2021
ASPIRING WOMEN* IN GAMES SCHOLARSHIP

*Women and non-binary
If you could choose anyone, who would you pick as your mentor?
Andrea Toyias, the Voice Over and Casting Director at Blizzard Entertainment. As an inspiring producer with a specialization in working with actors at a games studio there isn’t a more perfect person in the industry.

What is your favorite video game and/or boardgame and why?
I wrote on the Legend of Zelda multiple times in undergrad discussing its importance and legacy in media. I argued that the combination of narrative and gameplay best seen in Ocarina of Time shows the perfect harmony of bettering oneself as a protagonist in a grander scheme of life.

What’s a random fun fact about you?
I’m Platinum in Overwatch and have over 600 hours logged in competitive mode...
SCHOLARSHIP

*Women and non-binary

DANIELLE M. OLSON

School: Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Degree/course: Computer Science Ph.D. Candidate

Graduating: 2021

Hometown: Chantilly, Virginia

Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

What are you most eager to learn at GDC?
I look forward to hearing the ways in which games are continuing to make an important impact in our culture beyond entertainment, especially given the challenges of the pandemic.

What are your hobbies?
I enjoy all forms of storytelling (in games, books, podcasts, movies, and more), music, art, cooking, biking, and weightlifting.

What is the best piece of advice that you've received?
In college, one of my mentors shared an Arthur Ashe quote with me that has stayed with me ever since: “Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.”
If you could choose anyone, who would you pick as your mentor?
An experienced female developer so that I could pick her brain and become a better developer myself.

What do you geek out about?
Second hand clothes! When I ask how much of my outfit is thrifted, the answer is always 100%. Good for the earth and the wallet, what is there not to like?

What is your favorite video game and/or boardgame and why?
That’s so hard to answer! I get very into certain games for periods of time and they all seem like my favorite at some point. Right now it’s Persona 5 because it relies on strategy and allows me to grind.
**J**

**School:** -  
**Degree/course:** Game Design  
**Graduating:** 2022

**Hometown:** Spain  
**Pronouns:** They/Them She/Her/Hers (no preference)

**What are you most eager to learn at GDC?**  
Mainly how to get a better chance at making games I care about and how to engage other people in my work. Design and programming are my main areas of work, and there’s so much subjectivity around the workflows, the ways people think and how they anticipate and deal with issues that getting to know the perspective of industry titans first hand I feel it’s the best way to impulse my work to a better position quicker.

**What is your favorite video game and/or boardgame and why?**  
Portal 2, because is such a complete masterpiece. The puzzles, the characters, the music and sound effects... It’s such an amazing and short (which I love) experience.

**What’s a random fun fact about you?**  
Even though half my family is from the Canary Islands, I hate bananas with a burning passion ever since I was a baby.
JULIE MCLAUGHLIN

School: Temple University, Drexel University  
Hometown: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Degree/course: M.S. Music Technology.  
B.S. Music Production  
Pronouns: They/Them She/Her/Hers

Graduating: 2022

If you could choose anyone, who would you pick as your mentor?  
Jack Wall or Winifred Phillips! Completely different composers but I really like Jack  
Wall’s work on Call of Duty Black Ops: Cold War and Winifred Phillip’s work on Spore and  
Little Big Planet 3.

What do you geek out about?  
I geek out about current audio technology especially interactive audio technology. Ask me  
about the connection between building a synthesizer and game design and I will talk your  
ear off.

What is your favorite video game and/or boardgame and why?  
My favorite video game is Dance Dance Revolution. I’ve been playing the game since the  
Playstation 2. I really enjoy rhythm games in general and I like to show off in arcades or  
convention game rooms.
KATHERINE CHOI

School: Georgia Institute of Technology
Degree/course: Computer Science
Graduating: April 2023

Hometown: Pasadena, California
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

What are you most eager to learn at GDC?
I’ve always been a huge fan of the postmortem talks from GDC, so being able to watch them live would be incredible! I also would like to learn about next gen game development tools and services.

If you could choose anyone, who would you pick as your mentor?
Uncle Iroh from Avatar the Last Airbender!

What are your hobbies?
Dancing, playing musical instruments, and of course, video games.
If you could choose anyone, who would you pick as your mentor? Carrie Fisher, though that’s no longer possible. She was a survivor, a go-getter, a fighter, and a woman who knew how to leave her mark without taking any slack.

