

MAY 15 - 19, 2023

# ICGAN 2023

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GAMES AND NARRATIVE

 CONTINUE  
GAME START  
OPTIONS  
PASSWORD



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# I. INTRODUCTIONS

Welcome to the second 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](mailto:icgan.submissions@uwaterloo.ca), or tag @ICGaN Admin with your question in the conference Discord.

## ICGAN ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

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Aleksander Franiczek

Alexander Fleck

Dr. Ken Hirschkop

Jenn Rickert

Joey Femia

Lindsay Meaning

Dr. Neil Randall

Nicholas Hobin

Pamela Maria Schmidt

Rebecca Sherlock

Ritika Puri



# II. EVENTS

The conference features several different kinds of events, ranging from structured and formal to unstructured and casual. The conference is a hybrid event. All events will be held in Gather, as will keynotes (one keynote to be a hybrid event taking place at the GI). Social events will be in-person at UWaterloo campus or hybrid events in Gather. Streaming events will take place on Discord; The Discord will serve as a conference hub for support, asynchronous conversation, game jam work, and more! Please note that all times in the program are UTC (Coordinated Universal Time).

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

## **Keynote Sessions**

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

- Mia Consalvo - "An Unintended Moral Dilemma Meets Gamer Mode in Victoria 3: Or Can You Colonize in Videogames in a Non Problematic Way? (No)"
- Mark Wolf - "Isolation, Contemplation, and the Lonely Worlds of Single-Player Open-World Video Games"
- Jakub Szamalek - "Why is Video Game Writing Bad?"
- Kishonna Gray - "Narrating Race: Intersectional Practices in Design and Digital Gaming"
- Jesper Juul - "A Short History of the Meaning of Video Games"



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# II. EVENTS CONT'D

## **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**

There will be several 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. There will also be an academic game streaming relay where presenters take turns playing a single game, offering their unique perspective on its narrative and gameplay.

## **Social Events:**

### **Gaming Socials: Hybrid Event**

This is a hybrid event. We will be hosting an evening of play at the GI with board games, video games, and food. A simultaneous social/play event in Gather will be held.

### **Mid Conference Mixer**

Join us Wednesday evening for an in-person social at the Grad House at the University of Waterloo.

### **Spontaneous Socializing**

The Conference Discord will serve as a hub for conference organization, support, and asynchronous chat. You will find voice and text channels for casual chatting, sharing and promoting research, and video essays and session recordings.



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# III. GAME JAM

Attendees will have the chance of participating in a Game Jam during the conference. There are several scheduled time blocks to work on the game prototype and connect with others for peer feedback and mentorship.

The goal of a game jam is to make a game prototype and/or explore a certain mechanic or narrative element you've always thought was interesting. In this case, the game jam is meant to be collaborative, and the format consists of one-two days of development time, and then a showcase of game concepts and prototypes at the end of the last day.

We don't want to over-emphasize having a "complete" game by the end. Though if that is your goal, then that's good too! In this case we aim to provide a collaborative and supportive environment for working through game design/narrative elements that you are interested in. If the result is a game design document, a set of cards, a two-minute pitch for a game, or anything else that came out of you thinking about games and narrative, then that's great.

There will be game designers familiar with various toolsets (workshop leaders and others) at the jam to help troubleshoot and guide you if you have questions throughout the process, and we will offer specific workshops on tools and/or creating games in certain genres before the jam begins (more on this to come with the conference schedule).

[More details are available on the GI website.](#) Or scan the QR code for details:



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# IV. KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



## DR. MIA CONSALVO

Mia Consalvo is a Professor and Canada Research Chair in Game Studies and Design at Concordia University in Montreal. Dr. Consalvo is the co-author of *Real Games: What's Legitimate and What's Not in Contemporary Videogames* (2019) and author of *Atari to Zelda: Japan's Videogames in Global Contexts* (2016).

## DR. KISHONNA GRAY

Kishonna Gray is an Associate Professor of Writing, Rhetoric, & Digital Studies and Africana Studies at the University of Kentucky. She is also a faculty associate at the Berkman-Klein Center at Harvard University. Dr. Gray is the author of several books including *Intersectional Tech: Black Users in Digital Gaming* (2020).



## DR. JAKUB SZAMALEK

Jakub Szamalek is an award winning novelist and video game writer, who co-created international bestsellers such as "The Witcher 3" (2015) and "Cyberpunk 2077" (2020). He is a Doctor of classical archaeology educated at Oxford and Cambridge Universities and a Cambridge Gates Scholar.

