MEDIA RELEASE
+playengines+

major survey exhibition of computer art games, desktop film & streaming media
May 19 – June 13, 2003
Experimedia, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne

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The Pleasure is in the Play!

+playengines+ a major inter/national exhibition, curated by new media curator and producer Antoanetta Ivanova, is the centerpiece in the public program of the Fifth International Digital Arts and Culture Conference, MelbourneDAC +streaming wor(l)ds+ which will takes place in Melbourne, in May this year.
The exhibition is produced in partnership with Experimedia and it is the first of its kind to be presented at the State Library of Victoria's brand new multimedia and games space.

+playengines+ focuses on the digital medium as an idea-generating resource that offers new creative and expressive possibilities on an unprecedented scale.

*In **+playengines+** each artwork becomes an agent and an engine of play. There is the interactive play of hypertext stories, the use of nursery rhymes as a play of cultural memory, the navigation of digital, documentary and real places as a play between fact and fiction, right through to the exploration of a captivating virtual reality environment where players enjoy, or struggle with, a collective adventure. This is very much a hands-on experience of digital art and ideas that proposes an alternative to the cinematic viewing entertainment and the on-line, Google-style, search infotainment. It is an exhibition for kids of all ages.* Antoanetta Ivanova, curator

24 works, including projects by well known Australian artists Troy Innocent, Mez Breeze, Ross Gibson, the Lycette Brothers and Metraform, and award-winning international artists Mark Amerika (USA), Alok Nandi (Belgium), SKOP (Germany), gameLab (USA), Mary Flanagam (USA) and Han Hoogerbrugge (Netherlands), among others, have been curated for the exhibition.

If you happen to associate games with violence, ruthless shooting and scoring, **+playengines+** proposes some fascinating alternatives to these popular play scenarios.

***Ecstasis* by Melbourne based Metraform**
Set up on a permanent display at RMIT University's, Virtual Reality Centre, *Ecstasis* is a virtual reality interactive artwork that explores the notion of ecstasy through the negotiated interactions between players. The system of navigation is controlled by head-mounted motion tracking devices, which allow for the interface to track users' head movements. The data generated controls players' navigation within the environment, allowing the players to directly inform the navigation and modulation of the artwork's visual and aural components. The 'gameplay' depends on the players' skill to negotiate where they want to go and what they want to explore – collectively.

***Fluid* by New York City based gameLab**
Produced by the award winning gameLab team, *Fluid* is a game about systems, digital aesthetics and green ethics. Fluid is an abstract, miniature ecosystem made up of a handful of different species of organisms. The final objective of the game – cleaning up the ecosystem!

There are many frameworks by which we can understand play – life formation, community creation, discovery. Play can be used as a model for ethics and as a method for learning through doing. In politics play is a serious business... What is most compelling about this type of 'play' art, is the artists' comprehensive understanding of the digital medium and thier creatively use of it to bind together information, image, sound, motion, idiosyncrasy and game play. In this sense, one becomes an explorer, player and creator of the artwork, adds Ivanova.

Exhibition visitors are offered a multiplicity of game trails, paths and playspaces, and many levels of information and ideas all to be discovered within the complex architecture of the art projects. It is a show for kids for all ages. Spend some time with **+playengines+** – the pleasure is in the play!

+playengines+ will be officially launched by Mr. Randle Straw, Executive Director, Multimedia Victoria at the MelbourneDAC Reception, Australian Centre for the Moving Image, on Monday evening, May 19th 2003.

Main exhibition venue	Exprimedia, State Library of Victoria, 328 Swanston Street, Melbourne
Permanent installations	ACMIat Fed. Sq.& VR Centre, RMIT Build. 91, 110 Victoria Street, (opp. City Baths)
Admission: Free	**Bookings**: Essential for the VR Centre. Min. 4 people. Book at Experimedia.
URL	**http://hypertext.rmit.edu.au/dac/playengines.html**
Media Liaison	Maria RIZZO Publicity Coordinator
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