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UCLA Game Art Festival returns with exciting, eclectic collection of games and game art

One night only! Tuesday, November 14, 7-10 p.m. @ the Hammer Museum

Festival to feature more than 50 playable exhibits

Videogames, tournaments, live performances, board games, screenings, and more!

Los Angeles, CA – Now in its fifth year, the 2017 UCLA Game Art Festival returns with an exciting and eclectic collection of curated games and game-based art from around the world. Presented in a playful format, the UCLA Game Art Festival will feature more than 50 digital and tabletop games, live performances, screenings, VR/AR works, and other game art installations. The festival will be held 7-10 p.m. Tuesday, November 14 at the Hammer Museum in Westwood, CA. Admission is free.

Presented by the [UCLA Game Lab](#) in collaboration with the [Hammer Museum](#), the UCLA Game Art Festival will feature playable digital and tabletop games, large-screen projections of game art, a curated board-game lounge, a cinema installation, live stage performances, music, refreshments, and food trucks just outside the museum. This year's festival is curated and organized by Eddo Stern, Isla Hansen, Tyler Stefanich, and David O'Grady of the UCLA Game Lab.



As with previous festivals, the focus remains on showcasing an eclectic mix of independent, game art projects that may not otherwise reach the public. To that end, more than 1,500 people attended the last festival in 2015—an indication for Festival Director Eddo Stern, UCLA Design Media Arts professor and artist, that the event is fulfilling its mission.



“This year’s festival reflects our ongoing commitment to expanding the concept of what gaming means for many people,” Stern said. “The games we exhibit transcend conventional notions of digital gaming: many of them combine physical and digital media, employ new aesthetic language, or use one-of-a-kind controllers, to deliver political, polemical, and emotional play experiences—terrain often avoided by more industrial, mainstream games.”

One of the most exciting aspects of the festival is the live stage show, which will feature a three-hour program of games, music and live performances that explore intersections among games and theater, puppetry, and other arts. Highlights include a performance by the [Future Ladies of Wrestling \(aka F.L.O.W.\)](#), a live, multimedia wrestling event, and a tournament-style presentation of [Gecko Redemption](#), a videogame developed by artists in the UCLA Game Lab that was commissioned by Cartoon Network’s Adult Swim.

Returning to the festival is the much beloved UCLA Game Lab Arcade Backpack, our popular, human arcade machine, which will be roving throughout the festival. To double the fun, this year’s festival will feature two backpacks, both offering a rotating series of games to play throughout the evening.



Live music will be provided by the [Game Music Ensemble at UCLA](#), a student-run orchestra, choir, and chamber ensemble dedicated to performing and celebrating original video game music. The ensemble will be performing throughout the festival on the balcony level near the board game lounge, as well as taking the main stage to conclude the festival.

Featured games and events include:

Guest-curated exhibits:

As part of the festival’s diverse array of digital and tabletop games, two guest curators will feature special exhibitions within the festival. Naomi Clark, game designer, teacher, and scholar at the NYU Game Center, is curating the board game lounge this year on the balcony level of the Hammer courtyard. Titled [Systems of Struggle: History on a Tabletop](#), Clark’s selection of games focus on historical recreations of darker, even tragic, moments in world history. Although board games are often considered light diversions or childhood fare, this exhibition asks players to confront more complex and challenging scenarios, from the Nanking Massacre to the atrocities of the slave trade in the United States—and the resistance against it. In using



pieces, maps, and rules to depict historical events and circumstances, these games ask players to think about real-life systems and circumstances that are frequently inhumane or cruel.



Also guest curating is artist, author, and curator Matteo Bittanti, assistant professor of media studies at IULM University. Titled **Replay**, this exhibition allows players to re-enact, restage—essentially, replay—the public personas of famous artists (such as Ai Weiwei and Chris Burden) and/or their most well-known works as video games. Created by contemporary video artists, the games of **Replay** not only appropriate famous artists and their works, they also repurpose mainstream videogames, such as Grand Theft Auto, as their medium. The result is a collection of games that celebrate playfully fraudulent acts of identity theft and provide clever reinterpretations of iconic artists and their artwork.

On stage:

Future Ladies of Wrestling (aka F.L.O.W.) (Jennifer Juniper Stratford)

The Future Ladies of Wrestling (aka F.L.O.W.) is a no-holds-barred, multimedia extravaganza in which the wildest interspecies wrestlers battle for the title of Ultimate Multiversal Warrior. Watch as warriors such as Candy Pain, Chemtrails, Lisa 5000, Diva Colada, Valibu Tina, Hardcore Tina, Machine, Eruptia, and Flesh Eating Corpulous battle for the festival title!

Gecko Ridemption: The Tournament (Alex Rickett and Theo Triantafyllidis)

Gecko Ridemption is a browser-based, online-multiplayer area-control, rock-climbing, laser-blasting, stuff-barfing, sport-ish game. Up to eight players control geckos which can puke random bits of sports equipment that stick together into gravity-defying structures. Players must barf, build, and crawl up these structures to capture levitating sport-balls and score points. Don't get careless, though: geckos can also discharge power laser beams that will explode other geckos and their carefully constructed vomit-ladders!

