



V&A Dundee

Videogames: Design/Play/Disrupt
20 April – 8 September 2019

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Journey, developed by thatgamecompany

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Scotland's first design museum will celebrate the design and culture of contemporary videogames with the exhibition *Videogames: Design/Play/Disrupt*, a spectacular show running from 20 April to 8 September 2019.

This is the first exhibition to fully consider the complexity of videogames, positioning them as one of the most important design fields of our time. Today there are an estimated 2.2 billion people who play videogames worldwide, from commuters playing on mobile phones to eSports professionals watched by tens of thousands of spectators.

Curated by Marie Foulston and Kristian Volsing of the V&A, the exhibition focuses on videogames designed and developed since the mid-2000s when major technological advancements transformed the way games are designed, discussed and played. From multi-million-dollar blockbuster titles to smaller independent games and the work of DIY artists from a hacker/maker culture, the exhibition explores current international debates as well as the creative contributions made to game culture by the players themselves.

At V&A Dundee the exhibition will include a major new commission from Glasgow-based illustrator Ursula Kam-Ling Cheng, who is creating a colourful and chaotic mural inspired by virtual worlds. Videogames designed by Abertay University lecturer Niall Moody (*Hummingbird*) and Abertay graduate Llaura McGee (*If Found, Please Return* by DREAMFEEL) will also be showcased, housed in bespoke arcade cabinets designed by Edinburgh studio We Throw Switches.

In delving deeper into the design process of this fascinating medium, the exhibition encourages all visitors – gamers and non-gamers alike – to be playful, and this theme will be explored much further in the exhibition’s wide-ranging programme. Including a conference, a Tay Late, talks, workshops, digital demos and a games jam, there will be something for everyone.

Videogames: Design/Play/Disrupt was curated by Marie Foulston, V&A Curator of Videogames and Kristian Volsing, V&A Research Curator, and shown at V&A South Kensington from 8 September 2018 to 24 February 2019.

vam.ac.uk/dundee/videogames #DesignPlayDisrupt

Videogames: Design/Play/Disrupt is supported by Patrons and Members of V&A Dundee.

Exhibition highlights

1. Character sketches from *Journey*, thatgamecompany, 2012



Journey, developed by thatgamecompany, is a beautifully expressive and lavishly visual game in which anonymous players online control a robed figure through a vast desert towards a mountain, with the chance to emotionally connect with companions along the way.

The pencil character sketches show the important aspects of creating dynamic character designs that artistically define movements within a virtual landscape.

The mechanical elements of the game were tested through developing a basic 2D prototype, also presented in the exhibition, bringing together the dual dynamic of art and engineering in the medium. The pencil character sketches show the important first aspect of this design process in developing an authentic portrayal of the hero's journey.

2. Ellie and Joel character sketch from *The Last of Us*, Naughty Dog, 2013



The exhibition features original character sketches from Naughty Dog's visually stunning blockbuster *The Last of Us*.

With storytelling and characterisation equivalent to a Hollywood production, this post-apocalyptic blockbuster follows the relationship between companions Ellie and Joel who travel across a ravaged US over the course of a year. This sketch was developed to illustrate the emotional development and dynamic between the lead characters.

3. *Consume Me*, Jenny Jiao Hsia



Playable on smartphones are two prototype mini-games from *Consume Me* by designer Jenny Jiao Hsia. Prototypes are a way for designers to test out gameplay and design ideas early in the development process.

In *Wobble Yoga* the player must enact the poses highlighted, and in *Food Tetris* arrange a meal on one plate, balancing the calorie count and potential for hunger. Each game examines a preoccupation in Hsia's life relating to her issues with body image, but imagined in a humorous and cute way.

4. *The Graveyard*, Tale of Tales



Tale of Tales is made up of pioneering artist duo Auriea Harvey and Michaël Samyn, a developer of experimental videogames and interactive art influential within videogame communities. Between 2003 and 2015, the duo experimented with the idea that videogames could extend their digital practice, and could be used to express themes beyond traditional action-oriented game mechanics and structures.

