

Blank Arcade: A Diverse Exhibition of Forward-Looking Play

Hosted By:  **Abertay University.**



***Emilie Reed**, co-curator of **Blank Arcade** at Abertay University, on the rich variety of play experiences we can expect at this year's exhibition.*

Digital games are increasingly becoming of interest to cultural institutions like museums and art galleries, and my primary role at Abertay University is to investigate this phenomenon from a curatorial and art historical perspective. I'm excited to put my research into practice with the upcoming [Blank Arcade](#) exhibition I'm co-curating with [Lindsay Grace](#), who has organized [similar shows](#) at the past two DiGRA conferences. Submissions closed at the end of April, so we are now working together to go through the 57 ambitious games, software interventions and other playful objects we received this year.

A major gathering of games scholars, designers, artists and other professionals is the ideal stage for new ideas, both about the potential of games and play in contemporary society, but also developing exhibitions that argue for the importance of experimentation and expanded approaches in this area to a critical audience. We hope to make Blank Arcade something distinctly different from a temporary exhibition hall or similar sites for sharing work at conferences. While some work will likely be from conference attendees, the call was international and not conditional on attendance to the conference. I specifically hope to bring in voices local to Dundee as well as creators working outside of an academic or industry context to allow for a rich variety of play experiences within the exhibition itself.

This instance of Blank Arcade is also the first to have a longer life beyond the week of DiGRA. Thanks to the Hannah Maclure Centre at Abertay University and sponsorship from the [American University Game Lab](#), the exhibition will remain on display from its opening date on August 3rd through October 28th, allowing both the community in Dundee and returning Abertay students to experience these innovative works. Beyond the

audience of scholars and practitioners that will gather at FDG-DiGRA 2016, the general public as well as the next generation of game designers and digital artists will be able to be inspired by this selection of playful experiments bridging current gaps in mainstream perceptions of digital games, entertainment and play.

This all makes the process of deciding which works to feature quite daunting, especially since we're hardly in want for unique and well-considered submissions! There's also plenty of outside variables to consider, including the size and features of the gallery space, and the thematic content of the other work. Interactive works need to be activated by an audience in a space that facilitates this engagement, so they can often be more complex to group and realize in a limited physical space like an art gallery, but this kind of challenge is what energizes me as a researcher. While the Blank Arcade is still in the process of coming together, I hope everyone planning to attend FDG-DiGRA 2016 takes the time to visit the Hannah Maclure Centre while they're in Dundee, as I can already confidently say, based on the material we have to work with, that it will be a diverse selection of forward-looking play.

The opening reception for Blank Arcade takes place on Wednesday 3 August and all DiGRA & FDG 2016 delegates are invited.