The Med-Usa One: Pre-Next-Gen Technology (Britt Moseley)

A parodic, live demonstration of an exciting new game technology, The Med-Usa One: Pre-Next-Gen Technology combines analog, digital, real, virtual, cable-less, cable-full, Bluetooth, Sawtooth waveform, and Soretooth technology to provide the next level of highly immersive pre-next generation gaming—assuming the machine actually works....

Exhibits include:

The Game: The Game (Angela Washko)

The Game: The Game is the first chapter of an immersive installation and platform that presents the practices of several prominent seduction coaches (aka, pick-up artists, or PUAs) through the format of a dating simulator. In the game, these pick-up artists attempt to seduce the player using their signature techniques taken verbatim from their instructional books and video materials. Players explore the complexity of the construction of social behaviors around dating as well as the experience of being a woman navigating this complicated terrain.



Phantasm Atlas (Sara Haas, Lilyan Kris, Amanda Glover, Renee MacDonald)

An interactive video installation re-imagining our bodily anatomy, Phantasm Atlas enables users to manipulate their experience by interacting with a wearable controller. Supported by an Arduino, the Unity game engine, and custom software, the controller alters a projection of live action video and 3D animation. Phantasm Atlas was inspired by the film *Fantastic Voyage* and other science fiction, vintage human anatomy books, and fictional maps.



Plastic Vortex (Jen Agosta)

Plastic Vortex is a board game based on the Great Pacific Garbage Patch—a mass of human-made debris and trash trapped in the swirling gyres of the North Pacific Ocean. Each player in Plastic Vortex is a marine animal whose objective is to migrate through the oceanic waters while obtaining food to fuel their journey. To their dismay, the nutrients they have to feed on are a combination of food and plastic debris. The goal is to be the first to get to the other side of the board without dying of malnutrition. Just as the colorful plastics floating in the ocean allure marine animals, players are drawn to filling their animal’s stomach with colorful pieces that may cost them the game—and their animal’s life.

Regurgitating (Matthias Dörfelt)

Regurgitating is a projected animation loop of a flower and its lifecycle rendered in real time through procedurally generated computer imagery. Even though the loops transition seamlessly from one iteration to the next—as expected from the traditional animation loop—each of the iterations displays a unique instance of the underlying core idea. The result is a meditative experience that is close to life itself: every iteration of the loop will be the last one.



Night Witches (Jason Morningstar)

In World War II, a night bomber regiment composed entirely of Soviet airwomen—flying outdated biplanes from open fields near the front lines—attacked the invading German forces. To each other they were sisters, with bonds forged in blood and terror. To the Red Army Air Force they were an infuriating feminist sideshow. To the Germans they were simply *nachthexen*—night witches. Night Witches is a tabletop role-playing game about women at war. As a member of the 588th Night Bomber Regiment, you’ll answer the call of your Motherland in her darkest hour. Can you do your duty and strike blow after blow against the Fascists? Can you overcome discrimination and outright sabotage and rise above your sexist comrades? Are there limits to patriotism—or endurance? Whatever the outcome, Night Witches recreates an epic tale of heroism and sacrifice that honors the women who did it for real.



Pax Porfiriana (Phil Eklund)

Latin for “The Porfirian Peace,” Pax Porfiriana refers to the 33-year reign of dictator Porfirio Díaz, who ruled Mexico with an iron hand until toppled by the 1910 Revolution. Competing as rich businessmen, or hacendados, in the turbulent pre-revolutionary borderlands of the U.S. and Mexico, players build business empires of ranches, mines, rails, troops, and banks while subverting opponents with bandidos, Indians, and lawsuits. Win by toppling Díaz, either by coup, succession, revolution, or annexing Mexico to the U.S.



Machinima works (various artists)

The festival also will exhibit several machinima projects initiated in a UCLA Game Lab workshop led by French machinima artist and curator Isabelle Arvers. The workshop was co-sponsored by the French Consulate of Los Angeles.



SIGNALS 4 (Nicolas Sassoon and Rick Silva)

Exhibiting in the Hammer Museum's Billy Wilder Theater is SIGNALS 4, a video work reflecting the artists' mutual interest in the depiction and alternation of the natural through computer technology. The work presents a dynamic simulation of an ocean view infused with a seemingly oily substance--a vision of an oil spill in open waters. Produced by pairing complementary fields of research from both artists in computer imaging, the imagery is accompanied by a humming soundtrack that suggests a technological presence within the natural setting.

For more information and images:

For downloadable images of the exhibits featured in this release, please visit:

<http://festival.games.ucla.edu/2017-Press-Images.zip>

For a complete list of artists and games to be featured at the UCLA Game Art Festival, please visit the festival website: <http://festival.games.ucla.edu/>

The 2017 UCLA Game Art Festival is presented by the UCLA Game Lab in collaboration with the Hammer Museum. The project is sponsored by the School of Arts and Architecture and the School of Theater, Film and Television, with support from the Hammer Museum and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more information, please contact Tyler Stefanich and David O'Grady (festival@games.ucla.edu).

