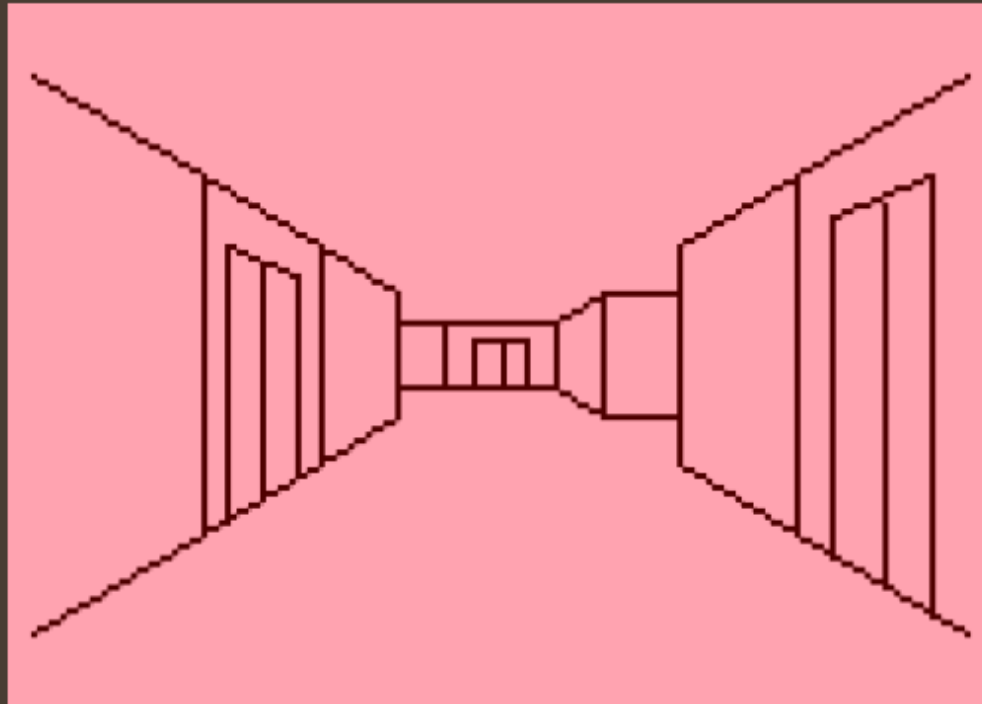


## THE POWER OF THE ABSTRACT

A GDC 2015 Talk by Liz Ryerson (@ellaguro)



the history of videogames = a struggle

NOW, we choose the limits. And we often see "gameyness" as a prison"

"representation realism" in Call of Duty/GTA/etc - not necessarily any more "real".