The pair used games as an alternative form of interactive art – to tell stories through the design of environments, animation, colour and lighting that immerse the player in a virtual experience.

The Graveyard embodies this concept, featuring a character and objective vastly different to the majority of other games. You play an elderly woman walking through a cemetery to sit on a bench. But, moving at a realistically slow pace, your focus is on the atmosphere and meaning of the game.

5. *No Man's Sky*, 2016. Hello Games



For *No Man's Sky*, a small independent team created an entire universe. Players can explore the beauty and adventure of flying their spaceship to over 18 quintillion planets, negotiating hostile environments, engaging in dogfights and using a hyperdrive to visit other galaxies. The game's environments and most of its inhabitants are created using procedural generation.

This means that until the game is played, much of it exists only in the form of graphic textures, colour codes and blueprints. Through complex mathematical equations and algorithms, the game blends these elements in many different combinations to create a massive universe. Yet within this vast expanse of space, the game also contains narrative paths to follow.

Hello Games was inspired by the human instinct for exploration. Their aim was to bring the discovery of new worlds to virtual space.

6. *how do you Do It?* 2014. Freeman, Butler, Kittaka, Coss



Nina Freeman works with small teams of artists and programmers to make games which often explore sex and relationships.

how do you Do It? is a semi-autobiographical game which puts players in the role of a curious 11-year-old girl exploring the idea of sex.

Using her dolls as plastic surrogates to investigate, the game allows the audience to understand the discovery of sexuality from the perception of a young girl. It will be playable in the exhibition.

7. League of Legends World Championships at the Bird's Nest Stadium, Beijing, China



An example of the mass spectacle of esports, (multiplayer games played competitively), the League of Legends World Championships tournament attracts tens of thousands of spectators to watch the professional players in a live atmosphere such as the Bird's Nest Olympic Stadium as well as a global online audience of millions.

Footage from the event will be shown as part of the immersive installation.

8. *Hummingbird* by Niall Moody, 2017



Hummingbird is a musical exploration game, built around a complex set of synthesizers and colour palettes. The designer Niall Moody is a lecturer in audio design for videogames at Abertay University.

The world you encounter in *Hummingbird* is different each time you play as the mesmerising graphics are generated by algorithms that respond to your movements. Niall created a custom controller for the game, made from dials and copper plates, that made it more fun to play at indie festivals and events.

In the exhibition, the game will be housed in a bespoke arcade cabinet designed by We Throw Switches and illustrated by Elph.

9. *If Found, Please Return* by Dreamfeel, 2016



If Found, Please Return, by Abertay University graduate Llaura McGee, is the story of Kasio, a young Irish woman returning to the rural island where she grew up. The story is told through her diaries in the month before December 31st 1993, the night when she is going to erase the universe.

Running from an unliveable family experience, Kasio finds support in new friends as they reclaim a crumbling mansion on the outskirts of town. In the game players can erase everything they see, as well as infinitely zooming into the game to explore a beautiful, hand-drawn world.

In the exhibition, the game will be showcased in a bespoke arcade cabinet designed by We Throw Switches and illustrated by KMG.

10. *Arcade Backpack* by UCLA Game Lab



Resembling a miniature replica of an arcade machine, the *Arcade Backpack* was created to show a rotating selection of independent and experimental videogames in surprising settings.

The backpack represents the rise of a grassroots DIY arcade scene and has enabled impromptu videogames play in a variety of venues from nightclubs to museums, enabling unexpected social interactions.

Programme highlights

Alongside the exhibition there will be a varied programme of events, talks, commissions and learning workshops inspired by videogame design that will reflect the local expertise of Scottish designers, companies and academics in the field, as well as celebrating the very best of international digital creativity.

Information about tickets will be announced through V&A Dundee's e-news, website and on social media.

Live audio described tour, Monday 6 May

Specifically adapted for our blind and partially sighted visitors, experience our latest incredible exhibition with a journey through the world of contemporary games, their influences and the people who make and play them.

