

# 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://nideffer.net/promo/pub/leonardo.pdf> (c. 2000)
    - <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 [opensource.net](http://opensource.net)
  - [Eddo Stern](#)
    - [Waco Resurrection](#)
    - [Darkgame 1,2,3](#)
    - [Best Flamewar Ever](#)
    - [more](#)

- **Computer games as art: theory and practices**
  - Lafarge, A. (2000). *WinSide Out: An Introduction to the Convergence of Computers, Games, and Art*. Beall Center for Art + Technology, University of California, Irvine, 2000.
  - LaFarge, A. and Nideffer, R. (2002). *SHIFT\_CTRL: Computers, Games, and Art*, *Leonardo*, 35(1), 5-13.
  - Dreyfus, L. (2003). LOADING...Video Games, A New Language for Artists, *Flash Art*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 229., 84-87, March-April.
  - ALT+CTRL: A Festival of Independent and Alternative Games, Beall Center for Art + Technology, University of California, Irvine ([online archive site](#)), 2004.
  - Getsy, D.J. (2011). *From Diversion to Subversion: Games, Play and Twentieth-Century Art*, Penn State University Press.
  - *Video games as an art form* (Wikipedia)
  - *Gamescenes: Art in the Age of Video Games* <http://www.gamescenes.org/>
  - MOCAtv: *Art in Video Games* <http://mocatv.tumblr.com/tagged/art-in-video-games>
  - *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)
  - *Supercade: A Visual History of the Videogame Age 1971-1984* (book)
  - *Arcade Mania! The Turbo-Charged World of Japan's Game Centers* (book)
  - *Returning Fire: Interventions in Video Game Culture*, (DVD), 2011, and YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6C7789075C00895A>
  - *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)
        - *Mastering UNREAL: The Art of Level Design* (book)
      - *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)
      - <http://www.techpowerup.com/gallery/>
    - Console hacking
      - *Hacking the Xbox* (book)
    - Gaming arcades
      - [Museum of Art and Digital Entertainment](#) (The MADE in Oakland, CA)

- *Arcade Mania! The Turbo-Charged World of Japan's Game Centers* (book)
- Game Mods and Meta-mods
  - *Garry's Mod* – a sandbox game or meta-mod <http://www.garrysmod.com/>
- 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
  - Scacchi, W. (2010). [Computer game mods, modders, modding, and the mod scene](#), *First Monday*, 15(5), May 2010.
  - Chapman, E. (Ed.) (2012). *Game Mods: Design, Theory and Criticism*, ETC Press, Pittsburgh, PA, <http://etc.cmu.edu/etcpres>
- **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?

- Stuart, K. (2014). Video games and art: why does the media get it so wrong? *TheGuardian.com*, 8 January 2014.
- Stuart, K. (2013). The absolute and inarguable beauty of video games, *TheGuardian.com*, 8 March 2013.
- Moriarty, B. (2013). A designer's take: MoMA is wrong to pretend video games are art, *TheGuardian.com*, 7 March 2013.
- Holpuch, A. (2013). Video game level up in the art world with new MoMA exhibition, *TheGuardian.com*, 1 March 2013.
- MoMA (2012). Contemporary Art Forum: Critical Play—The Game as an Art Form, Museum of Modern Art, New York. 17 May 2012.
- Moriarty, B. (2011). An Apology for Roger Ebert, *Presentation at 25<sup>th</sup> Game Developers Conference, San Francisco, CA*, 4 March 2011.
- Miranda, C.A. (2011). Let the Games Begin, *ARTnews*, April 2011.
- Ebert, R. (2010). Video games can never be art, *RogerEbert.com*, 16 April 2010.
- Dreyfus, L. (2003). LOADING...Video Games, A New Language for Artists, *Flash Art*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 229., 84-87, March-April.
- LaFarge, A. and Nideffer, R. (2002). [SHIFT\\_CTRL: Computers, Games, and Art](#), *Leonardo*, 35(1), 5-13.
- Lafarge, A. (2000). [WinSide Out: An Introduction to the Convergence of Computers, Games, and Art](#). Beall Center for Art + Technology, University of California, Irvine, 2000.
- Game play as social experiment
  - Whypox epidemic in *Whyville.net*
  - *QuakeCon* (<http://www.quakecon.org/> and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/QuakeCon>) and other game play festivals