



Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences, game:play lab

2022

Bodies in Play Zine

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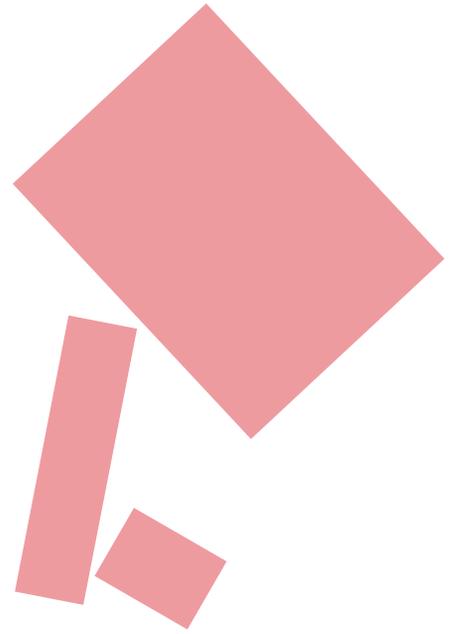
BODIES

IN

ZINE

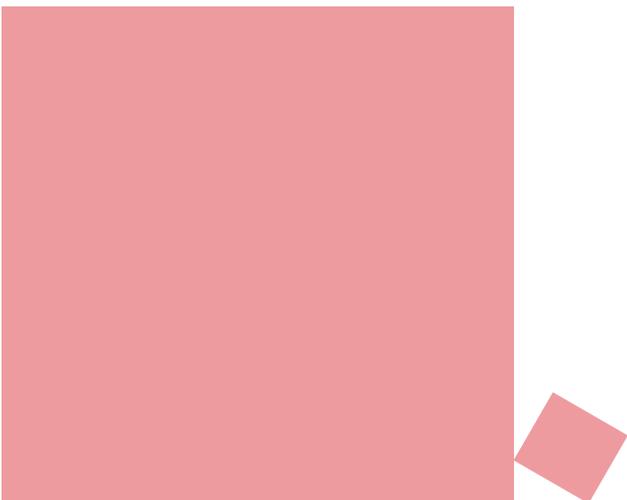
PLAY





LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

OCAD University and DMG acknowledge the ancestral and traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabe and the Huron-Wendat, who are the original owners and custodians of the land on which we stand and create.



INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS BODIES IN PLAY?

Bodies in Play (BiP) is a research project that brings together academic, cultural, and community practitioners to co-create knowledge towards more inclusive and innovative design practices for the creative technology sector.

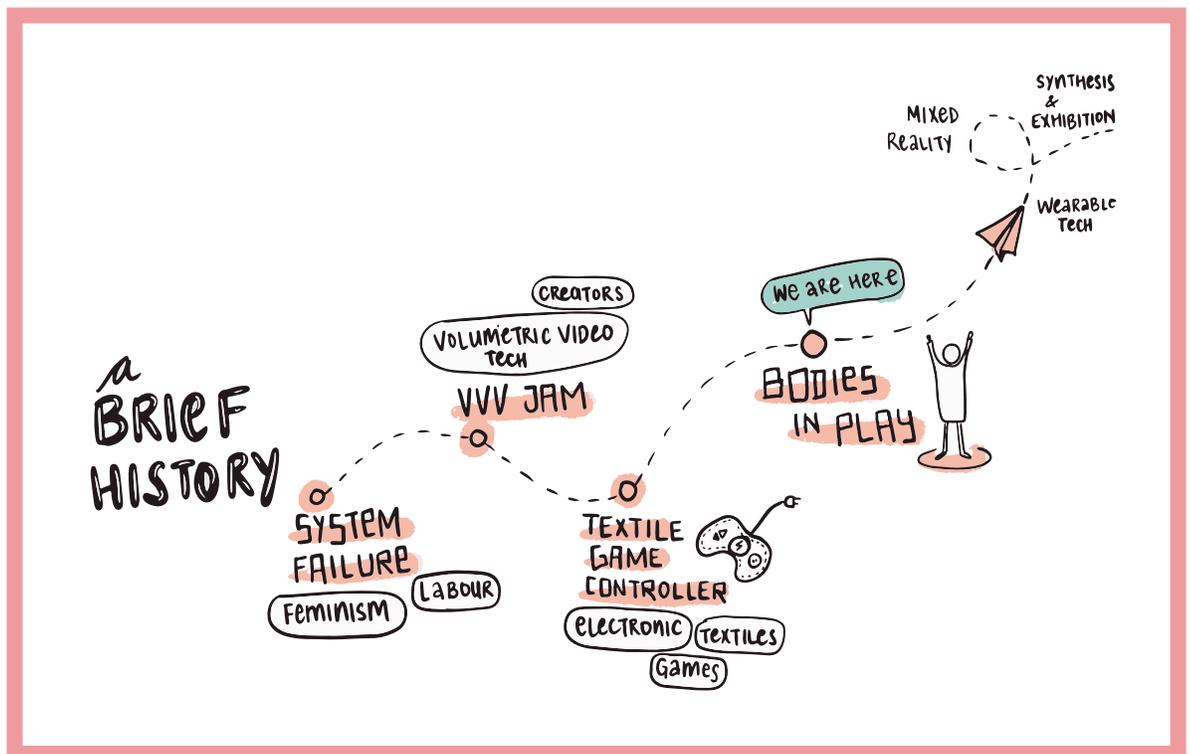
BiP launched online in early 2022 at a playshop that explored connections between bodies of all kinds, wearables and extended reality technologies.

