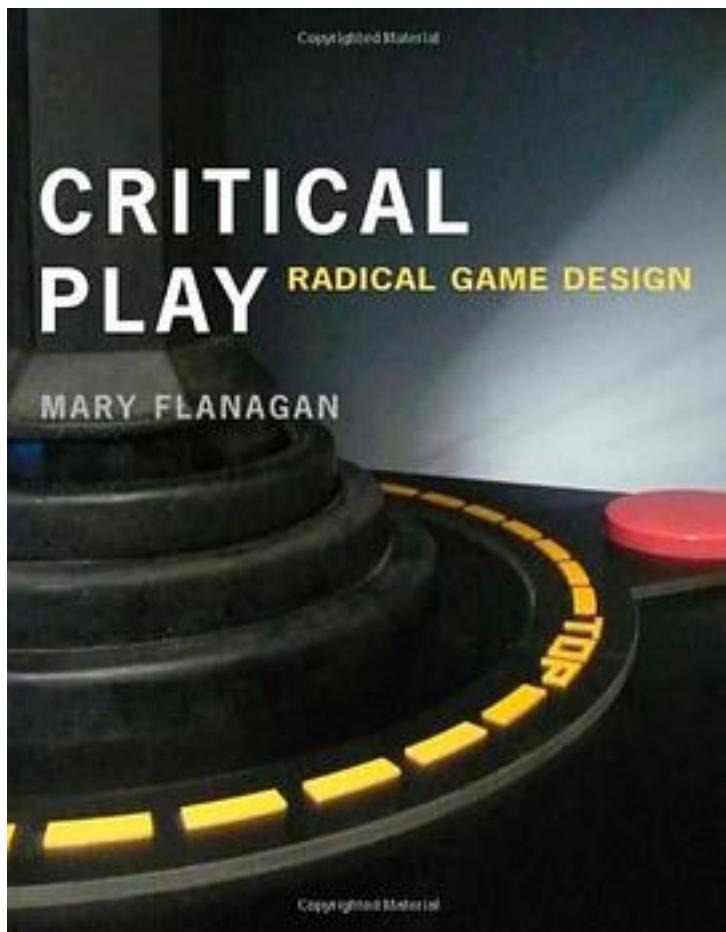


Critical Play



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出版者:MIT Press

出版时间:2009-9-8

装帧:Hardcover

isbn:9780262062688

For many players, games are entertainment, diversion, relaxation, fantasy. But what if certain games were something more than this, providing not only outlets for entertainment but a means for creative expression, instruments for conceptual

thinking, or tools for social change? In *Critical Play*, artist and game designer Mary Flanagan examines alternative games—games that challenge the accepted norms embedded within the gaming industry—and argues that games designed by artists and activists are reshaping everyday game culture.

Flanagan provides a lively historical context for critical play through twentieth-century art movements, connecting subversive game design to subversive art: her examples of "playing house" include Dadaist puppet shows and *The Sims*; her discussion of language play includes puns, palindromes, Yoko Ono's *Instruction Paintings*, and Jenny Holzer's messages in LED. Flanagan also looks at artists' alternative computer-based games, examining projects from *Persuasive Games* and Gonazalo Frasca and other games created through the use of interventionist strategies in the design process. And she explores games for change, considering the way activist concerns—among them Darfur, worldwide poverty, and AIDS—can be incorporated into game design.

Arguing that this kind of conscious practice—which now constitutes the avant-garde of the computer game medium—can inspire new working methods for designers, Flanagan offers a model for designing that will encourage the subversion of popular gaming tropes through new styles of game making, and proposes a theory of alternate game design that focuses on the reworking of contemporary popular game practices.

作者介绍:

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