

The Future Democracies Laboratory

A project by Jonathon Keats in collaboration with Steve Durie

Artist Jonathan Keats sees himself as an experimental philosopher, an amateur in the classic sense of the word: someone who does something for the love of doing it. It is in this light that Keats is presenting the *Future Democracies Laboratory*, in partnership with Steve Durie, adjunct professor in San José State University's Digital Media Arts Program CADRE (Computers in Art, Design, Research, and Education).

At a time when we are exploring our interdependence with machines and the growth of A.I., Keats and Durie present a simple blue screen interface, evoking a nostalgia for early computers. Intending to create a safe space for engagement and participation they prompt us to consider our relationship to representative democracy. Surrounding this interface, Keats has assembled experimental apparatus that serve equally as philosophical instruments. As Keats writes, "In the United States and around the world, democracy is in peril. Caught up in partisan gridlock, and often indulging in corruption or bigotry, all too many politicians are unable or unfit to govern. What if we automated governance, generating laws without legislators?" It is just these kinds of questions that the installation is intended to provoke, while being situated in a room for shared experiences, bringing us together, in a sense, to play, as well as being a call for broad civic awareness.

James G. Leventhal
Executive Director

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