Notes at the Intersection of Computer Games and Art

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General topics for consideration

- **Artists developing computer games as art** and **Art Games** (playful interactive) listed alphabetically—not exhaustive, but featuring well exhibited artists.
  - Cory Arcangel
    - Game Mods
  - Sheldon Brown
    - Scalable City
  - Garnet Hertz
    - OutRun
  - Robert Nideffer (with Alex Szeto)*
    - (Lara Croft) Nude Patch
    - unexceptional.net – offline
    - DinoQuest Online* – offline
    - WTF?!* and WTF?! SDK*
    - SPEW* – offline
    - 2007 BC (digital triptych print)
    - Data Arcade*: Stock Invaders (Space Invaders), Pipe Mania (Pipe Dream), and Oil Kong (Donkey Kong)
    - Online articles and teaching materials
  - Others (sample)
    - http://www.nideffer.net/proj/alt-ctrl/ via “Gaming Artists” (c. 2004)
    - http://videogamesasartmedium.wordpress.com/
    - http://www.glucksman.org/GameOn.html
    - http://videogamesasartmedium.wordpress.com/
    - http://mocatv.tumblr.com/post/88587616054/were-excited-to-announce-art-in-video-games-los
  - Anne-Marie Schleiner
    - portfolio and articles found online at opensourcery.net
  - Eddo Stern
    - Waco Resurrection
    - Darkgame 1, 2, 3
    - Best Flamewar Ever
    - more
• **Computer games as art: theory and practices**
  - ALT+CTRL: A Festival of Independent and Alternative Games, Beall Center for Art + Technology, University of California, Irvine ([online archive site](http://beallcenter.org/altctrl)), 2004.
  - *Video games as an art form* (Wikipedia)
  - *Art Games* not limited to computer/video games (Wikipedia)

• **Games as visual culture**
  - *Game On: The History and Culture of Videogames* (exhibition catalog/book)
  - *High Score: The Illustrated History of Electronic Games* (book)
  - *Arcade Mania! The Turbo-Charged World of Japan's Game Centers* (book)
  - **Machinima** – games as storytelling media (cinema)
    - *3D Game-Based Filmmaking: The Art of Machinima* (book)
    - Machinima.**com** (website—a machinima-centered commercial venture and branded as “a programming movement aimed at young males around the world”)
    - Machinima Channel on YouTube (way too many game-based videos)
    - Why the concept or practice of machinima became aimed at “young males” merits separate consideration.

• **Game art** – technical illustration, animation, 3D model design (virtual sculpture) incorporated into computer games
  - *The Art of Video Games* (book)
  - *Video Game Art* (book)
  - *1000 Game Heroes* (book)
  - many other books
    - Character design (including player character personalization)
    - Level/world design platforms, that implicitly employ visual design language(s)
      - *Unreal* and *Quake* (game and game development/modding kit)
      - *Half-Life* (game and game development/modding kit)
      - *Crysis* (game) and *Crytek* (game development/modding kit)
      - *Minecraft* and *Roblox* (game and game development/modding kit)
      - *Little Big Planet* 2 (game and game development/modding kit)
      - *NeverWinter Nights* 2 (game and game development/modding kit)
• *The Sims* (game and game development/modding kit)
• *Designing Virtual Worlds* (book)

○ Large-scale commercial game art production (via “Art Departments”)
  • Electronic Arts
  • UbiSoft
  • Activision Blizzard
  • THQ
  • also international game development studios in Europe, Korea, Japan, and China

• *Artwork inspired by games* (sample)
  ○ *Velvet-Strike: Counter-Military Graffiti for CS*, game mod graffiti
  ○ *I am 8 Bit* (book)
  ○ *EbOy HELLO* (book)
  ○ Nideffer’s *2007 BC* (large-format digital print)
  ○ Hernandez’s *mixed media panels*

• *Games, Appropriation, Mods*
  ○ Art (content assets) Mods (tiny sample)
    ▪ Nideffer's *Nude Patch*
    ▪ *SelectParks.net* (only available via online trek through Internet Archive *Wayback Machine*)
    ▪ others
  ○ Appropriation studies (examples)
    ▪ 2D game art asset appropriation (cf. EbOy isometric visual language)
      • *SPEW*
    ▪ Repurposing games (examples)
      • *Data Arcade:*
        ○ Stock Invaders (*Space Invaders*)
        ○ Pipe Mania (*Pipe Dream*)
        ○ Oil Kong (*Donkey Kong*)
      ▪ *WTF?!*
        • Re-representation of *World of Warcraft* as 2D side-scrolling arcade game motif
        • Introduction of new in-game characters to transform reflective game play
          ○ Mary Daly – exploring the female gaze and fetishization of female form promulgated by male-dominated commercial game development studios
          ○ Sigmund Freud – reflecting on in-game identity role play
          ○ Karl Marx – critique of late capitalism resource accumulation motifs commonly built into computer game play motifs
  ○ Gaming hardware modification
    ▪ *Case Modding* and DIY PC customization
      • Independent works (cf. “case mod images” and “case mods images” via Web search)
    ▪ Console hacking
      • *Hacking the Xbox* (book)
    ▪ Gaming arcades
      • *Museum of Art and Digital Entertainment* (The MADE in Oakland, CA)
**Game Mods and Meta-mods**
- Online communities of independent level/world design(ers)
  - *Steam* (independent game and mod distribution portal)
  - *Mod DB* (independent game mod distribution portal)
  - others specific to game development kit, game engine, or level/world design platform

**Game modding theory and practice**

**Game as New Media Theory**
- Games as Technology and New Media – alongside film, television, radio, Web, etc.
  - *First Person* (book)
  - *Second Person* (book)
  - *Third Person* (book)
  - *Critical Play* (book)
- Translations and remediations of computer games into other media
  - Game-cinema conundrum – why do translations and remediations of games into other media (primarily feature films) more often problematic than successful?
    - Game to film (sample)
      - *Doom*
      - *Mario Brothers*
      - *Lara Croft*
      - *Resident Evil*
      - *Final Fantasy*
    - Film to game (sample)
      - *Chronicles of Riddick* (to the game, *The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay)*
- Digital art prints and sculpture
  - *I am 8 Bit* artists
  - Nideffer's *2007 BC* (digital triptych print)
  - LaFarge's *World of World* prints
  - Faceted 3D statue of John Carmack
- Games as literary form for procedural rhetoric
  - *Facade*
  - *Promweek*
  - Persuasive games

**The elevation and curation of games as an art form, and other controversies**
- Are curated games art? Are curated games playable by visitors, or simply dynamic media to observe in a exhibit? What choices do curators make in presenting video games as art for exhibition? How do different theories about art support/refute the elevation of computer games as art? When is the value/experience of contemplating computer games as art, new media, and technology? Why is *computer games as art* problematic, to whom, where, when
and how?


○ Game play as social experiment
- Whypox epidemic in *Whyville.net*