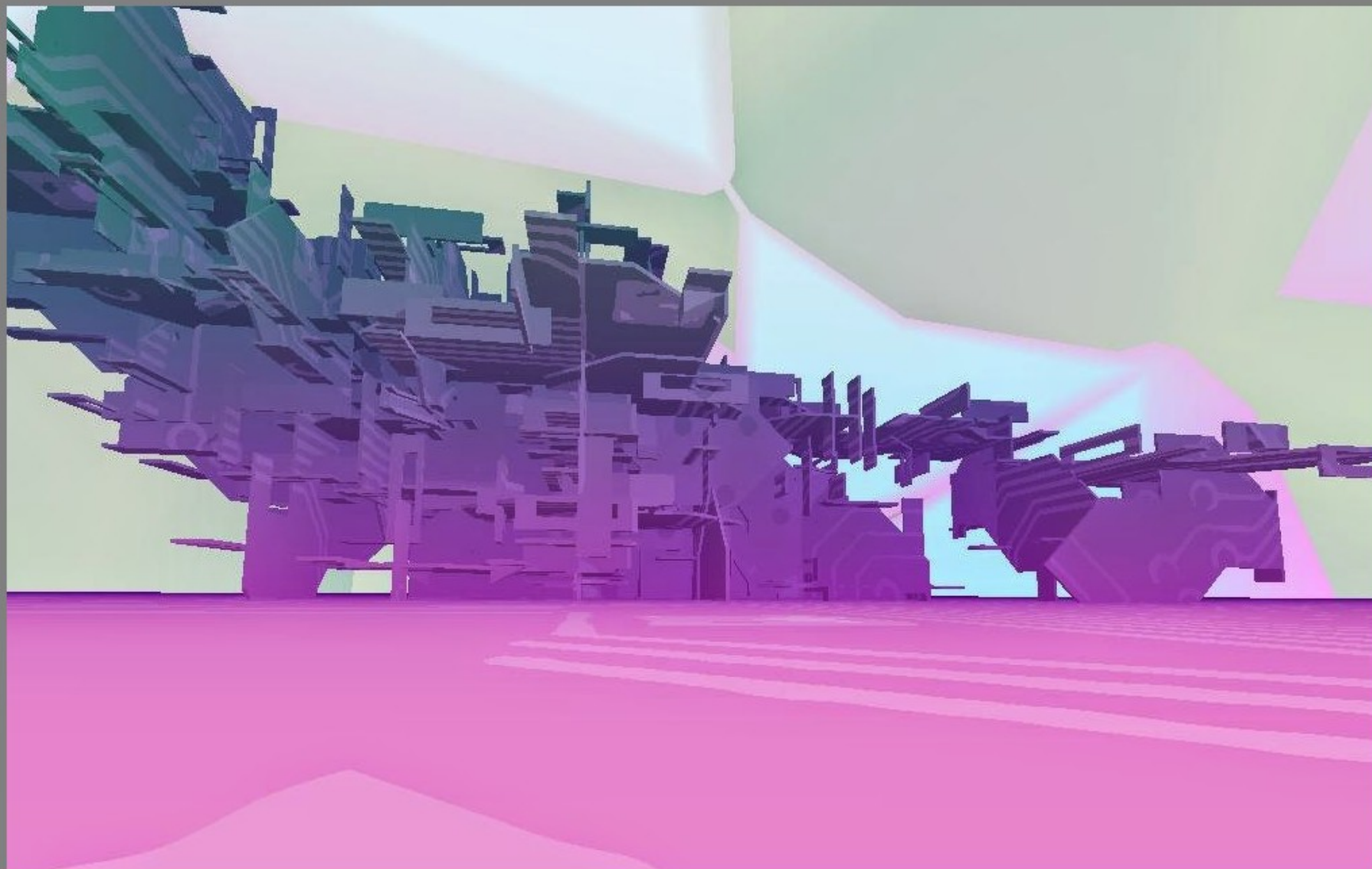


Games culture is very reflective of itself.

Games are very powerful and real, but also very fake. this fakeness can be a virtue instead of a shortcoming.

DISCLAIMER: THIS TALK NOT ABOUT HOW TO NAVIGATE AAA OR OTHER BUSINESS MATTERS.

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StrangeClimbing by StrangeThink - world has both an aesthetic & mechanical purpose.