## DR. MARK WOLF

Mark J. P. Wolf is a Professor in the Communication Department at Concordia University Wisconsin. His 25 books are on such topics as *Imaginary Worlds*, *Video Games*, and *Media Technology*, and he is currently working on a comprehensive history of computer graphics and Hollywood cinema.



## DR. JESPER JUUL

Jesper Juul is a video game researcher at the Royal Danish Academy. He has written four books on the video game, *Half-Real*, *A Casual Revolution*, *The Art of Failure*, and *Handmade Pixels*. He is co-editor of the *Playful Thinking* series on MIT Press, and is currently working on a new book about the Commodore 64.



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# V. 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.

Monday, May 15

Keynote:

Mia Consalvo, PhD | Professor and Canada Research Chair, Concordia University, Montreal  
An Unintended Moral Dilemma Meets Gamer Mode in Victoria 3: Or Can You Colonize in Videogames in a Non Problematic Way? (No)

**Session 1 | Room A**  
**Players and Characters: The Virtual Self**  
*Chair: Nicholas Hobin*

Open World Games and Player Identities: A Literature Based Categorization Proposal  
- José Agustín Donoso (Universidad de los Andes)

The Analysis of Characterization in Video Games: Methodological Concerns  
- Alexander Vandewalle (University of Antwerp and Ghent University)

Immersion as Narrative Engagement and Player Desire  
- Aleksander Franiczek (University of Waterloo)

**Session 2 | Room B**  
**Game Worlds: Narrative, Experience, and Ontology**  
*Chair: Neil Randall*

The Game World Concept: A Comparative Meta-Ontological Analysis  
- Nikita Stulikov

A World of Isolation: Environmental Storytelling in Elden Ring  
- Burçak Aydınlik (Memorial University of Newfoundland)

A Hope for Hyrule – Confronting the Absurd in The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild  
- Liahm Ruest (University of Waterloo)

**Session 3 | Room C**  
**Playing with Paratext: History, Literature, and Blockchain**  
*Chair: Lindsay Meaning*

Environmental Station Alpha's Postgame and Classic Detective Stories: Points of Contact  
- Guilherme Braga (Universidade de Caxias do Sul)

A Devious Archive: The Affective Historicity and Paratextual Folkloristics of Black Book  
- Andrew Bailey (York University)

Fancies Explained: Converting Symbolic Capital into NFTs - Alesha Serada  
(University of Vaasa)

**Session 4 | Room D**  
**Conversations with Games: Emergent Narratives and Gameplay Experience**  
*Chair: Toben Racicot*

Mechanical Experiences: The Language of Games  
- Sasha Soraine (McMaster University)

Creating Believable Stories with NPCs  
- Geneva M. Smith (McMaster University)

Political Conversations with Games  
- Noel Brett (McMaster University)

Break

**Session 5 | Room A**  
**Game Systems: Character and Narrative Agency**  
*Chair: Aleks Franiczek*

The Importance of Environment in STALKER: A-Life Provides Meaning to Players  
- Stuart Gritter (Brock University)

Narrative in Hero Shooters: Character Selection in Battle Royale and FPS Storyworlds  
- Mackenzie Streissguth (Clark College)

Narrative Time in Wayward Strand: An Intermedial-Specific Analysis  
- Sarah Thorne (Memorial University of Newfoundland)

**Session 6 | Room B**  
**Shaping the Shadowverse: Language, Immersion, Time, Community, and Character**  
*Chair: Mohamed Fouda*

Diversifying the 'Verse: Social Determinants of Health Meet Character Creation"  
- Najwa Al-Tabaa and Katherine Shaeffer (Shadow Health, Elsevier)

Hard Questions: The Personal and Systemic Conditions under which Characters Live, Work, and Play - Najwa Al-Tabaa and Katherine Shaeffer (Shadow Health, Elsevier)

**Session 7 | Room C**  
**Strong Female Character: Weaponized Sexuality, Trauma and Recovery**  
*Chair: Lindsay Meaning*

"I'm the Strongest Woman in the World!" – Fighting Girls and Weaponized Sexuality in Video Games - Matthew Poulter (York University)

Reading Feminine Trauma Through Narrative and Game Design in Metroid Dread  
- Alex Wedler

