

Open Worlds: An Exploration of Unacknowledged Spaces

Audrey Lendvay, Mentor Professor: Carrie Ann Baade
College of Fine Arts, Florida State University



Fig. 1-2, related images from virtual and physical explorations

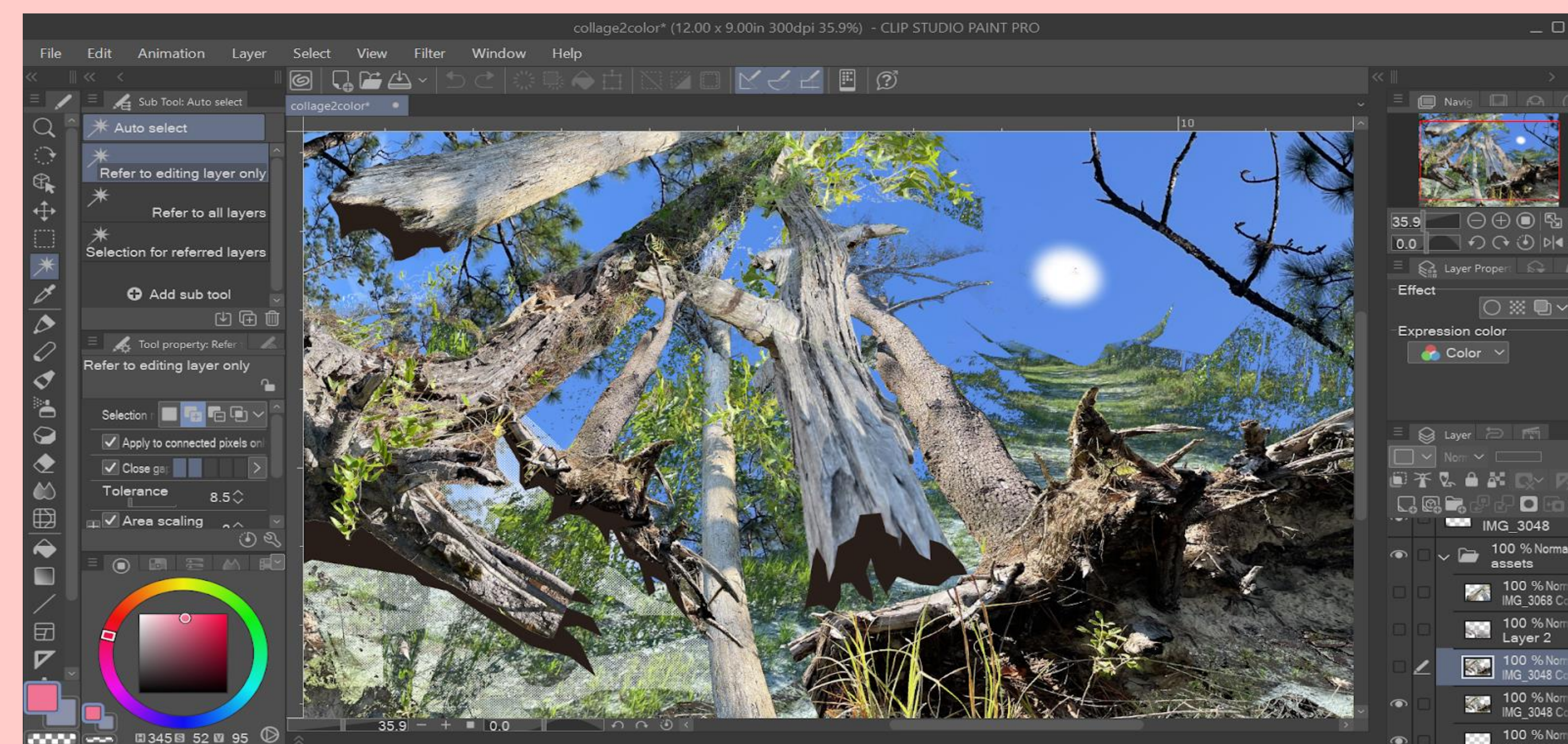
Background

- First published in 1956, French thinker Guy Debord describes his practice of the “dérive” as an experimental mode of passage through urban society determined by the attractions of the terrain which uncovers the unseen ways in which our environments shape our paths, habits, and emotions.
- Georges Perec in his 1973 essay, *The Infra-Ordinary*, was interested in subverting his attentions and investigating the “common things” that make up our lives.
- Stephanie Boluk and Patrick Lemieux publish *Metagaming: Playing, Competing, Spectating, Cheating, Trading, Making, and Breaking Videogames in 2017*, which demonstrates how games interface meaningfully with life and explores how videogames can function as a radical medium for creative practice.
- In 2018, contemporary artist Angela Washko reinterprets Guy Debord’s dérive in virtual space, notably with her performance piece “The World of Warcraft Psychogeographical Association.”
- As technology advances, digital and traditional art practices often appear as two sides of a coin, related but separate disciplines with independent trajectories.
- Aim: To initiate a hybrid traditional and digital art practice that facilitates play and mindful participation in the physical and virtual spaces we inhabit on a daily basis.

