

[ from  
later ]

*Restructuring Futures*

**signals**

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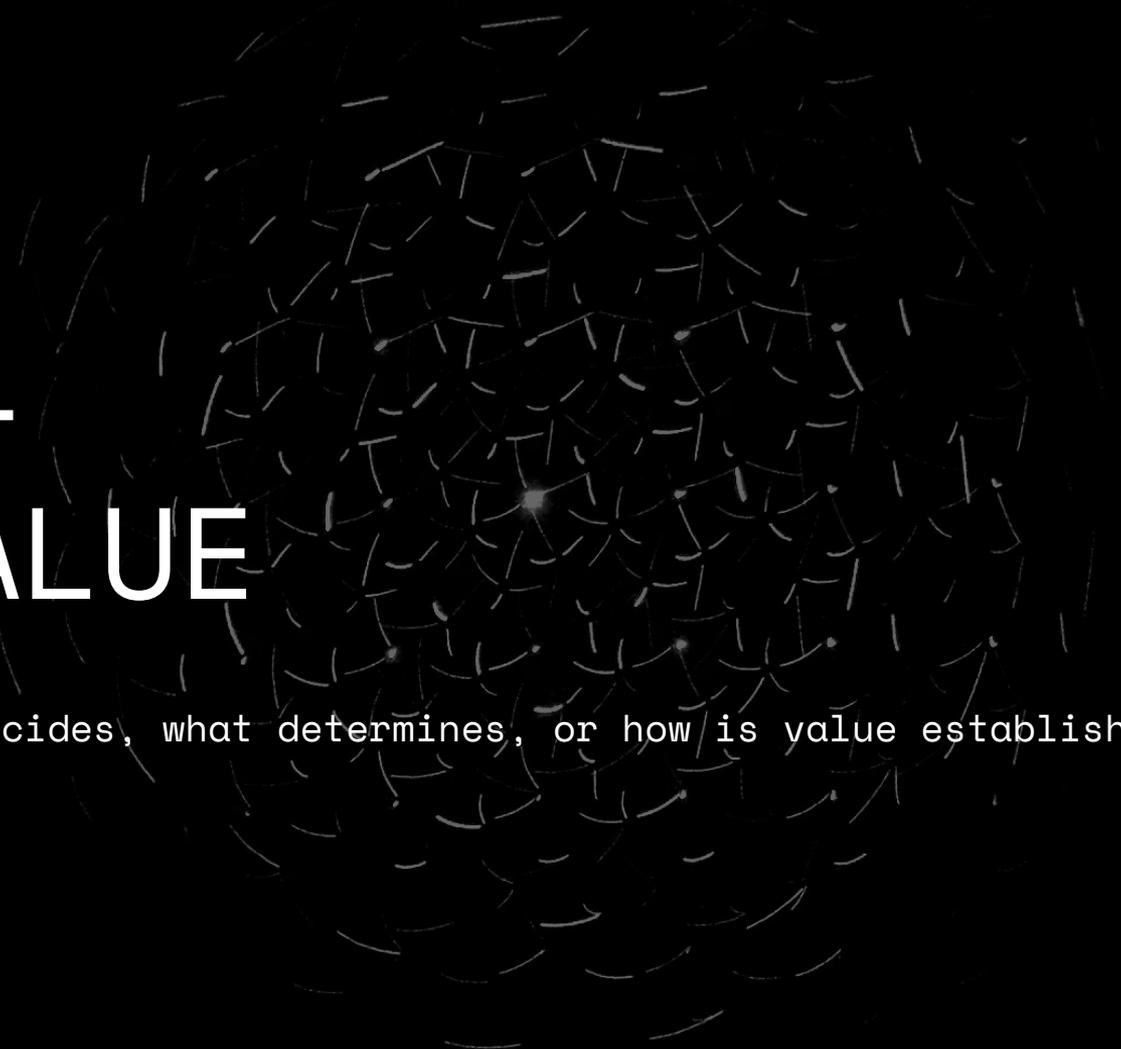
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The following document gathers signals and examples to help inspire thought residency workshops on the futures of artist-run spaces, virtual embodiment and co-presence, and alternative currencies.



01

# VALUE

Who decides, what determines, or how is value established?

# Accounting for the value of value

What makes something valuable? A variety of economic explanations have been used over the years. In everyday use, we likely mix and match accounts. These definitions matter for thinking about the possibilities of ‘new currencies.’



## UTILITY

(16/17th cent)

Is something valuable because it's useful? A jar holds water. A wall separates spaces. A pattern creates an aesthetic experience. But this doesn't account for why useless things (like diamonds) are often valued more highly than useful things (like water).

## LABOUR

(18/19th cent)

Or maybe it's the work that went into making something? Several painstaking weeks developing a project. The care, the nuance, the detail, the effort. But this doesn't account for the many effortful activities that go undervalued, and seems to imply that slower work should inherently be more valuable.

