

Bob Bicknell-Knight
Non-Player Character

4K video with sound, 3D printed marble PLA plastic, USB drive, USB male to female cable
9 min 38 sec

Commissioned by Petra Szemán using funding from Arts Council England as part of On Animatics, a cross-disciplinary project exploring the murky overlapping areas of contemporary art, animation, fandom, avatars and virtual worlds.



Bob Bicknell-Knight's Non-Player Character is a looping CGI video exploring non-player character's (NPCs) in video games as a vehicle to speaking about how human beings navigate through an increasingly codified and controlled existence.

NPCs are characters in video games that are controlled by the computer. They have a predetermined set of behaviours programmed by artificial intelligent software. The lives of these characters revolve around the player. They are stuck in the game world, doomed to repeat the same day for eternity, waiting to be interacted with.

Non-Player Character imagines what enemy NPCs are thinking and feeling on a daily basis, forced to repeat the same actions and to be defeated by the player, over and over again, until their data becomes unreadable. The work examines the NPCs increasingly gamified lives, and in turn our own, with the NPCs looking to the player, their own personal version of the creator and ruler of the universe, for answers to their ongoing existence.

Visually, the work observes a series of popular NPC enemies falling from the sky into a white, endless space, breaking into small pieces to be subsequently recycled and reused to create endless copies of their own selves. This visual loop is accompanied by a soothing soundtrack and a series of voiceovers speaking from the perspective of the NPCs, ruminating on their lives and the player in the sky

The work physically resides on a 3D printed USB drive resembling the arm of a Deathclaw from the Fallout video game series.

When installed in a physical space, viewers are invited to watch the film whilst sitting on a series of custom-made cubes featuring the video game textures from a number of the enemy NPCs included in the film.

Watch the film by going to <https://youtu.be/yIs9PPpRIYw>



Exhibited at Non-Player Character, solo exhibition.

At Galeria Kollektiva, Schillerstraße 30, 34117 Kassel, DE, 29th July - 21st August 2022.



Exhibited at Non-Player Character, solo exhibition curated by Pita Arreola and Elliott Burns.

At Klaipėda Cultural Communication Center, Bažnyčių str. 4 LT-91246, Klaipėda, Lithuania,
20th January - 19th February 2023.



Exhibited at Play During the Pandemic, curated by Jodi Kwok w/ Bob Bicknell-Knight, Daniel Tebano, Kialy Tihngang and Matthew Tully.

At QUAD Extra Gallery Spaces, QUAD, Market Place, Cathedral Quarter, Derby, DE1 3AS, 23rd July - 30th October 2022.



Exhibited at The Advantages of Being Boneless And Incomplete, curated by Jamie Sutcliffe and Petra Szemán w/ Bob Bicknell-Knight, David Blandy, Emily Mulenga, Hardeep Pandhal, David Steans, Petra Szemán and Christian Wright, and includes contributions from Ami Clarke, Cole James Graham and Sahej Rahal.

At Banner Repeater, Platform 1 Hackney Downs Network Rail, Dalston Ln, London E8 1LA, United Kingdom, 13th January - 30th April 2023.