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**[WWW.BIGANT.COM](http://WWW.BIGANT.COM)**

## CONTRIBUTORS TO THE NEXT EXHIBIT ~~~~~

**COVER ARTIST** Rebecca Enya

**BOOKLET DESIGNER** Cecile Richard

**FOREWORD** Amanda Yeo

## CO-ORDINATORS ~~~~~

Ally McLean, Liam Esler

## CONSULTANTS ~~~~~

Jay Justice, Rae Johnston,  
Steven Spohn, Vee Pendergrast

## EXHIBIT STAFF ~~~~~

Nik Pantis, Noni Och, Facundo Calderón,  
Stephanie Panecasio, Adam Matthews

## SPONSORS ~~~~~

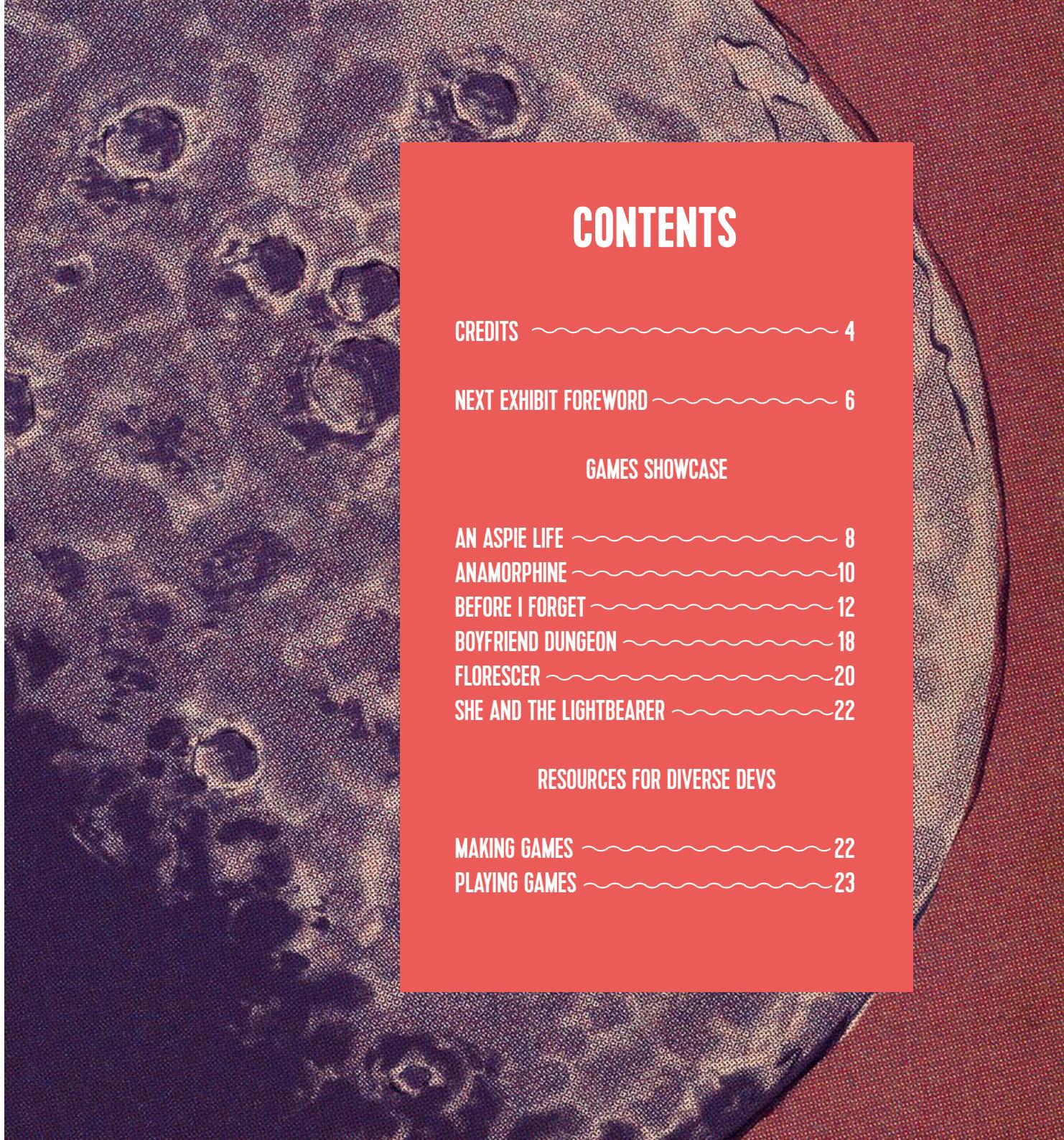
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# NEXT EXHIBIT FOREWORD

