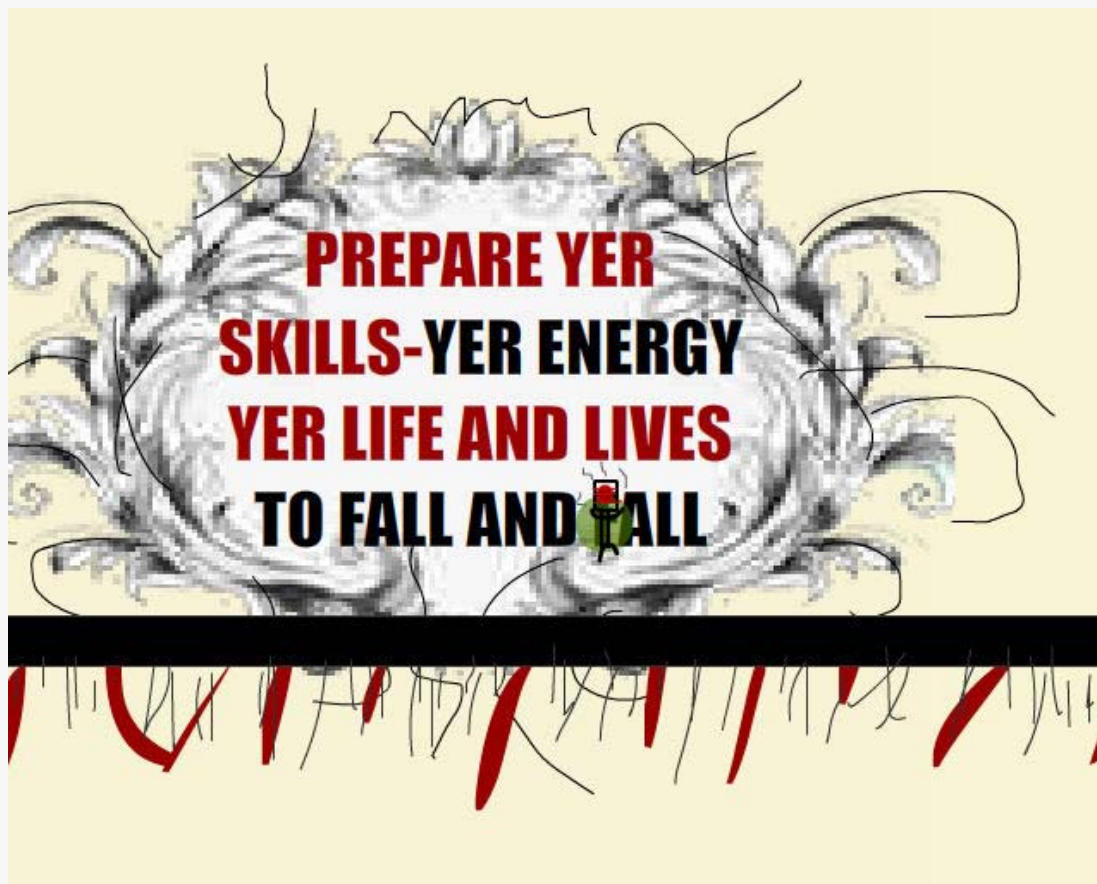


Nothing you have done deserves such praise (Jason Nelson)

Posted by Terry on June 27, 2013

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Porpentine June 28, 2013 at 12:32 am

"I'm coughing because of how amazing you are"

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nobody June 28, 2013 at 2:06 am

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"Nothing you have done deserves such praise" is such an *excruciatingly* good title, and so it feels like a shame to me that this piece directs it at a target as slow-moving as "contemporary mainstream video games flatter their players." (And the sarcastic voiceover doesn't help, every modulation just making sure, phoneme by sarcastic phoneme, that you know it's not taking itself seriously.)

That said, there's so much to like in this, but I'd argue that it works best when you recognize the joy of spectacle it's in fact wholeheartedly taking part in despite all the claims to the contrary. There are elements that are really quite beautiful. And there's pleasure in the explosions. The voice-over's obnoxious tone is telling you that this is a lazy piece, but if you could remove its (indeed lazy) messaging, you'd be left with something that really does bespeak its effort and its craft.

But really I'm just sad that "Nothing you have done deserves such praise" is now no longer available for a piece about the Nobel prize winner who's convinced s/he's a fraud, or the Poet Laureate plagiarist, or the celebrated self-help author whose home life is a wreck, or the depressed indie game maker who has trouble getting out of bed.

(I think my expectations were skewed by the NEA funding notice?)

Reply



Alex July 2, 2013 at 2:21 am

Yeah, I agree that 'joke at the expense of achievement-saturated commercial games' doesn't really do this justice. It didn't bother me so much because I found the voiceover stuff funny. But I think you're right in the sense that the anti-achievement hook, for whatever reason, wants to deflect the player's attention from what makes this game genuinely beautiful. The work also struck me as an earnest exploration of what a verb (jumping) feels like under different circumstances. Also, it made me think about how design boils down to the circumstances you surround that verb with once you decide how it feels. Maybe the dissonance between the 'message' and the substance is part of what makes this interesting? I dunno.

Reply



nobody July 2, 2013 at 4:43 pm

That might be true — and after hitting submit on that comment a few days ago I did wonder if I might have been being too harsh — but it comes off to *me* as a form of insecurity, an artist preempting critique by yelling "Not Serious, You Guys! Even the irony I'm employing: I'm not serious about that either!"

On the other hand, I like the underdog! I like when people are a little insecure! But maybe I just don't like when that comes out as pretend bravado. So this might boil down to being a kneejerk aesthetic preference.

I'd love to see a version of this with something like the Stanley Parable's deadpan voice in place. I wonder if the script here would even have to change much. ("I'm coughing because of how amazing you are" *is* good!)



Justin June 28, 2013 at 10:09 am

Reply

This comes off as being both massively condescending and completely lacking in self-awareness.

Maybe the obliviousness is by design, lampooning itself and those who would take it seriously as much as the target of the overt satire.

If that's the case, then this is pretty fucking excellent.

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