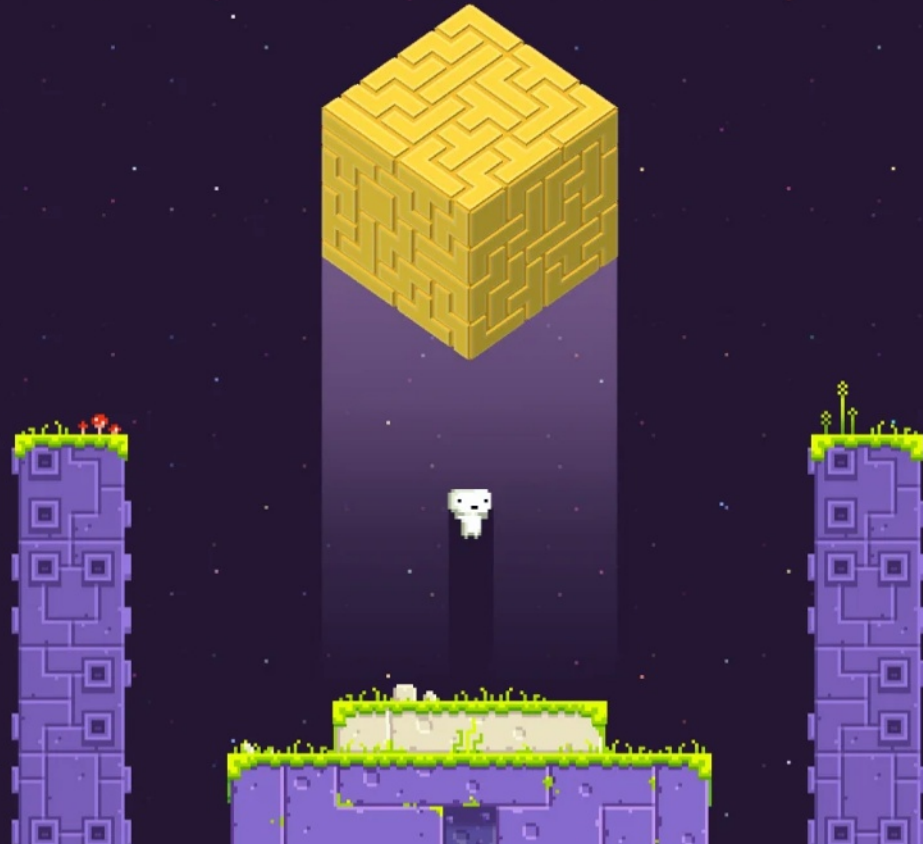


# Video Games & Art



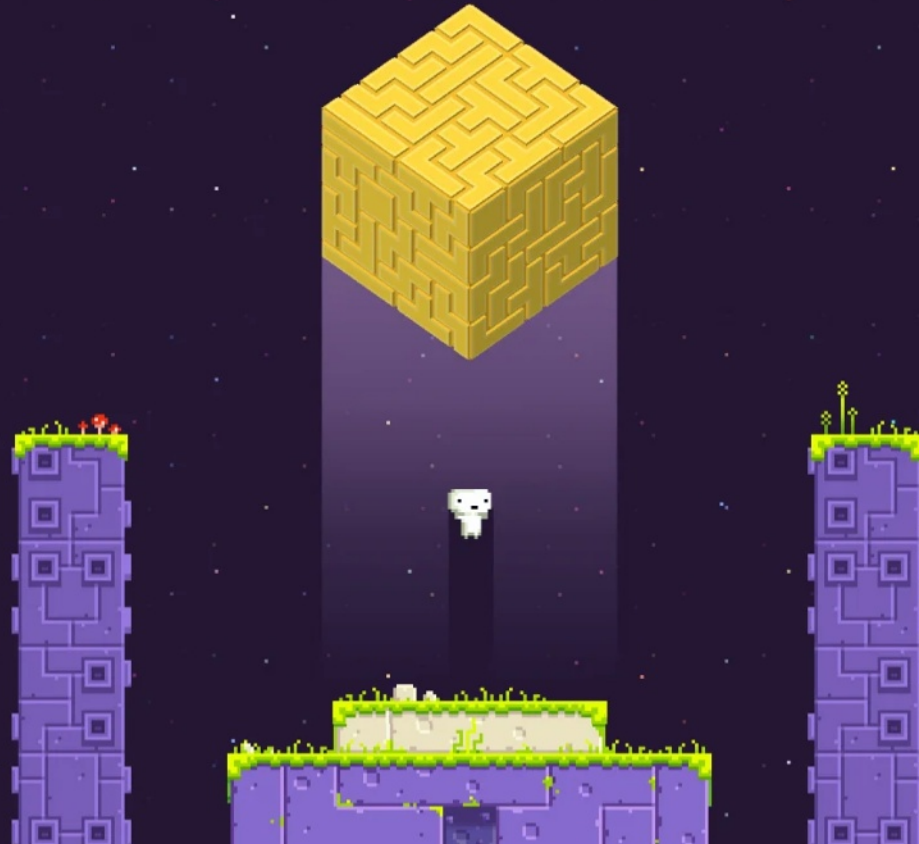
Fabian Krzich

Patterns and techniques  
of a shared habitat

February 8, 2022

# Video Games & Art

1. A short historical journey
2. Game Art, Art Games, Artist's Games (& what is art?)
3. Further resources and readings
4. Outro



Fabian Krzich

Patterns and techniques  
of a shared habitat

February 8, 2022

1. A short  
historical  
journey



# 1. A short historical journey

A games history of contents and forms

A games history of companies

A games history of technologies

A games history of the players



# 1. A short historical journey

A games history of contents and forms

A games history of companies

A games history of technologies

A games history of the players

solche enge Verbindung aus den technischen Grundlagen mit ihren gesellschaftlichen und kulturellen Bedingungen beschreibt die Historikerin Martina Heßler als »*Technik-kulturelle Geschichte*«. Aus dieser Sichtweise lässt sich eine Spirale erkennen, in der Gesellschaften ihre Bedürfnisse aus einer bestimmten Kultur heraus stetig durch technische Lösungen erfüllen. Ihre Nutzung verändert dann diese Kultur, woraus neue Bedürfnisse erwachsen, für die wieder neue technische Lösungen gesucht werden.

1.4

