



Conference Schedule Overview

September 12th, 2025: Friday

- **8:30 AM - 10:00 AM:** Registration in Wolk Admission Area
 - Coffee in front of Paychex Theater
- **10:15 AM - 11:15 AM:** Welcome and Opening Keynote in Paychex Theater
 - Conference Welcome, Dr. Lindsay Grace, Professor, University of Miami
 - Museum Welcome, Steve Dubnik, President & CEO, The Strong National Museum of Play
 - Address by City of Rochester Mayor, Malik Evans
 - Keynote Introduction by Dr. Jon-Paul Dyson, Senior VP, The Strong
 - Welcome Keynote by Stanley Pierre-Louis with Q&A to Follow
- **11:30 AM - 12:30 PM:**
 - Speaker Session #1 on "Decolonial Frameworks and Indigenous Voices" in Session Room 1
- **12:30 PM - 2:00 PM:** Lunch on your own
- **1:00 PM - 5:00 PM:** Games Showcase in Adams Atrium (opens at 1:00 PM)
- **2:00 PM - 3:15 PM:**
 - Speaker Session #2 on "Diaspora and Cultural Tropes in Games" in Session Room 1
 - Panel on "Diversity, Citational Justice, and Analog Game Studies" in Session Room 2
- **3:30 PM - 4:45 PM:**
 - Speaker Session #3 on "Identity and Fan Engagement in Gaming" in Session Room 1
 - Film preview and discussion in Session Room 2
- **5:00 PM - 6:00 PM:** Day 1 Closing Keynote by Elizabeth Del Valle
- **6:00 PM - 7:30 PM:** Fattey Beer Company Networking for All Attendees (across from museum)

September 13th, 2025: Saturday

- **8:30 AM - 9:00 AM:** Registration in Wolk Admission Area
 - Coffee in front of Paychex Theater
- **9:00 AM - 10:10 AM:** Day 2 Welcome and Keynote by Elizabeth LaPensée in the Paychex Theater
- **10:15 AM - 11:15 AM:**
 - Speaker Session #4 on "Race, Representation, and Resistance in Story-Driven Games" in Session Room 1
 - Games Showcase in the Adams Atrium
- **11:30 AM - 12:30 PM:**
 - Speaker Session #5 on "Cultural Preservation and Community Memory" in Session Room 1
 - Panel on "Reckoning with Japanese American Redress" in Session Room 2
- **12:30 PM - 2:00 PM:** Lunch on your own and the Games Showcase in the Adams Atrium
- **2:00 PM - 3:15 PM:**
 - Speaker Session #6 on "Educational Innovation and Institutional Change" in Session Room 1
 - Panel on "Social and Economical Factors that affect BIPOC Game Developers" in Session Room 2
- **3:30 PM - 4:30 PM:**
 - Speaker Session #7 on "Community, Design, and Play Cultures" in Session Room 1
- **4:00 PM:** Game Showcase Ends
- **4:30 PM - 5:30 PM:** Closing Keynote by Guha and Karthik Bala in the Paychex Theater
- **5:30 PM:** Closing remarks from Dr. Grace





September 14th, 2025: Sunday

- **10:00 AM – 12:00 PM:**
 - Unconference in Session Room 1
 - Please show conference badge at museum admission desk
- **1:00 PM - 3:00 PM:**
 - Unconference in Session Room 1
 - Please show conference badge at museum admission desk
- **Independent exploration of The Strong's exhibits is encouraged all day until the museum closes at 5:00 PM. Attendees must show their conference badge at museum admission desk.**



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Please note that the complete proceedings book is available via Play Story Press at, <https://playstorypress.org/>, after September 12th, 2025. The complete papers, extended abstracts, panel descriptions, recognition of committee members and additional information are contained in the proceedings. Please visit the open access bookstore for further details about the program and its contents



Paper Session Details:

