Paolo Pedercini

ARTISTIC AND PROFESSIONAL STATEMENT

As the artspeak trope goes, my work *explores* the *intersection* of ideology and entertainment. It's the bastard child of the Berlusconi era and the global justice movement of the turn of the century. It was a strange time, when politics became entertainment and vice versa, when masked Zapatistas in a remote Mexican jungle formed an unlikely alliance with disaffected flexible workers and Rastafarian hackers.

Molleindustria [soft industry/soft factory] is a project of reappropriation of video games, a call for the radicalization of popular culture, an independent game company committed to negative profit.
In the thirteen years I produced homeopathic remedies to the idiocy of mainstream entertainment in the form of free, accessible games.
My games range from satirical business simulations, to Marxistentialist meditations on labor and alienation; from playable theories to agitprop media interventions.

Since I started making games in 2003, many things have changed.
Experimental, political and expressive games, while still relatively underground, are becoming more and more accepted. A game *about* a serious theme is not relevant or newsworthy in itself anymore.
This is great news because there is more room for sophistication and depth. My approach is moving away from quick satirical interventions and focusing more on exploring the possibilities of games as objects to think about complex systems and abstract concepts.

I'm currently working on a series of city game inspired by Italo Calvino's Invisible Cities. The goal of the series will be to question the influential and problematic paradigm of city planning simulation established by SimCity, while providing poetic view of our cities and their conflicts.

Another work in progress is an "experiential essay" for Virtual Reality about the relationship between gaze and violence. The goal is to self-reflectively investigate issues of embodiment in 3D spaces, and the implications of *looking at things*.

The art world's wild infatuation with game culture, which resulted in a proliferation of faddish game+art exhibitions in the last twenty years, eventually settled into a healthy marital relationship. More often than not, my work is included in non-game-related exhibitions: a signal that the game-form is organically integrating within the contemporary art practice.

But more than the *high culture* validation I'm interested in creating spaces and contexts for games that are autonomous from both the "white cube" gallery model and the commercial marketplace.

After a few forays into curation I'm planning on starting a venue in Pittsburgh devoted to experimental playthings. The goal is to reclaim the social function of arcades with the ethos of DIY/punk spaces.

New powerful voices are emerging from the margins of the industry; feminism and queer theory are finally finding a place in the independent gaming scene. But we are witnessing a strong backlash from conservative gamers, and there's still a lot of work to do in terms of including minorities and non-college educated folks in game development (not to mention people from the Global South).

While there are limits to what I can tackle as an ally from a privileged position, I'm hoping to put more energy into informal education efforts and

community engagement. This would involve the creation of accessible tools and resources, as well as using game *making* as pedagogical and empowering tool - as opposed to games as educational products.