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March 1, 2012

Fact Sheet “The Art of Video Games”

Exhibition

“The Art of Video Games”
March 16 – Sept. 30

Location

Smithsonian American Art Museum, Eighth and F streets N.W.

Description

“The Art of Video Games” is one of the first major exhibitions to explore the 40-year evolution of video games as an artistic medium, with a focus on striking graphics, creative storytelling and player interactivity. The exhibition features some of the most influential artists and designers across five eras of game development, from early pioneers to contemporary designers. Video games use player participation to tell stories and engage audiences. The exhibition features 80 video games, selected with the help of the public, for 20 gaming systems ranging from the Atari VCS to the PlayStation 3. The games are presented through still images and video footage. In addition, the galleries include video interviews with developers and artists, historic game consoles, large prints of in-game screen shots and a selection of playable games. Chris Melissinos, former chief evangelist and chief gaming officer for Sun Microsystems and founder of PastPixels, is the guest curator of the exhibition. The exhibition will travel to 10 venues in the United States following its run in Washington, D.C.

Public Programs

“GameFest,” a three-day festival March 16–18, celebrates the opening of this ground breaking exhibition with talks, discussions, open game playing, music and movies. “Video Games: Beyond Play,” a symposium that examines the changing roles of video games, consists of two panel discussions Friday, May 4, from 1 to 4:30 p.m. A detailed schedule of all activities and links to webcasts is available online, americanart.si.edu/taovg.

Book

A companion book, *The Art of Video Games: From Pac-Man to Mass Effect* (Welcome Books, \$40), is written by Melissinos with an introduction by Mike Mika, head of development for Other Ocean Interactive and a prominent advocate for the preservation of video game history.

Credit

“The Art of Video Games” is organized by the Smithsonian American Art Museum with generous support from the Entertainment Software Association Foundation; Sheila Duignan and Mike Wilkins; Mark Lamia; Ray Muzyka and Greg Zeschuk; Rose Family Foundation; Betty and Lloyd Schermer; and Neil Young. Promotional support is provided by the Entertainment Consumers Association. The C.F. Foundation in Atlanta supports the museum’s traveling exhibition program, “Treasures to Go.”

The Smithsonian American Art Museum is located at Eighth and F streets N.W., above the Gallery Place/Chinatown Metrorail station. Museum hours are 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily, except Dec. 25. Admission is free. Website: americanart.si.edu.

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