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01.- INTRODUCTION



The CCCB presents the exhibition ***Gameplay. Video Game Culture***, which is open to the public from 19 December 2019 to 3 May 2020. The exhibition is curated by **Óliver Pérez Latorre**, a lecturer in audiovisual communication studies, advertising and public relations, and computer engineering at Pompeu Fabra University, and **Jérôme Nguyen**, an expert in communication sciences, a ludologist and a trainee curator and researcher at the ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe. *Gameplay. Video Game Culture* is an expanded adaptation of *Gameplay. The Next Level*, conceived and first presented at the ZKM. The exhibition is supported by the Banc Sabadell Foundation.

Gameplay journeys to the origins of video games, analyses their language and highlights the impact they have had on popular digital culture and on art and society. The exhibition is designed as a space for recreation and reflection where visitors can play and (re)discover video game culture.

Ever since video games became popular in the 1970s and 80s, they have developed as a medium of expression and entertainment and now occupy a central space in our imaginary, so much so that it is impossible today to understand contemporary society and culture without relating them with video gaming.

The exhibition also raises the issue of the increasing gamification of society: from mobile games to YouTubers and electronic sports (esports) to so-called serious games, educational video games with applications that go beyond entertainment.

Gameplay features works by artists such as Mary Flanagan, Joan Leandre, Harun Farocki, Lawrence Lek, LaTurbo Avedon, Mónica Rikić and Blast Theory.

With 28 game points, from the first arcade and computer games to the new immersive options, *Gameplay* is designed to be an exhibition where visitors can play and, at the same time, understand and enjoy video game culture from a critical viewpoint.

The show pays particular attention to Catalan production, especially pioneering works, recent indie creations and local artists, and university projects.

Exhibition itinerary

The exhibition invites visitors to (re)discover and (re)play the video game culture through five different ambits:

Level_1. Replay. The Origins of Video Games

Video games grew out of three technologies: computer games, coin-op machines (pay-to-play) and consoles. However, the history of the origins of video games is a history in which technological evolution is interwoven with social changes, the development of the early 'genres' characteristic of the medium, and the emergence of new imaginaries for children and teenagers, in which Nintendo became the new Disney. This seminal period of video game culture (the 1970s and 80s) has traditionally been told from the angle of Japan and the USA, but pioneering creators and companies in Spain and Catalonia played an interesting role during this era that needs to be highlighted.

Contents: The success of Pong (1972) as a mass-market commercial product; legendary Japanese and American games of the 1970s and 80s; the early home consoles; the visual parallels between silent movies and video games; and the golden age of Spanish video games.

Level_2. Liquid Narratives

The video game is a medium that is both narrative and playful, a medium for which creators can structure the design of the rules of play and the game mechanics (patterns of interaction), the non-linear narrative and the depiction of imaginary worlds in order to provide us with unique interactive experiences. At the same time, the 'language' and culture of video games have always been closely linked to their connections with popular narratives and analogue games. Moreover, in the popular imaginary, video games are associated with the pleasure of deciding, a certain 'rhetoric of decision-making' characteristic of video game advertising: "[in video games] you are free, everything depends on you".

Contents: Board and role-playing games, the popular imaginary, science fiction, and comic and manga superheroes as a source of inspiration for video games; video game rules; and the way gamers deal with decision-making and cope with defeat. Works by Mary Flanagan and Joan Leandre.

Level_3. Art and the Gaming Essay

Innovation and aesthetic experimentation in the field of video games are a response to complex overlaps between art, technology and play. In recent years, a new generation of independent creators and indie game authors has been exploring game styles that are alternative or opposed to the mainstream or detached from it. Alongside this, some video games that have left their mark on the imaginary of the medium are based on relatively simple yet ground-breaking concepts of play thanks to technologies, interfaces and/or forms of interaction that seem to invite us to simply 'play for play's sake' but in a novel and riveting way.

Contents: Benchmark indie video games (Limbo, Journey, What Remains of Edith Finch and Gris); and a bank of video games that visitors can play using large-format screens.

Level_4. Breaking the 'Magic Cercle'

Historically, video games have been criticised for being an escapist medium, for being set in a 'magic circle' that cuts us off from real life. Even so, they are exerting an increasingly powerful influence on the way many people perceive and interpret the world. This impact of video games on the social imaginary is not simple, nor is it only one-way: video games reflect the tensions and concerns of the day, meaning that in some respects they can reinforce

dominant ideologies (or even bolster retrograde views). However, they can also communicate alternative discourses, feminist or green messages, and can convey critical thinking on a range of themes, among them technological capitalism itself and the video game industry.

Contents: The capitalist spirit reverberates in many popular video games, but they can also be a cultural space for activism: feminist videos; new gender roles; the role of women in contemporary video games; and the potential of video games as a means to generate empathy with a social emphasis. Works by LaTurbo Avedon, Paolo Pedercini and Anna Anthropy.

Level_5. Ludopolis. Gamified Lives

Contemporary society has become 'video-gamified'. Video games have infiltrated people's lives at different levels and in very different ambits: gamified design now permeates all kinds of social media, digital apps and even workplaces; and video games are increasingly used in education and vocational training. At the same time, the audience for video games has expanded and the uses and enjoyment of video games have become more diverse: mobile phone games, the YouTuber phenomenon and esports (video game competitions) are three key vectors for the rise of video games in entertainment today.

Contents: Educational and military video games; games for architects or for learning how to perform surgery; and games to help youngsters with autism to socialise. Works by Roc Herms, Harun Farocki, Lawrence Lek, Mónica Rikić and Blast Theory.

02.- EXHIBITION TEXTS

INTRODUCTION

Ever since video games first became popular in the 1970s and 80s, they have developed as a medium of expression and entertainment and have come to occupy a central place in our imaginary, so much so that it is impossible to understand contemporary society and culture without drawing connections between them and video games.

Historically scorned as regards their artistic legitimacy, video games have come to be surrounded by an entire cultural ecosystem, with what is now a long history behind them, a language of their own, deep roots and connections with popular culture, and a gaming scene that is full of creative vitality and innovation. Meanwhile, the impact of video games on society has grown in both breadth and depth to the extent that some theorists talk of the 21st century as the “Ludic Century” (Eric Zimmerman) and of the “ludification of culture” (Jost Raessens) or of the “video gamification of society” (Muriel and Crawford).

