

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GAMES AND NARRATIVE

INTRODUCTIONS

Welcome to the first International Conference on Games and Narrative, hosted by the Games Institute of the University of Waterloo. We're delighted you are joining us for what we hope will be a stimulating and enjoyable 5 days of discussion, debate, and gaming. We have organized a varied program of events, including plenary lectures, focused panels, live game streaming with commentary, and various social events, where we you can meet other conference attendees and exchange ideas.

Throughout the conference there will be conference organizers and technical staff available. If you have any questions or difficulties, please contact us at icgan.submissions@uwaterloo.ca, or tag @ICGAN Admin with your question in the conference Discord.



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO



**THE GAMES
INSTITUTE**

I. EVENTS

The conference features several different kinds of events, ranging from structured and formal to unstructured and casual. All except the opening and closing receptions will take place on Discord. The opening and closing receptions are hosted on Gather. Please note that all times in the program are UTC (Coordinated Universal Time, equivalent to GMT).

We will generally record academic sessions, although we will respect the wishes of any speaker who wishes not to be recorded. Recordings will be made available to conference attendees only after the conference for a limited period. Please note we will also take screen shots of the opening and closing receptions at Gather for publicity purposes, but will edit out all identifying information from participants.

Keynote Sessions

There are six keynote presentations. Each keynote session features a presentation by a leading international scholar, followed by an Q & A.

- Elizabeth LaPensée - 'From Stories to Mechanics'
- Souvik Mukherjee - 'The Cartography of Virtual Empires: Videogame Maps, Paratexts and Colonialism'
- Clara Fernández-Vara - TBA
- Jan-Noel Thön - TBA
- Astrid Ensselin - TBA
- Kishonna Gray - TBA

Panels

Panels will feature three or four 20-minute presentations or video essays, plus time for questions and discussion. In most of the time slots, there will be a choice of panels to attend. There will be two or three sets of panels each day of the conference, details below.

Academic Game Streaming

We will have five game streaming sessions, in which presenters will share, discuss, and demonstrate their games research. The presenters will live stream a game session; streamers will comment on those aspects of gameplay that are relevant to their research, engage viewers in discussion, or simply reflect on the game as they play it. We will also be live streaming a Dungeons and Dragons game session following the 'F\$^&ing Around and Finding Out' panel, where viewers will be able to watch "playful rebellion and collective narrative" unfold live.

SOCIAL EVENTS:

Opening and Closing Receptions

We have an opening reception and a closing reception on Gather. Come meet people and chat in an informal online setting. Gather allows you to wander through a virtual world, where you can meet and mingle whether in large groups, small groups, or individually. Instructions and links to the Gather space will be posted in the conference Discord and emailed to registrants.

Gaming Socials

Hop in to one of our dedicated Discord gaming rooms to join the fun as we play Valheim (including a tour of the Games Institute's dedicated server), Among Us, and Jackbox Games; or, recruit for the multiplayer game of your choice and create your own breakout room to play!

Coffee and Cocktails

Join us Saturday 'evening' on Discord with a beverage appropriate to your time zone for our virtual happy hour featuring a webcam pet "paw"ty, gaming chat, and a vote on the best worst video game movie of all time.

Spontaneous Socializing

The Conference Discord will serve as the main hub for conference activities and socializing. You will find voice and text channels for casual chatting, sharing and promoting research, and video essays and session recordings, as well as dedicated channels for round-the-clock multiplayer gaming.

II. PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

All times are given in UTC

Friday, June 11

14:00 Keynote, Elizabeth La Pensee

15:00-17:00 Opening reception

Saturday, June 12

0:00-2:00 'Midnight' Gaming Social

12:00 Panels

14:00 Keynote, Souvik Mukherjee

17:00 Panels

19:00 Keynote, Clara Fernández-Vara

20:00 Networking event

Sunday, June 13

0:00 - 2:00 'Midnight' Gaming Social

13:00 Panels

15:00 Keynote, Jan-Noel Thön

18:00 Panels

20:00 Game streaming

21:00 Game streaming

Monday, June 14

12:00 Panels

14:00 Keynote, Astrid Ensselin

16:00 Panels

18:00 Game streaming

22:00 Panels

Tuesday, June 15

0:00 Panels

14:00 Panels

16:00 Keynote, Kishonna Gray

18:00 Panels

20:00 Dungeons and dragons!

