

**Panel 20**  
**Intermedial Strategies and Reconstructions**

**Unboxing the Cube: Intermediality in *Cube Escape: Paradox***

*Ng Xin Le*

*Nanyang Technological University*

Inspired by David Lynch's *Twin Peaks*, the *Cube Escape* series comprises several point-and-click games set in the surrealistic Rusty Lake universe, centred around Detective Dale Vandermeer and the death of Laura Vanderboom. Released in 2018 as the tenth instalment, the experimental *Paradox* was developed alongside a short film of the same name, and later adapted into a comic book by artist Lau Kwong Shing in 2019. By tracing how elements of the gameplay—dialogue, navigation, and setting—are translated visually across the three media forms, the paper posits that the intermedial nature of *Paradox* deliberately exposes the creator's world-building strategies to enhance and complicate the audience's understanding of its complex, layered narrative. Crucially, while the same narrative sequence is reproduced across all three works, medium-specific variations such as alternative endings (game), behind-the-scenes videos (film), and unique materials and layouts that “unfold” the cube (comic), invite the audience to move beyond interactivity on the level of gameplay and approach *Paradox* as construction. Beyond that, while game-Dale directly engages with actor-Dale in both the film and game, in the comic there is no visual distinction between drawn-Dale and actor-Dale. Accordingly, the affective implications of the interplay between the (visually) realistic and unrealistic planes of existence in the film and game, and the lack thereof in the comic, will be discussed in relation to the tenth-anniversary short film “The Intern”, which further conflates the primary and fictional worlds by depicting an actor solving in-game quests at the Rusty Lake headquarters.

**Biography**

Ng Xin Le is pursuing a Master of Arts in English at Nanyang Technological University, under the NTU Research Scholarship. Her thesis explores the visualisation of literary spaces in the works of Paul Auster, Apostolos Doxiadis, and Chris Ware. Her research interests include graphic novel studies, literary theory, and art history.