

## Katamari Kart: A Serious and Hilarious Sub/Urban Game for More Serendipitous, Playful and Friendly Public Art

Chris Berthelson, Rumen Rachev and Alex Bonham

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### Abstract

The article presents the sub/urban game-method Katamari Kart, where people roam industrial and suburban areas collecting waste materials and progressively building a large and mobile public sculpture. This game-method departs from established concepts and practice in neighbourhood improvement as it tries to evade capital expenditure and embraces uncertainty and friction in bringing together various stakeholders, does not aim to look stylish or even be useful, decelerates daily life, promotes self-sufficiency in cultural life, and creates long-term wellbeing through play. That is, it is a degrowth approach to neighbourhood improvement. Rumen Rachev positions the Katamari Kart game-method as an expression of the 'Kiwi way' and discusses the role it can play in making our future neighbourhoods more serendipitous, playful and friendly, and a reflection of the diverse people and things that reside there – all without capital expenditure or the support of the authorities. Finally, Alex Bonham, author of the book *Play and the City: How to Create Places and Spaces to Help Us Thrive*, discusses the Katamari Kart game-method in the context of adult play, our settler history, keeping up appearances, the Be a Tidy Kiwi campaign, play and wellbeing, and conflicting responses to frugality.

Keywords: Sub/urban play, improvisation, collaboration, public art, serious games

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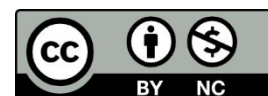
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