Though I love video games, growing up I knew they weren't intended for me.

Browsing through gaming magazines and flicking through new releases, I was an unwanted interloper amongst white men and nude mods. Small disabled Asian girls didn't fit in. I smothered my difference and hoped to be included anyway, but the escapist fantasy of games loses some shine when you have to qualify yourself to belong.

Like any experience, games ripple out into our world and shape our perceptions. When all our heroes look and behave a certain way, this is what we learn heroes are. When none are like us, this is what we learn we aren't. We internalise that our narratives are just side quests or flavour text in other people's tales, and we live our lives accordingly.

When I ran writing workshops, I discovered that teaching to write was often unteaching what writing is. Kids came in believing that there was value in four-syllable words and metaphors about love and drowning, but none in four-letter exclamations and jokes about their friends being shitheads. Nobody was telling their stories, so they'd learned their stories were not worth telling.

We are all made up of stories. And if we can't see the value in our stories, how can we see the value in ourselves?

Not every child is a voracious reader, but most would eagerly take up a controller if offered. The stories found in games are no less significant than the stories found in film or literature, and it is vital that they reflect the wide range of people who consume them.

It isn't enough to merely say that anyone can pick up a controller and be included. For one, it isn't true. Factors such as physical disability or lack of access to consoles bar many from participating. For another, this assertion ignores the way exclusion operates. It must be countered with action as well as words. If we invite a friend to eat with us but only set the table for ourselves, we can't be surprised when they feel unwelcome.

**WE ARE ALL MADE UP OF STORIES.  
AND IF WE CAN'T SEE THE VALUE  
IN OUR STORIES, HOW CAN WE SEE  
THE VALUE IN OURSELVES?**

Each game featured in the NEXT Exhibit helps to carve out a place for marginalised voices, broadening what games are, who they're for, and who makes them. Whether through the inclusion of diverse options for romance and gender identity in *Boyfriend Dungeon*, or the sensitive depiction of a woman with dementia in *Before I Forget*, each brings to the fore stories that are too often muffled.

Games such as these don't just aim to be good. By their existence, they also do good.

However, while empowering underrepresented groups within a game is important, it is ineffectual unless we also consider how said groups are affected outside it. How we create and who creates it is just as significant as what is created, and diverse characters need diverse developers behind them. Accordingly, the developers behind each game in this showcase are as varied as the characters within them.

**WE CAN'T KNOW WHO WE ARE  
IF WE CAN'T SEE OURSELVES.**

Making games that reflect the breadth of human experience is impossible without the people who have lived them. I cannot speak for a group I am not a part of, and it would be ignorant and damaging for me to pretend I could.

The best people to tell these stories are the people to whom they belong. And for these voices to thrive, it's vital to foster an environment where people of all demographics and walks of life can share their own stories, told in the way they want them to be heard. The value of giving people control of their own

narrative, of their own self-image, and of letting people hear from others like them, is immeasurable.

The six games featured in the NEXT Exhibit are just a microcosm of a rich universe of oft unheard stories. Each is as varied from each other as they are from the dominant discourse, each as important as each other, each a lighthouse for future developers and players to follow.

