



Buffalo Arts Studio



Squeaky Wheel



**BUFFALO
GAME
SPACE**

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Amatryx Gaming Lab & Studio Presents:

Creativity in the Time of Covid-19

Exhibition: August 25–September 30

Opening Reception: Friday, August 25, 2023, 5:00–8:00 pm

**In partnership with Buffalo Arts Studio, Squeaky Wheel Film & Media Center, and Buffalo
Game Space**

Part of M&T Bank Fourth Friday at Tri-Main Center



A still from TD's short video *Loom*, a photo from Tianjun Li's photo series *La Luna y el Hacedor*, and a photo of Michael DeAnda wearing fae's crocheted pride crown, all parts of the exhibition.

BUFFALO, New York, August 7 2023: Amatrix Gaming Lab & Studio presents ***Creativity in the Time of Covid-19*** (<https://ubwp.buffalo.edu/amatrix/projects/creativity-in-the-time-of-covid-19/>) - an exhibition of pandemic artwork and creative expression. The exhibition is the outcome of a three year project examining how people ranging from professional artists to first-time creatives used creativity during the Covid-19 pandemic. The project defined creative expression broadly, including traditional and experimental art forms as well as creative hobbies such as gaming, baking, crocheting, and much more.

Creativity in the Time of Covid-19 is on display **August 25-September 30, 2023**, with an Opening Reception on **Friday, August 25, 5:00–8:00 PM**. There will be a series of short talks starting at 6:00 PM in the Buffalo Arts Studio gallery space, featuring speakers Natalie Phillips (Michigan State University), Lawrence Carter-Long (DisArt), and members of the Amatrix lab. A closing reception will take place on **September 22, 2023 at 3:00 PM** in the Buffalo Arts Studio gallery space, and feature a talk by speaker Tina Rivers-Ryan (Buffalo AKG Art Museum). **The exhibition and receptions are free and open to the public.**

Creativity in the Time of Covid-19 began with experiences common to many during the pandemic lockdowns: being stuck at home without physical access to the spaces and communities people were used to, and looking for ways to connect, fill the time, and process varied emotions. The project partners, including faculty from Michigan State University, University at Buffalo, Washington University in St. Louis, and United States Naval Academy, noticed how many people tried out new forms of creative expression or began new creative projects in response to the difficulties of life in lockdown. With the financial support of the Mellon Foundation, the project partners surveyed thousands of people across many states and sixteen countries (ranging from the US to Korea to Indonesia and beyond) about their creative expression during the pandemic. The result of this work is a collection of thousands of experiences, stories, and creative works from around the world that gives a broad, diverse picture of the role creativity played in living during the pandemic.

Creative works from the collection will appear in a series of online and physical exhibitions with each partner organization beginning in Fall 2023 and running through Spring 2024. The first of these exhibitions is *Amatrix Gaming Lab & Studio Presents: Creativity in the Time of Covid-19*, with community partners Buffalo Arts Studio, Squeaky Wheel Film & Media Art Center, and Buffalo Game Space. The Amatrix exhibition focuses particularly on LGBTQ+, BIPOC (Black/Indigenous/Person of Color), and/or Western New York-based creative works. In doing so, Director Cody Mejeur hopes that the exhibition will “prioritize the marginalized voices of communities often left out or forgotten in mainstream narratives.” As Mejeur notes, LGBTQ+ and BIPOC communities were often some of the hardest hit during the pandemic, and the Buffalo-based exhibition aims to start off the series by drawing attention to that trend and the people creating in these communities.

As part of the exhibition's opening night, the Amatrix Gaming Lab & Studio will also be launching the first full release of their current video game project, *Trans Folks Walking*. *Trans Folks Walking* (<https://ubwp.buffalo.edu/amatrix/trans-folks-walking/>) is a 3D, first person narrative game made with Unity that explores experiences of trans embodiment, being, and mobility. The game currently puts players in several situations drawn from the experiences of trans folks in contemporary America, ranging from the everyday such as using the bathroom through the particular such as being trans in a Christian church. The game creates space for trans folks to share their stories and for players to experience small parts of what it means to be trans. The game is intentionally designed as an anthology of short experiences that will grow in collaboration with trans people and their communities. The game will release on August 25, 2023 for PC and Mac on the game website itch.io, with a Steam release to follow.

The Buffalo exhibition contains creative work in many forms, including paintings, photographs, films, songs, video games, crochet, zines, and mixed media sculptures. These works will be spread across multiple gallery spaces in the Tri-Main Center, with visual and physical appearing in Buffalo Arts Studio; film, video, and digital media in Squeaky Wheel Film & Media Art Center; and games and virtual reality in Buffalo Game Space. Participants are encouraged to explore works in each space on opening night, and throughout the exhibition during each organization's normal business hours (see attached links and flyers for more details).

Amatrix Gaming Lab & Studio (AGLS) is a lab in the Department of Media Study at University at Buffalo dedicated to gaming, virtual reality, social justice, and community storytelling projects. The lab combines cutting edge research on games, culture, and narrative with development projects in analogue, digital, and virtual reality games. Amatrix is committed to the diverse exploration of social justice narratives with intersectional queer and feminist values, such as antinormativity, relationality, coalitionality, and resistance. The lab thinks critically about play and narrative as means for imagining more equitable and transformative futures.

For more information on:

Amatrix and *Trans Folks Walking*, please visit <https://ubwp.buffalo.edu/amatrix/>

Buffalo Arts Studio, please visit www.buffaloartsstudio.org

Squeaky Wheel, please visit <https://squeaky.org/>

Buffalo Game Space, please visit <https://www.buffalogamespace.com/>

Creativity in the Time of Covid-19, please visit <https://dhlc.cal.msu.edu/creativity-in-the-time-of-covid-19/>

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High resolution images available upon request.

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