

ZeMKI-Forschungskolloquium

ZeMKI Research Seminar

Linzer Str. 4, Room 60.070, 28359 Bremen, DE

05.11.2025, 16.15 – 17.45 (CET)

Prof. Dr. Lissa Holloway-Attaway

(University of Skövde, Sweden)

Making Kinship and Playing Dead: Death, Grief, Mourning, and 'Passing on' in Video Game Culture(s)

Abstract:

In my seminar, I will share some of the context and initial research from my current project "Making Kinship and Playing Dead: Death, Grief, Mourning, and 'Passing on' in Video Game Culture(s)." The project is based on an exploration of how the process of "making kin," particularly with Donna Haraway's concept of "odd-kin," offers a dynamic, anti-conventional, radical, way to engage the world and its potential more-than human intimacies. The process offers a way to reconceptualize/materialize living as we know it. But importantly, it also aims to reconsider dying, and all the 'passings on', and in between, the complex and emergent phenomena that sustain these seemingly opposing dual (power) states that all humans inhabit. In the midst of the challenges to ontological being and epistemological knowing that states of death, loss and grief stimulate, phenomena emerge that offer powerful other-worldly perspectives to restructure, engage with, and open social relations. 'Passing on' (that is dying, but also grieving and mourning), then, is a deeply mixed material and affective site from which to reimagine and play with conventional cultural structures and agents as 'we' have always (seemingly) understood them.

In the context of video games focused on death, loss, dying, and other states of un-doing, as well as in my own practice of digital worldbuilding, I consider how, such sites/agents/phenomena may also potentially offer players radical new ways to see, undo and communicate radical affective worlds for inclusion to initiate/sustain new relations via their powerfully unconventional odd-kin. My research on video games, and in my own creative research practice making interactive, play-based digital work, is intended to exemplify the complexity of current and developing feminist, posthuman, and non-human scholarship. But further, I aim to illustrate how video games and adjacent interactive digital narratives may be seen as complex, intimate and expressive vehicles for engaging/critiquing world phenomena through new embodied, non-cognitive perspectives.

Bio:

Lissa Holloway-Attaway is an Associate Professor in Media Arts, Aesthetics, and Narration in the Division of Game Development at the University of Skövde, Sweden. She is also the leader for the GAME ("games, art, media, experience") Research Group. She teaches within the undergraduate and masters programs in game development and also supervises and teaches in Informatics at the PhD level. She works across many forms of media focusing on users in complex socio-cultural systems. Her current research is focused on interactive digital narratives, experimental sound work, digital cultural heritage, non-human narratives.