**Hybrid Event: Gaming Social**  
**Gather.town & The Games Institute @ University of Waterloo**



Tuesday, May 16

13:00 UTC  
(9:00 EDT)

**Keynote:**

Mark J.P. Wolf, PhD | Professor, Concordia University, Wisconsin  
Isolation, Contemplation, and the Lonely Worlds of Single-Player Open-World Video Games

14:00 UTC  
(10:00 EDT)

**Session 8 | Room A**  
**On Form: Structural Analysis of Game Narratives**

*Chair: Alex Fleck*

Understanding Ludonarrative Dissonance as an Artistic Tool  
- Elliot Burns (University of the Arts London)

A Game or a Film? Hyperfiction and Ambiguous Narrative in Her Story  
- Lacy Custance (Memorial University of Newfoundland)

More than Just Vibes: A Multimodal Approach to Atmospheric Narrative Analysis in Videogames - Jason Hawreliak (Brock University) and Paul Drotos (Brock University)

**Session 9 | Room B**  
**The Ideological Game Apparatus: Critique and Critical Pedagogy**

*Chair: Dániel Herczeg*

“In visions have I seen St Agnes”: on the representation of religious experience in videogames - Leonid Moyzhes (Russian State University of Humanities)

Questing Solo: The Single-Player RPG Hero and Neoliberal Isolation  
- Caighlan Smith (Memorial University of Newfoundland)

Writing and Playing Praxis: Conscientization, Marxism, and Colonialism in Dungeons & Dragons - Brian McKenzie (Maynooth University)

15:30 UTC  
(11:30 EDT)

**Break**

16:30 UTC  
(12:30 EDT)

**Session 10 | Room C**  
**Endless Possibilities: Innovation and Subversion in Game Systems**

*Chair: Will Zhao*

Cards in Conversation: Playful Dialogue in Signs of the Sojourner - Jason Boyd (Toronto Metropolitan) and Tanya Pobuda (Toronto Metropolitan/York University)

Formative Failure: Expanding Narrative Possibilities in Games  
- Josiah Boucher (Worcester Polytechnic Institute)

Tactile Thematics: Passages of Plurality in FromSoftware’s Elden Ring  
- Eric Stein (Trinity Western University)

**Session 11 | Room D**  
**Mapping Queerness and “The Other” in Virtue Systems, Character, and Space**

*Chair: Mohamed Fouda*

The Renegades and the Righteous: A Survey of Virtue Systems in Role Playing Video Games - Rebecca Grose (University of Alberta)

Navigating Non-Binaries: Assessing the Queerness of Digital Place-Making  
- Betsy Brey (University of Waterloo)

Chloe as Loser: The Queer Politics of Failure in Life is Strange  
- Allison Graves (Memorial University of Newfoundland)

18:30 UTC  
(2:30 EDT)

**Session 12 | Room A**  
**Transmedial Narrative Worlds**

*Chair: Ken Hirschkop*

Demade by the Blood: Bloodborne PSX at a Crossroads of Horror Fandoms  
- Patrick Dolan (York University)

Ellipses and Dashes: Making and Breaking (Up) Player Narratives about Video Games  
- Josh Mishaw (Ohio State University)

Everything Old is New Again: The Playful Nostalgia of Project 1999  
- Alexander Hurezeanu (Toronto Metropolitan/York University)

20:00 UTC  
(4:00 EDT)

**Break**

**Session 14 | Room D**  
**Who Makes the Game: Design, Development, Representation**

*Chair: Stu Hallifax*

Pitfalls and Potentials of Indigenous Narratives in Video Games  
- Autumn Mayes (York University)

20:30 UTC  
(4:30) EDT

**Narrative Co-Creation Workshop: Toben Raciot**

**Room C**

“This Extremely Japanese-Styled Title”: Fatal Frame, Folklore, & the Narrative Construction of Japanese-ness - Ryan Scheiding (Georgia Institute of Technology)

**Wednesday, May 17**

**13:00 UTC  
(9:00 EDT)**

**Keynote:**

Jakub Szamalek, PhD | Narrative Director, Rebel Wolves  
Why is Video Game Writing Bad?