What is your favorite video game and/or boardgame and why? WoW is among my favorites of all time due to the immersive qualities of each zone and the friends I made while playing. Jumping back into the game brings memories soaring back at an almost visceral level. The same is true of the Final Fantasy series (although those were all solo play). I also love D&D and the Portal games. It’s all about the depth of story and environment.

What’s a random fun fact about you? I was once on the radio, with the DJ name “Princess Layla”!

School: Case Western Reserve, University School of Law

Hometown: Rochester, New York

Degree/course: IP and Tech Law

Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

Graduating: May 2022
What are you most eager to learn at GDC?
I’m most excited to be able to meet everyone at the conference and learn about their experience in the gaming industry. I hope I’ll get to learn more about game design as that’s something I’ve always wanted to learn more about.

What is your favorite video game and/or boardgame and why?
Team fight tactics. It gives me the competitive aspect, allows me to play with a group of friends, and I love trying all the different combinations of team comps.

What’s a random fun fact about you?
My spirit animal is the penguin.
LUISA ALVES ESCOSTEGUY

School: Carleton College
Degree/course: Computer Science
Graduating: June 2023
Hometown: Santana do Livramento, RS, Brazil
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

What do you geek out about?
I geek out about Harry Potter. I love the movies and the books; I have read all the books three times and never get tired of it. The Sorting Hat would probably put me in Ravenclaw.

What is your favorite way to spend a day off?
Definitely traveling or exploring a different place. I would be happy to visit a national park to do some trails and hiking, walking around a new city, or relaxing at the beach.

What is the best piece of advice that you’ve received?
To maximize passion and do things that I am deeply curious about; I should not worry about maximizing outcomes and results as those will follow when I do what I love.
WOMEN* IN GAMES SCHOLARSHIP
*Women and non-binary

MARINA GUTIÉRREZ CASAS

School: UCM / U-Tad

Degree/course: Game Design

Graduating: October 2021

Hometown: Madrid, Spain

Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

What are you most eager to learn at GDC?
Level and Narrative Design. I want to find new ways to design stories through the map and narrative resources, and new tricks for technical design.

What are your hobbies?
I enjoy thoroughly writing short stories, designing new plots and NPCs for my Vampire: The Masquerade game, I’m trying to learn how to draw, and, of course... I play a LOT of videogames!

What is your favorite video game and/or boardgame and why?
Vampire: The Masquerade from World Of Darkness. I’ve been Dungeon Master for three years, and I love the feeling of creating stories along with my players and friends and discussing the limits of human conception through role playing.
MICHELLE M. BRYANT

School: University of Wisconsin - Stout  
**Hometown:** Calumet City, Illinois  
Degree/course: Game Design & Development - Art  
**Pronouns:** She/Her/Hers  
Graduating: May 2023

**What are you most eager to learn at GDC?**  
The latest innovations that developers have been exploring and utilizing in video games and how they have approaching on developing games and their narratives to be more than just a source of entertainment.

**What is your favorite way to spend a day off?**  
Reading and gaming. I’m a huge nerd for lore and narratives that pull me into the story and let my imagination run wild creating mental images of what places look like that make me want to draw/paint them.

**What’s a random fun fact about you?**  
I am currently working on a passion project of turning an old RPG I played with friends in high school into a comic.
What are you most eager to learn at GDC?
I’m super excited to see virtual reality and hopefully augmented reality games.

What do you geek out about?
I geek out about marine biology. It’s so cool that there’s all these amazing organisms living in a totally different ecosystem than us.

What is your favorite video game and/or boardgame and why?
My favorite video games is Dishonored. I love the atmosphere and art style of the universe, the unique game mechanics, and the characters.
What are you most eager to learn at GDC?
I have many questions about the environment industry, what people’s preferred pipelines are, how to work on a 3d art style like Spyro and lighting advice.

What do you geek out about?
Stylized environment art, being amazed at how something has been created with so few polys or maps, or how imaginative and creative the style is. I think trees will always be a major one for me, when someone has found a beautiful yet creative way to create mid-low poly trees it makes me want to push my own boundaries.

