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Ateneo's Arete features 'The Games and Politics' Interactive Exhibit

by Gabriel Cadiz & Emily Tan 3 Months Ago



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Students and the public can look forward to the Ateneo de Manila University's future creative and innovation hub, **The Arete**, which is set to officially open in February 2018. Currently in the works, the Arete building is meant to be an expansion and a new space for the cultural endeavors of the University.



One of the main purposes of the building is to reach, connect, and infuse the creativity of the arts with other disciplines. One key feature of the building that surrounds this concept is the bridge of the building that acts as a metaphor.

Games and Politics Interactive Video Game Exhibit

Although it's still under construction, Arete has already launched their first ever exhibit: **The Games and Politics Interactive Video Game Exhibit** presented by the Goethe-Institut Philippinen and the Ateneo Art Gallery.



The goal of the exhibit is to express some realities of the current state of the world through a different medium: video games.



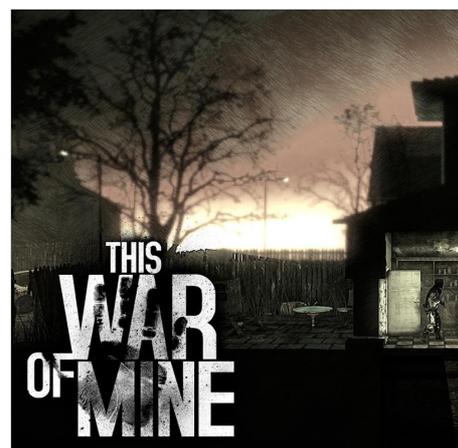
The Goethe-Institut wants to showcase how artists these days are using this medium to open its functions up to scrutiny and to explore where the boundary of games now lies. They aim to emphasize how this new leading medium can be used not only as an entertainment mainstream tool, but also to advocate ones' political agenda, and so much more.



At the "Games and Politics," one can have a personal and interactive experience through 18 different video games made by independent game developers to advocate their purpose. Here are some of the notable games featured in the exhibition:

This War of Mine (2014)

"This War of Mine," which was developed by 11-Bit Studios is dubbed as the "Saddest Game of the Year" by Zeit Online. It's a strategy game that is set on a fictional war-torn city of Pogoren, Graznavia, where you are to manage civilian survivors in order for them to survive until a ceasefire is called on the city. You get to take control a group of civilian survivors that take refuge inside ruins of a building in order to outlast the war outside by allotting different tasks to each member of the group. During the day, the group cannot go outside due to the battle ongoing in the area. At night though,



the survivors can go outside to look for food, medicine, and tools needed in order to survive. These survivors are also under the constant threat of criminals and looters. The game exposes the player to moral dilemmas through the scarcity of resources, hunger, disease, and death. It also tests the player to figure out which steps to take in order to survive: the use of force, stealing, helping other survivors, or leaving them to fend for themselves.

This anti-war game changes the perspective from the direct fighting of other war games, to focusing on the civilian victims of war. It is meant to take the player on a position of existential powerlessness through being not able to do anything to change the events causing the dilemma of the game, but to just brave the conflict altogether in order to survive.



Sunset (2015)

"Sunset" is a narrative, first-person game developed by Tale of Tales Studio, which brings the player to the eyes of Angela Burnes, an African-American citizen tasked as a housekeeper at the luxurious penthouse suite of Gabriel Ortega, a wealthy and influential person in the fictional country of Anchuria. As doing her tasks as a housekeeper, Angela discovers more about the country's political situation and her own employer as well. The game restricts the players' freedom by making them slowly realize that their actions won't change the events happening around them. The game provides an

introspective perspective on the current events happening in Anchuria, where Angela is at the mercy of the events surrounding her, making the players feel the helplessness of the character. It also shows another view on racial inequality and racism- as Angela is an African American immigrant forced to work as a housekeeper for a wealthy private household, despite her university qualifications.

Killbox (2016)

"Killbox" is a multi-player game by the Biome Collective that focuses on the topic of drone warfare that puts two players in different perspectives: one is from the perspective of a child wandering around their village; and another from the perspective of a drone pilot, given directives and objectives to accomplish without any question. One player is charged to control a pink ball that can be steered from a third-person perspective through a three-dimensional terrain characterized as a peaceful, tranquil, and soft area. This player is also tasked to collect white balls around the map. But also at the same time, the other player can end the game for the first player when he or she commits one mistake of an explosion.



The experience of "Killbox" is complete when both players have tried both perspectives. Player one has lots of freedom and yet so powerless, while player two has all the power in the game, without any freedom except to not follow orders, which means not playing the game at all.

Unmanned (2004)



“Unmanned” is a flash game developed by Molleindustria and written by Jim Monroe, which focuses on a drone pilot and his daily life. The game is presented in a split screen, covering both the protagonist’s thoughts against his task at hand. It shows how the drone pilot lives in a tranquil suburb, completely detached to the actual human beings affected by his work.

The game reflects the absurdity of modern warfare and how it numbs the society of the actual effects of the violent actions done to the other side of the coin.

“Unmanned” presents itself as a parody of the mainstream military games within an anti-war game.

You can check them out for yourself at the new Arete Building at the **Ateneo De Manila University, Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City** until **October 21, 2017**, where the final panel discussion and closing of the exhibit will take place.

For more information about the exhibit, visit Arete's Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/Ar eteAteneo/>).

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