

On using Machinima as 'Found' in Animation

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Abstract

This article explores the extent to which machinima can work as 'found' and be appropriated in an animation. Machinima as a relatively new animation production technique gains its popularity in the community of independent animators. It is also used by installation artists to create installation artifacts in the digital space. As a form of remix and fandom culture, machinima is closely related to readymades and found arts. However, the layered concept 'found' in machinima is vague and has not been clearly defined, as the knowledge generated within the machinima production practice community is usually fragmented, incomplete and poorly documented.

This article is based on installation art and machinima production practices. Two issues are of mostly concerned: 1. How can machinima components be considered as 'found' in an animation; 2. To what extent can machinima components work as found in an animation. The outcome benefits both animators and installation artists who want to use machinima in their works. It also provides a lens to further study on machinima, as well as on installation in the digital space of videogames.

Keywords: Found works, Installation art, Machinima

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1. 'Found' in animation

In order to build a framework to explore the use of machinima as 'found', this paper firstly discusses the concept of 'found' in animation. The concept of found object has been initially developed by Duchamp who made a series of readymades which consists of using unaltered everyday objects designated as art; it is a core aspect of installation art. As the readymade, the found object is placed in a particular context and re-designated; it thus questions the status of art and the museum (Benjamin 1993; Oliveira, Oxely & Petry 1994; He 2008). Found objects are 'taken unaltered from ordinary existence, (they) preserve an aspect of reality when shown as part of a work of art' (Davidson & Desmond 1996, p.6). In animation, readymade works can be intentionally appropriated, and the concept 'found' is to different extents involved.

To illuminate the diversified forms of which found materials can be applied in animation, four pre-existing cases are discussed in this section.

(1). *Logorama*

Logorama (2009) is a short animation that shows strong features of installation art. Different logos are collected, appropriated and designated as other objects; therefore this work is an example of using found objects in the digital space. *Logorama* takes advantage of the visual similarity between the logo and other images, and use logos as characters, objects and landscapes (see Figure 1). In this animation work, all the logos are found objects, and the designation of them is automatically finished by visually linking the logos to the images in ordinary experiences. In the signification system of the logos in *Logorama*, the relationship between the signifier and signified is designated as visual similarity, and thus the original signified is replaced by the object that the logo looks like. For example, in this animation the logo of MSN (Windows Live Messenger) represents butterflies rather than the MSN software; it therefore becomes an icon rather than a symbol or index. The remixing of readymades, the replacement of the signified, and the change on the signification system make all logos in this animation being found objects. The focus of this work is on the designation of found objects, and the story is less important, therefore it can be considered as an installation artifact in itself.



Figure 1 The found works in *Logorama* (2009)

(2). *The Tatami Galaxy*

The Tatami Galaxy (2010) is a TV anime work which combines multiple techniques and styles. It uses different kinds of 'found' materials, and merges them with 2D components (see Figure 2). On some occasions live-action segments are also used as single empty shots (in which no main character appears). These shots are shot by the animator, but the image of landscapes and objects are 'found' by the animator and used to construct the virtual world of this anime. Some replicas of these landscapes and objects in the virtual space of this anime do not equal or being connected to their origins in reality. For example, this anime uses a photo of old apartments as the background of some scenes; however this photo does not represent the very buildings in reality, instead it creates a part of the hyperreal world of this animation. From this perspective, the image of this apartment is found and digitally appropriated in this anime work.