WHAT IS A PLAYSHOP?

Playshops are social events at which people playfully collaborate to imagine, share, and develop ideas on a subject or theme. The playfulness of these events is core, and prioritises the active engagement and enjoyment of all involved. We believe that play is more generative of new knowledge than work and essential to imagining preferred futures for all.

WHAT ARE GAME JAMS?

Game jams are intensive and collaborative game making events that bring a community together to explore and build ideas often around a central theme in a short period of time. In a feminist setting, game jams are organized in a way that is mindful of the labour conditions and equitable access of those involved e.g. fixed duration, childcare options, payment where possible, etc.



THE PLAYSHOP TEAM

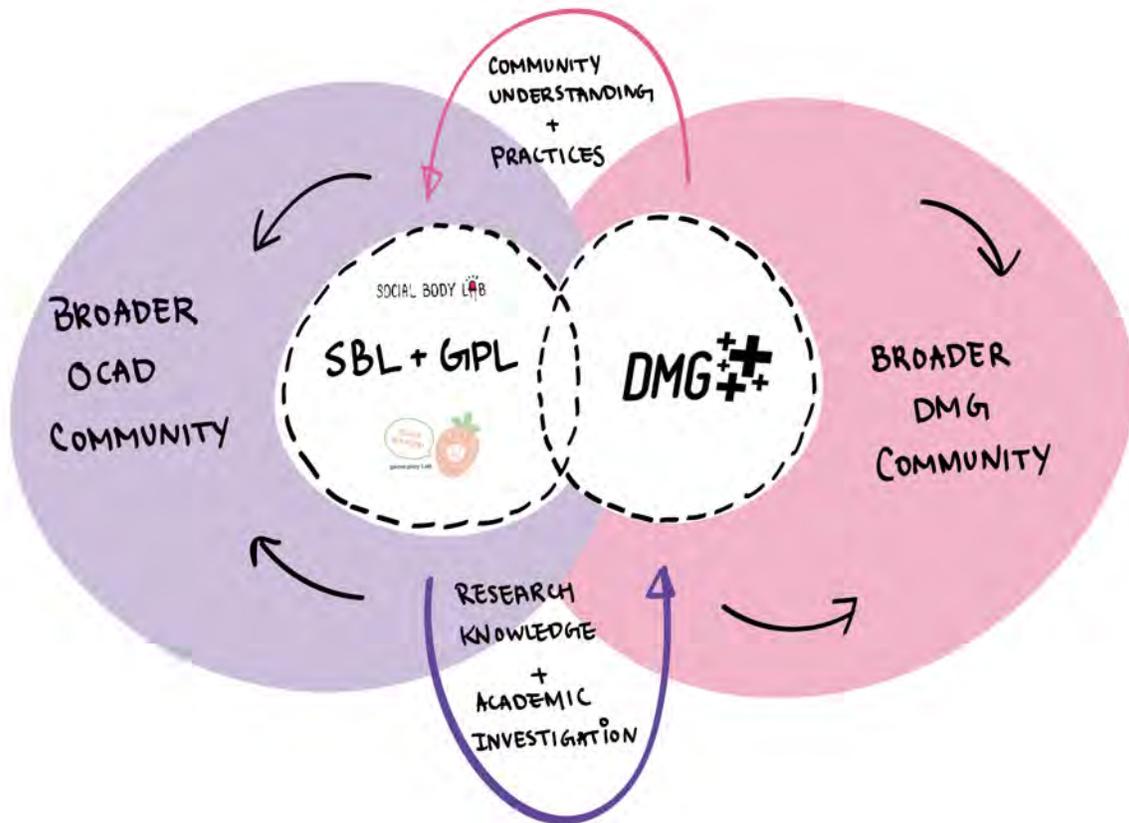


DMG

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Emma Westecott (Game:Play Lab)
Kate Hartman (Social Body Lab)
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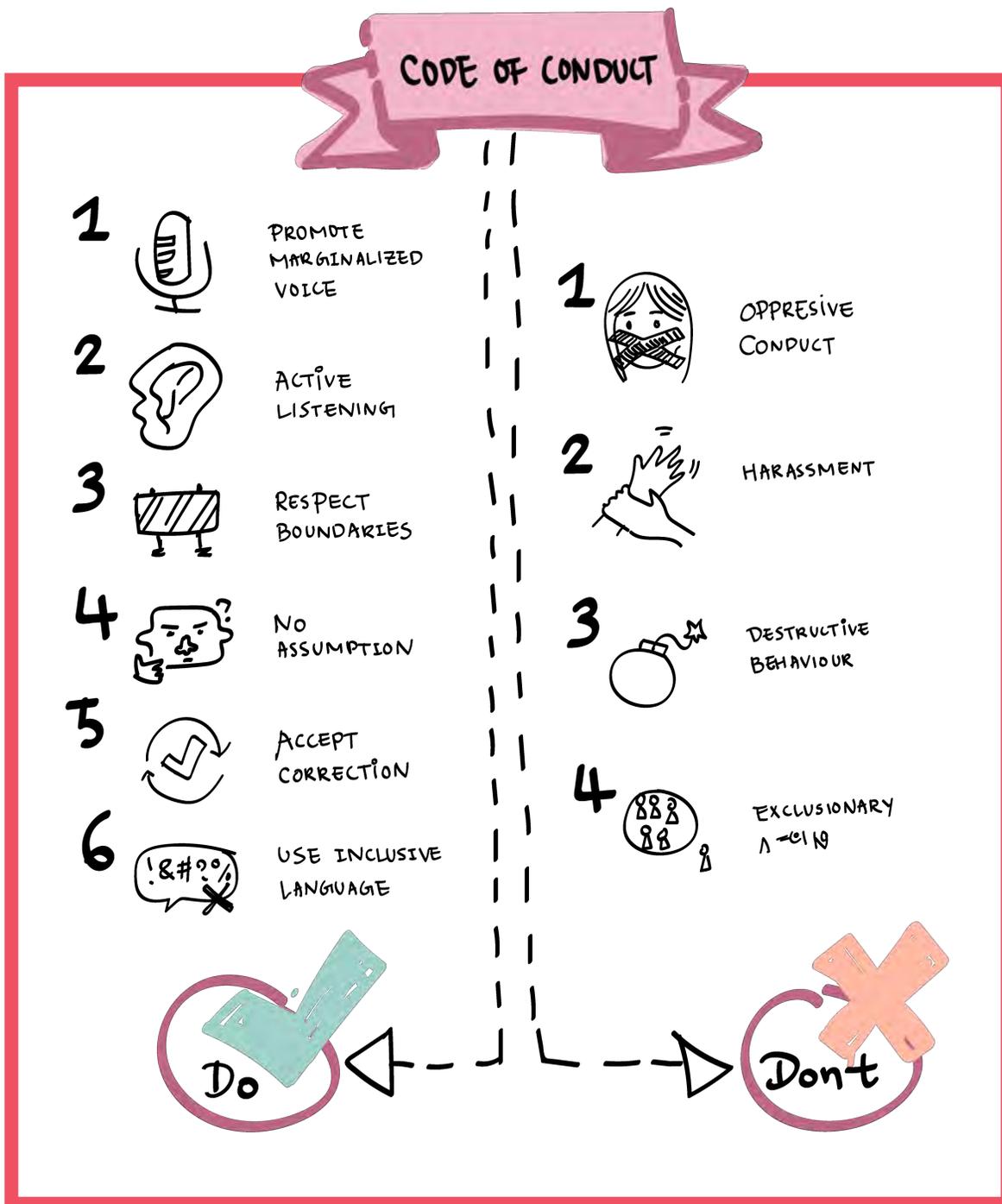
This partnership map describes the overlapping structure of this research partnership, aimed at maximizing knowledge sharing across academic and community collaborators.