- Each * **full-length paper** will be allocated **20 minutes** (15 minutes presentation, 5 minutes Q&A).
- Each **extended abstract** will be allocated **10 minutes** (8 minutes presentation, 2 minutes Q&A)

60 minutes	<p>Speaker Session #1: Decolonial Frameworks and Indigenous Voices</p> <p>Theme: Unsettling dominant narratives through Indigenous and decolonial lenses in games</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Cultural Threads in Gaming: Indigenous Representation, Knowledge, and Game Development — <i>Kendall Scott, Harley Ceberano, and Diego Martinez</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distorting Settler Colonial Space-Time: Space-Time Distortions and Indigenous Counter-Narratives in Pokémon Legends: Arceus — <i>Changie Chang</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • * Full Paper - Decolonizing Play: Frameworks for Game Design Free of Colonial Values — <i>Elaine Gómez, Dan Cook, and Roxanne Blouin-Payer</i>
75 minutes	<p>Speaker Session #2: Diaspora and Cultural Tropes in Games</p> <p>Theme: Examining how Asian and diasporic identities are represented—and misrepresented—in games.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing with Orientalism in How to Host a Murder's Hoo Hung Wu — <i>Noah Miranda</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clones and their (All)Mother: Postmemory, Techno-Orientalism, and Asian Diasporic Gaming in 1000xResist (2024) — <i>Joseph Wei</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beyond the Colonial Politics of Recognition — <i>Gerald Voorhees</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • * Full Paper: Lake Minnewaska Uplifting a Black Narrative in an Underrepresented Industry, Exploring Grief Themes in a Fishing Video Game — <i>Lloyd Campbell</i>
75 minutes	<p>Speaker and Panel Session #3:</p> <p>Identity and Fan Engagement in Gaming</p> <p>Theme: Fans navigating identity, representation, and cultural critique in gaming communities.</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expectation versus Reality: Black Millennial Fandom of the Yu-Gi-Oh! Trading Card Game — <i>Taylor Woodhouse</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Role of Romance in Shaping Player Interactions in Thedas: Deconstructing Misogynoir and Fan Interpretations of Vivienne — <i>Diamond Beverly-Porter</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Full Paper - Reclaiming My Controller: Gaming as Site of Black Feminist Intervention — <i>Myranda Bell</i>
Day 2:	
60 minutes	Speaker Session #4
	Race, Representation, and Resistance in Story-Driven Games
	Theme: How race and resistance narratives are embedded in story-heavy and cinematic games.
	Presentations ...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Full Paper - Racial Representation and Resistance in Dystopian Video Games: Exploring Detroit: Become Human and The Last of Us — <i>Kendal Jordan</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedural Blackness, or How to Read a Loss of Ontological Resistance in Video Games — <i>Ashleigh Cassemere-Stanfield</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I Can't Lie to You About Your Chances, But... You Have My Sympathies": Racial Movement Rhetorics and the Interface of Horror in Alien: Isolation — <i>Brandon Blackburn</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Greater History of Video Games — <i>Anthony Brave</i>
60 minutes	Speaker Session #5:
	Cultural Preservation and Community Memory
	Theme: Critical thought and feminist scholarship in the gaming space.
	Presentations ...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserving and Promoting Latine Cultural Heritage Through Gaming — <i>Samantha Conde</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Full Paper - What the Aesthetic and Preservative Functions of Batik in Songs of the Hmong? — <i>Sha Huang</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Full Paper - Virtual Reality Museums: Redefining Engagement and Understanding in Cultural Heritage — <i>Yuning Gao</i>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Jokes over you’re Dead!”, The Role we Play in the Necropolitical Design of Black and Latinx Characters in Games, Luke Hernandez
75 Minutes	<p>Speaker Session #6:</p> <p>Educational Innovation and Institutional Change</p> <p>Theme: How games shape education, identity, and institutional inclusion.</p> <p>Presentations ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • * Full Paper - Black Quare Game Studies: A New Approach to Gaming Education — <i>Kenneth Norwood</i> • Expanding Inclusion in Game Development: Creating the HBCU Expert in Residence Program — <i>Krystal Cooper</i> • Let’s Intelligame: Spreading Social Good with #ThoughtfulPlay — <i>Josh Boykin</i>
60 Minutes	<p>Speaker Session #7</p> <p>Community, Design, and Play Cultures</p> <p>Theme: Using games and game-like media to celebrate, preserve, and educate about cultural traditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • * Full Paper - Revive Rival Schools: Contemporary Efforts to Maintain Arcade Venues and Culture and the Relevance of Competitive Culture in Community Building — <i>Rhys Hall</i> • Collegiate Esports: Overcoming Bias, Exclusion, and Misinformation — <i>April Welch</i> • Designing a Community Generated Video Game Exhibition — <i>Masaya Heywood</i> • * Full Paper - “I Am Not the Default”: Racialized Experiences of Avatar Embodiment Among Black Social VR Users — <i>Cyan DeVeaux, Eugy Han, Zora Hudson, Jordan Egelman, James Landay, and Jeremy Bailenson</i>



