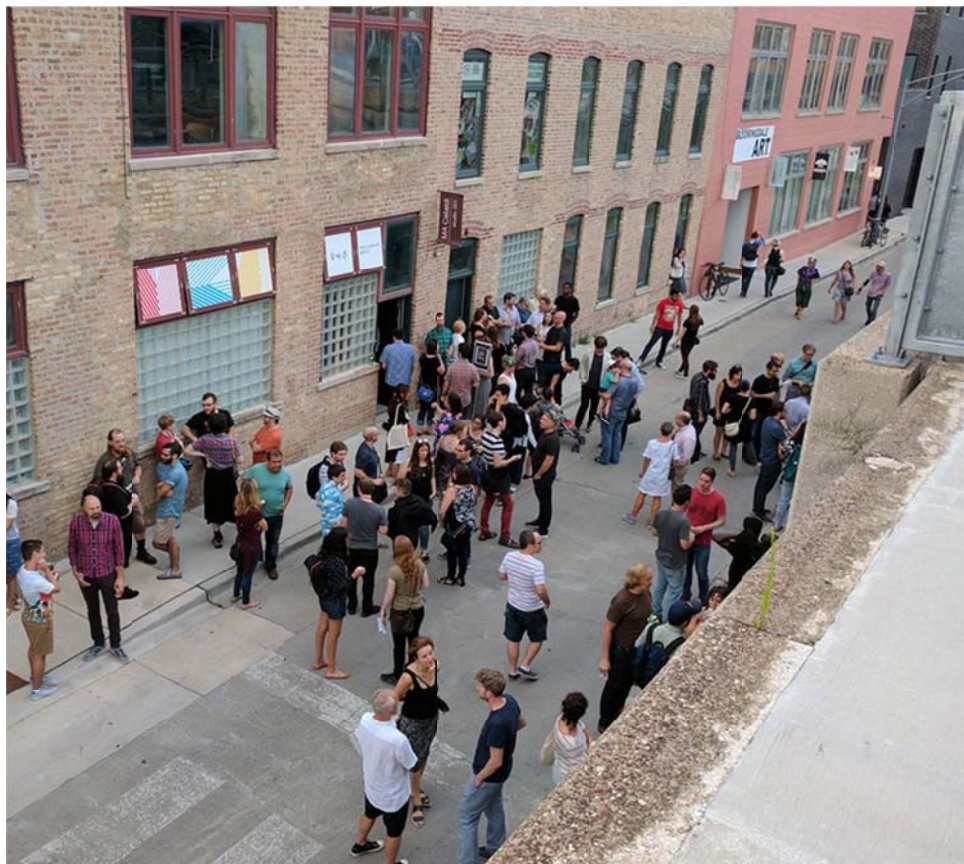


# video game art gallery



VGA Gallery Grand Opening August 8, 2017. courtesy of Mike Chuck Bretzlaff

## **FY17 (October 2016 - September 2017) Annual Report from Executive Director**

April 30, 2018

We did it. Chicago is now home to the first nonprofit gallery for video games and new media. After three years operating as a popup organization, there is now a place on the map where visitors can play and appreciate games and new media art of significance. A dedicated space for our work is the culmination of a great deal of blood, sweat, and tears, and fulfills a dream that we envisioned from the very beginning. Yet, this shift from itinerant organization to brick and mortar has presented a new set of challenges for



staffing, facilities, and programming, and it is testament to the capability of our sharp cadre of staff, board members and volunteers, that these challenges were handled with aplomb. We're just getting started, friends.

An achievement on par with opening the new space was the publishing of the first issue of the VGA Reader in the fall 2017. The VGA Reader is a new journal for video game audiences and video game practitioners interested in the history, theory, and criticism of video games. It was the culmination of a year's worth of work by the unstoppable team of VGA Reader Editor-in-Chief Tiffany Funk and Managing Editor Mick Reed, who, together with the Editorial Board, mounted a public call for papers, peer reviewed these submissions for quality and contributions to game art scholarship and worked with talented designer Levi Sherman to design and publish issue 1. If you haven't already picked up your copy, please buy yours today, in the gallery or from the website.