PLAYSHOP SETUP

Our **Discord** server allows us to host live activities and conversation in audio and video as well as asynchronous text participation. It creates persistent online resources for our community after the event. As an approach taken up during the pandemic, working together online allows us to include people from other parts of the world that we may not otherwise have had access to. Our shared online space helps us be more mindful of varying workflows and feedback - for example the use of emojis to provide encouragement as a back channel to spoken conversation.

Our emphasis was on rapid brainstorming and ideation, a small group of participants were guided over the course of an afternoon to imagine the kinds of body-centric technologies and experiences they would like to see.

This was a speculative exploration into possible themes that could inspire future BiP activities and resulted in this zine - which we hope will provide a foundation for future work for ourselves and others.



Holding our playshop on Discord allowed us to progress participants through sign-off of a Code of Conduct (server behaviour guidelines) and Consent to Research (invitation and consent materials to meet our research ethics needs) prior to pronoun selection and introductions in our server #welcome channel.

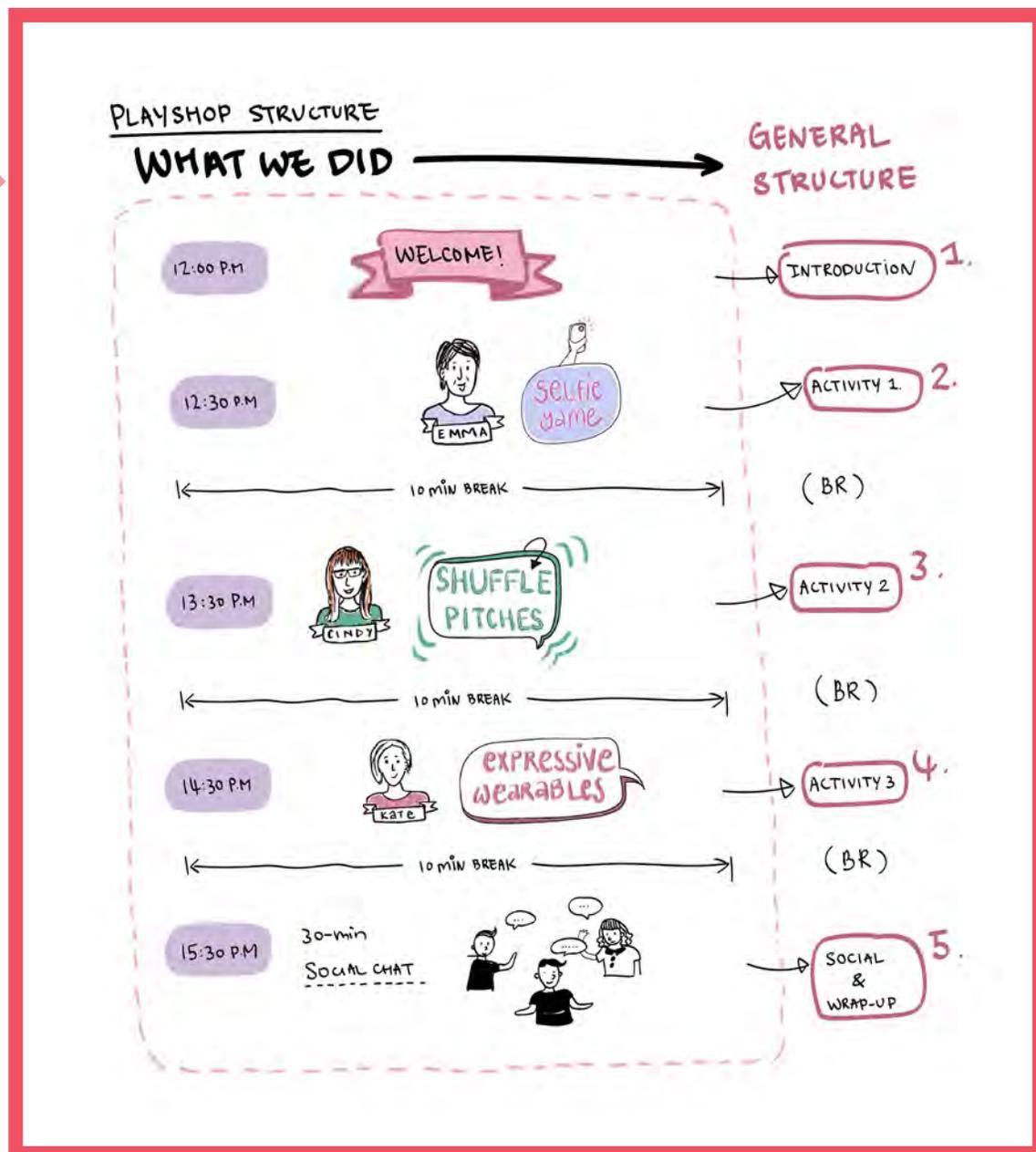
These methods are central to our work, intended to both set participant expectations and create the safest possible space for feminist work of this nature.

