00:00:00:12 – 00:00:29:17
Unknown
Hey. Good afternoon. First of all, thanks, Jennifer and Carolina, for the kind of invitation to to to participate in today's series. It is an honor. I'm a designer, and I helped create the identity for the Arts and Ecology festival. And for you see, can which folks talked about earlier. But my talk today is about something different. It's adapted from a workshop that re dim and I ran at King Middle School in Berkeley, California a few years ago.

00:00:29:18 – 00:00:56:13
Unknown
In the workshop, we prompted participants to generate words and images about the past, present, and possible futures for themselves and their city. I think you might appreciate the prompts that we shared with the students and their responses. So that is what I've built this talk around. So this is this is here. This is where we are today. And then this is a satellite image of King Middle School.

00:00:56:13 – 00:01:27:20
Unknown
And so we began our workshop with this image, and we said, as much as it's about anything. Today's workshop is about the land, what it is, what it was and what it will be. We said as we zoom out, we see how this land has been used. How densely developed this part of Berkeley is. We zoom out further and we see the bay's shoreline to the west and rugged green mountains to the east.

00:01:27:22 – 00:02:20:16
Unknown
We are reminded of how relatively small we are in nature's larger context. Now let's zoom back in time to 1965, when rallied to protest the war in Vietnam. The passionate young activists and the line of police officers trying to control them is reminiscent of recent actions for social justice and the environment to 1955, and a home movie capturing the wonder of snow falling on the houses in the Berkeley Hills to 1947, and the Craig, Mont streetcar, connecting downtown Berkeley with neighborhoods to the north to 1923, when a small grass fire in Wildcat Canyon swept over the hills to North Berkeley, burning more than 500 homes.

00:02:20:18 – 00:02:49:21
Unknown
To 1918, when King was Garfield Junior High School. This is a Sanborn fire insurance map. As cities developed, Sanborn issued update patches so that map owners could keep their maps current. So you can see maybe that the gymnasium was added on as an update at some point after 1918. So here we can see the layers of updates through 1929 when a new base map was issued.

00:02:49:23 – 00:03:14:11
Unknown
If we go further back in time, we see that all of Berkeley was part of Rancho San Antonio, a 45,000 acre parcel of land granted to Don Luis Maria Peralta, a sergeant in the Spanish Army. The grant also included San Leandro, Oakland, Alameda, Emeryville, Piedmont, and Albany. Peralta and his sons had over 8000 head of cattle and 2000 horses grazing on the rancho.

00:03:14:13 – 00:03:34:08
Unknown
The green Dot marks the approximate location of King Middle School. In the mid 1800s there were very few permanent structures on the land. This is a drawing of San Francisco from 1848. The Golden Gate Bridge and Bay bridge are still 85 years in the future.

00:03:34:10 – 00:03:56:18
Unknown
Humans have only been on this land for an estimated 15,000 years. For millions of years, animals ruled the land. This scene shows a pride of American lions hunting a panicked herd of Scots horse, while a small group of Colombian mammoths don camel and a ground sloth visit the springs in the background.

00:03:56:20 – 00:04:18:06
Unknown
At various times in history, as Earth's water has been frozen in glaciers or melted into the sea, the Bay area's coastline has shifted. 12 million years ago, the Berkeley Hills were deep at the bottom of the ocean. 20,000 years ago, the coastline was almost 30 miles west of where it is today, and the Farallon Islands were coastal hills.

00:04:18:08 – 00:04:44:23
Unknown
Now let's spend a little time looking into the future. Those of you who are Star Trek fans might know that Starfleet Headquarters is located in the Bay area. Here we see a technically advanced future Star Trek's version of the year 2364, with advanced ships and buildings in the foreground. And what's that in the background? Well, that's the Golden Gate Bridge, of course.

00:04:45:01 – 00:05:10:06
Unknown
And Star Wars provides us with an alternate version of the future. And or where the Ewoks live is in the Bay area's ancient redwood forests. It is a wild, lush forest full of surprises. Perhaps the future is not so high tech after all. So after setting this context, we led the students to a series of generative exercises. The first was called Seven Generations.

