

INTANGIBLE IN-BETWEEN

Baron Lanteigne . Ahreum Lee . Enric Llagostera . Raphaëll Maïwen . Kara Stone . Santiago Tamayo Soler

JEU ART GAME

Exhibition produced and toured by:

SPOROBOLE

In partnership with:

Galerie Galerie 

perte de signal

ELEKTRA

bang centre
d'art
actuel

 **CALQ**
Conseil
des arts
et des lettres
du Québec

RETORNAR (2021)

Santiago Tamayo Soler

Vidéo HD, 20'

Set in a fictional Andes in the year 2222, *Retornar* narrates the story of the last nine living humans on Earth, and their journey towards a big "reset". Narratively structured as a video game, *Retornar* takes place in an eco-pessimistic world, where Latin America has nothing else to give: its soil has dried up and the atmosphere has become increasingly dangerous. After a big war driven by the extreme exploitation of natural resources, the surviving characters wander around a dystopian Andean landscape, aimlessly and alone, with no other purpose but to spend their day going through different "puzzles" and "loading screens", until they are summoned by a mysterious blue orb that will transport them into a digital celestial world where - after a big celebratory "last dance" - they will become the seeds for a new generation.

Retornar was made through a multilayered process. The world itself was designed from scenes created in The Sims 4, SketchUp, Photoshop, as well as real footage shot in front of a green screen. The scenarios were built using an isometric perspective to mimic early 8 bit video games, as well as early life simulation games, and videochat universes.

Created as part of the PHI Montreal 2021 Residency.

Santiago Tamayo Soler (Bogotá, Colombia, 1990) is an interdisciplinary artist working mainly in video and performance. Interested in fiction/nonfiction, narrative devices, and live action, Tamayo Soler's most recent work overlays digital footage and modified video games to create pixelated universes home to Latin American, immigrant, queer stories of a radical futuristic fantasy.

santiagotamayosoler.com

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INTANGIBLE IN-BETWEEN

Intangible In-Between is an exhibition that took shape thanks to a partnership between the Galerie Galerie, perte de signal and Sporobole centres, focused on residencies to create game artworks. After a first presentation in Sherbrooke at Sporobole in September 2022, the exhibition was presented in Montréal, at ELEKTRA and perte de signal from January 19 to February 25, 2023. It is now presented at the Bang Center in Saguenay, from March 16 to May 6, 2023, as part of a Québec micro-tour.

In parallel, a publication entitled *ART X GAME = JEU X ART* = addressing different angles on the art game was produced by Sporobole, under the direction of Nathalie Bachand and Lynn Hughes. Bringing together essays by authors Pippin Barr, Liane Décary-Chen, Raphaëll Maïwen and Jess Rowan Marcotte – and referring to the creative residencies of artists Baron Lanteigne (Sporobole), Ahreum Lee (perte de signal) and Raphaëll Maïwen (Galerie Galerie) – this book accompanies the exhibition as a reflective supplement around art games.

Gathering the works of six artists, *Intangible In-Between* is an exhibition whose proposals are at the junction of gaming and art. In this in-between, there is a meeting space that allows a certain porosity between what is artistic and what belongs to the world of video games and ludic interaction in general.

This third space offers different possibilities. For a game designer, it allows to generate highly experimental forms and contents that act as critiques and/or alternatives to the dominant tropes and mechanisms of commercial games. For an artist, borrowing the aesthetics and/or participatory nature of games, whether in a critical or celebratory way, instills rich references to this interactive cultural form that currently occupies nearly three billion people worldwide. The popularity of gaming makes it a privileged gateway to explore certain boundaries, notably those delimiting the real and the virtual.

These art and game interrelationships are intangible in the sense that they exist halfway between the two categories: they are undetermined "objects", suspended in a temporality that is that of a temporary and contextual interconnection. They are also in-betweens, often deliberately speculative, constantly renewing themselves - which can make them sometimes difficult and ambiguous propositions, but proportionally fertile in reflection.