Multifaceted and contradictory, video games are a maelstrom of social fears concerning violence and addiction, as well as a dream factory and an area for trying out skills such as creative problem solving and resilience, the art of failure. A mirror of the tensions in contemporary society, they are the smiling face of technological capitalisme but also a powerful medium for conveying critical and alternative discourses, a showcase for sexist imagery as well as terrain claimed by feminist activism. A reflection of society but at the same time a crucial tool in the construction of contemporary culture, the video game, like any other game, is a dance between rules and freedom, adaptation and personal expression, efficiency and poetry; complex balances for a world in the throes of change.

LEVEL 1: REPLAY. THE ORIGINS OF VIDEO GAMES

Video games grew out of three technologies: computer games, coin-op machines (pay-to-play) and consoles. However, the history of the origins of video games is a history in which technological evolution is interwoven with social changes, the development of the early genres characteristic of the medium, and the emergence of new imaginaries for children and teenagers, in which Nintendo became a new Disney. This seminal period of video game culture (the 1970s and 80s) has traditionally been told from the angle of Japan and the USA, but pioneering creators and companies in Spain and Catalonia played an interesting role during this era that needs to be highlighted.

1.1. Insert coin

The success of the coin-op arcade machine game Pong (Atari, USA, 1972) signalled the emergence of video games as a mass-market commercial product. Shortly afterwards, the blossoming of Japanese video games, with Space Invaders, Pac-Man and Donkey Kong, marked the golden age of amusement arcades, which spanned the 1980s and first half of the 90s. Amusement arcades served several purposes at the same time, as they were places where teenagers could hang out with each other; symbols of the digital invasion as a present and future challenge for the younger generations; the birthplace of action video games; showcases for competitive, sexist and warmongering imagery; and micro jungles containing elements of risk and disobedience in which the term vice was unequivocally celebrated by aficionados. The role of Catalan output in this sector dates back to companies such as

Cidelsa, which developed pioneering games like *Destroyer* (1980), and *Tecfri* (later *Gaelsa*), which produced hits such as *Ambush* (1983).

1.2. Compact home imaginaries

Video games made their way into homes thanks to Ralph Baer, the inventor of the first commercial console, the Magnavox Odyssey, in 1972. The Atari company was quick to create its own consoles, the Atari VCS (1977), which already had interchangeable game cartridges and became an international success. In the mid-1980s, Japan took over as the dominant force in video games, with the competition between Nintendo and Sega driving the sector forwards.

The advances in consoles presents the history of video games as a technological and commercial race, but consoles were also a breeding ground for new imaginaries for children and teenagers virtually from the outset. With *Super Mario* and *The Legend of Zelda*, Shigeru Miyamoto demonstrated video games' potential for creating iconic characters and remarkable interactive fantasy worlds. At the same time, the links with popular culture fed into the creation of video games from the very early days, with adaptations of European comic strips by the New Frontier company representative of the sector in Catalonia.

1.3. Who's afraid of computers?

Microcomputers became especially popular as a game platform in Europe with the emergence of the ZX Spectrum and Amstrad CPC in the United Kingdom. These computers were advertised in an often ambiguous way, with mention made of their possible use by adults for work or other practical purposes, as well as for leisure and entertainment, especially among children and teenagers. They had a particular significance in Spain in the 1980s, as the new technologies were often associated with the country's ambition to modernise and its entry into the European Economic Community. Moreover, these small computers represented the friendly face of information technology. In addition, the ground-breaking hit computer games produced in Spain also came out at this time.

The tension between optimistic visions and fears in the face of the new digital era were explored in film, in which a new type of hero emerged, the young gamer, in movies such as *The Last Starfighter* (1984) and *The Wizard* (1989).

LEVEL 2: LIQUID NARRATIVES

The video game is a medium that is both and playful, a medium for which can structure the design of the rules play and the game mechanics (patterns the non-linear narrative and the of imaginary worlds in order to provide us with unique interactive experiences. same time, the language and culture of games have always been closely linked connections with popular narratives and games. Moreover, in the imaginary, video games are associated with the pleasure of deciding, a certain of decision-making characteristic of game advertising: “[in video games] you free, everything depends on you”.

2.1. The poetics of the rules

Every game means something, as the Dutch historian and philosopher Johan Huizinga said, and a game is essentially its rules. Through their rules, video games can convey ideas or

encourage gameplay dynamics with a certain symbolism, a form of signification that Ian Bogost (an American academic and video game designer) terms “procedural rhetoric”. The digital art of creators such as Joan Leandre, based on the manipulation of computer code, also alludes to the importance of integrating generative systems and rules into artistic reflection.

In contemporary algorithmic society, in which algorithms are the rules of the game that we abide by at all times in our everyday lives, these creative practices take an interesting turn: creators appropriate the rules as resources for personal expression, while gamers take a different approach to the relationship with algorithms and go from the simple search for efficiency to a hermeneutic game.

2.2. The culture of decisions

The designer Sid Meier described games as “a series of interesting decisions”. It is true that video game design is noted for problematising decision-making – albeit in a pleasing manner – depending on strategic issues, moral dilemmas and forks in the narrative. Thus, any minor scene in a video game may have a vast array of interrelated variables behind it, tucked away in its programming.

The discourse of video game paratexts (covers, advertising) tends to emphasise the power to make decisions as an essential source of pleasure for the player: “you are free”, “everything depends on you” and so forth. However, these decision-making fantasies are not politically neutral: they resonate with a neoliberal discourse, and lurking in their shadows are external conditioning and limiting factors that are just as important as our own decisions in determining our destiny, if not more so. Some alternative video games sabotage the pleasure of decision making, among them *Papers, Please*, about the impotence of an immigration officer in a country in conflict, and *Stanley Parable*, in which the player has to deal with an omniscient narrator who puts pressure on him to do as instructed.

2.3. An experiential art

Video games invite us to engage in different experiences through our identification with our avatar in the game. They are an experiential art that encompasses the actions shown on screen and the skills the gamer needs to employ in order to progress in the game.