00:05:10:07 – 00:05:42:09
Unknown
Seven generations ago was around 1850, which is the same year that California became a state. Seven generations in the future is the year 2200. So do you know where your ancestors were in 1850? Does anyone know? Yeah. My family trees in Massachusetts. Massachusetts? Anybody else know where their family was seven generations ago? Yeah.

00:05:42:11 – 00:06:13:01
Unknown
Very cool. So we asked the students this. Many of them were uncertain, like many of you would be. So these are some of their answers. So we see someone saying, I'm not 100% sure, but some were pretty precise naming places like Uganda and Moscow. Others are more expansive. I know they were definitely on Earth. One was only willing to commit at the galaxy level Milky Way.

00:06:13:03 – 00:06:31:00
Unknown
So then we asked the students to go find a window and make a list of everything they could see. I wasn't sure if this room would have windows. And we were, you know, we could have done that, but we'll do that later. So this is what the scene was at King Middle School. Those are the students all kind of arrayed at the window making lists.

00:06:31:02 – 00:07:01:03
Unknown
And so these are the things that they wrote down. They noticed tiny things like hair ties and spiderwebs. They noticed enormous things like San Francisco and the sea. A student named Ellie wrote a little poem, purple leaf tree bark, on a thin but sturdy trunk, the leaves hanging off the flimsy branches. The color of the leaves are a deep purple, like a ripe plum.

00:07:01:05 – 00:07:23:01
Unknown
Seventh grade people. Next, we turned to the future, inviting students to record the first ten words or phrases that come to mind when you think about the future. So, okay, what's a word or phrase that comes to mind when you think about the future?

00:07:23:03 – 00:07:30:20
Unknown
That death, abundance, abundance? Health?

00:07:30:22 – 00:07:42:17
Unknown
Anything else folks? The future. What vulnerability? So interestingly, many of the students.

00:07:42:19 - 00:08:11:20
Unknown
For whatever reason, it's still a thing. Flying cars is what they think the future holds. Okay. So the last exercise I'll share with you today is called reincarnation. It's also my favorite because of how it bridges the past in the future and kind of unlocks the imagination. So part one was to imagine yourself in a previous life as an animal, a plant, a geologic feature, or a human made thing.

00:08:11:22 - 00:08:54:13
Unknown
What were you? When were you? Why? And then part two was to imagine yourself in a future life, but with the same parameters an animal, a plant, a geologic feature, a human made thing. So the past. Samantha was a Persian cat in 1929. Because they are adorable. Xavier was a fern in 1000 BC. Ezra was the Big Bang 4.54 billion years ago, and Raiden was a bottle of Pepsi in 1989.

00:08:54:15 - 00:09:28:02
Unknown
And the future keto will be a mutated thing that scares people for fun. In the year 4209, Jojo will be a broccoli like plant. In 28, 40 will be an earthquake in the year 3000, and David will be a sentient spaceship AI in 4040. So these were just like, like so much fun to see what the students were coming up with in terms of just their dreams about the beings that they could have been or the beings that they could be.

00:09:28:04 - 00:09:53:17
Unknown
So what did we do with this, all this stuff? What the final kind of product of it was a series of flags. So we did this workshop at King and Longfellow and Willard. Those are the three middle schools in Berkeley. And in each sort of we were drawing on either the words that the students had written or images that they had made to create these flags.

00:09:53:17 - 00:10:23:22
Unknown
And then the flags flew at the schools. Something you might not know about Berkeley is that it doesn't have a flag. I'm not sure why, but maybe there was difficulty for the committee to decide. And so it was kind of fun to think about how these could be these alternative options for the city. And I think that, you know, it was really in, in a project like this, more about the creative process and working with the students than it was about whatever was the output.

00:10:23:22 - 00:10:29:20
Unknown
But, it was super nice and interesting to learn from them. And so

hopefully interesting to you to.