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3

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In August of 2014, the now infamous movement dubbed Gamergate was born, the controversial campaign concerned issues of sexism and progressivism in video game culture, stemming from a harassment campaign conducted primarily through the use of the hashtag #GamerGate. Within the movement several prominent female figures working within the gaming industry were targeted, particularly game developers Zoë Quinn and Brianna Wu, as well as feminist media critic Anita Sarkeesian. The third issue of the *isthisit?* magazine hopes to consider the constructed worlds that we choose to inhabit, the excessive violence surrounding video game debate and discussion, the power of video games as an interactive medium and the heteronormative face of stereotypical video gaming. The following is a collection of artworks, essays and interviews all responding to this overarching narrative.

Bob Bicknell-Knight, director of *isthisit?*

With contributions from:

Aaron McCarthy, Alan Butler, Alexandra Ehrlich Speiser, Andy Nizinskyj, Aram Bartholl, Benjamin Warner, Bertie Irons, Bob Bicknell-Knight, Brent Watanabe, Calum Bowden, Christina Smiros, Claire L. Evans, Dani Ploeger, David Blandy, David OReilly, Duncan Herd, Eden Mitsenmacher, Ellie Power, Elliott Burns, Emily Godden & Audit Chaos, Eva and Franco Mattes, Felix Treadwell, Fengyi Franklin Zhu, Frances Kelly, Gabriel Junqueira, Gabrielle Noel, Georgie Roxby Smith, Georgina Tyson, Gerhard Mantz, Hannah Nussbaum, Harun Farocki, Henry Driver, Ian Cheng, Ian Malhotra, Isa Magalhaes, Jakob Kudsk Steensen, Jason Rohrer, Jon Haddock, Joscha Steffens, Joseph DeLappe, Kara Gut, Kasem Kydd, Katy Roseland, Kent Sheely, Klara Vincent-Novotna, Lawrence Lek, Lee Boötes, Liv Preston, Lucas Glenn, Marc Blazel, Marta Strazicic, Mathew Zefeldt, Mathias Jansson, Matteo Bittanti, Max Colson, Melanie Courtinat, Michael Pybus, Miyö Van Stenis, Motsonian (Monica Rohtmaa), Nora Silva, Oliver Bharat, Oliver Payne, Ololade Adeniyi, Owen Thackeray, Ped.Moreira, Pete Jiadong Qiang, Petra Szemán, PucciSethCnxion, Roc Herms, Samuel Capps, Sandra Araújo, Second Front, Siann Fan, Sid and Jim, Silvia Dal Dosso, Stacey Davidson, Stefan Schwarzer, Stelios Ilchouk, Tea Strazicic, Theo Triantafyllidis, Thomson and Craighead, Todd Deutsch, Tom Kobialka, VJ Entter, Valentin Dommanget, Viktor Timofeev, Will Kendrick, Willem Weismann, alpha_rats, fleuryfontaine, tissue.hunter

I wanted to take a selfie but I had no face.

First Museum Shooters

Written by
Mathias Jansson

In the Beginning was Doom

When the small company id Software in Texas, USA, 1993 released the videogame Doom few would have guessed that this game would change the entire game industry, and even fewer would have guessed which impact Doom would have on the art world. Until 1990 most videogames were played in a 2D environment in which you controlled a character or vehicle through a landscape, as in videogames as Super Mario Bros, Pac Man or Space Invaders. In the early 90's the First-Person Shooter genre (FPS) got its breakthrough with titles such as Wolfenstein 3D (1992) and Doom (1993) both published by id Software. The big difference with these games was that they took place in a 3D world that was generated in real time and they were played in first person (First Person Shooter). The player didn't control a character on the screen, he was the main character in the game and saw the whole game from first person view which mostly consisted of looking straight down at a loaded gun.

Already at the launch of Wolfenstein 3D, id Software had noticed that the players tried to build their own levels to the game and when they released Doom the following year, they did what they could to make it easier for the player to modify the game. They separated audio, video and music from the game and put them in WAD files (Where's All the Data?)[1]. Both founders of id Software, John Romero and John Carmack, had begun there career by hacking and altering others' games and now they wanted to give something back to the gaming community and create something that gave extra value to the new game. In retrospect it is clear that this was a wise decision. Doom sold over four million copies and was long in the charts of the world's bestselling computer games. The videogame Doom did not only create a whole new way to experience a videogame but also the conditions for a whole new art form.

The FPS genre evolved rapidly over the next few years with titles such as Doom II (1994), Quake (1996), Unreal (1998) and Half-Life (1998). Powerful new graphics engine made it possible to render even more detailed and sophisticated 3D environments. Among the new games were also new special tools that made it possible for players, to modify and extend the game by building their own levels, characters, weapons, etc. Through the Internet, which at this time began to connect players around the world, there were easy ways to spread the new modifications to other gamers. Suddenly there were a lot of new mods (modifications) to well-known game titles as Doom, Quake and Half-Life, which both extended the life of the games and created a growing subculture and community around them. It was in this environment a whole new generation of artists grew up with videogames and they soon began experimenting with the game tools to see how they could be used in artistic contexts.

The artist-as-gamer

The breakthrough for artistic modifications of videogames can be dated to 1995 when the Austrian artist Orhan Kipcak created Arsdoom to the media festival Ars Electronica in Linz, Austria.[1] Arsdoom consisted of an entirely new level for the game Doom II (1994). The level was a virtual copy of the exhibition hall in Brucknerhaus. In the virtual exhibition hall the player could found artworks of artists as Peter Weibel, Seiichi Guruya, Manfred Wolff-Plottegg, Sabine Bitter and other. The exhibiting artists were also the enemies in the game and could be killed by the player by using weapons as his fists, brushes, wooden cross and the traditional chain saw from the original Doom game. Except beating and killing the artists the player could also destroy the exhibited art and create his own art. In the game the player could pick up objects from different artists as Herman Nitsch blood, with which he could spray the walls, or use Arnulf Rainer pens to draw on the artworks. There was also a feature that made it possible to turn all the artwork upside down in a style reminiscent of George Baselitz's art.[3]

Arsdoom represents a milestone in the videogame-inspired art and marks in many ways a new approach between art and audience. The audience is no longer passive consumers, but active arts producers who have control over the exhibition with full rights to destroy the works of art and shoot the artists. The concept of Arsdoom has many of the characteristic features that define artistic computer game modification. First, this type of art requires a certain habit of playing videogames from the visitors, second, it is expected that the visitor is active and interactive in order to experience the artwork. If the visitors do not play or get involved there will be no work of art. In Arsdoom there are also a fusion between popular culture (video games) and high culture (the established art world). Often this fusion is a bloody clash when the violent aesthetics from videogames are confronted with the rules of "not to touch the art" in the exhibition space. In art works as Arsdoom the visitors/players have every opportunity to experience the art exhibition without the normal conventions and limitations.

First Museum Shooters

It took not long before other artists started to create their own levels to popular videogames. Palle Torsson and Tobias Bernstrup were still students when they in November 1996, were invited to the Nordic biennial "The Scream: Borealis 8" at Arken, Museum of Modern Art near Copenhagen.[4] Their contribution to the exhibition was a videogame which they called "Museum Meltdown". With help of the videogame Duke Nukem, Torsson and Bernstrup recreated the architecture from the Art Museum Arken and let the visitors as in Arsdoom, take control over the exhibition hall where they could shoot down enemies of various kinds and destroy the works of art.[5] "Museum Meltdown" got two successors. 1997 Torsson and Bernstrup made a version of the Contemporary Art Center in Vilnius and in 1999 a new version of Museum Meltdown was showed at Moderna Museet in Stockholm. In the press release from the Moderna Musset exhibition the artists writes:

"Museum Meltdown is a virtual reorganization of the Museum of Modern Art and is based on the video game Half-Life. The game's logic can be displaced as well as all living art become objects for the player's destructive desires. Museum with the task of conveying / preserve our cultural heritage here is a scene of violence and destruction."[6]

In 1999 RELOAD Shift eV Gallery in Berlin arranged an exhibition with the artists Florian Muser and Imre Oswald, who exhibited a reconstruction of the Hamburger Kunsthalle created with help of the videogame Quake.[7] As in the previous examples, the artists created a virtual architecture of a real exhibition hall and let the visitors take a walk in the galleries armed to the teeth so they can defend themselves against enemies sneaking up around the corner and disrupting the experience of art. Arsdoom, Museum Meltdown, and other similar works can be categorized in a special genre called "First Museum Shooters". In "First Museum Shooters" artist re-create real exhibition spaces, and in this virtual interactive arena the forces of popular culture and high culture clash together in a violent and often bloody confrontation. On one side, the established art institution with its unique irreplaceable works of art, exhibited as precious relics, and on the other side the digital artwork that can be mass produced, copied and distributed via the Internet. "First Museum Shooters" can be interpreted as a metaphor for an ongoing paradigm shift in art, it is a metaphor for the struggle between the old art vs the new art. There is also a metaphor of how different generations consume culture. The older generation is more accustomed to passively consume art in institutions, stated in the expression "go and look at art", while young people today expect to be able to participate in and create their own art experience. The older generation, are in the game metaphor, the monsters who defends and preserves the institutional 'high culture" while the younger generation, the player, create their own art experience by mixing elements from high culture and popular culture and melting them together in new impressions and experiences in an interactive Game Art. Within the framework of the virtual world, the player can break all the conventions and rules surrounding the real art exhibition. He can do everything that is normally forbidden to do as loudly destroying art objects.

A Meta-Level

The Australian artists Stephen Honegger and Anthony Hunt's contribution to the genre is a bit different. There work "Container" was showed for the first time in 2002 at Gertrude Contemporary Art Space in Melbourne, Australia.[8] "Cointainer" consists of a setup where a copy of a real container is placed inside the gallery. Of course, the visitor asks himself how did they manage to get such a large shipping container into a small gallery? It can hardly have come through the door. The answer is inside the container where you can watch a video. The video is a machinima made using the computer game Half-Life, and shows how an unknown person breaks into the gallery by climbing in through a window at the back of the gallery. The unknown person then seeks his way through the building through corridors and staircases, until he finally arrives at the gallery. In the gallery he opens a secret hatch in the wall and presses a button. The ceiling of the gallery opens and the container is slowly lowered into the room. The unknown intruder then retrieves a gun and walks up to the container and opens the door. Inside the container there are a man looking at a video. The unknown intruder simply shoots down the man and here ends the movie, and also the explanation of how the container ended up in the gallery.

The original idea to "Container" came from a need to create a dark space in the gallery to view a video. The solution was to create a container in the gallery and also making a fictional story about how it ended up in the gallery. The visitor sits inside a proper container and sees a movie that shows how the container has come into the room and how the person in the film enters the container and shoots the viewer. It's an artwork about the creation of an artwork and therefore you could say there is a meta-level included in "Container". In other examples of "First Museum Shooters" you will also find this kind of meta-level. As visitor you participate in different narratives levels. The artwork is showed in a physical real exhibition space in which the visitor enters, but the visitor also steps in as a viewer and player of a virtual copy of the exhibition space. To draw a parallel with the theatre, the visitor is not only a person in the audience looking at the play but he also steps up on stage and start to act and became a part of the play he is viewing. The visitor is taking part both in the physical exhibition and the virtual exhibition, he moves between different narrative levels in the artwork. In that way you can see "First Museum Shooters" as a form of meta-art, which discusses and examines the experience of art in museums and galleries.

Everything I Shoot is Art

In connection with the 2006 graduation show at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago artist Chris Reilly made a reconstructed of the entire exhibition, 4500 square feet spread over three floors, with the help of computer game Half Life 2. Reilly works, with the long title: "Everything I Do Is Art, But Nothing I Do Makes Any Difference, Part II: Or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Gallery".[9] A title that alludes to Stanley Kubrick famous film "Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb "from 1964 with Peter Sellers in the lead role. Anyone who visited the thesis exhibition in Chicago could walk around in the real exhibition, but also make a virtual visit. In the virtual version you had to deal with some nasty monsters as in many other "First Museum Shooters". In Reilly artwork you can also shoot and destroy the artworks in the exhibition, but it is also possible to pick up paint cans around the building and shoot at them. The result is a kind of "shooting painting", where the paint can explode and makes formation in different colours on the gallery walls. Maybe Reilly had Niki de Saint classic work of art "Shooting Paintings" in mind when he included this feature. It was between the years 1961 to 1962 as Niki de Saint Phalle did 12 performances in which she used a salon rifle to shot at paint container mounted at reliefs and sculptures. When the shot hit the container the paint spread over the object and formed a "Shooting painting". For Saint Phalle it was a statement that she as a woman could shoot her way in to the male occupied sphere of art, but it was also a new way of looking at painting. In a known quote she said:

"Ready. Aim. Fire. Red, yellow, blue – the painting is Crying, the painting is dead. I have killed the painting. It is reborn. War with no victims."[10]

A quote that just as well could be use to describe the genre of "First Museum Shooters". Videogames can be compared to a form of new real-time paintings and when artists use the FPS games to create new art forms, they are literal shooting their way into the art history. Especially in works as Arsdoom and Museum Meltdown you can see that the artists are killing and destroying the old paintings and simultaneously creating a new form of digital paintings on the screen. After fifteen years we still see new examples of "First Museum Shooters". The Swedish artist Paul Steen has for example created "Art Assault" a modification of the free open source FPS game, Assault Cube.

"The computer controlled bots are named after the 100 most successful artists according to artfacts.net. In Team Deathmatch mode the bots and the player are randomly parted into two teams, Inside and Outside. The maps in the game are based on real life artist run galleries or alternative museums."[11]

You can choose between 10 different maps including Magasin3, Stockholm, PS1, New York, TATE Modern, London, Westwerk, Hamburg and Worm, Rotterdam.

One more example in the genre is Michiel Van Der Zander's machinima "Pwned Paintings #2" from 2008.[12] In this machinima we see a character moving around in an art historic collection. The view is not first person, rather third person, found in games as Max Payne. Armed with a rifle the character moves around in the galleries shooting at the painting so they fall of the wall. Pwned is an expression used in videogames as Counterstrike, and to say "You just got pwned!" is a way to humiliate and show domination over an opponent that got soundly defeated. In the same way van Der Zanden pwned the established art world. The statement is clear: The traditional art and art institutions have been defeated, a new generation of artists are taking over, artists that will shoot their way into the art history and bring their own culture and expressions with them, in the same way as previous generation of artist has done before them.

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Mathias Jansson (b. 1972) is a Swedish art historian and art critic interested in the history of Game Art. He has published books as "Game Art Around the World: From Japan to Cuba" (jag behöver inget förlag, 2015), ISBN 9789186915193; "The Pioneers of Game Art: From ArsDoom to SimBee", (jag behöver inget förlag, 2015), ISBN 9789186915186 and "Everything I Shoot Is Art", Mathias Jansson, ISBN 9781291020502, Link Editions, 2012.

Filters

p2K` Blink! : LAghg
|TKD| ChickenWaffles : what r u talking about
Mattes : i'm an artist
gameME Stats disabled! Need at least 6 players (5/6)
|TKD| Tomahavvk music : so what
|TKD| Tomahavvk music : wat do u need
|TKD| Tomahavvk music : ur begining to get on my nerves

Say : i'm making an art performance

[US Army] dead-in-iraq messaged: BLAKE W EVANS 24 ARMY MAY 25 2008
[US Army] dead-in-iraq messaged: JASON F DENE 37 ARMY MAY 25 2008
[US Army] Buggy si team messaged: just kick this guy already :)

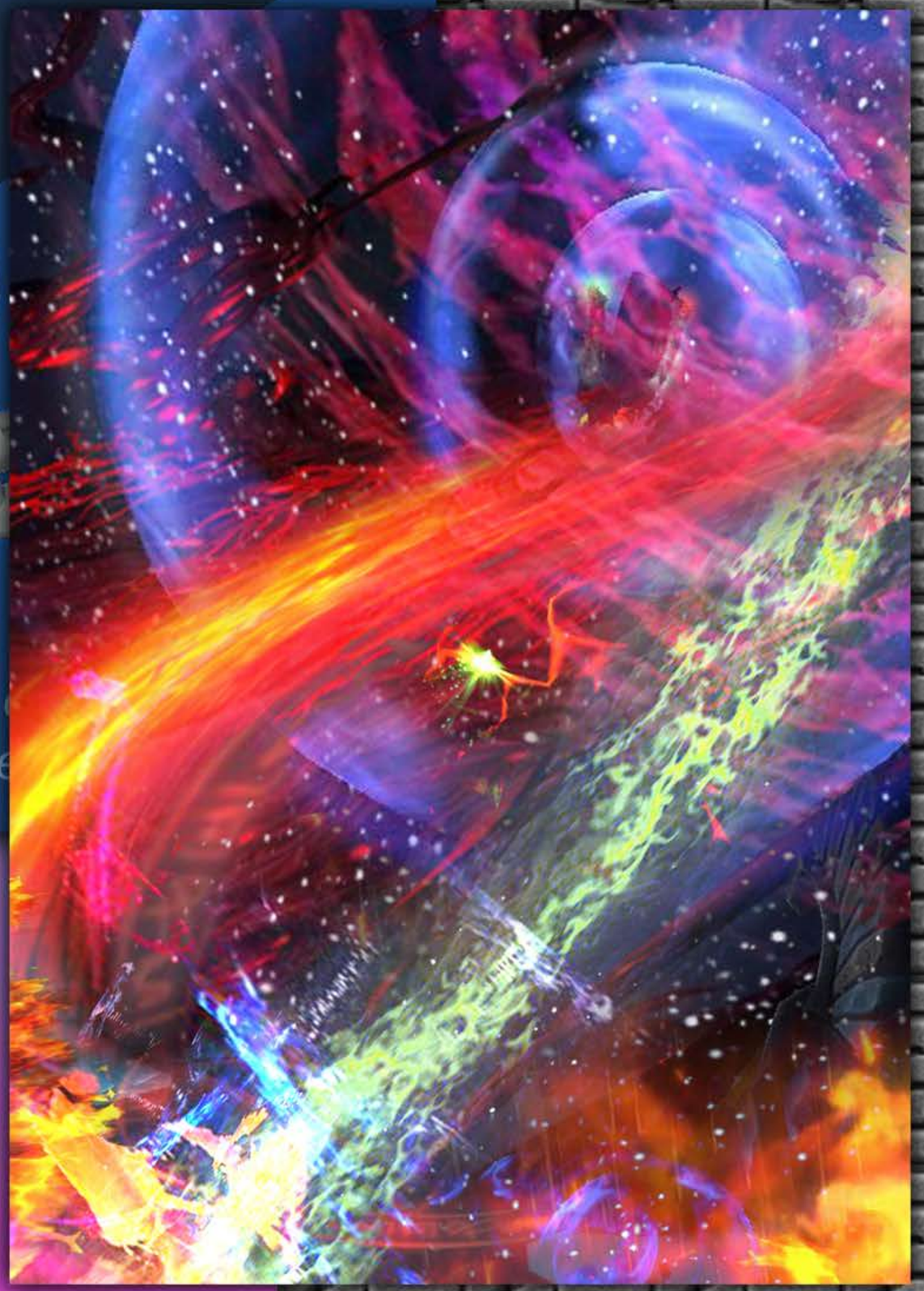
into being of the notion of "author" constitutes the moment of individualisation in the history of ideas, literature, philosophy, Even today, such categories seem

The coming into being of the notion of "author" constitutes the privileged moment of individualisation in the history of ideas, knowledge, literature, philosophy, and the sciences. Even today, when we reconstruct the history of a concept, such categories seem relatively weak.

was

Scene

WHERE DO I PUT MY THUMBS



Jakob Kudsk Steensen Interviewed by Bob Bicknel-Knight

In this exclusive interview artist Jakob Kudsk Steensen talks to artist and curator Bob Bicknell-Knight about why he uses Virtual Reality in his work, the importance of stimulating an emotional response and the future of the medium.

Bob Bicknell-Knight: The research surrounding a lot of your work seems to primarily stem from real life scenarios, or realistic future scenarios, accompanied by an interest in immersive technologies such as virtual reality. Where does this interest stem from and why do you think it's important to immerse oneself into these environments?

Jakob Kudsk Steensen: My exploration of immersive technologies, VR especially, stems from my up-bringing, and I think it is something relatively generational. I never really questioned "why" VR for-example, or the use of game engines for art making, because it has been a natural part of my personality since childhood, and hence, virtual experiences are imprinted into my memory, my personality, and my friends and network. With VR I seek to make sense of how technologies, our bodies, and natural environments intertwine. Growing up, I spend a lot of time playing computer games and tinkering with game editor, but I also spend a lot of my time outside, and I grew up in several different countries. The first version of "unreal", essentially the same program I use today, was released when I was a teenager in the late 1990's. The amounts of effort, technical frontier, art direction, research and societal commentaries of a specific genre of games have formed how I think artistically.

The first game I played was called "Red Alert" from 1996. So I was 9 years old when the game came out, and it blew my mind. I was obsessed with it. I even learned some English from it, as it was hard to progress without knowing the mission statements. Red Alert is an isometric game, which means that you see it from a static top-down perspective. The premise of the game is an alternative post-second world war history, where Einstein's theory of relativity was used to develop a time machine that was used to go back in time and capture Adolf Hitler right after his graduation. However, as a result, the Russians merged as a super nation that went into war with the Allies, and, eventually, in Red Alert 2, conquered USA. Red Alert 2 was also one of the early online games I played, besides Unreal, and I ended up being among rank 50 worldwide in it. No one really knew about my early online gaming, since it was more of a stigma being that much into computer games back then, compared to today.

The game that seriously got me into thinking there was more to computers than entertainment, was Fallout from 1997. I got my hands on it through a magazine some years after it was released. Also an isometric game, it took place in an (again) alternative history, where a nuclear war had happened after WW2. I think games in the 1990's had some-kind of obsession with twisting, satirically, post-cold war Western imaginations of the status quo of the world. That was really thrilling to me, but none of my friends were into it. My sister was a bit into it, so we both played it. But I became obsessed with the game, much more than Red Alert. Fallout has been a big inspiration to my work for many years, and I think my work Dome of Gated Ecologies, a VR piece part of DIS Magazine Styles and Customs of the 2020s, draws a lot from Fallout. Fallout from 1997 is a role playing game with a variety of references to Mad Max movies, Monty Python, Scientology, neo-tribalism, orientalism, and conflicts between humans and new mutant species. It is also as much a novel as it is a game. Lots of reading, character development and a soundtrack that still owns today.

So to me, using game engines and VR now in my work, to develop virtual environments which speculate on alternative futures of real-world locations, feels very natural. I use VR because I can really express myself, and invite people into virtual environments, where I am able to literally develop simulations of places I first research in person, and then speculate on, how those areas may be in the future. The combination of visiting new locations, observing landscapes and how people relate locally to different landscapes, and then use these elements to conjure and develop entire places people can visit is pretty thrilling to me. But it also feels like a very natural process, and I think many from my/our generation feel that way. More people are used to precarious transforming living circumstances, as well as interacting with computers.

Bob Bicknell-Knight: My favourite type of science-fiction takes the world as it's known and distorts it slightly, changing one element that offsets the balance, causing a shift that creates a new world, with the same menial jobs or environmental worries, but with tiny changes, enabling the novel or film to become a critique of our current society shrouded in this sci-fi cloaking mechanism. Fallout and Red Alert are prime examples of this offsetting, something that you seem to be considering and attempting to duplicate in your own work, both in the aforementioned Dome of Gated Ecologies and in the recent work AQUAPHOBIA. This differentiation from the real seems to manifest as water levels rising and engulfing our current landscape, full of environmental concerns you may have for the future, what do you hope to gain when immersing people so rigorously in these environments?

Jakob Kudsk Steensen: I like science fiction too, where a single event or other type of element is introduced which changes everything at personal and societal scales. I think that kind of stimulating imaginative thinking is powerful. When I say imaginative, I mean our ability to shape pictures, construct mentally new systems and predict of thinking about real world actions we can do, to shape the future. Those relationships between real observed events, imaginary thinking, and how they become manifested, and in what (often odd) forms, has been my approach to several art pieces since I filmed the landscapes of abandoned tourist resorts in the work A Cartography of Fantasia in 2015. In AQUAPHOBIA I wanted to personify a landscape and create relationships between inner psychological spaces and exterior architecture and worlds. When I build for VR, I think about the places I make as installations and landscapes, more than digital places. So I build architecture, rocks, mud, hills, caverns, tunnels, pathways etc. to evoke different kinds of environmental sentiments such as anxiety, pleasure, fear, wonder. This approach is taken directly from what is referred to as "level design" in the game industry. With AQUAPHOBIA, a work

Screenshot from *AQUAPHOBIA* (2017)

that is based on a real-world and 1-1 accurate scale of a park and pier in Brooklyn, I wanted to develop 5 steps of overcoming fear of water, inspired by psychological methods of overcoming aqua-phobia. I then wrote a kind of break-up story and "love poem" told from a transforming mutational water blob, which goes from microbial scale to overtaking the entire world. Physically then, inside the virtual environment, you are moving through five spaces, from a subterranean server and bunker live environment, which keep water microbes in captivity, towards a muddy tunnel with underground infrastructures, towards an archaeological digging side, up to the real park and, finally, over the bridge and water. So I think, with AQUAPHOBIA, I became more aware of methods of directly connecting psychological inner structures and transformations, with the climate changes we are seeing, and imagine the future of. VR is excellent for entering such psychological, and real, spaces.