## Eine Gamesgeschichte der Inhalte und Formen

Deshalb wandelt diese Spirale im Verlauf der Gamesgeschichte mit den technischen Möglichkeiten auch die spielerischen Formen und Inhalte, die Entwicklerinnen und Entwickler verwirklichen. Bemerkenswert differenzierten sich z. B. ihre Haltungen zu historischen Inhalten aus (→). Standen lange Zeit Objekte und ihre Materialien im Fokus, erlaubte das wachsende Leistungsvermögen digitaler Spiele bald immer komplexer vernetzte Erzählungen. Weiterwachsende Kapazitäten der Rechner ermöglichten feingliedrige Rechenmodelle, die beispielsweise wirtschaftliche und gesellschaftliche Systeme simulieren. In jüngster Zeit beeindruckten Weltentwürfe für kleine Landstriche mit ausgefilterter Umwelt sowie dem Alltag seiner Bewohner. Mit den technischen Möglichkeiten ändern sich über die Haltungen also auch die spielerischen Formen.

Themen und Szenarien oder Spielformen wie Shooter oder Echtzeitstrategie (→) werden in Wellen aufgegriffen. War Echtzeitstrategie in den 1990er Jahren stark auf dem PC verbreitet, verblasste sie zum Ende der folgenden Dekade. Die Wiedergeburt von Rundenstrategiespielen beflügelt jüngst auch wieder Strategiespiele, die in Echtzeit ablaufen. Soziokulturelle Bedingungen von Kundenkreisen beeinflussen Inhalte und Formen ebenso wie die Interessen von weltweit agierenden Marktaktoren – etwa Publishern und Investoren. Weniger ins Auge springt wegen der längeren Zeiträume, wie gesellschaftlich und politisch relevante Themen in Spielinhalte eingehen. Beispielsweise wandelten sich Feindbilder seit den 1990er Jahren schleichend von postsowjetischen Abtrünnigen über Staaten des Nahen Ostens hin zu muslimischen Individuen.