Abstract

Games pervade our lives. In contemporary times, videogames often come to mind as the latest phenomenon of play, and consequently, the latest opportunity for mass commoditization of games. However, the marketplace represents only a shallow perspective of video games, which continue a long history as “sites of resistance” against corporate appropriation of play and for “creative practice, philosophical experimentation, cultural critique, and political action,” as described in 2017’s *Metagaming* by Stephanie Boluk and Patrick Lemieux. Players critically manipulate, disregard, and expose rules just as generations of artists have done so with the systems that shape our lives. My research is distinctly concerned with the synthesis of art and games by engaging critically with the “rules” that inform our lives and with living meaningfully through play.

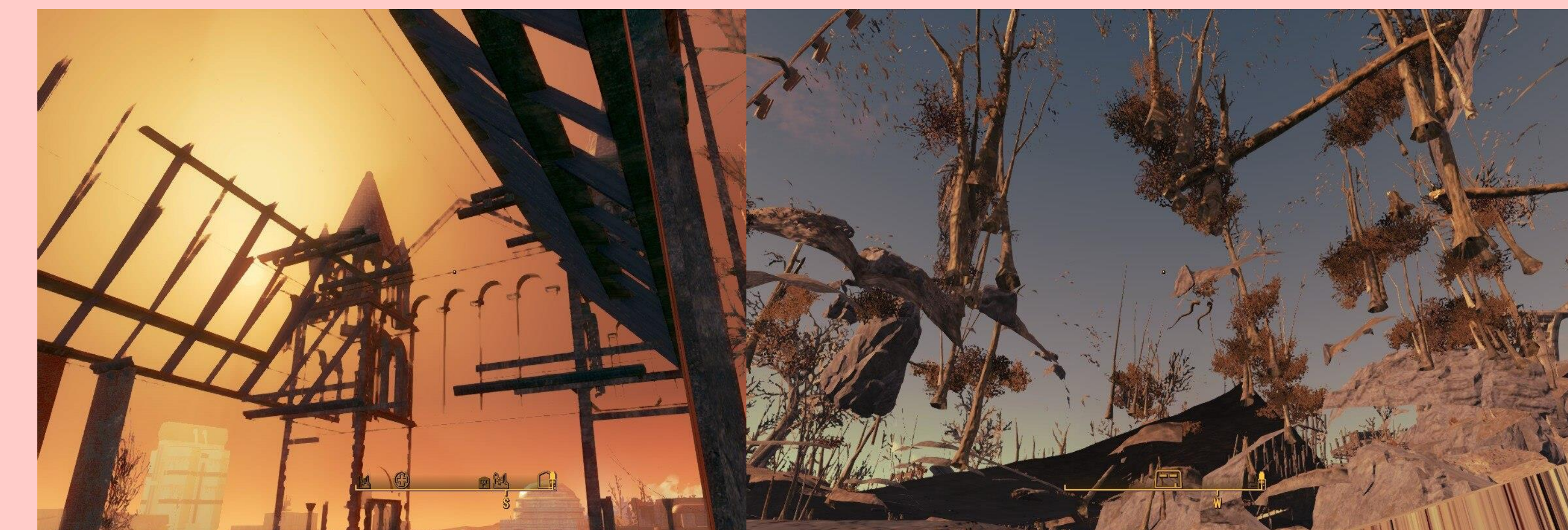
My body of work begins with adapting artist Guy Debord’s dérive into the virtual landscape of *Fallout 4*. Here I subverted the game’s rules by using console commands to break and navigate space intuitively. Screen captures from this process became the basis for three paintings. For the second phase, I reflected on each of the selected encounters in the physical spaces I inhabit, conducting new explorations guided by the visual properties of the previous compositions. I synthesized my new images into digital collages. These investigations required me to engage with my surroundings in new and attentive ways, and resulted in a hybrid art practice that revolves around meaningful participation in overlooked virtual and physical spaces and which enriched my understanding of play and mindfulness.



Methods

Open Worlds is comprised of 3 components:

- **In the gamespace:** I conduct a virtual dérive in the wasteland of *Fallout 4*, using console commands to navigate without barriers and to manipulate the in-game weather conditions. I collect screen captures as I travel, accumulating a variety of impossibly fragmented landscapes from which I select three successful compositions.
- **In physical space:** Using my three selected screen captures, I conduct three trips into the landscape around my hometown guided by their dominant visual properties. I collect images that I next import into Clip Studio Paint and synthesize three new compositions with.
- **On Canvas:** With six finalized compositions, I prepare six 3 by 4 ft canvases with gesso and acrylic and then transfer my images with soft pastel. Using assets from the images, I cut several stencils using a Cricut Explore. With everything in place, I begin oil painting.



Conclusion

- To synthesize digital and traditional artmaking, a mindful exploration practice was constructed that yielded both material for paintings and a greater understanding of and curiosity towards my environments.
- Constructive play critically examines the rules and systems that govern a space and naturally feeds creative practice.