"Let's Pretend"

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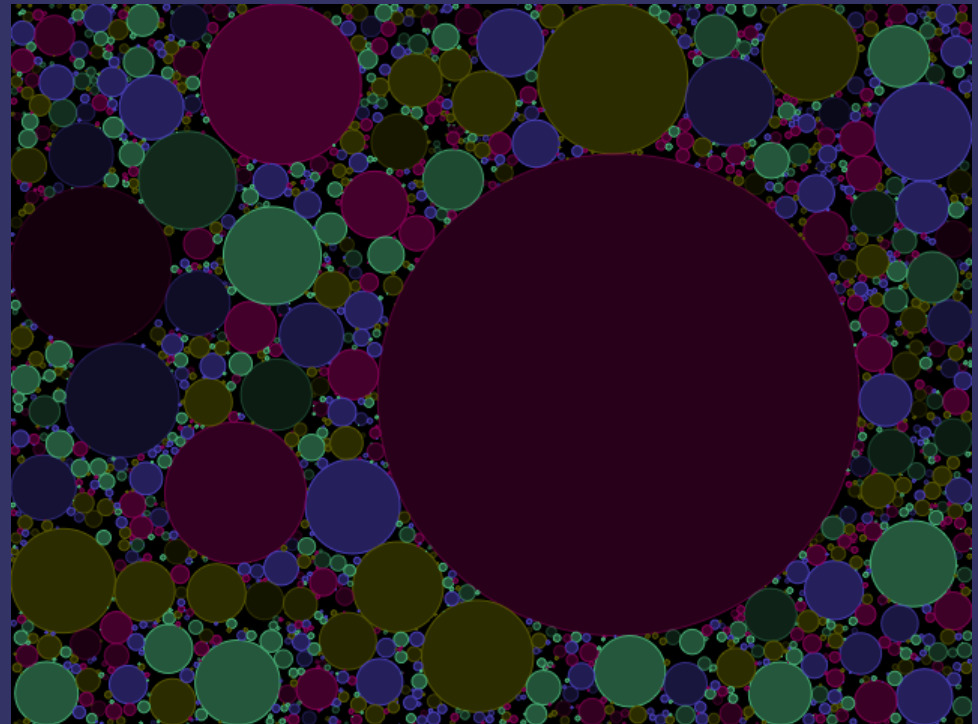Stanislaus
http://web.csustan.edu/English/DeVries/

Limits and Approaches

This is an early report on work in progress.

It is shameless auto-ethnography

It draws on the hybrid <u>foam</u> metaphor proposed by Mirko Tobias Schäfer.

It aims to discover how the sense of risk and possibility of transgression create a ludic tone that attracts participants.

Old BeOS screensaver for Mac

Social Software

Is it a social network, a web interface, a game?

A metaphor of hybrid foam helps describe the characteristics I wish to explore.

Seemingly enclosed worlds, but touching, intersecting, and permeable membranes belie the apparent safety or closed nature.

Virtual/Actual/Real?

Where is the line between "real" life and pretend?

Does the tension between what's real and what's not encourage a spirit of play?

Models of Online Community

- Fan
- Fetish
- FLOSS
- Hacker
- Artistic

The communities I will discuss may be usefully viewed as fan communities (Jenkins, Foster, De Vries), and as fetish communities (Hill)

Transgressive games

Because it isn't quite "real" transgressive behavior is more common, but is also encouraged by the games structure. Players are encourages to attack, trick, challenge and taunt other players, all of who are friends or perhaps "friends."

Who did I just add?

"Yes, the picture. I guess I just violated facebook etiquette--it is not me (maybe it is the inner me). It is, of course, 1950s hearthrob Troy Donahue! I will have to work on that."

Eventually I discovered that he was the husband of a friend...

What is Real?

What is shared between genre fiction, games, and social networking sites?

 * Tension between the real and unreal world

 * Tension between the real and fictional world

 * Tension between the real and game world

In-conclusion

We like to create worlds, but rather than the completely enclosed safety of fiction or game, maybe the most fun is to be had in spheres bound by permeable membranes, always offering the possibility of intersection, transference, and secret identities revealed.
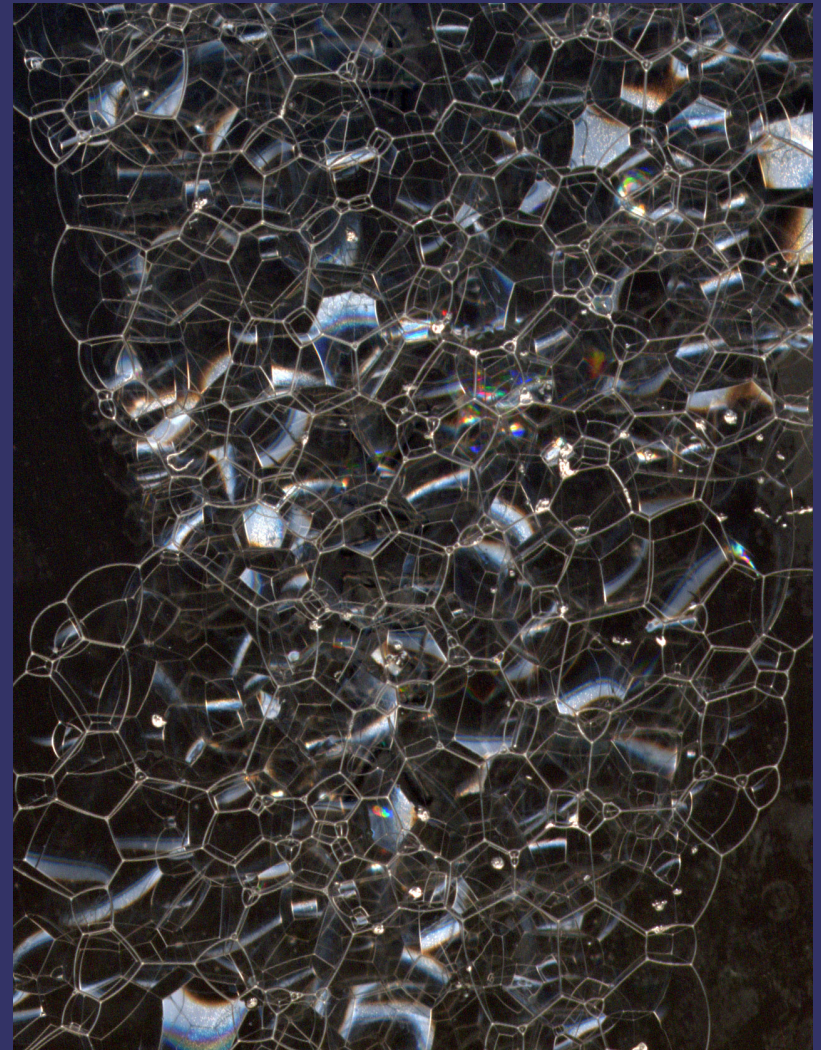
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