

Exhibition Information

Theresa Duncan CD-ROMS

Sat 16 July - Sun 4 September 2016

DCA
Dundee Contemporary Arts

152 Nethergate
Dundee DD1 4DY
01382 909900
Scottish Charity No. SC026631

Open daily 11:00-18:00
Open late Thu 20:00
Admission free
www.dca.org.uk

INTRODUCTION

THERESA DUNCAN: CD-ROMS

For summer 2016 DCA is delighted to present *CD-ROMS* and *Small Wars*, two exhibitions in partnership with Abertay University exploring the cultural impact of computer games, programmed and co-curated with Dr William Huber, Head of the Centre for Excellence in Game Education.

The exhibitions coincide with Abertay University's hosting of the first joint International Conference of DiGRA and FDG 2016, from Mon 1 to Sun 6 August.

Theresa Duncan (1966-2007) was a writer, filmmaker and computer game creator who became known in the 1990s for developing graphic adventure games for girls. Duncan's three completed games, *Chop Suey*, *Smarty* and *Zero Zero*, have been conserved by Rhizome and can be played in the exhibition. Stills from each game are presented on the gallery walls. The exhibition also features Duncan's animated film *The History of Glamour*.

CD-ROMS is presented in association with Rhizome, New York. Special thanks to Michael Connor, Dragan Espenschied, Mary Duncan, Magnet Interactive/AKQA and Tom Nicholson.

Further information:

www.dca.org.uk/whats-on/event/theresa-duncan

www.theresalduncan.typepad.com

www.rhizome.org/editorial/2015/apr/17/theresa-duncan-cd-roms-are-now-playable-online



Chop Suey, 1995

Chop Suey is a point-and-click adventure game developed and published by Magnet Interactive Studios in 1995. It was developed by Theresa Duncan and Monica Gesue while they were working at the World Bank in Washington DC. The artwork is by Ian Svenonius (a member of The Make-Up and Nation of Ulysses). Music and sound is by Brendan Canty (a member of Fugazi and Rites of Spring) and narration is by the author and broadcaster David Sedaris. The game is presented as a colourful, interactive storybook in which two little girls explore the small town of Cortland, Ohio. The player clicks on the map of the town to explore buildings, houses and roads.

The girls, Lily and June Bugg, eat too much chop suey at the Ping Ping Palace, then daydream while staring at the clouds which turn into different shapes. While exploring the town, they meet the black dog Mud Pup, visit their favorite aunt's bedroom and try on her clothes and makeup, where items tell of her past life as a Rockette on Broadway. After this, the girls pretend they are angels and fly to New York. Another location is the room of Aunt Vera's son Dooner, where the girls look at graffiti on the walls, his diary, magazines and records. They also go on a picnic with Aunt Vera and her boyfriend Ned. Other locations include a Bingo Hall and a carnival with playable games.

The website World Village (Gamer's Zone) gave the game a rating of 100%, writing "The magical fantasy world of two little girls, Lily and June Bugg, comes to life in *Chop Suey*, a creative multimedia masterpiece developed by Magnet Interactive Studio. This hip interactive storybook provides a refreshing look at the curiosity and imagination of kids of all ages. You won't find another CD-ROM like it! Hats off to software developers Theresa Duncan and Monica Gesue, for providing a software title that will truly inspire girls AND boys to be more creative and aware of the music and colors that surround their lives". It was also named Entertainment Weekly's game of the year in 1995 and won an ardent following. Games journalist Jenn Frank called it "one of the greatest, most important games I've ever owned".

Smarty (Nicholson Associates, 1996) and **Zero Zero** (Nicholson Associates, 1997) were both made in collaboration with Duncan's partner Jeremy Blake. Blake was a digital artist and painter known for his short films with figurative images blending into the abstract. Among his many projects, Blake went on to design digital animation for the film *Punch-Drunk Love*, and the video for Beck's song *Round the Bend*. His work was selected for the Whitney Biennial in 2000, 2002, and 2004. Blake introduced a different visual aesthetic - the artwork was still warm, handmade, and folk-inspired, but less messy, and more idyllic, with more carefully rendered perspective.

Smarty focuses on Mimi Smartypants' visit to her aunt's house for the summer, where she has a range of new experiences. The Chicago Tribune acknowledged the way that Duncan "cast girls as strong, multi-dimensional characters with wit, imagination and brains". *Zero Zero* is set on New Year's Eve 1899 in Paris, where a little girl called Pinkée LeBrun tries to find out what the future holds by talking to the people she meets in Paris - a world of bakeries, wax museums and catacombs.

In 1997, Duncan was working with Blake on a fourth CD-ROM, ***The History of Glamour***. By that time however, the CD-ROM market was in decline and the project was reconceived as a film. Renowned artist Karen Kilimnik collaborated with Duncan and Blake on the artwork, with animation by Eric Dyer. *The History of Glamour* (Rhinstone Publishing, 1998, 38m45s) is the semi-autobiographical journey of a young woman, from a small town in the Midwest to the glamour of New York, and back home again. Much-lauded in art circles, *The History of Glamour* featured in the 2000 Whitney Biennial and was aired on Channel 4.