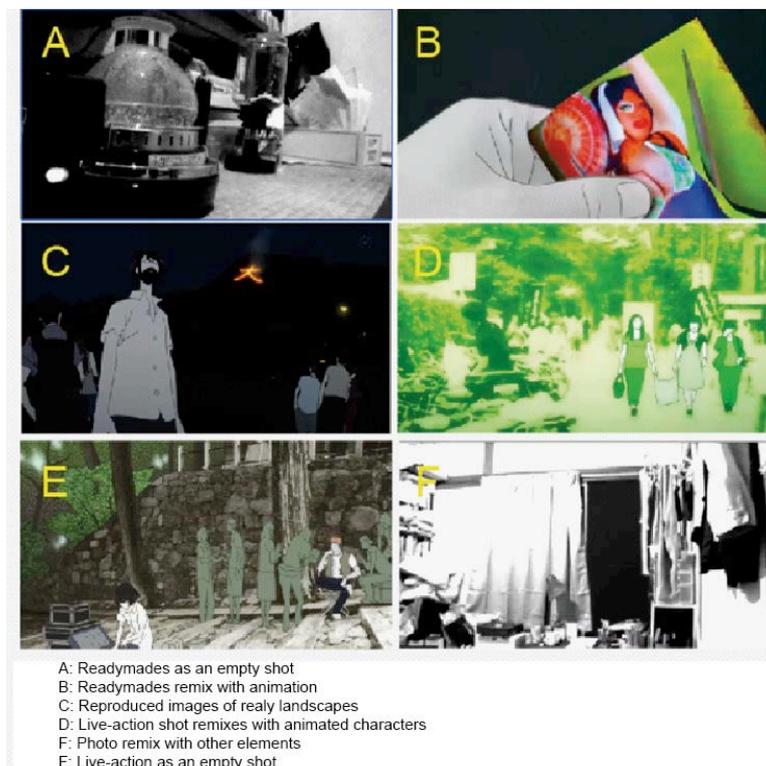


Figure 1 The readymade works in *The Tatami Galaxy* (2010)

(3). *I Am MT*

I Am MT (2009) employs multiple production techniques, and it uses the readymade digital space of *World of Warcraft* (WOW) as the stage of its story. It is a work of remix and remediation. Its machinima backgrounds are captured directly from WOW. Filters are applied, but audiences can identify the landscapes of WOW. Main characters are not readymade models from WOW but designed by the producer. These 2D style rendered 3D characters are not the WOW realistic characters but cute style, as shown in Figure 3. There is no traditional hand-drawing 2D animation composited in *I Am MT*.



Figure 3 The cute 2D style rendered 3D characters in machinima backgrounds in *I Am MT*(2009)

The producer employs 2D style rendered 3D characters, and also uses some 2D conventions such as iconic facial emotions, however the emotional expression created by this technique is limited. Furthermore, the appraisal of the combination of cute style characters and 3D machinima backgrounds is controversial, and thus resisted by some audiences (Huang 2010).

(4). *The Hero's Journey Project*

The Hero's Journey is the animation production practice of my doctoral research project, in which I attempted to bring the concept of *found* from installation art into animation. This research project is a practice-based research that draws inspirations from my experience of installation art practice (*The Endangered Earth*) to creation of a post-apocalypse animation (*The Hero's Journey*, <https://vimeo.com/102311705> password: huangwww3boxcc). In *The Endangered Earth*, I used various found objects, and combined them with other elements. This artifact is composed of five works including *The Metal Casket*; it creates its space as the context of the found objects in it. This space does not represent but creates its own reality in which the original functions of found objects are deprived, and the found objects thus are endowed with new meanings. For example, the computer cases in *The Endangered Earth* cannot function as they used to, instead they are used as caskets (see Figure 4: *The Metal Casket*). The computer cases link *The Endangered Earth* to daily experience (in this case, the experience of modern technology and digital life) in a critical way, and drives viewers to critically reflect on the abuse of technology.



Figure 4 *The Metal Casket*



Figure 5 The replica of *The Metal Casket* in *The Hero's Journey*

The artifact of *The Metal Casket* is to a large extent depended on the appearances of found objects; found objects are also influenced by their positions in the artifact and the relationship to others. Some of the found objects I collected were further processed, but most of them were kept in their original state. In *The Metal Casket*, the computer cases I collected were with different shapes, colors and sizes. They were piled up without a certain sequence, and this process of assemblage showed flexibility and an extent of randomness. The use of found objects also led to the feature of flawed statue, as in the process of assemblage I had no intention to create a perfected form of the appearance of the art work. The new meaning is endowed by the context that is created by the artwork, as well as the designated title of the work.