The core elements of the archetypal game experience (running, jumping, etc.) were summed up by the artist Mary Flanagan in her work *[pile of secrets]* (2011), which includes images from very different video games dating from the 1990s up to 2010. With regard to the skills that players have to bring to games, the two most emblematic are creative thinking and resilience. Firstly, the ability to solve problems imaginatively, in other words, being capable of putting simple objects to novel uses, is a lesson commonly taught in graphic adventures and also features in other video game genres. And secondly, in relation to the emotional side, video games teach us above all how to lose through the frequent ‘game over’ messages we are presented with.

2.4. Open worlds

In *Other Places*, Andy Kelly pays tribute to the open worlds of video games, worlds that can be explored by the gamer, with the possibility of deviating from the plot and deliberately getting lost along their highways and byways. In many instances, these are vast virtual worlds

online that offer the opportunity to play with other gamers at the same time. In his video remixes, Kelly shows the landscapes of uninhabited games, with the action suspended, thereby focusing full attention on the fictional environment, accompanied solely by the music and soundscape, elements that are as discreet as they are essential in video-game art.

Melodies:

Assassin's Creed III (Ubisoft Montréal, 2012) | HomeStead by Lorne Balfe

Deus Ex: Human Revolution (Eidos Montréal, 2011) | The Mole by Michael McCann

Red Dead Redemption (Rockstar San Diego, 2010) | Far Away by José González

The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt (CD Projekt RED, 2015) | Spikeroog by Marcin Przybyłowicz and Mikolaj Stroinski. Running time: 23'30''

Firewatch (Campo Santo, 2016) | Prologue by Chris Remo

BioShock (2K Boston, 2007) La Mer (Charles Trenet) | played by Django Reinhardt and Stéphane Grappelli

LEVEL 3: ART AND THE GAMING ESSAY

Innovation and aesthetic experimentation in the field of video games are a response to complex overlaps between art, technology and play. In recent years, a new generation of independent creators and indie game authors has been exploring game styles that are alternative or opposed to the mainstream or detached from it. Alongside this, some video games that have left their mark on the imaginary of the medium are based on relatively simple yet ground-breaking concepts of play thanks to technologies, interfaces and/or forms of interaction that seem to invite us to simply play for play's sake but in a novel and riveting way.

3.1. Indie styles

Some recent indie video games, such as *Limbo*, *Journey*, *What Remains of Edith Finch* and the Catalan game *Gris*, employ a design style opposed to the mainstream action video game by inverting fantasies of power by placing players in the skin of fragile avatars; erasing any trace of aggressive competitiveness; and opting for a pictorial approach – rather than cinematographic spectacle – as well as a slow, contemplative, often melancholic pace of play.

The *Indie Game: The Movie* documentary, which won a prize at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival, presents indie video games as auteur works: in their comments, leading figures such as Jonathan Blow and Tommy Refenes underscore the creation of video games as an act of personal expression and they reject commercialism or distance themselves from it, with echoes of the artistic discourse typified by Bourdieu in his studies on the rules of the game in the world of art.

Notwithstanding this, there are different indie styles. *Monster Prom*, developed by the Catalan company Beautiful Glitch, is imbued with a singular transgressive humour with a surreal touch. Julián Quijano goes for a balance between creativity, commercial planning and online distribution, also in the indie sphere.

3.2. Playground

There are video games that seem to have issued simultaneously from a children's playground, an artist's studio and a lab specialising in innovation in design and new technologies: video games that resort to the simple activities and pleasures of play or age-old pursuits even as they renew them by means of unconventional user interfaces, surprising forms of interaction and amazing visual aesthetics. For example, playing with bubbles that are not made of soap but are instead virtual bubbles that we have to interact with using our shadow (Bubbles), or having fun looking at optical illusions but in this instance transformed into playable mazes in which we have to help a character advance without getting lost (Monument Valley).

The defamiliarisation effect of art, its invitation to us to renounce our normal routines or ways of seeing, is applied in these cases to the act of playing using video games that are simultaneously familiar yet strange, childlike and artistic.

LEVEL 4: BREAKING THE MAGIC CIRCLE

Historically, video games have been criticised for being an escapist medium, for being set in a magic circle that cuts us off from real life. Even so, they are exerting an increasingly powerful influence on the way many people perceive and interpret the world. This impact of video games on the social imaginary is not simple, nor is it only one-way: video games often reiterate dominant ideologies and reinforce gender stereotypes, but they can also communicate alternative discourses, feminist or green messages, and can convey critical thinking on a range of themes, including technological capitalism itself and the video game industry.

4.1. Ludocapitalism

While entertainment has grown to become one of the main driving forces of contemporary capitalism, video game business models have diversified and include monthly subscriptions to online worlds as well as payments using real money to acquire advantages or cosmetic elements in games.

The capitalist spirit reverberates powerfully in many popular video games. In one amusing experiment, when the researcher Miguel Sicart attempted to play *The Sims* as Kurt Cobain, the frustrating outcome revealed the rules of the game to be a consumerist/ capitalist framework. In addition, Theodor Adorno's observation that popular culture tends to reproduce the tensions of the employment culture of the time remains valid today: characteristic traits of the contemporary world of work, such as flexibility in changing environments, multitasking and creativity under pressure, are to be found in some of the most popular online video games of recent years, among them *League of Legends* and *Fortnite*.

Even so, video games can also be a cultural space in which alternative creators can mount resistant activism. An iconic case of this is the Italian collective *Molleindustria* and their anti-capitalist games such as *Phone Story*. Their motto: *Radical Games Against the Tyranny of Entertainment*.

4.2. Gender roles

In the summer of 2014, the cultural journalist and influencer Anita Sarkeesian, who made a series of videos entitled *Tropes vs. Women in Video Games* about gender stereotypes in video

games, was the target of online sexist harassment. This campaign was just one episode in the Gamergate controversy that affected a number of feminists associated with the world of video games.

