The composition of this project can be described as half responsive digital media composition and half social experiment. It is built for the seven screen display of the Decision Theater and utilizes a combination of digital media and creative software tools along with sensor technology to create a media environment that responds to real time physical feedback from participants. The experience uses different desired interactions or “levels” to examine the tension between Shalom Schwartz’ three sets of bipolar cultural values represented in his theory on cultural value orientation. Cultural values are significant drivers of human behavior that change throughout time, however rarely does society name and define these dominant forces outright. This project aims to expose people to consider these forces through interactive discovery and game play. The installation’s primary user input is based on movement and physical interaction and includes visual rewards for desired forms of cooperative engagement.

The design process included interdisciplinary and collaborative engagement on both the project team level as well as for research and development of a cohesive cooperative experience. The development process included research and experimentation with multiple motion tracking systems and iterative testing of concept and grounding theory including overall user experience. This experimentation focuses on using a collision between art and science in order to communicate about the complex social drivers that contribute to overall sustainability. This installation may be considered a pilot application of the potential for creative and interactive digital art platforms that allow for a play based open exploration of cultural values and connections to sustainability.

Sustainability science and research often cites education and communication initiatives as the next actionable steps towards a sustainable solution. Art and design are two fields that are uniquely suited for completing this next step. They both regularly examine, critique, create, and comment as a part of shaping culture and encourage reflexive thinking about our norms and values. This ability to reflect and consider the assumptions that may be engrained within cultural value orientation is fundamentally important to the wider recognition of the cultural shifts needed to create a sustainable future. The usage of immersive interactions and gamified environments that include elements of cooperative discovery might provide the perfect low stakes environment for users to explore how to participate in creating this future.