This installation art work has been digitally reproduced in *The Hero's Journey*. From this perspective, the image and idea of *The Metal Casket* are found and appropriated in this animation. The digital replica is placed in the post-apocalypse world; the scale of this art work is enlarged, and is combined with other materials such as bones and doodles (see Figure 5). Similarly, images of readymades in *The Hero's Journey* critically connect the artifact to the daily experience; some are used as 'found' to symbolically express ideas. The forms and sources of readymades in this project are various and cover a range of disciplines, and the ways of adapting and using them are flexible. In *The Hero's Journey*, readymade are placed in the fictional world. Some scenes of *The Hero's Journey* are significantly influenced by the appearances of the readymades.

However, an essential difference between the two art works is that the space of *The Hero's Journey* is virtual but not substantial, and thus the concept of 'found' also exists in the virtual form. In the post-apocalypse context of *The Hero's Journey*, some readymade images lose the original functions and meanings they represent. For example, in the post-apocalypse world, the image of cash may lose the function of currency and the traditional meaning of wealth. They are endowed with new functions and meanings (e.g. 'cash' as 'fuel' or 'trash'). These readymades are combined with others, and are re-designated in this particular context. Based on the concept of found objects, these readymades are found.

I notice that for readymades in the digital world, there are two parallel layers of appropriation existing: the vehicle (e.g. the digital file of pictures or 3D models) and the image (in the digital world and on screen). For example, a 3D digital model of a desk is collected and used in this project, and this digital file is a vehicle of readymade; more than a digital component, the image of this model is an icon that represents a real desk and its functions and meanings. When this model is being used in my project, both these two layers of appropriation are reflected in this process: the digital file is found and remixed with other components; meanwhile, the readymade image of this desk is placed in the virtual world, which is displayed on screen.

'Found work' in animation

Based on the cases above, the term 'found work' can be used to describe those components that are not originally created for this project but are sourced from somewhere else; they are appropriated and replaced into the new context, in which their original functions or meanings are deprived, and new ones are endowed. This concept of found relates to the animator, as well as to characters in the virtual world. For example, in *The Hero's Journey*, 3D digital models of computer cases have been collected and placed in this particular project which provides a new context; this process is like that of an installation artist finding and appropriating readymades in his artifact. On the other hand, the images of computers that are shown on screen in *The Hero's Journey* represent different functions from that of in our daily life; they are used in different manners, and combined with other materials, to express new ideas. For characters in this virtual world, these computers are 'found', and are never expected to be used as they are in ordinary life.

In an animation work there are two layers of the concept 'found' active: first, the vehicle of readymades that are found and appropriated in the production software; second, the images are found and reproduced in the space of animation. The first layer is primarily reflected in the process of animation production, as the animator uses readymade components (such as 3D digital models) directly in my project. The second layer is predominantly displayed on screen as found images (or images of found objects). On both the two levels, a found work in an animation: (1). is a readymade; (2) is combined with other materials, or is put in a new context; and (3). has new meanings or functions.

2. Machinima: a form of readymade art

Machinima is 'animated filmmaking within a real-time virtual 3D environment... (It is) a mixture of several creative platforms - filmmaking, animation and 3D game technology' (Marino 2002, p.1). Berkeley defines machinima in a more circumspect manner: 'machinima is where 3D computer animation gameplay is recorded in real time as video footage and then used to produce traditional video narratives' (2006, p.66). Machinima is originally a form of fan fiction which is based on the original

work of popular culture, such as a novel, film or animation, and it is usually not produced as 'professional' (Hetcher 2009; Zeng 2012; Brown & Holtmeier 2013). Machinima absorbs the elements in its original game, and the gap between the two can be minimized.

Machinima is the convergence of videogame, cinema and animation (Marino 2002; Nitsche, Riedl & Davis 2011; Burke 2013). Marino (2002) and Horwatt (2007) believe that machinima is an avant-garde art form, and machinima works are highly experimental. Johnson & Petit (2012) cite Greenaway's statement that machinima as a viable art form will need to be text based rather than image based; they further argue that machinima should be tied to Hollywood story telling. As an alternative production technique, machinima can help animators to form new styles based on the original game, and to diversify the animation styles (Zeng 2012). However it is struggling for acceptance (Berkeley 2006). As Nitsche, Riedl & Davis (2011) state, the device of machinima creation is poorly documented, and the knowledge generated within the practice community is usually fragmented and incomplete. Academic research such as this paper can help ensure that machinima receives the artistic and public recognition it deserves.

