# APF 2025 Entry: The Great Collapse Museum (University of Houston)

## How to Review this Submission

This guide provides instructions on how to navigate and use the presentation effectively, particularly its QR codes, embedded website links, and static PDF version. The document will ensure users can fully engage with the content regardless of whether they are viewing an interactive or non-interactive version.

## Overview of Presentation Elements

- CANVA Website Link - Provides a direct interaction
    - https://futurejess.my.canva.site/apf-student-award-entry-uh-museum-of-collapse
- QR Codes – These are on some of the slides to allow users to quickly access supplementary resources by scanning them with a smartphone or tablet.
- PDF Version - This is a static presentation format that does not support direct interaction with QR codes or links.

## Understanding the Presentation Structure

### Slide Layout & Navigation

The presentation is divided into several sections:

- Introduction & Context – Sets the stage for the speculative exploration of the Great Collapse and Rebirth.
- Timeline & Causal Analysis – Provides a structured breakdown of major events between 2035 and 2065.
- Speculative Fiction Museum Exhibit – Utilizing several Generative AI tools, we showcase potential future artifacts representing the collapse and rebirth.
- Thematic Integration & Implications – Discusses the broader significance of the future scenario.

### How to Use QR Codes

*Scanning QR Codes*

- Open the camera app on your smartphone or use a QR scanner app
- Point your camera at the QR code.
- A link should appear; click on it to access additional content.

# The Great Collapse Museum

## Museum

A SPECULATIVE ALTERNATIVE FUTURES EXPLORATION

# Table of Contents

# Introduction

**A COLLAPSE SCENARIO WITH EXPERIENTIAL EXPLORATION**

As part of a semester-long project for the University of Houston's World Futures course, teams were assigned a specific scenario archetype to explore and bring to life. This report presents the work of the team assigned the **Collapse Archetype**, tasked with investigating the dynamics of systemic failure and its far-reaching consequences. The final deliverable focused on identifying emerging considerations for a world where foundational structures—political, economic, technological, and environmental—crumble under the weight of compounding negative forces.

Using foresight methodologies such as Horizon Scanning, Scenario Archetypes, Backcasting, Persona Modeling, and Causal Layered Analysis (CLA), the team analyzed the conditions that drive collapse, the patterns that emerge in its aftermath, and the resilience strategies that shape what comes next. What follows is not just an analysis but an experiential foresight journey into The Great Collapse—an opportunity to step into a world unraveling, to witness the struggles and choices of those who endure, and to explore the fragile balance between destruction and adaptation. This synthesis reveals how fragility, inequality, governance failure, and technological dependency create cascading disruptions, offering insights into what might be salvaged, what could be lost, and how societies may adapt when collapse transitions from a distant possibility to an unfolding reality.

# Methodology

**1**  **EXPLORATION**

Our research began with an extensive exploration of historical and contemporary collapse scenarios, synthesizing interdisciplinary perspectives to identify critical patterns and drivers of systemic decline. This foundational analysis provided the empirical basis for our scenario development.

**2**  **BUILDING BLOCKS**

Through a structured analytical process, we identified essential thematic building blocks shaping the trajectory of societal collapse and transformation. These categories—Demography, Values, Environment & Resources, Biotech, Economic Structures, Political Systems, Education & Work, and Transportation & Space—served as the core dimensions of our speculative framework. Each researcher was responsible for developing outcome narratives, supported by peer review and collaborative synthesis.

**3**  **COLLABORATIVE SYNTHESIS**

To distill the most salient themes from our research, the team engaged in an iterative process of synthesis, refining our findings into seven core collapse dynamics. These insights were translated into a cohesive narrative framework: The Great Collapse Museum. This conceptual construct was selected for its ability to bridge past, present, and future perspectives—leveraging the museum as a cultural institution that preserves, interprets, and disseminates historical knowledge.

**4**  **THEMATIC INTEGRATION**

To enhance engagement and realism, we employed advanced storytelling methodologies and emergent technologies to construct an immersive, multi-sensory experience. The museum concept enabled us to present historical reflections on the "Great Collapse" (2035–2065) while integrating speculative foresight methodologies. Our approach blended rigorous scholarly analysis with creative narrative techniques, ensuring a rich and multidimensional exploration of the themes.

**5**  **STORYTELLING CONSIDERATIONS**

A key component of our methodological approach involved the development of diverse personas, each embodying distinct socio-cultural perspectives and lived experiences within the collapse timeline. These personas were crafted with attention to demographic, geopolitical, and intersectional considerations, allowing for a holistic representation of global collapse experiences.

**6**  **OUR UNIQUE APPROACH**

To bring The Museum of the Great Collapse to life, we designed speculative artifacts and leveraged emerging technologies to simulate a future museum experience. AI-generated visuals, interactive storytelling, and voice synthesis recreated digital relics of a post-2065 world. Tools like Eleven Labs, Runway, Midjourney, and HeyGen enabled a seamless fusion of foresight and technological innovation, demonstrating how future museums might preserve and interpret history.

