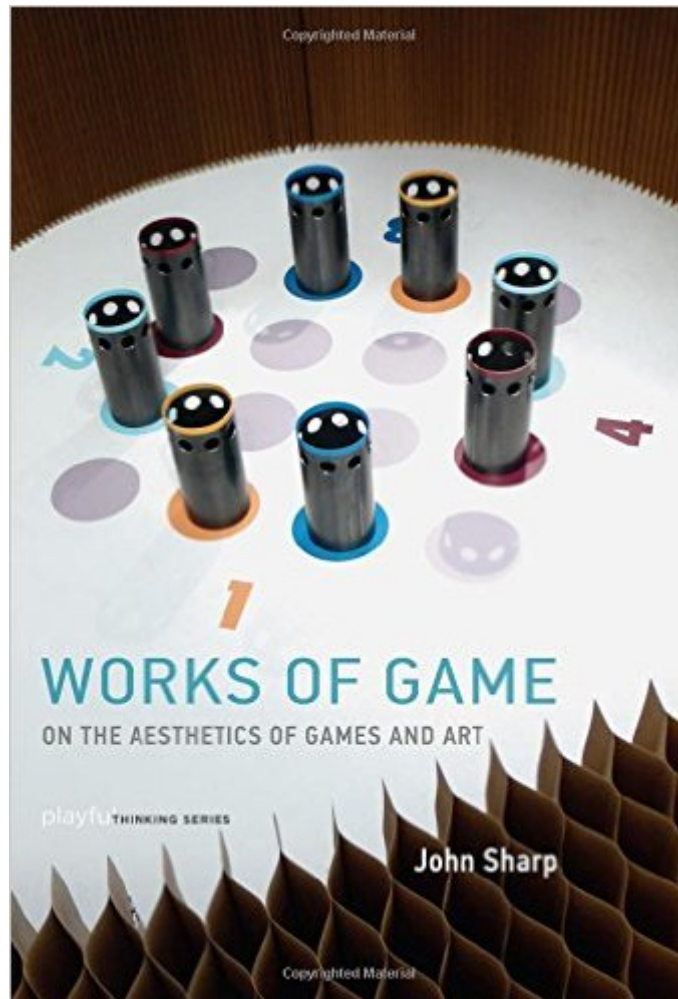# Works Of Game: On The Aesthetics Of Games And Art (Playful Thinking)

Synopsis

Games and art have intersected at least since the early twentieth century, as can be seen in the Surrealists' use of Exquisite Corpse and other games, Duchamp's obsession with Chess, and Fluxus event scores and boxes -- to name just a few examples. Over the past fifteen years, the synthesis of art and games has clouded for both artists and gamemakers. Contemporary art has drawn on the tool set of videogames, but has not considered them a cultural form with its own conceptual, formal, and experiential affordances. For their part, game developers and players focus on the innate properties of games and the experiences they provide, giving little attention to what it means to create and evaluate fine art. In Works of Game, John Sharp bridges this gap, offering a formal aesthetics of games that encompasses the commonalities and the differences between games and art.Sharp describes three communities of practice and offers case studies for each. "Game Art," which includes such artists as Julian Oliver, Cory Arcangel, and JODI (Joan Heemskerk and Dirk Paesmans) treats videogames as a form of popular culture from which can be borrowed subject matter, tools, and processes. "Artgames," created by gamemakers including Jason Rohrer, Brenda Romero, and Jonathan Blow, explore territory usually occupied by poetry, painting, literature, or film. Finally, "Artists' Games" -- with artists including Blast Theory, Mary Flanagan, and the collaboration of Nathalie Pozzi and Eric Zimmerman -- represents a more synthetic conception of games as an artistic medium. The work of these gamemakers, Sharp suggests, shows that it is possible to create game-based artworks that satisfy the aesthetic and critical values of both the contemporary art and game communities.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Not a lot of effort put into the overall intention of this book - reading through it feels like a pastiche of barely related blog posts. You are better off watching Jonathan Blow's lectures on games than reading this book which is clearly influenced by Blow's lectures while not openly crediting Blow (which I found to be slightly offensive). That being said, it does cover a range of strange contemporary art related game pieces that would be hard to find out about anywhere else, and for that I do have to lend some credit.

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