

THE WIND SPIRIT

PROGRESS REPORT SEPTEMBER 2019-JANUARY 2020

Big update. After a major “life event” I’ve been steadily working on new things and gathering material and energy to write about. I made this website and the first blog a little over a year ago and as such I feel like it needed some updates. My original plan was to publish a blog a month but that didn’t happen, mostly because I didn’t have enough material month-to-month to write about. Maybe this needs a format change as well? Who knows what will happen in 2020.

MAX ANDERSON

WORK REPORT

SKELETON BAND CHARACTER PACK I’ve been wanting to make a game for about a year or so. I wrote the general story in broad strokes (summarized in the video *Freak Room: Ruins*) and have been working on and off on three of the main characters: these skeleton brothers who have a band. Well, I

finally finished some high-quality versions of them in Blender and as it will be a long time until I finish the game, I wanted to publish them in some form. I put them on itch.io for purchase. I don’t expect anyone to actually buy them but just wanted to release a finished product.

SCANS I feel like opportunities to show work in Baltimore and potentially the world at large has dried up for me. As such, I’ve been focusing on finishing long-term projects I started years ago, organizing old project folders and cleaning my room. I’ve kept a lot of old notes, cut outs, sketches, prints, drawings, sketchbooks, etc. in a low-level of organization since 2011. I finally sorted through them, scanning a lot and throwing a lot away. I put the best of the notebook stuff and the collage stuff in two folders on Deviantart if anyone is curious.

ART

PARTY ON THE CAPS I saw Meriem Bennani’s *Party on the CAPS* at Clearing in Brooklyn. I had been anticipating this exhibition for a while, and it did not disappoint. I’ve talked about Meriem Bennani’s work a couple times in the past; this show was definitely a natural progression from what I’m familiar with in her work. The video work takes place on a futuristic domed island city populated by those caught and sequestered for teleporting without proper credentials. The video pieces are vfx-heavy and really funny which heighten the super interesting sci-fi premise.

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HALO IN A HAYLOFT NOEL FRIEBERT I saw my friend Noel's solo show at Lubov in New York and it didn't disappoint. Noel's work is intricate and tender with a grim aesthetic that manages to avoid feeling brooding or nostalgia-driven. Noel's comics and prints are extremely unique work; definitely work anyone's time.

DIS UNIVERSITY: LIBERAL DEMOCRACY AND DRIVERS OF EXCLUSION WITH MCKENZIE WARK AND LESTER SPENCE My friend Lee moderated this great lecture between two authors who have been really influential to me. I've read a lot of McKenzie Wark's books and rely heavily on her work. Lester

Spence is someone who's actual writing I'm admittedly less familiar with though his prominence here in Baltimore means that I've been familiar with (and admired) his work. The two speakers had a lot to talk about and the conversation moved really fast in a good way.

WEB/VIDEOS/GAMES

DEADLY PREMONITION An older game that I recently revisited in observance of its recently announced sequel. Definitely one of my favorite works of art. At its surface its a low-budget survival horror game heavily influenced by Twin Peaks, but after a few hours things get really interesting. The style of the game is eerie and janky, but the character interactions and dialogue keep things grounded. By the midpoint of the game I felt really attached to all the characters. The soundtrack is also very memorable. A lot of people consider this to be one of the last mid-budget studio games so there's also some fondness for that bygone style of game wrapped up in my adoration.

WIZARD PEOPLE, DEAR READER An early internet "audio book" commentary track for the first Harry Potter movie. This sort of media and humor has almost completely disappeared from the internet. Revisiting this makes me feel really good, though its totally guilty of the sort of trappings one might expect from 2005ish internet humor. Still, this is much more revisitable than other similar pieces of media.