Wednesday, June 16

0:00 Panels

13:00 Gaming social

15:00 Closing reception

III. KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Dr. Elizabeth LaPensé, Ph.D.

Is an award-winning designer, writer, artist, and researcher who creates and studies Indigenous-led media such as games and comics. She is Anishinaabe with family from Bay Mills, Métis, and Irish. She is an Assistant Professor of Media & Information and Writing, Rhetoric & American Cultures at Michigan State University and a 2018 Guggenheim Fellow. Most recently, she designed *When Rivers Were Trails* (2019), a 2D adventure game following a displaced Anishinaabe during allotment in the 1890's, which won the Adaptation Award at IndieCade 2019. She designed and created art for *Thunderbird Strike* (2017), a lightning-searing side-scroller game which won Best Digital Media at imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival 2017.

Dr. Souvik Mukherjee

Dr. Souvik Mukherjee is Assistant Professor in Cultural Studies at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences Calcutta, India. Souvik's research looks at the narrative and the literary through the emerging discourse of videogames as storytelling media and at how these games inform and challenge our conceptions of narratives, identity and culture. Related interests and expertise include a broad spectrum of topics in Game Studies ranging from identity and temporality in videogames to the videogame industry in South-East Asia. Currently, he is researching how videogames relate to Postcolonial Studies and separately, also how certain ancient Indian board-games contribute to the understanding of gameplay. Souvik is the author of two monographs, *Videogames and Storytelling: Reading Games and Playing Books* (Palgrave Macmillan 2015) and *Videogames and Postcolonialism: Empire Plays Back* (Springer UK 2017). Souvik has been named a 'DiGRA Distinguished Scholar' in 2019.

Dr. Clara Fernández-Vara

is Associate Arts Professor at the NYU Game Center. She is a game scholar, designer and writer. Her main research interest is the study and creation of narrative games, the creation of fictional worlds for games. Clara's digital media work is grounded in the humanities, informed by her background in literature, film and theatre, and her current interdisciplinary research focuses on the study of detective games. She has also worked on games for research as well as commercial titles for the companies such as Warner Bros., Big Fish Games, the Spanish National Ballet, and Die Gute Fabrik. Her book, *Introduction to Game Analysis*, is now on its second edition.



III. KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Dr. Jan-Noël Thon

is Professor of Media Studies in the Department of Art and Media Studies at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Guest Professor of Media Studies in the Department of Media Culture and Theater at the University of Cologne, Germany, and Professorial Fellow in the School of Film, Media and Performing Arts at the University for the Creative Arts, UK. Recent books include *From Comic Strips to Graphic Novels* (co-edited with Daniel Stein, 2013/²2015), *Storyworlds across Media* (co-edited with Marie-Laure Ryan, 2014), *Game Studies* (co-edited with Klaus Sachs-Hombach, 2015), *Transmedial Narratology and Contemporary Media Culture* (2016/²2018), *Subjectivity across Media* (co-edited with Maïke Sarah Reinert, 2017/²2019), *Comicanalyse* (co-authored with Andreas Rauscher, Stephan Packard, Véronique Sina, Lukas R.A. Wilde, and Janina Wildfeuer 2019), and *Comics and Videogames* (co-edited with Andreas Rauscher and Daniel Stein, 2020).