We can't know who we are if we can't see ourselves. People need stories. Stories provide nourishment, reassurance and courage. They show us it is possible to run while we are still learning to walk, and give us the hope that one day we will.

None of us are flavour text, bricks for building other people's worlds and providing backdrop. We are each worlds unto ourselves, and each world is valuable, vital, and worth exploring.

SPONSORED BY DEFIANT DEVELOPMENT



## BRADLEY HENNESSEY

*An Aspie Life* is an experimental adventure game that puts players into the perspective of an autistic person. Created by **Bradley Hennessey** to share his experience of living with Asperger's Syndrome, *An Aspie Life* takes what Hennessey describes as his “everyday autistic traits” and transforms them into innovative and challenging mechanics.



# AN ASPIE LIFE

BRADLEY HENNESEY

With a story centred around daily life and everyday experiences that can be both difficult and beautiful for people with autism, *An Aspie Life* is hopeful and insightful. Hennessey says, “Just because you have it, doesn’t mean you can’t enjoy life. Some things can be harder to do, but you can do some incredible things as well. It just makes even the mundane parts of life an experience.”

AN ASPIE LIFE



## ABOUT THE DEV

*An Aspie Life* is **Bradley Hennessey**'s first released game, having started development in his 45 minute lunch breaks at school at age 16. “The past 4 years at high school... all the failed projects and lessons I learnt in Pixel art, coding and game design eventually came together in *An Aspie Life*.”

→ [MEBRADHEN.GITHUB.IO](https://mebradhen.github.io)



## ABOUT THE DEVS

**Artifact 5** is an award-winning company creating distinct surreal and emotionally driven games for PC, console and VR. **Artifact 5** diverges from the pack by creating new modes of storytelling through mechanics. With a small, diverse team and a new approach to storytelling, **Artifact 5** are an exciting example of what can happen when you truly explore new perspectives.

→ [ARTIFACT5.COM](http://ARTIFACT5.COM)



Snapshots of happier days dance through Tyler's head. When your own mind is against you, where else can you turn?

Tyler, a young man in post-traumatic denial, revisits a succession of milestones that define his relationship with his wife Elena, who falls victim to an accident that robs her of her livelihood and emotional outlet. Tyler's mental turmoil warps his past as he struggles to come to terms with his guilt and inability to help Elena when she quietly slips into depression.



## ANAMORPHINE

ARTIFACT 5

Told with no dialogue or action button, *Anamorphine*'s narrative comes together through Tyler's dream-like memories, contorting and bleeding into each other with his mental state. Will you confront the past and try to find a way to move on, or will you let it consume you?

*Anamorphine* is a beautiful, surreal exploration of mental illness for PC and VR devices.

## 3-FOLD GAMES

*Before I Forget* is a narrative exploration about Sunita, a woman with dementia. Players explore the house, interacting with objects which trigger memories and bring colour into the world. Sunita's dementia means she doesn't always understand what she's remembering, or where and when she is. Playing with expectations, *Before I Forget* delivers an unsettling and often heartbreakingly representation of some of the confusion and anxiety caused by dementia.



# BEFORE I FORGET

3-FOLD GAMES

Made by an all-woman team of developers from the UK, *Before I Forget* is a passion project driven by a desire to tell a story about an experience faced by many. **In an environment of limited indie funding opportunities, women developers face difficulty in securing financial support often attributed to the large gender imbalances in the games industry.** Games that tackle serious illness and disease outside of the “educational games” sphere often struggle to find a platform, and *Before I Forget* is simply too beautiful, and too moving to be overlooked.

BEFORE I FORGET

## BEFORE I FORGET

### ABOUT THE DEVS

**3-Fold Games** formed after meeting at the XX+ Game Jam 2016. **Clare** is a self-taught programmer and digital artist who organises game jams and workshops around Bristol, UK. **Chella** is a freelance games journalist, diversity advocate and co-host of the *Argue the Toss* podcast.