Curators : [Nathalie Bachand & Lynn Hughes](#)

RITUAL OF THE MOON (2019)

Kara Stone

In its initial version, *Ritual of the Moon* is a daily meditational activity that takes place over 28 real time days—in the gallery context, the game has been modified to be experienced over a short period of time.

Originally, each day the player experiences a memory game, draws symbols, receives a mantra, and makes a decision about the future of the Earth. The game tracks the decisions the player makes, becoming a sort of mood tracker. The narrative follows a witch who had been exiled to the moon during a neo-Salem witch trial and discovers she has the power to destroy or protect the Earth. Each day a little bit of the witch's narrative unfolds, uncovering more about her life, her lover, Malinda, whom she can never go back to, as well as about the Earth's Council that exiled the witch to the moon to live out the rest of her life looking at the earth. Depending on their feelings over the lunar cycle, the player will experience one of the multiple endings.

This game aims to create a space for self-reflection to be embedded into players' lives. The hope is that we can create a different relationship to games and personal technology, sparking self-reflection rather than escapism. The experience doesn't tell people how to feel, so much as prompt them to check in with their own emotional state at that moment. *Ritual of the Moon* is a unique game, in terms of aesthetics and design, and offers a different approach to making and playing video games.

Kara Stone is an artist and researcher making working on psychosocial disability, gender and sexuality, and the environment. Her artwork has been featured in *The Atlantic*, *Wired*, and *Vice*. She is a member of the Different Games Collective. She is currently an assistant professor at Alberta University of the Arts in Calgary, Canada.

karastonesite.com

IF U SEEK AMY (2022)

Raphaëll Maïwen

The work entitled *If U Seek Amy* is a role-playing game (RPG) that explores the duality between a pop star's public persona and her private life, the overlap between the two, and the steps taken to keep them separate. The project also explores the fascination of a queer young person - namely the one who created this game - with this star and questions the boundary between sincerity and performance in this admiration. The two protagonists go on a quest for identity each in their own way through what they project voluntarily or not, what is said about them, what they internalize from the perception of others and what they reject.

A true tribute to Britney Spears, this game explores with a touch of humor the different ways in which she has integrated the popular consciousness, whether through memes, unusual remixes of her songs, the legends she generates or her most famous quotes. In this way, the work reveals how people reappropriate an icon to address the special and one-way bond between a celebrity and her fans.

Created as part of a Galerie Galerie residency.

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With the support of Canada Council for the Arts.

Raphaëll Maïwen has been creating games since childhood with all the software she can find, from PowerPoint to Unity, RPG Maker, Unreal and many others. She democratizes game creation as much as possible, convinced that anyone can make games if given the right tools. She achieves this goal by organizing workshops, conferences and game jams of all kinds. Her favourite themes are vulnerability, queerness and Britney Spears. She is interested in absurd games, rhythm and golf games, and alt-controllers. Apart from video games, her interests include drag, stand-up comedy, body modification, relationships, and again, Britney Spears.

rafiki.itch.io



LA PLANTE (2022)

Baron Lanteigne

La plante is a sculptural work that is both connected and materially tangible. A device whose aesthetics are inspired by medical equipment is dedicated to the calculation and representation of a virtual plant entity, visible from a screen. A digital plant is maintained and kept alive through situations proposed to participants via a chat server. These events—for example, opening a window or shading the plant—influence the simulation parameters of the plant's condition and its evolution.

Loosely inspired by Tamagotchis, these small Japanese virtual pets, *La plante* requires care and attention in order to blossom. The work is thus a reflection of a complex system of interactions between the real and the virtual, a "snapshot" of the technology necessary for the functioning of a small interactive hologram.

Created as part of a Sporobole residency.