Games Showcase

Curated by Allen Turner:

Open to all visitors to the Strong National Museum of Play

(Listed alphabetically)

Complete details available at links at <https://bipocgames.com/showcase/>

capitalism cannot last

- **Developer:** ATJScreams
- **Description:** This project was created for the "f*ck capitalism jam 2024" using free and open-source tools. It serves as a statement within a larger community expressing opposition to a destructive economic system. The game is described as a "small shout within a community's roar."

Cookout Calamity

- **Developer:** Thrill Seekers
- **Description:** Cookout Calamity is a tower defense game where you must protect the food for a family cookout from your hungry relatives. As the perfectionist Eris, you must set the table while your family arrives early to interfere with your progress. To win, you place your siblings, who act as allies, to distract family members before the timer runs out.

Far From Home

- **Developer:** Aaron Lim
- **Description:** This is a tabletop roleplaying game for 3-5 players about immigrants and outsiders exploring their identity in a new culture. Based on the "belonging outside belonging" framework, players explore what it means to draw from multiple cultures without fully belonging to any. In addition to their main characters, players also take turns controlling setting elements to introduce complications and drive the story.

Gaming for Justice- Welcome to the Mycelium Youth Universe

- **Developer:** Mycelium Youth Network: Gaming for Justice
- **Description:** This program uses gaming to address racial, environmental, and social justice topics through a culturally-responsive fantasy lens. It aims to build an intergenerational collaboration that empowers youth to envision and create a more just world. Sessions feature adventures narrated and illustrated by local artists that focus on Bay Area-centered issues like gentrification, pollution, and homelessness.

Kaiju Klasher



- **Developer:** Astro Peaks
- **Description:** Kaiju Klasher is a VR game where the player embodies a destructive Kaiju monster in a low-poly city. The gameplay is built around movement and environmental interaction, allowing you to knock down buildings, fight helicopters, and breathe fire. The game offers a chaotic and immersive experience for players to release frustration without real-world consequence.

Kevin

- **Developer:** Zihan Feng and Peiran Hu
- **Description:** Kevin is a narrative-driven slot machine game that explores the college life of its protagonist. Players spin virtual reels to generate a new day in Kevin's life, triggering emergent narrative moments through specific symbol combinations. The game's story focuses on the multidimensional aspects of Kevin's lived experience as an Asian queer individual.

Keys to a DREAM: An AAPI Immigrant Student's Story

- **Developer:** Matters at Play
- **Description:** This visual novel tells the story of Dr. Tereza Lee, the original "Dreamer" whose activism as a high school student in 2000 inspired the DREAM Act. The game explores the keys to her immigration story and her role in Asian American student activism. Still in development, it encourages players to continue advocating for essential immigration reform today.

