



Cologne Game Lab
TH Köln – University of Applied Sciences

Clash of Realities 2018
Press Release, November 09th, 2018

Schanzenstr. 28
51063 Cologne, Germany

Clash of Realities 2018 – Digital Games between Science and Art

At the center of the “Clash of Realities – International Conference on the Art, Technology and Theory of Digital Games,” held from Nov. 12 – 14, 2018 at the Cologne Game Lab / TH Köln, lie questions concerning the aesthetic development, theoretical analysis, and cultural mediation of digital games.

Over 50 international experts from the academy, science, research, and games industry will discuss the innovative trends in design and development of digital games and explore pressing questions concerning the societal perception of digital games in a setting of critical engagement.

To this end we are hosting a summit on the highly relevant topic of “Gender and Sexuality.” Additionally, the pre-event of the conference—the “Young Academics Workshop”—will feature a series of presentations on the pressing societal issue: “Reframing the Violence and Videogames Debate.”

Among the invited are scholars, social scientists, game developers, specialists in education and media, up-and-coming creative talent, students, and all those interested in and excited by digital games.

The co-directors of the Cologne Game Lab, Prof. Björn Bartholdy and Prof. Dr. Gundolf S. Freyermuth, are happy to welcome a collection of prominent guests who will mark the start of the ninth “Clash of Realities” Conference on Nov. 12 at 6:00 pm with some opening remarks. The kick-off event will feature Prof. Dr. Stefan Herzig (President of the TH Köln), Till Hardy (Film- und Medienstiftung), Dr. Ralf Heinen (Mayor of Cologne), and Oliver Keymis (Vice President of the State Parliament NRW).

Afterwards Carolyn Petit will hold the opening keynote on “Gender and Sexuality.” Petit is the managing editor of the website “Feminist Frequency” and widely known as the first transgender woman to have a prominent voice in the discourse on gender representation in mainstream gaming media. The evening will be accompanied by the sounds of the Cologne ensemble Trikustik, who will be performing jazz

interpretations of Renaissance and Baroque compositions. (Line-up: Sarah Nakic - vocals, Tobias Klug - saxophone, Martin Lorber - double bass).

The summit day (Nov. 13) boasts a series of lectures, discussion sessions, and project presentations on five topics which promote a critical, analytical, and artistically advanced approach to digital games: Playing Utopia - Futures in Digital Games (Game Studies Summit), The Evolution of Visual Storytelling (Game Development Summit), Perspectives of Narrative Design (Film and Games Summit), Gender and Sexuality (Diversity in Games Summit) and Inclusive Worlds of Games (Media Education Summit). At this summit Hannes Roeber from Indivi and Michel Roeber from transfer e.V. will present their project "Visually Impaired Person – V.I.P. Sim" and afterwards the audience will be invited to playtest the VR game.

The game studies pioneer Jesper Juul (Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Design, Copenhagen) will open the conference main day (Nov. 14) with a keynote about "Handmade Pixels – Independent Video Games and the Return of Craft." Next Clara Fernandez-Vara, associate arts professor at the NYU Game Center, will explore the mysteries of storytelling in her talk "Designing the Mystery: Elision and Exegesis in Games." A town hall talk with both speakers will round up the first session of the day. In the afternoon, Christopher Power (University of York, UK) will speak about the challenges and possibilities of designing accessible games in his talk titled "Designing Accessible Player Experiences." Christopher's presentation will be followed by a town hall talk addressing "The Inclusiveness of Digital Gaming: One Step Forward, Two Steps Back?" Afterwards Christopher Ferguson (Stetson University, Florida) will hold a talk titled "Do Sexualized Images of Female Characters in Games Impact Players? A State of the Evidence." Author and narrative designer Cara Ellison will close the conference day with insights into the world of 3D storytelling with her presentation on "The Gentle Verb – 3D Storytelling in Games."

The conference venue is located on the campus of the Cologne Game Lab of University of Applied Sciences Cologne and the international film school cologne (Schanzenstraße 28, 51063 Cologne).

Attending the conference is free of charge. More information about the program, speakers and registration: www.clashofrealities.com

Those responsible for the Clash of Realities concept and program layout are the Cologne Game Lab and the Institut für Medienforschung and Medienpädagogik of the TH Köln, the ifs internationale filmschule köln GmbH, the Institut für Medienkultur und Theater of the University of Cologne and Electronic Arts, as well as AG Games (an interdisciplinary coalition of digital games researchers in the area of digital games).

Project sponsors include TH Köln – University of Applied Sciences, the Film and Media Fund of NRW, the City of Cologne, the Minister President of North Rhine-Westphalia and Electronic Arts. This year's media partners include WDR COSMO and the Mediennetzwerk NRW.

The TH Köln – University of Applied Sciences offers students as well as researchers, from Germany and abroad, inspiring opportunities to learn, work and research in social and cultural studies as well as engineering and the natural sciences. Presently there are more than 26,000 students enrolled in over 90 of our Bachelor and Master programs. The TH Köln – University of Applied Sciences shapes societal innovation: It is with this aim that we face society's challenges. Our interdisciplinary way of thinking and acting as well as our regional, national and

international activities make us a highly valuable collaborator and innovator. The TH Köln – University of Applied Sciences was founded in 1971 and is widely considered one of the most innovative technical universities in the world.

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