

## **ABSTRACT**

**THESIS:** Are We Still In The Game?: Constructing Consumer Virtual Reality Through the Lens of Artist and Industry.

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For the past several decades, the video game industry has made repeated attempts to introduce virtual reality devices into the marketplace. After nearly twenty five years of attempting to introduce this technology to players, the rise of Facebook's Oculus Rift and Sony's Project Morpheus appear to be in a position to be successful virtual reality devices. The two companies have expressed vastly different interests for the direction of their VR devices. Facebook is interested in creating a new communication platform, while Sony claims to only be interested in virtual reality gaming. Interestingly, this approach to the virtual reality market has been depicted in science fiction writing. For several decades, science fiction writers have been providing narratives about virtual reality that seems to be quite prescient. This thesis works to uncover the themes that have been shown in virtual reality science fiction writing and make a connection between the political economy of the current virtual reality industry. Through the discussion of themes and unpacking the rhetoric of the VR industry, we are able to discuss what a future with ubiquitous virtual reality may look like and how we can prepare ourselves to deal with this new technology.