**14:00 UTC  
(10:00 EDT)**

**Twine Workshop:** Elina Roinioti & Renard Gluzman

**Room A**

**15:00 UTC  
(11:30 EDT)**

**RPG Maker Workshop:** Dakota Pinheiro

**Room B**

**Game Jam**

**16:00 UTC  
(12:30 EDT)**

**Break**

**17:00 UTC  
(1:00 EDT)**

**Keynote:**

Kishonna Gray, PhD | Associate Professor, University of Kentucky  
Narrating Race: Intersectional Practices in Design and Digital Gaming

**18:30 UTC  
(2:00 EDT)**

~ to ~

**22:00 UTC  
(6:00 EDT)**

**Game Jam**

**Academic Game Streaming Relay**  
*Tears of the Kingdom*  
Discord: #game-streaming

**22:30 UTC  
(6:30 EDT)**

**Mid-Conference Mixer**  
In-Person Event @ The Grad House, University of Waterloo

Thursday, May 18

13:00 UTC (9:00 EDT)	<p align="center"><b>Game Jam</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Tabletop RPG Play Session</b> Hybrid Event: Games Institute @ University of Waterloo &amp; Gather.town</p>
16:00 UTC (12:00 EDT)	<p align="center"><b>Keynote:</b> Jesper Juul, PhD   Associate Professor, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts A Short History of the Meaning of Video Games</p>	
17:00 UTC (1:00 EDT)  ~ to ~  22:00 UTC (5:00 EDT)	<p align="center"><b>Game Jam</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Academic Streaming:</b> Nicholas Hobin <i>Stray</i></p> <p align="center"><b>Academic Streaming:</b> Aleksander Franiczek <i>Disco Elysium</i></p> <p align="center"><b>Academic Streaming:</b> Ken Hirschkop <i>Civilization VI</i></p> <p align="center"><b>Academic Streaming:</b> Pamela Maria Schmidt &amp; Toben Racicot "Breath of the Whatever" (<i>Breath of the Wild</i>, speed running)</p>

Friday, May 19

12:00 UTC (8:00 EDT)	<p align="center"><b>Session 15   Room A</b> <b>Are You Afraid of the Dark? Aspects of Horror in Games</b> <i>Chair: Alex Fleck</i></p> <p>Horror As Medium: An Examination of Environmental Horror in Video Games - Sid Heeg and Pam Schmidt (University of Waterloo)</p> <p>"Can You Unhaunt a Haunted House?": The Uncanny Return Home in Coming-of-Age Videogames - Derrit Mason (University of Calgary)</p> <p>Horror and the Hero: MMORPG Metafiction in Final Fantasy 14's Tam-Tara Deepcroft - Kevin Wong (Harvard University)</p>	<p align="center"><b>Session 16   Room B</b> <b>Capital Ideas (and Alternatives) in Games</b> <i>Chair: Mohamed Fouda</i></p> <p>Exploring Alternative Digital Approaches to Magic and the Pokémon Trading Card Game - Lee Cadwallader</p> <p>GTA is the only way of living the American Dream for developing nations' teenagers - Animesh Dhara (University of Hyderabad)</p> <p>Utilizing Narrative and Fostering Social Change: A Critical Analysis of The Sims - Kaylee Rideout (Memorial University of Newfoundland)</p>
14:00 UTC (10:00 EDT)	<p align="center"><b>Session 17   Room C</b> <b>Telling Stories Through Worlds: Game Objects, Architecture, and Nonhuman Animals</b> <i>Chair: Nicholas Hobin</i></p> <p>Architecture Telling Stories: The Narrative of Space in NaissanceE - Gabriele Aroni (Xi'an Jiaotong- Liverpool University)</p> <p>Moving the Story: How Interacting with Objects in Video Games Tells Stories - Pierre Gabriel Dumoulin (Université du Québec à Montréal)</p> <p>Detangling Animality: Posthumanist Mediations in Virtual Worlds - Chelsea Russell (York University)</p>	<p align="center"><b>Session 18   Room D</b> <b>Serious Game Projects: The Health Care Sector</b> <i>Chair: Hector Perez</i></p> <p align="center"><b>Paper Presentation</b> Gamifying Community Health Nursing Competencies: A Hybrid Learning Environment Design using Serious Gaming - Sjors Groeneveld (University of Twente)</p> <p align="center"><b>Roundtable Discussion</b> It Comes In Waves: An Exploration of Social Class in Narrative-Based Games Lyne Dwyer (Concordia University), Courtney Blamey (Concordia University), Michael Iantorno (Concordia University)</p>
15:30 (UTC (11:30 EDT)	<p align="center"><b>Break</b></p>	
16:30 UTC (12:30 EDT)	<p align="center"><b>Gaming Showcase &amp; Closing Reception</b></p>	

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