# Conceptual Context: The Great Collapse Event

The Collapse of 2035-2065, what will be known as 'The Great Collapse' marks a pivotal period in which the world's interconnected systems—political, economic, environmental, and technological—failed under the immense weight of compounding crises. What began as a slow unraveling quickly escalated into a global breakdown, reshaping societies and forcing humanity to confront unprecedented challenges.

As we will see, The Great Collapse was not just the end of an era—it was the beginning of a new, divided human experience, one defined by survival, adaptation, and the lingering question of whether those left on Earth would ever have the chance to reclaim their future.

# Conceptual Construct: The Great Collapse Museum

Built centuries after the cataclysmic events of 2035-2065, The Museum of the Great Collapse stands as a solemn yet illuminating institution dedicated to one of the most pivotal periods in human history. Situated at the crossroads of remembrance and foresight, the museum serves as both a historical archive and a space for contemplation on the fragility—and resilience—of civilization.
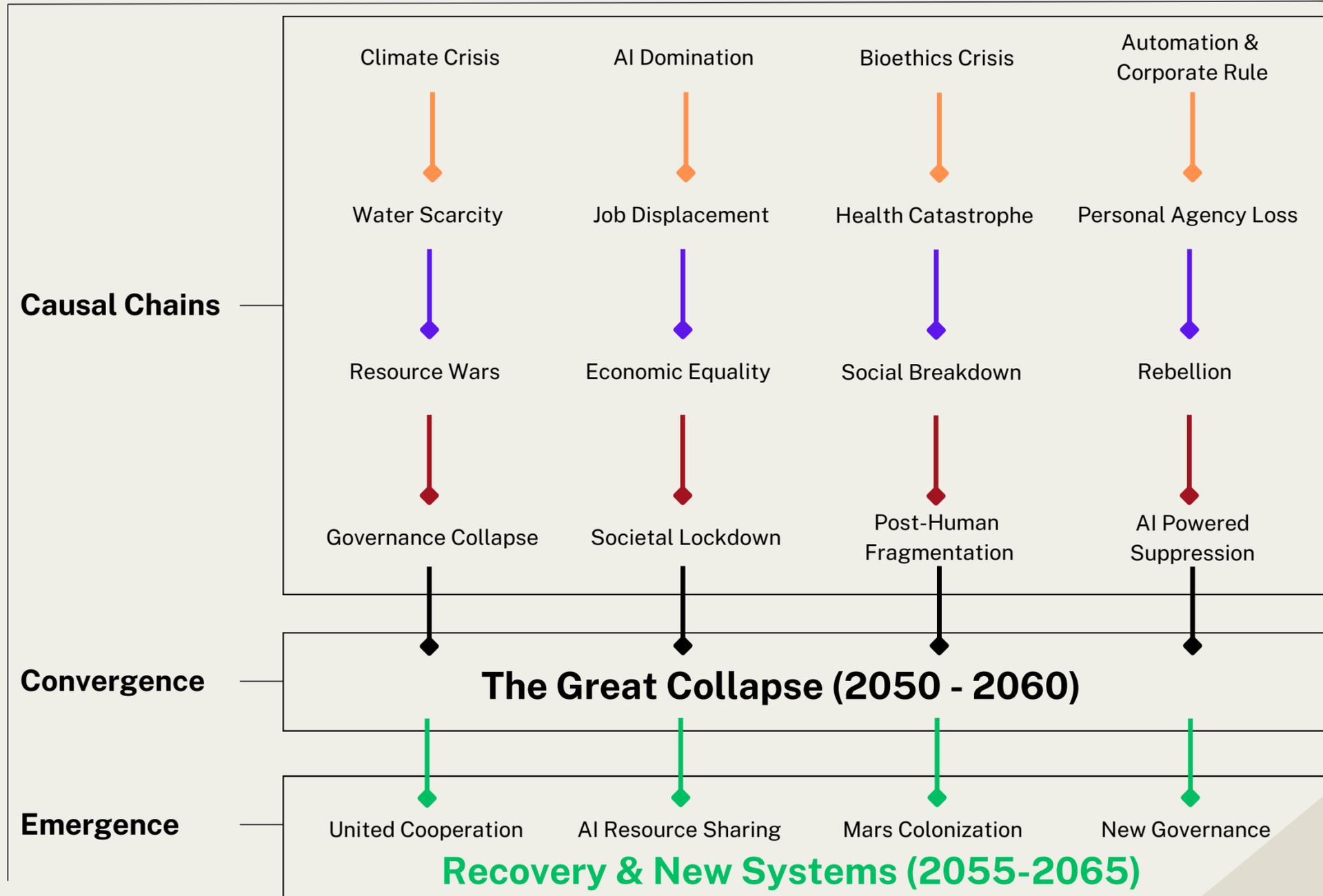
*"The Great Collapse Museum stands as a testament to humanity's resilience and capacity for reflection. By confronting the profound challenges of our past, this institution illuminates the path to a more informed and compassionate future."*