Dr. Astrid Ensslin (she/her)

is Associate Professor in Digital Culture at the University of Bergen in Norway. Her research engages with narratological approaches to digital fiction and literary games, theories of gender and the body, participatory-feminist methods of research-creation, ludic discourses, historical electronic literature, and language ideologies in digital media. Some of her main publications include *Digital Fiction and the Unnatural: Transmedial Narrative Theory, Method and Analysis* (Ohio State UP, 2021; with Alice Bell); *Approaches to Videogame Discourse* (Bloomsbury, 2019; with Isabel Balteiro); *Small Screen Fictions* (Paradoxa, 2017; with Lisa Swanstrom and Pawel Frelik); *Literary Gaming* (MIT Press, 2014), *Analyzing Digital Fiction* (Routledge, 2013; with Alice Bell and Hans K. Rustad), and *The Language of Gaming* (Palgrave, 2011). She has led externally funded research projects on digital fiction as narrative therapy; videogames across cultures; empirical, medium-specific reading research; analyzing digital fiction; and specialized language corpora. Her new book, *Digital Publishing and the Lore of Electronic Literature*, is forthcoming with Cambridge University Press.

Dr. Kishonna L. Gray

is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication and Gender and Women's Studies at the University of Illinois - Chicago. She is an interdisciplinary, intersectional, digital media scholar whose areas of research include identity, performance and online environments, embodied deviance, cultural production, video games, and Black Cyberfeminism.

Dr. Gray is the author of *Intersectional Tech: Black Users in Digital Gaming* (LSU Press, 2020). She is also the author of *Race, Gender, & Deviance in Xbox Live* (Routledge, 2014), and the co-editor of two volumes on culture and gaming: *Feminism in Play* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2018) and *Woke Gaming* (University of Washington Press, 2018). Dr. Gray has published in a variety of outlets across disciplines and has also featured in public outlets such as *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph*, and *The New York Times*.

Follow Dr. Gray on Twitter @KishonnaGray

IV. CONFERENCE ETIQUETTE

We value the participation of everyone at ICGaN events and want them to be fulfilling and enjoyable for everyone regardless of gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, class, age or religion. We will not tolerate harassment in any form.

Participants are expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Act respectfully. Harassment and sexist, racist, or exclusionary comments or “jokes” are not appropriate at any time (including social events). Harassment includes verbal or physical abuse, offensive comments, sustained disruption of talks or other events, sexual attention or innuendo, deliberate intimidation, stalking, and photography or recording of an individual without consent.
2. Behave professionally. Participants should be courteous with the opinions of others and be mindful not to exclude anyone from discussions or work-related activities.
3. Communicate appropriately. All communication should be appropriate for a professional audience including people of many different backgrounds. Sexual, sexist or other pejorative and exclusionary language and imagery is not appropriate. Conference attendees must ensure that they conduct safe, professional and appropriate online behaviour.
4. Work collaboratively. The diversity of our colleagues’ backgrounds is an asset. We’re all here to learn, share, and contribute. Fresh perspectives should be valued along with the voices of experience.

Individuals asked to stop any inappropriate behaviour are expected to comply immediately. Anyone violating these rules may be asked to leave the event at the discretion of the organisers and may be excluded from ICGaN completely. Any participant who wishes to report a concern or violation of this policy is asked to speak confidentially to the event organisers, who can be reached by tagging @ICGaN Admin on Discord.

This code of conduct is based on the Interact 2019 Code of Conduct and the ‘London Code of Conduct’, as originally designed for the conference ‘Accurate Astrophysics. Correct Cosmology’, held in London in July 2015. The London Code was adapted with permission by Andrew Pontzen and Hiranya Peiris from a document by Software Carpentry, which itself derives from original Creative Commons documents by PyCon and Geek Feminism. It is released under a CC-Zero license for reuse.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GAMES AND NARRATIVE

June 11-16, 2021

**Hosted by:
The Games Institute
University of Waterloo**

<p style="text-align: center;">** Please note that all times on the schedule are given in UTC (Coordinated Universal Time). To convert to your local time zone, you can use the tool found here **</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Some sessions may be +1 or -1 day in your time zone; convert carefully!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Panel presentations will be 20 minutes in length, followed by a 20 minute long live Q&A session with presenters.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">In case of scheduling conflicts, we will accept pre-recorded paper presentations. In addition to live question and answer sessions for individual panels, a conference-wide asynchronous Q&A platform will be available to all presenters and attendees. Pre-recorded presentations and video essays should be submitted using the Google form, no later than Friday June 4, 2021.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Video essays and recorded panel sessions will be hosted on the conference website, available only to registered attendees. All videos and recorded material will be available for one week after the final day of the conference.</p>			
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16:00 UTC	<p style="text-align: center;">Keynote: Elizabeth LaPensée Michigan State University</p>		
15:00 - 17:00 UTC	Opening Reception		
Day 2: Saturday June 12			
00:00 - 02:00 UTC	Gaming Social		
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20:00 - 21:00 UTC	Academic Game Streaming: Sabrina Sgandurra playing Ori and the Blind Forest		
21:00 - 22:00 UTC	Academic Game Streaming (TBD)		