Gamergate demonstrated the importance and need for feminism in video-game culture. Since then, associations such as Women in Games and FemDevs have stepped up their activism. Even though male heroes continue to predominate, new non-sexualised heroines have emerged, and video games such as *Life is Strange* and *Gone Home* tell the story of protagonists who are homosexual and ambiguous in their sexual orientation. In *Dys4ia*, Anna Anthropy, now a leading light in indie games connected with the gender perspective, gives an autobiographical account of her personal experience of changing gender. In recent years, Robert Yang has created a number of video games that feature homoerotic relationships, among them *Rinse and Repeat*, many of which contain an ironic and provocative sense of humour.

4.3. Not just violence

In a medium criticised for its copious violent content and the association between violence and spectacle, a number of creators have in recent years explored the potential of video games to develop social empathy in what are known as ‘empathy games’, in which the gameplay is a translation of the experience of someone different, thereby helping players to understand that experience. For example, *Never Alone* (developed by Upper One Games, 2014), based on a traditional tale told by the Inupiaq people of Alaska, reflects the values of this culture and is intended to raise awareness of the need to protect nature. In addition, some contemporary video games, such as *Unmanned* (La Molleindustria, 2012), are critical of the banalisation of war in video games themselves and in society as a whole.

The creative activism of game artists and aficionados is also aimed on occasion at trouncing violence. Examples of this include the well-known video game mod (modification) *Velvet-Strike*, developed by Anne-Marie Schleiner, Joan Leandre and Brody Condon, which invited gamers to add pacifist symbols to *Counter-Strike* during the Gulf War, and pacifist runs, in which players try to advance in violent video games without hurting anyone and which are later shared via social media.

4.4. Transmedia dystopias

In recent years, the pervasive presence of new dystopian and especially postapocalyptic narratives in video games, films, television series, comics and literature (especially for children and teenagers) has coincided with a cocktail of social ills: the global crisis and economic recession, outrage at the retrenchment of the welfare state, the resurgence of the far right and rising concern over the environment and climate change.

It is no coincidence that the production of dystopias and periods of change and social tension should converge given that dystopian narratives have historically functioned as parables that reveal the bleak scenarios that await our society in the future (represented in a dramatised, allegorical form) if we continue along certain paths.

However, as the academic Tom Moylan points out, the contemporary dystopia generally includes some kind of utopian enclave, a bastion of hope: a last redoubt that is an imaginative attempt – often fragile and ill-defined yet still perceivable – at new societies, possible ways of transforming the dystopian world or, in any event, models of resistance.

LEVEL 5: LUDOPOLIS. GAMIFIED LIVES

Contemporary society has become videogamified. Video games have infiltrated people's lives at different levels and in very different ambits: gamified design now permeates all kinds of social media, digital apps and even workplaces; and video games are increasingly used in education and vocational training. At the same time, the audience for video games has expanded and the uses and enjoyment of video games have become more diverse: mobile phone games, the YouTuber phenomenon and esports (video game competitions) are three key vectors for the rise of video games in entertainment today.

5.1. The spread of video games

Nowadays, 41% of video game fans in Spain are women, the average age of gamers is over 30, and more money is now spent on games for mobile phones than on console games (\$63.2 billion in 2018). In addition, playing video games is no longer the only way to enjoy them, as lots of fans also like watching videos of their favourite YouTuber gamers or major esports tournaments streamed live.

Esports are a fusion of video games and sports with a big media appeal. On the professional side, sponsored teams compete to win championships that offer big fat monetary prizes and which draw huge audiences via streaming (it is estimated that the current audience in Spain is 5.5 million people, of whom 2.6 million are keen fans). Esports are a booming sector in the industry (with global business amounting to \$905 million), but they are not without their critics or those who express concern over issues such as sexism (there are very few women competitors and there have been cases of verbal aggression) and the tricky melange of gaming, fame, money and work.

5.2. Beyond entertainment

Without needing to oppose the pleasure of gaming, some video games are created for serious purposes or may have certain sensitive implications and so call for expert advice. Examples of this include educational video games aimed at formal teaching, video games for vocational training and video games to support the personal growth of minors with special needs.

Ever since *Battlezone* (Atari, 1980), video games have been used for military training purposes, a question Harun Farocki explores in *Serious Games*, a video installation with documentary traits. Another aspect very different to serious video games is the research and development conducted by Catalan universities that have resulted in a number of very interesting products in recent years, for example, *EduGame4City*, gamified software for studying and practising architecture; *Virtual Perfusionist* for virtual training in heart surgery; and *Lands of Fog*, a game that encourages autistic children to socialise through play. At the intersection between art, research and gaming, Mónica Rikić's project *Mother of Robots* presents a platform for producing social simulations based on robots.

03.- GAME POINTS

A BLIND LEGEND

Creator: Dowino | Publisher: Plug In Digital | 2016

The player plays the part of the blind knight Edward Blake, who has to advance and interact using sound alone. The knight can call on his daughter Louise for help if he needs directions.

AMBUSH

Creator: Tecfri | Publisher: Nippon Amuse | 1983

Take off in your spacecraft and pilot it skilfully between the waves of meteorites that keep coming at you. The aim is to defend the planet against an imminent alien invasion.

ASTEROIDS

Creator: Atari | Publisher: Atari | 1979

Fly the spacecraft while avoiding the asteroids and shooting at them to score points. You must also watch out not to collide with the remains of asteroids broken up by one of your missiles.

BUBBLES

Creators: Wolfgang Münch and Kiyoshi Furukawa | 2000

Use your shadow to play with virtual bubbles.

BUGABOO (THE FLEA)

Creator: Paco Suárez and Paco Portalo | Publishers: Indescomp / Investrónica | 1983

Help the flea to escape from the cave. Depending on how long you hold down the key, its jump will be more or less powerful. Avoid the dragon, which can kill the flea with a single touch.

CRAYON PHYSICS DELUXE

Creator: Petri Purho | 2009

Draw shapes and see how they acquire form and mass on screen. Apply your ingenuity and imagination to make the ball reach the star by creating surfaces, pushing the ball, propelling it, etc.

CRAZY RALLY

Creator: Tecfri | Publisher: Tecfri | 1985

Try to come first in a car race in which you must not only beat your fellow racers but also dodge all kinds of vehicles coming in the opposite direction.

