, however huge, to a thoroughly cute tiny bundle of joy, whose mental and physical health is at once relatable to."
— Finiliar promotional video

When watching a Finiliar's highs and lows as it goes about its day we are forced to recognise the weight of each movement. For instance, a smile of a Finiliar connected to GDP may mark the creation of thousands of jobs, while a spate of depression may point towards a deep-seated economic decline affecting millions. The emotional tumult of these bulbous friends begins to give a body to our relations with capital, charting it through our our interactions with these little critters.

Developed by engineers and designers based in Montreal, the Finiliar uses the exaggerated proportions of a newly born human child to elicit both a sense empathy and parental bond with you the viewer. Communicating through an interface of face and body language, the Finiliar transform often illegible data into something instantly knowable and relatable.
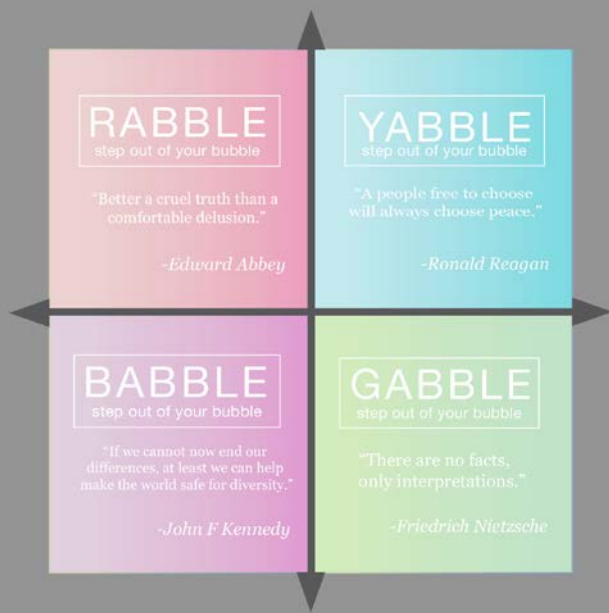
Yet to an extent the viewer is rendered helpless when confronted with the reality of their new relationship. Faced with a sick or unhappy Finiliar, it soon becomes apparent that care requires a complex choreography of persons, systems and models beyond their immediate control.

The maintenance and upkeep of their cute companion must therefore engender a sense of responsibility towards the wider structures upon which it feeds. What does it mean to render the relationship between subjects and capital visible? What is revealed in the expectation of transhuman empathy between subjects and money? Does this empathy serve to punctuate our already tumultuous relationship with capital vis-à-vis care?

On further investigation, the Finiliar seem to be performing a reversal of expected roles: in possessing a body, the Finiliar deprives the subject of their own, flattening them into another data set. Bereft of materiality we become the very sustenance that the Finiliar feeds off, our sense of self reduced to one variable among many vying for subjecthood.

Seen like this, the Finiliar appear to be doing nothing other than pursuing their own happiness and growth at the cost of all else. As one disruptive Finiliar absorbs the market share, the older Finiliar around it begin to slowly die, its happiness coming at the expense of their sickness and possible death. Is it here we begin seeing the true nature of the Finilar and their environment, a hard wilderness in which all entities must adopt and evolve or face certain extinction? Is it possible to calm or slow this process, is a sustainable state achievable? Or do the Finiliar expose a cycle of violence and change, that is somehow an essential part of our reality as we know it?

RABBLE
step out of your bubble

"Better a cruel truth than a comfortable delusion."

-Edward Abbey

YABBLE
step out of your bubble

"A people free to choose will always choose peace."

-Ronald Reagan

BABBLE
step out of your bubble

"If we cannot now end our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity."

-John F Kennedy

GABBLE
step out of your bubble

"There are no facts, only interpretations."

-Friedrich Nietzsche

a political conversation service

Babble

In response to an email raising concerns about the creation of a political conversation service which tries to bring mainstream people from different political perspectives into dialogue with each other. The concerns are that these conversations could exacerbate and escalate tensions between people from different political backgrounds rather than creating a constructive space.

This is an urgent moment, where many people risk being isolated by the mainstream, social media and politics; while seemingly having their concerns addressed by more radical groups whose rhetoric results in a hard discourse that doesn't allow for exchange of ideas or perspectives. It's this rigidity that is perhaps one of the greatest dangers in this present moment; it excludes compromise or emphatic actions and encourages a fear of anything different or other — which can ultimately lead to violence.

While real-world actions and politics contribute to our daily material existence (however imperfect that might be) it is the media, especially social media, that become our filter on to that reality. It's these social media platforms that Babble is attempting to investigate and address. What are the structural results of a filter bubble that cocoons the user from people of different perspectives, that prevents free exchange of ideas and opinions? It seems to create a hard binary that is even harder to escape if there is no possibility of a shared space.

Obviously, the platforms have the possibility of becoming a place of cathartic release and trolling in which people unburden animosity to each other (which to a degree may not be

an inherently bad thing). Which is why we are working on developing the platform that attempts to lessen the chance of this sort of use. The main mechanism to achieve this is simple one to one format in audio, which makes the act of trolling or even angry discourse incredibly inefficient. A troll thrives on impact of the many, while babble seeks to force a direct exchange of two people talking to each other, nothing else.