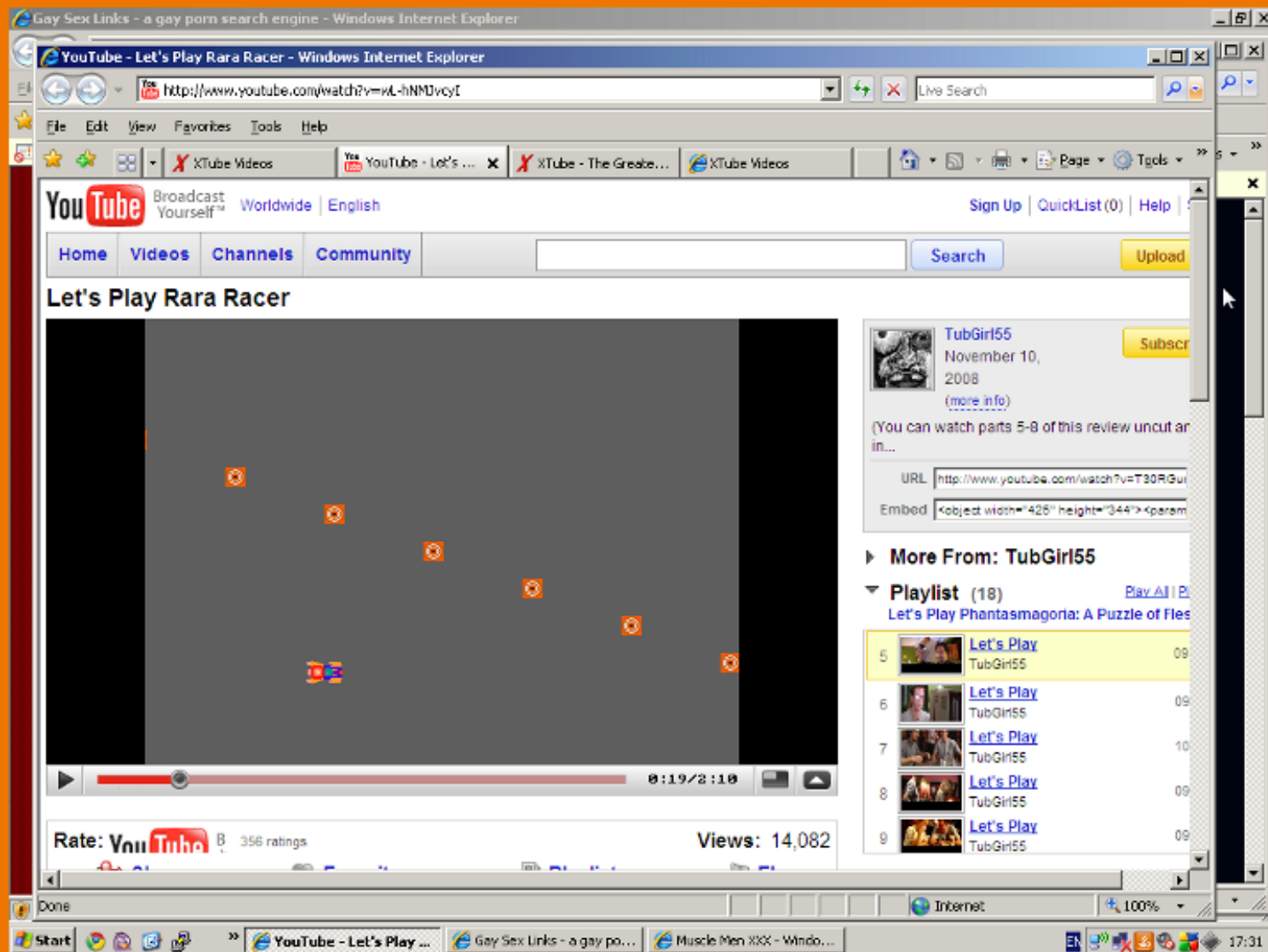


doesn't hide from it's guts!

let's talk about "polish".

"polish" = a construction defined by the culture of games!

it should = how effectively a game realizes its ideas. more subjective (but not totally arbitrary!) judgment.