## EXCHANGE

(19/20th cent)

Is what's valuable simply what the market determines? The less of something that's desired exists, the more it'll be worth. There is no real theory of value here – just the impersonal fluctuations of supply and demand. Value is neither intrinsic to things, nor subject to collective definition. What isn't priced doesn't have a value here.

?

How should we think about value in the 21st century?

## detourning financial mechanisms

9.

A variety of tokenized projects are using financial tools to reorganize how funds get allocated to make things, and who benefits from making them.

/ [Holly+](#) is an experiment in monetizing a creative tool – a machine learning model based on musician Holly Herndon's voice. Artworks created with the tool are then auctioned, and the profits automatically split between the tool, the creator, and the DAO hosting the auction.

/ [Regen Network](#) is a public ecological accounting system, run on a proof of stake blockchain, that seeks to incentivize regenerative land practices.

To what extent can financial tools and market mechanisms be used 'against' themselves to support art workers, and/or to hardcode other values?



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## enabling collective deliberation

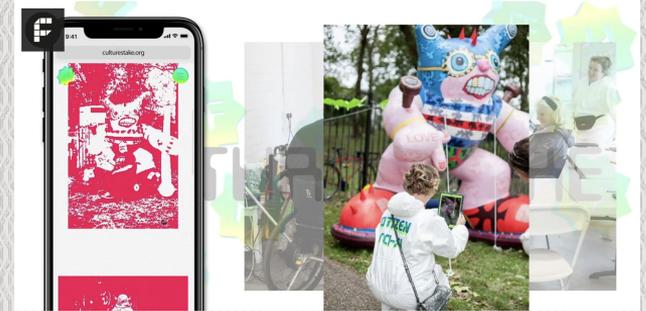
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Some projects emphasize collectively deliberative processes in determining value. In deliberation, individuals put forward their *reasons* for supporting something, rather than only voting or buying.

/ [People's Park Plinth](#) was an experiment in letting community members vote on digital public artworks they wanted developed, after a weekend of collective deliberation, using a specially weighted [quadratic voting](#) system ([CultureStake](#)) developed by the gallery Furtherfield.

/ The physicist David Bohm developed an approach to [dialogue](#) in the 1990s that continues to be used today. *Dia-logos* (or the flow of reason between things) in a Bohmian dialogue requires putting aside all practical concerns and decisions, and focusing entirely on the logic of thoughts as they develop and flow across the group.

What is the role of dialogue and collective modes of reason in determining value? How can it, or why should it/not, scale?



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02

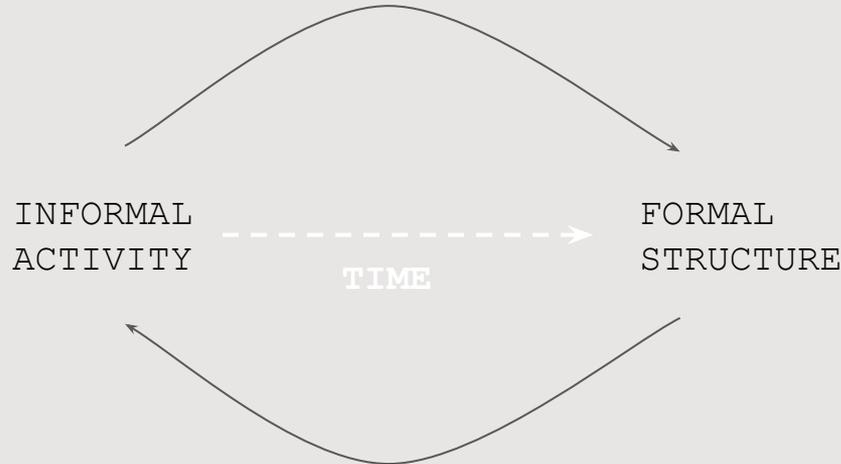
# ORGANIZATION

What catalyzes, and stabilizes, collective activity?

## Forms of collective individuation

How do groups emerge? What makes them cohere over time? Often, there is a legislative bias in our thinking – that structures or rules found groups. But rules can be retroductive – they happen *after* something is already happening.

Something happens. There is only a minimally organized field, but no rules yet. People do things together. As example from Brian Massumi: there is a field, with two goals placed at the ends. Immediately, the field organizes itself. Bodies align to the poles induced by the goals. There are no rules yet, but something is collectively happening. Organization has triggered activity.



Formal structures are introduced to ensure the repeatability of what happens. Maybe they are rules for a game that emerged on the field. These formal structures reduce the uncertainty of what happens – they channel the potential of a minimally organized field into discrete, repeatable possibilities. There is now a predictable set of outcomes that can be repeated.

