Seneca graduate Tanya Kan has won the $50,000 Ubisoft grand prize for a video game developed by her studio. (Photo: Paul Hillier)

Tanya Kan wins Ubisoft grand prize

Video game developer graduated from Game Art & Animation

May 15, 2020

Seneca graduate Tanya Kan has won the $50,000 grand prize in the 2020 Ubisoft Indie Series competition for her entry *Solace State*, a video game developed by Vivid Foundry (https://vividfoundry.com/), an interactive digital media studio she founded.

"I'm so excited to get this prize. It is an honour but also a huge responsibility. Seneca's emphasis on having a beautiful game arts portfolio, their practical game engine training, and their encouragement to learn from both peers and instructors are the incredible foundations to my gaining this life-changing experience," said Ms. Kan, who graduated from the Game Art & Animation certificate program (/programs/fulltime/GAA.html) in 2012.

According to Ubisoft Toronto, *Solace State* won the prize as it is "creative, well-scoped, visually polished, and explores compelling and timely themes." The Vivid Foundry team, selected for the top prize out of 21 competitors, will now receive mentorship by Ubisoft and financial counsel from National Bank as they move to the next stage of production.

Solace State centres on the near-future story of a young girl fighting the powers of a surveillance state on the verge of a bio-tech revolution. Ms. Kan says she used the game as a framework for raising questions about political identity, social values and beliefs.

"You see more and more social divisions in society," she said. "The story of *Solace State* is going to resonate with a lot of people, regardless of their age, gender and ethnicity."

Ms. Kan says that while she owes much of her success to the education she received at Seneca, her parents were initially reluctant to let her join the program.

"Games seem so macho and my parents were not sure if my work would be respected as women are fairly under-represented in the industry," she said. "The first pitch I made for my video game ideas was not to Ubisoft, it was to my parents. They didn't see games as a viable career path even when I completed my program. To them, it was just a curious, hobbyist skillset to have. That changed once they realized how happy I was in my first studio work experience. They are now my biggest cheerleaders and that is so validating."