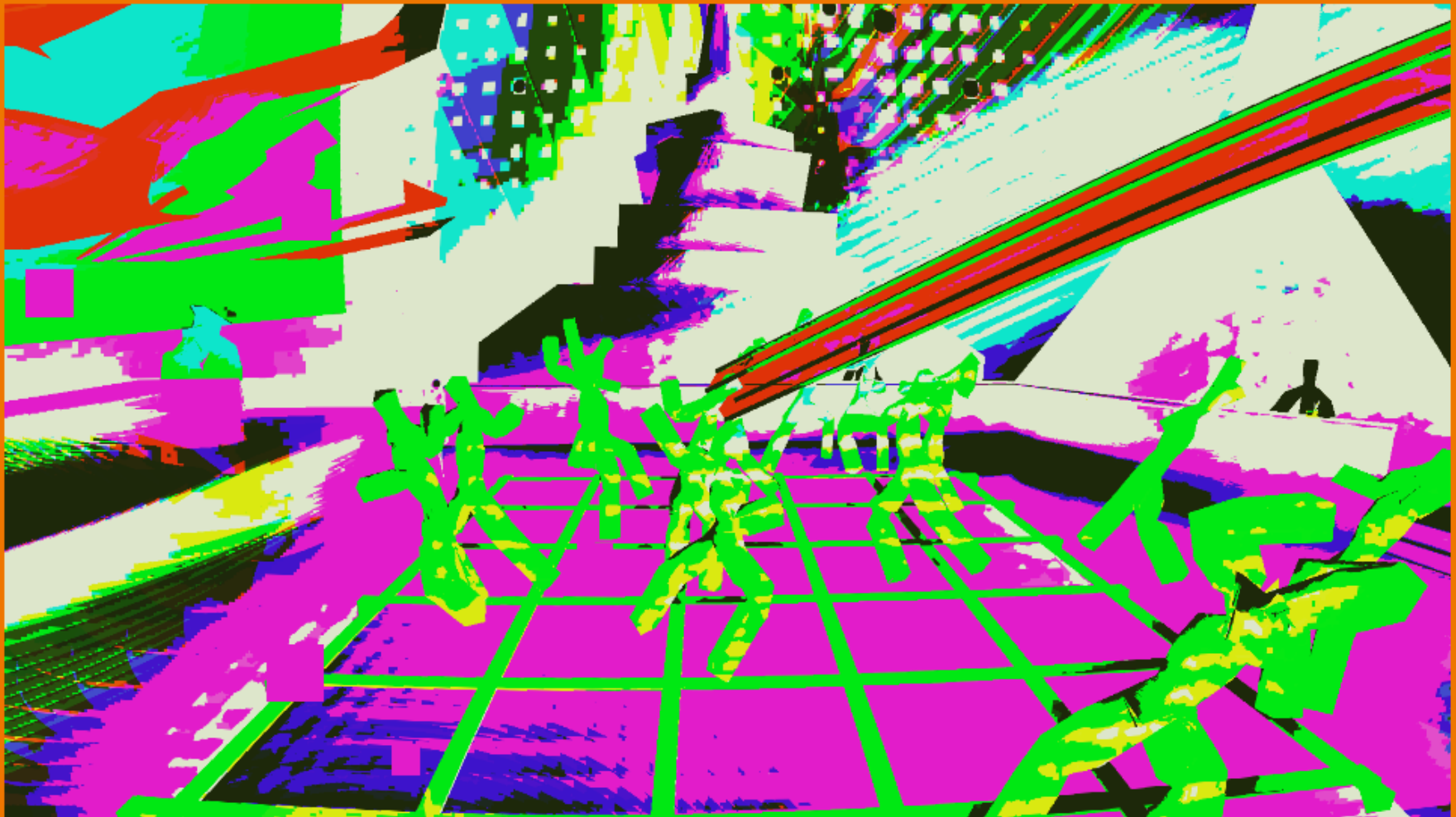
Rara Racer by Stephen Lavelle - fully realized & polished "joke" game.

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I should play with Jack.

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The Terrible Whiteness of Applachain Nights - ASCII art reflects the themes. (inability to meaningfully interact with the world, a sense of dissociation).



Slave of God - literally like being on drugs.