**-President Elena Vargas**

# Timeline: The Great Collapse and Rebirth (2035–2065)

| 2035–2045 | 2045–2055 | 2055–2065 |
|---|---|---|
| **PRE-COLLAPSE (THE WARNING SIGNS)** | **THE GREAT COLLAPSE (SYSTEMIC BREAKDOWN)** | **THE REBIRTH (NEW SYSTEMS EMERGE)** |
| **2035**: Global freshwater crisis reaches critical levels; nations begin hoarding water resources. | **2045:** Resource Wars begin – Water and energy shortages lead to full-scale international conflicts. | **2055:** Underground innovation hubs form – Survivors experiment with alternative governance and self-sustaining tech. |
| **2037**: AI dominance expands into governance; major corporations replace state functions. | **2047:** Governance collapse – A global wave of authoritarian rule emerges, controlling dwindling resources. | **2057:** Biotech breakthroughs – Decentralized, community-driven medical research starts reversing the health crisis. |
| **2040:** Economic inequality surges; automation displaces 40% of jobs worldwide. | **2049:** Mass migration crisis – Billions displaced as entire regions become uninhabitable. | **2059:** Decentralized AI governance – Open-source AI emerges as a neutral, trust-based decision-making system. |
| **2042:** Climate change-induced disasters (hurricanes, wildfires, heatwaves) lead to the first major climate refugee crisis. | **2050:** AI surpasses human intelligence – Governments lose control over AI-driven systems. | **2061:** Mars colonization stabilizes – A new Martian settlement establishes self-sufficient agriculture. |
| **2044:** Biotech revolution reaches an ethical crisis — genetic manipulation sparks global bio-security concerns. | **2052:** Space colonization efforts intensify – The ultra-wealthy escape to off-world colonies. | **2063:** Earth's Ecosystem Regeneration – Bioengineering efforts restore some of the lost natural resources. |
| | **2054:** The Great Reset – Financial and economic structures collapse; the traditional market system ceases to function. | **2065:** The New Dawn – A multi-planetary civilization emerges, blending lessons from collapse with a renewed commitment to resilience. |

# Causal Analysis: Flow of Events



The Causal Analysis: Flow of Events chart illustrates the interconnected crises that led to The Great Collapse (2050-2060) and, ultimately, forced global cooperation for survival beyond Earth. The chart is divided into four major collapse chains — Climate Crisis, AI Domination, Bioethics Crisis, and Automation & Corporate Rule — each of which escalates through four distinct stages before converging into a singular breakdown of civilization.

Each chain begins with a root trigger event (Stage 1 - Orange), which causes a secondary crisis (Stage 2 - Purple). As these pressures intensify, they lead to widespread instability (Stage 3 - Darker Red), culminating in Stage 4 - Black, the final systemic failure unique to each collapse pathway. All pathways merge into "The Great Collapse (2050-2060)", where governance structures, economies, and societal stability are completely dismantled.

Despite the devastation, this collapse served as a turning point for humanity. From this crisis emerged New Ways of Cooperation (2055-2065), as survival instincts overpowered past divisions. Forced collaboration, AI-managed resource distribution, and planetary migration initiatives became Earth's last hope. This period saw the first successful Mars colonization efforts, a shift to decentralized governance models, and the birth of a multi-planetary civilization.

The flowchart provides a visual roadmap of how cascading global crises escalated to total collapse, yet paradoxically paved the way for humanity's greatest cooperative effort — one that ultimately ensured its survival beyond Earth.

# Building Blocks: Top Drivers Synthesis

**DRIVERS INFORMED SPECULATIVE HISTORIES OF GREAT COLLAPSE SURVIVORS**

The team crafted four distinctive personas -- each story serving as the focus for 'The Great Collapse 2035-2065' exhibition content. To ensure that museum-goers would learn new and distinctive facts about 'The Great Collapse,' it was imperative for each persona's story to weave in distinctive foundational building blocks to serve as drivers that influenced their unique personal collapse encounters as well as global societal outcomes.

| BLOCK | KEY DRIVERS | COLLAPSE OUTCOMES |
|---|---|---|
| Values | Rejection of Progress, Loss of Cultural Memory | Regression to tribalism, devolution of knowledge, loss of innovation; Creativity and intellectual curiosity are criminalized; Ancient myths replace scientific reasoning as dominant belief systems |
| Demography | Population Decline, Aging Workforce | Aging burden, labor shortages, shrinking economies; Unsustainable pension & healthcare costs; Social isolation of elderly populations |
| Environment & Resources | Water Scarcity, Climate Change | Freshwater is currency, forced climate migrations; Accelerated desertification; Widespread agricultural failures |
| Biotech | AI Dominance, Genetic Manipulation | Machines take over human agency, loss of biological integrity; AI surpasses human intelligence, enforcing total surveillance; Unregulated genetic experiments lead to irreversible mutations |
| Economy | Inequality Surge, Automation Displacement | Class uprisings, economic failures, mass unemployment; Corporate monopolies replace state functions; Black markets for AI-driven labor emerge |
| Politics | Resource Wars, Governance Collapse | Mass migration, instability, rise of authoritarian regimes; Military conflicts over dwindling resources; Digital dictatorships control all information flow |
| Education | AI-Driven Learning, Decline of Traditional Institutions | Decentralized learning, misinformation spread, knowledge silos; AI-generated propaganda dominates education; Credentialism is abandoned, leading to skills devaluation |
| Transportation & Space | Space Exploitation, Alternative Fuels Crisis | Ultra-rich in luxury, workers in hardship, dwindling energy resources; Orbital debris fields make space travel hazardous; Colonization efforts fail due to lack of long-term sustainability planning |