Machinima is a form of remix, as it combines and manipulates cultural artifacts, including various forms of readymades, into new kinds of creative blends (Johnson & Petit 2012; Nitsche, Riedl & Davis 2011; Hetcher 2009; Cheliotis & Yew 2009; Knobel & Lankshear 2008). Machinima thus inherently has eclectic and hybrid features. For machinima the hybridization 'occurs in remixing a species of video game with a species of video-editing technique(s) to create narratives via writing with moving images and sound for do-it-yourself entertainment purposes' (Knobel & Lankshear 2008, p.25). Machinima reproduces the digital world of videogame in animation, thus is also a process of remediation, which as Lichty defines is used to describe 'practices that recreate works in performance art in virtually "embodied" media' (2009, p.6).

Creating machinima involves appropriating readymade resources found within the game engine (Knobel & Lankshear 2008) into new contexts, therefore machinima is connected to found arts, and has been used by installation artists. The digitally appropriated components of machinima within the digital space of game are 'highly malleable and needs to be created' (Howartt 2007, p.10). As a form of remix, machinima avoids the suggestion that 'the new works are produced by fans of the underlying works' (Hetcher 2009, p.1871). The aesthetics of machinima 'emerge from its unique context as a found technology, providing a set of pre-programmed movements and visual elements that are reconstituted in new ways by the animator' (Nitsche, Riedl & Davis 2011, p.51). As a new media, machinima can be used to 'experiment and push the boundaries of the art form with imaginative three-dimensional performance art that immerses the viewer in the sensory experience in a new way that goes light-years beyond what is even possible in real-life

installation art' Johnson & Petit (2012, p.92). As Conradi states, the digital technology provides 'opportunities of imagine entirely new approaches to non-objective forms and to liberate the imagination of artist' (2012, p.70). However, the remix of readymades is not equal to using found works, and the norm of defining machinima as found has not been established.

3. Use machinima as found

Found arts can be created in the digital space of videogames and machinima. Machinima installation artists such as Annabeth Robinson, Garrett Lynch, Fortunato Depero and Tullio Crali use online games to create installation artifacts in digital spaces (e.g. videogames); some others such as Cao Fei and Gazira Babeli use machinima as a new media of installation artistic creation. For example, Cao Fei's machinima documentary '*iMirror*' (based on *Second Life*) has been considered as an installation artifact at the 2007 Venice Biennale; as Lichty (2009) states, 'while it might be possible to create (installation) works that exist in the virtual that do not express themselves in terms of references to the tangible, they are likely extremely subtle or outside the embodied paradigm of human experience' (2009, p.8).

There are multiple forms and levels of 'found' reflected in installation artifacts in digital spaces. For example, for an installation artist, an empty bottle from *Fallout 3* (2008) on screen can be a found object as it is modeled and textured by game developers. Meanwhile, from the perspective of the existence of the digital post-apocalypse space, the empty bottle can also be 'found' as it is collected from somewhere in the digital world, and it has different functions and meanings.

Two practices

This research project is based on my artistic practices, and it is thus practice-based. Practice-based research is 'an original investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice' (Candy 2006, p.1). In a practice-based research project, the practice is an integral part of the research process, and the basis of the contribution to knowledge (Candy 2006; Scrivener 2000; Chang 2009). In this research project, I reflect on my experience of the animation production practice of *The Hero's Journey*, as well as of machinima installation art work *The Corridor*. This reflect-in-action has characteristics of reflexivity that means not only reflect but turn the experience to myself (Sullivan 2005). This process is heuristic, which means it incorporates creative self-processes and self-discoveries, and the emergence of understandings is through the unpredictable process (Moustakas 1990; McNiff 1998). The outcome of the creative-production practice is necessary for the understanding of this research; it has its own value as an artwork and contributes to human experience; it can be shared in a wide community of installation artists and machinimators.