DONKEY KONG

Creator: Nintendo | Publisher: Nintendo | 1982

Take control of Jumpman and leap and climb to the top level of the scaffolding to rescue Pauline, while avoiding the barrels and fireballs along the way.

DYS4IA

Creator: Anna Anthropy | 2012

Using simple mini-games in which it is impossible to lose, Anna Anthropy gives an account of a time in her life.

FEZ

Creator: Polytron | Publisher: Polytron | 2012

Help Gomez explore the pixelated mini-worlds of Fez by strategically alternating 3D and 2D views. The aim is to find yellow cubes but the main sources of pleasure in this game are our explorations and the challenge to our customary 3D perception of space.

GRIS

Creator: Nomada Studio | Publisher: Devolver Digital | 2018

Travel with Gris through the dreamlike landscapes of the game. Collect points of light and interpret the language of the environment and the structures in order to advance.

JOURNEY

Creator: Thatgamecompany | Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment | 2012

Walk, jump and slide your way through desert dunes to make your way towards the mysterious mountain peak in the distance. Pick up the bits of fabric you come across along the way in order to keep the avatar floating in the air for longer.

KATAMARI DAMACY REROLL

Creator: Namco | Publisher: Bandai Namco | 2018

Move the highly adhesive ball all over the place and collect objects so that it grows big enough to go up a level within the time limit. The bigger the ball becomes, the greater its ability to stick to ever larger objects.

LIMBO

Creator: Playdead | Publisher: Playdead | 2010

A boy wakes up alone in a vast forest. To enable him to get out of the forest, you must help him to overcome all kinds of obstacles. But the boy cannot run faster or jump further than an ordinary child, so you have to advance cautiously and use your ingenuity to make progress.

MONUMENT VALLEY 2

Creator: Ustwo games | Publisher: Ustwo games | 2017

Make the characters advance towards the exit by pressing the touch-sensitive screen. You can interact directly with the architecture by moving and rotating structures.

PAC-MAN

Creator: Namco | Publisher: Namco | 1980

Pac-Man is a greedy yellow head in a maze. The aim is to send him through the passageways that open up ahead of him as he eats his way along until he has devoured all the dots. At the same time, he must dodge the ghosts.

PASSAGE

Creator: Jason Rohrer | 2007

You control an avatar that makes its way through a maze and you collect points as you advance and open treasure chests hidden in among columns. At the start of the journey, you meet a woman and you have to decide if you will continue alone or with her, a decision that will have significant consequences.

PHONE STORY

Creator: Paolo Pedercini | Publisher: Molleindustria | 2011

Move people and objects as indicated on the screen while listening to an account of the dark side of mobile phone manufacturing.

PUSH ME PULL YOU

Creator: House House | 2016

You and a fellow gamer control a two-headed character with two bodies fused together, and you have to co-operate in order to play with a ball.

RAKETE

Creator: Mario von Rickenbach | 2012

Guide the space rocket to the landing pad on your own or in co-operation with four other participants. Each pedal activates a different rocket thruster. At advanced levels, you must capture blue balls before being able to land.

RINSE AND REPEAT

Creator: Robert Yang | 2015

If you want, you can help a man soap himself in the shower at the gym. In the original game, the man only appears at the gym a few times a week; in this special version, the developer has reduced the waiting time to 30-60 minutes between each gaming session.

SEPTEMBER 12TH

Creators: Gonzalo Frasca and Sofía Battegazzore | Publisher: Powerful Robot Games | 2010

You fly over a Middle Eastern city that is home to both civilians and terrorists, which are easily distinguishable. Armed with a rocket launcher, all you can do is fire.

SÍSIF (LET'S PLAY: ANCIENT GREEK PUNISHMENT)

Creator: Pippin Barr | 2011

Push the rock with Sisyphus.

SUPER MARIO WORLD

Creator: Nintendo | Publisher: Nintendo | 1990

Explore the world of Dinosaur Land to rescue Princess Toadstool from the hands of the wicked Bowser. Jump, collect coins and dodge or defeat your enemies. To help you, Yoshi the friendly and fleet-of-foot dinosaur will often let you ride him.

TETRIS EFFECT VR

Creators: Monstars and Resonair | Publisher: Enhance Games | 2018

As in the classic Tetris game, tiles must be placed in such a way as to form lines, but in this version the game becomes a both a musical and a virtual reality experience (using the headset). If you enter a 'zone' phase while playing, you can position several blocks at the same time.

THE STANLEY PARABLE

Creator: Galactic Cafe | Publisher: Galactic Cafe | 2013

Walk through the office and decide if you want to follow the suggestions given by the voice of the narrator or to go your own way.

UNMANNED

Creator: Molleindustria (Jim Munroe) | Publisher: Molleindustria | 2012

Choose the phrases that will define the thinking of the character and his dialogues and play a number of simple video games that show various moments in the everyday life of a drone pilot in the army.

WHAT REMAINS OF EDITH FINCH

Creator: Giant Sparrow | Publisher: Annapurna Interactive | 2017

You put yourself in the shoes of the young Edith Finch, aged 17. Explore the family home, in which you find journals and notes that will help you to delve into the past.

04.- ARTISTIC INSTALLATIONS

BLAST THEORY

Rider Spoke, 2007

Blast Theory is an artist group from the UK well-known for combining games and participative narrative with artistic performance. They transpose concepts such as live roleplaying and alternative reality games into the realm of artistic reflection, and they pioneered the use of augmented reality in artistic projects. Rider Spoke is a cycling game that invites participants to take a fresh look at the city and at human relations in the digital era.

Rider Spoke was launched at the Barbican in London in October 2007 and later presented in Adelaide, Athens, Brighton, Bristol, Budapest, Cambridge, Copenhagen, Edinburgh, Falmouth, Kupio, Leeds, Linz, Liverpool, Madrid, Sydney and Terni.

Created by Blast Theory in collaboration with the Mixed Reality Lab at the University of Nottingham, Sony Net Services and the Fraunhofer Institute as part of the European research project IPerG (Integrated Project on Pervasive Gaming).