Der technische und ökonomische Rahmen beeinflusst die historischen Entwicklungen mit, wie etwa digitale Verkaufsplattformen wie Steam und Finanzierungsportale wie Kickstarter zeigen. Seit einer guten Dekade ermöglichen sie Kundinnen und Kunden, direkt zu investieren und inhaltlich im Produktionsprozess mitzuarbeiten. Damit lenkten sie das Spektrum digitaler Spiele auf erstmals totgesagte Spielformen wie *Adventures* oder Rundenstrategie zurück und fördern bislang ungedachte Spielkonzepte. Digitale Kommunikationswege und das gemeinschaftliche Spielen, ob nun miteinander oder gegeneinander, prägen zudem die Spielformen und ihre Inhalte, weil Spielende Gemeinschaften bilden (→). Immer weniger trennen digitale Spiele die Erfahrungen als Einzelspieler von Erlebnissen im Mehrspieler.

3.2 ERINNERUNGS-KULTUR

1.3 GAME-BEGRIFFE

4.1 COMMUNITYS

## Eine Gamesgeschichte der Unternehmen

Aus einem Blickwinkel der Unternehmen und ihrer Köpfe dominieren gegenwärtig chronologische Erzählungen die Gamesgeschichte. Sie leiden darunter, dass sie zeit-

2. Art Games,  
Artists'  
Games, Game  
Art (& what is  
art?)

(according to  
Thomas Hensel)

(& what is  
art?)

7 theories  
about what  
art is:

- 1)Essentialism
- 2)Analytical  
Positions
- 3)Functionalism
- 4)Intentionalism
- 5)Historicism
- 6)Institutional  
Theory
- 7)Cluster Theory

(& what is  
art?)

## Essentialism

7 theories  
about what  
art is:

"[...] to find common  
properties of all and only  
the objects that are  
called art."

e.g. "interactive  
real-time  
simulation..."



(& what is  
art?)

## Analytical Positions

7 theories  
about what  
art is:

"[...]the term "work of art" is learned by means of paradigmatic cases gradually expanded via similarities in its range of application. Even without a definition, the term "art" can be used without any problems and an explicit definition is, strictly speaking, even a hindrance."

There are no such cases  
yet...

(& what is  
art?)

## Functionalism

7 theories  
about what  
art is:

"[...] The way in which works of  
art are used [...]"

No functions found yet  
that all and only  
computer games  
(understood as art) are  
entitled to...

(& what is  
art?)

## Intentionalism

7 theories  
about what  
art is:

"[...] which bases the definition  
of art on specific intentions of  
either the recipient or the  
producer."

Why does not every recipient  
create a work of art?  
What if we don't know the  
intention of the producer?

(& what is  
art?)

## Historicism

7 theories  
about what  
art is:

"[...] is characterized by the fact that the definition of art is based on a reference to the history of art and in particular to objects already recognized as works of art."

We shouldn't compare games in the same way as e.g. movies...

(& what is  
art?)

## Institutional Theory

7 theories  
about what  
art is:

"It is based on the conviction that an object becomes an art work through institutional attributions. These institutions, the so-called art operating system, include for example museums, art critics, producers and recipients."

But how do THEY  
decide...?

(& what is  
art?)