What are your hobbies?
Rollerblading, Ice-skating, Running, Drawing and videogames, I would definitely say that my life is a cycle of juggling those things around the everyday stuff that has to be done. I also love playing with my dog (Who goes running with me).
TIFFANIE CHOI

School: University of Maryland, College Park  Hometown: Columbia, Maryland
Degree/course: B.A. Computer Science  Pronouns: She/Her/Hers
Graduating: Spring 2023

What is your favorite way to spend a day off?
I love to paddleboard deep in the middle of the bay, and then just lay on the board all day, listening to the waves crash into me.

What is your favorite video game and/or boardgame and why?
Overwatch is hands down the best video game ever because each character brings something different to the table, and the maps are absolutely gorgeous so the game is anything but boring!

What is the best piece of advice that you’ve received?
Think more about what brings you joy and less about what soothes your fears.
**VIANSA SCHMULBACH**

**School:** University of California, Berkeley  
**Degree/course:** Electrical Engineering and Computer Science  
**Graduating:** May 2023  
**Hometown:** Los Altos, California  
**Pronouns:** She/Her/Hers

**What are your hobbies?**  
When I’m not programming or developing video games, I enjoy baking bread, cooking new foods from 99 Ranch, and writing articles for a campus blog.

**What is your favorite video game and/or boardgame and why?**  
My favorite video game would probably be Stardew Valley because of its inclusiveness. I’ve been able to play this game with my family as well as my friends, and it’s really helped keep us close even through quarantine.

**What’s a random fun fact about you?**  
I’ve had pet jellyfish before, and they actually lived a really long time for domesticated jellyfish. They can become stressed out by the change in environment and develop small holes, but these healed over time for us after changing the salinity of the water.
Due to GDC 2020 being cancelled, we invited last year’s scholarship winners to virtually attend GDC in 2021 along with this year’s winners.

We’ve included them here in the next few pages.
EARLY CAREERS

2020

ASPIRING WOMEN* IN GAMES SCHOLARSHIP

*Women and non-binary
**ALEJANDRA VENDRELL**

**School:** La Salle Campus BCN  
**Degree/course:** Computer Science Engineering  
**Graduating:** September 2020

**Hometown:** Barcelona, Spain  
**Pronouns:** She/Her/Hers

**What do you geek out about?**  
Can I say food? Cooking it is okay but what I really love is trying out all different types of food.

**What is your favorite way to spend a day off?**  
Meet with friends (if possible) and play a LOT of boardgames with them.

**What’s a random fun fact about you?**  
I collect restaurant cards so that I can choose where to eat randomly between those cards when I’m indecisive [spoiler: I always am].
**INES CHOUQI**

**School**: Supinfogame Rubika  
**Degree/course**: Master Degree/Game Design & management  
**Hometown**: Amiens, France  
**Graduating**: March 2021  
**Pronouns**: She/Her/Hers

**What are you most eager to learn at GDC?**  
I believe the most interesting thing at GDC is to learn and exchange about dozens of ways of doing the same job from a place to another...So I would say, learning from other Game Designers!

**What are your hobbies?**  
I spend too much time into video games, but I am also an airplane pilot in my free time, and I do some chill knitting with a nice book or series!

**What is your favorite video game and/or boardgame and why?**  
It changes all the time, but lately Death Stranding has really impressed me for its gameplay proposal and its radicalism, the way it deploys its purpose is really unique. Otherwise the favorite game of my childhood is definitely Pokémon Emerald!
JOSEFIN KlINTBERG

**School**: Linköping University

**Degree/course**: MSc Media Technology

**Graduating**: June 2021

**Hometown**: Eksjö, Sweden

**Pronouns**: She/Her/Hers

**What is your favorite way to spend a day off?**
I love to go out running, since it allows me to spend a lot of time outside and in the forest, meeting up with friends, preferably playing some fun game, and grabbing a Fika.

**What is your favorite video game and/or boardgame and why?**
Hard choice, I enjoy a lot of video games, but I’d say World of Warcraft since it allows me to explore this whole different world with so much immersion and story while playing with my friends. My favorite board game is One Night Ultimate Werewolf since it is a fast game with high complexity, much tactics and it allows for many players. The online version of this game has been the center of many virtual game nights the past year.

