Introduction
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This special edition of the Journal of Media Practice is devoted to the emerging field of videogame art. In essence, this is art which appropriates the form, technology, or iconography of videogames, but the simplicity of this definition conceals the strength, importance, diversity, and radicalism of the work produced.

The diversity and breadth of videogame art reflects the extent to which videogames have become assimilated and established into our cultural landscape. At its simplest and most obvious level, the characters in these games have become memes that the artists can appropriate in their work. But beyond this, the videogame form - the conventions of the games and their gameplay, as well as their graphical style - have themselves become so recognisable that they too can be imitated and subverted. Furthermore, level editors and open source tools allow the artists to subvert the actual code of the games, altering their appearance and behaviour.

Using a variety of tools and techniques, videogame art maintains an active dialogue with - and commentary upon - its source material, the games themselves. As a result, videogame art transcends the videogames that it appropriates and one should not trivialise the work because of its similarity to, or close relationship with, videogames; by doing so, one ignores the maturity and intellectual rigour of both the work and the artists who produced it.

This special edition of the Journal of Media Practice provides an introduction to the field of videogame art and to some of the artists working within it. The papers published here are taken from a book on the subject (*Videogames and Art*), also edited by Grethe Mitchell and Andy Clarke, and published by Intellect Books later in 2006. Four papers are included - by Suzanne Treister, Henry Lowood, Rebecca Cannon, and Ernest Adams - and there is also an extended interview with the artist Brody Condon by Andy Clarke. Together these papers provide an insight into the work in this field (both currently and historically) and highlight key issues and artists within it.

The first paper, by Rebecca Cannon, provides an overview of some of the various subgenres of work currently taking place in the field of videogames and art. Her paper covers "mod art" extensively - that is to say, art produced with the level editors provided with FPS ("first person shooter") games such as *Quake*, *Unreal Tournament*, and *Half-Life*. These level editors allow fans of the game to customise the game or to create new virtual environments in which to play and fight, but artists such as Brody Condon (and others) have taken these same tools and used them to create artworks that one can regard, in many senses, as being "virtual installations" or "virtual site-specific works".

In his paper, Henry Lowood outlines in detail the history of machinima, another type of work produced with these level editors. Machinima are animations created through recording "in game" performances and this highlights the way in which game fans – and consequently game artists – will find new ways in which to use games technology.

The interview with Brody Condon highlights some of the difficulties facing artists working in the field of videogame art. These problems are not only technical and creative, but also relate to the contextualisation and interpretation of his work which has been exhibited at the Whitney Museum and Pace Wildenstein Gallery (both in New York) and is currently on show at the Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam).

The problems faced by videogame artists are not new and the next paper, by Suzanne Treister, describes her work in this field in the late 80's and early 90's. In doing so, it also places the field of videogame art in its proper historical context.

Yet in spite of the fact that videogame art is now being exhibited in mainstream art galleries, the relationship of videogame art with the videogame industry itself cannot be ignored, nor can the issue of whether the videogames themselves are art. As a respected figure in the videogames industry, Ernest Adams is well placed to address these questions in the final paper in this special edition of the Journal of Media Practice, devoted to videogame art.