

About Uncanny Valley

Welcome to Uncanny Valley is a four-part installation that explores historical and contemporary connections between photography and videogames.

The installation is part of a long-term research project that asks:

'What do we mean when we describe videogames as "photorealistic"?'

The project looks beyond technology into the socio-cultural intersections where the two media meet and bring together art and science, society and technology, nature and culture.

Photography forms the foundation for the installation in the form of photographic reconstructions of landscapes found in open-world exploration and "walking simulator" games. The installation also uses sight, sound and touch to create an immersive, holistic experience that transports you into the hybrid world of the Uncanny Valley, a place where boundaries between the physical and virtual are blurred.

Welcome to the Uncanny Valley - a place both familiar and foreign, terrifying and terrific!

Sights

The Uncanny Valley is a vibrant and diverse environment, with lush landscapes presented in the tour Virtual Lands 2.0. The landscapes you will see are photographic reconstructions of game worlds in open-world "sandbox" and "walking simulator" games. You are invited to explore the landscapes and all the adventures you can imagine. Don't be afraid of feeling confused and a bit of wonder - that's all part of the journey!

The second tour, titled Wish You Were Here, is for history buffs - discover how paintings and traditions from over two-hundred years ago continue to shape how we perceive and construct reality!

Sounds

Enjoy different sounds from the Uncanny Valley - all of which have been sourced, sampled and remixed into a custom soundscape that takes you through four environments.

Flora

Easily recognisable due to its origins beyond physical reality, the flora of the Valley revels in its hybridity. Please interact and touch the flora, but do so with respect and care.

Scents

Due to prevailing conditions, the scented experience of the Valley is currently not be available. Future tours will hopefully introduce you to the enticings scents of the Valley.

To Visit, Please Contact
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Welcome to Uncanny Valley

A Land of Strange Discoveries and Unexpected Wonders



Step into the Virtual

Representation/Simulation

BA dissertation* exploring relationships between photography and videogames as distinctive visual forms existing parallell in a complex media environment. The text discusses differences and similarities to discover how the two media inform and influence each other.

History and Theory

The dissertation also discusses how the technologies of photography and videogames are contemporary continuations or extensions of historical practices and concepts that remain vital and relevant even now, including representation, simulation, realism and subjectivity.

Virtual Lands

BA final project consisting of three digital C-type prints and a series of photo-manipulated landscape images that explore the liminal space between physical, represented and virtually simulated spaces. The images are the result of human-machine cooperation, combining traditional photographic fieldwork and computer-based image processing.

Explore and Discover

The project questions separations of nature and culture, technology, art and science. The images invite you to explore the pictured landscapes and question your expectations and perceptions of the photographic image. The images entice you to imagine the various reasons you could have for inhabiting the pictured spaces.

* Bachelor of Arts in Photography, Edinburgh Napier University School of Arts and Creative Industries, 2016
* Master of Letters in History of Photography, University of St Andrews School of Art History, 2018

In-Game Photography

A Recent History of In-Game Photography

MLitt dissertation* examining a recent history of virtual in-game photography to discover how the photographic image is becoming resituated within emerging networks of cultural production. The dissertation discusses the historical, cultural and technical grounds for the conceptual, technical and aesthetic remediation of photography in contemporary three-dimensional open-world game spaces.

Art, Science, Technology and Culture

The dissertation discusses the genre's development in broader socio-cultural contexts and how game developers, players, artists, photographers, institutions and curators have responded to the cultural convergences of videogames with photography in modern society and culture. The dissertation urges us to look beyond traditional conceptions and uses of photography to understand its relevance in today's world.

Wish You Were Here

The photographic project tracks lineages and legacies of 19th landscape painting through photography into videogames, pointing to a continuum of shared traditions and asks how traditional analogue media and digital media transfer, transmute and transform each other.

Landscapes

The project points to how nature is constructed through images both in traditional media and digital media. The work suggests that to understand how landscapes are construcuted, we need to look at the images themselves but also the contexts that frame them through methods of display and presentation.



Other Essays and Projects

On the Precipice of Modernity

This essay discusses how photography is remediated in *Red Dead Redemption 2* as a symbol of modernity in a game world that simulates North America at the turn of the 19th-century. The essay urges us to understand what histories are represented in the digital age, and what are some implications in appropriating the photographic in videogames.

Sixth-One Sights

The project is a performative act conducted in *Grand Theft Auto 5* that was documented photographically, in video and through a text diary. Following a ruleset, I photographed the time between sunrise and sunset while standing on top of Mount Chiliad.



Continuum

Continuum is an exhibition concept that combines painting, handcrafts, archival photographs, hybrid imagery, historical and contemporary viewing apparatus and extracts from my personal archives. Each piece is shown in dialogue with the others, and when viewed as a holistic totality, present steps in photography's lineages and legacies. The exhibition provides a tool-shed for talking about photography's past, present and futures.

The Sixth-Plate Experiment

A temporary multimedia installation featuring tintypes made using inkjet printing. The installation showcased the process of creating the pieces and documented the material experimentation and the resulting objects. The project's name stems from the smallest sizes of tintypes made during the 19th century.