**What’s a random fun fact about you?**
I’ve won 11 medals at the Swedish Championships in orienteering.
JULIA JENSSEN

School: SchoolForGames GmbH
Degree/course: Game Art degree
Graduating: November 2019
Hometown: Berlin/Brandenburg, Germany
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

What are you most eager to learn at GDC?
More about the industry itself and learnings from other companies. Specifically in UI/UX design.

What are your hobbies?
Playing Piano, singing, writing songs, drawing, writing, traveling, dancing, archery (armature), sfx makeup and body painting, reading

What is your favorite video game and/or boardgame and why?
Breath of the Wild, Because of how polished it is. So breath takingly stunning
JULIA NILSSON

School: Futuregames
Degree/course: 2D game artist
Graduating: July 2018
Hometown: Skövde, Sweden
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

What do you geek out about?
Animals. In all shapes and sizes. Real or fictional. I’ve always loved nature films and documentaries, and I know so many random facts about weird animals. This was also my inspiration for starting to draw pictures when I was very young. And later also the reason I started playing games, like the original Pokémon Red/Blue on Nintendo Gameboy.

What is your favorite video game and/or boardgame and why?
Journey, by Thatgamecompany. It is so simple, yet you can interpret so much in this game in different ways. You play either alone or together with another online player. You are both anonymous and can’t talk. It’s a one-of-a-kind experience.

What’s a random fun fact about you?
I own 3 Kaledonian geckos as pets, they live in large beautiful tropical rainforest terrariums.
LILIANA PITA

School: Plymouth College of Art
Degree/course: Game Arts
Graduating: 2019
Hometown: Funchal, Portugal
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

If you could choose anyone, who would you pick as your mentor?
If I could I would have Nicholas Kole as my mentor. He has so much experience in working as a freelancer and has worked with so many amazing companies in incredible projects. I love his art style and how creative each design he creates is. I would just love to learn everything I can from him, he is truly inspiring.

What is your favorite way to spend a day off?
By grabbing a blanket and playing whatever game I am obsessed with at that time and at some point during the way going for a nice walk to my nearest park. There is a huge lake with ducks and swans and I love going to see them.

What is your favorite video game and/or boardgame and why?
Kingdom Hearts Birth by Sleep. The best game of the series, the story in it is great and the fact that you can go through it with 3 different characters is so fun as you experience the story differently with each one, different mechanics and relationships with others.
MARRI DRAGICEVIC

School: Malmö University, Sweden, and Exchange in Georgia Tech, Atlanta, USA

Hometown: Malmö, Sweden

Degree/course: Bachelor of Science with a major in Interaction Design

Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

Graduating: Graduated summer 2020

What are you most eager to learn at GDC?
I’m eager to hear experienced creatives in the game industry talk about their take on how to keep users coming back to their product, and how to balance a good and challenging experience while minding business and tech.

What do you geek out about?
The magical mystery of games, and why we voluntarily engage with them to overcome unnecessary obstacles. It is fascinating! We step out of the real world into a fictional world where the rules are altered to create challenge. Why? It is thrilling to hear why people play and what makes them tick.

What’s a random fun fact about you?
I collect retro games but I’ve probably only played a handful of them.
MEI-YING CRODDY

School: Cal Poly Pomona
Degree/course: Computer Science
Graduating: May 2021

Hometown: Ewa Beach, Hawaii
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

If you could choose anyone, who would you pick as your mentor?
I grew up on a bunch of recognizable tracks from composer Grant Kirkhope. I would love to learn from him!

What do you geek out about?
I love listening to composers talk about music theory, sound sampling, and how they come up with themes for soundtracks.

What are your hobbies?
When I have free time, I sew plushies or practice making music.
What do you geek out about?
If a game is being discussed, it doesn’t matter if I have played it or not, or if one were to talk about an abstract idea of a game even – I will geek out about the design! I’m happy to discuss game design anytime.

What are your hobbies?
I love expressing my creativity in many forms, everything from creating a game, drawing a picture to playing the guitar or writing a story.

What is your favorite video game and/or boardgame and why?
Back in 2015 I decided I wanted to become a game designer, after having played the game Life Is Strange. It was the first time I played as a relatable female character in a game, and that amplified the whole experience. I became a designer to be able to create and give that type of experience to more people. There for, the game Life Is Strange is very special to me.