Day 4: Monday June 14		
12:00 UTC	Session 9: Global and Spatial Narratives: Affordances, Construction, and Education "A Study of Place in the Metal Gear Solid Narrative Arc" - Andrew Kroninger (<i>Purdue University</i>) "One of Us! One of Us!: Video game as a process of becoming-the-same constructs the image of China" - Sam, Li Mengqi (<i>Birmingham City University</i>) "Playability or reflection? Video games and anthropocene" - Grzegorz Zyzik (<i>Opole University</i>)	Session 10: Games and Narrative: Tracing Influences "Will Kentucky Route Zero Take You to Twin Peaks? Tracing the Narrative of the American Weird" - Alesha Serada (<i>University of Vaasa</i>) "Braid, Calvino, and the Emotions of Memory" - Christina Anto (<i>Ryerson University</i>) "All the Men and Women Merely Players: The Performative Stage of Video Game Narrative" - Lis Moberly
14:00 UTC	Keynote: Astrid Ensslin University of Bergen	
Break		
16:00 UTC	Session 11: Playing at the Margins "We too emerge from this magic": Representations of Disability Identity and Justice in the Immersive Narrative Development of Ninja Theory's Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice" - J. Muriel Moore (<i>Ryerson University</i>) "The mislead of The Missing: A queer videogame narrative through misdirection of gameplay, player presumption and storytelling" - Josephine Baird (<i>University of Vienna</i>) "Me, My Religion, and the Misogynist World" - Umer Hussain (<i>Texas A&M University</i>) and Kamilla Swart-Arries (<i>Hamad Bin Khalifa University</i>)	Session 12: Poverty, Precarity, and Power: Dissecting Socioeconomic Class in Digital Game Narratives "Who You Decide to Become": Meritocracy, Class, and Race in Videogame Character Creators" - Michael Iantomio (<i>Concordia University</i>) and Mia Consalvo (<i>Concordia University</i>) "Cocktails, Clients, and Class-Narratives in VA-11 Hall-A: Cyberpunk Bartender and Red Strings Club" - Courtney Blamey (<i>Concordia University</i>) and Scott DeJong (<i>Concordia University</i>)
18:00 - 19:00 UTC	Academic Game Streaming: Nicholas Hobin playing <i>Untitled Goose Game</i>	
19:00 - 20:00 UTC	Academic Game Streaming: Jenn Rickert playing <i>World of Warcraft</i>	
20:00 UTC - 21:00 UTC	Academic Game Streaming: Justin Carpenter playing <i>No Man's Sky</i>	
22:00 UTC	Session 13: Work and Play "Back to Nature: Ludonarrative Nostalgia and Capitalist Ideologies in the Farming Sim Genre" - Caighlan Smith (<i>Memorial University of Newfoundland</i>) "A Healing Journey: Narrative, Disability, and Transformation" - Kara Stone (<i>University of California, Santa Cruz</i>) "How Live Streamers Transform Game Narratives into Comedies" - Mark R. Johnson (<i>University of Sydney</i>)	
Day 5: Tuesday June 15		
00:00 UTC	Session 14: Gender in Game and Narratives "Becoming-woman and the Affective Politics in The Sims 4" - Yu Hao (<i>City University of Hong Kong</i>) "Hidden and intensified male chauvinism in digital games: A case study on Super Seducer" - Tianxiao Peng (<i>University of Southampton</i>), Gao Yijie (<i>University of Southampton</i>), and Shuyu Lin (<i>Xiamen University</i>) "Playing as a girl" or "Becoming them"? Gender performance and digital labour of Chinese female game-related video uploaders" - Hong Chen (<i>University of London</i>) "You are saying it or you are saying it? The confusing standing on masculinity in Chinese Parents" - Sam, Li Mengqi (<i>Birmingham City University</i>), and Yuhua Hanna Wu (<i>University of Nottingham Ningbo China</i>)	
