

Into the Pixel: 2006 Juror Insights

Fine Art Perspective:

The variety of work was extraordinary, and I was impressed with how the digital medium allows such varied pictorial effects. Some works seemed to evoke more traditional paintings or drawings, while some effects were more sculptural or digital. The artists' imaginative and inventive range of subjects was amazing and not at all formulaic.

-- *Cynthia Burlingham, The Hammer*

The *Into the Pixel* exhibition comes at an interesting time in contemporary art, where fine artists are utilizing imagery and concepts from video games into their work. Usually this influence stems from the generation who have grown up with gaming culture, and it can manifest itself into more traditional fine-art forms such as sculpture, paintings, and multi-media installations.

Jurying *Into the Pixel* gave me the opportunity to familiarize myself with the art that stems directly from the video games of today and is, thus, influencing the fine art realm. Coming at it from an art background, my interest lies in the finished product: How does the piece work? How is it composed? Does it aesthetically stand up to what I see in my everyday work environment as a gallerist? What I found was that, yes it can. Whether or not digital/game art will be accepted into the contemporary art work will depend entirely on the context in which it is presented. Given this "right" context, I do not see why talented gaming artists couldn't emerge successfully as fine artists.

-- *Caryn Coleman, sixspace and art.bloggng.la*

When Kevin Salatino (Curator of Prints and Drawings at LACMA) asked me to be on the *Into the Pixel* jury for the 2005 competition, I thought he had lost his aesthetic mind and I said as much in a slightly less polite way. It's an odd thing to judge static images that were, for the most part, taken from video games. (Some of the images turned out to be preparatory studies). And then the other problem: is it art? I decided not to be pedantic and take the images at face value and judge them from my perspective as a curator. I look at composition, color, and line, as well as the disposition of characters-- not to mention a bunch of other issues. What I found were images that were sometimes poetic, sometimes nostalgic, and sometimes downright brilliant.

-- *Louis Marchesano, Getty Research Institute*

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Game Art Perspective:

I once swore I would never use a computer to produce art. That the fidelity and feedback and creative process of my beloved traditional materials could never be matched by what was then an admittedly fairly crude contraption (this was way back in 1996 after all). Now I can't see working any other way. The computer as an art, design and illustration tool is a huge leap forward for artists looking to work in a media which has virtually no limitations on creativity or potential.

The level of talent displayed by this year's ITP artists really showed this trend. Making the final selections was not an easy task. I enjoyed the breadth of technique and subject matter; and it's clear that these artists have pushed the boundaries of their capabilities to new levels. There was a lot of discussion and debate during the jury process when game art experts and working computer artists hashed things out with fine art historians. My eyes were really opened when this top level digital game art was seamlessly discussed in the context of broader Art History trends. I consider events such as ITP as some of the first steps in blurring the lines between game art and fine art.

-- *Ryan Church, Concept Artist*

Few can have failed to notice that stunning graphic content is driving next-generation games. This has led to an extremely high caliber of artist being attracted to the game industry -- artists whose work rivals that in any other medium. The quality of game art has been a tremendous inspiration to my university students who are excited to see games now as a clear art form in themselves, and a domain where they can potentially excel to widespread acclaim.

The dialog that *Into the Pixel* has brought about between digital artists and traditional fine art is also immensely inspiring and is leading to incredibly interesting explorations of art across all media. Most exciting for me, ITP is allowing the exceptional individuals responsible for game art to at last gain recognition for their work and in turn further elevate the wider spread appreciation for games as an art form.

-- *Tim Langdell, University of Southern California and EDGE Games*

Each year the game industry continues to attract incredible artistic talent from around the globe. Yet much of the work created by these artists goes into the preproduction process and is rarely seen in its original form by the art-loving public. That's why *Into the Pixel* is an exciting opportunity. It allows the artistic works to be seen and judged by the artistic merits of the creators and not by the commercial success that is all too often mistaken for quality in our mass market medium. To gain the attention and support of the museum community brings recognition and acknowledgement to those exceptional individuals who continue to foster inspiration within the games industry each day.

-- *Lorne Lanning, Oddworld Inhabitants*