

Solo Journeys, Universal Experiences: analysis of THE END as an extraordinary solo role-play carried out an ordinary world

This paper continues the scholarship explored in the 2016 ASTR working session on gaming and theater studies by returning to the subject of THE END, an interactive performance for a single audience member at a time exploring a personal experience of their own mortality. Swim Pony Performing Arts, an experimental interdisciplinary performance company, will detail the development of the game over the past two years and look at critical successes in its final performance run over the month of May 2017. The paper will explore the ways in which this work blended improvisational-based devised acting methodologies with LARP and ARG game mechanics to create an embodied narrative experience for the player. The underlying structure of the game as a “curated contemplation” will be detailed. It will also explore the use of digital mediation of dramatic content to create a unique character and dialogue that can be tailored to the individual player and explore the benefits combining live performance with both real world and digital gaming to give player agency. Finally, it will reference some of the larger contextual scholarship and performance lineage out of which the work emerged and reflect on the ways that digital and transmedial storytelling can be utilized in the future to elevate pedestrian experience into the realm of extraordinary performance.