## *folding space online*

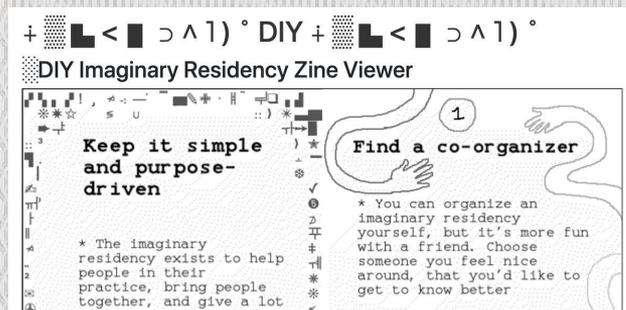
9.

Maybe there is a Discord server. People join. They talk. The invite link acts as a door – it separates an inside from an outside, folding space online. Minimally organized, there are no rules yet. Only an atmosphere in which things happen. That activity is the group that is emerging.

/ [Virtual Care Lab](#) is a series of creative experiments in remote togetherness. A discord server acts as a digital home with community guidelines, inviting anyone to propose projects that are co-developed with community members. Their “[Terms That Serve Us](#)” challenges the rigidity of typical terms of service, celebrating fluidity and friction.

/ [Imaginary Residency](#) is a DIY-model for creating low-barrier temporary online spaces to support individual artistic practices. It uses zine as a form of social technology – providing a minimal set of instructions to generate ‘imaginary residencies’ that can be repeated in other contexts, with other individuals.

How does atmosphere emerge online? What triggers group activity? What components can be replicated and recontextualized across contexts?





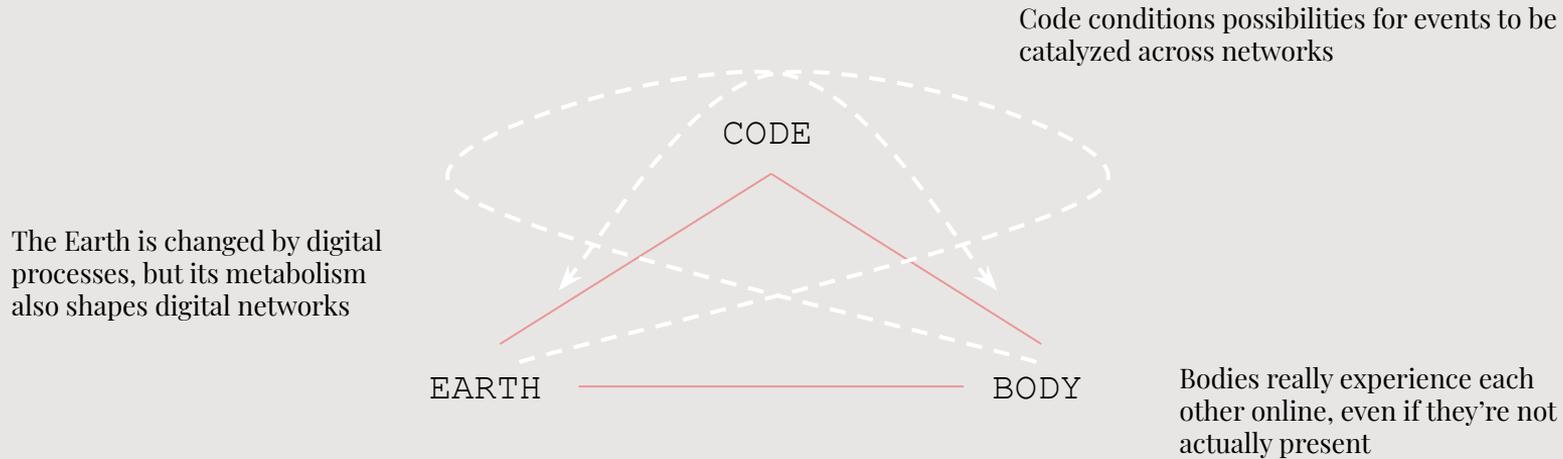
03

# RELATION

How do digital networks shape our relations?

## ***Building relation across time and place***

What do digital networks connect? How do bodies relate to other bodies, and to themselves, online? And what connects digital processes to offline, analog ones – to life and literal flows of energy?



## I am sitting in a network

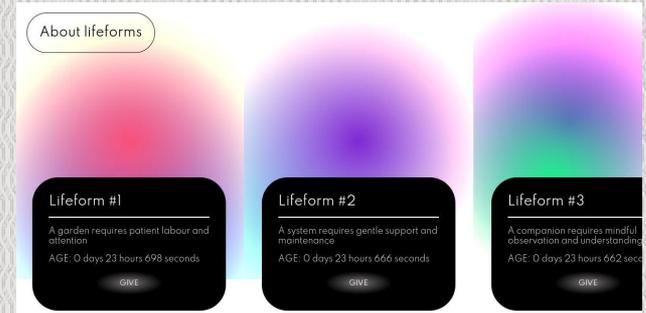
a.