## Cluster Theory (largely accepted)

7 theories  
about what  
art is:

"[...] a set of individually  
neither necessary nor sufficient  
properties [form together]  
necessary conditions."

e.g. "aesthetic qualities that provide sensual pleasure, such as **beauty** or **elegance**; **emotional expressivity**; **intellectual challenge** in the sense of **challenging traditional ways of seeing and thinking**; **formal coherence** and complexity; **semantic complexity** or polysemy; the **exhibition of an individual point of view**; originality as a testimony to creativity; a **high degree of skill**; belonging to an established art form (painting, theater, film, etc.) and the **intention to create art.**"

# Art Games

(games considered to be art by critics and video game reviewers)

GRIS (2018)  
<https://youtu.be/BRiKQIVo7ao>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_video\\_games\\_considered\\_artistic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_video_games_considered_artistic)



## Art Games

(games considered to be art by critics and video game reviewers)



HER STORY (2015)  
<https://youtu.be/gaHw97l7-Lc>



## Art Games

(games considered to be art by critics and video game reviewers)



THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE (2015)  
<https://youtu.be/RBK5Jheu0To>

# Artists' Games

(games made by artists)

## William Chyr

B.A. Physics and Economics, University of  
Chicago, Chicago, IL

2011  
Interaction Designer, Aesthetec Studio,  
Toronto, ON

2008 - 2009  
Research Technician, Kenji Suzuki  
Laboratory, Department of Radiology, The  
University of Chicago, Chicago, IL

2008 - 2009  
Research Technician, Enrico Fermi  
Institute, Chicago, IL

2008  
Computer Engineer, Istituto Nazionale di  
Fisica Nucleare (National Institute of  
Nuclear Physics), Legnaro, ITALY

2007 - 2008  
Research Assistant, Nancy Cox Laboratory,  
Department of Human Genetics, The  
University of Chicago, Chicago IL



# Artists' Games

(games made by artists)



William Chyr - "A Handful of Stardust" (2012)

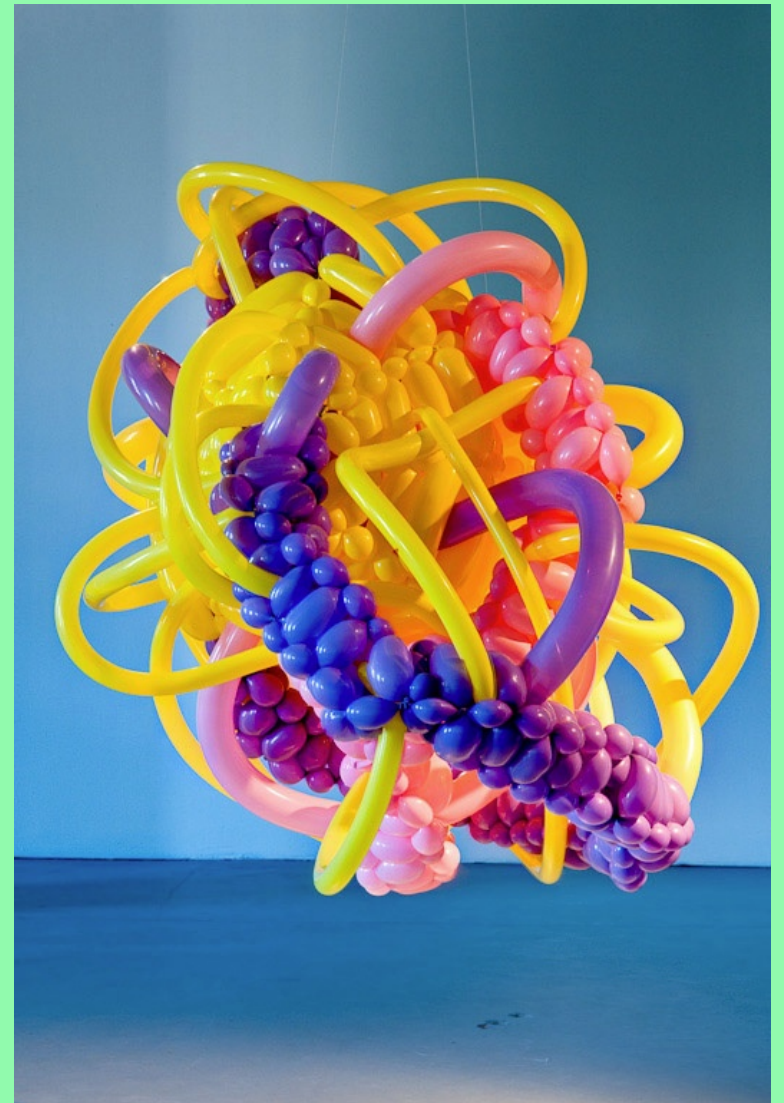


# Artists' Games

(games made by artists)