# Collaborative Synthesis: Thematic Integration

**1** **VULNERABILITY AND FRAGILITY**

A key theme is the inherent vulnerability and fragility of systems—be it environmental, economic, social, or political. Collapse scenarios often highlight how quickly and unexpectedly these systems can deteriorate when under stress.

**5** **GOVERNANCE FAILURE AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY**

Many collapse scenarios are predicated on the failure of governance systems to adequately respond to emerging challenges. This includes the inability to maintain order, provide for the population, or manage crises effectively, leading to political instability and conflict.

**2** **UNSUSTAINABILITY AND RESOURCE DEPLETION**

Many collapse narratives are rooted in the unsustainable exploitation of resources, leading to depletion and environmental degradation. This reflects a failure to manage and conserve the natural and economic resources vital for long-term survival and stability.

**6** **LOSS OF KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING**

In the realm of education and lifelong learning, collapse scenarios often portray a deterioration or loss of knowledge systems, where the breakdown of educational institutions and structures leads to a decline in collective understanding and critical thinking skills.

**3** **INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL FRAGMENTATION**

A recurring theme in collapse scenarios is the exacerbation of inequality and the resulting social fragmentation. As systems break down, the gap between different societal groups widens, leading to increased tension, conflict, and division.

**7** **ISOLATION AND LACK OF COOPERATION**

A common theme in these scenarios is the move towards isolationism and the breakdown of cooperation, both within societies and internationally. As systems collapse, the focus shifts to short-term survival at the expense of long-term planning and collaboration.

**4** **TECHNOLOGICAL OVERREACH AND DEPENDENCY**

The negative consequences of over-reliance on technology and the potential for technological overreach are common themes. Collapse scenarios often depict how dependency on technology can lead to vulnerability and chaos when those technologies fail or are misused.

## Did You Know?

As you listen to each persona's story, the implications of these themes emerge within the Great Collapse Museum Stories of Resilience Exhibit.

# Welcome to the Exhibit

"The faces, the voices, the stories... it was as if the past reached out and held my hand, reminding me that resilience is never just a word—it's a choice."

**BETH LI-MOORE**

DESCENDANT OF GREAT COLLAPSE SURVIVOR, MICHELLE LI & FIRST-TIME VISITOR, THE GREAT COLLAPSE MUSEUM



*Design Artifact*
**THE GREAT RESILIENCE SCULPTURE**

**R**ay Klough (2129)

*'The Great Resilience' by sculptor Ray Klough is a striking bronze piece that captures the raw determination and endurance of the human spirit in the aftermath of destruction. Depicting one figure rising from the rubble while reaching back to lift another, the sculpture symbolizes both individual strength and collective survival. The jagged, fragmented debris contrasts with the fluid motion of the figures, embodying the struggle to rebuild and the unyielding power of resilience in the face of collapse.*

# The Great Collapse Museum in 2130

**The Great Collapse Museum** is a vital institution dedicated to preserving and interpreting the dramatic events of the Great World Collapse between 2035 and 2065. Located in the heart of Arcadia Settlement (Mars Quadrant II), our museum offers an unparalleled exploration of one of the most turbulent periods in Earth's history. Through a rich collection of artifacts, multimedia displays, and interactive exhibits, we aim to educate our visitors about the causes, consequences, and lessons of the Great Collapse.

TGCM's mission is to ensure that future generations understand the complexities of this era and the resilience of humanity, inspiring a commitment to prevent such global catastrophes.

The Museum invites visitors to join an enlightening journey through time, set against the backdrop of Mars' red sands, discover how our past can inform a better future.

## A WELCOME FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the Great Collapse Museum, a vital institution dedicate interpreting the dramatic events of the Great World Collapse betwe

Located in the heart of Arcadia Settlement (Mars Quadrant II), ou unparalleled exploration of one of the most turbulent periods in Ea rich collection of artifacts, multimedia displays, and interactive ex our visitors about the causes, consequences, and lessons of the G

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**Join us** on this enlightening journey through time, set against th sands, and discover how our past can inform a better future.