Bob Bicknell-Knight: I like the idea of taking a technique like level design, primarily used in the gaming industry to guide the player efficiently through the level to the next stage, to evoke an emotional reaction like anxiety or pleasure. Commercial video games can and do do this, but it's rarely achieved or very successful. You've said previously that you work primarily in the medium of VR due to how natural a progression it feels, I'm wondering how much of an impact it makes on the work that it's created using a game engine that was originally created specifically to develop first person shooters (FPS) video game experiences?

Jakob Kudsk Steensen: I actually do think a lot of games, in particular FPS, are incredible strong at developing moods in the user, and in that community of developers the word "pace", is often used; in AQUAPHOBIA you start in a small room to give a sense of claustrophobia, so I experimented a lot with the width and height of the space, in relation to my own body size at least. Clearly a virtual space gives physical reactions in relation to the users own physique and psychology, in terms of how that person is conditioned to navigate different types of space. So from that little room in AQUAPHOBIA a wall opens and the entire experience pick up in speed, opens up and starts to morph, so you feel a progression in time and space as all the sequences are dependent on "player" movement. It gives the piece a "pace" and feelings of closeness to openness, claustrophobia to calm wide open spaces. This method and knowledge comes from computer games, absolutely. There is lots of theory and discussions on it if you look within the fields of level design and developer forums online. I think we owe a lot to computer games for having paved the technical way and methods for all this, in VR too. Architects have similar languages and museums which seek to tell "stories" through shows. I don't like the word storytelling much though in VR and games. The reason is that a game engine is essentially a software that connects humans with hardware, capable of providing real-time feedback and changes. And computer game industries paved the way for the hardware necessary today at consumer levels. Now perhaps, it's AI leading the field of real-time computational developments.

Screenshot from *AQUAPHOBIA* (2017)

Where I think games lack is within their culture of production and business. It has become such a megalomaniac production rhythm of 100+ USD for one game developed over several years which means emphasis is on wide as possible consumer levels i.e. guns & buns. It's quite sexist and violent male gaze dominated. But then again in the same games you find cutting edge level design, superior sensual evocation and extreme passion for artistic capabilities. With the indie game scene developing, and VR especially, I think (hope) the demand for shooters with Hooters will decrease.

So in short yes, I love game engines, and I deeply respect the knowledge and methods of the gaming industry. I'm interested in the form just a whole other type of content. I strive to develop work which functions in an art context, as well as being capable of surviving and being recognized within the gaming and more commercial vr fields as well. To me that is what true interdisciplinary work means. I don't think it's is as interesting, to me personally, to just show game engine art in an art context, that I know game developers roll their eyes at for its execution because it in practice doesn't really do what is promised at a conceptual level. I'm interested in both. Oh and I think a lot of games are WAY too long, from 15 to 40 hours and emphasize too heavily tasks, goals, feel good vibes, winning mentalities and male heroism. I am more into a design philosophy of short, well conducted and meaningful at deeper levels than reaching the next level.

Bob Bicknell-Knight: I do agree that the triple A section of the gaming industry has become this bloated corporate cash cow, mostly catering to young males, with the storylines being heavily focus tested and sapped of any real feeling. It's definitely a problem, although, as you say, the indie game scene is growing and producing amazing gaming experiences, charging less money with reduced play-through times. The game industry is still incredibly young compared to the film industry, some say it's currently in its 'teenage years', so I'm excited to see what's going to happen to video games in the next few decades. Due to the proliferation and ease of access that the common consumer now has to VR technology, have you considered selling your artworks as video games on online distribution platforms like Steam?

Jakob Kudsk Steensen: This is in fact, structurally, what I think could have the biggest potential of VR. I have showed at film festivals like Sundance and TriBeCa for collaboration projects, as well as museums like Carnegie in Pittsburgh. What I have noticed is that VR bring together entirely new communities intersecting across multiple disciplines. I have worked with established art directors from AAA games now, sound artists, technology Ph.D. students from MIT and in general, in VR, people seem currently very open to collaborations across fields because emphasis is on the end product and how to make something interesting. In terms of publications, I am going to have my new work available for HTC Vive first on their platform, then likely Oculus and PS4. That is through a new distributor for VR art. I can't say more right now (legally), but it will go live soon. However, the real potential lies in, as you mention, self-publishing which is something I may consider and experiment with next year. A bigger ambition is to create something of a 1-4 hour fully fleshed experiences through collaborations with artists I have met, but in "fine arts" and from game/VR industries to offer new types of creative output. I am working on such a project right now, again, I cannot say more, but it launches next year! I am considering planning a single project with a 1 year development process, and involve a range of artists to work together and distribute it on Steam. But that process is also a big logistical, financial and promotional process which take times away from actual making. So I would need a creative reliable team, not to direct, but to truly collaborate with. So right now I'm setting up a network for something like that to begin next year. It would be absolutely amazing to develop an AAA experience with no guns, no sexist dimensions, and purely artistic creations. No "narrative" but a really immersive experimental world of virtual poetics by artists. I think this is my "grand vision" or dream right now.

Bob Bicknell-Knight: It sounds like an incredibly interesting time to be working in the medium, at the forefront of a new and exciting technology. What do you think is going to happen in the future, when eventually VR has become so accessible and low cost that everyone has a device, much like a laptop or smart phone, and we can wirelessly (or otherwise) enter virtual worlds whenever we want?

Jakob Kudsk Steensen: I think at this point, we, to some extent, already have access to virtual worlds. I think the real shift is not so much if it is VR or AR per se. I think that we are undergoing a paradigm shift where we interact with the virtual, not through screens we look at, screens which are on the "outside" of us, which we decipher, read and interact with logically and through specific commands.Instead, I think we are starting to go through a paradigm shift from a 2D and one-directional way of interacting with the virtual, towards a 3D and physical one. So instead of seeing something, analyzing it, and then pushing existing buttons, you are more embodied, emotional, physical, sensory, and able to think and react in a three dimensional space with the virtual. I think the digital until now has relied too heavily on pictorial traditions, where images, sculptures, texts etc. are seen as something outside of us, which we engage with. Instead, the new digital paradigm will be one where things are around us, and we are part of it. We already spend so much time online, on a screen, why not just make it more human natural by making it full 3D and physical/sensory? So if it is specially a future with VR headsets I see, I don't know. Right now, there is a very exciting moment for making VR art and I mostly approach the technology based on what is available now, happening now, being meaningful now. On the long term, I think we will start to see new non-hierachial, 3D/physical and less directed approaches to not just 3D, but society in general. The idea of the internet itself has already been leading the way for this.

Though I will admit that I am totally in to the idea of VR hubs/access points to virtual worlds being available at somekind of VR-netcafe, things like phone booths, launges, cafe's with holes in the wall you can hook into etc. What I really like about VR is, ironically, how much emphasis there is on the physical body, being present by visiting installations, taking your time, no selfies for example, and being able to fully immerse yourself into an art work with minimal distraction. I have personally been craving that way of focusing on experiences and making art work.

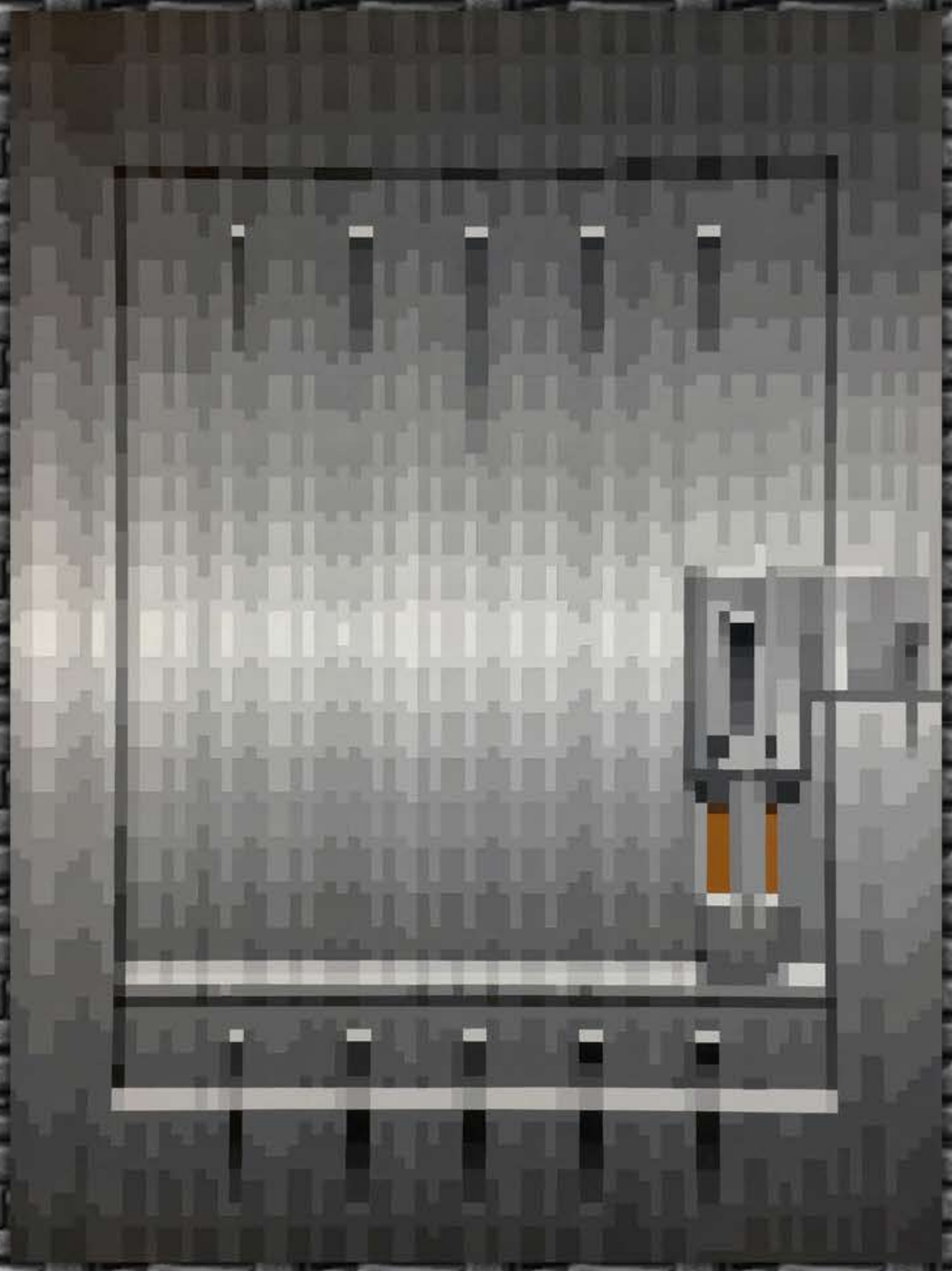
Bob Bicknell-Knight: That idea of 'immersion' seems to keep coming up a lot, in what you want from your work and any current or future reality altering technologies that we're yet to encounter. What does that mean to you in this context? Why is that, as it seems to be, the ultimate goal?

Screenshot from *AQUAPHOBIA* (2017)

Jakob Kudsk Steensen: Hmm. I probably use the word immersion because it's an industry catch concept. Fundamentally I think immersion refers to the idea of forgetting your "own" reality and become subsumed into the location and premise of VR, films, games, books etc. it seems to stem from a language of dichotomic thinking on reality versus fiction. So in one way, in terms of being strongly effected by a VR piece and sensing it corporally and mentally, immersion makes sense to me. But it only make sense to me if you return to the realm of "reality" and learn from the virtual experience something of meaning to the present. So in that way I don't like the idea too much of the virtual being a different reality and immersion making you forgot your own past, future and responsibilities. Immersion is also a non technology specific term. That is useful because it means categories of VR, AR etc. aren't visible. I think that's good and can allow for more freedom of production if the aim is immersion. But then again I don't think immersion in itself is ideal without it being connected to wider things outside the headset itself. Unless we fully leave our current ethics and individual bodies behind to become a meta physical swarm collective spread across the universe and in-between layers of existence from beneath the soil on microscopic scales to tree tops. I would like that...

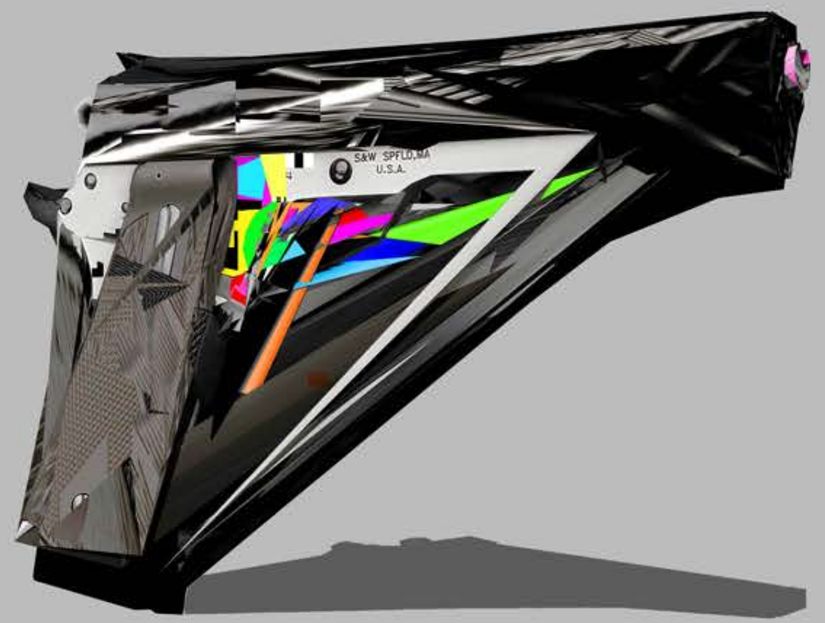
Jakob Kudsk Steensen is a Danish artist and based in New York, specialized in VR and interactive media installations. Through his practice, Steensen is concerned with how imagination, technology and ecology intertwine by developing futuristic virtual simulations of existing real-world landscapes. His work is at the forefront of real-time rendered virtual environments, and he develops projects through collaborations with science, technology and natural science divisions. His art has recently been exhibited at Carnegie Museum of Art, The Moving Image Fair, NYC, MAXXI, Museum of Modern Art, Museum of Modern Art, and as an art director, Steensen's work has been shown at Sundance and TriBeCa film festival. His work has been featured on Artnet, The Art Newspaper, Hyperallergic, Spike Art Quaterly, ARTREPORT, Politiken, Information, Worm, NEO2 and TSOEG. He has received awards from the Danish Arts Foundation, The Augustinus Foundation, and Lumen Arts Price. He has been artist in residence at Bemis Center for Contemporary Art, AADK, Centra Negra, MASS MoCA, BRIC and Mana Contemporary.

Bob Bicknell-Knight is a London based artist and curator working in installation, sculpture, moving image, net art and other digital mediums. Online and offline surveillance accompanied by the consumer capitalist culture within today's society are the main issues surrounding his work in association with current and future utopian environments, the continued automation of our daily lives in relation to the internet of things and the various cultures associated with online communities. Recent curated shows include The Museum Has Abandoned Us at State of the Art in Berlin and The Choice of a New Generation at The Muse Gallery in London.



CAUTION
STAY ON
TRAILS
BEWARE OF
STEAM VENTS
EARTH CRACKS
AND CLIFFS

Is irrationality the main characteristic of consciousness?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Modern Pacifism

Written by
Kent Sheely

If you've never played any of the Call of Duty series, there are two details you should know. First, these games are typical first-person shooters, which means you will likely mow down a few hundred enemies before the credits roll. Second, they are presented as highly cinematic experiences, in which a lot of combat and action is happening around you at all times, most of which is tertiary to your character's goals and is present only as atmospheric context. You are meant to feel like just an ordinary soldier within the ranks of a larger force. However, because you are the protagonist of the story, you're expected to be on the front lines doing a lot of the dirty work yourself if you're playing as intended.

I recently sat down for the first time with Modern Warfare, the fourth sequential entry in the line and a favorite among fans. Though violent agency is a common thread in a vast majority of games in the genre, the ubiquitous presence of semi-competent, computer-controlled teammates in the Call of Duty franchise stood out to me as a compelling variation. What would happen if you chose to shirk your own "duty" and let your allies shoulder the responsibility of cutting through the enemy line that stand between you and victory? Would the game's programming allow you to play as a pacifist? These were the questions that ran through my head. After completing the first mission without firing a shot, I realized my idle conjecture might actually have some merit, and I made it my own personal responsibility to see just how far I could push through the story without doing any harm to those around me.

The fact that this feat is even remotely possible is an interesting discovery in itself. This is a series whose very name insists that you, the player, are going to be called upon to fulfill your duty, to do whatever it takes to secure victory. By forsaking that responsibility you are essentially defying the entire purpose of the game.

I quickly developed various strategies for advancing the narrative of each level without directly engaging with the targets set up in front of me at each turn. Usually this would involve moving from one waypoint to another alongside the team until I found a hiding place, and waiting there until my companions finished clearing out all the bad guys from that immediate area. Sometimes I would need to run to the next "trigger point," which would sometimes teleport my friends nearby and allow them to completely bypass entire firefights just as I had. These unconventional techniques usually worked flawlessly, as enemies were programmed to pop out at predetermined points of engagement for a quick firefight, and my comrades were likewise programmed to move along a route as my "support," seeking cover & occasionally emerging to help out in the fight. The player is meant to be the star of the show, but when push came to shove, these minions have no problem pulling the trigger where you can't (or won't, in my case).

There were some parts of the run, however, that required more complicated maneuvers, such as manually pushing allies out into the line of fire in order to force them into engaging the enemy for me. Other complications came in the form of mission objectives that demanded I take specific action, such as planting explosives on an anti-aircraft weapon or firing rockets at a small team of tanks blocking the way through. I did a lot of practice runs on each level, trying to find the best route and the safest strategies for getting through to the end without dying or having to use a weapon. The solution in some cases was just a matter of finding the right pattern of movements to get around anyone in my way, but avoiding some of the scripted sequences proved to be a challenge that I could find no way through without taking an active part in the story. I managed to get through several missions before encountering such a roadblock, but as soon as it happened I decided I would need to craft a specific set of rules for myself:

I shall not harm infantry or vehicles. If I must use explosives or weaponry of any kind, I must do everything within my power to ensure that no enemy infantry are caught in the blast. I may only break the above rules if the programming will absolutely not let me proceed otherwise, and only after I have attempted to exploit said programming in order to avoid breaking these rules.

Incredibly, there were only a handful of points at which I was required to violate my hand-crafted code of ethics. For most of the game, I could simply allow events to play out by themselves without any direct involvement from me whatsoever.

After I wrapped up the campaign this way, I sat back in my chair and just stared at the screen as the credits rolled, molling over the implications of what I had just done.

The first thing I realized upon reviewing the footage of my run was that there were innumerable cases where I could have prevented a lot of death with a single bullet, if I'd been willing to put it through the head of just one enemy combatant. So many times I watched helplessly as my compatriots ran valiantly forward, only to be cut down by the same gout of automatic gunfire. Was I responsible for these deaths, or did I still have the moral high ground by refusing to actively take part in the bloodshed?

At some point I had a flashback to Freshman Philosophy 101, remembering Immanuel Kant and his insistence that murder is always wrong, regardless of how much goodness we perceive to be the result. This was the mantra to which I chose to adhere, refusing to justify violence by speculating on its results. From the antithetical Utilitarian perspective, though, these hypothetical killings would have been morally justified, because they would have saved countless lives.

As I considered these two opposing moral frameworks, I felt like I was once again in the front row of that early-morning class, scrabbling for bullet points I'd scrawled down from last week's lecture and desperately attempting to defend my position, to justify my inaction that had cost so many lives. Even as I write these words, I feel poorly equipped to make such a judgement.

I quickly reached another disturbing realization, that despite refusing to pull the trigger I was still very much a mechanical component of the massacre. Just by moving from one location to another I had caused my allies to surge into harm's way, forcing them to kill in self-defense and often to die in my stead as I ducked behind nearby cover and refused to let myself be a target.

Other times I was directly involved in coercing them to act violently against others, by pushing them into a position where they had no choice but to react with lethal action. Not only did I refuse to shoulder this burden, but I was actually the one who manipulated them into taking lives on my behalf. In a way, some of my strategies for avoiding murder were actually far more vile than if I had simply gone along with what the game wanted me to do, if I'd just drawn my weapon like a good soldier and pulled the trigger.

Again, there were times when I was forced to act in a way that directly caused the deaths of enemy troops, and those compromises should be addressed. I accepted these moments grimly at the time, realizing that if I was going to finish this trial I would have to bend my own rules. At the time I chose to just keep pressing on for the sake of completing the run, but what if I had simply refused to go any further? I could have ended the experiment at the first junction that required lethal force on my part, and declared the task to be impossible.

My fear of stagnation won out in the end, though, and rather than accept defeat I chose to make exceptions, to make excuses. I wanted to stay the course with the knowledge that I was still doing my best to avoid taking lives. I still had the moral high ground, in my own opinion, because it clearly wasn't my fault I had to blow up that tank. It was the game's fault for pushing me into a corner, for shoving the rocket launcher into my hands and saying "take this, we need you to do this one thing for us so we can keep moving forward." There was no alternative. But...what if I'd just stopped playing?

Screenshot from *Modern Pacifism: CoD Modern Warfare No-Kill Run #1*

By the end of the game, I had neutralized about thirty people (if you count the ones I ended up shooting in the leg or arm so the game would count them as a "kill" during parts of the game in which I couldn't proceed until I'd dropped a requisite number of enemies). I still might make another attempt and see if I can reduce this number even further, as there were some places where I could have set off an explosive at a better time, or used different strategies to to avoid certain sections entirely.

I'm still not quite sure whether my efforts to preserve life in Modern Warfare would be morally justified had they taken place in the real world; I suppose the verdict rests on how we would individually answer those age-old questions of morality, how we weigh our actions and inactions against their consequences. What began as a superficial challenge in a game otherwise intended for escapism turned into a deeply philosophical experience for me, and I think the end result is worth scrutinizing. I refuse to accept that there is any form of interactive media that is not worth exploring and pushing to its limits, even if that means taking the exact opposite approach and just stepping back to let things play out as they will. You can decide for yourself what to make of the results.

Kent Sheely (b. 1974, United States) is a new media artist based in New York City. His work draws both inspiration and foundation from the aesthetics and culture of video games, examining the relationships between the real world and virtual ones. Much of his work centers around the translation and transmediation of symbols, concepts, and expectations from game space to the real world and vice versa, forming new bridges between simulation and reality.

DROP BODY
ACTION

Georgie Roxby Smith Interviewed by Matteo Bittanti

In this interview artist Georgie Roxby Smith talks to artist Matteo Bitanti about her artistic influences, a machinima based practice and her work within the game worl of Grand Theft Auto V.

Matteo Bittanti: Can you briefly describe your education?

Georgie Roxby Smith: After finishing secondary school I studied Media Arts, specializing in animation and sound art before I returned to study at the University of Melbourne, Faculty of the Victorian College of the Arts as a postgraduate student. I completed a Master's of Contemporary Art and then Master's of Fine Art (by research) specializing in mixed reality, idealized selves, and how we role-play the self online.

Matteo Bittanti: Can you name some influences - not necessarily artistic ones - that played a key role in your evolution as an artist?

Georgie Roxby Smith: When I started working in the digital medium, it was not a big scene here in Australia yet, so meeting digital artists IRL at the Watermill Center in New York and travelling to Nevada to take part in Perspectives International Festival of Digital Art curated by game art pioneer Joseph De Lappe was an incredible experience. Meeting and working with my digital peers from across the globe in the one space for the first time (a number of whom I later brought together for a group show here in Melbourne "New Media Art NOW" in 2013) was pivotal. Having curators like Matteo Bittanti bringing together artists and creating a virtual gallery and discussion space through his GameScenes blog continues to be a great inspiration.

Matteo Bittanti: When and why did you begin using video games in your practice?

Georgie Roxby Smith: I had been working with virtual worlds and materiality in my studio research during my Master's but the more I delved into the work, the more it became about the self, role play, and how we perform online. I began experimenting with interventions, glitches and the insertion of 'the other" into the virtual norm. Rediscovering the video game landscape in 2012 after years away (which may as well be eons in video game world!) was a key moment in my practice. Immersing myself as audience/player, the possibilities of the medium and my concerns with gaming culture (both onscreen and off) emerged and the work generated itself naturally out of those provocations.

Matteo Bittanti: Digital games often create parallel, alternative experiences for its users. How do you relate to the complex relation between reality and simulation? How do you address this tension through your work?