HARUN FAROCKI

Serious Games, 2009-2010

This piece explores the ways that video games are used today for military purposes, not only to train troops for warfare but also afterwards to treat posttraumatic stress disorder among soldiers.

Watson: 8' 23" | Three Dead: 7' 42" | Immersion: 20' 24" | Sun: 7' 48"

MARY FLANAGAN

[pile of secrets], 2011

Mary Flanagan is one of the most eloquent thinkers regarding games as an artform. This work, which features several terabytes of video-game images published between 1980 and 2010, addresses the issue of the elements that make up the quintessence of the video-game experience: running, jumping, climbing, descending, shooting, treasure, explosions, etc. The videos are shown in continuous loops, an allusion to the iterative experience of the video game.

ROC HERMS

Postcards From Home, 2015

This piece by Roc Herms is the result of five years of work photographing the PlayStation Home virtual world. It is not just a compilation of images but a documentary project, undertaken in a spirit of inquiry, in which this Catalan photographer explores the virtual environment and the lives of its occupants, with whom he conducts personal interviews. It thus crosses the boundary between the physical world and the virtual world: the relationships that develop in environments like Home are real even though they are forged in a virtual world. In addition, as Luis Cerveró points out, "photography is about capturing decisive moments of reality, be it in this world or another". While Herms was working on this project, Sony announced it would be closing PlayStation Home, which ceased to exist on 31 March 2015. The artist's intrigued and non-judgemental gaze and his interest in ethnography are preserved in the book of the project and are an inspiration, encouraging others to continue to observe and reflect on video games in the present and the future.

LATURBO AVEDON, artista-avatar

LaTurbo Avedon is an artist and avatar whose identity formed in the Second Life virtual world in 2008. Avedon is the subject of their own creation, making them both the creator and the artistic project. Their self-portraits present a dual level of virtual identity: behind their numerous avatars in several video games, there is no physical person but a virtual subject, LaTurbo themselves. At the same time, their project evokes the ambivalence of virtual environments from a gender perspective: between the potential of exploration and the fluidity of identity as drivers of personal/social change and virtuality regarded as an experience of escape.

JOAN LEANDRE

R/C, 1999

Gravity Code / Blue Bot / Butterfly Overflow

R/C is an experimental project based on the deconstruction of software. Leandre manipulated the code and structure of the Re-Volt racing game and reduced the game to three phases: the generation of a variable centre of gravity; the elimination of the environment; and the transformation of the mobile components. The deconstruction process ends with the abandonment of the initial aim of the game (the race) and the program operating on its own, with no need for any interaction by the gamer.

LAWRENCE LEK

2065, 2017

This dystopian piece presents a post-work world in which algorithms and artificial intelligence do all the work and citizens' labour centres around playing, while esports have grown to become the new driver of the global economy. Lek's work addresses the concept of digital playbour, a hybrid of play and work and its various manifestations in contemporary society: the gamification of work environments, the exploitation by technology companies of content created by fans, and the final turn of the screw represented by the professionalisation of gaming in esports. Installation: video (5 min running time) and two playing stations

PAOLO PEDERCINI

Videogames and the spirit of capitalism

The academic, artist and game activist Paolo Pedercini is known mainly as the main figure behind La Molleindustria, a web-based platform via which he designs and publishes critical video games imbued with biting sarcasm on contemporary capitalism and various other social issues. Video of a talk given by Pedercini at Indiecade East (2014). Running time: 26 min

MÓNICA RIKIĆ

Mother of Robots, 2019

With the collaboration of the Massana School and the students of the Degree in Arts and Design

Mother of Robots is a project by the Barcelona-based artist Mónica Rikić that combines play, robotics and sociology. It operates as a social multi-agent simulation that is game-like in nature. In it, participants can experiment with small robots that coexist in a particular environment and which have certain roles and give them simple commands to help them to be happy. These instructions, in conjunction with the robots' autonomous actions and transposed into the simulated environment, can give rise to unexpected complex situations that reveal the various power relations that exist.

Mother of Robots is a project developed with the support of a Leonardo Grant for Cultural Researchers and Creators awarded by the BBVA Foundation in 2018.



Jérôme Nguyen

© Matthieu Vlamincq , 2019

Jérôme Nguyen is a media scientist, ludologist and curator. In 2017, he completed his MA at the Eberhard Karls Universität in Tübingen with a thesis on the evolution of identification strategies in video games. He currently works as a curatorial and research trainee at the ZKM | Center for

Art and Media Karlsruhe, where he was the curator of the exhibition »zkm_gameplay. the next level« and lecturer in the gamelab of the Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design. His main research interests are the immersive and narrative aspects of video games, as well as video games as political and artistic medium.



Óliver Pérez Latorre

Óliver Pérez Latorre holds a PhD in Social Communication, awarded by Pompeu Fabra University (UPF) and a BA in Audiovisual Communication. He has lectured in Audiovisual Communication Studies and Advertising and Public Relations at UPF since 2006. In his work, he specialises in the theory and analysis of video games, the study of audiovisual language and audiovisual narrative, and the popular culture trends in audiovisual media. He has published articles on video games, culture and society in academic journals such as Games & Culture, Convergence, Social Semiotics and The European Journal of Communication and is the author of the books *El lenguaje videolúdico. Análisis de la significación del videojuego* (Laertes, 2012) and *El arte del entretenimiento. Un ensayo sobre el diseño de experiencias en narrativa, videojuegos y redes sociales* (Laertes, 2015).

06.- ACTIVITIES

The CCCB is running an extensive programme of activities featuring debates, workshops, audiovisual pieces and digital content that will offer a range of perspectives on thinking regarding the nature of video games and about the place they occupy in today's imaginary and their impact on society.

1.- OFFICIAL OPENING

18 December, 7 p.m.
Audiovisual performance from Alba G. Corral and Tutu
CCCB Hall, free entry

2.- DEBATES

2.1. The Permanent Game. Digital Entertainment and the Hyperconnected Society

This series of conferences aims to stir up debate on the role of digital entertainment within a complex reality governed by game logic, simulation and permanent connection.