Making Beshbarmak: Digital Games for Central Asian Cultural Heritage

- **Developer:** Amina Kobenova, Adina Kayimova, Tristyn Lai, Alim Utemisov
- **Description:** This is an interactive cooking game designed to immerse players in the culinary traditions and culture of Central Asia. Set in a cozy, digital yurt, the game leverages playful mechanics to reconnect diaspora communities with their heritage. It also serves to introduce non-Central Asian audiences to lesser-known cultural traditions through the emerging genre of cozy gaming.

Reclaim! Azhe-Giiewewining

- **Developer:** Grass Roots Indigenous Multimedia
- **Description:** This is an upcoming point-and-click adventure game about Ojibwe culture and language. Players take on the role of Miskwaa, a young Ojibwe girl who awakens in a magical forest and must use her traditional knowledge and language skills to find her way home. The game features full voice acting in the Ojibwe language, creating an immersive and fun way to engage with it outside of formal learning.

Sankofa Seasons

- **Developer:** DePaul Originals Game Studio/Council of Fools



- **Description:** Sankofa Seasons is a meditative and explorative game where players engage with Black stories of existence, wellness, and survival. Players wander a dreamy landscape to find "story-pots," which contain interviews with people across the diaspora of Blackness about their experiences. The project is described as a "love letter to Black survival" that celebrates the wisdom and everyday struggles of the community.

The Archon Experiment

- **Developer:** Eventcore - Soulstice Studios
- **Description:** The Archon Experiment is a high-octane sci-fi franchise about a group of rogue genetic experiments. The story follows them as they discover their purpose in a unique world. Their journey unfolds in a "cybermystic" setting filled with mad scientists and gods.

Welcome to Night Vale Roleplaying Game

- **Developer:** Renegade Game Studios
- **Description:** This tabletop roleplaying game allows players to immerse themselves in the world of the hit podcast *Welcome to Night Vale*. The game blends humor, mystery, and supernatural elements for thrilling and imaginative adventures. It provides everything needed to explore the desert town where every conspiracy story is true.



Panels and Roundtables:

Thursday, 2:00 PM – 3:15 PM

Diversity, Citational Justice, and Analog Game Studies: A Roundtable

EDMOND Y. CHANG (CO-CHAIR)

Associate Professor of English, Ohio University Editor-in-Chief, Analog Game Studies

AARON TRAMMELL (CO-CHAIR)

Associate Professor of Informatics, UC Irvine, Former Editor-in-Chief, Analog Game Studies

EVAN TORNER

Associate Professor of German Studies and Film / Media Studies, Director of UC Game Lab, University of Cincinnati, Senior Editor, Analog Game Studies

SHELLY JONES

Professor of English, SUNY Delhi, Senior Editor, Analog Game Studies

MEGAN CONDIS

Associate Professor of Creative Media Industries & Communication Studies, Texas Tech University, Analog Game Studies

EMMA LEIGH WALDRON

Assistant Researcher in Internet Culture and a Lecturer in the Department of Informatics, UC Irvine, Editor-at-Large, Analog Game Studies

BEATRIX LIVESEY-STEPHENS

MPhil Candidate in Games and Arts, Abertay University, Analog Game Studies

LUKE HERNANDEZ

Ph.D. Student in Arts, Technology, and Emerging Communication, University of Texas at Dallas, Editorial Intern, Analog Game Studies

Abstract:

In the inaugural issue of Analog Game Studies (AGS) in 2014, editors Aaron Trammell, Emma Leigh Waldron, and Evan Torner wrote that “analog games hold the potential to allow a new and different set of voices into design processes, voices which might resist the pathological displays of racism, sexism, homophobia, and violence native to the video game industry. In addition, analog games are...marginal and estranged from demands made by the conventional publishing industry...Because the impetus is on invention as opposed to industry, analog games epitomize the potentials of a design ethic [that] does



not pander to over-generalized market demographics.” Since the journal’s inception, AGS has worked to invite, discover, develop, mentor, and foreground scholars, designers, artists, and players from a range of disciplines, institutions, geographical locations, and stages of career. The journal regularly publishes essays on tabletop role-playing games, board games, card games, live-action role-playing, actual play, and gaming communities with an emphasis on analyses of race, gender, sexuality, disability, and other identities, materialities, and embodiments in analog games. Now, over a decade later, Analog Game Studies continues its interdisciplinary mission to provide “a periodically published platform for the critical analysis, discussion of design, and documentation of analog games. By offering sharp narratives that highlight the most interesting features of individual games, we hope to increase the visibility of analog games within the sphere of game studies.”