Free, tickets must be booked in advance.

Videogames Conference: Arcadia, Saturday 18 May, 10.30-17.30

Join an amazing array of leading game designers and thinkers at our first conference, co-curated with Biome Collective.

This day-long event will bring together a world-leading group of diverse designers and radical thinkers whose work covers the spectrum of game-making, from practical design, to soundscapes and future technologies, as well as exploring games as a cultural force.

£25/£20. Tickets on sale 1 April.

Tay Late: Press Play, Saturday 18 May, 19.00-22.00

Channel the alt.arcade scene for a night of DJs, fun, and raucous, beautiful videogames, co-curated with We Throw Switches.

Join us for a night of jostle-inducing multiplayer games, moving digital experiences, and weird and wonderful interfaces. Experience a world of party hardware, alternative arcade cabinets, and experimental play from a range of global artists and designers. Whether you're obsessed with alternative controllers and digital curios, or you're interested to see what videogames can be, don't miss this one-night-only celebration of incredible games creators.

Tay Late is a regular museum takeover event at V&A Dundee. *Press Play with We Throw Switches* will be preceded by the Videogames Conference earlier in the same day.

£10/£8. Tickets on sale 1 April.

The Emotional Power of Games in Education – Brenda Romero, Thursday 30 May, 12.00-13.00

The BAFTA award-winning game designer and entrepreneur explores games as a powerful tool in teaching difficult subject matters. Following the talk, Romero will be joined by V&A Curator Lauren Bassam and Jo Mawdsley, Head of Learning, for a panel discussion.

Free, please book. Tickets available 1 April.

Family Design Day, Saturday 8 June, 12.00-16.00

Come dressed as your favourite videogame character for a day of exciting, interactive workshops exploring how to bring a game to life.

Bring the whole family along to explore a range of playful activities inspired by our latest exhibition. Try out our curious new videogame *Plaything*, commissioned especially for the exhibition and find out more about the process of bringing a videogame to life.

Join us for a party in the Picnic Room where you can enjoy music and role play inspired by videogames. A range of materials will also be on offer if you'd prefer to design and dress up.

Free, drop-in.

Young People's Design Day, Saturday 22 June, 12.00-16.00

Get involved in an exciting range of talks and activities programmed by our Young People's Collective.

Speakers include Stuart Brett, motion graphics artist and author of *Super Famicom: The Box Art Collection*, who will explore Japanese videogame design and arcade culture.

You'll also have the chance to meet members of the collective, find out more about how they co-design and represent young people (aged 14-24) within V&A Dundee and how you can join this influential group

Free, drop-in.

Schools game design workshops

Take on the role of Game Designer in this practical design workshop. Inspired by our latest exhibition, develop a paper prototype of a new game concept of your own.

Suitable for all age groups. Term time only, advance booking.

Photography credits

1. Wing Ninja character sketch. Journey™ ©2012, 2014 Sony Interactive Entertainment LLC. Journey is a trademark of Sony Interactive Entertainment LLC. Developed by Thatgamecompany.
2. Ellie and Joel character sketch. The Last of Us™ ©2013, 2014 Sony Interactive Entertainment LLC. The Last of Us is a trademark of Sony Interactive Entertainment LLC. Created and developed by Naughty Dog LLC.
3. *Consume Me*, Jenny Jiao Hsia
4. *The Graveyard* concept art, Auriea Harvey, Tale of Tales, 2007-08
5. *No Man's Sky*™ © 2016 Hello Games Ltd. Developed by Hello Games Ltd. All rights reserved
6. *how do you Do It?* 2014. Freeman, Butler, Kittaka, Coss
7. 2017 League of Legends World Championship. Image courtesy of Riot Games.
8. *Hummingbird* by Niall Moody, 2017
9. *If Found, Please Return* by Dreamfeel, 2016
10. Arcade Backpack, 2012. UCLA Games Lab. Photo by Robin Baumgarten.