Georgie Roxby Smith: As technology advances, we are increasingly living in multiple realities at once. For a long time we have had one hand in the digital and the other in the real but it's the slippage in between that has always interested me – how much we invest in our virtual selves and avatars, the physical and neurological connections between us and "it", mirrored and glitched real and virtual environments. My installation work Reality Bytes attempted to address this by layering multiple realities, audiences and performances in a myriad of spaces in one time. Since then it has been a process of stripping back and isolating those moments and experiences. The tensions vary with each work – viewers know the protagonist is a "bunch of pixels" yet by repeating and looping acts of violence, as in 99 Problems [WASTED] for example, I create an unease in the viewer. In this work, the viewer's discomfort is amplified by injecting a juxtaposition of humor and a rhythmic soundtrack, courtesy of the suicide gun, that carries the viewer almost jauntily through the work.

Matteo Bittanti: The creative opportunities afforded by machinima are greatly constrained by existing copyright law, which prohibits many possible uses, including commercial purposes. What's your take on the paradoxical nature of this art form?

Georgie Roxby Smith: I'm not overly concerned with machinimas limitations as I am not driven by commerciality, rather the best medium to convey the work's concept – and in this case the concept is embedded in the medium itself.

Matteo Bittanti: Do you agree that machinima has democratized the art making process? Has it lowered the entry barrier for creators of video art, as some critics argue?

Georgie Roxby Smith: As a contemporary artist, I value concept and aesthetic equally, I don't necessarily relate the majority of machinima with art making. That argument could be (and was) just as easily applied to the photography/painting debate. I don't think artists and critics should be elitist about the medium – if the medium is the best vehicle for the work, the importance should be placed on the work being executed well both in thought and materiality.

Matteo Bittanti: How do video game aesthetics affect the overall impact of your work? What comes first, the concept or the medium?

Georgie Roxby Smith: For me, immersive and critical play generates the concept. That said my new body of work is sculpturally based, concept definitely lead in that case.

Matteo Bittanti: In your artwork ***99 Problems [WASTED]*** how and why do you use this particular video game?

Screenshot from *99 Problems [WASTED]* (2014)

Georgie Roxby Smith: *Grand Theft Auto* comes pre-loaded with preconceptions of hyper-violence from both players and the wider community – some true, some way off the mark. The interesting thing of course, particularly in the multiplayer platform, is that the use of these violent actions (and how far they are taken) is completely up to the player. Like Marina Abramovic's Rhythm 0, the audience (or player) drives the act and its level of severity and subsequent consequences. Being open world and dense in its environment and modability – and with these embedded nuances in-game and out - Grand Theft Auto V was the perfect platform for this work.

Matteo Bittanti: Do you think that the video game aesthetic is the more suitable one to gain attention to gender issues and to the perception of women in our society?

Georgie Roxby Smith: The medium has been an important tool to demonstrate my artistic concepts and feminist ideals through the de-contextualisation of female protagonists who "exist" within this illusionary world yet represent a greater and more concerning overriding culture. Since creating these works, these concerns have been aired on a wider platform through the efforts of Anita Sarkeesian and are therefore now very much in the public consciousness. As an artist, exploring and teasing out societal glitches that perhaps go unnoticed in the everyday, the wider understanding of these issues signifies to me a moment for my practice to move on and into new spheres – whether or not that includes new mediums.

Screenshot from *The Fall Girl* (2012)

Georgie Roxby Smith works across a range of disciplines exploring new pathways between virtual and physical worlds. Employing a variety of tools - including 3D graphics, live performance, shared virtual and gaming spaces, installation and projection - these works explore the increasingly blurred border between identity, materiality, reality, virtuality and fantasy in contemporary culture. In 2010 Georgie was selected for The Watermill Center Spring Residency Program, NY, by an international selection committee of cultural leaders including Marina Abramović, Alanna Heiss & Robert Wilson. In 2011 Georgie completed her MFA at the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne. Since 2012 Georgie has been focusing on gender representation and violence in video games, particularly that directed towards women on screen and in online communities. Georgie has exhibited extensively both nationally and internationally including Art in Odd Places, New York, (where her work was featured in Time Out NY), Prospectives International Festival of Digital Art Nevada, Game Art Festival at Hammer Museum Los Angeles, Gamerz Festival (FR), Festival Miden (GR) and Generation i.2 - Aesthetics of the Digital in the 21st Century at Edith Russ Huas for Media Art (DE). Other highlights include curating and showing in NOW13:New Media Art Now, Substation Contemporary Art Prize and Self Help at Rawson Projects Brooklyn, curated by Jocelyn Miller (MoMa PS1). Most recently, in 2015, Georgie showed at Strafsachengalerie in Austria , QUT Art Museum, James Makin Gallery and Data Flow: Digital Influence at Town Hall Gallery in Melbourne.

Matteo Bittanti is an interdisciplinary artist based in San Francisco and Milan. His practice is located at the intersection of gaming, film, and the web. Bittanti's conceptual works have been exhibited in the United States, Canada, England, Australia, Mexico, Scotland, Australia, France, and Italy. Since 2012, he has been collaborating with Colleen Flaherty as COLL.EO. His curatorial practice includes exhibitions in both Europe and the United States, including GAME VIDEO/ART. A SURVEY (2016, with Vincenzo Trione), TRAVELOGUE (2016), and ITALIANS DO IT BETTER!! (2011, with Domenico Quaranta in the Fringe events of the Venice Biennale). As a scholar, he conducted fearless research at UC Berkeley, fought technological determinism at Stanford University, understood the difference between critical theory and hypocritical theory, social practice and social justice while performing as an Adjunct Professor at California College of the Arts. He lives in San Francisco and Milan.

BUZZ
Fashion
Bikini Paris Redstars
Bikini Paris Chocolate
Male Shorts Waves
Male Shorts Tiares

Sexy clothes ... Sexy p
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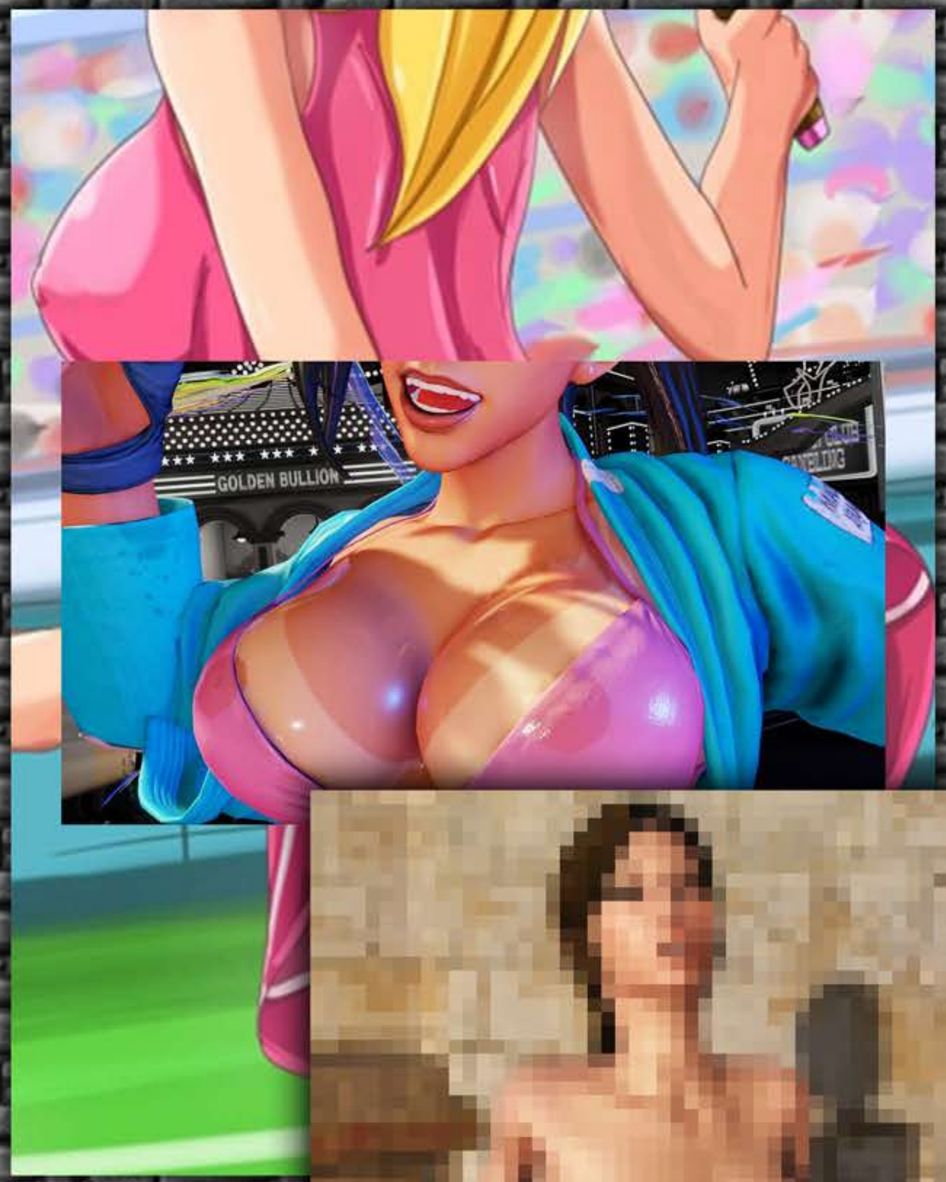
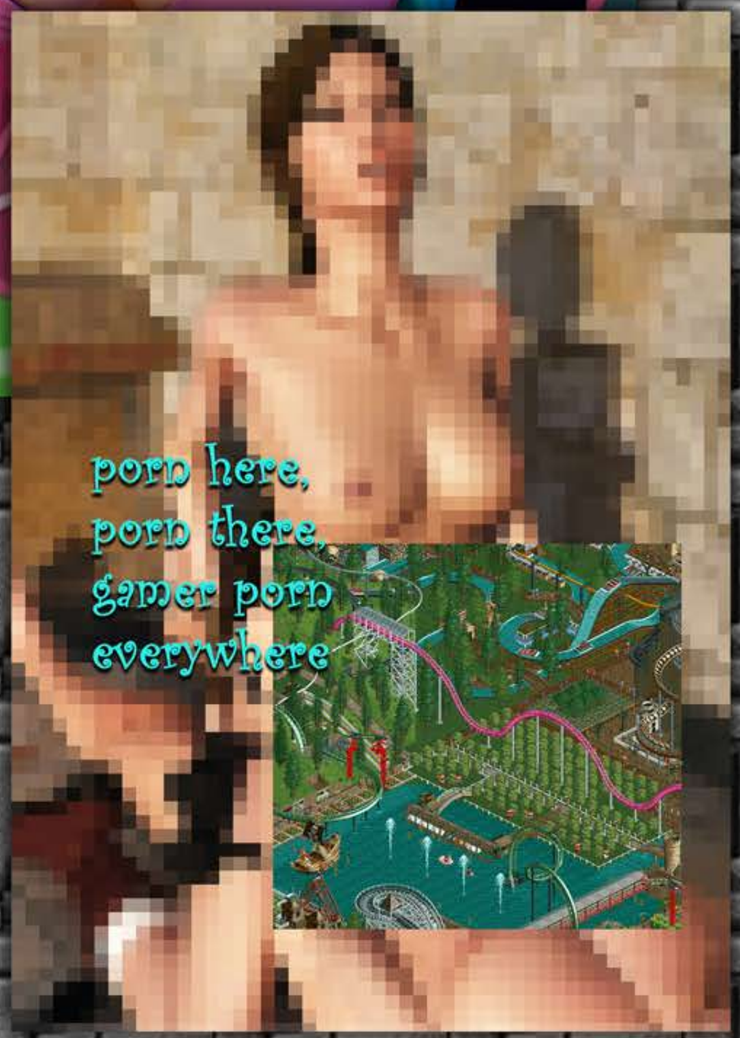
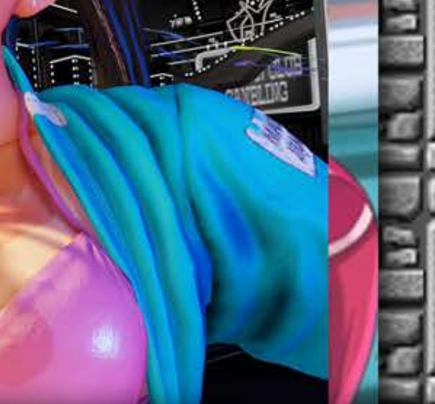
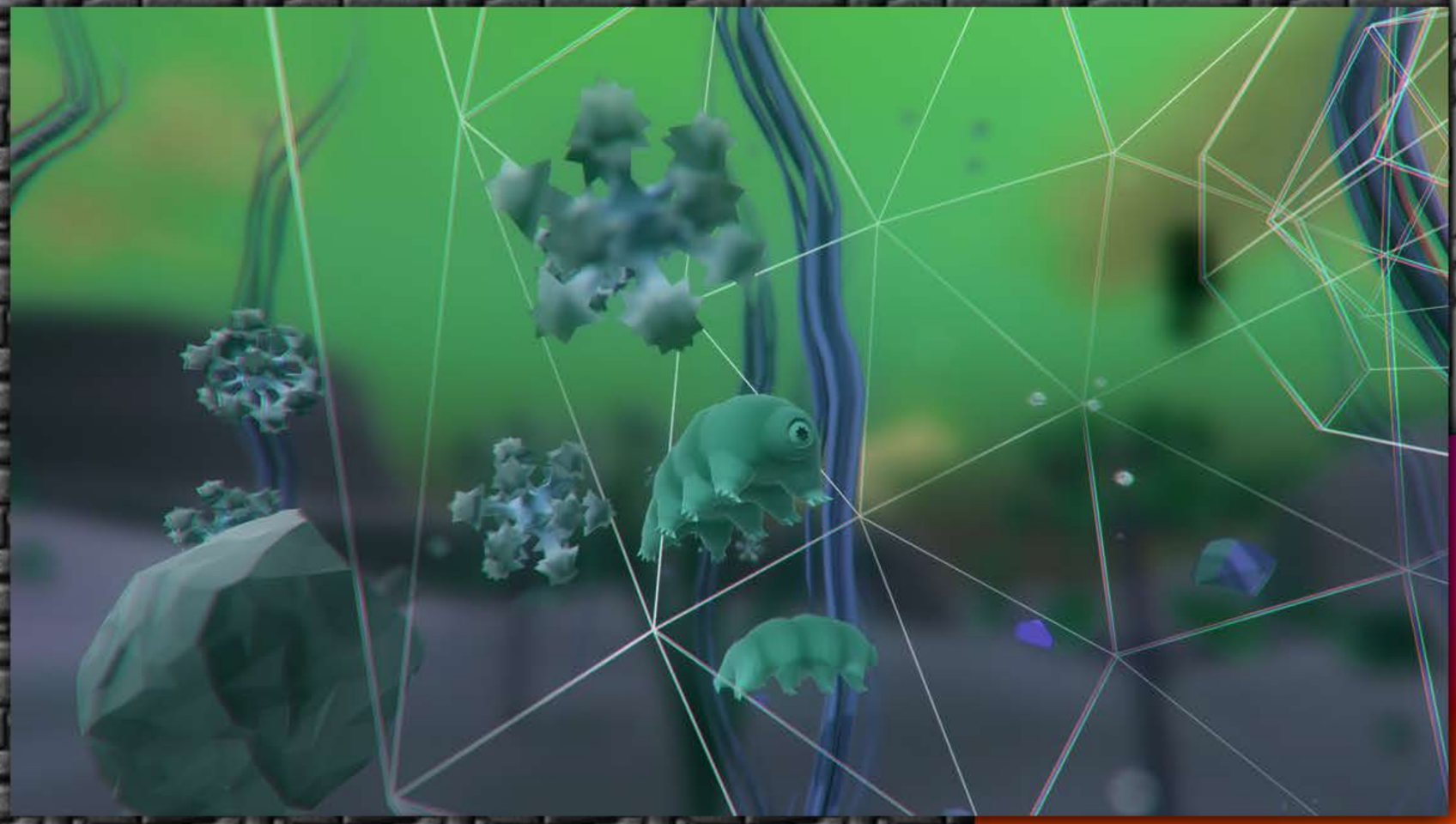
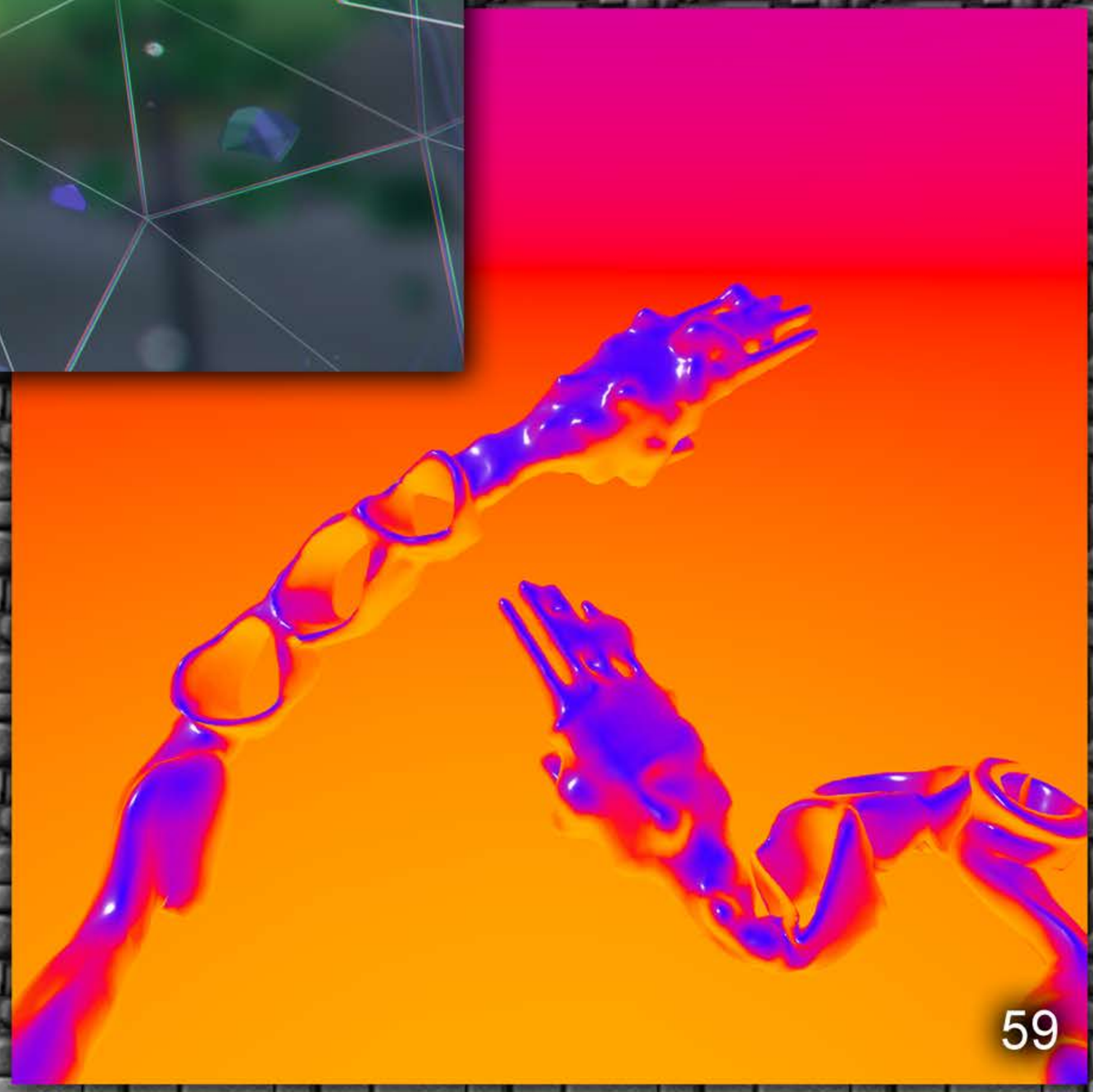






There is but one can never get enough of you

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TO BATTLE!

Ambient Occlusion

Written by
Samuel Capps

Ambient Occlusion is a technique that has been developed for computer generated graphics to create lighting conditions with a greater sense of depth, which are more akin to real life. The technique works by calculating the exposure of a surface to the lighting surrounding it and creating a map to display light co-ordinates in a 2D plain. With this in mind, the semantics of Ambient Occlusion can be dissected into the blocking out or exclusion of our general surroundings and atmosphere. Whilst this may be relevant within the specific context of lighting calculations in computer generated renderings, it can also provide relevance to the relationship of CGI within the wider world.

Computer graphics at their very core are simulations, illusions and portals to another world, and are set to become the dominant visual culture of our future. Whilst contemporary representations seek to attain the holy grail of IRL-realism, at its core, the rendered worlds of games and film are a means of escape from the real. The idea of the synthetically real eating escapism from the inside lands us somewhere in the midst of the paradox constructed by the uncanny valley. As humans have evolved they have always sought to extricate themselves in some way from their surroundings, to alter reality or to mould experience into something that we long for. The inception of a trans-human reality with mental and sensory prosthetics combined with a universe of known data will metamorphose the species into a new construct.

In a metaphysical sense, the change of human perception to a computer generated reality is the biggest paradigm shift any creature in the Earth's history will have faced. The virtually real is already causing hallucinogenic refractions manifested through abuse of the standard model of biological mechanics. As Phenomenalism created the sense datum as a basic unit of experience produced by sensory stimuli, so it has become the nexus to establish a Virtual Reality. The postulation of the image/object dialectic becomes complicated within this realm as the physical world maintains its existence, but the visualisation of the virtual becomes the real, as the true reality of electrons pulsing around PCB's becomes an alternate dimension where the (capital P) Physical transforms into the virtual. Naïve Realist or Direct Realist theories deteriorate rapidly in this environment as what is known to be true by sense experience is already a projected image, the image of an object in that projection has been used to to quantify the object into a psychologically physical state. Optical transcendence in the post-reality world means full embodiment of the non-body and consignment to the ethereal darkness.

Pseudo reality, or at least a closed or restrained reality, can have its consequences as seen with the propagation of troll culture over the internet. The relationship between the virtual and alienation has always been a self fulfilling prophecy as the alienated will withdraw further, using the virtual domain as a platform to vent their anger and attack other people. Over exposure will lead to psychosis and as computer addiction increases, people may become trapped in digital worlds, unable to escape and kept prisoner as a literal representation of being rendered useless.

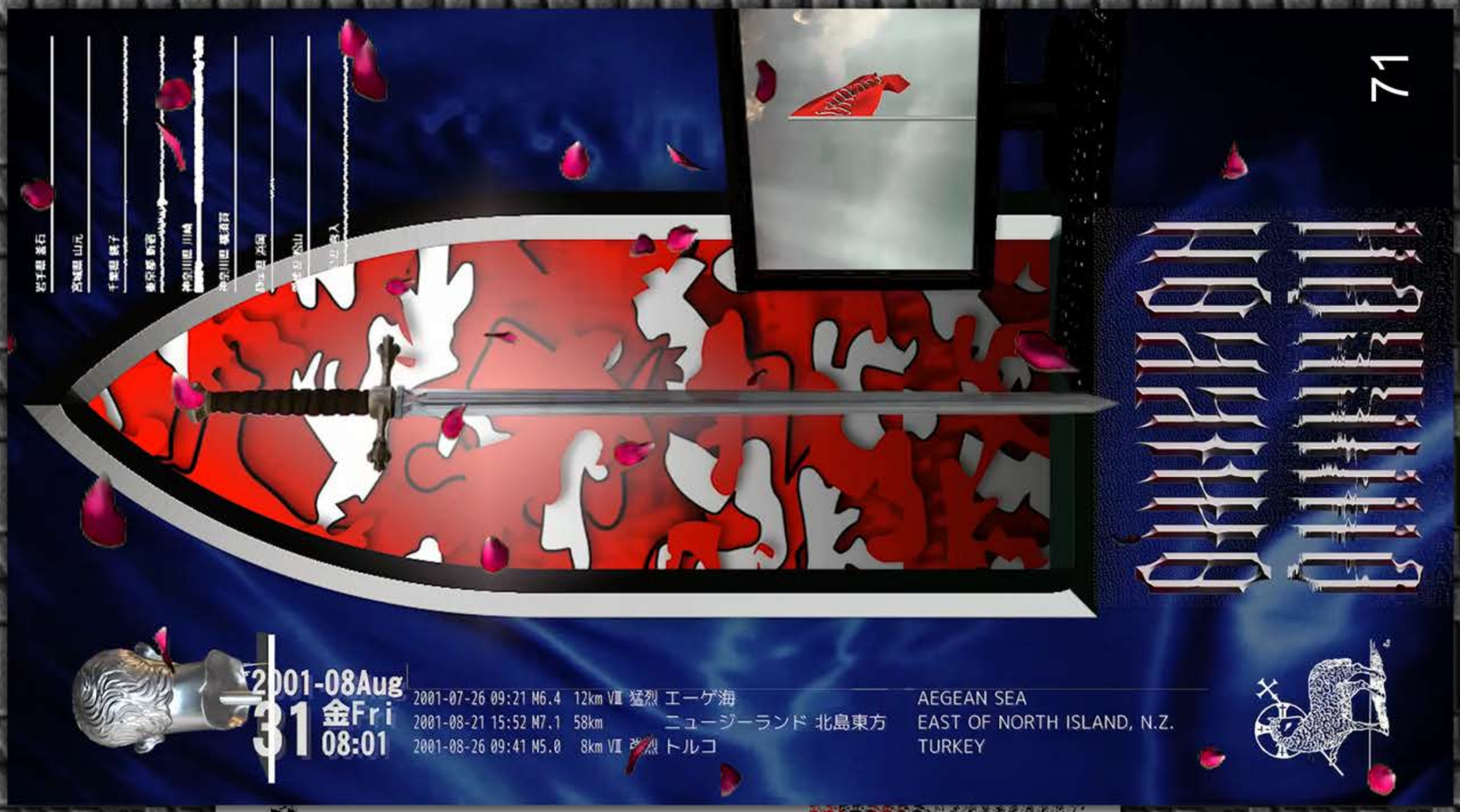
The synthesis between the human and the computer is preordained and the visual intersection is simply the first step.

