

GAMESCENES

ART IN THE AGE OF VIDEOGAMES

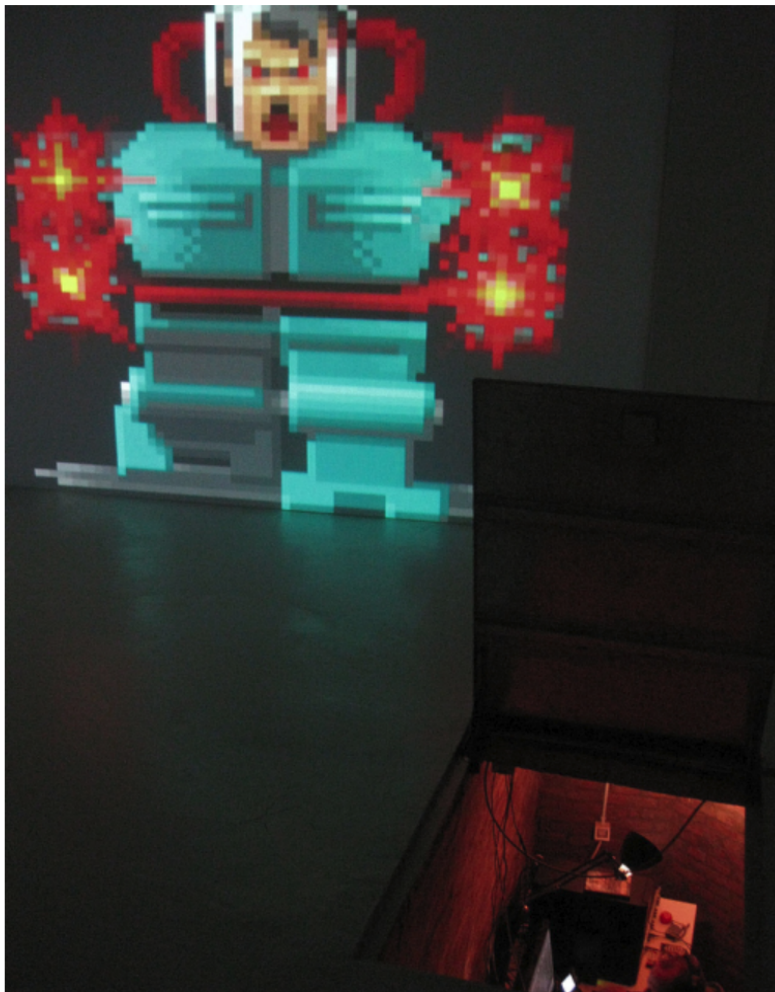
[HOME](#) [ABOUT](#) [NEWS](#) [FEATURE](#) [INTERVIEWS](#) [INTERVIEWS II](#) [COURSE](#) [CONTACT](#)

« Video: //////////fur//// Games, Art, and Testosterone (2016) | Main | Event: PUSH PLAY (January 12 - March 4 2017, Hedreen Gallery, Seattle) »

01/08/2017

Game Art: Justin Berry's OffDuty (2014)

American artist Justin Berry is a prolific and talented game photographer. His series of virtual landscapes that began in 2012 is complemented by interesting game-based installations, including *Offduty* (2014), a three-channel video installation which appropriates the popular first person shooter *Call of Duty* by Activision. Berry's set-up reminds me of a Damiano Colacito's installation at "21st century" and "Three thoughts" (2009). Both artists deal with the *gaming subconscious* - hidden from sight and yet accessible. Both Colacito and Berry locate games in the basement of the soul.