- Monday 3 February | ***The Virtual Body*, Cassandra Khaw** (Science fiction writer and game designer)
- Monday 10 February | ***Permanent Connection, Infinite Interaction*, Peter Vorderer** (Lecturer of Psychology and Entertainment, Mannheim University, Germany)
- Monday 17 February | ***Playing with Emotions*, Aubrey Anable** (Professor of Communication and Comparative Literature, Carleton University, Canada)
- Monday 24 February | ***The Playful Brain*, Diego Redolar Ripoll** (Lecturer of Neuropsychology, Open University of Catalonia)
- Monday 2 March | ***Expressions of the Future*, Pilar Lacasa** (Professor of Audiovisual Communication, University of Alcalá)
- Monday 16 March | ***Augmented Humanity*, Alessandro Baricco** (Italian writer and essayist, author of *Silk* and *The Game*)

2.2. Digital Museography

Digital Museography forms part of the Minor in Digital Narrative and Creation organised by the Digital Culture Community of Pompeu Fabra University in collaboration with the CCCB, which studies the creation of digital arts and narratives.

May 2020 (days to be confirmed)

For information on dates, timetables and prices, go to:
<https://www.upf.edu/web/minors/minor-en-narrativa-digital> / ugacom@upf.edu

3.- ZOOM

A Games Room for All Ages

We've designed a space for sharing and exploring together a selection of the latest video games that are bound to captivate you. With twenty great little games for people of all ages, Zoom places the focus on the player experience. Activity curated by Lucas Ramada Prieto and Hugo Muñoz Gris.

From Saturday 1 February to Monday 13 April
Tuesday to Friday, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.,
Saturday to Sunday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

3.1. CCCB for the Family: Intergenerational Video Game Club: Who's Playing? Shall We Play?

Sundays 1 and 8 March, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. – Groups aged 7 to 10 years old
Sundays 15 and 22 March, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. – Groups aged 11 to 14 years old

3.2. Activity for Teachers: Playing with Fiction. Video Games as Culture in the Artistic Education of Children and Teenagers.

Organised by Lucas Ramada Prieto.
Saturdays 29 February and 7, 14 and 21 March, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

4.- BETA STATION

During the months when the exhibition is running, a series of sessions will be held at the Beta Station to explore a range of perspectives and voices related to the world of video games and its context. The areas covered will include an analysis of the sector as a successful business model. There will also be a space aimed specifically at professional women from the sector in the form of the *Women in Games* platform.

In a series of participative sessions, we will cast an analytical eye over specific video games together with their creators, through conversations with specialist youtubers. In terms of video games that go beyond the scope of entertainment, we will be presenting Serious Games projects related to the areas of health, research and medicine as well as surgical training, rehabilitation and neurology. There will also be a number of specific open workshop sessions for students studying subjects related to the programme as well as video game design and guided tours for members of the Game BCN startup incubator programme.

All Beta Station sessions are free. If you're interested, you can sign up via www.cccb.org.

5.-TOURS AND VISITS OF THE EXHIBITION

5.1. Group Tours of the Exhibition

- **Tour for teachers given by the curator Óliver Pérez.** 22 or 23 January, 6 p.m. Followed by a presentation on the teacher-training activity given by Lucas Ramada Prieto at 7.15 p.m.
- **Group tours and visits.**
- **Unaccompanied visits and resources for working on in the classroom.**
- **Guided tours:** Primary, Secondary, Baccalaureate, Vocational Studies.
- **Guided tours + Working in ZOOM:** Primary, Secondary, Baccalaureate, Vocational Studies. Given by Hugo Muñoz Gris (cultural video game critic). Dates on request, between 4 February and 3 March.

Activities with a limited capacity. Booking required.

Bookings: seducatiu@cccb.org / 933 064 135 / www.cccbeducacio.org

5.2. Guided Tours

A tour that will give you a more in-depth understanding of the exhibition's subject matter and that takes in all the different areas, with explanations of the most important pieces and games. Included in the price of entry to the exhibition.

For dates and times, see the general information section.

5.3. Adapted Guided Tours

“Gameplay” for people with blindness and visual impairment

Thursday 27 February and Wednesday 11 March, 4 p.m.

“Gameplay” in sign language

Sunday 19 and Saturday 25 April, 12 a.m.

5.4. Social Programme

The CCCB forms part of the Apropa Cultura social and educational programme, as part of which it offers guided tours to groups of people at risk of social exclusion.

Bookings: www.apropacultura.cat

6.- FILM IN THE CCCB

6.1. Film season and tour of the exhibition “INSIDE THE GAME”

Video games place players both inside and out of the screen. Films have played with this idea, developing it to analyse how far we could go in mixing the real and virtual worlds and what it could mean for our lives.

- Saturday 1 February, 6.30 p.m. | *ExistenZ*, David Cronenberg, 1999
- Wednesday 29 February, 6.30 p.m. | *Level Five*, Chris Marker, 1997
- Saturday 28 March, 6.30 p.m. | *Computer Chess*, Andrew Bujalski, 2013
- Saturday 25 April, 6.30 p.m. | *Aidol*, Lawrence Lek, 2019

6.2. Xcèntric: “Oh! and Can’t Stop!”

Session of experimental films from the 70s and 80s that foreshadow some of the central aspects of video games. With films by Ericka Beckman, Zbigniew Rybczyński, Claude Lelouch and Hieronim Neumann.

22 March

6.3. Soy Cámara

New instalment from the YouTube video essay channel.

Video Games as the Notary of History, directed by Andrés Hispano

6.4. Xcèntric Archive

From its more than one thousand avant-garde and experimental films, the Xcèntric Archive has put together a selection on the theme of game culture.

Starting in January, Floor -1, free entry during exhibition opening hours

6.5. Filmin

The online film platform Filmin and the Contemporary Culture Centre of Barcelona (CCCB) have joined forces to pay homage to the enriching relationship between video games and film by creating a special channel to explore the history of how video games have been portrayed on the big screen and the influence that this art of the new century has had on our lives. From films that were forerunners to this new medium to the major hits from some of today’s leading video game designers, such as Hideo Kojima. The selection also includes documentaries that explore where the industry is currently at, as well as films where the players themselves are the stars.