Samuel Capps (b. 1984) is a London based Artist and Curator. His practice is concerned with the dissection of the modern built environment through an inter-disciplinary approach. He is interested in exploring the human impact that has created the epoch of the Anthroposcene and the sociocultural effects this condition may create. This interest extends to radical projections of our future landscape, be it in a post-nature world or a post-human.

Screenshot from *Hyperelixx* (2017)

VOTE
OBAMA

htc
VI


2001-08Aug
31 金Fri
08:01
2001-07-26 09:21 M6.4 12km Ⅶ 猛烈 エーゲ海 AEGEAN SEA
2001-08-21 15:52 M7.1 58km ニュージーランド 北島東方 EAST OF NORTH ISLAND, N.Z.
2001-08-26 09:41 M5.0 8km Ⅶ 激烈 トルコ TURKEY

Ped.Moreira Interviewed by Nora Silva

'A Level Playing Field', 2017-18 is an art research project by Ped.Moreira. The artist intends on using gaming as both a method of research and a medium, with a focus on analyzing and questioning concepts of identity performance within virtual spaces. For the duration of a month, Ped.Moreira will be residing in an MMO RPG (or Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game), disconnecting himself from all social contact outside of the virtual space. Pedro is currently working with PACTO, an artist run collective and research-based residency group exploring "communal negotiations of autonomy". For this interview, Nora (a member of PACTO) and Pedro discuss Pedro's venture into the virtual world.

Nora Silva: I think It'd be good to start by asking you about the concept of "residing". The proposal you submitted to PACTO states "For this research project I propose residing in an MMO RPG". So I guess my question is what do you mean by "residing" because usually that means locating your body somewhere but obviously in your case it's different?

Ped.Moreira: I've recently been into this notion that social media and other modes of online presence operate under a "virtual architecture". Our actions online occupy a "space", and I wanted to take that idea further into a more immersive virtual environment that is halfway between occupying a space physically with your body and occupying it with your thoughts and images. In an MMO RPG you inhabit a virtual space through an avatar that represents you. It's easier for me to conceptualize this when talking about specific games like "Black Desert Online", where I'll be staying, where you have the ability to purchase and inhabit property and interact with a community in public spaces. I guess I'm performing "residency" through an avatar.

Nora Silva: I think the key is to be present somewhere. And presence doesn't necessarily have to be only physical anymore. I just looked it up and the definition of "residing" is "to have one's home in a particular place" and I guess this place will be your home for the month. It also means "to belong to a person or body". So you can also reside in a body, or in your case...

Ped.Moreira: In an avatar! Which is a virtual body.

Nora Silva: Thinking about how you manufactured your Ped.Moreira identity online through your instagram. You have this control over how you edited your identity. In the virtual space you will have even more control over how you express your identity, this very distilled version of Pedro Moreira is going to exist in this videogame. I was wondering do you have any idea of what you are going to be like in the videogame? Are you going to manufacture a personality? Or are you going to find yourself through virtual reality?

Ped.Moreira: Originally when I thought about this aspect of the project of self-creation, I wanted it to kind of be in reference to the notion that within virtual mediums we all edit our identities to an extent. Whether it's conscious or not, whether it's honest or not, everyone is only able to show a facet of themselves. When the window that you open up to the world is so heavily managed by your own production of your self-image and personality, you become more of a character or a mask, rather than a multi faceted and complex human being. I think with my Instagram I am trying to go as far as I can with this idea of a character and looking at my "self" as a case study of how I would come across when framed a certain way. In doing that I think I did find out more about myself, and I think to an extent I'm going to be doing the same in this virtual space. It'll be interesting to try and create an avatar that speaks for my essence and how I'd like to be perceived, both visually and socially. Aesthetically it would be as though I had access to gene splicing technology.

Nora Silva: A what technology?

Ped.Moreira: Like CRISPR-cas9!

Nora Silva: What is that?

Ped.Moreira: It's biotechnology that can alter your genes. Basically an editing and altering tool for your DNA, I'm obsessed with it. Creating and conceptualizing that the avatar is my real body for the duration of this research project is kind of like that. I get to decide exactly what the body that represents me consists of.

Nora Silva: When you're talking about gene modification and how that's real life... the power you would have to do that in the game, which is essentially a program... I guess it's desirable because it's a comfortable place? Do you think people enjoy playing as avatars because it's this kind of contained comfort zone? I feel like that's something that makes it a safe space for the development of an identity, as opposed to the real world.

Ped.Moreira: I agree and I love that concept. In a way the Internet in general is a safe space that allows the exploration of one's identity. Take trolling for instance. It's only possible because the Internet has liberated that way of communicating an identity. Which can both be a blessing and a curse.

Nora Silva: I was thinking in the case of trolling, it's like you only feel empowered because you lose your physicality through the Internet. Do you think you are your truest self when you lose your physicality then?

Ped.Moreira: I think we all have multi-faceted identities, and it's almost like your consciousness possesses the different facets that are there at your disposal. I think in that sense physicality is a prison, your body is your meat cage, and your mind inhabits more spaces through your interactions with modes of communication that don't require the acknowledgement that your body exists. I don't think it's possible to pinpoint someone's truest self, because we're all so affected by different circumstances, like the weather or time of day. We don't really have that much power over our mood, it's not something that we can hack (yet). Defining your self as your true self to me is an idealized branding exercise.

Nora Silva: That's what your Instagram is, right? A branding of you.

Ped.Moreira: What I find interesting about the platform is that it's your own perception of yourself. You're the producer, you're the model, you're the set designer, you're the director, you're the camera technician, you're the costume and makeup, you're post-production etc. It's a fictional story that is produced around you. Maybe it is your true self, maybe that's as close to your true self as you can get, but it's a simplified version of that.

Nora Silva: Have you heard of that Chinese social media application, Sesame?

Ped.Moreira: No?

Nora Silva: So Sesame is this Facebook-like app, where you can write statuses and check in, and you get a score ranking set by the government. What's scary about it is that in 2020 they plan on making it obligatory for every citizen to have.

Ped.Moreira: That's scary, it's like a stat system in a videogame, but real.

Nora Silva: Yes, and it affects the way your survivability as it can impact your likelihood of getting a job, or being arrested... So in that sense managing your identity in social media might become a vital skill. What do you think about editing your virtual self, being something that you are forced to do to be legitimized or validated?

Ped.Moreira: The notion is scary to me, but in a way online presence already affects us in the west that way. It's 1984, it limits the self expression that the Internet should allow us to have. This application sounds like a set of algorithms made to create a perfect citizen, which restricts the existence of an identity.

Nora Silva: What happens when virtual reality stops being an escape and starts being a prison...

Ped.Moreira: In a way I'm kind of putting myself in a physical prison for this project to happen, which is the price I have to pay for this virtual liberation of identity I'm trying to achieve. I'm confining myself to no social contact at all outside of the videogame. I'm basically going to be someone in rehab or solitary confinement for a whole month, of course I've given myself the privilege of going outside...

Nora Silva: It is a durational performance, in the most traditional sense. It's physically enduring.

Ped.Moreira: I wonder if at any point in the future this kind of endurance will be norm.

Nora Silva: Actually one of my questions was going to be, do you think this is going to be how things are going to turn out for us in the future?

Ped.Moreira: My rationale, which goes back to the first questions you asked me, is that your consciousness is the beginning of your actions, and your body is something you control with your consciousness, and when you're consciously controlling your physical body for it to control a virtual avatar, your physical body becomes nothing more than a linking tool between your consciousness and your avatar. The thing about this project is that it's actually quite cost-effective as a residency. I won't be expending that much physical energy, I'll be making home cooked meals every day for a month, I won't be spending money on transport, and my rent is going to be cheap. If this was the way of life for everyone, it would be a sustainable way of life. It could probably solve a lot of resource scarcity issues.

A Level Playing Field: Promtional material

Nora Silva: Haha yeah but you need social contact!

Ped.Moreira: But the thing is... Will I? I don't know if I'm going to go crazy or not from this month, because I wont have social contact with people in a physical space, but I will be in constant contact with other people online. In fact social contact will be even more accessible than it would be if I had to travel to meet someone. And again it will be a lot cheaper because we won't have to frequent a coffee shop, or a restaurant, or a bar. It won't matter what I'm wearing or how I look either. Doing things with other people is hard work.

Nora Silva: Will you be able to Skype?

Ped.Moreira: I'm closing all social contact, even Skype or social media. I will have to Skype with the gallery spaces I'm working with and I'll be seeing people on the screen but I'll use my puppet to communicate so I won't be seen.

Nora Silva: I guess something that you're going to prove or prove wrong is whether we, as human beings, really need physical social contact, or if we can be content with virtual social contact.

PedMoreira PACTO workshop: A virtual birthday party held within a MMORPG

Ped.Moreira: Also even if it's something that you aren't fully content with, will the efficiency of the situation in terms of resource consumption prove that it's actually beneficial to us as a whole? Would that sacrifice be worth it? I'm aware that it's a dark thought, and a dark future. But it also removes a lot of tension and adversities in society. The removal of this fixed identity attached to living in a physical realm could even end war and identity focused conflict. We're trying to destroy racism, sexism, xenophobia, transphobia etc. Would re-starting in a virtual space where everything is set at a level playing field (hence the title of the project) be an easy fix to those issues? And even if there's conflict between people in a virtual space you can do anything you want to protest those emotions, even to the point of killing each other, and you'd have no real life repercussions. How would we solve conflicts then?

Nora Silva: You were raised Mormon, and the Mormon church is a very specific social setup, it's a very tight community. Do you think coming from that background is something you're trying to explore in other levels? Like does it impact your interest in exploring identity in your virtual world?

Ped.Moreira: I think my work is always in the context of my upbringing. Even though I left the church at 18 it's always going to be a part of my life that formed me that I can't get away from. It's part of my identity in a very fixed way whether I like it or not. I think spirituality is a very specific kind of identity and it's not really something you can control.

Nora Silva: I think it's also a set of characteristics that shape your interests.

Ped.Moreira: Maybe, I mean the Mormon after-life idea of the Mormon Church is that in heaven we will become gods what will create their own world much like our god created ours.

Nora Silva: Jesus!

Ped.Moreira: Literally!

Nora Silva: Wow, well aren't you kind of conquering a new world in inhabiting this virtual space?

Ped.Moreira: Haha I mean I didn't create the game. But maybe if I had the means to do it I would! I've always wanted to create my own open world videogame.

Ped.Moreira Puppet

Nora Silva: How do you see PACTO supporting the project?

Ped.Moreira: PACTO will keep me sane. I think making the exception of being in contact with the members is a welcomed compromise for the project. I don't think I would have been able to take this project as far as I want to if it weren't for the support of PACTO. Having them available on Discord (PACTO uses a server in the gaming application to communicate) is just like having a hand to hold. To me it's like a family, even though it's a professional group, it's a support group that I know understands what I'm doing and will be there for me when I need them. It's helped me take my work to new heights, which is priceless. It's allowed me to get more involved in my work with subjects that I really care about and enjoy exploring.

Nora Silva: That's great to hear! If you had to make an avatar for PACTO, what would it look like?

Ped.Moreira: It would have to be female, the group is 80% female and I love that female energy. Maybe a tall muscly mixed race female, with pointy elf ears of course.

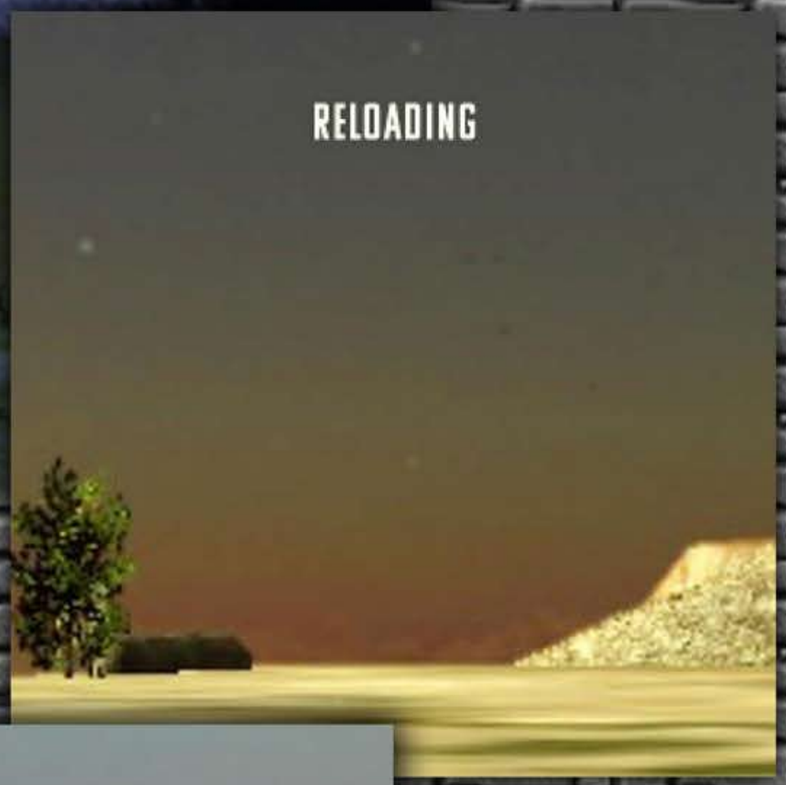
Ped.Moreira is an online entity and Internet based artist with a practice centered on questions of the meaning of the word "reality", and how the ways in which it is consumed blurs the lines between virtual and "real" space and identity. This is usually attached to queer identity, and expression of the body and natural landscapes as canvases for virtual consumption. Aside from these concepts the artist's background in a cultist upbringing encourages a juxtaposition of these notions of "virtual existentialism" with theological and scientific theories.

Nora Silva (b. 1988) is a Spanish artist based in London. Currently studying at the Royal College of Art, recent shows include Exchange of Spaces at the Camden Art Center, The Dose Makes the Poison at Carousel or VR Exhibition at the ICA. Upcoming exhibitions include Lost Senses at Shonibare Studio in London and her first solo show in London, Your Friendly Local at Chalton Gallery. She also co-directs The Gramounce, an exhibition supper club, and MilesKm.

First Person Workthrough Adventure Game

TELEPORT FROM COUNTRY TO REGION TO ETHER

2ND ARMOR BUSTER HAS BEEN WIPED OUT!


RELOADING

LET'S FIGHT!

100% BONUS CASUALTIES TO THE OTHER TEAM!

NEW ARMY UNLOCKED!

CAPTURE TARGET SUPPLY DEPOT

It doesn't take long to find new targets

Written by Elliott Burns

1.

360ºs exposed, armed with a KF7, grenades and a limited supply of timed mines, he rotates rapidly testing his luck as guards spawn randomly around him. Having exhausted all other challenges he augments the logic of the easiest level turning it into an arena death match, one where he may test his wits against an unlimited supply of Russian foot soldiers.

This was a long time ago, well before the genre cemented itself as a console staple; before they introduced regenerative shields; before he could pit himself against multiplayer bots and before wave mechanics became an integral part of online play. Circling his vision are two curves, orange blocks of health and blue blocks of armour, each bullet that clips a limb takes an inch that he can't win back. When he's a single shot away from death he'll make a run towards a small bi-plane and watch the end level sequence.

Only when he completes his objective will he know how well he's done: how long he lasted, how many kills, his accuracy, head shots and weapon of choice. He'll check these stats against his personal best and reload, play it all over again, competing time after time against himself. He does this a dozen times a day. Training and perfecting his abilities.

With a friend he turns the settings to 2.3 Domino, dividing control across two pads, a makeshift dual analogue system. One will take charge of movement: forward, back, sidestep left, sidestep right. The other the direction of their head: up, down, left, right and shoot. They load the same level and together, awkwardly, choreograph their movements, like Siamese twins, to hold out a little longer.

2.

Some years later his appetite for pixelated violence had grown; with a new console and a new game he begins building his own levels, his own arenas of combat, where he can rack up a even higher kill-count. On a black and blue grid interface, inspired by architectural plans, he connects corridors to double-height halls, builds stairwells between floors, positions weapons and health kits. He programs his enemy to appear from various directions, converging on his position so he can pick them off, taking head shots, tossing TNT and emptying duel uzis into their compacted hordes.

Freed from the restrictive confines of the developers design, he sets the stage of his own narratives. Exploiting limitations in his enemies AI, he forces them to attack down narrow routes, detrimental to their survival: over the top and into the barrel of a machine gun. Lacking the consciousness required to learn, they repeat the same mistake ad infinitum.

Sometimes he will pit two teams of bots against one another. With a sniper rifle he aims for the head as they distract each other. It's like clay-pigeon shooting, target practice where the enemy dodges and dives but never poses any real threat.

Overtime the traps became more one-sided, simplified and cruel; pits where dozens spawn, stuck below, with basic weapons, unfeasibly trying to defeat a foe who greatly out-guns them. It's ritualised slaughter, flies to wanton schoolboys, a dystopian gameshow with no prize. If he ever falls low on health he quickly retreats into a specially designed panic room, patches up his wounds, re-stocks on ammunition and returns to the fray.

3.

Next he takes to the streets of Liberty City where he cruises for the perfect location to begin a shooting spree. The city is different, it isn't a military installation, stationed by Russian comrades, nor a death match arena, tailored to combat. This place tries to be real. The people in it, try to be real.

They've modelled it on actual locations, stolen the American identity and warped it into an exaggerated version of itself, a satirical parody that plays over his car's FM radio. He'll drive up town and into a multi-storey car park, jump up onto the bonnet and spy through a gap, down onto a populated shopping district. The cops won't enter, their programming fails to permit them, and their helicopters can't angle a shot. So with a high powered rifle he happily pops heads, arms and legs off pedestrians, unperturbed.

The first shot is always easy; they've never any reason to worry. It gets a little harder with the second and third: everyone in the immediate vicinity runs, and sometimes he misses them by a fraction. But soon, anyone outside the radius is drawn in, curious to see what has happened, maybe thinking they can help. Clustered around a body he takes them out, with precision.

It doesn't take long to find new targets; he turns 90º and looks along a different street. The game automatically populates areas whenever you look somewhere new - fresh people, blissfully unaware of what has unfolded moments before. So he's never in short supply thanks to the way the developers dealt with in-built memory.

Another day he might drive over to Shoreside Vale and the airport. Here he can sneak in and steal a small plane. He has to push the nose down towards the tarmac as he builds up speed; at the end of the runway he pulls up, and the little aircraft bounces into the air. Carefully he flies back to Staunton and around the commercial district. With some luck he puts the plane down on top of a casino. He isn't meant to be able to get here, the developers hadn't intended it, but now he's here he can take advantage of the view.

Left and right, in both directions, a long road runs past his vantage point. Targeting a passing car he fires a rocket into its path. Slowly he builds up a road block of burnt out vehicles, it helps prevent the cops from getting close enough to him. When helicopters fly in he dispatches them circling out of control and into the cityscape. When the army finally arrives with tanks, they can do little to reach him.

Eventually he gets bored. Rather than allow them to take him alive, he simply swan dives off the roof. The impact should kill him. Then moments later he walks out of a hospital with all his weapons intact. No harm, no foul.

NEW WEAPON UNLOCKED

AMMUNITION: UNLIMITED
FIRING STYLE: AUTOMATIC

ENERGY STATUS: FATIGUED
ATTACK STYLE: VICIOUS

NEW WEAPON UNLOCKED

LOADING MAP...

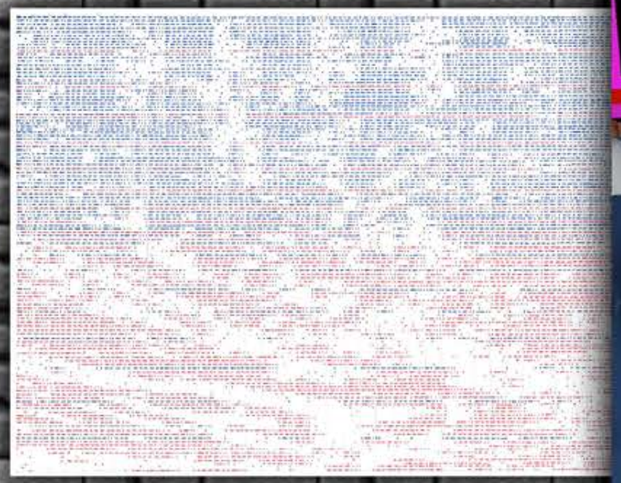
LOADING ...

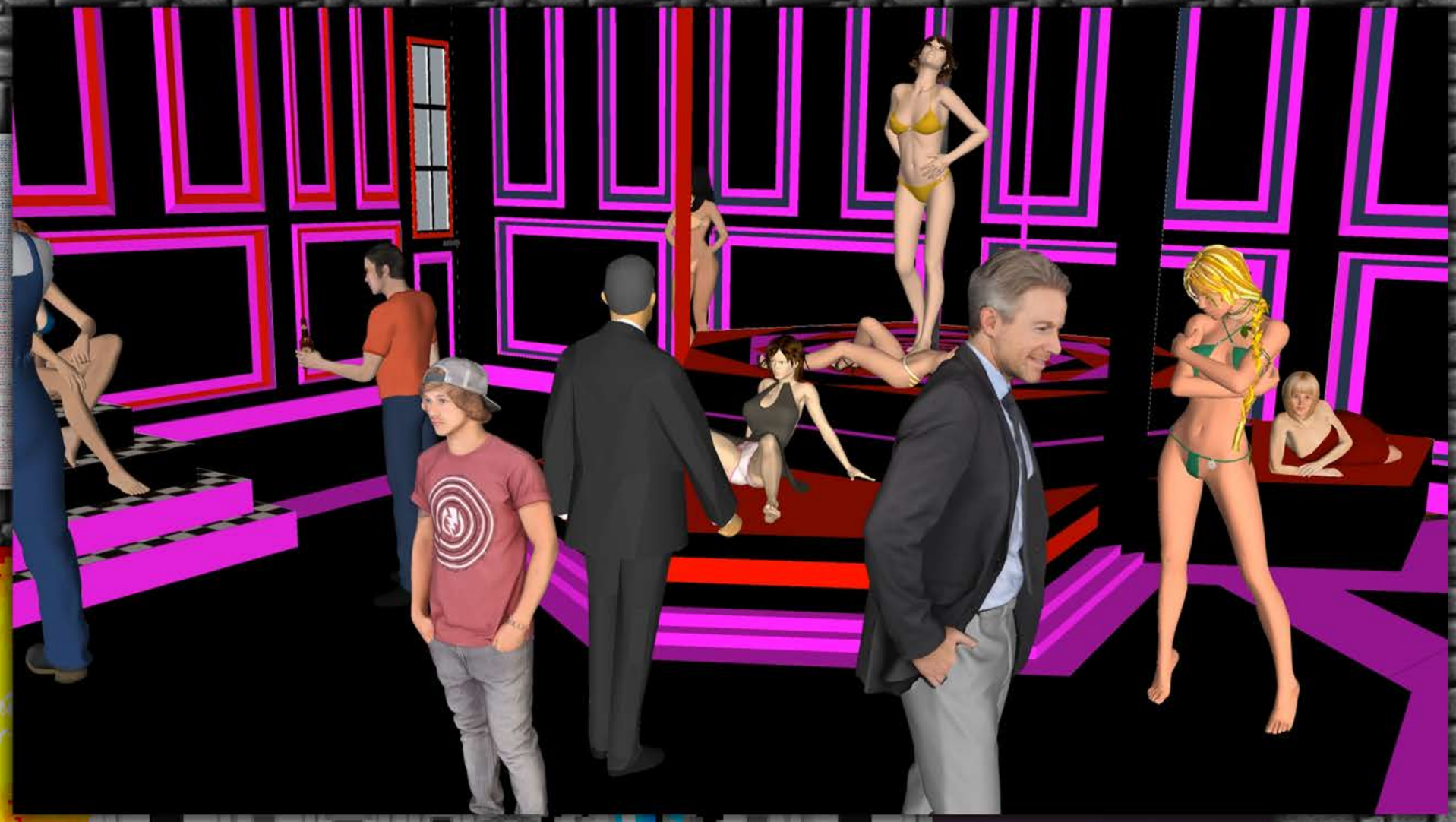
the sound of three bullets being fired in quick succession, with added reverb, plays every second

holding hands the ak-47s shot out great suspense
in the form of ellipses into the open air

class: barbarian swarm
age: 4 x 10⁹ years
body: arthropoda
mass: 6 g (specimen) / 500 000 000 tones
power: hemosynthesis, silicon carbide armor, fibroin sinews, diapause
CHELI