PLAYSHOP STRUCTURE

Each OCADU team member ran a brief playshop activity targeted at specific methods.

We started with: Welcome, Introduction to Bodies in Play, and warm up. This offered us a chance to introduce ourselves and get familiar with the BiP Discord.

Below is a suggested structure - activities can be swapped according to different needs and target audiences.



ACTIVITY 01

SELFIE GAME

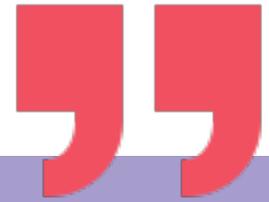
INTRODUCTION

As the first playshop activity, the goal was to introduce the politics of the project and act as an ice-breaker for participants on our Discord server. Written by feminists from several countries, the #Feminism nano-game collection takes on contemporary feminist issues through a series of small games meant to be played with other people.

WHAT IS A FEMINIST GAME?

Sexism oppresses everyone and pushes people into unequal power relationships. Feminism is about equity between all genders and is pluralist. Feminist games engage with feminist values, themes, and politics in a variety of ways. We believe that the culture we consume and the technologies we create can help undo the harms of sexism.

KIRA MAGRANN'S SELFIE GAME



Described as “An intimate game about feelings in images”, Kira Magrann’s Selfie Game asks the player to take and share selfies that express particular emotions felt whilst listening to music. Points are given to players who correctly guess the emotion shared, whilst all players compliment the selfie taker on their emotion, description or photo. Our playshop ran all activities on Discord in separate channels.



HOW TO TAKE A SELFIE

1. Chose an angle
2. Have a light source beside you
3. Consider head position in the image
4. Add a filter that flatters skin and hig lights features
5. Keep background simple
6. Express with your eyes

HOW DOES IT WORK?

STEP 1: Create and share a playlist that inspires emotions.

STEP 2: Read the following game description aloud:

In this game, every player will take one selfie at any time while the soundtrack is playing. The goal is to pick a time when you are feeling the strongest about an emotion you wish to express. Write down the emotion then take the selfie and share with the group.

STEP 3: As soon as someone shares their selfie, pause the soundtrack then the other players will try to guess what emotion is being expressed before the selfie taker shares their emotion. Players closest to the correct emotion get a heart on their answer, those furthest get a star.

STEP 4: As players share their selfies the rest of the group will give the sharer one compliment: it could be about the emotion, description or photo.

STEP 5: Repeat until all players have shared a selfie with the group. If you want to make it more of a “game” you could tally hearts to find the winner.



PARTICIPANTS' WORK

We chose the Selfie Game as it playfully introduces participants to each other in a familiar context that emphasises the player's control over their own image.

We ran this game in channel and whilst the Discord server struggled with sharing the playlist, the feedback and conversation soon became more important than the points awarded.

ACTIVITY 02

SHUFFLE PITCHES

WHAT IS A DEBATE/PITCH GAME?

Argument/debate games are a form of improvised game meant to encourage creative thinking and group discussion.

They are popular as both social games (for example Flatlands by Nathalie Pozzi and Eric Zimmerman), and as tools for creative scenario generation (as a form of prompt or speculative thinking, like The Thing From the Future, from Jeff Watson and Stuart