Thursday: 3:30 – 4:45 PM

Reckoning with Japanese American Redress: an interdisciplinary, community-engaged design story

Panelist bios

Lien B. Tran (she/her) is an associate professor of games and design and chair of the game design program at DePaul University's Jarvis College of Computing and Digital Media. She is director of Matters at Play, a transdisciplinary design lab partnering in the creation of interactive advocacy solutions for learning and positive social transformations (including social justice, public health, and the environment). Her design portfolio includes interactive solutions in collaboration with Full Spectrum Features, Open Society Foundations, World Bank, and the United Nations. Tran received her M.F.A. in Design and Technology from Parsons School of Design. See more at mattersatplay.com.

Dr. Belquis Elhadi (she/they) is an ACLS Leading Edge Fellow and the Manager of Learning and Impact at Full Spectrum Features. Dr. Elhadi received her PhD in American Culture from the University of Michigan, where she wrote a dissertation interrogating representation discourse through looking at depictions of Muslim women in popular culture and their relationship to US empire. They also hold a certificate in Learning Experience Design and work on healing-based pedagogies and curriculum development for Reckoning with Redress.

Clara Bergamini (she/hers) is a PhD Candidate in history at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She is formally trained as a historian of East Asia and her research centers around how people's experiences with and memories of crises and catastrophes shape society over time through moments of memory-making. She has been working as a historian and researcher with Full Spectrum Features since 2021 and is currently working as the Web Producer for the Reckoning with Redress project.





Ashley Cheyemi McNeil, PhD (she/her) is the Director of Education and Research at Full Spectrum Features, an arts/media non-profit that works to uplift stories from marginalized communities. She has PhDs in Literary Studies and American Studies with extensive experience working with cross-disciplinary teams of academics and community partners to create public-facing projects that disseminate stories and research. At Full Spectrum, Dr. McNeil leads the development of cinematic Open Educational Resources while also supporting the team in community collaboration, development strategy, and fundraising.

Dr. Karen (Kat) Schrier (she/they) is Full Professor and Director of Games & Emerging Media at Marist. She is also a game design consultant for World Health Organization (WHO) and CEO of PlatyPlay, LLC, which designs games for care, health, and inclusion. Dr. Schrier is the author/editor of over 100 published works, including *We the Gamers* (Oxford University Press) and *Knowledge Games* (JHU Press). She has over 20 years of experience in game development, and has worked for Nickelodeon, Scholastic, and BrainPOP. See more at: <https://www.karenschrier.com/> and <https://www.linkedin.com/in/katschrier/>.

Friday, 2:00 PM to 3:15 PM

Panel - What is Happening?: Social and Economical Factors that affect BIPOC Game Developers

Javon Goard, Johns Hopkins University

Latoya Peterson, Elsewhere Entertainment

Dr. Kishonna L. Gray, University of Michigan

PANEL DESCRIPTION

Our three panelists will engage the audience in a conversation surrounding social and economic factors attributed to the current state of the games industry: toxic work culture; high cost to develop games; cannibalization of game studios; mass layoffs. These factors have left consumers and games professionals to speculate about the stability of the games industry. The panelists are interested in how these factors impact BIPOC game developers? Where do they go after layoffs? The panelists will discuss what changes need to take place to create a more sustainable and equitable games industry?