Chaz Evans continued leading VGA's visionary, vanguard exhibition program with the details of the programming year in review mapped out below. Chaz received critical aid from Brice Puls, who works miracles to overcome any installation or technological challenge. George Chen capably and efficiently fulfilled orders of our beautiful prints to international collectors. And Tom Caprel will often be found greeting guests at fairs and expos, selling prints and sharing VGA's work with visitors, while also informing and strategizing our communications efforts. Gracing the new facade of VGA, Ohn Ho advanced our brand and identity by preparing striking new signage for VGA with style, grace and verve.

In FY2017, VGA benefited from the addition of Maureen Ryan to the team as Content Strategist, bringing editorial acumen and social media expertise. Brice Puls expanded his duties from Exhibitions Manager to also include the new role of Gallery Manager. When you arrive at VGA during public hours, you'll find Brice staffing the front desk and working with our fantastic new gallery assistants, Kay Slater and Sean Leftwich. This



year we also said farewell to interns Nikki Gushurst and Cheri Stewart and thank them for their great work with social media assistance and other special projects.

VGA continued to draw upon the wisdom and counsel of the VGA Board with special recognition in this key year of growth and transition to the Executive Committee of President Ross Hersemann, Vice President Eric Mittereder, Treasurer Adam Wolek and Secretary Jen Rhodes. This group was especially taxed this year with special meetings related to the lease and model and plan for VGA's new space. Thanks guys!

Financially, VGA is in sound financial standing and continues its sharp trajectory of growth. FY17 was aided by by new fundraising partnerships with the Terra Foundation for American Art, The Chicago Community Trust, The MacArthur Funds for Arts and Culture at The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, the Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, and more than 200 people from around the world rallied to support VGA's kickstarter to build out its new space at 2418 W Bloomingdale, surpassing our kickstarter goal in just four days. This year I'm proud to report we served more people than ever, reaching 13,250 onsite at our new space and in conferences, fairs and expos.

Thanks everyone and hope to see you at VGA soon!

Jonathan Kinkley

Executive Director and Co-Founder



# video game art gallery



VGA Reader Cover Featuring Image from *Savior* by Josuhe Pagliery and Johann Armenteros

## Report from Director of Exhibitions & Programs

Being a part of an organization that has opened a public brick-and-mortar venue, as well as a new publication, to support video games and related new media art in Chicago is the fulfillment of a dream. As exciting as these new platforms are on their own, the true excitement comes when these resources are used by artists and writers dedicated to critically and creatively expanding the field of video game art. It's my pleasure to offer a recap of programming goals we accomplished in 2017; some that were housed in our own new space and some that came through collaborations and partnerships that we continue to grow along the way:

### **Game Art Vs. Art Game**

Game Art Vs. Art Game opened at Columbia College Chicago's Arcade Gallery in fall 2016 as VGA's biggest and most ambitious exhibition to date. The international survey of artists' experiments with video games spanned decades and over 60 artworks, and illustrated the complex and evolving relationship between video games and contemporary art.



### **Dateline: Bronzeville**

Opening in fall 2016, Dateline: Bronzeville at the Dorchester Art and Housing Collaborative, artist Phillip Mallory Jones brought his rich historical vision of the black metropolis, 1940's Bronzeville, to Chicago audiences. The exhibition was accompanied with education programs and tours that connected Mallory Jones' techniques and extensive historical knowledge to students and members of the Dorchester Art community.

### **Machinima Report**

VGA began the 2017 programming calendar with our first-ever screening with partner organization Comfort Station. Co-curator Rob Lach and I gathered notable examples of real-time animation created inside of video games post-2010. Work by Alex Bonson, Georgie Roxby Smith, Isabelle Arvers, and Kent Sheely were included to map the current state of machinima after the first boom of the late 2000's.

### **Savior**

Our inaugural exhibition for the grand opening of the brick-and-mortar home of VGA, Savior exhibited the first indie video game developed in Cuba for wide international release. The artists, Josuhe Pagliery and Johann Armenteros, traveled from Havana to be there in person for a huge summer opening that we'll never forget.

### **Game Art Vs. Art Game at Iowa State University**

After its first successful run at Columbia College Chicago Game Art Vs. Art Game traveled to the Christian Petersen Museum at Iowa State University. It was a thrill to see this international and historical survey of artist experiments with video games have a second life at a campus community hungry to interact with and learn more about the relationship between contemporary art and video games.

