In this workshop, participants will explore questions of meaning production in 3D environments, through a consideration of the multivalent potential of ruinous architectures in video games, 3D art, architectural visualizations, and other digital media. In particular, notions of fragmentation, play, and allegory can be understood through both the production and reception of derelict structures in the digital and virtual realms. In this context, ruin space, ruin images, and the collective imaginary of (especially modern, and urban) decay facilitate communicative modes that enable a critical understanding of how meaning and digital space are produced in video games and related media.

Emma Fraser is a final year PhD candidate at the University of Manchester, researching video games, virtual architecture, and urban decay. Emma’s work is focused on 3D and digital space in terms of meaning production, urban play, and design. In particular, Emma considers the depiction and navigation of ruined cities in games in relation to urban experience and the writings of Walter Benjamin, Caillois, Lefebvre, and others, and her research has been published in games studies, urban studies, geography, sociology, and art media. Emma’s work broadly considers regeneration, urban exploration, and modern ruins, and has focused on fieldwork and embodied experience in Detroit, Chernobyl, Berlin, Paris, New York, Sydney, Christchurch (NZ), and elsewhere. Emma has been invited to work collaboratively with Practising Place and The Arca Project, and is a member of the Playful Mapping Collective. Emma is currently a research assistant on The Craft of Play at Manchester Metropolitan University, and a key investigator on the Urban Planning through Playful Participation (UPPP) PoC, in progress at the University of Warwick.