Baron Lanteigne lives and works in Québec City, Canada. He explores our relationship with technology and its infrastructure through installations of modified screens opening onto virtual worlds. However, the essence of his work comes from infiltrations of numerous cyber-communities and virtual collaborations. This web-based practice is reflected internationally through participation in numerous digital art events: The Wrong Biennale, real-fake.org, Mapping Festival (CH), Mirage Festival (FR), Vector Festival (CA), Dutch Design Week (NL), Sónar+D (ES), Mutek (JP), Gwangju Media Art Platform (KR), Electrofringe (AU), CPH:DOX (DK) as well as at the Ludwig Museum in Budapest (HU).

baronlanteigne.com



GUI, THE GHOST (2022)

Ahreum Lee

Gui, the Ghost is a graphic novel-style text adventure survival game - combining various retro aesthetics such as vector graphics, ASCII art and pixel art - in which we play the role of the protagonist, Gui: a dead young woman, stuck in this world and who must overcome a series of challenges to cross over to the afterlife. As players investigate what happened to her, and collect memories of her "past life", Gui unlocks new abilities by becoming more and more transparent until she can finally disappear forever.

Inspired by Korean folklore "Cheo-Nyeo Gui Shin (처녀귀신)" - which literally translates to "virgin woman ghost" - the game's narrative features this spectre caught in purgatory and unable to enter heaven or hell, because of this burden related to her tragic death. Some Korean scholars argue that this figure has remained famous because of its roots in a misogynistic culture. It can also be seen as a parallel to witches in the folklore of Western cultures. *Gui, the Ghost* allows us to revisit this story with a feminist perspective in order to help us rewrite the future.

Created as part of a *perte de signal* residency.

Ahreum Lee is an interdisciplinary media artist from Seoul, South Korea, currently based in Tiohtià:ke (Montréal). She is interested in examining socio-political issues that permeate our everyday technologies, such as Google Maps, Predictive Text Algorithms, and AI virtual assistant voices. She uses a range of media including video, audio, performance, 3D printing and images, stock images from online and web art. She has exhibited and performed at Arsenal Art Contemporain Montréal, Fonderie Darling, Ada x, Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery, as well as Third Shift Festival and Axis Lab. Additionally, she has participated in the Emerging BAiR program at Banff Art and Creativity Centre and Impression Residency Program at Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal.

ahreumlee.com

COOK YOUR WAY (2018)

Enric Llagostera

"Within commodity culture, ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture." --- Bell Hooks, dans *Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance*.

Cook Your Way is a game about how immigration systems and capitalist discourses of multiculturalism combine. In the game's fiction, visa applicants (or players) are instructed by immigration authorities to prepare a typical dish of their country of origin using a cooking station. The system evaluates applicants according to their efficiency and potential to contribute to the destination country's society. Cooking becomes a standardized test, one step within a longer application process.

Players act through a cooking station alternative controller, a custom-built device with interactive components for different actions, like adding ingredients, stirring a pot or chopping vegetables. Using the system involves performing gestures that resemble actions of food preparation, but recontextualized and filtered through particular lenses. Such actions are closely monitored and should be done as instructed. These prompts are intertwined with questions and comments adapted from actual immigration forms and brochures.

Cook Your Way combines sardonic humour and pointed critique. It highlights the tensions and significance of cultural commodification and the purposeful complexity and alienation involved in immigration systems. Through play, it aims to raise questions and reflections about the multimodal interfaces of control, labour, and the meritocratic narratives that permeate immigration.

Credits & Acknowledgement

Game created by Enric Granzotto Llagostera. Videos, photography and documentation graphics by Vjosana Shkurti. Music from <https://filmmusic.io>: "Modern Jazz Samba" by Kevin MacLeod. Licence: CC BY; Intro music by John Bartmann. Special thanks for their ongoing support and various contributions to this project: Carolina Chmielewski Tanaka, Rilla Khaled, Rebecca Goodine, Jess Rowan Marcotte, Dietrich Squinkifer. *Cook Your Way* was created in Montréal, QC, Canada, from 2017-2019. It received support from the Hexagram Student Grant and the Reflective Game Design research group at the Technoculture, Art and Games Research Centre.

Enric Granzotto Llagostera is a game designer and researcher from São Paulo, Brazil, currently based in Montréal. He studies alternative game controllers and how they can foster a reflection and engage in political critique. He has a background in programming and social communication and a keen interest in experimental and DIY play devices, community organizing, and public play. Enric has previously worked as a lecturer, teaching about game development, and is currently a PhD candidate at Concordia University.

enric.llagostera.com.br