This presentation will be with a brief explanation of the series of layoffs within the games industry. Afterward, there will be a conversation about the first-hand experiences of acquiring venture capital and maintaining an indie studio. Lastly, the presentation will end with a discussion on the need for the creative and social gaming spaces.





The panel will be given by Javon Goard, Latoya Peterson, and Dr. Kishonna Gray. Javon Goard's research takes an interdisciplinary approach in studying aspects of video game culture by working in the domains of sociology, informatics, and media studies. His current work focuses on African Americans/Blacks within esports and the intersection of black joy within gaming culture. Javon holds positions related to geek-culture related conventions; Member of the Board of Directors for MAGFest, Inc., Founder and Co-Director of the B.L.A.D.E. initiative at BlerDCon, and Steering Committee member for the Black in Gaming DMV Chapter. You can read his work in Sociation, blerdsonline.com, ROMChip: A Journal of Game Histories, medium.com and GamesIndustry.biz. Latoya Peterson lives at the intersection of emerging technology and culture. Named one of Forbes Magazine's 30 Under 30 rising stars in media, she is best known for the award winning blog.

Racialicious.com - the intersection of race and pop culture. She co-founded and was CXO, and Director for the Culture at Glow Up Games, a creative R & D studio telling beautifully crafted stories using mobile, AR/VR, AI, and other emerging technologies. She is currently on the advisory board of the Data & Society Institute and the board of visitors for The John S. Knight Journalism Fellowships. Dr. Kishonna L. Gray is a Professor in the School of Information at the University of Michigan. She is also a faculty associate at the Berkman Klein Center at Harvard University. Dr. Gray is the author/co-editor of Intersectional Tech, Race, Gender, and Deviance in Xbox Live, Woke Gaming and Feminism in Play. She also has a book currently under contract titled Black Game Studies. Dr. Gray is a highly sought-after speaker and regularly addresses both academic and industry audiences such as at the Game Developers Conference. She is the winner of a number of awards over the years, including The Evelyn Gilbert Unsung Hero Award and the Blacks in Gaming Educator Award.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thank you to BlerDCon's Blerds Leading and Advancing Diversity in Education initiative, Black in Gaming Foundation, and MAGFest's Music and Gaming Education Symposium for holding spaces for BIPOC players and researchers.

REFERENCES

- [1] Matthew Ball. 2025. PRESENTATION: The State of Video Gaming in 2025., Retrieved from May 15, 2025. <https://www.matthewball.co/all/stateofvideogaming2025>
- [2] Wes Fenlon and Ted Litchfield. 2024. The impact of 16,000 games industry layoffs, in one chart. Retrieved May 15, 2025 from <https://www.pcgamer.com/the-impact-of-16000-games-industry-layoffs-in-one-chart/>



Friday, 3:30 -4:45 PM

Film Viewing and Discussion

Game On: Using a documentary film about game designer Brenda Romero as a tool for BIPOC youth to create serious games

Theresa Loong, Parsons School of Design

Description

Game On is an upcoming documentary by BIPOC filmmaker and game designer Theresa Loong that focuses on pioneering game designer Brenda Romero (Dungeons & Dragons Heroes, Wizardry 8, and 45+ more). Brenda treats board and video games as art, incorporating game play into every aspect of her life. She creates contemporary and historical games to amplify social issues. Her games explore Black, Indigenous, Irish, Mexican and Jewish history in ways that challenge players. Brenda also navigates the male dominated game design industry.

Game On follows Brenda's life as the CEO of her video game company and a mom. She and her husband, legendary game developer John Romero, are on a mission to do what they love while raising four kids in an ethnically blended family. Brenda helms the production of a new game, and opens up a timely discussion about discrimination in the tech industry as well as the gaming world.

How can we make a more comprehensive community surrounding women, BIPOC creators, and the values we espouse? Game On encourages us to rally around the film and Brenda's achievements, creating space to acknowledge the social and economic struggle between caretaking, economic survival, and career building.