All the machinima segments in the two artistic practices (*The Hero's Journey* and *The Corridor*) are captured directly from the original videogames. The two project demonstrates different extents to which machinima can be used as found.

(1). *The Hero's Journey* Project (machinima components)

The Hero's Journey is a non-dialogue short animation project that employs multiple production techniques. This work is additive, as I have created a large number of details, and imported plenty of posters, illustrations, doodles and photos.

In this project, machinima footages were combined with other components to create background and visual effects. As a production technique, machinima was not good enough to express the complicated facial emotion that I needed, but could be an excellent technique to make 3D based backgrounds. However, I noticed that it is difficult to find high quality videogames that reproduce contemporary Chinese urban landscapes, and thus in this project, the use of machinima was limited.

In order to find proper machinima components, I collected resources from several games including *Fallout 3: New Vegas* (2010), *Call of Duty 4* (2007), and *Metro: Last light* (2013). Some other games such as *Grand Theft Auto 4* (2008) and *Second Life* (2003) were viewed but not used due to their inappropriate visual styles or qualities. I chose photo-realistic games that contain modern urban landscapes or post-apocalypse scenes, since these games are additive and can satisfy my requirements for the style. However since most high quality videogames are made by Western studios, their virtual worlds were the Westerner's imagination of China rather than representations of real Chinese cities. This limited the scope that I could choose for this project. Materials from *Call Of Duty 4* and *Metro: Last Light* were mostly used, since some stages of these games are ruined Russian cities, which are more similar to Chinese cities than the wasteland of USA in *Fallout*. Most machinima segments are clouds, abandoned buildings and ruins of the city. They were combined with other components that show strong Chinese style. In most occasions they were not used as major figures in the layouts; however as parts of the whole, they contributed the whole visual effects and helped to shape the atmosphere of the post-apocalypse world (see Figure 6).



Figure 6 Machinima components in the background of *The Hero's Journey*

I also used some found footage to create visual effects. The sources varied, and they became hard to identify after they were mixed with other works in an integrated entirety. Some of them were selectively exposed to express particular meaning or emotions.



1 a Neolithic art work; 2 Newspapers of squeezing bile from living bears; 3 my previous work; 4 a found footage from my friend; 5 a found footage from my friend; 6 machinima (Skyrim); 7 machinima (Fallout 3:New Vegas); 8 machinima (Metro:Last Light); 9: machinima (Fallout:New Vegas)

Figure 7 The found works in the segment of montage pictures

For example, in the pictures montage segment I experimented with using found footage and images of found objects to create visual effects (Figure 7). Different works were collected and remixed in this segment for specific purposes. Some of them (the Neolithic artwork, the newspapers and my previous illustration works) were

used as a single shot to link to other scenes according to the screenplay; the others were used to make visual effects.

In the process of viewing videogames for machinima production, I found many interesting scenes. They could not be used directly as scenes in this project, but I thought they could provide short but strong impressions that were related to the theme of *The Hero's Journey*. I wondered whether I could use these impressions to help express my ideas. As an experiment, I added a machinima segment which was captured from *Fallout 3: New Vegas* (2010). It was a first-person shot in which the character runs in a dark narrow corridor. In this process, I found that the translucent machinima layer can give a split-second and discontinuous impression since it kept interfering and being interfered by other layers. Thus I tried to add more elements and made this segment even more fragmented, and this segment was considered as a set of fragments of impression. I captured videos of running, shooting, killing and missile launching from different videogames, as I wanted to display fragments that related to the self-destruction of mankind. I exposed the information explosively, and deliberately overloaded fragments so that audiences could not capture all the details; I made pictures shift faster and faster, and different footages overlapped with each other. This process was random, as I remixed multiple segments without a pre-designed order. Through controlling the transparencies of different layers, the fragments of impression such as running, shooting and killing were interwoven together.