BATTLE FOR DREAM ISLAND A delightful cartoon made by two brothers in 2010 that's still ongoing. I tore through a ton of these on the train and found the style and humor to be very charming. Every joke has a really bizarre ad-lib video game logic to it. It feels really similar to Nick "Ulillillia" Smith's work. I feel like this episode, especially the sweeping shots of the city and the final race up into space represent the charm and scale of this series well:

ANODYNE 1 & 2 I have a lot to say about these games and not all of it is positive. I usually leave things I feel even somewhat negatively about off this list, but in this case I definitely do think these games (especially Anodyne 2) are worth playing. I picked up both games when I saw the trailer for Anodyne 2. I really liked the aesthetic of the 3d world. It was definitely a PS1-

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era throwback but the art direction and use of modern shaders and lighting gave it a really powerful and consistent look. Anodyne 1 is a completely 2d LoZ-style game that stands out less and is a little frustrating to play. I played it before Anodyne 2 and was really frustrated by a lot of the puzzles, platforming and the writing. In fact, both games tend to have this flippant-yet-surprisingly-philosophical Earthbound style writing and dialogue that's been popular ever since Undertale took off. It's really not my thing. Honestly I was also disappointed that a ton of Anodyne 2 takes place in a similarly exhausted 2d world. Barely anything game-y happens in the 3d environments. I wouldn't be disappointed if the whole game was 3d exploration and interaction with other characters via dialogue. Again, the 3d environments are beautiful and moving around the 3d worlds is really fun. You can turn into this cute little car and drive around. Its hard to say the writing and the 2d parts are "bad", just not really my thing. Even so I think Anodyne 2 at least is worth picking up for the 3d parts alone. I also think supporting the devs is a good idea. I feel like whatever they do next will be really good given the jump in quality from Anodyne 1 to Anodyne 2.

EARTHBOUND BATTLE BACKGROUNDS A little Java tool I found online for generating background animations like those found in the video game Earthbound.

SUPER MARIO MANGA A collection of charming Mangas from the various Super Mario Bros. games. Not a lot to talk about; just sharing.

YOSHIRO KIMURA INTERVIEW Good interview about a cult-classic game Moon which is getting a localization on the Switch later this year. I'm excited for this and the interview is full of keen insights from the industry.

3D PLUGINS/PROGRAMS

PROCEDURAL MATERIALS I've been making a lot of procedural textures in Blender lately. It's a lot more rewarding to me than searching for free textures online or attempting to paint my own (I'm not good at texture painting). Also, making one material means that I won't have to find another eyeball or bark texture ever again. I've found the YouTube channel Syncratic 3d to be really helpful. Anyways I combined these two tutorials (here and here) and made a really nice procedural eye material. If you want it, let me know, but it only works in Blender 2.80 because they changed the values and the way the Voronoi texture node works in 2.81.

FOLIAGE RESOURCES A really good collection of various tutorials and resources for making 3d foliage. Pretty old though so some of the links are dead.

LAZY BLENDER TUTORIALS These one minute blender tutorials are helpful and well edited. You can watch them all in like 18 minutes, too.

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PODCASTS

PARADISE CROSSED I stumbled on this podcast because someone I follow on Soundcloud reposted it. I clicked on it thinking it was a mix they were maybe featured on but its not its just a really good podcast. The hosts bill it as a “Nightcore Lifestyle” podcast and they seem to have spent the same amount of formative teen time in the same places online as me. A lot of topics and references are made to things I would never hear another human talk about (like the girugamesh meme from 2009). They also have a soundboard; a requisite for good podcasts.

BOYS’ BIBLE STUDY Cohosted by one of the Paradise Crossed guys. The three hosts talk about recent Christian films. They were all raised in religious households and do more than just make fun of the movies. It only has a few episodes so far but I’m into it.

BOOKS

HEGEMONY AND SOCIALIST STRATEGY by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe After seeing this book cited time and time again, usually by McKenzie Wark, I decided to check it out. Unfortunately a lot of the info in this book went over my head since its not really my area of expertise. I’ve read a lot of Mouffe at this point and while I want to keep trying to read stuff like this I think its clear that I definitely need someone like Wark to explain the broader strokes to me. In any case I would recommend it to anyone interested in more modern foundational Marxist theory stuff.