Smarty, 1996



Au Revoir

Zero Zero, 1997



The History of Glamour, 1998

TALKS AND EVENTS

Book your place on 01382 909 900.
For more information visit
www.dca.org.uk

Exhibition Introduction: Small Wars & CD-ROMS

Fri 15 July, 18:30

Galleries. Free, but please book in advance.

An opportunity to hear from exhibiting artist, Eddo Stern, alongside Graham Domke, Exhibitions Curator at DCA and Dr William Huber, Head of Centre for Excellence in Game Education at Abertay University, as they discuss the work on show in the galleries.

Gallery talk:

Emilie Reed aka NET.GAL

Thu 18 August, 19:00

Galleries

Join Emilie Reed, aka net.gal, for a talk in the gallery. In between her game making and playing, Emilie is a PhD student focusing on New Media and Videogames. She is also co-curator of Blank Arcade at Abertay University. Emilie lives in Dundee, has written on exhibiting artist Theresa Duncan and writes extensively about art, technology, games, museums, and the spaces where they end up intersecting.

Senior Citizen Kane Tour and Workshop

Tue 23 August, 10:30-12.30

Galleries. Free, but please book in advance.

This event is designed for our visitors aged 60 and over. Explore the exhibition with one of our friendly

Gallery Assistants, share your thoughts, chat over a cup of tea and get hands-on with a creative design activity based on the games and imagery in the galleries.

(((echo)))

Thu 01 September, 19:00

Galleries. Free, drop in.

Come along and contribute to this popular event designed to provoke discussions about the current exhibition through a series of presentations by local artists. Please email exhibitions@dca.org.uk by Fri 19 August if you are interested in proposing a response to either or both of the Theresa Duncan or Eddo Stern exhibitions.

Drop in and Play

Sat 3 September, 13:00-16:00

Level 4. Free, drop in.

We've teamed up with Abertay University to offer another of our popular Drop in and Play gaming events - pop in on the final weekend of *Small Wars* and *CD-ROMS* and be among the first to try a range of brand new games before they're widely available. The designers will be on hand who you can have a chat with and let them know what you think, as will local games company Future Fossil to help you explore the art of games in depth. All games will be suitable for ages 10+.

If you're a games designer with a game you'd like to show at Drop in and Play, we're accepting submissions until Fri 29 July. Have a look on our website for details on how to submit.

RELATED SCREENING

WarGames

Sat 03 September, 16:00
Cinema

We've selected early 80s sci-fi thriller *WarGames* to coincide with our exhibitions *Small Wars* & *CD-ROMS*.

Definitely of its time, *WarGames* remains one of the most fun films about computer hackers ever made. Blending an unease around the arms race with concerns around new technology, the film is surprisingly prescient and still a tense and gripping watch. Matthew Broderick is smart-beyond his years teenager David Lightman who accidentally hacks into the Pentagon and starts playing what he thinks is a computer game called Global Thermonuclear War. Turns out, the machine he's competing against has complete control of the USA's nuclear arsenal, and David's actions are unwittingly pushing the world to the brink of war. Oops!

Broderick (terrific in only his second screen role) is joined by brat-pack regular Ally Sheedy as his love interest and the wonderful Dabney Coleman as the grumpy defence specialist trying to avert the impending nuclear holocaust. Director John Badham laces the suspense with just the right amount of invigorating humour, keeping the preachy sentiment to a minimum. Hugely enjoyable and worryingly thought-provoking, this cautionary tale has lost none of its edge.

Dir: John Badham / USA / 1983 /
1h54m / PG

FOR YOUNGER VISITORS AND FAMILIES

Family Art Lab: Handmade Games

Sat 27 August, 13:00 - 15:00
Activity Room. Free, but please book in advance. Suitable for ages 5+. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Join local games designers from Space Budgie to explore the nature of the games in the gallery. Create your own setting and designs using watercolour and acrylic paint, collaging foregrounds, background, points of view and story texts then scan them in to take away and use at home.

Art Cart

Sat 16 July, Sat 6 August
and Sat 20 August
13:00 - 15:00
Level 4. Free, drop in.

Come and visit our Art Cart where you can play with images and ideas from the exhibition. You can design a pixelated character badge and create a game story page with 'pop-up' and 'lift the flap' interactions inspired by Theresa Duncan's CD-ROMS.

Activity Room

Open daily unless being used for a workshop. Free, drop in.

DCA Activity Room is a comfy, imaginative space for younger visitors and families inspired by the work of Bruno Munari. Try out one of our DIY activities, browse our children's art library and make connections with the exhibition.

JUST ASK

Our friendly Gallery Assistants are always happy to help with your questions.

Keep up to date with the very latest from DCA by visiting www.dca.org.uk or by following us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Tweet us your thoughts on the exhibition using **#helloDCA**.

NEXT EXHIBITION

Katy Dove

Sat 17 September - Sun 20 November

A memorial exhibition of drawings, collages, paintings, prints and animations by the much-loved artist Katy Dove (1970 – 2015). Katy created meditative spaces through her combinations of sound and image, and contemplative responses to colour and rhythm.

Katy studied at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design in Dundee in the 1990s and worked at DCA when it first opened. She participated in DCA's exhibitions programme and worked with the Print Studio to produce a series of prints.

The exhibition is programmed to coincide with this year's Discovery Film Festival.