Uniprise
Uniprise
Uniprise





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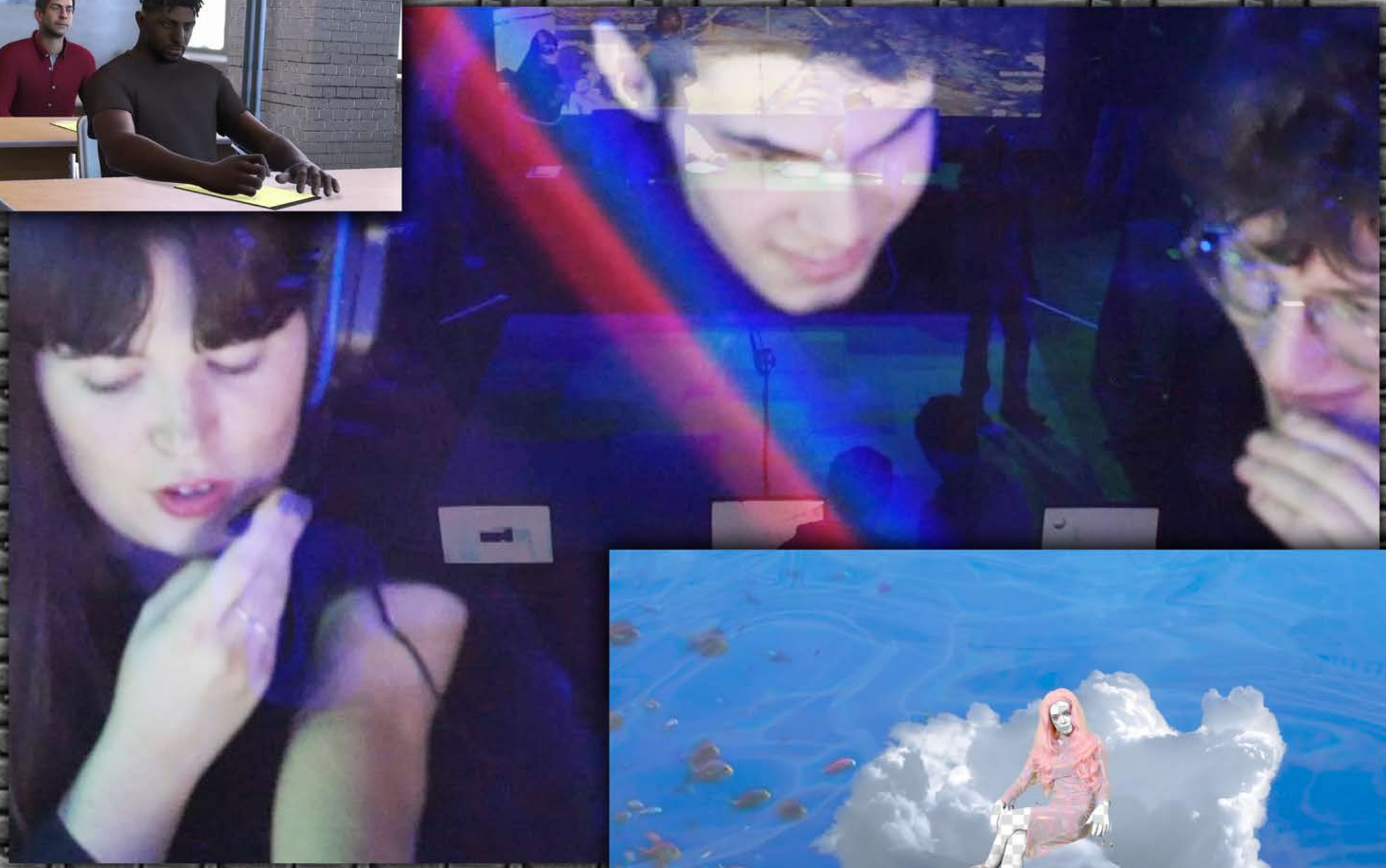

Please, don't shoot me, I'm an artist

How artists have explored the relationship between digital and physical space in the video game environment.

Written by
Motsonian's user Monica Rohtmaa

Introduction

This essay will be discussing specific artists that have created artworks that deals with the overlap of elements between virtual and physical spaces in different ways. In doing this they bring forward how different these spaces are. Most of the artworks can be said to be part of a subgenre of contemporary art called Game Art. As defined by Matteo Bittani, Game art is 'any art in which digital games played a significant role in the creation, production, and-or display of the artwork' (Bittani 2006:9). Choosing specific examples of Game Art that exploit inconsistencies between physical and digital spaces, I will be discussing how digital spaces contribute to contemporary understanding of the spaces we inhabit both with and without art. These examples include the use of digital games as material from which to make artworks as well as games as a medium. Video games offer a different view of the complexities of subjectivity through simulation of physical spaces in digital technology. I will demonstrate how such practices enable artists to play around with what the original game spaces were meant for, and thereby contribute to critical understanding of both physical and digital spaces, and the technology that mediates between them. As a key theme that emphasizes inconsistencies within these spaces, the works discussed bring forward a remoteness of violence. By this I mean how the fear of death has been removed from the experience that is being simulated in the game and what this might then say about the real space when juxtaposed with the game space. The fear of death still applies in real space. These are some of the contradictions that prevent us from allowing physical and digital spaces to be considered direct copies of each other.

To contextualise my comparison between these spaces and how the artworks articulate this, I will first summarise some important theories of simulation and consider why it is relevant to think of video games first and foremost as simulations. I will then discuss a series of artworks discussing the simulation theory and the remoteness of violence.

Videogame as a simulation

A lot of discussion can be found in Game Theory around the relationship of simulation and narrative concerning videogames. Firstly, the different theories about simulation come from various routes including postmodern literary theory, most notably Jean Baudrillard's simulacra, where simulation is about hyperreality which consists of a system of signs that cannot be exchanged with real elements (Dovey et al., 2008: 38) and computer simulation (Marc Prensky 2001 and others cited in Dovey et al., 2008: 41), where the simulation is 'not an illusionary distraction from the real world, but rather a model of the world', which is then used to 'model complex systems over time' (Dovey et al., 2008: 41). When video games became a big part of culture in the 2000's and academics started to recognise this new medium as relevant on its own (Frasca 2003: 221), video games started to be studied in more depth and it was realised that these definitions where not quite suitable to define the different modes of simulation as they were manifested in video games, that a different notion of simulation needs to be developed and applied. It was Gonzalo Frasca who was also one of the first people to note that videogames are not just extensions of a narrative, but they have a more complex semiotical [sic] structure (Frasca 2003: 222). He claims that video games do include narrative, but they have additional features added to them, which can be best described by simulation. He claims that simulation in video games 'does not consist of sequences of signs...' [as it behaves more] '...like machines or sign-generators' (Frasca 2003: 223), which suggests that simulation is a process in within which signs are generated, rather than being a sequence of signs itself.

It is also interesting to compare simulation to other cultural products, like cinema. For example, Espen Aarseth discusses how 'game gaze is not the same as the cinema gaze' (Aarseth 2004: 52). For example, in cinema, a narrative is provided to us by sequences of clips set out by the filmmaker, which the viewer cannot alter, but can only view. Since videogames are a simulation, 'knowledge and experience is created by the player's actions and strategies' (Aarseth 2004: 52), so the story is never the same, as people can make different choices within a game and learn in different ways and speeds that create and alter the narrative for each player. As such the game gaze is a much more active than the cinema one, in both real and psychological aspects of the viewers experience.

If we assume it is the characteristics of a simulated space what makes videogames interesting to use for artists, rather than merely the attractions as new technology, or as a popular site of play then what do these spaces suggest in terms of the more familiar artistic spaces of the studio, the gallery and the public space? To begin suggesting answers to these questions appropriate to the scope of this essay I will focus on a key theme of violence, because crucially, when using video games, they are not only dealing with the simulated virtual spaces, but also the activity that happens in those spaces and the rules that govern them.

Purpose of video games spaces and the fear of death

The spaces in videogames are created with a specific purpose. The space is supposed to tell the story and guide the player through the environment in order to tell this story. In fact, Jenkins (2004: 121-122) argues that video game space is created through spatial storytelling, meaning that the designers may have a narrative that they adhere to, but it is the space itself that needs to suggest that narrative. This is how they can create immersive and convincing representation of their narrative worlds. For example, in first person shooter game Counter Strike, to create an experience that the player is in a conflict zone, firstly the designers simulate a fictional space where that could happen, including objects which aid gameplay such as crates and other structures. These are all placed strategically around a 'game map' (see figure 1 for an example of a game map)., which is all the space, that is available for the player (Wikipedia). Usually, in first person shooter games multiple game maps would be available with different amounts of space and gaming elements to provide variety in gameplay. This can also be achieved by recreating historical battle spaces or at least the popular imaging of those spaces where conflict occurred like Omaha Beach in the video game Battlefield 1942 (2002).

Figure 1: Online multiplayer game Counter Strike game map titled *Dust* (2000)

Playing video games is mostly done in one's home, when you are likely to be both comfortable and safe. When playing a game about racing cars, the threat of crashing the car and dying only exists for the player's virtual avatar, rather than their physical body. The game might simulate the emotions which may occur to racing cars, but there no physical consequences for that activity. This means that the threat of dying in reality has been removed from the simulation. It has been kept in the game in a certain way, by giving players multiple lives, meaning that once they have been 'killed' in the game, their avatar will reappear certain amount of times depending on the game that is being played. There is a double simulation in place here, with having multiple lives, but also at some point the lives run out meaning the avatar is 'killed' and the game is over. In other media, like cinema which is based on a specific narrative, starting the film over does not give you different results, but in a video game repetition is 'requirement of the medium' (Frasca 2003: 227), because that enables the player to interpret the space in different ways and gain skills required by the space more times than would be possible in reality. The crucial difference between physical and digital spaces is in the latter's multiplicity.

It is interesting for artists look at these ideas surrounding the purpose of video game space and the concept of dying being removed from the game, because even though the simulation is similar to what reality looks like, these obvious differences applied back and forth between reality and game space create tensions more than when those spaces are clearly separated.

As with many technological developments, the history of computer simulation media has been closely connected to the military. The ability to reboot and start over a simulated environment is obviously appropriate for training exercises. It is unsurprising therefore that computer simulation has been used effectively as a training tool, to train soldiers in how to deal with different situations and spaces (Penny 2004: 74). What are referred to as first person shooter games (games that place the player in the position and body of the game's protagonist) especially are considered to be war games, because within it you have a perspective of a soldier holding a gun and you are required to do what a soldier would do: shoot other people or vehicles in order to win a conflict. There are claims that first person shooter games conditions people to shoot other humans (Penny 2004: 76). Especially now that the graphics of video games are incredibly realistic, there are debates whether violent videogames create violent behavior (Guanio-Uluru, 2016) and counter claims that other aspects like exposure to domestic violence is more substantial for a person for developing violent behavior than violent video games are(Ferguson et al. 2008 cited in Guanio-Uluru 2016).

Video Game Objects in Real Space

An example of working with elements of spatial storytelling is 'Dust – Winter Prison' (figure 2), which is an artwork from 2013 by a Berlin-based artist Aram Bartholl. The artist has recreated the wooden packing crates and chemical weapon crates featured in the bomb defusal map (figure 1) in the popular online multiplayer first person shooter game Counter Strike (2000).

In Counter Strike (as in most first-person shooters) The crates are placed in certain places in the game to aid gameplay and let users hide behind them or jump on top of them to kill other users in the game. Sometimes these in-game virtual objects are also given in-game narrative roles in addition to their role as assistance or hindrances to navigating space. In this game map chosen by Bartholl, these "chemical weapon crates" (green boxes with yellow and black stripes, see figure 2) are there to be protected by a group of players assigned as counter-terrorists, so that the users who play the terrorist side in the game, do not blow them up, which is the purpose of this map for the former (Counter Strike Wiki, 2016).

Figure 2: ***Dust - Winter Prison*** **by Aram Bartholl, installation in Winter Prison, Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada.**

In his work, Dust - Winter Prison, Bartholl has remade these digital objects into physical ones and placed them in an old prison yard in Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada. However due to crucial differences between the game space and physical space this is not just as straightforward as simply constructing a sculpture of a crate. What happens when these works are removed from the context of the game and placed in an exhibition context is more suggestive of the shift in the laws and narratives that govern the different spaces. The artist has taken the virtual spatial elements of a war game, that are designed for conflict, and placed them in an old prison yard, in physical space that is not normally considered to be a war zone. I think these objects have not lost what they were created for in the process of this transfer from virtual space to physical space. They are still recognised the same way in physical space. The perspective in which a person would look at them stays the same, but they cannot act the same way around them as they would do in the game space. People will not run around with guns shooting at other people, because those are not the normal rules that govern the physical space in the location of the work. Also, the crates in the prison yard look the same as the chemical weapon crates in the game, but does not mean they act the same way. They do not have the chemical weapons in them, which means they will not blow up once they are being shot at. The violence which occurs within the game space does not transfer over, but that is what the audience understands these objects as being given meaning by.

Furthermore, the crates in Counter Strike game space have been created by copying what a crate looks like in reality and then representing it in the game. Then Bartholl has taken that representation of a crate and put in back into the physical space. The simulated crate has now brought the different aspects of the gaming experience back into the physical space.

Video Game Narratives in Real Space

Not all transfers between physical and digital spaces are so simple however. In a game created by American artist Kent Sheely, he deals with these transferring of first person shooter elements into reality, but in a different way that complexifies our relationship to observed, simulated and recorded reality. In the work 'Youtube Shooter' (see figure 4), Sheely layers the hands holding a gun and the aim, which are a usual perspective for a user playing a first-person shooter game on various Youtube tour videos. The gun and sight are, as such, cut-outs superimposed on the work of other internet users/broadcasters. The user can choose from different 'levels' to play in, these levels are in fact just different videos posted by Youtube users who, it seems may be unaware of this appropriation of their content. These repurposed videos, reframed as 'levels', include simulated spaces like Disney World, but also public spaces like streets of New York and tours of houses in suburban neighbourhoods in Brentwood, USA. This juxtaposition of graphics makes the person filming the tour seem like a gunman. In this work, the game space elements are not brought out into a physical space directly like in Bartholl's work, but a war game like situation is being simulated back by placing a gaming element on top of a video of a physical space.

The hands holding the gun (see figure 3) are positioned this way, because that will give the player the perspective of holding a gun. The purpose of the aim system is to give the user the ability to aim at and shoot other players, but also pick up items and engage with other gaming elements. In this work this aiming system is applied to various videos of real spaces, where real people, rather than virtual avatars are walking around. The work makes us as the viewer, feel like by watching this we are walking around in public spaces with a gun. A feeling that might be more or less convincing depending on the familiarity of the viewer with playing these games. This work seems to refer to the differences between the video game world and reality, but it is also referring to another important difference involving the implication of violence in relation to the narratives of the different spaces. For example, the usual narrative in first person shooter games is that of having given an objective to complete, and to reach that you will have to move through the game map in order to kill other players or gaming elements. In contrast, tour videos are made to record and show different spaces, mainly in regards to how the space looks and may feel like to visit, for example a tour video of Times Square in New York shows what it would be like to visit there. In this work, these two narratives have been pushed together by layering of videos.

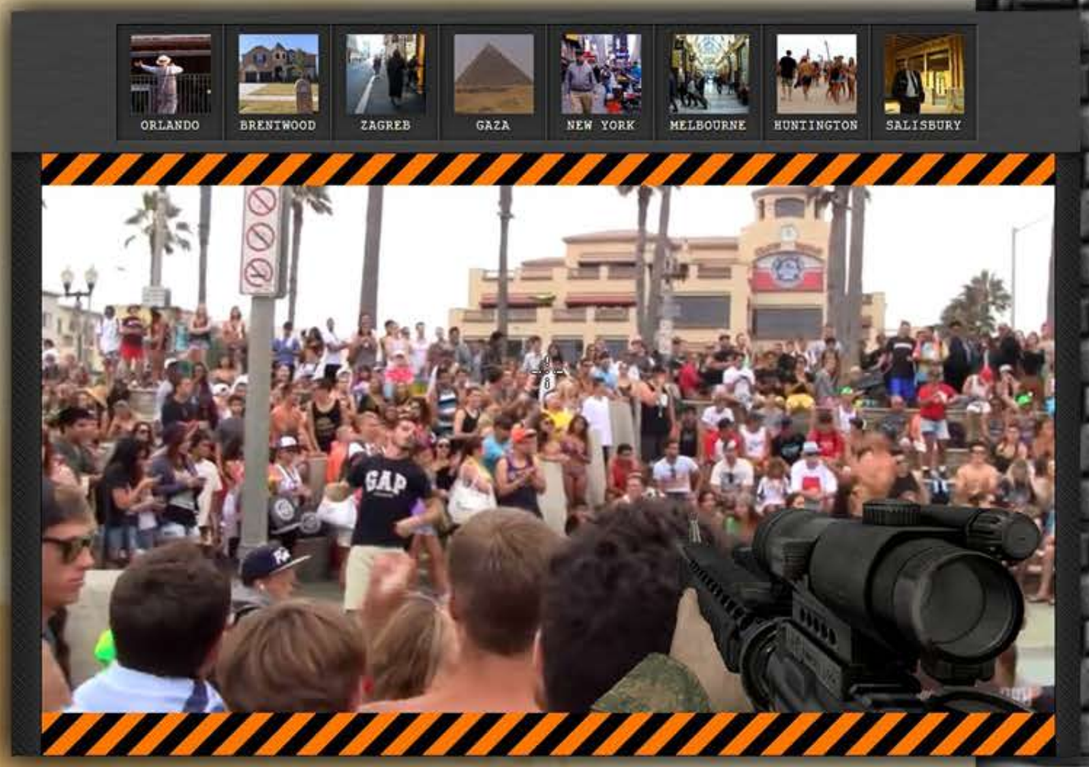

Figure 3: Screenshot from *Youtube Shooter* (2013) by Kent Sheely

On the other hand, the work seems to refer to the continued debate whether violent video games like first person shooter games, where the player essentially plays through a simulation of being a shooter, affect people in real life. This layering, could make one think whether this is how people who play these games think about when walking in public spaces.

This is combined with a change between the identity of the camera in Youtube videos, where the camera is both the cameraman and the viewer, compared to in first person shooter games where the camera is only you the player. This combination of two camera identities in this way, makes one of them seem more true than the other. The Youtube version of being the cameraman and the viewer is now only a view of being a player, because none of the interface of Youtube (title of the video, start/pause buttons) that are usually present are hidden by the first-person shooter interface.

In virtual simulations like video games there is no fear of dying, because whichever game you play, whether that is racing cars or defending chemical weapon crates from terrorists, you are not actually physically involved in that situation, you are just pressing buttons in a safe environment. Sheely applying the game elements on top of the tour videos brings the potential of death element into the work. While walking around the busy shopping mall in Paris, as is available in one of the levels in Youtube Shooter, suddenly as a viewer you start feeling responsible for aiming a gun at innocent people in a shopping center. This layering also makes you expect certain emotions like fear to be on people's faces when they look at you walking around with a gun, but in the video people are looking at you as though this is normal. The viewer has no direct control over the gun, a feature they would have in the game world whilst involving the passive viewer in the implication of violence. This is violence against real people in the sense that the people in the Youtube videos are not actors or characters designed for video game narratives, but people who have been recorded and then he video of them has been shared publicly showing of their physical location.

Simulated space and violence

Wafaa Bilal's performance/installation from 2007 (see figure 4), titled Domestic Tension does not use video games to create the work, but he does use some aspects of them that can be recognised. These aspects offer suggestions of how our engagement with technology has had a real impact on our understanding of space and violence. In this 31 day long performance Bilal let people see him through a live web-cam feed, and chat to him via an online chatroom while he was confined to the gallery space. He also gave people an option to operate a paintball gun, which was facing the gallery space he was in. (Bilal, 2007). With this work Bilal is trying to raise awareness for people living in Iraq who have to deal with conflict and war in their homes on a daily basis. Just as many first-person shooter games simulate spaces of conflict, the same way Bilal is simulating a domestic space of conflict of civilians in Iraq for himself in a gallery in Chicago. With a game, a designer would simulate the space through a game engine virtually, instead he is using the gallery to simulate it physically. He is not referring to a specific domestic space in Iraq, but is representing the situation by putting domestic furniture into a gallery space. This is a simulation, because he not only telling a story of people in Iraq, but experiencing it for 31 days by being under gunfire. The same way in which you do not die when playing Counter Strike, Bilal is not using a real gun in the gallery space, but a paintball gun.

Figure 4: Performance documentation of *Domestic Tension* (2007) in FlatFile Galleries, Chicago

In most artworks, the viewer is not engaged in it, but is experiencing it from afar. In this work Bilal is making the viewer part of the work, as they feel like they are a first person shooter character holding the gun, and Bilal was a gaming element. The main difference is that he is not a computer simulation of a person, but an actual person, physically existing in the space. In this work persons actions in a virtual space have an effect on another person in a physical space. Usually in video games there are no real consequences for shooting a gun at another user, other than they might get wounded or die within the game and respawn again and continue to play. Here Bilal is giving people an option to cause pain to another human being (himself) anonymously. 65 000 shots were taken while Bilal was confined in the gallery space (Rice, 2012). This work was set up like a game online, so people who were operating the paintball gun are far away from it, and because they are not directly holding the gun, it was simple for them to fire it.

Youtube Shooter suggests public spaces and suburban neighbourhoods to be conflict areas, because you are walking through them holding a gun. The work gives a feeling of anticipation, like something might happen when you enter the next room on the tour, but in Domestic Tension, Bilal actually gives the audience the gun and gives them the agency to shoot. The work is like a real first person shooter game, with real consequences. This work is not suggesting it, but it actually does it. As people would have a chance to shoot him and actually did means that it wasn't the threat of violence to the target that holds the viewers back, but only the threat to themselves.

Bartholl is using elements from a video game that are used to aid conflict within games. They are elements around which conflict is encouraged and he is bringing it into a real space to make the viewer question what they are supposed to do in the installation. On the other hand, Bilal is using domestic elements that everyone is familiar with and has in their homes, to simulate what people in Iraq go through.

'You are just an artist, you don't want to play this game, it's all about killing people'

Compared to other works discussed, this online performance by Eva and Franco Mattes, titled Freedom (2010) explores the game culture within game space. Similar to Aram Bartholl's work though, the artists have also used the popular first person shooter game Counter Strike for this performance. In the artwork Eva Mattes is playing in one of the maps in the game, where the purpose of it is to shoot and kill other players. In the performance the artist does not shoot anyone, but is trying to type to other players over the game chat not to shoot her avatar, because she is doing an art performance. The other players ignore her and keep killing her over and over. In this game the players have infinite amount of lives so the artist keeps regenerating in different areas of the game map after being killed. Continuing on, a few of the players are asking what she is doing, what does she want and the artist keeps responding that she is making an art performance. The other players seem to become increasingly irritated by this, so they tell her to 'go play and paint, don't play Counter-Strike' (3:45 in the video) rather than play this game. The players in Counter Strike have a relative amount of freedom, as there is with any game, but that 'freedom is always placed within the confines of the larger simulating system' (Wardrip-Fruin 2003: 625). In this case the simulating system is the game of Counter Strike. The game is exercised in a small space of rules, regulations and behaviours, set by the game. The people who play this game have learned those rules and mastered them. This judgement can be made, because the artist is doing the performance in the online multiplayer version of this game, where the users are mostly highly skilled players. The players that Mattes has encountered seem to play this game often and they are used to conversing with users who understand the rules the way they do and abide by them. In the work, Mattes is creating tension by not following the rules of this controlled environment which other players are used to. The other players are so familiar and comfortable with the laws of this game that they consistently resist the artist's efforts to challenge them, because without these laws how would the players know who has won the conflict. This means that she becomes someone/something that they cannot control within the game, creating a backlash of other users demanding her to leave.

The work starts off as being about an artist resisting what the game space is for , by ignoring what you are meant to do there. As you keep watching the work becomes more of a critique of online first person shooter games and questioning the value of playing these. Mattes says 'what are we fighting for?' A player answers 'Freedom'. Yet, ironically it is the laws of the game narrative that defies and gives values to the game space and its objects that the players are fighting for.

Figure 5: Installation view of *Freedom* (2010) in Plug In, Basel, Switzerland

It could also be said that the way in which the artwork has been installed in the gallery space (see figure 5) is also reflection upon the artist's intent of the work being a critique. The inflatable mattress on which the viewer can sit on, perhaps reflects upon the what the artist thinks of the other players that they have encountered in the game, might be like in reality. The fact that there is no other furniture around, for example no desk or table for the screen, could be read that the artist feels that the player's lives are empty outside of Counter Strike, that is where all of their lives exist.