This project indicates that machinima segments as found works can be used in different stages of animation production. Machinima can be used to create singular shots, or be combined with other material in various ways. In this process, this production technique is deployed according to the narrative and/or visual requirements of the animation. The story space of *The Hero's Journey* breaks the connection between machinima and its original videogame. For example, in the photo montage segment, the machinima components I used lose their identities of combats in *Fallout 3: New Vegas*, *Skyrim* and *Metro: Last Light*, but are a part of the memory of the protagonist of *The Hero's Journey*. In other scenes, The objects created by machinima (e.g. a collapsed building from *Call of Duty 4*) are detached from their original games and merged into the world of *The Hero's Journey*.

For the animator who intends to combine machinima with other production techniques, visual style is one of the essential issues. The appropriation of machinima components will undoubtedly bring the style of original videogames. It will make the animation work aesthetically eclectic and hybrid; however it also has the potential danger of breaking the consistency of aesthetic style. Due to this consideration, for animation project that integrates multiple production techniques (such as *The Hero's Journey*) to shape one unified visual style, machinima segments are seemingly more proper to be used at the subordinate parts of the scenes.

(2). *The Corridor*

In order to explore the layered use of machinima as found in animation, I created an installation artwork, and reproduced it in the digital space of videogame. The replica was represented in the form of machinima. This installation artifact was firstly designed in the process of creating the post-apocalypse world of *The Hero's Journey*. It was a corridor with a huge number of tableware that covers the ground, and the protagonist would go through the corridor (see Figure 8).



Figure 8 The sketch of the corridor scene in section 2

This scene was initially designed as an alarm system set by another survivor who the protagonist would encounter. Within the post-apocalypse context, this scene expresses ideas more than its expected functions in the ordinary world. This work involves the use of found objects, as the tableware is 'found' for characters in this virtual world; it loses its original functions, and has new functions and meanings (a part of an alarm trap, and a critical reflection on the over consumption). I realized that the idea of this scene can be used to create a real or an animated installation artifact. In animation it is possible to provide the experience of interaction with the art work through the character as avatars of audiences. As Rheingold states, 'at the heart of VR [virtual reality] is an experience – the experience of being in a virtual world or remote location' (1991, cited in Bolter & Grusin 1999, p.22). This interaction between the artifact and character provides the experience of viewing and physically participating in the artifact in the virtual space of *The Hero's Journey*. Therefore, this corridor has double identities: a scene of this animation (an alarming system for the survivor who lives in the building); and an interactive installation art which expresses my anti-consumerist ideas.

I then created this installation artifact (a real craft). I collected empty bottles, containers, tableware, and other wasted industrial products and piled them in a corridor. This artifact was not publically exhibited, instead I invited one actor stepping through this corridor, and I used videos to record the experience of the

interaction between the actor and the art work (Figure 9). This video has been uploaded to youtube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLxjxpyoeiY>).



Figure 9 *The Corridor* (real craft)

I reproduced this artifact in *Fallout 3: New Vegas* (2010) (youtube link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vDGixsh5fE>). I found a corridor, collected a large number of tableware and bottles, and placed them on the ground (Figure 10). The game engine provided great freedom, and the scale of the digital version *The Corridor* was significantly enlarged. In this process, I exploited the mechanic of *Fallout 3: New Vegas*, and the in-game objects were considered as 'found objects'. All the digital components (empty bottles, etc.) that are provided by the videogame developer were assembled in the digital space. Due to the limitation of the game engine, I could not place the objects precisely, and the remixing process creates random consequences. This whole scene is significantly greater than the sum of its parts, while all components of this work are in relation to others.



Figure 10 *The Corridor* in *Fallout 3: New Vegas* (2010)

As a part of the experience that is provided by this artifact, I used the game character to interact with this work. I controlled the player character (PC) stepping through the corridor (Figure 11), and the experience of physical participation was created in this process. The in-game action and the ephemeral experience was recorded by

machinima. I also recorded the interaction between the artifact and the non-player character (NPC) (Figure 12). The artifact was unwillingly set in the routine of one NPC; this process was similar to that of placing an installation artifact in the routine of spectators in a museum).