### **Launch of VGA Reader**

More than a year in the making, VGA published the first issue of the VGA Reader with a



celebration on November 5. The VGA Reader is a peer-reviewed journal supporting history, theory, and criticism of video games through the lens of art history and visual culture studies. Thanks to the tireless efforts of Editor-in-Chief Tiffany Funk, Managing Editor Michael Reed, Staff Editor Maureen Ryan, and the editorial board, the issue is currently available in print and electronic formats. The Reader staff and editorial board are already hard at work in the peer-review cycle for issue 2. The Reader marks an exciting milestone in the organization's history, expanding our programming efforts into publications for more projects to come.

### **New Prints and Traveling Print Exhibitions**

We have also been staying close to our roots: acquiring new work for our fine art print collection and exhibiting it in a number of spaces in Chicago and beyond. Over 2017, we debuted new work from Carter Lodwick and Titoaun Millet. We had a ball exhibiting a huge wall of prints for Bit Bash 2017, another great year for the festival. We exhibited classics from our collection on the walls of our friends and partner-organization Open House Contemporary. We sent mobile exhibitions to multiple conferences: GlitchCon in Minneapolis, GDEX in Columbus, and Progression Mechanics in Evanston.

Having access to resources like our gallery makes me reflect on what an honor it is and to act as custodians for the incredible work created by the artists working with VGA, how much a privilege it is to share that with different audiences, and how thrilling it is to work with our brilliant staff, board, and volunteer community. I'm grateful beyond description and can't wait to see you there as we continue to support the discipline of video game art over the rest of 2018.

Chaz Evans

Director of Exhibitions and Programs and Co-Founder

↓ ← ↗<sup>®</sup>  
video game art  
gallery



Savior by Josuhe Pagliery & Johann Armenteros

## FY2017 Programs

- *Game Art VS Art Game* Exhibition in partnership with Columbia College Chicago's Arcade Gallery and Columbia's Department of Exhibitions, Performance and Student Spaces (August 18 - October 28, 2016) Attendance: 2,500.
- *Dateline: Bronzeville* Exhibition of work by Philip Mallory Jones at the Dorchester + Art Housing Collaborative in partnership with the Rebuild Foundation (September 30, 2016 - March 31, 2017) Attendance: 2,500.
- Bit Bash exhibition and booth (February 17, 2017) Attendance: 300.
- Machinima Report (May 3, 2017) in partnership with Comfort Station screening of work by Alex Bonson, Georgie Roxby Smith, Isabelle Arvers, and Kent Sheely. Attendance: 50
- GlitchCon (May 5, 2017) exhibition and booth in partnership with the Soap Factory, Minneapolis. Attendance: 500.



- VGA at Open House Contemporary (May 18 - September 4, 2017), a survey of work from the VGA print collection in partnership with Open House Contemporary. Attendance 750.
- Savior (August 11 - November 19, 2017), the first exhibition in VGA Gallery's new brick and mortar space featuring the work of Cuban artists Josuhe Pagliery & Johann Armenteros. Attendance: 1,500
- VGA at Bit Bash (August 12, 2017), an exhibition and booth in partnership with Bit Bash at Revel Fulton Market. Attendance 1,500.
- Game Art VS Art Game (August 21 - December 17, 2017) traveling exhibition in partnership with Christian Peterson Museum at Iowa State University. Attendance: 2,500
- Hardcore Casual Benefit (September 9, 2017) annual benefit at the Bloomingdale Arts Building honoring Anna Anthropy. Co-chaired by Jessica Kiser and Lindsay Wojcik.
- VGA at GDEX (September 30, 2017) exhibition and booth at GDEX convention at the Ohio Convention Center. Attendance 1,000.



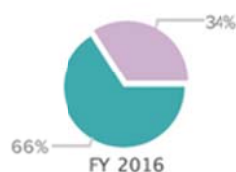
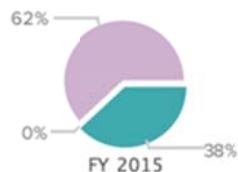
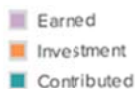


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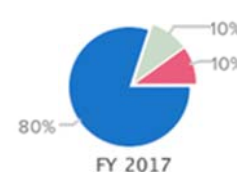
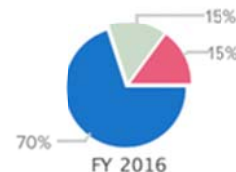
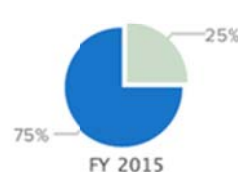
## Financials