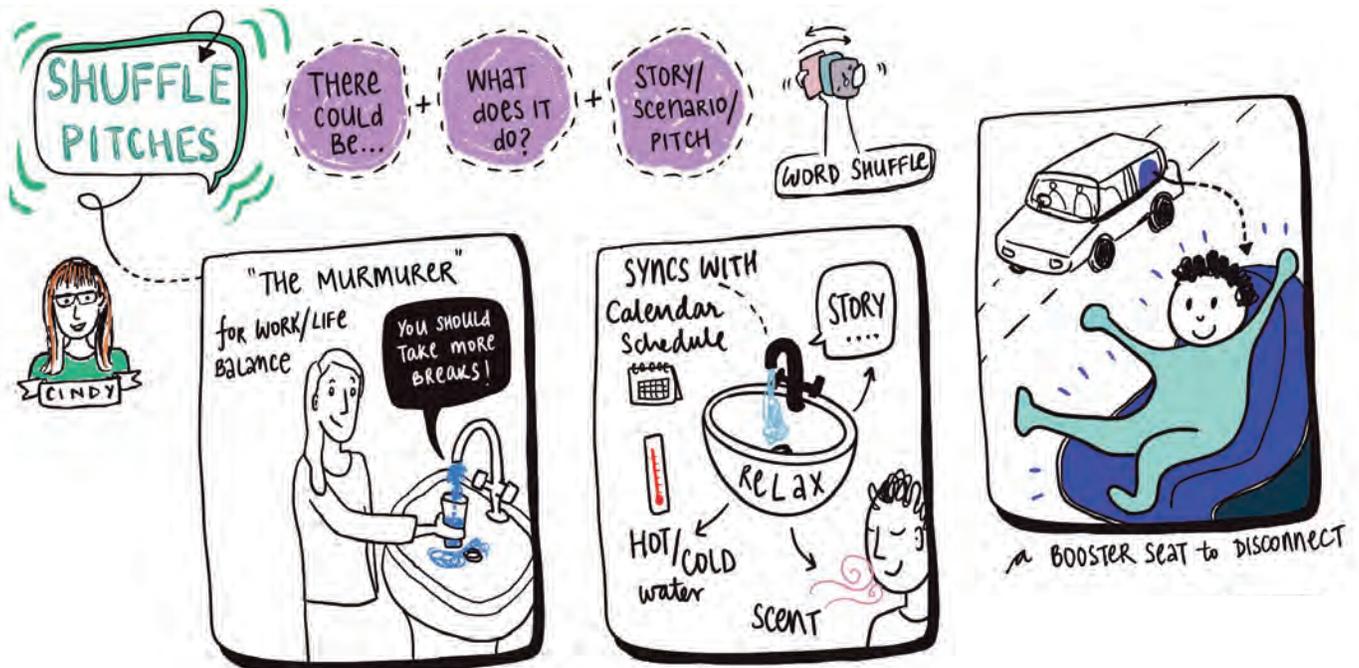
In a debate game, players pick from some pool of random objects, and are asked to convincingly argue something about that object. The game can take on additional complexity when players are asked to combine random objects together, or make particular kinds of arguments (for example, which object is the best fit to a particular statement or condition), compete against other players, and/or convince a group or a judge. A winner or victory condition is largely optional, which makes these kinds of games great icebreakers and idea generators. Since what makes a “best” argument is often highly subjective, it can also be a great way to encourage players to share situated perspectives in a

INTRODUCTION

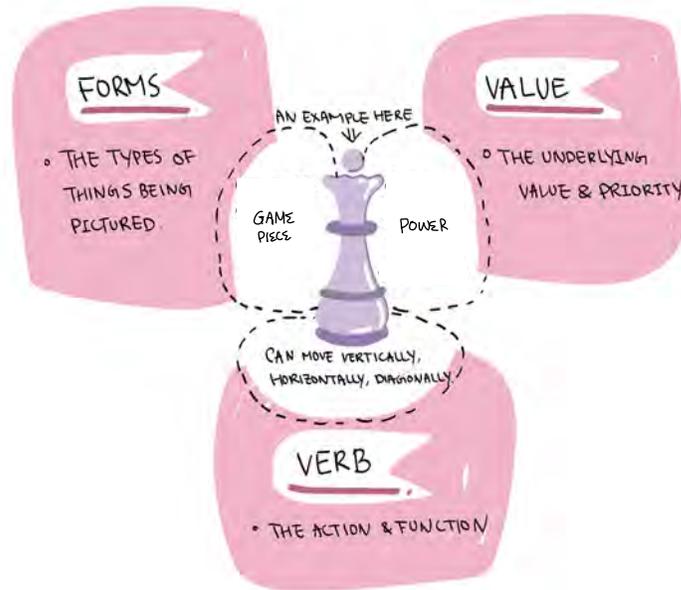
For our version of the game (Shuffle Pitches), we chose to co-create three lists of parameters that would be randomly combined to generate an object. Each player would then be randomly assigned an object, and would have a limited amount of time to further describe the object, and create a short story or scenario about it.

They were also encouraged to sketch it, or have one of our illustrators help sketch it. Each player then shared their story or scenario to the group.