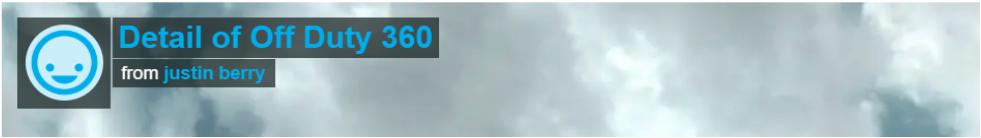


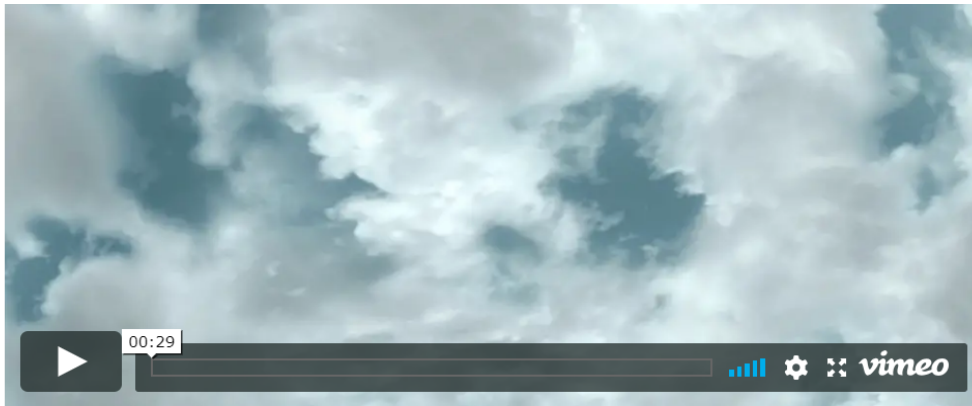


Damiano Colacito, installation at NT Gallery, Bologna, 2009 (Photo: NT Gallery)



Justin Berry, *OffDuty*, 2014, installation (Photos: courtesy of Justin Berry)





The above video is from *OffDuty 360*, a "special cut of the video installation *OffDuty...* projected 360 degrees around the circumference of an auditorium. The true pixel dimensions of the video are 9024 x 800 pixels." (Justin Berry)

ArtSpace has a full description of Berry's *OffDuty*:

Berry's installation proposes the video game as a site for non-competition, aesthetic wanderlust and contemplation. Two high-definition monitors display magnificent skies that transition from day to night. While the videos appear to be documentary footage, the recordings are revealed as vistas from the fictional landscape of *Skyrim*, a video game developed by Todd Howard in 2011. Upon its release, *Skyrim* received rave reviews for its "open world" format, which allows players the freedom to travel anywhere at any time and to ignore the main quest indefinitely, gaining points even for sensitive activities, such as picking flowers.

The only action a player is not allowed to do is stop playing—this is the moment Berry's work kicks in. After two minutes of stillness or, in this case, sky-gazing, the game rejects the player, pulling the camera's gaze away from the landscape and pointing it back at the player's avatar. Berry re-constitutes the moments where the player ceased to play and decided to simply be still, stitching together those stretches of sky-gazing into a 24-hour showcase. The videos are timed so that noon on one screen meets midnight on the other.

Offduty recognizes a great paradox of the virtual world—players who enter these supremely creative tapestries feel real emotions, create formative memories that are not compartmentalized and try on new bodies and personas. These worlds are legitimate sites for meeting the other, coming of age, making decisions and passing time. The game too behaves and develops an intimate and responsive role with its player. In the face of this existential dilemma, where the real world and the digital blend into one, Berry searches for the space where the game shows itself, asserts its power, and reveals its physical limits.

This fascination for game clouds is not uncommon among artists. Consider, for instance, Harun Farocki's series *Parallel I-IV* or Ashley Blackman's *Clouds*.

Justin Berry is a new media artist and curator who lives and works in New Haven, CT and Brooklyn, NY. He is a recipient of the 2014 NYFA artist's fellowship and holds an MFA from the Art Institute of Chicago. Berry's work has been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, the New Museum, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.

been exhibited around the world, most recently at CAVE in Detroit, CUAC in Salt Lake City, and at the University of Richmond Art Museum. His work has been featured in Frieze, Pin-up magazine, Media-N, Prattfolio and Bomb Magazine. Currently, he is a member of the gallery collective Essex Flowers and is a critic at the Yale School of Art. From 2007 to 2008 he was co-director of the artist run curatorial space Alogon, in Chicago, IL.

LINK: [Justin Berry](#)

Posted by MATTEO BITTANTI on 01/08/2017 in GAME ART, INSTALLATION, PHOTOGRAPHY | [Permalink](#)