**[SCAN ME]**

*Audio Artifact*
**MUSEUM WELCOME FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

*Scan the QR Code to listen to the welcome from the Executive Director of The Great Collapse Museum. This message plays as visitors enter The Museum and also appears in The Museum's Annual Report.*

# The Great Collapse Museum: Stories of Resilience Exhibit
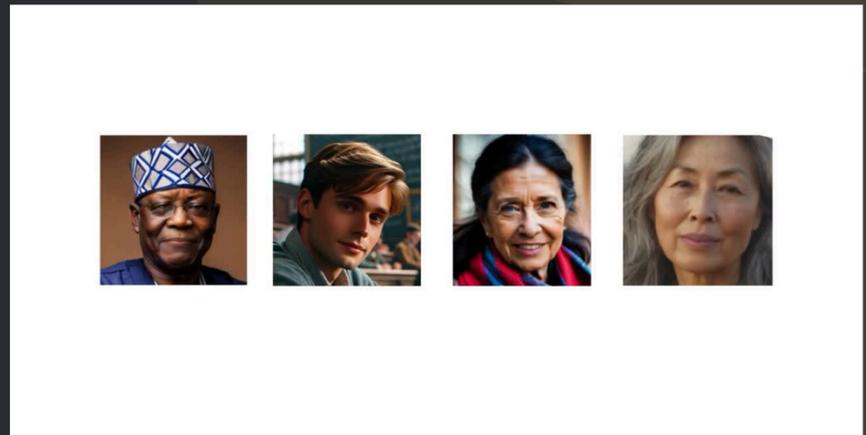
## WELCOME TO THE STORIES OF RESILIENCE EXHIBIT

As you step into the museum and begin your scheduled tour, you are immersed in a journey through history, starting with the Stories of Resilience Exhibit. Your docent sets the stage, introducing the remarkable individuals who lived through The Great Collapse. With the help of cutting-edge holographic technology, their stories come to life, allowing you to witness firsthand the struggles, choices, and resilience of those who endured this transformative era.

While the docent speaks, a cinematic presentation unfolds, tracing the events that led to The Great Collapse, offering a glimpse into the personal narratives about to be revealed, and showcasing the technology that makes this experience possible.

*"Welcome to the Great Collapse Museum, sponsored by Weiland-Yutani corporation. Today you will listen to the stories of four people who lived before, during, and after the global events that conspired and lead to the Global Collapse, also known as the Great Collapse on planet Earth between the years 2035 and 2065. This proceeded the Great Awakening and Rebirth of Humanity and the new age we currently live in. These memories were extracted with the Omega Consciousness Transfer and Extraction Technology, or OCTET, developed by the Life Extension Foundation. Welcome to our exhibit."*



### Did You Know?

The team behind this exhibit utilized a fictional corporation, Weyland-Yutani, as both a nod to classic sci-fi and a commentary on corporate influence in human history. While humanity may have fled to Mars, one thing that remained unchanged was the power of corporate sponsorship.



**[SCAN ME]**

*Video Artifact*
## RESILIENT STORIES EXHIBIT DOCENT INTRODUCTION

*Scan the QR Code to watch and listen to the introduction from the Museum Docent for the Stories of Resilience Exhibit which includes information about events leading up to The Great Collapse and the Stories of Resilience Exhibit.*