Conclusion

As I have demonstrated artists have exploited inconsistencies between physical and digital space by bringing the virtual into the real, for example by having gaming elements and objects in the real or by bringing real world concepts into game space or the value of playing video games in general from the real into the virtual. Even though video game space is simulated from reality, the subjectivities of the space are very different from real space. Video game spaces are complex spaces with specific purpose and rules, which the large community of people who play in them understand and abide to. The disruption of these rules shows exactly how different virtual space is compare to physical spaces and this is what many of the artists have explored. When game space objects and interface elements are transferred into real space, they start to create tension and suggest narratives of violence in the real space as they are made for conflict in the games. As can be seen, video games can be considered to be the new spaces for performance and exploration. Artists are clearly challenging the culture and opinions which this private world has developed. The complex nature of these simulations offer interesting medium for artists to play with. These works have also shown that the distance between the body in real space and the virtual space makes it easier for violence to be caused to gaming avatars or real people in a gallery space. With the fear of death dissolved and with their multiple lives, artists have embraced the inconsistencies of the game space in real space.

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Motsonian is the username for Monica Maria Rohtmaa (b. 1995. Viljandi, Estonia), an artist based in Gateshead, UK. Motsonian's videos, installations and texts look at how game space elements of video games, as well as visuospatial relations in Google Earth, Street View and VR, have changed our relationship to our worlds. Motsonian's art practice combines physical materials with virtual textures in reference to what's known in 3D digital environments as texture mapping - skins covering virtual objects to give them identity. Recent work uses the visual symbol of knitting, a tradition she draws from her Estonian culture, as a metaphor for a video game aim system or player's view.

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JUDGE DREDD
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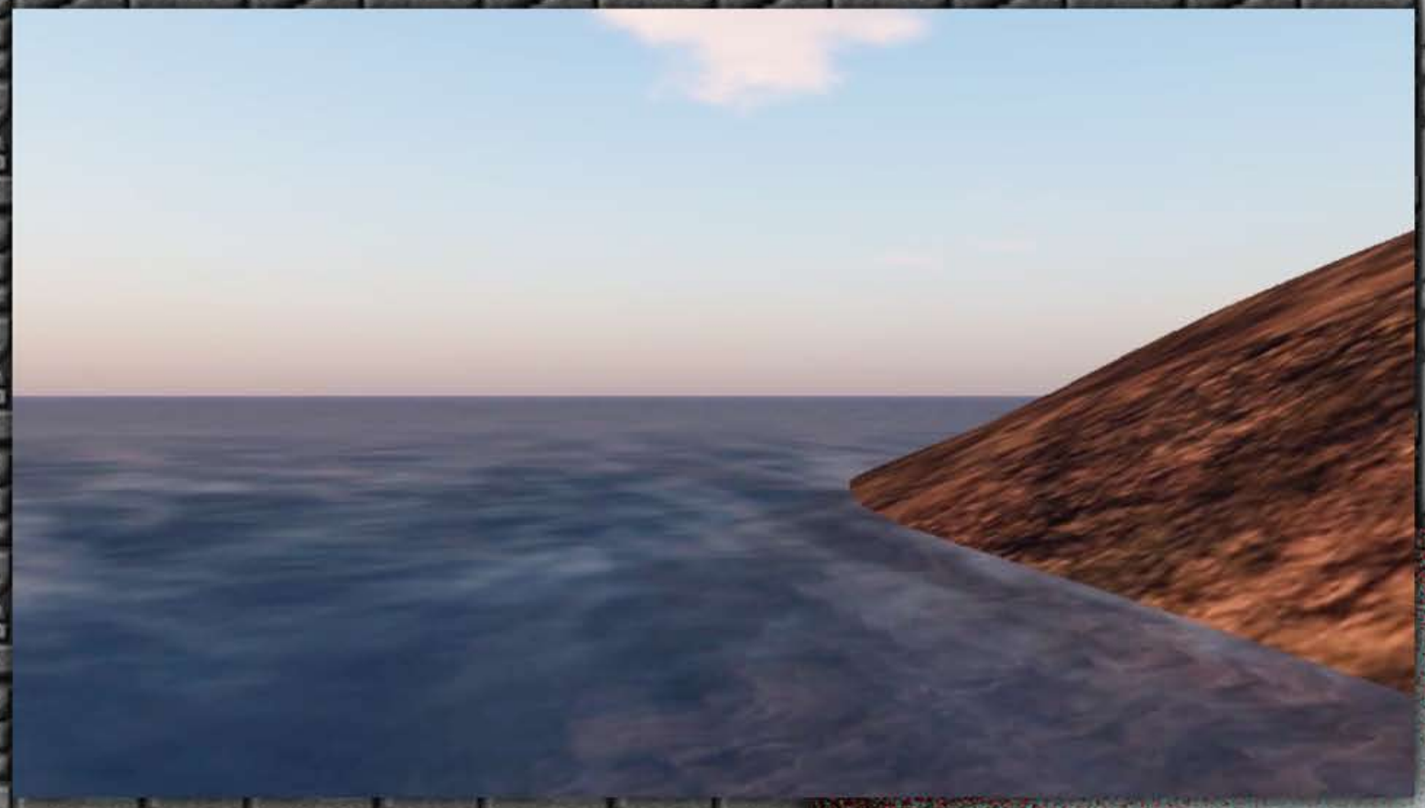
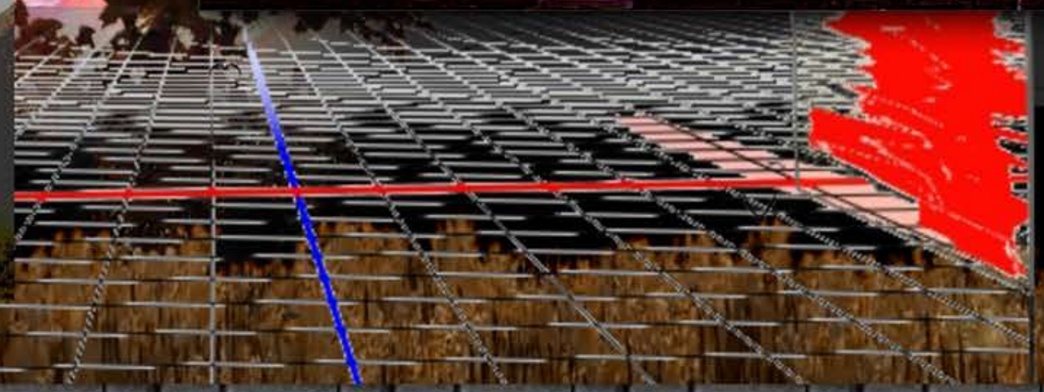




Locomotion in an Open World Game

Written by Oliver Payne, originaly published by Flash Art

Open world games are about exploration. At first, the space between two locations is unfamiliar to the player, so one must travel between them in order to experience it. This is rather the point. Essentially, these games intend to open up this space and simulate its traversal—quite different to transit in our daily lives, which we aim ever further to truncate, reducing our commute wherever possible.

But it is also in video games that we find the loading screen, the placeholder for travel. Somewhere between exploring and loading, there is a zen state of being.

Desert Bus (Absolute Entertainment, 1995), for the SEGA CD, has you drive a bus from Tucson to L as Vegas in real time. Despite never having an official release (although ROMs circulate online), it is perhaps the best-known "anti-game." To call Desert Bus an open world game would be a joke—it couldn't be more linear. It is comprised of one encompassing environment, without loading screens between areas. Every inch of the drive looks largely the same, throughout its marathon, single-sitting play-through.

The game's intentions are clear—do nothing for eight hours—questioning the very nature of video games and why we play them at all. But Desert Bus is actually very much a game about doing something, doing one thing—namely, driving the bus. And, perhaps more importantly, never not driving the bus. The vehicle's wonky alignment requires constant player input. Merely allowing the bus to stall, by taking your finger of the acceleration button, will result in your being towed back to Tucson, again in real time. Its limitations create a remarkably narrow field of possibility, and its unforgiving system, coupled with its intentionally broken mechanic, create a simple but profound tension, mounting as you get closer to Vegas. When you're seven hours into your drive, keeping the bus on the road is as high-stakes as it gets in gaming. Underestimating its own systems and rules, Desert Bus answers the very questions it poses: In trying to illustrate how boring and pointless games are, it creates a tense and exhilarating experience. As a game about nothing, it is fundamentally broken.

Perhaps the best-known open world games are the Grand Theft Auto series, in which driving has always been integral. It's one third of the name after all. Here, time behind the wheel isn't downtime, and even cruising for the sake of cruising will invariably result in an unfolding drama. However innocuous the intention of the drive, pandemonium is almost inevitable.

But unlike Desert Bus, the Los Angeles of GTA V (Rockstar Games, 2013) is a living, breathing, pulsing world. Far more than a mere backdrop, it is the figure of action itself. To put the landscape back in its place and appreciate it in a more leisurely fashion, the player must take to train hopping. By positioning oneself in a boxcar, and allowing the camera to drift naturally, you can observe the game's perfectly rendered textures and its diminishing light particles in a way not afforded in the automobile.

If Desert Bus is about doing nothing for the sake of it, of exploring the potential for boredom the medium affords, then Final Fantasy XV (SquareEnix, 2017) is about doing nothing in order to postpone the doing of something potentially more boring.

Ostensibly, you take the role of a certain Prince Noctis, off on a stag-holiday road trip with his best friends, before he is to be married off in order to forge peace between two kingdoms. The reality is closer to a J-pop band doing odd jobs for strangers. In an effort to undo all the work which has been made in the open world role-playing game genre in the last decade, Final Fantasy XV finds new ways to automate boredom and twist it into purpose. Even the frivolous, fun stuff is a joyless graft from another era: tedious fetch quests and frustrating fishing challenges.

And this is where the game succeeds—as an exercise in putting off responsibility and deferring obligation. For a game rooted in the idea of a road trip, you have surprisingly little control of the vehicle itself, no more than you have of the eponymous desert bus. This is seemingly so that you choose the auto-drive function and let Noctis's lackey take the wheel. Every system you engage with, from how the characters level-up, to the in-game currency, and the day-night cycle, or how driving the car itself works, all encourage the player to auto-drive between remote points. Some drives can take up to eleven minutes, which is a lifetime in video game terms.

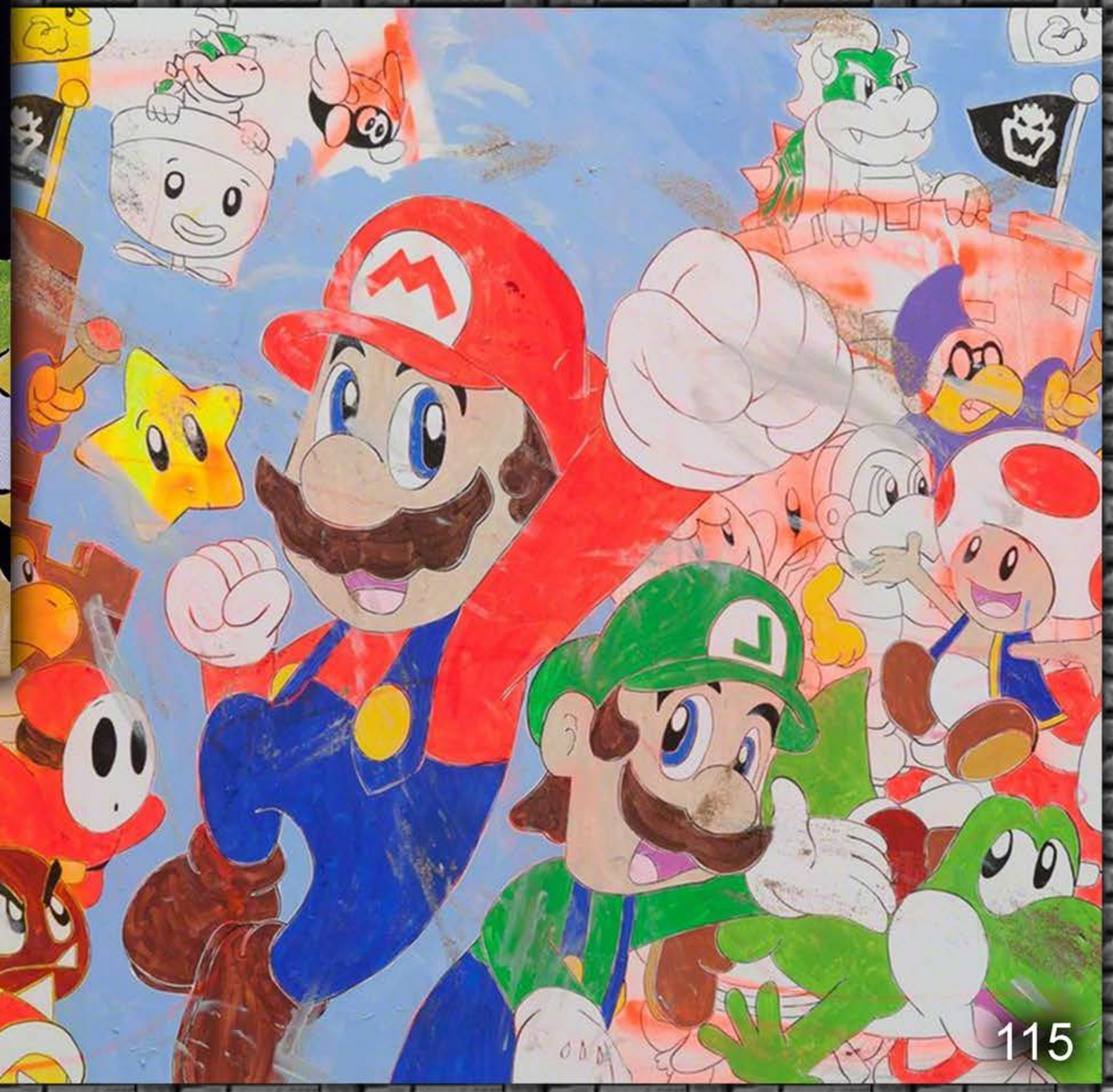
During these long drives, the characters occasionally chat amongst themselves, but more often they are found to be doing nothing. They stare idly at their smartphones, or gaze out the window at the hyperreal patchwork landscapes of the American south, complete with muscle cars and diners. As they do nothing, you are invited to do the same. To make a sandwich or check email, glance occasionally at the TV, as they glance out the window. Distance times between locales are stated beforehand, enabling the player to plan accordingly and find the most efficient way to do nothing, whilst the game plays itself.

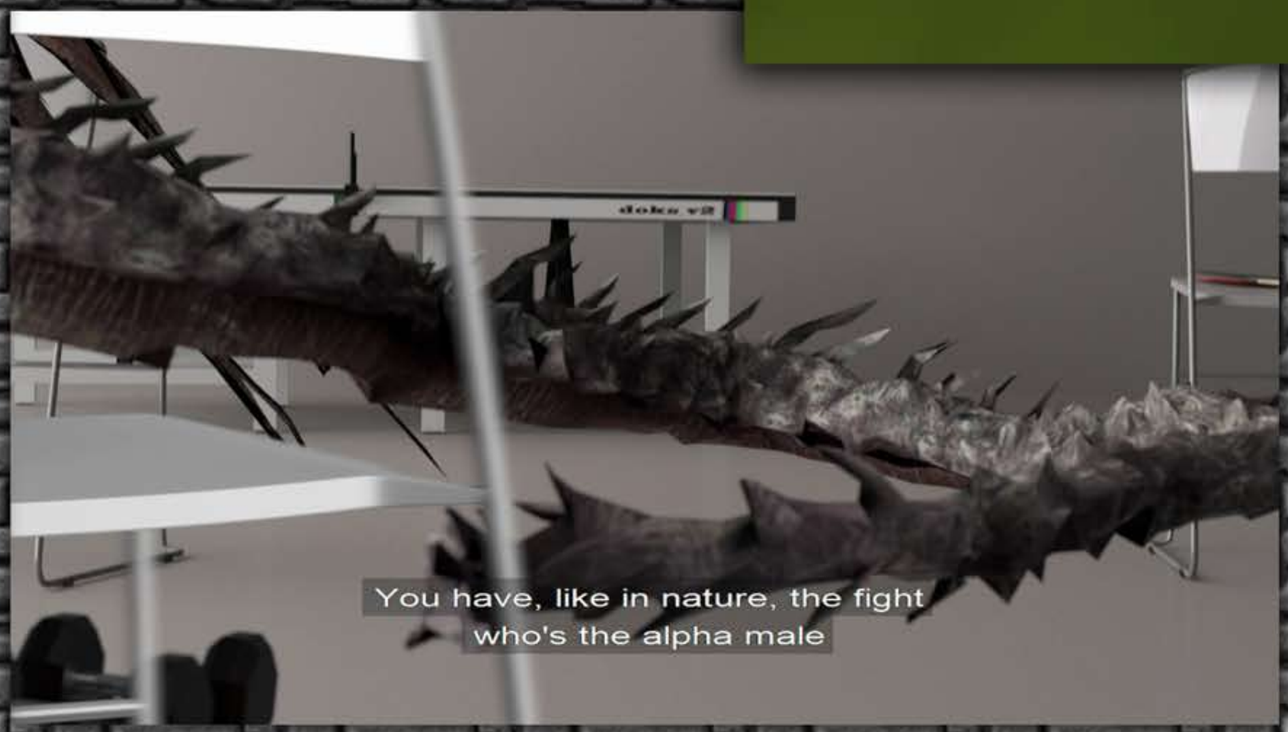
Whilst Desert Bus is accidentally and unbearably tense, Final Fantasy XV has somehow stumbled upon the perfect mechanic for sightseeing, meditation, and achieving a sense of calm in a digital realm.

Oliver Payne (b. 1977, London) lives and works in Los Angeles. As a duo with Nick Relph, his work has been shown internationally in museums and institutions, including: Serpentine Gallery, London; Kunsthalle Zurich, The National Museum of Contemporary art, Oslo. Recent exhibitions include Nanzuka, Tokyo and Hong Kong; Studiolo, Zurich; Vavassori, Milan (curated by Fredi Fischli and Niels Olsen).

Since working as a solo artist (2007/9), Payne's practice has focused on ideas of subjectivity and context. The artist draws from disparate sources such as Japanese videogames and subcultures to camping gear brand fetishes, that reflect on our perception of an "outside" reality. Starting from a suspicion against the world that we recognize or accept with common knowledge, Payne explores the contemporary relations between virtually connected players, between inside experiences and outside expressions, spaces of drift, areas of in between and in flux.

Final Fantasy XV (2017). Courtesy of SquareEnix.




You have, like in nature, the fight
who's the alpha male

That's why
you usually have a fight between top guild leaders.

get started. OKP
ROCKSTAR
O.K.
O.K. I'll drive for you
car and go Coffee
seriously going
Bloody
Go on - walk away
City problem
regularly
sweets movies
burn!
waves
money. It ain't too hot

Territory

Written by
Frances Kelly

Territory

Soldiers sit and play games. Training simulation games. Their uniforms echo the screen in front of them. Sand coloured camo outfits in physical 3D cloth, harmonise with the environment that has been created for the virtual space. Harun Farocki's Serious Games I-IV takes the form of four video cycles consisting of three two-channel and one single-channel installation. Viewers occupy a space created by seven projections onto slim Perspex sheets, hung invisibly in the dark.

The videos show American Military soldiers partake in a gaming situation, which acts as a simulation for events which could happen, have happened, and are likely to happen in their military career. One section of the film discusses the trauma experienced and how the digital gaming simulation can produce a positive output. This is controlled by lighting effects, which is in turn manipulated by the instructor of the game. Creating a reverse pathetic fallacy in which the lighting engenders a carefully chosen mood, with the intent to lift the emotions experienced by the player. Here, Farocki's use of imagery is not to intended to represent the world, rather to intervene with our perception of it. The work is no longer an image as reproduction in Walter Benjamin's sense, but images as realities in the their own right.[1]

Could it be that a computer animation is somehow rendering the truth, more adequately than a photograph? The animation is derived from reality, a copy of the war environment in Afghanistan. A simulation. In the sense of 'hyperreality', the possibility of unlimited identical objects produces a "relationship of equivalence, of indifference," ...leading to the "extinction of the original."[2] However the original in this case would not become extinct. The use of simulacra and their pervasive power would seem unstoppable exactly because of the fallacy of their equivalence to empirical reality: however simulacra allow for high levels of identification, but also of editing, manipulation and control. That is why they are so popular with the dominant structures. Farocki's critique exposes the unjustifiable faith placed in simulation and its desensitizing effect. With our knowledge of the world predominantly being shaped not only by virtual, but mediated experience, are we not well past the availability of the 'original'?

Serious Games I-IV are based on a model of reality. The space occupied by the computer canvas is a non place, an atopia.[3] It is an area which has different boundaries than a true space; these are not infinite, better yet described as indefinite. They are governed and constituted by an alternative set of rules than real spaces. The computer simulation itself is the non space, the user interacts through an impersonal mode of address; as a player, a score, a win or a lose. The history of these places created in Farocki's games are reconstructed into different versions of the future, to be interacted with. To change the players perception of Euclidean space.

The online system which encompasses these virtual atopias, is addressed by John Perry Barlow, in his 'Declaration of Independence of Cyberspace'. His manifesto indentifies Cyberspace as a place of utopian sovereignty, that should not be interfered by Governments. 'We will create a civilization of the Mind in Cyberspace. May it be more humane and fair than the world your governments have made before... you are terrified of your own children since they are natives in a world where you will always be immigrants'.[4] However Barlow's utopian vision of the internet as a flawless frontier, could become the single most regulated medium of communication. A dystopian splinternet. With international agents of espionage bugging peer to peer chat services inside online gaming. Infiltrating World of Warcraft; creating characters and inhabiting their online life to collect restricted information and data regarding illegal currency transactions and further illicit activities.[5]

The boundaries that exist indefinitely within the online spaces are defined by those who abide by them, but more importantly by those who created them. Governments are restricting access to areas of the internet, creating roadblocks and diversions for the vehicles that manoeuvre the junctions of cyberspace. The authority to put in these stops is held with those with power. High visibility clothing is not required, no personal protective equipment needs to be worn. It is for your own safety, as the driver, the player, the user.

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Frances Kelly (b. 1994, United Kingdom) is an artist and writer whose interested in the translation of physical space to the digital other, investigatating permeable 3D space by utilising digital animation as a tool to simulate possible future realities.

