



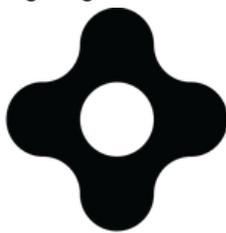
GAMES: IMPROVING ART

In the beginning, there was Pong's black screen and white cube. Today, video games are not only works of art themselves – they influence other art forms. Games now show on big screens at movie theatres and earn recognition at film festivals; composers of game scores are now nominated for Grammys; and acclaimed film and television directors are entering the world of video game design.

VISUAL ART: EDUCATION AND DESIGN

Educational institutions across the nation provide young people with advanced artistic training in computer and video game design. Nearly 400 American colleges, universities, and technical schools offer programs in video game-related topics.

New York University, known for its film school, also operates the NYU Game Center. This multi-school center for the research, design, and development of digital games also offers courses that complement the existing game-related classes currently available at the university. The center also hosts an annual spring exhibition of independent games commissioned by the center and designed specifically for a gallery setting.



**NYU GAME CENTER
INCUBATOR**

The NYU Game Center is not the only facility to acknowledge video games for their cultural and artistic value. Art exhibitions across the country and around the world feature video game graphics and designs. In November 2012, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) announced that it had acquired a selection of fourteen video games to display in the Museum's "Applied Design" exhibition in its Philip Johnson Galleries. MoMA aims to build its permanent collection of video games to include 40 titles. The "Into the Pixel" traveling art exhibit, cosponsored by the Entertainment Software Association and the Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences, showcases a series of conceptual and production work from current and future video games.

385

The number of American colleges, universities, and technical schools offering programs in video game-related topics.



Additionally in 2012, the Smithsonian Institution's American Art Museum opened "The Art of Video Games," an exhibition showcasing the evolution of video games as an artistic medium, with a focus on striking visual effects and the creative use of technologies. The exhibition is currently on a tour of 10 U.S. cities, including Boca Raton, Florida; Seattle, Washington; Phoenix, Arizona; and Syracuse, New York, which will continue through 2016. The Smithsonian added thatgamecompany's Flower and Halo 2600, a version of Microsoft's iconic Halo game designed for the Atari 2600, to its permanent collection as well.



The recognition of video game art has also spread to the U.S. government. The National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency that supports artists and art organizers across the U.S., includes interactive games among projects that are eligible for "Arts in Media" grants, along with media produced for the Internet and interactive and mobile technologies.

CINEMATOGRAPHY AND TELEVISION

The entertainment software and movie industries have influenced each other's storylines for years. Now, increased demand for video games provides Hollywood producers, directors, and actors with additional ways of forming partnerships.

Movies and video games routinely borrow characters and subjects from each other to produce hits and unique roles for actors. Eidos Interactive's classic adventure game *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* inspired the movie "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider" with Angelina Jolie. Pierce Brosnan and Shannon Elizabeth also provided likeness and voice work for Electronic Arts' *James Bond: Everything or Nothing*, reprising their work on the movie screen.

A number of box office hits are released as video games, including the recent films "Need for Speed" and "Captain America: The Winter Soldier." Production companies may also use original games to promote their films. Yahoo Inc. released an interactive online game to stir audience interest in 35 summer blockbusters, including Warner Bros.' "Dark Shadows" and Universal's "Snow White and the Huntsman," before each film hit theaters in 2012.



The relationship between games and film continues to expand. The 2014 Tribeca Film Festival partnered with the annual Games for Change Festival, which promotes the development and distribution of video games with an educational or social-minded focus. The partnership represents a more formal integration of games and films and builds on successful past presentations of video games, including Rockstar's *L.A. Noire* and Sony's *Beyond: Two Souls*, at the film festival. In an interview with the *New York Times*, film festival organizers applauded the idea that game play had grown beyond entertainment and has "infused every aspect of culture."

50,000

The number of electronic games and game-related historical materials on display at the International Center for the History of Electronic Games in Rochester, New York.

240

The total number of video games featured by the Smithsonian Institution's American Art Museum in its travelling exhibition, "The Art of Video Games."

Some video game companies are even beginning to produce their own films. Ubisoft launched Ubisoft Motion Pictures in May 2011, and is developing a feature film from its *Assassin's Creed* game, starring Academy Award winner Michael Fassbender, to be released



UBISOFT™
MOTION PICTURES

in 2015. Additionally, Microsoft's Xbox Entertainment Studios announced in early 2014 expanded new programming for the Xbox Live network. Xbox will premier 12 originals, starting with "Every Street United," a street soccer documentary series featuring international soccer star Thierry Henry and launching ahead of the World Cup in Brazil in June 2014. Other announced programs include a live action TV series based on Microsoft's popular gaming franchise *Halo*, live streaming of special events such as the Bonnaroo music festival, and a show hosted by comedian Sarah Silverman.

Video games are increasingly moving to the smaller screen as well. Some games, like the iconic *Pokemon* brand, have found broad success in television. Others, like *Defiance*, share a more intimate connection with television, expanding the ever-growing transmedia storytelling genre. As events on the Syfy Channel TV show *Defiance* unfold, they influence plots, characters, and environments in the massively multiplayer online role playing game by the same name. Syfy producers and game developers plan to eventually drive major plot twists across both mediums.

LITERATURE

Book publishers collaborate with video game makers to push original written works across multiple platforms. Popular author Robert Kirkman partnered with Telltale Games to produce a series of episodic video games and a television series based off of Kirkman's widely popular graphic novel, *The Walking Dead*. The first installment, *The Walking Dead: Season One*, consisted of five episodes and received more than 90 "Game of the Year" awards. The second installment, *The Walking Dead: Season Two*, was released in late 2013 and met with widespread critical acclaim for its emotional depth and character development.

In addition, the Oxford University Press, the world's largest university press, partnered with mobile and social web game developer SecretBuilders to support its "50 Great Reads Before 15" initiative, which transforms characters and storylines from popular classics into fun and engaging digital learning experiences. As part of the initiative, SecretBuilders is developing a series of mobile games, the first of which explored *Alice in Wonderland* through a challenging spot-the-difference game.

SECRET BUILDERS™

275

The number of shows performed by Video Games Live, an immersive concert event featuring music from some of the most popular video games of all time, as of May 1, 2014.



MUSIC AND VIDEO GAMES

Video games encourage creativity in music as well. Popular video games provide both aspiring and established musical artists with access to a broader audience.

Many of the latest games come with originally composed classical music. The field has even attracted some of the most prominent film composers and has earned recognition from the broader music community. In 2013, composer Austin Wintory's soundtrack for the acclaimed title *Journey* became the first video game score to be nominated for a Grammy Award in the "Best Score Soundtrack for Visual Media" category. Wintory's album was honored alongside compositions by musical legends including John Williams, Howard Shore, and Hans Zimmer.

Academic institutions have acknowledged this trend. In 2014, Youngstown State University's (YSU) College of Creative Arts and Communication and Dana School of Music convened leading composers and academics to discuss the emerging genre at the inaugural North American Conference on Video Game Music. The event analyzed video game scores, and examined interesting topics such as sounds, performance, melody, instrumentation, and music technology. Other renowned colleges and universities including New York University, Yale University, Berklee College of Music, and the New England Conservatory offer classes that prepare students for careers in this field.

The scores in popular video games also provide the music for Video Games Live, a concert tour of top orchestras and choirs that include the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra and the London Philharmonic Orchestra. The two-hour show, which has toured the world and sold out venues for six years, includes video footage and musical arrangements, synchronized lighting, solo performers, electronic percussionists, and interactive segments – put together to create a unique experience for gamers and music lovers.