> "The more we watch the spectacle of meaningless death, of random violence and cruelty, the more afraid we become in our daily lives. We cannot embrace the stranger with love for we fear the stranger. This irrational fear is an expression of madness if we think of madness as meaning we are out of touch with reality."

This is a quote from bell hooks about love as a disruptive force that can counteract many of the patriarchal forms and conventions that invade our day-to-day. She formulates a definition of love that focuses on collapsing alienation in communities through the simple act of communication. I know love is an overused word and not much used in political discourse, but i think it is the genesis for the right kind of change.

In the end, I think it is better to talk than not, to try to hear not just someone's politics but the underlying needs and desires driving those positions. Perhaps then some common ground can begin to be mapped.
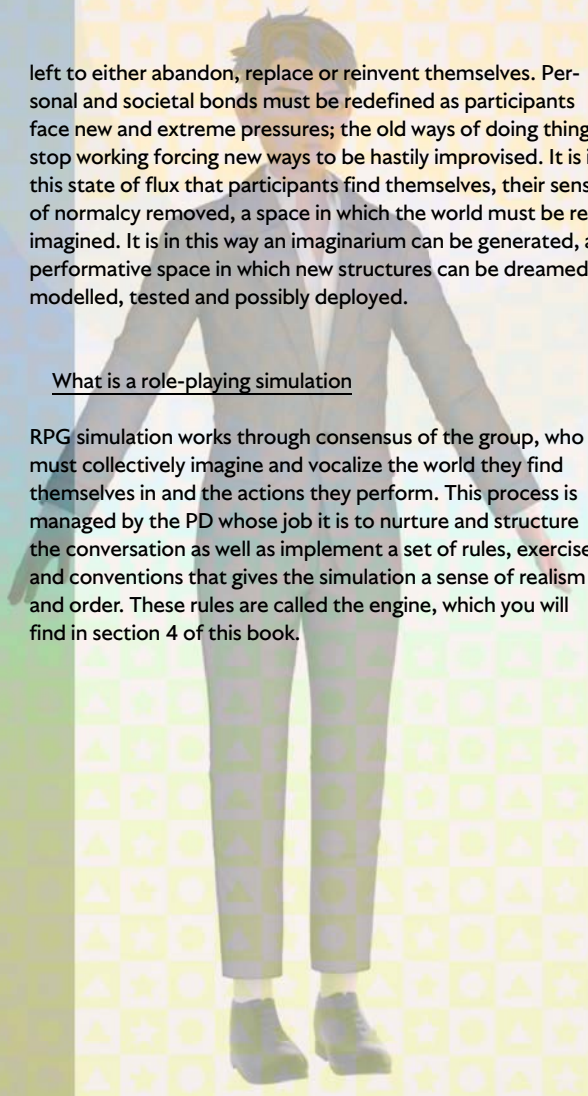
All the best,
Ed

Sim Vol. I

Hello and welcome to *Sim Vol. I: Existential Risk*, a book that introduces some of the ideas and techniques experimenting in roleplay that I have developed over the last five years. I see this as a starting point for a much larger investigation into the significance of simulated space.

Sim Vol. I: Existential Risk has been designed as a practical manual to help you to harness the idea of simulation and to give you the tools necessary to produce your own simulations and immerse yourself and others within them. Techniques have been taken and adapted from a wide variety of sources including acting theory, RPG tabletop games, emergency simulation and group therapy exercises. The main focus throughout has been to explore the latent power of the brain and its ability to model and make sense of a sometimes seemingly irrational world and to think how simulation of all kinds might be used to not only ask but also resolve questions about how culture and identity is formed, sustained and replicated.

It starts with an end

While the techniques and exercises in this book can be used to generate and run any number of scenarios, Sim Vol. I takes the apocalypse and post-apocalypse as its starting point; a moment of crisis in which the participant is stripped back, forced to confront themselves, their relationships and their environment differently. Participants enter a familiar yet distinctly different world, where institutions and infrastructure have collapsed or are radically changed, leaving those people

left to either abandon, replace or reinvent themselves. Personal and societal bonds must be redefined as participants face new and extreme pressures; the old ways of doing things stop working forcing new ways to be hastily improvised. It is in this state of flux that participants find themselves, their sense of normalcy removed, a space in which the world must be re-imagined. It is in this way an imaginarium can be generated, a performative space in which new structures can be dreamed, modelled, tested and possibly deployed.

What is a role-playing simulation

RPG simulation works through consensus of the group, who must collectively imagine and vocalize the world they find themselves in and the actions they perform. This process is managed by the PD whose job it is to nurture and structure the conversation as well as implement a set of rules, exercises and conventions that gives the simulation a sense of realism and order. These rules are called the engine, which you will find in section 4 of this book.

SIM VOL. 1
EXISTENTIAL RISK

by Ed Fornieles

SIM VOL. 1
EXISTENTIAL RISK

START AT THE END