7.- LIBRARIES AND CIVIC CENTRES

7.1. Gameplay in Barcelona's Network of Civic Centres and Libraries

The civic centres Can Clariana Cultural, El Carmel, La Sagrera "La Barraca", Casa del Relotge and Zona Nord and the libraries Ignasi Iglésias - Can Fabra and Zona Nord are organising a season of activities where people can discover, enjoy and reflect on the world of video games and how they influence our society.

February to April

7.2. Digital Fiction Lab for Libraries in the Barcelona Province

Digital fiction lab run by Lucas Ramada Prieto, in which a group of professionals from 15 municipalities within the Barcelona province library network will have the chance to reflect on how digital fiction can be brought into public libraries.

8.- COURSE FROM THE INSTITUT D'HUMANITATS

Hybrids. Live Arts and Digital Technology

In this course, thinkers, artists and technologists will be demonstrating the possibilities for symbiosis between technology and live arts – a growing field that encompasses performance, networking and cyberactivism and that ultimately aims to open up new mediums of expression for creators.

Co-organized by CCCB and Institut del Teatre.

- Wednesday 26 February | ***Expressive Technology, a Horizon between Art and Engineering, Jan Mech***
- Wednesday 4 March | ***Possible Experiences, Impossible Interactions, Pau Alsina and Enric Mor***
- Wednesday 11 March | ***Dramaturgy and Games, Albert Boronat and Mònica Rikić***
- Wednesday 18 March | ***Digital and Personal Processes, Alba G. Corral and Lluís Nacenta***
- Wednesday 25 March | ***Hybrid Research, Ferran Marqués and Soraya Hidalgo***

For information on dates, timetables and prices, go to: www.cccb.org

07.- GENERAL INFORMATION

#GameplayCCCB

twitter @cececebe | facebook/CCCBBarcelona | instagram @cccb_barcelona

DATES

From December 19th 2019 to May 3rd 2020

OPENING TIMES

From Tuesday to Sunday and bank holidays, 11.00 – 20.00 (Non-holiday Mondays Closed)

Dates closed

23, 25 and 30 December and 1 and 6 January

Dates with restricted opening times (11.00 – 15.00)

24, 26 and 31 December and 5 January

GUIDED VISITS

Free guided tours of the exhibitions when you present your ticket.

From 21 December to 6 January:

- **Saturday 21 December:** 11.30 Spanish
- **Sunday 22 December:** 11.30 Catalan
- **Tuesday 24 December:** 11.30 Catalan
- **Thursday 26 December:** 11.30 Catalan
- **Friday 27 December:** 11.30 and 16.00 Catalan
- **Saturday 28 December:** 11.30 Spanish
- **Sunday 29 December:** 11.30 Catalan
- **Tuesday 31 December:** 11.30 Catalan
- **Thursday 2 January:** 11.30 and 16.00 Catalan
- **Friday 3 January:** 11.30 and 18.00 Catalan
- **Saturday 4 January:** 11.30 Spanish
- **Sunday 5 January:** 11.30 Catalan

From January 10th on:

- **Fridays:** 18.00 Catalan
- **Saturdays:** 11.30 Spanish
- **Sundays and holidays:** 11.30 Catalan

GROUP VISITS

For guided visits for groups to the exhibitions prior booking should be made with the Education Service (seducatiu@cccb.org and 933 064 135), from Tuesday to Friday, from 10.00 to 13.00.

PRICES

Admission to the exhibition: 6 € / Reduced price admission: 4 € (Senior Citizens, Under 25s, Carnet Jove (Youth Card), Libraries Card, Large-family and single-parent family card holders and Groups (minimum of 15 people).

Free admission: Under 12s, Friends of the CCCB, Senior Citizens who are Pink Card holders, Unemployed, teaching licence holders (compulsory education), and Sundays from 15.00 to 20.00.

08.- PROJECT CREDITS

“**Gameplay. Video Game Culture**” is an extended adaptation of the production by ZKM | Center for Art Media Karlsruhe “Gameplay. The next level”.

Curators

Óliver Pérez Latorre (CCCB)
Jérôme Nguyen (ZKM)

Director of adaptation to the CCCB

Carlota Broggi

Coordinators

Eva Gimeno and Montse Novellón
with the collaboration of Claudia Baixeras

Collaboration in writing texts

Mariona Borrull and Marçal Mora

Exhibition design and installation

Cesc Solà and Sebastià Bonet – LA CREATIVA.COM

Graphic design for the exhibition

David Torrents and Alba Font

Graphic design for communication

POSTDATA:

Production coordination

Mònica Ibàñez

Installation coordination

Mario Corea and Alex Papalini

Installation

Feltrero Divisió n Arte
Husofi
Lotema, Muntatges i Producció, SL

Registration and conservation

Susana García, Neus Moyano, Josep Querol

Electricity and lighting

Gabriel Porrás, Paco García, Rosó Tarragona, Oscar Monfort, José Luis Molinos

IT production

Lluís Sangermán
with the collaboration of Jan-Bernat Roselló Sbert

Beta Station

CCCB Audiéncies Unit
and Cira Pérez - RELEVANT

Translation and correction of texts

Marta Hernández Pibernat and Sue Brown Bridge

AUDIOVISUALS

General audiovisuals for the exhibition

General coordination, editing and montage:

Toni Curcó

Scripts: Óliver Pérez Latorre,

with the collaboration of Mariona Borrull

Ja són aquí!

Passatge al paradís

Silenci, es juga

Director: Andrés Hispano

Editing and postproduction: Toni Curcó

Virtual Perfusionist

Land of Fog

Filming and editing: Juan Carlos Rodríguez and José Antonio Soria

Motion design and opening credits

Gimmewings

Art Director: David Torrents

Typography: Approach and Blak

Audiovisual installations

CCCB Audiovisual Service

with the collaboration of New Media

Coordinator: Roc Codó

Video translation and subtitles

Sublimage - Xavier Canals, Anjana Martínez Tejerina, Arturo Muñoz, Carole Patton, Sonsoles Pizarro, Anna Valor Blanquer

Also with the collaboration of the Documentation and Debate Centre, CCCB Education, the Dissemination and External Resources Service, CCCBLab and CCCB Administrative and General Services.