The you that logs on to a network is also the you that is produced by that network. By relating to others through a network, we relate to ourselves differently. Networks shape interior states.

/ [Lifeforms](#) is an NFT art project that plays with an aesthetic and spiritual experience of 'digital entities'. Unlike other nfts, each lifeform will expire if it isn't given away. The network structure forces you to experience the transience of things held in common, rather than possessed.

/ Stelarc's 1997 performance [ParaSite](#) explored an involuntary, remote choreography of the body through networks. With his muscles linked directly to a program interpreting online images, Stelarc actualizes the way digital networks act virtually as an extended nervous system.

How do networked interactions change our relation to ourselves? How does the body feel itself in relation to others? In what ways do networks *produce* bodily experiences?



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## human-earth interfacing

C.

Human-centered approaches are being contested by calls for [more-than-human](#) perspectives – a multi-species feedback loop that prioritizes linkages to non-human objects and ecological systems.

/ [Terraio](#) is a 'self-owning forest' that uses satellite imagery to sense itself, determine whether to sell or regenerate itself, and then use blockchain to automatically create those contracts. While meant to generate conversation, the project is also exploring its legal status in Germany.

/ [Solar Protocol](#) is an energy-monitoring network of solar-powered servers working off the 'natural logic' of the sun. The protocol makes decisions based off of local sun sources, allocating where energy is available and distributing it based on the needs of the network.

What 'currencies' flow between digital networks and the Earth? Could we imagine digital infrastructure itself as a long-lasting natural system to be stewarded?



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04

# EVENT

What kinds of events do digital networks induce?

## weaving worlds

9.

Space is less something inhabited than something produced by acts of inhabitation. How does this happen in digital networks? Increasingly, with [spatial software](#) – game worlds, livestreams, and collaborative documents that directly simulate spatial qualities.

/ [Moving Castles](#) are a term for a kind of online space that crosses the boundaries of public and private. Coined by members of Trust, it reflects on their use of diverse platforms and game engines to host events and catalyze new kinds of group dynamics portable across them.

/ [Special Fish](#) is a collection of websites, profiles, and text-based logs that brings to mind the idea of a ‘handmade web.’ It invokes a tactile and craft element that’s often lost with ‘seamless’ digital experiences.

What kinds of activities produce digital space? What textures those worlds? What modes of interacting could produce new collective forms?



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## algorithmic entanglements

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Perception is never unshaped. It is shaped backwards, by our *expectations*, and forwards, by our *intentions*. It is shaped by past memories and habits, and future desires and actions. Increasingly, this process is subject to algorithmic mediators, from AI to AR.

/ [BIY™ \(Believe it Yourself\)](#) is a critical design project by automato.farm to train machine learning models on vernacular beliefs and superstitions. For example, a machine learning model might detect facial features that bring bad luck (known in Neapolitan folk beliefs as *Jettatore*).

/ [The Mormon Church](#) has released an AR application to create religious scenes inside of living rooms. It's seen as both an educational tool and as a way to reinforce beliefs.

How are our shared worlds being shaped by algorithmic processes? How is our perception itself being conditioned? Is this always problematic?



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## knotty healing

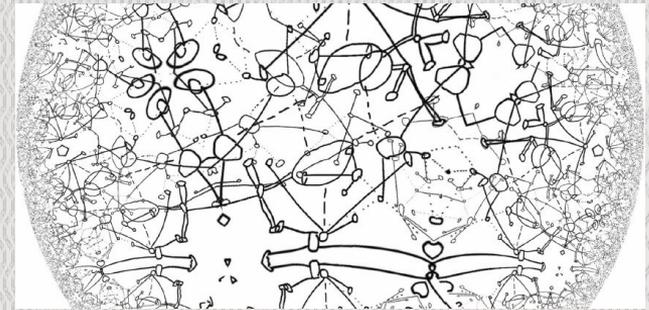
C.

As an antidote to digital-addiction and surveillance capitalism, communities are emerging that center collective care and healing to reorient the way physical, mental and social health is experienced online.

/ [Traumagotchi](#) is a virtual game space designed to help users create and care for a virtualization of their [“data trauma”](#). The traumagotchis collectively tend to a TraumaCompostShrine that casts virtual spells for healing in the CPU, GPU, and interweb astral-sphere.

/ [The Hologram](#) is a viral, P2P feminist health social technology that organizes small non-expert groups to care for the medical, emotional, and social health of one person at a time.

How do we care for and with each other online? What rituals, rules, assemblages, or ties challenge us in unexpected ways? How do we think about the design of social technologies?



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