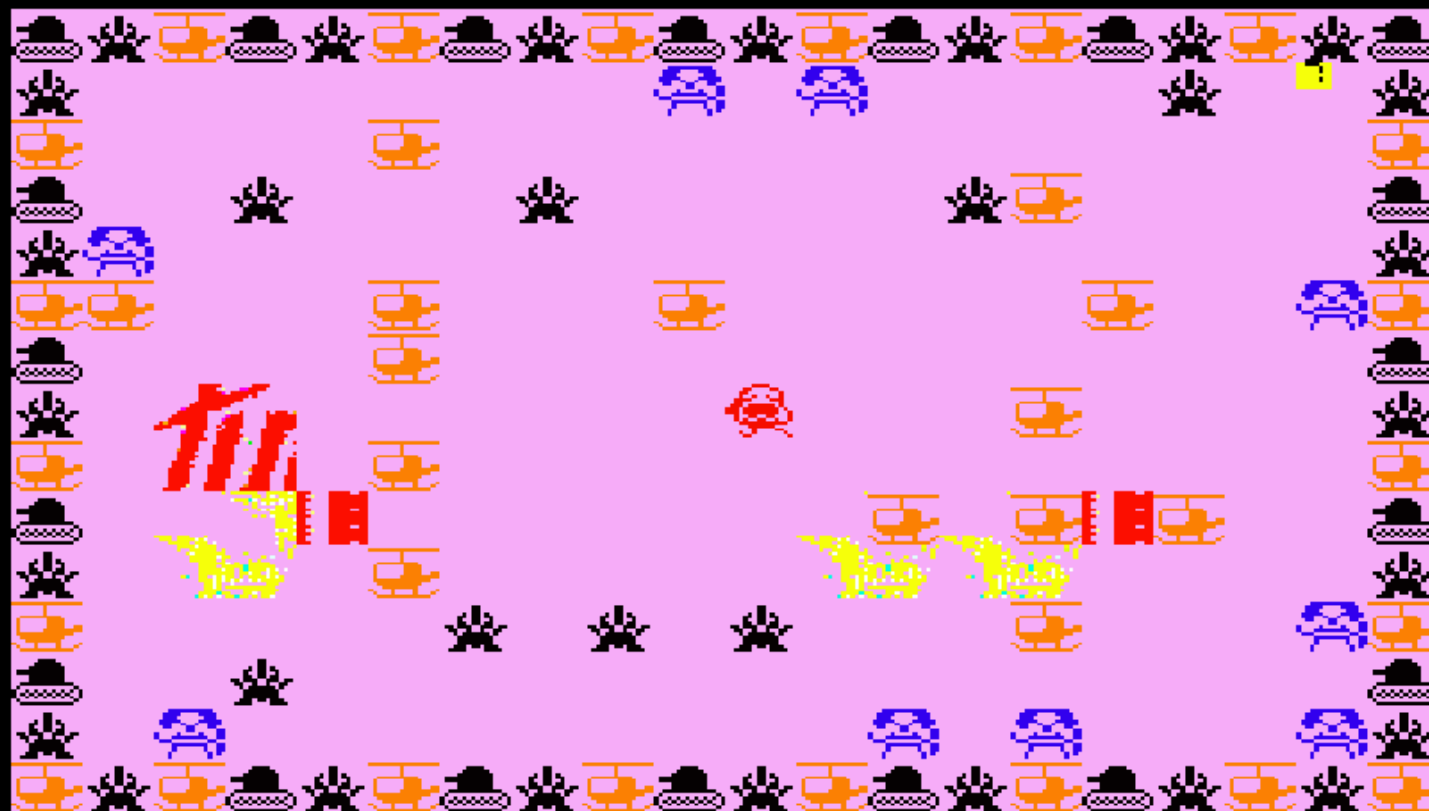
These games, while very different, all very effectively realize their ideas.

Stephen Lavelle thinks deeply about how to reflect narrative themes into all aspects of the game - interface, design, visuals, sound, writing.

His work is intersectional. IMO He's the best and most exciting game designer working today.



Carrocracia by Pedro Paiva: almost a bootleg game. Sarcastic commentary.



VHS Maluco: confrontationally anti-game reimagining of old arcade games.

from his patreon - "When I talk about melting videogames I'm thinking of corrode the borders that maintains the most diverse part of people away from the inside community (and the inside people stuck in). I love videogames but hate the mainstream culture around it."

Anarchist games very effectively using the language of the medium.

THIS IS INTENTIONAL!! DONE NOT JUST BECAUSE IT'S EASY TO DO!

abstraction: not just "glitch" or 8-bit weirdness or whatever.



