

**Panel 33**  
**Art Beyond the Museum**

**From Literary Psychogeography to Virtual Worlds:  
Reading Space and Writing Memories Through Play**

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This paper explores virtual worlds in Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPG) platforms as sites of intermedial poetics shaped by psychogeographical drift, ontological breakdowns, and spatial encounters. Drawing on my artwork *Wasteland* (2025) and two case studies of “public” virtual cities on MMORPG platforms, *KOWLOONS GATE REBORN* (2005-ongoing) in *Second Life* and *Moscow Trip 2002 Night Tram* (2022-ongoing) in *VRChat*, I argue that virtual worlds function as vernacular archives and narrative assemblages which are formed not through narrative plot but through ambiance, absence and juxtapositions. These virtual cities evoke the literary psychogeographies of Iain Sinclair and Peter Ackroyd where walking becomes a method of reading and place emerges through memory. Players become readers of space, interpreting architectures, signages, and ambiances in ways that mirror the fragmented narrative logic of the psychogeographer or literary flâneur. Through my artwork *Wasteland* (2025) which operates both as artwork exhibited at NTU Museum and as public virtual world on *VRChat*, I propose that virtual worlds in digital games enable a form of embodied nonlinear storytelling that draws its roots from ergodic literature and reconfigures literary traditions in contemporary culture. By situating digital game space within a broader lineage of intermedial experimentation, I argue that virtual worlds offer a contemporary form of the literary: one that extends psychogeography into digital space. In doing so, they model new and alternative ways of writing space through play.

**Biography**

Debbie Ding is an artist-scholar working across the intersection of artistic research and game studies. Notable exhibitions include “Radical Gaming” at HeK Basel, “Worldbuilding” at Julia Stoschek Foundation Dusseldorf, “Wikicliki” at Singapore Art Museum, “Radio Malaya” at NUS Museum, “Construction in Every Corner” at NTU Museum, Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Singapore Biennale and Ars Electronica. She has been walking in both real and virtual worlds for over 20 years.