Speed 0
Armor
Fuel
Horn 10000
Get out
4: "WHERE ARE YOU?"
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4 (F4)

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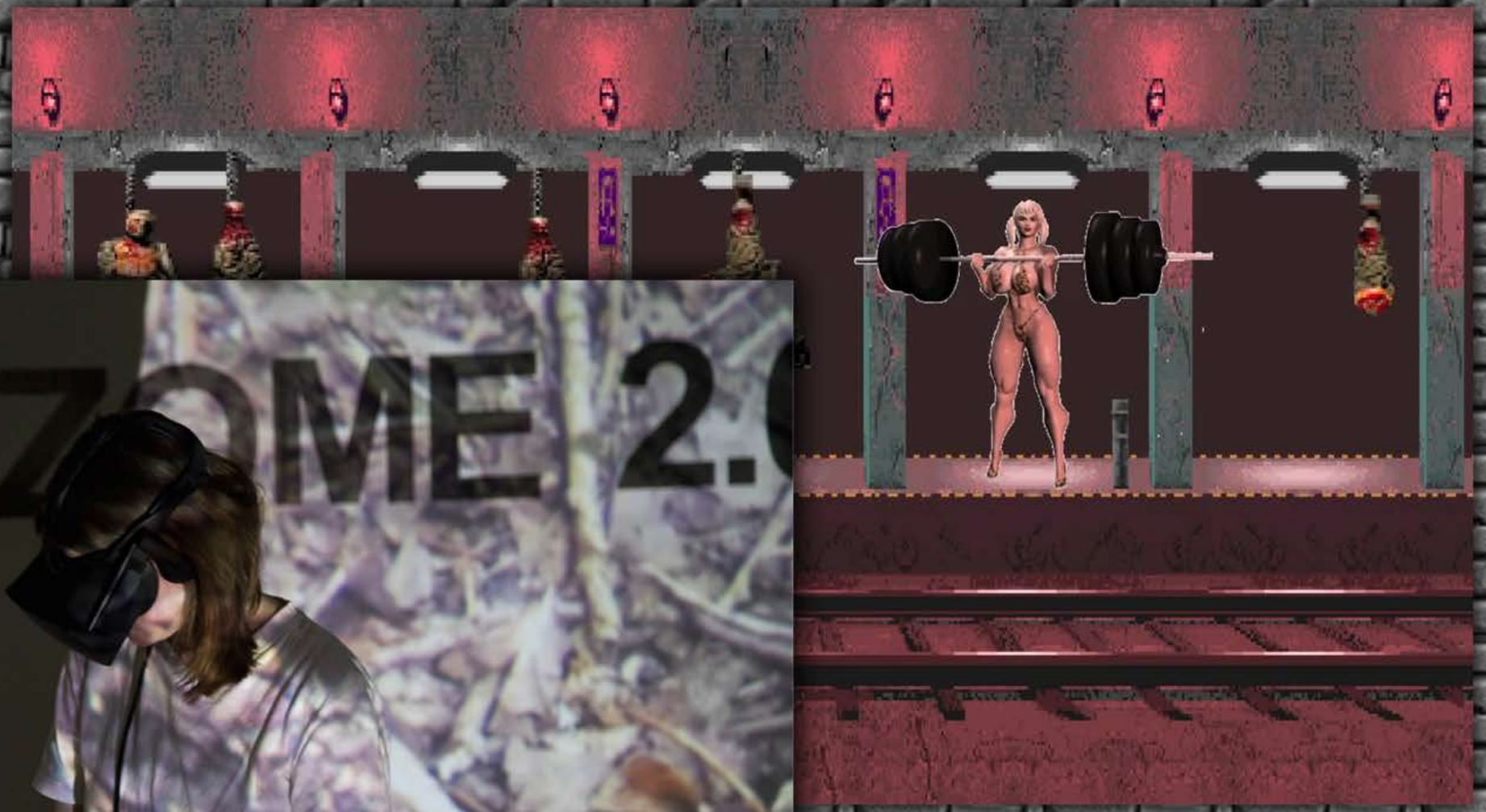

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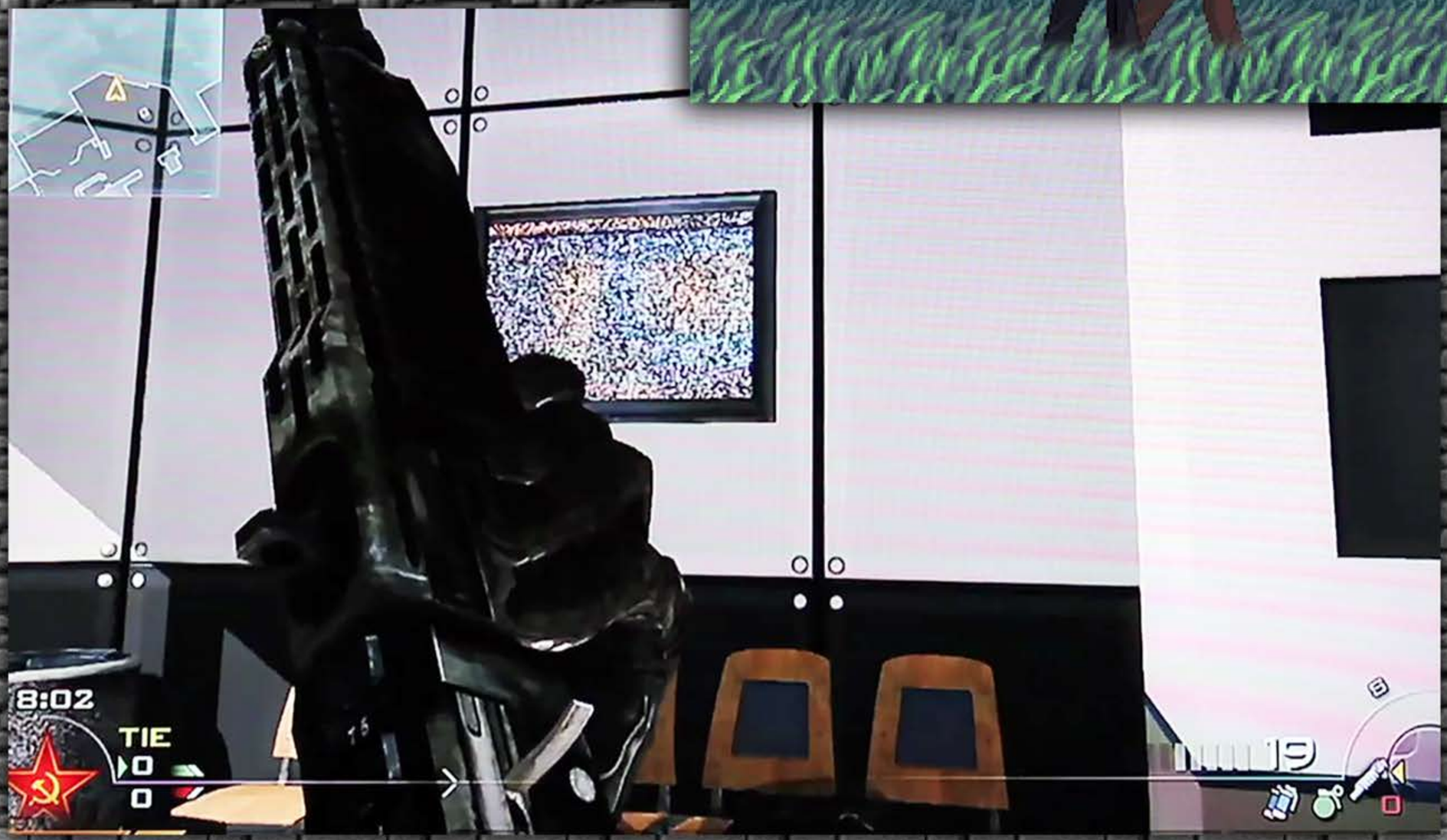
/LOAD
/GAMEPLAY
/OPTIONS
Trajectories
/choose player/
Level 4
Can hold a basic conversation in Japanese.
Has an undercut (not included in video).
Thinks derealisation is great fun.
A virtual self that's no longer a self-aware vessel for tracking retrospective character growth in real time, but accidentally a separate person.
Your Cooler self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An exploration of the insidious nature of technology

The disillusionment of self in virtual realities and nameable affinities

Written by
Oliver Bharat

Introduction

"An avatar is an icon or figure representing a particular person in a video game or Internet forum, that the user can control and move around the screen. Within Hinduism an avatar is a manifestation of a deity or released soul in bodily form on earth; an incarnation of a person or idea."

How do both of these types of avatar affect human interaction with reality? Do the exaggerated emotions and boredom of a video game create the dissolution of self? Has the immateriality of technology and the internet metaphorically blinded people in society? Perhaps the tragedy that we are losing a sense of consciousness of ourselves within reality, as we are depending on, or devoting ourselves to developing an online persona, whether that be an exaggerated 'self' or fictional.

In comparison to James Cameron's 2009 fantasy blockbuster 'Avatar', where a paraplegic male infiltrates an alien community with the use of an "avatar" identity. Saturated with a combination of environmental and spiritual themes, the sci-fi challenges the viewer to seek emotion within something that is undoubtedly fictional yet relevant. This is due to the arguably discomforting high definition, and visual effects which becomes scarily realistic and true.

As writer Will Self examines, "It's because of our faith, I think – not faith in an immaterial being, or a transcendent reality, but faith in the very ability of digitisation to produce the highest imaginable degree of verisimilitude." This blurry verisimilitude is the key aspect that the two artists I am interested in both explore using idiosyncratic methods. Digital Artist Ed Atkins uses performance capture technology and animation software, to challenge reality through subjective provocative and unsettling narratives. Whereas Jon Rafman exploits the glitchyness of technology by documenting an online 'gaming' reality where everything that is not necessarily possible in real life, can be achievable in the online game, no matter how corrupt the subject may be. Both artists manufacture a dark undertone of western life itself through digitisation. In this essay I will be tapping into how people have been affected by the internet, and also examine in what ways technology has become an immaterial thing, arguable sugar coated by capitalist society. I aim to scrutinise how digital artists Ed Atkins and Jon Rafman have responded or utilised humans behaviour and reaction to the internet generation and digital era within their contemporary practice; and examine how they test the immaterial aspects of new technology through the use the avatar.

Disillusionment of Self

The proliferation of discourses that are decidedly 'post-' inundate artistic and intellectual life today: a post-Fordist mode of production gives way to post-politics and post-capitalism, which is accompanied by a post-media, post-digital, post-internet landscape populated by postidentitarian post-humans that are post-feminist, post-race, and post-queer. An important catalyst art movement of the 1960's who intended to abolish the idea of the artist as a creative genius were the New Tendencies; the anarchic group replaced original productions of art i.e. painting, sculpting, with the notion of visual researching utilising the computer as the medium. This anticipated digital art, which helped manipulate a paradigm shift from the political economy of mass production and consumption development of Fordism, to the information revolution and consequently the dematerialization of postmodern art practices. Consequently, effecting the way that people view art, and therefore perceive the world in its unraveling digital form.

What's more, through the introduction of email, social media and the ability for anybody to possess their own professional website, it has become second nature for people to access a mass amount of information via the web. However, our participation is scrutinized by capitalist society and hegemonic governments, who have a tight yet insecure grasp on the limits of what we can do, and information we are able to source. The late Hank Koehn wrote about the eruption of the information revolution, "Information is universal energy, effecting change, creating and disrupting order. Information in the form of proprietary databases can be monopolistic. It's information that is forcing us to question the true nature of the decision process and the perception of reality". The general consumer is unaware of the delusive nature beneath the beautiful screensaver of their digital devices. As writer Brian Droitcour states, "The new spirit of capitalism is about subdividing the individual into nameable affinities; Facebook likes, dating profile stats or competencies". Evidently the idea of individualism has grown within the internet and social media with people portraying an image for themselves, yet we forget that 'big brother' is always watching what we do, through heavy surveillance, and the government and has more ghostly power than ever before. We have become so indulged within social media; narcissistically creating an online self, when realistically we are just another single serving thing, existing on a database. The disillusionment of self has become prevalent in relation to new technologies; with around 66 million CCTV cameras within England alone, loss of the individual has become truly perpetual.

Furthermore, technology companies and data storing centres have created the 'cloud', which is a perfectly chosen word, and is quite insidious about the fact that the cloud is somebody's computer, or a mass amount of computers suffocating in a 'secure' hanger somewhere. Stored with the assumption that the user is the only person able to access, or the state, if needs be. However, there are also clever hackers that are able to gain entry to your hidden information. Humans being smothered in consumerism created by society are blinded by the attractive, innocent and even beautiful name of 'cloud' and consequently encounter the digital as an immaterial thing. As Immanuel Kant analyses, the beauty of an item has a "purposiveness; it assists, from the side of the senses, in the formation of empirical concepts for the understanding". In this sense, the more perfect apple products become, the less we think about the narrative or material realities behind the technology we use. Atkins seconds this idea saying "technology spirits things away, out of sight and out of mind". A concrete deception that the smartphone consumer is unaware of as they are generating and deleting data; their information is always accessible in the right hands. For example, when you have a problem with your computer and the software company are able gain access easily and able to move the mouse icon around on the screen within minutes, just by knowing the identification of the computer. This creates a discomforting realisation of the detachment we truly have with technology, yet its so integrated into people's lives.

Conversely, the disjointedness of reality and technology was exploited in early experiments by video artist, Nam Jun Paik during the 1960's. In an installation, Nixon(1965-2002) Paik manipulates televisions to deliberately create distortions to the broadcast on the screen using magnetic coils and other house based materials attached to the screen. Imperfections in the television's interface fired resonating lines on to screens, responding to the magnetic charge. This questioned the void between reality and the digital realm, as it consequently brought the attention away from the important television broadcast, but focused on the technology that was feeding them the information. This obscurely reflects the way we interact with the worldwide web as completely second nature within western society. As if it were an attachment to our being. Realistically what we are visioning on the distorted screen is the underlying of digital chaos, entirely composed by the zeroes and ones of software machine code. As Self specifies, " the picture on digital screens is generated by a myriad of saccades – short transverse pulses that shade in the images – although, in common with the way the human eye works, the television "assumes" that a lot of the background will remain constant, and so concentrates its fine detailing on more evanescent visuals". The verisimilitude nature of this subdivided idea is that technology is a construction. In comparison to the theatre scene in David Lynch's 'Mulholland Drive' (2002), where the actress sings an intense repetitive love song, then suddenly the sound of her voice becomes out of sink with the movement of her mouth on screen. The viewer is immediately

disembodied at the realisation that the narrative they were so deeply involved with has been deconstructed in front of their eyes, therefore the experience is arguably tainted. However, through updates in technology and polished apple products, everything behind the screen disappears into functionality and the interface appears seamless to the consumer.

Inevitably, an 'internet culture' has been born, where individuals counter the digital as being an immaterial thing in a neoliberal manner. With the introduction of the still very vague concept of 'Post- internet art' coined by artist Marisa Olson in a web interview with 'We Make Money Not Art' (2008); her definition acknowledges that internet art can no longer be distinguished as strictly computer/internet based, but rather, can be identified as any type of art that is in some way influenced by the internet and digital media. Meaning, anything contemporary artists practice; whether that be painting, sculpture or moving image, they have been affected by the internet in some kind of way. Directly or subconsciously.

Video based artists such as Rafman, Ed Atkins, and Benedict Drew who are encouraged to create an experience or interpretation of modernity through the technologies they use and are truly interested in; they are always trying to represent the present in abstract yet conceptual forms and exploit the 'come to be' norms of society. As Jennifer Chan relates, "the syntactic and semantic qualities of 'post-' are interchangeable with postmodernism to mean 'in reaction to', 'after', 'in the style of', or 'an extension' of the internet", so if the internet is present and ever growing, how can it be 'post''. Artists react to current time in many different ways, through literal methods of documentation of the internet cultures, or perhaps they go against the present by manipulating reality in abstract ways. In Drew's piece, 'Sequencer' (fig1) where the work creates a paradigm or colour and sound that puncture out of the scary politics of society by abstractly contrasting movement of digitally affected movement onto nature within his vibrant installations. Challenging the juxtaposition of technology and reality in a very consumerist fashion; or arguably the outcome of digital art in the contemporary society. Specifically within the installation environment where the senses are overwhelmed, and the intention to challenge the viewers placement in the world is experimented with.

Figure 1: *Sequencer* (2015) in British Art Show 8 at Talbot Rice Gallery

As well, what I am investigating is how contemporary artists have used the digital era to their advantage as a perpetual tool and acknowledge ones that have used digital technologies to shift and distort the blend between digital and reality. The aptitude to constantly create digital footage, anywhere at any time with a never ending hard drive, to an extremely diligent level has become instinctive to the western consumer. Therefore, ideas of insidious surveillance of people and accessibility of personal information is not perceivable to the power technology holds.

An example of this would be how artist and writer Zach Blas explores the capitalisation of humans within society through means of biometric facial recognition within public places such as airports, busy cities, and large arenas. Blas states that 'Biometric control has become a frontier for neoliberalism in governments'; his main concern within his work is the discovery that as well facial recognition being able to discover if you are an undocumented immigrant, a terrorist, or a criminal; these powers can identify your sexual orientation. Importantly, this exploits the dissolution of self that governing bodies induce into the minds of the customer, is realistically nonexistent.

I believe that the artists job is not to find solid answers to why things are changing in the digital age, but to capitalise on the effects that it is having on human beings lives. In this case, to alter the norms of the everyday by exaggerating or mocking how the internet manipulates people's minds whether that be through exaggerating a stereotypical subculture through avatar and animation, or by capitalising on ways in which governments use technology to exploit human beings through biometric surveillance and CCTV.

Immaterialisation of technology

In Ed Atkins' recent work 'Safe Conduct' (2016), we are introduced to a fictional character; or as Atkins describes him as a 'surrogate', as the model acts as a substitute for the stereotypical human being; or white male, going through a security check which we presume is in an airport situation. Atkins identifies in an interview that the 3D models he purchases online are typically caucasian people as the artist believes they are more depth in detail, in comparison to the models of darker skin. This reflects a horror between the fuse of the digital world and societies attitudes inside a multicultural society; as the caucasian male has historically been the empowered body within the western world. In the sequence that involves the character sadistically handing over his limbs and other internal organs; even though the visuals are very gruesome, it becomes quite slapstick as he also hands over his laptop. This dark humour ridicules and exaggerates how personally exploiting this scenario is to individuals and how the control of higher power enters the privacy of people in these day to day exercises.

As Kant and Schopenhauer all argued, "humour resides in the inappropriate association of things". The protagonist in Safe Conduct ironically humiliates himself shamelessly by metaphorically handing over every piece of himself into the allocated trays, whilst wearing a discomforting, doltish and erotic smile on his face. Comparable to Bas Jan Ader's slapstick, where the comedic element is at the actors misfortune, gruesomely, Atkins turns the everyday rituals of travel in to a satirised violent, fluxus performance, or parody of a contemporary world. There is an understanding relationship between the tragic and the funny. As Ader points out that his concern with falling was connected to failure and tragedy. The empathy towards the Atkins character is portrayed very awkwardly throughout the piece, yet unmistakably relatable towards the viewer. Jörg Heiser would disclose this a 'the existential adversity', which Atkins executes violently through fleshy, familiar graphics as the artists views this passing between states as a very unpleasant yet some how necessary situation. I feel that the artful use of humour is important within the Atkins work as the tragedy of humour is an aspect that undoubtably connects all humans together. What's more, the mockery and brutality of the everyday procedure of travel, appears absurd. In comparison, Blas describes a 'contra-internet' art : "An implicit critique of the internet as a neoliberal agent and conduit for labour exploitation, financial violence, and precarity.

Figure 2: *Facial Weaponisation: Fag face* (2012) by Zach Blas

Within Blas' work, 'Facial Weaponisation: Fag face' (fig2) he questions what the benefits of this knowledge are, other than to control, monitor, and police us even more discomfortingly.

The piece is a completely opaque face mask generated through facial data of a number of participants, digitally forced together to create a "collective mask" This results in an amorphous mask that cannot be detected as human faces by biometric facial recognition technologies. The dark undertone of this very confrontational piece of work, relates to the sadistic humour of Atkins' video's as it is like a 'play mask' that is arguably aesthetically pleasing, yet if worn out in public it would be to peoples entertainment unknowledgeable of the exploitative context to the piece. Additionally, 'Safe Conduct' is installed into the gallery space on three channel, with one audioscape piece which plays the well known tune of Boléro. The video's are positioned on three airport-styled hanging in an oppressive way in the centre of the room; relatable to the securitisation and surveillance that Blas adheres to. Atkins acknowledges that the character he has built is operated by himself using performance capture technology who anyone with a face can use, therefore the 'surrogate' he uses is a representation for all people within the closed circuit society, the idea of the 'individual' is not feasible.

Furthermore the titles use of 'weapon' suggests in Blas' work suggests it wants to challenge the conforming and abiding society; protesting against biometric facial recognition and the inequalities these technologies enforce. Where as the software that Atkins uses homogenises and renders all types of people, where you can modify a completely new body for yourself. Likewise, within Martin John Callanan's piece 'Departure of All', the artist challenges the verisimilitude of individualism. A vertically mounted large scale LCD screen hangs on the wall of the gallery, in the form of a flight departure board, it displays information about all flights taking off from all international airports in the world, in real time. each flight are placed in a row that moves up as a new flight is added to the list.Even though Callahan does night use a virtual avatar, similar ideas of self-disillusion are suggestive, with the viewer or the thousands of people departing from airports across the world, become the surrogates. As Pau Waelder summarises, "At some point, origins and destinations seem to matter less, and it is the uninterrupted procession of flights that gains relevance, not a list anymore but a flow, an overwhelming flow of data". The flight information board can be read as a symbol of the real meaning of travel, as an endless succession of departures, continuously happening in a void.

In addition, the segment in 'Safe Conduct' where the avatar (fig3) is continuously peeling off layers of his face in quite a dark yet humorous fashion sets quite an anxious tone for the video; or as Atkins describes it as a 'self annihilating horror show'; this corresponds to his interest in the face as an idea and the representation of people.

As soon as a face appears on a screen it becomes the protagonist, you immediately begin to mould different folds of emotions and the structure of this character, unless it is a computer generated face. In an interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist, Atkins enforces that "you are so aware of its fallacy, you can hold on to both the empathetic relation with this character and also the fact that it is constructed, you don't lose yourself to the moving image, as it presents itself as a limit." Atkins utilises his digital ability to modify a character using himself as the performer being the screen, embellishing fictional characters, that take on the attributes of an individual in the 21st century. In a gallery space it perhaps becomes a short and rememberable experience with no attachment to the character, unlike the bond an audience may have with a the lead role in a cinematic blockbuster. As writer Rich Thornton identifies it as "Immersion without escapism" being the main power within the work.

Figure 3: *Safe Conduct* (2016) Production still by Ed Atkins

In addition with the artists work Ribbons (2014), a stereotypically animate being; pathetic, gruesome and gratuitously drunk singing is examined. The pre designed 3D model that Atkins has purchased for a respectable amount online, to the be manipulated and brought to life by the artist; he takes advantage of material that already exists which represents the depth of the digital era, where data can be appropriated for different personal uses. Idealistically, aspects of the the capitalist consumer can be acknowledges within 'Ribbons' as the subculture of this typical working class male is portrayed as miserable and lonely, drinking spirits and singing about his emotions, is exaggerated through something that isn't real, something that is digitalised. However, the banality of smoking and drinking alcohol at a bar is uncontrollably relatable for a viewer, the audience awkwardly empathises with the male, which becomes an important discourse as the artist makes us questions what reality is. Contesting of mortality vs digital. Atkins rebels against the perpetuity of the high definition culture and examines the underbelly of society through the immaterial. Also within layering of editing itself, the fake lens flares, dust and light reflections challenge the eye on how far digital software can go to seem so realistic. In addition, Atkins would argue that the push for high definition within todays digital world as 'too real', that it becomes unwatchable. He analyses the high definition, arguing that within the cinema industry, filmmakers have become so precious about making the image so high definition and so real that the body of movie drops away. Film critic and theorist André Bazin commented about cinema being a warning that the material will always return – "that it's not just illusion, it's not just air; that there's something there".

Similarly, digital based artist Jon Rafman is interest in the technological portrayal of capitalist society but in a more glitchy, online, so obviously digital and abstract way, in terms of editing and subject. Within his work, 'Kool-Aid Man in Second Life', (2008-2011) he uses the oldest online virtual world 'Second Life' which is completely user generated where mass amount of subcultures within subcultures are created and 'live'; where you can create your own avatar to suit yourself or whoever you want to portray yourself as in Second Life. Rafman describes a sense of "anarchic psyche"; like a "supercharged Las Vegas" within the virtual realm that he believes the obsession within it can reveal a deeper truth about reality. As it is run by its users, with mass amount of people using it, it becomes quite insidious as it projects a more extreme rebellious nature than the reality the gamers are possibly trying to get away from. Compared to commercial games where repetition is the essence of the game play in a reliably linear fashion, Rafmans documentation of 'Second Life' suggests a much more irrational attitude to notion of the reality game. The gamer is not made to complete tasks using their avatar, but it is up to the player to what actions they want to achieve depending on their personal interests and imagination. I think it is important to point out that the extreme lack of social awkwardness in the virtual reality is fated within the virtual reality as there is no human interaction. Yet, it is arguably very discomforting when the video piece is being viewed in a gallery space, similar to the distressing visuals in in 'Safe Conduct'.

As well, the replacement of identity in both Atkins and Rafmans work is apparent, or the accessibility to do so which technological advances have created. Sianne Ngai describes this ideas as 'stuplimity', which combines the aesthetic awe of an image with boredom. The experience of this discloses the limits of human's capacity to comprehend an extended form as a totality; believing a digital world is reality. Likewise, Eugénie Shinkle examines a "contemporary technological sublime finds expression in an affective combination of elevated emotion and banality – a combination in which the subject also encounters the limits of the self". Comparable to Rafmans concern of self disillusionment, we become so engrossed with virtual reality out of pure enjoyment of exploring and not for the purpose of creating art. Similar to having a sense of escapism whilst reading a fictional novel on public transport, as Csikszentmihalyi remarks, 'we might even feel that we have stepped out of the boundaries of the ego and have become part, at least temporarily, of a larger entity' within the game. The stuplime affect makes no claims for spiritual transcendence or ironic distance, relying instead on a paralytic tedium: 'Instead of emerging from existential or phenomenological questions ... this boredom resides in relentless attention to the infinite and small'

By similar means, the 2006 video game release 'flOw' created by Jenova Chen, the games encourage the experience of flow states (A flow state, in other words, is one of control), rather than offering more commonplace experiences of com petition, violence, and destruction. Whereas in Rafmans documentation of Second Life, reliable boundaries are non-existent and archaic. Flow states occur in activities that offer clear goals and instant recognition of how well you are doing, without introducing excessive frustration.

This utter disjointedness of self with reality arguably becomes overly beautiful and sublime for the player, compared to the extremely lucid 'life' of 'Kool-aid man in Second life' where the dysfunctional avatars devise their own missions created by the user, which becomes visually glitchy as the player is consistently testing and pushing to see how far they can challenge the interface of the game. Therefore, an understanding that Second Life is completely constructed, there is not necessary empathetic connections within the game, whereas 'flOw' and games alike, the interface consistently works properly, for that reason, none of the complexity is perceived by the player.

Additionally, Will Self analyses, "Our willingness to upload our social existence to the web, to rely on it for our orientation, and to depend on it for our memory, means that when the silvery interface between us and it becomes perturbed, we seem to be witnessing the very lineaments of the thing in itself, stripped of its fleshly and humanising coat." Similarly in Rafmans digital work where the juxtaposition of avatars being controlled by human interaction with the game, yet faults are seen when their character walks through walls or and pixels are become utilised on the screen. Reminding the player that they are in a created digital world and not reality.

The medium in which Rafman presents this piece within a gallery is via projecting into a dark space, which reflects the ideas of a cinematic experience, however the contrast of viewing the journey of a corrupt virtual reality and is a digital documentation of exploration guided by his avatar 'Kool Aid man'. Like Atkins, Rafman is also interested in the representation of people, and society: Kool-aid man is a celebration of pop culture, the smiley face means different things in different contexts of the world, most commonly used in text messaging via yellow emoji face, also appropriating a brand that has been poured down peoples necks in the United States for generations.