14:00 UTC	Session 15: Mechanics and Narrative "The Contribution of Puzzle-Based Narrative to Player Challenge-Based Immersion" - Gabrielle Trépanier-Jobin (<i>Université du Québec à Montréal</i>) and Mathilde Savoie (<i>Université du Québec à Montréal</i>) "The Effect of Player Created Rules on Game Narratives" - Doruk Balci (<i>Tampere University</i>) "Understanding the ludic effect: how narrations become game mechanics" - Pierre-Gabriel Dumoulin (<i>Université du Québec à Montréal</i>) "Playing the Game or the Story? An Exploratory Study of Player Engagement with Narrative Content in Digital Games" - Milan Jacević (<i>The Royal Danish Academy</i>)	Session 16: The Many Failures of Cyberpunk 2077 (and Why They Matter) "It's Opened, Because It's Closed. Ludotopian Dissonance in Cyberpunk 2077" - Krzysztof M. Maj (<i>AGH University of Science and Technology</i>) "Ghosts and Mirrors: The fear of being eaten by the other in Cyberpunk 2077" - Michal Kosiński (<i>University of Silesia</i>) "We are not humans any more! The dehumanization and failure of transhumanism in Cyberpunk 2077 music" - Tomasz Bonkowski (<i>University of Silesia</i>) "Cyberpunk 2077 and Transgressive Failure" - Agata Zarzycka (<i>University of Wrocław</i>) "A Polish Ghost in the American Shell" - Tomasz Z. Majkowski (<i>Jagiellonian University</i>)
16:00 UTC	Keynote: Kishonna Gray University of Illinois at Chicago	
18:00 UTC	Session 17: F*cking Around and Finding Out: Playful Rebellion and Collective Narrative in Dungeons and Dragons "Is This Character Who You Think They Are? Visible and Invisible Motivation For Players and Stories" - Matthew Wysocki (<i>Flagler College</i>) "All Guards are Bastards: Anti-Establishment Power and the Structure of Consensual Narrative" - Josh Call (<i>Grand View University</i>) "Collaborative Storytelling and Imperial Forms (of Play)" - Gerald Voorhees (<i>University of Waterloo</i>) "Rejecting High Noon: Individually and Collectively Structured Narratives in Dungeons and Dragons" - Betsy Brey (<i>University of Waterloo</i>)	Session 18: Narrative Potential: Procedural Generation, Choice, and Community "Modern Necromancy: The Revival of Communal Storytelling through Dungeons and Dragons" - Sabrina Alicia Sgandurra (<i>University of Waterloo</i>) "Generative Design as a Game Studies Paradigm: Authorship, Agency, and Emergence in No Man's Sky" - Justin Carpenter "Can reality shows teach us to construct better procedural narratives?" - Yifat Shaik (<i>York University</i>) "DIY: How Open World Games Tell Stories" - Elizabeth Caravella (<i>York University</i>)
20:00 - 22:00 PM UTC	Dungeons and Dragons Live Game DM: Toben Racicot	
Day 6: Wednesday June 16		
00:00 UTC	Session 19: Transmedia Gaming: Storytelling and Affordances "Shadow Brokers and Shadow Play: Exploring Transmedial Ludology through Mass Effect" - Gregory Blomquist (<i>University of Alberta</i>) "A Game of Thrones: The Card Game and Transmedia Worldbuilding in Licensed Games" - Nick Bestor (<i>Arizona State University</i>) "From ambiguity to affection: Masculinity in Jianxiangyuan online and its fanfiction" - Yuhua Hanna Wu (<i>University of Nottingham Ningbo China</i>)	
13:00 UTC	Gaming Social	
15:00 UTC	Closing Reception and Discussion of Future Directions	