Horror - the genre most friendly to abstraction. Using tools to make visual metaphors in the language of dreams.



Silent Hill games: good at abstraction.

This head is judging you.

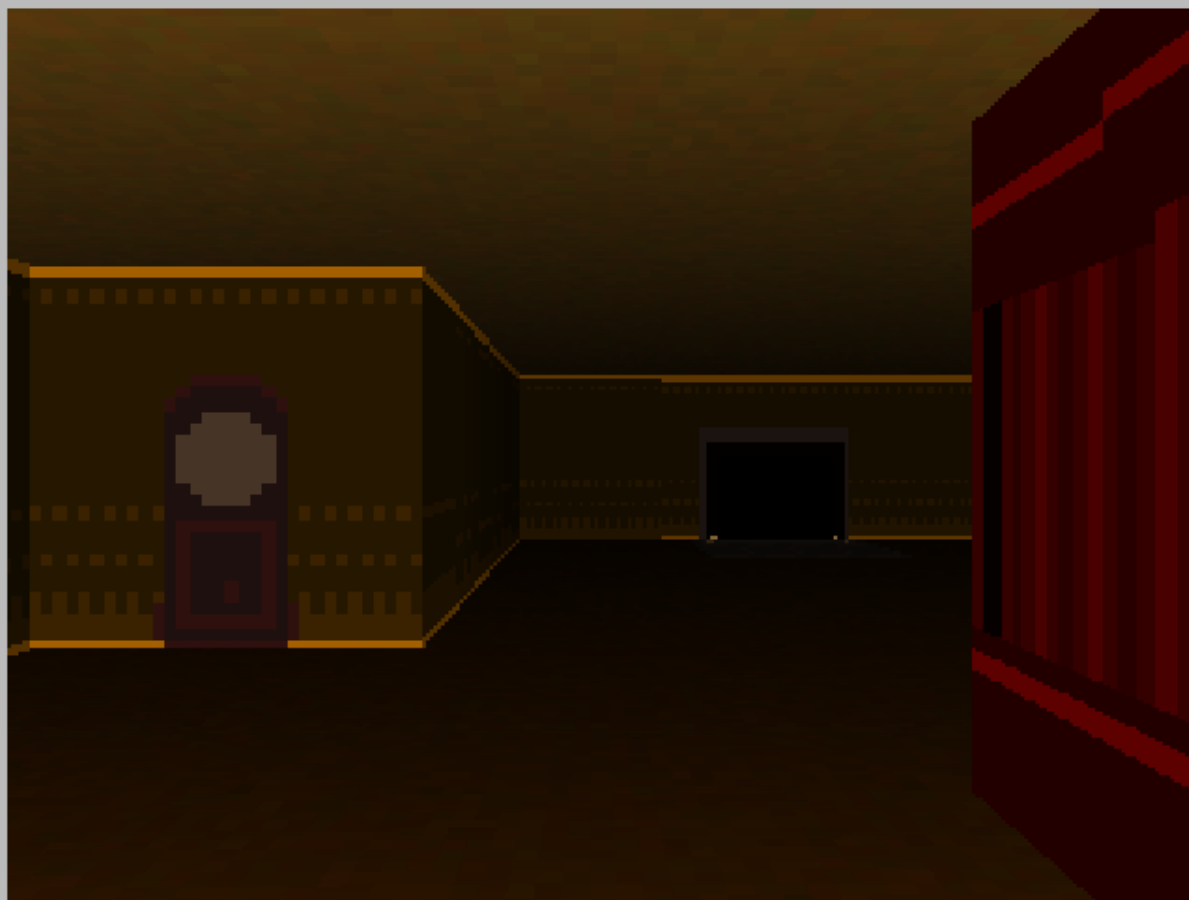
Silent Hill 2 - deliberately confusing spatial navigation.



Yume Nikki - one of my favorite games!!

A metaphor for all games. We enter into doors, and see parts of ourselves.

GAMES ARE DREAMS!



Judith (& others) - taking an existing feeling not quite on the surface and fully owning it.