Likewise, in Rachel Maclean's solo exhibition, 'WOT U :-) ABOUT?', she directs a vomit of technology and a grotesque portrayal of social media, through exaggerated unglamorous characters who are obsessed with their personal ratings on social media. The video piece 'It's what's inside that counts', is an ironically titled film about a supermodel-like figurehead, of a greed driven data provider who has a plague of citizens that desire her acceptance through greater digital connectivity. In relation to the online gamers generating Rafman's 'Second Life', the civilians in Maclean's absurd film are giving rise and fame to 'glamorous' data provider queen. They are totally disconnected from non-virtual reality but are being exploited and zombified in a part baroque, part post-apocalyptic, microcosmic nightmare. The piece is extremely monotonous and repetitive to observe, which coincides as being the essence of virtual games; continuously doing the same task over and over for a better outcome for yourself, or to move on to the next step.

Moreover, the piece is also a performance piece, as Rafman creates a figurative tour for spectators around Second life, to let audiences experience unfamiliar territory and to interesting exploit the gratuitous blend between online virtual worlds and reality itself. Video artists Lucky PDF argues, "work online automatically exists in a much larger context of content creation than work in a gallery, and it's important that what we can be judged against and interact with the rest of what is out there. Being early adopters and innovative users of popular technology means we can shape how it is seen and used. The Internet is a technology whose purpose is decided by its use". Rafman would support, "dialogue between internet artists, is becoming less of a conversation about the aesthetics and signs and symbols of the internet and more about everyday culture and everyday reality". Whereas Atkins believe that you should not completely emotionally give yourself up to the digital world he present, Rafman does the opposite as he allows himself to be amongst other inside the virtual space, and does give himself up to the mystical subcultures that may reside in the digital realm. In this respect Rafman has exploited this dark and mysterious part of the web by documenting his journey through himself having genuine excitement in the exploration of the web and how it reflects reality.

Within his film, there is many surreal altercations that embellish a list of metaphorical juxtapositions, weather that be through sexual activities between three headed dragons and innocent Kool-Aid man, that suggests many interpretations, whilst a certain awkwardness is captured, through glitches and avatars walking through each other, making it specifically clear that this is a chaotic, disorganised virtual world. On the other hand the awkwardness between the social interactions of the avatars is completely avoidable, as empathy towards other users is optional; inexcusable in real life circumstances.

Conclusion

In summary the internet and virtual reality harshly juxtaposes how people in western societies live their lives; being able to limitlessly explore the internet and gain information fast has become extremely desirable to the digital user. Additionally, I feel that visually, unsettling narratives of the internet, virtual reality and surveillance culture need to be reciprocated by large audiences. Within an accessible gallery space, online itself or even on a larger scale within the commercial media. As of now, online interaction, specifically within social media, has been beautified to naively create the feeling of human communion via our social devices. The themes of the disillusionment of self and the immaterialisation of technology is scrutinised heavily amongst the artists I have mentioned. Atkins successfully embellishes the idea of the avatar, but argues for its only existence to be the surrogate for commuting humans in reality. He exploits the simple event of travel, and manipulates it into a toxic human mummification. The fact that it is a digital avatar, metaphorically exaggerates that we, as muggles, are not individuals but are part of a huge database of personal information. Rafman on the other hand, uses an actual online gaming avatar which can be seen as an escape of oneself from reality, using an alter ego or fictional persona to explore virtual realities. However the glitchy depiction of Second Life exaggerates the insidious nature of the internet through users manipulating its fragile interface. Both artists contemporary work consistently has a layer of of grotesque humour which I see as extremely provocative and important, as humour is what connects human beings on an international scale. Humour has the power to be tragic yet meaningful purpose. The absurdity of people watching something so much where all humankind is completely annihilated, is attractive compared to the norms of everyday life. It is not necessarily important for people to completely understand how to the zeros and ones are constructed in detail, but to become knowledgeable not to believe corporate propaganda of products so that technology becomes totally immaterial.

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Olly Bhat (b. 1994) is a video based artist who explores the insidious nature of technology through the construction of sound, animation and directed footage. Olly is interested in how sound can work both in harmony with a visual, as well as juxtaposing with it, as a tool to create different narratives and emotions. He often combines banal sounds with structured digital footage as a way of creating unsettling tones within his work. He layers sound in order to challenge the visual. This is paired with a fascination with repetition - how it is the essence of religion, music, sampling, technology, and the everyday.

CHANEL
GUCCI
CHANEL
CHANEL
CHANEL

Kop
mouse druid from Ekvos forest
prepares elixirs from mushrooms and closes them in crystals
very shy and meticulous
likes: fireflies, moss, cold stones
hates: dry leaves

- 100
Noyo killed by Trickle R's flaming flare
undiscovered gift:
Crying Brooch
allows you hide in tearful mist

A Rupture of Self

Written by
Hannah Nussbaum

You're caught somewhere between the corporeal world and a digital landscape that's been coded up and rendered for you by a 3D animation studio called Masters of Pi . Your biometrics rely on your successes or failures in a set of immersive games, and the games are sponsored by brands that exist in limbo, somewhere between virtual entities, and non-virtual peddlers of terrestrial products that you actually eat and shit out in the non-virtual world. In this world, there are a cornucopia of ways to indulge your desires in hyperreal detail: you and your avatar are in a schizophrenic union, and the darkest bonne bouches of the internet are available to stream in the round. William Gibson probably already told us this story: the one where immersive digital experiences gamify life. Life becomes an imbricated video game with incredibly high stakes, and pleasure and leisure become the Purge, only harmless because its only a digital simulation.

In Azeroth, the mythical setting in World of Warcraft, digital currency is currently worth more than Venezuela's bolívar. Does that count as virtual reality? When digital trappings permeate real space, we're rendered avatars even when we step outside of the network. A collision of wet and dry takes place –synthetic emulsifiers rub vegetal and digital together. When you're virtually online, offline, are you still an avatar? Are you accountable? Does hiding-behind-your-avatar become the next tax loophole, honorable discharge, etcetera ?

Beth Coleman conducted extensive interviews with a virtual Cannibal, Gy. Gy is a French white male adult who participates in gynophagia sex play – that is, violent virtual sex-play that ends in (virtual) death and (virtual) cannibalism – in European Second Life. His tendencies and pleasures provoke speculative meta- ethics, 'in terms of what may actually be done to another person (legally and morally)[1].' Cannibalism is allowed on the net, because what does it mean to virtually eat someone who is only a proxy of themselves? One can also assume that participation is consensual, although consent is literally never as simple as I brought myself here of my own volition. full stop. Regardless, a virtual representation of a taboo ritual becomes ethically irrelevant for existing legal infrastructure when its being simulated. This feels like a pure expression of the way in which virtual prosthesis still claims the status of a ghost limb, when it wants to. It's just a game is sometimes true, sometimes just a violently convenient alibi, more and more literally a category error. When pores between the screen and 'offline' are more like portals, when do video games and interactions that were borne-digital slip into life? So GamerGate looms large in this conversation: on the net until it isn't. The larger point here: as wet, sticky, offline life rubs closer and closer to hard, dry, online life, at what point can you enact your cannibalistic fantasies on the net, and still continue to compartmentalize your wet and dry selves? The hyped up promise of VR technology is producing erections in khakis everywhere: it's going to feel so good when we can get our hands on augmented reality first person shooter games and interactive horror porn. Progression towards high-definition, hyperreal violence. We move towards a new sense of sensuous geography. That was my avatar, not me.

Roy Ascott asks us to imagine three VRs: Virtual Reality, Vegetal Reality (biohacking and technological instruments that interface with DNA) and Validated Reality ('common sense'). He asks us to beat our brains over what he calls a 'Biophotonic Flux' – to "imagine a technology of the mind that allows you to become immersed in a vast database of universal knowledge, one that reaches deep into the neuronal zones, cuts through the layers of inhibition laid down by centuries of cultural conditioning, religious prejudice, and political repression[2]. He's fantasizing about a thick futurity – again that word imbrication: said of the scaly covering of reptiles and fishes, of leaf-buds, the involucre of Compositæ[3]. Once ontologically disparate layers of digital, DNA, and 'everyday sensory reality' will fuse like scales on a fish in our hybrid horizon.What then will the avatar imply? A bio-hacked avatar in an immersive virtual setting practicing biophotonic cannibalism, for fun. When DNA enters the network, and neural technology interfaces with virtual reality, compartmentalizing our avatars from ourselves may be a rupture we can no longer afford – or one that leaves us indifferent, affectless, traumatized: 'Whoever turns into a swan, or a thing, is left with their abject original being inside[4].'

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[4] Ed Atkins, in an interview with Chisenhale Gallery, discussing his 2012 exhibition Us Dead Talk Love - http://www.chisenhale.org.uk/archive/exhibitions/images/EAtkins_Interview.pdf

Hannah Nussbaum (b. 1993, Massachusetts) is a writer and cultural critic based in London. She's currently completing her MA at the Royal College of Art. She's interested in trash, sleaze, refuse, detritus and abjection, and art that activates these degraded forms: post-punk and no-wave music and film histories, as well as contemporary practices that deal with debris and "trash" (culture) on the net.

renegade NPC

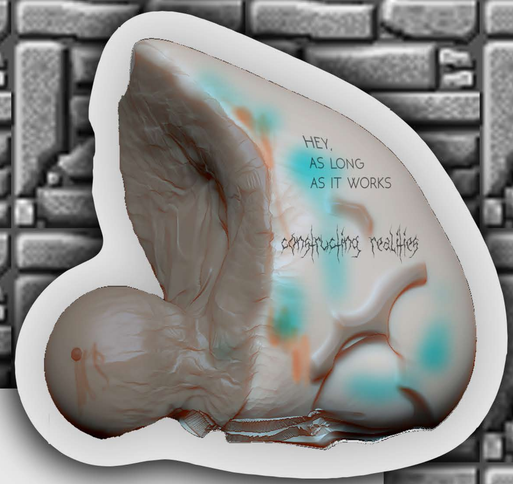
The renegade NPC (non-playing character) embodies a disruption of conventional gamebound roles and structures. No longer a passive utility, these femme and nonbinary avatars are creating blueprints for flexible poison pills, lockpicks, mutual aid and self-care by hijacking the given mechanisms of gameplay and game environments.

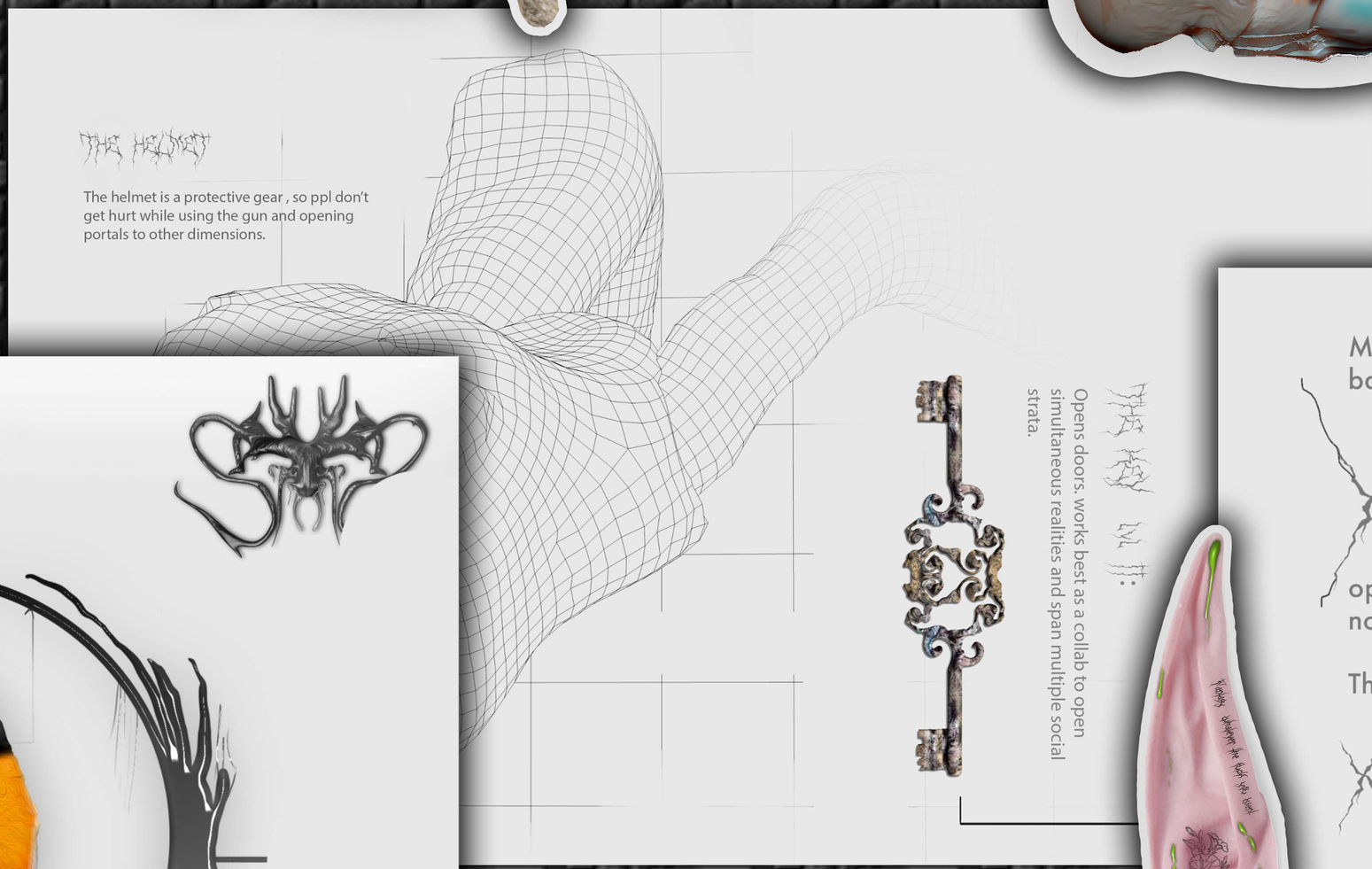
Being renegade is about claiming the power to survive by seizing the tools to mark the world that marked us as "other"; it's about hacking out of the passivating presets that make us supernumerary to master narratives and predetermined goals. Echoing Donna Haraway, we are the illegitimate offspring of militarism and cyberntetic capitalism - but illegitimate offspring are often exceedingly unfaithful to their origins.

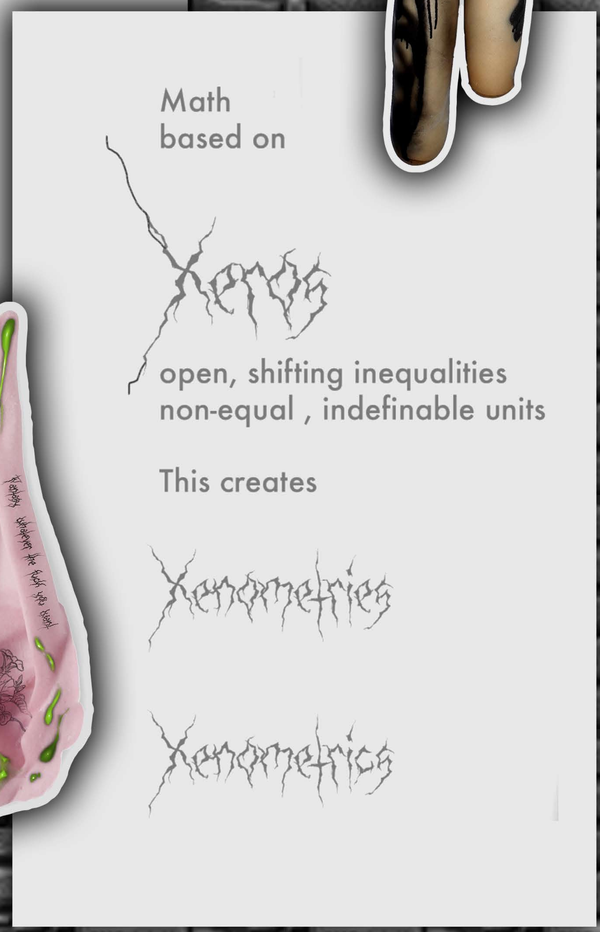
Our costumes and inventory are weapons and armour that help us navigate our worlds freely, opening terrains and unlocking player to player interactions. We invite you to take inspiration and construct your own objects of power and protection in your local environment.

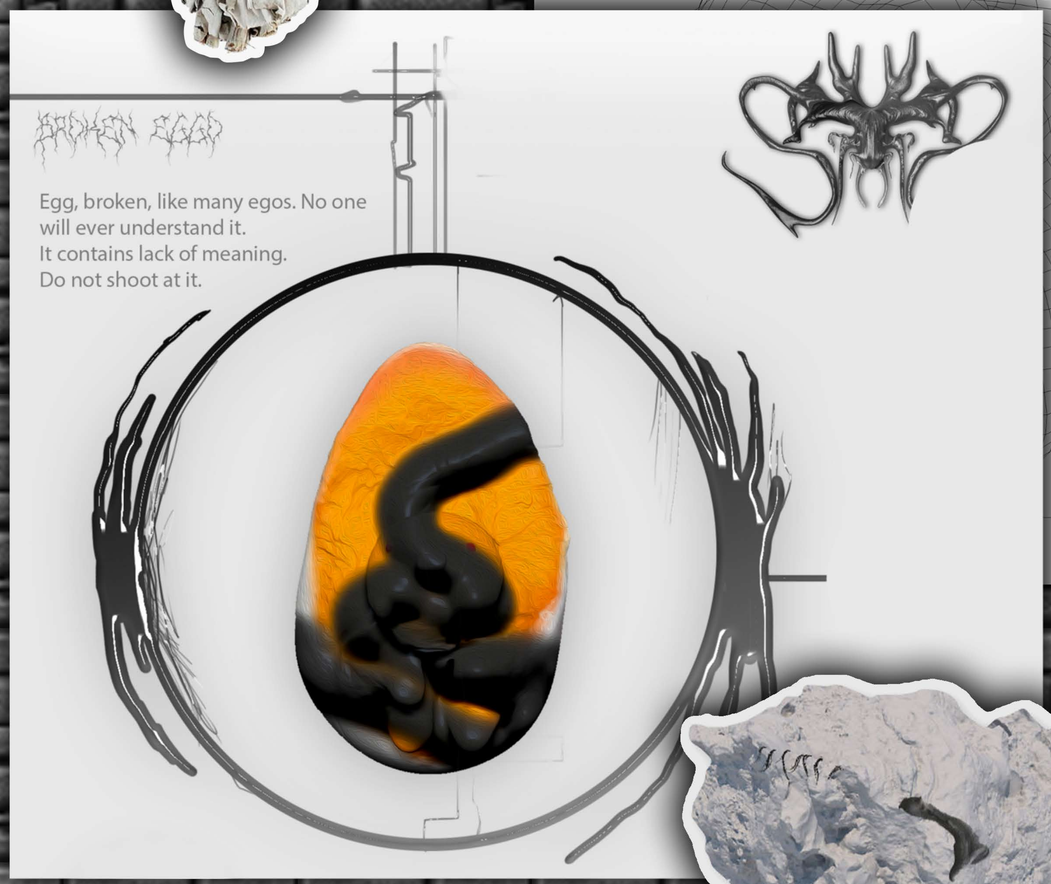
The renegade body can mutate, duplicate, and repeat indefinitely, extending itself through space by means of time, compressing time to create for itself a home. What kind of subversive repetition might call into question the regulatory practice of identity itself? How can we encode our future bodies - as creatures of flesh and pixel, creators of affect, and of technology - to vibrate along the optical illusion of social fictions and virtual realities?

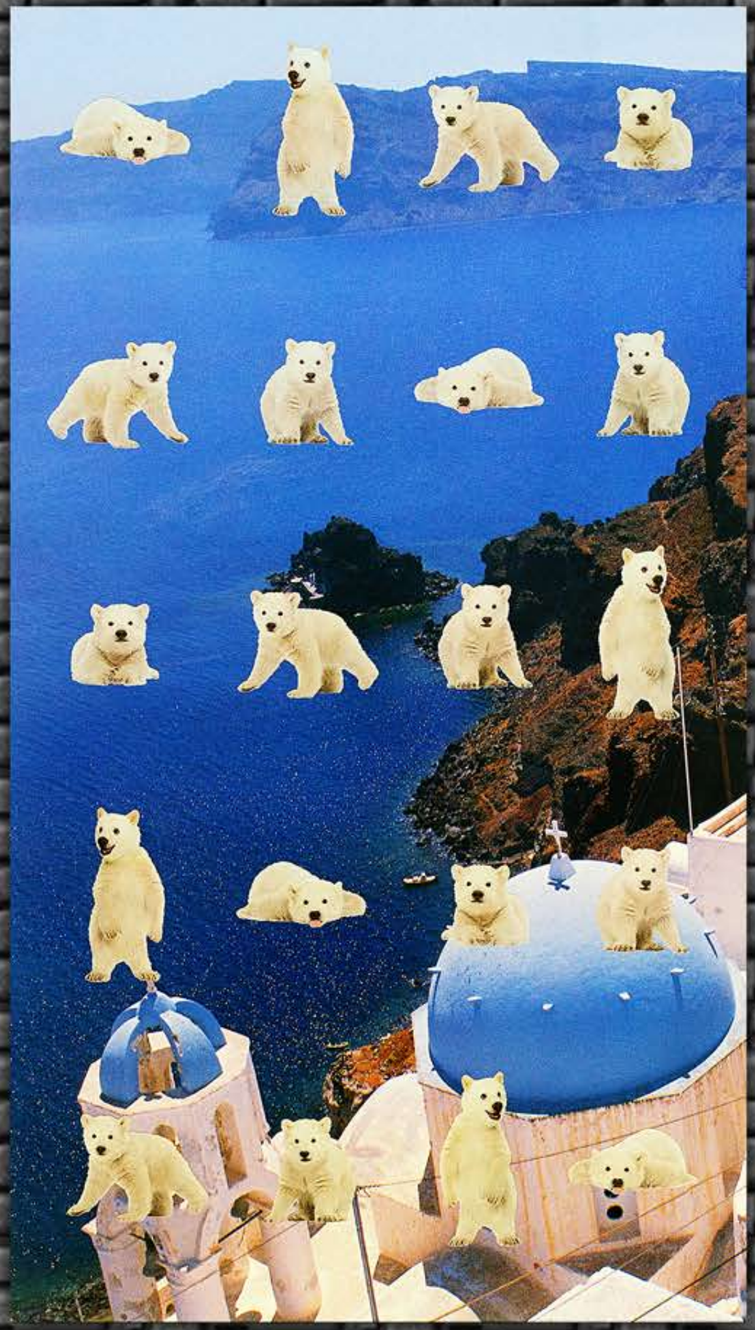
Here at the borders of the screen, trouble is inevitable - and the task is how best to make it. Femme and nonbinary NPCs squad up!


HEY,
AS LONG
AS IT WORKS
constructing realities


THE HELMET
The helmet is a protective gear , so ppl don't get hurt while using the gun and opening portals to other dimensions.


Math
based on
Xenos
open, shifting inequalities
non-equal , indefinable units
This creates
Xenometries
Xenometrics


BROKEN EGGS
Egg, broken, like many egos. No one will ever understand it.
It contains lack of meaning.
Do not shoot at it.



BEANS
101
Civic Center
Downtown
Bay Bridge
ONLY
Thank You
Enjoy

B
A
Double Doors
Filters
Mattes : i'm not shooting back
Mattes : this is an art performance
zBlock 4.4 [p2K` Blink! - 0:0:11547692]
jOn : lmao
jOn : he's trying
Deagle # : lol.
Mattes : please don't shoot at me
Say : can you listen to me for a second?
RAGE[FL] @ Side Door..
.sK^ LoLMeCrazy @ T..
100
0
$ 16000
20 | 120

(Leased-Official Server) 2.6.0

-=]FC[=-LESTAT_SiK has entered the server and is waiting for PB authorization.
[US Army] -os-zelptic messaged: dead... whats your point?
[US Army] dead-in-iraq messaged: JUAN E SEGURA 26 MARINE NOV 9 2004
[Enemy] cengizhan66 messaged: lol

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Emissary Sunsets The Self, 2017
Live simulation and story, infinite duration
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Sound design by Diego Navarro
Screen piece, custom software, live simulation. gaming PC
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Commissioned for the 2017 Jerwood/FVU Awards
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Acrylic, Aluminium-dibond sandwich
141 x 60 cm x 4
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Lenticular print
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Acrylic on Canvas
84 x 63 inches & 55 x 40 inches
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Primal Tourism, 2016
Digital image
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A Place To Fall, 2017
Inkjet auf Leinwand
140 x 160 cm
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Useless Weapons Series // piece No 1, 2016/17
Digital print on Canvas
130 x 110 cm
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24 x 30 cm
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Interactive video installation
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Essay
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Video game
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Essay & collage on monitor
Page 112 - 113, 156 - 157

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Page 114 - 115, 150

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Page 116, 118 - 119

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21 x 15 cm
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Page 122 - 123

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Page 124 - 125

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Page 124 - 125

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Page 126 - 127

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Page 127

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Page 131, 140 - 141

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Essay
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Digital image
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Essay
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Digital images and text
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38 min 38 sec