Total Activity	FY 2015	FY 2016	% Change	FY 2017	% Change
<b>Operating Revenue</b>					
Earned Program	\$0	\$0	n/a	\$9,303	n/a
Earned Non-program	\$9,243	\$5,637	-39%	\$4,500	-20%
<b>Total Earned Revenue</b>	<b>\$9,243</b>	<b>\$5,637</b>	<b>-39%</b>	<b>\$13,803</b>	<b>145%</b>
Investment Revenue	\$0		n/a		n/a
Contributed Revenue	\$5,638	\$11,077	96%	\$27,506	148%
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$14,881</b>	<b>\$16,714</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>\$41,309</b>	<b>147%</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>					
Program	\$4,349.25	\$6,451.9	48%	\$23,575.2	265%
Fundraising		\$1,382.55	n/a	\$2,946.9	113%
General & Administrative	\$1,449.75	\$1,382.55	-5%	\$2,946.9	113%
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$5,799</b>	<b>\$9,217</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>\$29,469</b>	<b>220%</b>
<b>Total Operating Activity</b>	<b>\$9,082</b>	<b>\$7,497</b>	<b>-17%</b>	<b>\$11,840</b>	<b>58%</b>

### Revenue by Source



### Expenses by Functional Grouping



## VGA Staff

Amanda Coleman, Publications Intern  
 Brice Puls, Manager of Exhibitions  
 Chaz Evans, Director of Exhibitions and Programs  
 Cheri Stewart, Intern  
 George Chen (Zhi Quiao), Store Manager  
 Jonathan Kinkley, Executive Director  
 Maureen Ryan, Content Strategist  
 Michael Reed, Managing Editor, VGA Reader  
 Nikki Gushurst, Intern



Ohn Ho, Design Volunteer

Tiffany Funk, Editor-in-Chief, VGA Reader  
Tom Caprel, Manager of Communications

## **VGA Board (October 2016 - September 2017)**

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Adam Wolek  
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Laurie Poindexter  
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Victoria Szabo  
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Angus Forbes  
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Ian Hartman  
Stephan Moore  
Jon Cates  
James Conley  
Meredith Espino  
Kelli Wood  
Nate Zoba  
Reem Hilu

## **Partners and Artists**



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Adriaan de Jongh

All Star Press

Amanita Design

Amy Schachman

Andy Hoyos

Anna Anthropy

Arnie Jorgensen

Aron Gent

Atomhawk

B. Börkur Eiríksson

Beau Blyth

Ben Crooks

Ben Esposito

Benji Blessing Sayed

Cardboard Computer

Carter Lodwick

Catherine Fox

Challengers Comics

Chicago Design Museum

Christian Peterson Museum, Iowa State  
University

Christine Janokowicz

Cook & Becker

Craig D. Adams

Cukia Kimani

David van Brink

Demecina Beehn

Department of Exhibitions, Performance and  
Student Spaces, Columbia College Chicago

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Lindsay Wojcik

Luke Whittaker

Mark Kelly

Mark Porter

Matt Gilgenbach

Matthew Kellen

Meg Duguid

Melissa Kinkley

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Nancy Gebhart

Naughty Dog

Netherrealm

Neysa Page-Lieberman

Nick Briz

Nina Freeman & Joni Kittaka

Numinous Games

Paloma Dawkins

Paul Hertz

Philip Mallory Jones

Pippin Barr

Pol Clarissou

Porpentine Charity Heartscape

Quimby's

Rebuild Foundation

Richard Anderson

Rob Lach

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Greg Wohlwend  
Hannah Leja Epstein (hanski)  
Hollow Tree Games  
Hunter Jonakin  
InfiniTap Games  
Irrational Games  
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Jenny Siegenthaler  
Jesse Tise  
Jessica Fenlon  
Jessica Kiser  
JODI  
Jon Satrom  
Jon Veal  
Jonathan Blow  
Joseph Chiocchi  
Josh Larson  
Julia Mayer  
Julianna Cuevas  
Julie Partynski  
Justin Witte

Ryan & Amy Green (Numinous Games)  
Ryan Green  
Sabrina Raaf  
Sara Goodman  
State of Play Games  
Stoic  
Superbrothers  
Susan Clark  
Sylvain Tegroeg  
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Todd  
Todd Varde  
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Tommy Sunders  
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