→ [3FOLDGAMES.UK](http://3FOLDGAMES.UK)

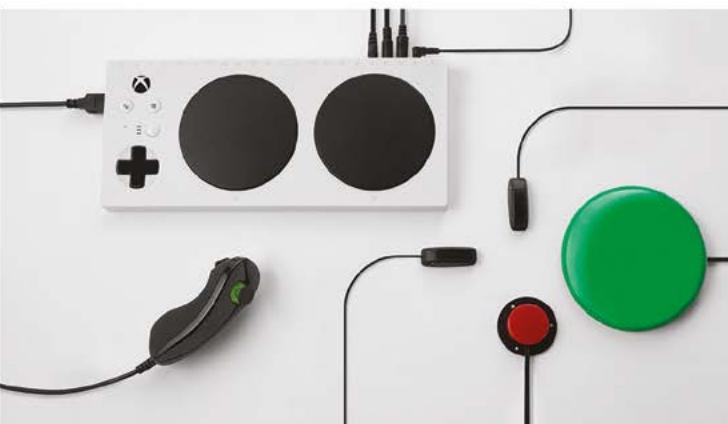


3-FOLD GAMES



## Xbox Adaptive Controller

Game your way.



Game your way

Designed primarily to meet the needs of gamers with limited mobility, the Xbox Adaptive Controller is a unified hub for devices that helps make gaming more accessible.

Works with a range of devices

Connect external devices such as switches, buttons, mounts and joysticks to create a custom controllers experience that is uniquely yours. Button, thumbstick and trigger inputs are controlled with assistive devices (sold separately) connected through 3.5mm jacks and USB ports.

Available now from Microsoft Store or try it for yourself at the Xbox booth at PAX



# Dinosaur Polo Club

We don't *actually* ride dinosaurs.

But we are a small, cheerful studio, making games for everyone.

@dinopoloclub

dinopoloclub.com



## BOYFRIEND DUNGEON

Romance your swords! Capture the hearts of weapons to level them up in this “shack-and-slash” action-RPG dungeon crawling adventure. For your summer job, you’re tasked with clearing the creatures in “the dun”. Soon you discover weapons you find transform into cuties... and they’re SINGLE! Forge precious moments with your lovers and work together to clear the rampant monster infestations in procedurally generated dungeons and varied combat styles.

## BOYFRIEND DUNGEON

KITFOX GAMES



### ABOUT THE DEVS

Kitfox Games is an independent Montreal-based games company dedicated to creating only the highest-quality games. Self-described as a “scrappy games studio,” they focus on creating dangerous, intriguing worlds to explore.

Kitfox is also one of the most diverse independent game development outfits in the world, placing an extremely high value on gameplay, quality, learning and respect. Kitfox’s former games include *Shattered Planet*, *Moon Hunters*, and *The Shrouded Isle*.



→ [KITFOXGAMES.COM](http://KITFOXGAMES.COM)

Successfully Kickstarted in 2018, *Boyfriend Dungeon* reflects an innovative take on two different genres, in a game that could only be created by one of the most diverse teams on the planet. As more diverse people enter into the industry, we hope to see more titles like *Boyfriend Dungeon* smash expectations of what games can be!



## FLORESKER

PUGCORN

The game was developed with the help of a Brazilian NGO called Florescer, an organization that houses transgender women. The English translation is by **Helena Alves**, a trans woman who worked not only to support the people Pugcorn are trying to help, but also to make sure the translation wouldn't fall victim to negative tropes and stereotypes.

FLORESKER



### ABOUT THE DEVS

**Pugcorn** are a student team from Brazil. Focused on creating projects with positive social impact, they are currently working to develop their individual skills as much as their skills as a team. They seek to learn, have fun and change the world.

Game developers outside of the West can struggle to be heard outside of their own countries, and Florescer is a wonderful example of a team whose stories SHOULD be heard!



