

New-Wave Australiana and Making A Game About Australia

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ABSTRACT

Australiana is a term that is used to represent a collection of cultural artefacts with Australian origin, which became popular during the early 1990's. New-Wave Australiana is an emerging cultural trend which I will examine through looking at the external influences and the effects it has had on a variety of different mediums, including my experiences of making a game.

There are a variety of young local artists, who are focusing on producing Australian specific content, and through their work, they paint a picture of the type of world they live in. The focus of this work is giving the viewer an honest lens of contemporary Australia through the perception created by the artist. This is often idealistic, humorous, sometimes melancholic and very self-aware.

This work shows an understanding of Australia's rough history and attempts to find a positive understanding in national pride and what it means to be Australian. By focusing on topics and content that is specific to the artist, it steps away from what has been traditionally considered 'Australian', whilst also being relatable to its audience.

The recent resurgence of 90's aesthetic has helped in giving the New-Wave Australiana trend traction. This can be seen with the successes of Courtney Barnett, *Black Comedy* on ABC, and the creation of Ian McLarthy's Ned Kelly mod for *Vertex Meadow*. Whilst a lot of what is being produced could be seen as a throw-back to Australia's cultural cringe, this trend is also a reaction to recent political and social changes.

The main focus of this presentation will be on drawing parallels between Australia's history and the use of iconography, nationalism, racism and symbolism. It will focus on how New-Wave Australiana is being communicated by artists and how these elements have been appropriated in an attempt to subvert an audience's expectations. By examining my recent work on a game titled *Paperbark*, I will deconstruct how this trend and my own experiences have influenced my design decisions and the types of considerations required when making a game about contemporary Australia.

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Keywords

Australiana, Game Design, Cultural Cringe

BIO

Terry Burdak is a Melbourne based Graphic Designer, Printer and Game Maker. He has contributed design work for *Global Game Jam Melbourne*, *Freeplay Festival* and *RMIT*. He currently works with local Musicians designing and printing Album covers and promotional materials. He is currently working on a video game titled *Paperbark* that is set in the Victorian bush, which tells a typical story of life in an Australian Summer.