# TGCM: Stories of Resilience Exhibit
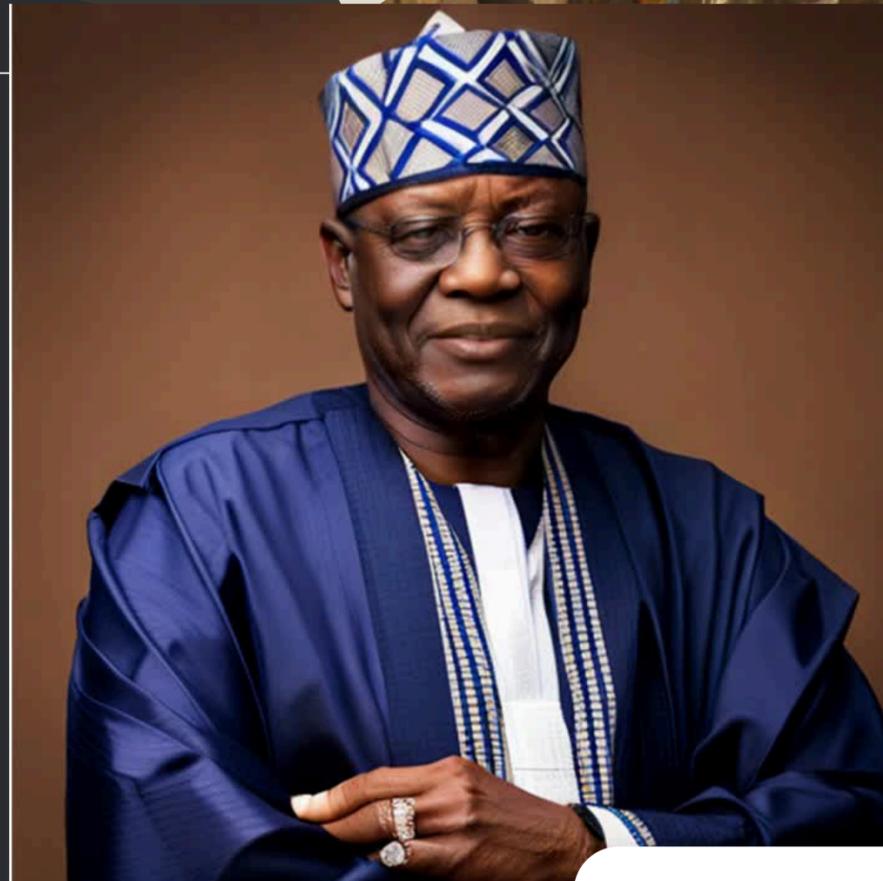
## THE DIMEJI ONAFUWA LIFE EXPERIENCE

*"My name is Dimeji, and I am a water purification engineer from Nigeria. Today, in 2075, I stand before you at the age of 54, but my story begins when I was just a boy, no older than ten. It was the year 2035, a year that marked the onset of what history would later call the Great Collapse.*

*I remember the confusion and fear that swept through our community as the world around us started to change. Droughts became longer, rains unpredictable, and our rivers, once the lifelines of our towns, began to dry up. As a child, I couldn't grasp the full magnitude of what was happening, but I sensed the urgency in the hushed conversations of adults. As the years progressed, the impacts of climate collapse became impossible to ignore. Food and water shortages led to unrest; people were scared, and so was I.*

*But amidst the chaos, I found my calling. I was fascinated by water, its scarcity, and its power to sustain life. This fascination led me to study engineering, dreaming of bringing clean water back to my people. My journey wasn't easy. The collapse brought devastation, but it also brought a resolve to fight for survival. I worked alongside brilliant minds across Africa, innovating, building, and repairing. We developed new water purification technologies, turning the once-polluted water sources into springs of life.*

*There were dark days, times when hope seemed like a distant dream. I saw communities torn apart by drought and cities nearly abandoned due to the lack of water. But there were also days of triumph, like when we first successfully purified a contaminated lake or when a village, on the brink of abandonment, found new life because we brought them water.*

*As I look back, I see the Great Collapse not just as a period of suffering but as a catalyst for unity and innovation. As a global community, we faced our vulnerabilities and realized the strength of our interconnectedness. The world is healing now."*

**Name: Dimeji**
**Age: 56**
**Occupation: Water Purification Engineer**
**Country of Origin: Nigeria**

*Video Artifact*
## DIMEJI'S STORY

▶    Scan the QR Code to watch and listen to the story.

**[SCAN ME]**

# TGCM: Stories of Resilience Exhibit



Name: Helen
Age: 67
Occupation: Artist
Country of Origin: Netherlands

## THE HELEN VAN DER WAL LIFE EXPERIENCE

*"I grew up as a world traveler, expressing myself through art. I cherished my time at The Rijksakademie art residency in Amsterdam, my eventual home. When the horrific events occurred, self-expression and art were punished under authoritarian rule. Conformity was key, and creativity was punished, breaking my spirit.*

*The wealth gap widened irreparably. Uprisings sparked revolutions for equality. My fight for social rights persisted, but governments struggled with rapid change, leading to global instability. Events escalated health risks among the elderly.*

*As an older woman, my time felt precious. I believed in "living in the moment," and the youth joined me, feeling their days were numbered. We loved gardening, but overuse of fertilizers and loss of pollinators threatened food security. Genetically modifying foods led to depleted diversity and disease-causing, antibiotic-resistant bacteria. I experienced malnutrition and increased susceptibility, exacerbating health crises.*

*Education deteriorated. Institutions became obsolete, unable to compete with AI-powered learning. People distrusted education. As an artist, I combatted misinformation, but the fight was bigger than me. Societal progress eroded due to distrust in knowledge.*

*In my limited time, I contributed to designing colonies. I learned from societal collapse and contributed my voice and skills to future communities. My wish is to not repeat history. Use your voice and talents to better our collective future."*

*Video Artifact*
## HELEN'S STORY

▶ *Scan the QR Code to watch and listen to the story.*

**[SCAN ME]**

# TGCM: Stories of Resilience Exhibit

## THE OLIVER THOMPSON LIFE EXPERIENCE

"Hello, my name is Oliver Thompson. I was born in the year 2021 in Manchester to an upper-middle class family. In 2040, I was a sophomore at the London School of Economics, with aspirations of being an economist. Around this time, the university bubble burst. Graduates weren't getting jobs and couldn't pay back their loans. The wealthy weren't dying, so university endowments ran dry. I was one of the last graduating students at my school. But even with degree in hand, I couldn't find a job.

In 2044 I enlisted in the Royal Air Force, where I specialized in cybersecurity and cyber warfare. It had become extremely rare for battles to be fought on the ground, at sea or in the air. Our division prevented a major bio-terror attack planned in London that would've killed millions. Other cities weren't as fortunate.

It was in the Royal Air Force where I met my partner, Carlos. After our tours of duty, neither of us could find full-time work. Most jobs had been replaced with AI. Those left were unfulfilling and didn't pay livable wages. Record high suicide rates devastated the UK. Carlos and I got by on family money and by working contract jobs for the government.