CRIME OR EMERGENCY by Sibyl Kempson My friend Amanda recommended this play to me and I really enjoyed it. I haven’t read or seen anything else by Sibyl Kempson but I generally trust anything associated with the Bernadette Corporation. It reminded me a lot of the ...A Most Curious Dream play that I wrote about a couple posts ago. I was really moved by this part, considering that I live in a warehouse space with a long history.

LACEY

But recently I went to a place that had been a camp. And it was so great. The bathrooms and the rooms were not finished off, but the structure of two by fours inside the places were exposed, so you could see the homemade handiwork, you got the feeling that they had been built by one very adept carpenter of a period of time. And the two by fours were painted white, Even in the bathrooms and showers. There were corners and shelves built in, for soap or for toilet paper or what not. It was nice. Very practical, and comforting. You didn’t examine things to make sure they were clean. It didn’t matter as much. Because there was still care put in. The walls themselves were painted bright, strong blue. Which you appreciated especially at night. Just a light bulb in the ceiling with a beaded metal pull cord. It felt like childhood, it felt like someone had cared. And it was a privilege to be there, to spend time there. I hope I never forget it. Instead of roaches and rats, there were spiders and deer curled up out back in the sunshine. (She sighs.)

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CAPITAL IS DEAD by **McKenzie Wark** McKenzie Wark's latest book is great. Its really accessible and I would recommend it to anyone. Wark continues to be one of the few Marxist voices that I feel really understands technology. In the book she does a good job at breaking down institutional Marxist conceptions of class and labor and reevaluating them in a contemporary context.

MUSIC

NEOTENOMIE An LA-based electronic musician who I found because she made the soundtrack to the upcoming game Crypt Underworlds (which I'm really excited for). She recently put out two releases, Bubblegum Crises pt. 1 and pt. 2 and I really enjoyed them, especially the Nightcore version of Numb.

MOVIES

DRAGON'S HEAVEN Rare anime OVA heavily inspired by the art of Moebius. Definitely worth the short runtime.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN An unambitious Leprechaun knockoff the inexplicably contains a really fun car chase between an 18-wheeler and a little gocart. Also the male lead wears a crazy red white and blue leather jacket for most of the movie.

TWISTED PAIR Neil Breen's movies have been all over the internet and its easy to see why. They're really dense sprawling narratives with bizarre science fiction plots usually starring Breen himself as some form of genius ecoterrorist or vengeful alien. Unsurprisingly the conversations and analysis of Breen's work online pretty much shakes out to ridicule. This movie is great video art. Its compelling, inexplicable and entertaining. Breen's movies can be a little difficult to get a hold of through legitimate channels (no streaming) but you should be able to find them if you know where to look.

THE EVIL WITHIN Another outsider movie. Made over the course of 15 years by a recovering meth addicted oil heir in his mansion. This movie was suggested by Sam. Similar to Twisted Pair this movie is legitimately compelling and contains visual effects and sequences that are breathtaking, especially because they're in the same movie that laughable bullshit is happening in. If we have anything in common you will love this.

DEATH MACHINE A cyberpunk slasher set in a skyscraper starring Brad Dourif as the indirect hacker killer. It's really good. A shining example of low-budget horror.

TWIN SITTERS 80's comedy starring identical twin wrestlers. This movie is really weird but the most confusing part is the wardrobe of the two Twin Sitters. Like, eventually one of them is just tangled up in a coiled keyboard cord as part of his costume.

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THE SIXTH DAY Seems to be an attempt to recapture the magic of Total Recall in the 2000's. There's a lot of good stuff in here and the whole look and style of the movie is heavily entrenched in the style of the time. Arnold plays two characters its really good.

<http://thewindspirit.com/reports/report-09-01-2020.html>

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