Figure 11 The interaction between the controlled game characters and the digital installation artifact



Figure 12 The interaction between NPC and the digital installation artifact

This machinima version of *The Corridor* was created within the videogame, it thus kept the visual connection with *Fallout 3: New Vegas*. However, this does not mean that *The Corridor* is representing one scene in the digital world of the videogame, neither this machinima is a recording of game-play. On the contrary, it builds its own post-apocalypse space, which disconnects this machinima art work from its original videogame.

Neither *The Corridor* in the digital space is simply a replica of the real craft. The environment of the artifact (the post-apocalypse atmosphere) endows the artifact with

new and stronger meanings (e.g. the criticism of the over-consumption). The post-apocalypse fiction is a subgenre of science fiction (SF/Sci-Fi), and possesses strong post-modern features (Ostwalt 1998; Pearson, 2006; Gomel 2010; Napier 2008; Rosen 2008). In the post-apocalypse world, everyday experiences are removed and audiences are forced to confront the dead world that is depicted by the science fiction genre (Fisher 2010). The daily functions of many industrial products are deprived. These products are endowed with new functions, which collides with the daily experience.

The Corridor does not equal to the corridor scene in *The Hero's Journey*. In *The Hero's Journey*, the corridor is an alarming system set by a survivor. However, this function works only in the specific context of the story of *The Hero's Journey*. With the context changes, the alarming function loses. Meanwhile, this corridor is no longer in the ruin of the amusement park in the world of *The Hero's Journey*, therefore this artifact is set in a new space that provides specific atmosphere and context.

Discussions

The cases above indicate that not only real objects, but also images of virtual objects (such as those in another animation or videogame) can be found, reproduced and remixed in an animation. The machinima works in *The Hero's Journey* and *The Corridor* have two identities: (1). the images in the digital space of the games, and they are found and appropriated in the animation space; (2). the video segments (the vehicle of readymades) that are created by the animator, and despite the fact that the images of games are readymade, the video segments are seemingly not found or readymade in itself. However, the second identity is still closely related to found works; the use of these machinima segments is similar to that an installation artist uses found objects to create a part of his artifact, and remixes these components with others.

Therefore, the vehicle of a machinima component (a digital video segment) that created by an animator is not found for him; however, some machinima works can still be considered as found if the machinima segments are remixed with other materials, since the animators collect readymade resources of videogame and appropriate them in new context which endows machinima segments with different meanings.

Not all machinima are found works, some are even not strict readymades. In some machinima works, the animator may create new models, textures and plots; in some others, the contexts of the original games are completely kept, and these works are more likely trailers or recorded gameplay videos. The former is not readymade but is created by the animator; the latter, in contrast, has not been set in a new context and re-designated.

Based on the application of machinima in the two projects, as well as the definition of the found object and found footage (Benjamin 1993; Oliveira, Oxely & Petry 1994; He 2008; Davidson & Desmond 1996; Fossati 2012; Bolemeuvel, Fossati & Guldmond (eds.) 2012), two norms for using/identifying machinima components as 'found work' can be reached.

(1). The animator uses original works of the game, or other readymade resources (such as mods that are made by other players). The readymade works can be found within the game, or within the develop kits such as map-editor. In this process, the animator records the gaming experience that is provided and framed by the game developer. However, if the animator makes new models, texts, textures or other components specifically for his project, it is not a found work.

(2). The machinima component is put in a new context through being re-edited and remixed with other works. This process is similar to that of an installation artist puts found objects in new environments and remixes them with other materials.

(3). The machinima video should be re-designated and thus has new meanings. As a found work in an animation, the machinima segment is usually detached from its original game. It is put in a new context, or creates its specific hyperreal space, in which the machinima component is endowed with new meanings. Some machinima segments that are used in animation are still a recording of gameplay (e.g. the *Minecraft* machinima videos in *Southern Park*), and they can hardly be considered as 'found'.

In short, when using machinima segment as a found, it comes from ready-made resources, and is used in other contexts to express new ideas. In this process of appropriation, the machinima segment is usually detached from its original game. The artist's effort is collecting and reassembling the materials that he found in the game. In a broader view, these norms may also apply in digital appropriations in other fields.

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