→ [PUGCORN.ITCH.IO](https://pugcorn.itch.io)

FLORESKER

PUGCORN



## ABOUT THE DEVS

*She and the Light Bearer* is a multi-team effort out of Indonesia (**Mojiken Studio**, **Toge Productions**, and **Pathetic Experience**) lead by creator **Brigitta Rena**. Mojiken's mission statement reads, "We provide happiness to our family member, to inspire people, and build a better world to live in."

→ [MOJIKENSTUDIO.COM](http://MOJIKENSTUDIO.COM)

→ [TOGEPRODUCTIONS.COM](http://TOGEPRODUCTIONS.COM)

→ [SOUNDCLOUD.COM/  
PATHETICEXPERIENCE](http://SOUNDCLOUD.COM/PATHETICEXPERIENCE)

## SHE AND THE LIGHT BEARER

*She and the Light Bearer* is a point and click adventure game inspired by Indonesian folktales, accompanied by beautifully hand-drawn art and acoustic folk music. The narrative was inspired by the tale of **Ibu Pertwi**, an Indonesian tale about mother earth. The developers aim to educate players about Indonesian culture and art through the experience.

**Brigitta Rena**, *She and the Light Bearer*'s creator, has faced strong patriarchal values in her Javanese upbringing, and cultural pushback against trying to achieve her goals in the games industry. **In leading this project, Brigitta Rena is working towards a future where women in Indonesian game development are treated like their peers.**



# SHE AND THE LIGHT BEARER

MOJIKEN STUDIO, TOGE PRODUCTIONS, PATHETIC EXPERIENCE

Indonesia, and the whole of Southeast Asia, is home to extraordinary teams of game developers producing world-class games that often go unrecognised. Brigitta and her team's efforts on *She and the Light Bearer*, and other beautiful games like *A Raven Monologue*, remind us to look beyond our own shores for games to fall in love with.



MOJIKEN STUDIO, TOGE PRODUCTIONS, PATHETIC EXPERIENCE

# MAKING GAMES

Want to start making games?  
Here are some great resources and tools we'd recommend to get started!

## SORTINGH.AT

Sorting Hat is a free interactive tool designed to help someone with no knowledge of game development get started!

→ [SORTINGH.AT](https://sortingh.at)

## TWINE

One of the most popular and easy-to-use tools to make narrative games, Twine is an HTML driven interactive storytelling framework.

→ [TWINERY.ORG](https://twinery.org)

## ITCH.IO

Not sure where to release a game you've made? Check out itch.io, a platform supportive of diverse and underrepresented developers world over.

→ [ITCH.IO](https://itch.io)

## CRASH OVERRIDE NETWORK

If you are faced with harassment due to being a woman or an otherwise underrepresented minority online, the Crash Override Network is a crisis hotline, an advocacy group and a resource center for victims of online abuse.

→ [CRASHOVERRIDENETWORK.COM](https://crashoverridenetwork.com)

## ITCH.IO

One of the most supportive platforms for diverse and underrepresented developers, itch.io is one of the best places to find games that you might not otherwise see!

→ [ITCH.IO](https://itch.io)

## I NEED DIVERSE GAMES

INDG is a non-profit dedicated to highlighting the work of underrepresented developers, founded by Tanya DePass.

→ [INEEDDIVERSEGAMES.ORG](https://ineeddiversegames.org)

## QUEERLY REPRESENT ME

QRM is a database for games that represent the spectrum of sexuality, gender, and relationships, and resources that discuss such games.