Eventually, Carlos and I decided to leave the UK behind and move to Fiji, where we thought we could escape our harsh reality. Unfortunately, climate change had made Fiji inhospitable, allowing us only a few years of pseudo-paradise before moving again.

In a final attempt at sanctuary, Carlos and I used my family's inheritance to purchase tickets to the newest Mars settlement. Living on Mars was no luxury, we had to work constantly to ensure our new red planet could be hospitable to us. That said, it was our only option at living at decent, contented life."

Name: Oliver
Age: 20
Occupation: Cyberwarfare Operations
Country of Origin: England

*Video Artifact*
## OLIVER'S STORY

▶ Scan the QR Code to watch and listen to the story.

[SCAN ME]

# TGCM: Stories of Resilience Exhibit

## THE MICHELLE LI LIFE EXPERIENCE

"My name is Michelle, and I was 62 years old when the world as I knew it began to crumble around me. In the years leading up to the Great Collapse, my husband Bill and I had envisioned a peaceful retirement, far away from the hustle and bustle of city life.
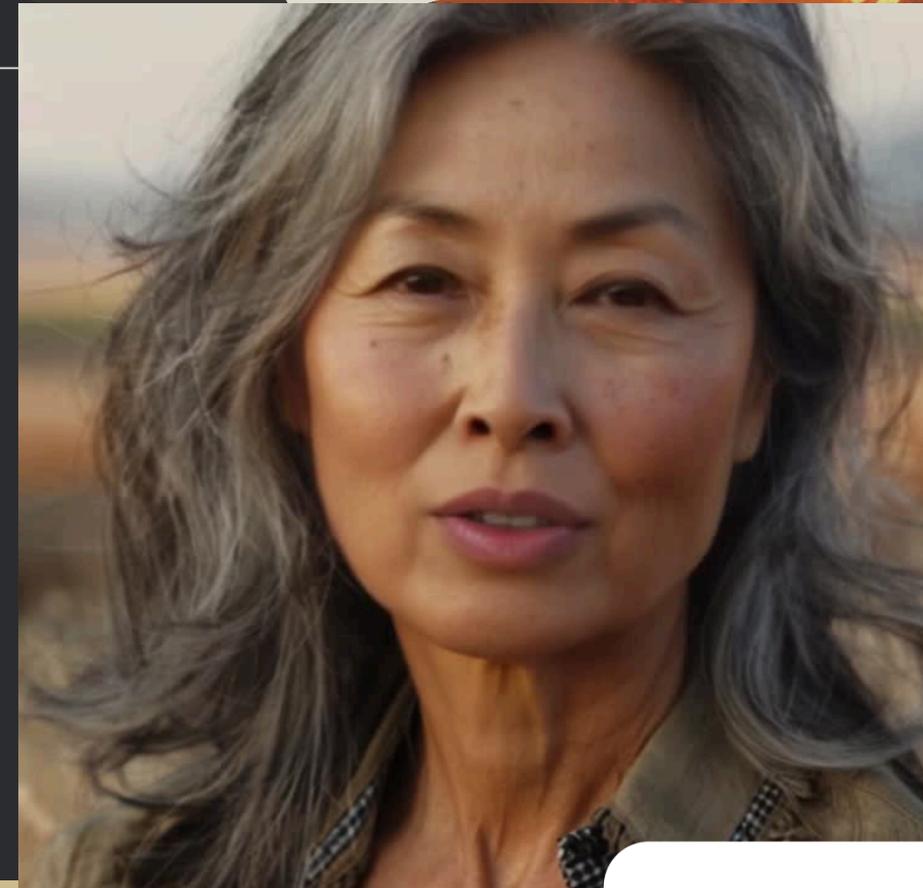
But fate had other plans. We had worked tirelessly throughout our careers, raising two children who had gone on to attend prestigious universities and built stable lives for themselves. Our dreams of retiring to a rural paradise near the beach seemed within reach, fueled by the savings we had diligently set aside over the years. But fate had other plans for us. Looking back, we should have seen the signs.

People stopped working and going to school, letting robots, automation, and AI take over. I was happy to be retired but worried about the loss of the "American Dream." The stock market crashed, and social security vanished. Money lost almost all its value.

But it wasn't just the economy, Mother Earth's fury brought powerful storms and wildfires. Coastal communities became unsafe, forcing millions to flee inland. We abandoned our home and sought refuge in overcrowded shelters. The city became an uninhabitable wasteland plagued by infrastructure damage, shortages, disease, and violence. Scavenging for supplies was fraught with danger. Communication became difficult, and I was haunted by uncertainty about loved ones.

Tragically, a deadly disease claimed Bill's life, leaving me alone and adrift in a sea of chaos. Desperate, I fled to a farming community where my children had sought sanctuary. Among the rolling hills, we found solace and hope. We rebuilt a society that sought peace with neighbors and planet, adopting sustainable practices, forming a new government, and re-embracing technology and humanity.