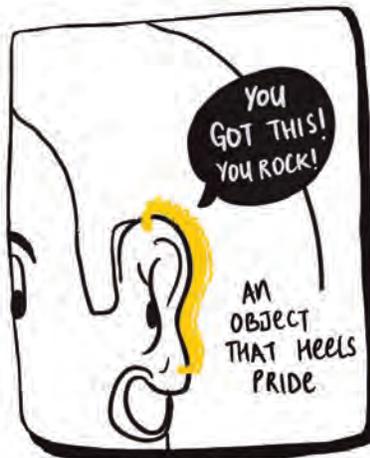
We opted not to judge the “best” contribution, instead celebrating the range and diversity of the player stories.



HOW DOES IT WORK?



- STEP 1:** Co-create lists of object characteristics to randomly combine. Our version used three characteristics: **Forms, Verbs and Values.**
- STEP 2:** Each person will be assigned one shuffled object. Generate a random set of constraints for each person/pair.
- STEP 3:** Describe the object, and come up with a short story/ scenario/pitch about it. The scenario provides some context for how this object would exist in the world.
- STEP 4:** Share your possible object with the group.
- STEP 5:** If you want to make it more of a “game,” you could vote on the best or favourite option. Judging the pitches is entirely optional!



PARTICIPANTS' WORK

ACTIVITY 03

EXPRESSIVE WEARABLES

INTRODUCTION

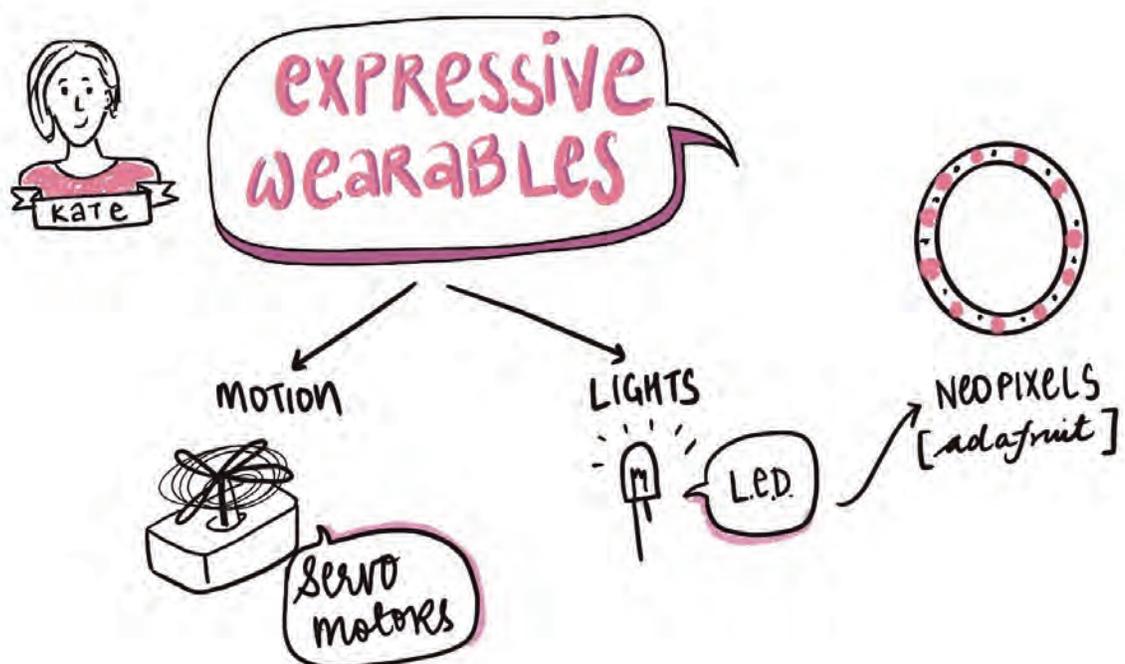
This final playshop invited participants to explore the possibilities for embodied expressivity that might be achieved within the realm of do-it-yourself wearable electronics. The following “Toolbox” of expressive components was introduced:

- **Neopixels** - These LEDs (light-emitting diodes) can light up in many colours, be controlled individually, and come in many form factors including rings, strips, and grids.
- **Servo Motors** - These motors can be programmed to turn to precise locations and can drive mechanisms that cause wearables to change shape or visual pattern. They can be easily mounted to the body using 3D printed accessories from the Kinetic Wearables Toolkit.

Participants were asked a series of prompts and then were invited to create a “Profile” and a “Storyboard” for their Expressive Wearables. The following methods were offered as ways to quickly and easily visualise ideas:

- **Digital sketching**
- **Sketching by hand and then photographing or scanning**
- **Use of Creative Commons licence and copyright-free images via services such as the Noun Project and Unsplash**
- **Help from the two live illustrators available on Discord**

Outcomes were shared both by posting to the live slide deck as well as to the Discord channel.