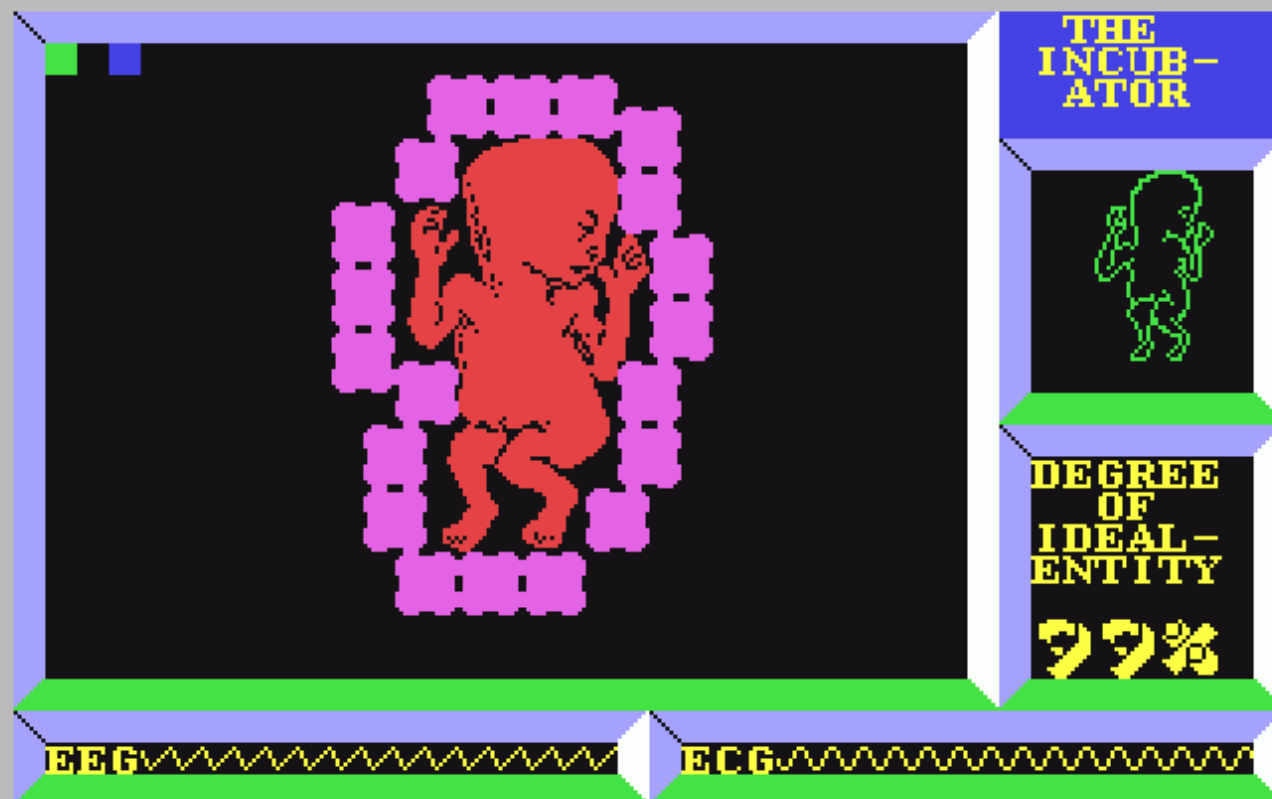
History leaves traces of the past behind.

Weird/conceptual/experimental/"art" games have always existed. We must not leave them behind!

here are a few very strange games from the 80's, in case you need reminding:



Microsurgeon for the Intellivision. from 1982 - three years before Mario.



Deux Ex Machina. a year before Mario & featured spoken narration throughout the whole game.



Go To Hell for the ZX Spectrum. Came out the same year as Mario.

In spite of technological limitations and design weaknesses, these games can and do still speak to us today. They tell us something new & valuable!

Own your "gameyness"!

EMBRACE THE NEW FLESH!  
LONG LIVE THE NEW FLESH!

END. (thank you!)