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To the chair of the selection committee,

I am writing regarding the position of assistant professor of emerging media studies. As a specialist in emerging media theory and practice, with an established publication record, future publication prospects, expertise in empirical research methods, a track record of attracting research grants, experience teaching film studies, digital media studies and digital media production, I hope you will consider my application for the position of Assistant Professor in Emerging Media Studies in the Department of Film and Television. I was awarded my PhD in 2017 from The University of Glasgow for my thesis, "Videogame Ecologies: Interaction, Aesthetics and Affect". My interdisciplinary work blurred the lines of empirical and analytical research methods through a mixture of quantitative, player-focused research groups and data-driven analysis of the digital operations behind game aesthetics. I have taught numerous courses in digital design, film analysis and archival-research at Fife College, The University of Glasgow, and Stirling University. I have currently published peer-reviewed research in five international journals, a book-chapter, numerous reviews and proceedings and regularly present at conferences and workshops. Given my proven record of research, teaching and contribution to the academic environment, I believe I would make a fine contribution to the outstanding department at Boston University.

My interdisciplinary research is situated at the intersection of screen-media, technology. In my doctoral thesis, I engaged with a number of international, independently developed digital games, analysing their underlying technical 'ecologies', suggesting how digital dependencies can prompt an engagement with the entanglement of matter and meaning discussed within new materialist scholarship. My interdisciplinary work required a novel methodology that combined the investigative, media archaeological practices inherent in code studies with the performance focused research of scholars such as Karen Barad and Jane Bennett. Engaging with specific game functions, I wrote numerous computer programmes that simulated elements of gameplay then close read the functions I had created, discussing their ecological nature, from the micro level outwards. In all, my thesis found a powerful correlation between the functioning of contemporary videogames and the recent ontological shifts within contemporary philosophy; just as Karen Barad has

suggested a fundamental 'entanglement' and a drive to move away from thinking about 'things', focusing instead on phenomena, the digital media I creatively analysed revealed important 'intra-active' qualities that set them aside from other media. Videogames, I suggested – when read through my critical lens – are an invaluable philosophical tool for understanding recent innovations within the humanities. At present, I am working with Steven Connor and the Open Humanities Press towards a publication of the thesis.

Building on my PhD research, I have begun to shift my focus towards a study of the environments in which digital media are created – the software 'engines', 'platforms' and API's that accelerate but also encode contemporary creativity. Within digital games development, to focus on one of many examples, the tendency to develop modern games within these environments – such as Unity, Unreal and, more recently, Amazon's Lumberyard – has prompted an outpouring of creativity from otherwise disadvantaged voices within the gaming community such as predominantly female development teams, non-white and LGBTQ+ independent developers. At the same time, however, there is a serious lack of study into how developing alongside these environments shapes the work produced or the audiences that consume them. It is my hope to engage in further study of these software environments, including the now more affordable than ever Adobe Creative Cloud, to discuss to what degree creatives working within these fields are generating novel cultures or else simply extending the reach and feature sets of these technologies.

Since receiving my doctorate, I have received a grant from the Scottish Graduate School of the Arts and Humanities to undertake an MSc in Interactive Technology at the University of Glasgow. This funded research has allowed me to work with numerous members of the computer science department including Professor Stephen Brewster and Dr Matthew Barr within the HATII institute for digital humanities. This has enabled me to further hone my doctoral research, developing my software design skills in a manner that enables further experimentation and generating engaging outcomes for my research. I am currently working towards a project aimed to make users more aware of their place within a digital ecology. Although at its early stages, I hope to publish the software online and the findings of the controlled testing in 2018.

I have extensive teaching experience in a range of subjects and have taught at multiple institutions at varying levels. As such, my teaching methods, proven through rigorous peer-evaluation, are flexible and adaptable to a range of courses. Although my focus has most often been on film studies and digital media production, I have always endeavoured to allow my interdisciplinary experience to shape taught courses, making them more philosophically and methodologically broad whilst theoretically deep. My experience with a broad range of research, including empirical and statistical evidence-based methods, has allowed me to influence undergraduate and graduate level tuition. This, I believe, could be an invaluable asset to Boston University as my teaching interests cross the boundaries of film studies/design but also transgress borders of digital technology and online media.

Prior to taking up my position at the University of Glasgow, I held the position of lecturer at Fife College, Scotland, in their creative industries department. I was responsible for developing and delivering modules in 'Computer Game Design', 'Introduction to 2D Animation', 'Introduction to 3D Animation', and advanced courses on digital modelling, web-design and computer programming. I was responsible for over two-hundred students

each semester. In this position, my broad range of interdisciplinary skills were essential as I was required to shift from practical to analytical courses several times each day. Teaching abstract algorithms, computational logic and programming practice was regularly followed by classes in quantitative and qualitative research, including market and user testing to drive design.

Since moving to the University of Glasgow, I have helped shape several existing courses, including the 2017-18 'Film Analysis' core course, and lectured on others including honours-level 'Film History: Aesthetics and Genre' and 'Film Spectatorship: Ways of Seeing'. In generating materials for 'Film Analysis', I endeavoured to stay true to the needs of the module while updating the course as much as possible to engage with contemporary concerns within film and media studies. In a similar fashion, in 2018 I have begun teaching on the Film History, Aesthetics and Genres course where I have helped Dr Rebecca Hamilton shape the course into an object and material focused course, developing new forms of assessment such as introducing a curatorial element into their work. I have also provided seminar tuition for numerous courses within the department. My experiences with teaching conventional, close-reading centred film-studies, less conventional, micro-historical, object-centred film studies, statistical and empirical research, as well as my experience with production and digital-media, have prepared me to contribute to a wide range of potential subjects at any university.

While I have experience fostering relationships with other academics, students and departments, I continue to work on my public outreach, regularly attending and presenting at conferences and workshops internationally. Having presented more than once at the annual Screen conference, SCMS, having most recently presented at the Games Philosophy conference and with my upcoming paper at the Edinburgh TransImage 2018 conference, to name but a few, I have a proven track record of attempting to bring my research to the attention of a slightly broader academic audience. I also contribute on several boards including British DiGRA (the digital games research association), a contributor to Vector, the British science fiction magazine, and as an editor of the Press-Start Journal in Glasgow. I would like to retain these activities and extend them, generating links between my existing research communities and the academic collectives at Boston University.

In summation, my numerous publications in peer-reviewed journals, collected books and conference proceedings, several years of teaching experience, drive to develop new and exciting research, pending publications, awareness of the importance of global research excellence and a willingness to contribute towards maintaining Boston University's excellent international reputation, would make me an excellent potential candidate for the position.

I look forward to hearing from you and hope you will extend an invitation to interview to enable us to further discuss the future of emerging media at Boston University.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Conor Mckeown