



**Lauren Tan's Paper was delivered at *Plaything*;
The Language of Gameplay 2: artist presentations.**

The Language of Gameplay 2: artist presentations

Artists are incorporating various types of gameplay into their practice resulting in new hybrid forms.

Leon Cmielewski

GameArt: playing to lose

Laurens Tan

The minute you walked in the joint...

Rebecca Cannon

Introduction to game modification

The Minute You Walked in The Joint ...

Laurens Tan

[Vegascana® & Vegas Noir® : an Ecstatic Eclecticism] The Game begins as soon as you set eyes on the sign, as you park the car, enter the elevator ...

After other searching for an avenue to deconstruct my out-of-touch Chinese heritage [predominantly in Ceramics and Painting 1976- 89], and the [related] eternally puzzling and preoccupation of personal conduct within social transactions.

A first resolution was in 1991-92 when as Wollongong City Gallery's first Artist –in-Residence [designed using a Mac SE], 'Adapt Enforce IV' was created. The 14 m. fabricated steel sculpture was WCG's first work for its external 'gallery' and operated like a billboard, lenticular in its signage and interactive as it read like a slogan. The piece also toured to other sites, notably Gallery 14 at the Queensland Art Gallery. 'Adapt/ Enforce' was a series of work intended to question opposites in transactional behaviour- assertive vs. pliant, male vs. female, active vs. passive, weak vs. strong, winner vs. loser etc.

The first 3 of these works were drawings in chaff and shredded rubber, with the last of these shown in the Australian Perspecta in 1991 at the AGNSW.

In 1991 a further development in an interest in 'the game' was 'Skin' which explored shysters' language as used gambling in conspiring against unsuspecting prey [Macquarie Galleries Sydney, Michael Milburn Galleries Brisbane- installation of components in treated sheet steel]. 1990- 94 also saw the use of video in installations which had produced kiosk-structures which dramatically changed the function, appearance and notion of 'sculptures'. 'Well the image is One Thing...' was one of such works to tour US Art Museums [1995-97] as part of the 'Elvis + Marilyn: 2X Immortal' exhibition- 107 works curated by Wendy McDaris, University of Memphis and the Boston Institute of Contemporary Art.

Octogene was a tender won in 1994 for the Capitol Theatre's Box Office Foyer and possibly the most satisfying project that addressed the entertainment design intent. The video and animation was programmed to reflect the 'atmospheric' theme of the late 20's, and partly based on Jules Verne's themes. Screen imaging and construction design and detail of the 'kiosk' were purposefully linked.

A third video 'construction' created during this same period was 'Vegas of Death', an installation based around two 70's 'Aristocrat' slot machines. The slot cabinets were converted to look like coffins with video loop and interactive reel-game. The project was initiated by Rookwood Necropolis to tour Australia to promote the city cemetery as a place of cultural interest.

Two other kiosk-like sculptures, both 1997, were kiosks as 'entertainment' furniture constructions: 'Bartone I & II' for the Tamworth Country Music Festival and 'Consoles I & II' for the Casula Powerhouse to commemorate the 'fallow' years of the powerhouse building.

The entertainment design platform in my work was outlined in a paper at the University of Nevada Reno's **10th International Conference on Gambling**, Montreal, Canada in 1997, following what, since 1995, became bi-annual pilgrimage visits to Las Vegas. The Silver City's architectural and design history and its unique demeanour in urban entertainment management led to my thesis 'A Cultural Architecture of Identity' which proposed that the apparently derivative and eclectic imaging style was spuriously used as design template elsewhere as shorthand to deliver a visual environment gamblers and tourists expected. The term 'Vegascana'® and 'Vegas Noir'® were used in the thesis to refer to this heritage. The essence of Vegas became an obsession in design research- wishing to fulfil a Sequel study of the urban phenomenon in the footsteps of Venturi/Scott Brown's 'Learning from Las Vegas'. [Vegascana is attributed to Mike Newman, a Las Vegas writer and blackjack dealer at Rio casino].

Since 1997, the Vegas investigation became a fundamental element for all projects, including several public art proposals carrying the urban entertainment theme [which never came to fruition], but several exhibitions and projects that did: 'ESM' [1997], 'Aiya' [1998], *Jack High* [Animation 1997-98], 'Profile of a Counter' [Animation 1998-2000], 'Daze of Our Lives' [2000], 'Game Theory I' [2001] and including the year-long 'Octomat' project culminating in participation in the World Gaming Congress in Las Vegas in 1999, which also produced the website, www.octomat.com. 'Octomat' was a research partnership assisted by the Research Centre, UWS and culminated in several industry animation projects- TV Commercial, Slot machine, Website and other animation. The project was also supported by the University of California Davis, with several interns from the Faculty of Environmental Design and Landscape Architecture taking part.

Current works pare the gambling theme to more elemental concerns- especially involving Pythagorean numbers, number theories, the symbology of numbers and mathographics. A current theme development is 'Risk-as-Pleasure', *lifestyle* considerations informed by the doctrines of Epicurus and the theories on risk of economist Daniel Kahneman. Forthcoming research projects will also consider the solutions surrounding problem gambling and aspects addiction/ immersion.

New installations will be at the Sydney Powerhouse Museum and at Casula Powerhouse in 2004.

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