→ [QUEERLYREPRESENT.ME](https://queerlyrepresent.me)

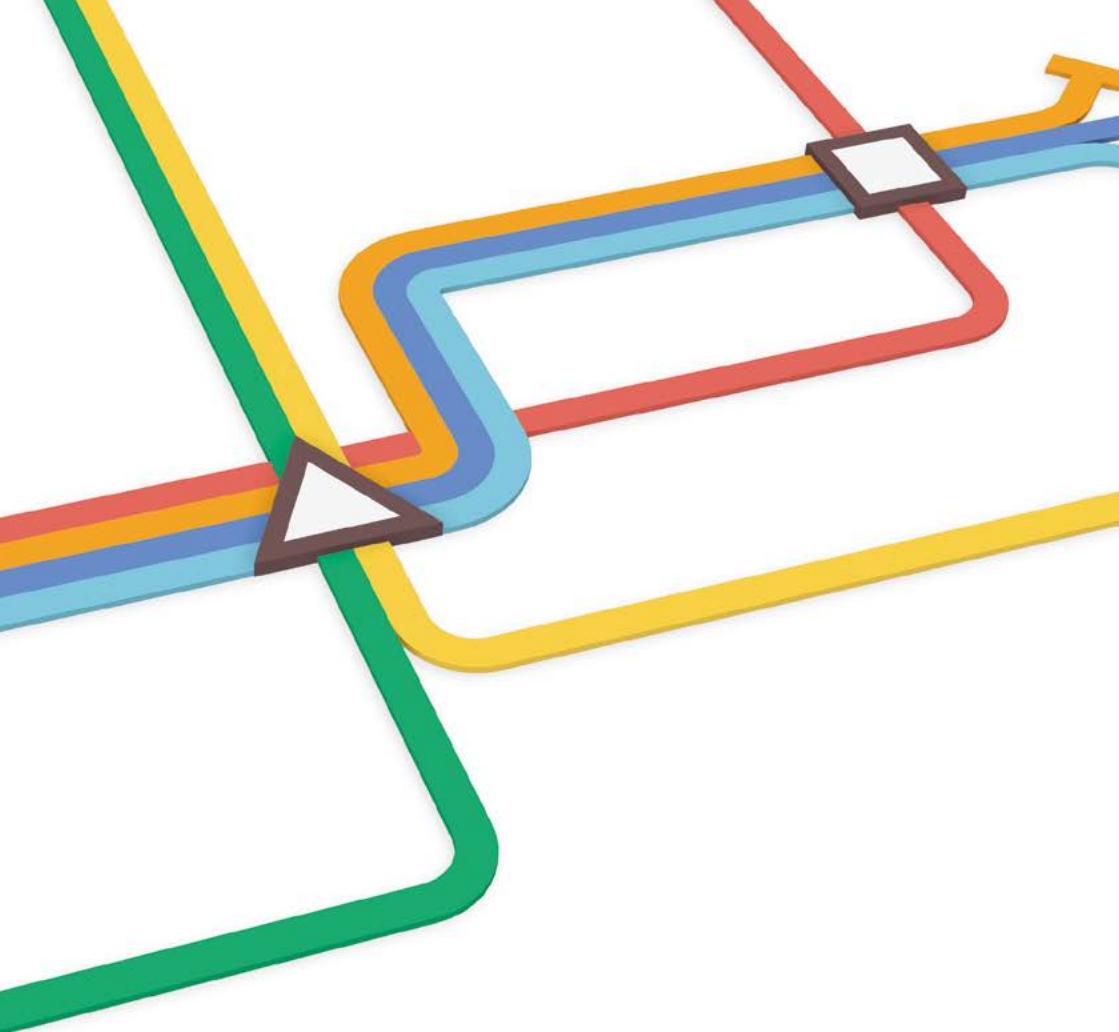
## GAME DEVS OF COLOR EXPO

GDoC curates games, highlighting creators of colour, for their annual event Game Devs of Color Expo. Follow them on Twitter!

→ [TWITTER.COM/GDOCEXPO](https://twitter.com/gdoceexpo)

# PLAYING GAMES

Want to check out more games featuring diverse content or by underrepresented developers? Here are some links and resources to check out!



# Mini Metro™

It looks boring but it's actually pretty fun.™