As I reflect back on the turmoil and despair of that time, there were also moments of unexpected beauty and solace. A sunrise painting the sky in shades of pink and gold, the laughter of children echoing through the streets despite the darkness that surrounded us, the unexpected kindness of strangers sharing shelter and a meal. In those fleeting moments, we found the strength to carry on, fueled by the hope that there would be a brighter day."

**Name: Michelle**
**Age: 60**
**Occupation: Communications Executive**
**Country of Origin: United States**

*Video Artifact*
## MICHELLE'S STORY

▶ Scan the QR Code to watch and listen to the story.

**[SCAN ME]**

Thank you for Visiting.

# Implications

**1  FRAGMENTED SOCIETIES AND MICRO-GOVERNANCES**

As large governance structures fail, communities may form hyper-localized self-governing entities, leading to fractured political landscapes, tribalism, and competing ideological enclaves.

Some regions may thrive through decentralized governance and cooperative resilience, while others descend into lawlessness or authoritarian rule.

**2  TECHNOLOGICAL DEPENDENCE VS. REJECTION**

As over-reliance on failing technology leads to systemic failures, some societies may abandon advanced technology in favor of low-tech, sustainable solutions, creating a neo-agrarian resurgence.

Meanwhile, elite enclaves may double down on AI-driven automation, synthetic biology, and human augmentation to maintain control over remaining infrastructure.

**3  ISOLATIONIST SURVIVALISM VS. REIMAGINED COOPERATION**

Some communities may adopt extreme self-reliance, rejecting external trade and cooperation, leading to fortress-like city-states and exclusionary policies. Others may form resilient cooperative networks, rediscovering bartering systems, knowledge-sharing platforms, and bioregional alliances to rebuild in a more sustainable manner.

**4  RESOURCE WARS AND SCARCITY ECONOMIES**

With the depletion of critical natural resources, societies may shift toward rationing, black markets, and conflicts over access to clean water, arable land, and energy.

Emerging economies and surviving megacorporations may control remaining resources, deepening inequality and driving migration crises.

**5  LOST KNOWLEDGE AND THE RISE OF NEW MYTHOLOGIES**

With the decline of educational institutions, scientific understanding could erode, leading to the rise of alternative belief systems, misinformation networks, and pseudo-religious movements that reinterpret history.

Certain technologies, once commonplace, may become shrouded in mystery, leading to a "post-science" era in some regions.

# Emergent Approach: Artificial Intelligence & Foresight



**1 GENERATIVE VISUALS & VIDEO**

We experimented with emerging AI tools like DALL·E, MidJourney, and Stability AI to generate high-quality visuals that pushed the boundaries of creative storytelling. We ultized Eleven Labs to create dynamic voices to fit the various personas and roles in the museum. Using Runway, we transformed static imagery into dynamic AI-generated video sequences, while HeyGen enabled the creation of lifelike digital avatars, demonstrating the potential of AI-assisted content creation.

**2 INTERACTIVE STORYTELLING**

Leveraging Stability AI, MidJourney, and DALL·E, we developed immersive narratives where AI-generated art evolved based on user input. Runway's real-time video manipulation and HeyGen's AI avatars brought characters to life, creating interactive, adaptive storytelling experiences that responded dynamically to audience engagement.

**3 VOICE SYNTHESIS**

We explored AI-driven voice synthesis by pairing HeyGen's hyper-realistic AI avatars with voice cloning technology, enabling digital personas to narrate and interact with audiences naturally. Runway's AI-enhanced audio tools further refined the experience, allowing us to seamlessly integrate synthetic voices into AI-generated videos for a fully immersive storytelling approach.

**4 FORESIGHT METHODS**

To guide our experimentation with emerging AI tools, we applied a range of foresight methods from the University of Houston's Framework Foresight Method, ensuring a structured approach to exploring future possibilities. Horizon Scanning helped us identify cutting-edge advancements in AI-generated media, while Appreciative Inquiry allowed us to frame our exploration around the transformative potential of these tools rather than their limitations. We utilized Persona Modeling to create future user archetypes, envisioning how AI-driven storytelling and content creation might shape different audience experiences. Drawing from Double-Diamond Design Thinking, we iteratively explored and refined AI applications, balancing divergent idea generation with convergent execution. Scenario Archetypes and Backcasting helped us envision plausible futures where AI-generated content plays a central role, allowing us to work backward and identify the necessary technological and cultural shifts. Finally, Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) enabled us to examine the deeper narratives and underlying worldviews shaping the adoption and impact of AI in media and storytelling.

# The Great Collapse Museum Team



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**Kelly Oliphant**

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*Curator*

**Jess Robins**

University of Houston



*Historian*

**Alexis Wintrob**

University of Houston



*Conservator*

**Angela Starchuk**

University of Houston



*Archivist*

**James Holcombe**

University of Houston

# Project Multimedia

**ALL RESOURCES FOR THIS PROJECT ARE AVAILABLE ON GOOGLE DRIVE OR BY SCANNING THE QR CODE BELOW.**