HOW DOES IT WORK?

Our bodies are inherently expressive. Through our body language and facial expressions they can share mood, attitude, interest, and state of attention with those around us. But sometimes they don't share enough, or share too much; or are misread or misunderstood.

What we wear often acts as a means of personal expression. Clothing, shoes, and accessories can be used to help us express or connect with different aspects of our identities. But even these options have limits.

TASK: Imagine a wearable electronics device that uses body-based light or motion to express something not adequately expressed by either the body or everyday (non-electronic) wearable items.

How does the wearable use different modes or behaviours of these tools to express different states of being or communication differing information?

DESIGN DECISIONS:

1. Who is it for? Where/when is it used?
2. What type of wearable?
3. What does it express?
4. What type of Expression Tools (LEDs, motors, etc.) does it use?
5. What are the Expression Modes?

PARTICIPANTS' WORK

Introvert Tiara

Kate Hartman

Description
A wearable for certain introverts who are super energetic and sociable at the start of the day but after a certain number of meetings need to recharge...

Type of Wearable

- A tiara

What it expresses

- Energy available for social interaction

Expression Modes

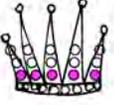
- 5 modes
- Number of LEDs lit decreases and also dims as the longer you are engaged in social interaction.

Expression Tools

- What kind of clothing, accessory, etc.?

PROFILE





Created by Tatyana from the Beach Project

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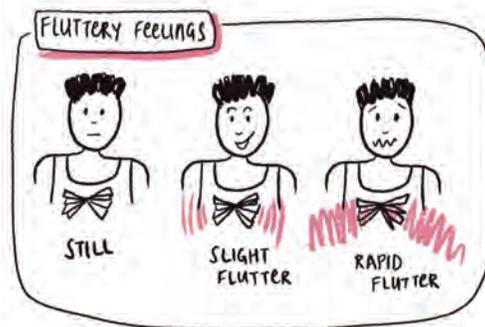
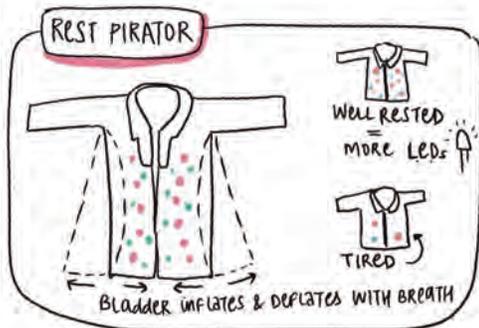
Created by Tatyana from the Beach Project

Beginning of the day - tiara indicates that this wearer is feeling very socially sparkly!

Several meetings later - some depletion...

Too many meetings - fading fast!

CREDITS
"Tiara" by Tatyana from the Beach Project



PLAYSHOP CONCLUSION

Selfies are part of many of our day-to-day digital activities, allowing us to choose how we portray ourselves on social networks and beyond. The Selfie Game helped us get to know each other quickly through shared expression and collective feedback.

Shuffle Pitches gave us a fun means of sharing the materials, interactions, and values we might hope to explore. Our outcome was a marvellous and provocative co-created collection of speculative objects centering the idea of bodies in play.

Concepts for Expressive Wearables adopted forms such as vest, jacket, belt, collar, halo, and face mask. Through the use of Profiles and Storyboards, participants proposed the use of body-based light, colour, shape, and movement to outwardly express the shifts in the spectrum of the wearer's lived experience, from restfulness to exhaustion, sociability to social anxiety, and more.

It is our hope this assortment of illustrations and stories can continue to prompt new hopes, wants and desires surrounding the relationships between technologies, bodies and play.

RESOURCES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We would also like to thank additional contributors who asked to remain anonymous.

We would like to thank our partners, our illustrators, our graduate research assistant Ellie and most especially our wonderful players, without whom this zine would not have been possible.

REFERENCED WORKS:

- “Adafruit NeoPixel Überguide” by Phillip Burgess
- “Feminism - A Nano Game Anthology” by Julia Bond Ellingboe, Emily Care Boss, Jason Morningstar et al
- “Kinetic Wearables Toolkit” by Social Body Lab
- “Playshops: Workshop series exploring play” by Barbara Rauch, Emma Westecott, Kate Hartman, Suzanne Stein
- “Values at Play in Digital Games” by Mary Flanagan and Helen Nissenbaum

URLS FOR ALL PARTNERS:

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