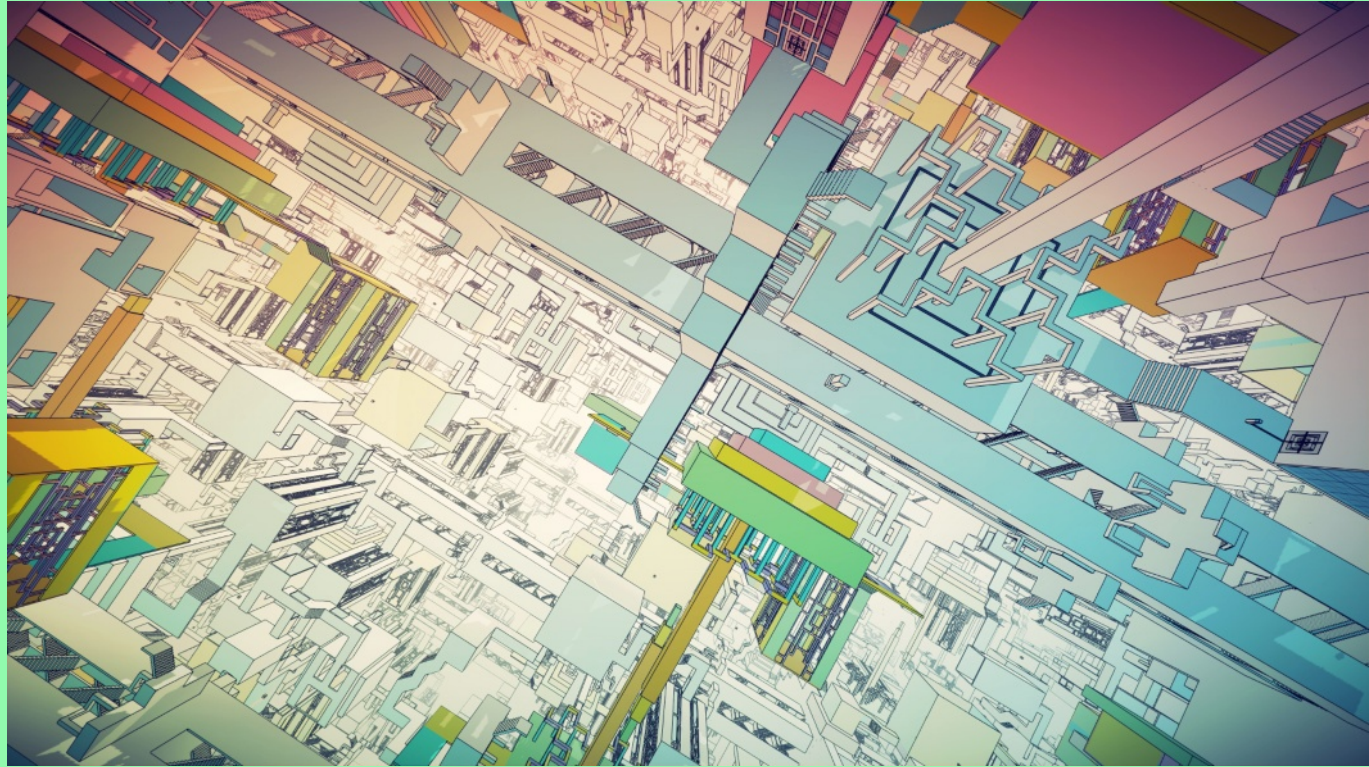


William Chyr - "Nucleus" (2010)



# Artists' Games

(games made by artists)



William Chyr - "Summer Days In Chroma City" (2010)

# Artists' Games

(games made by artists)

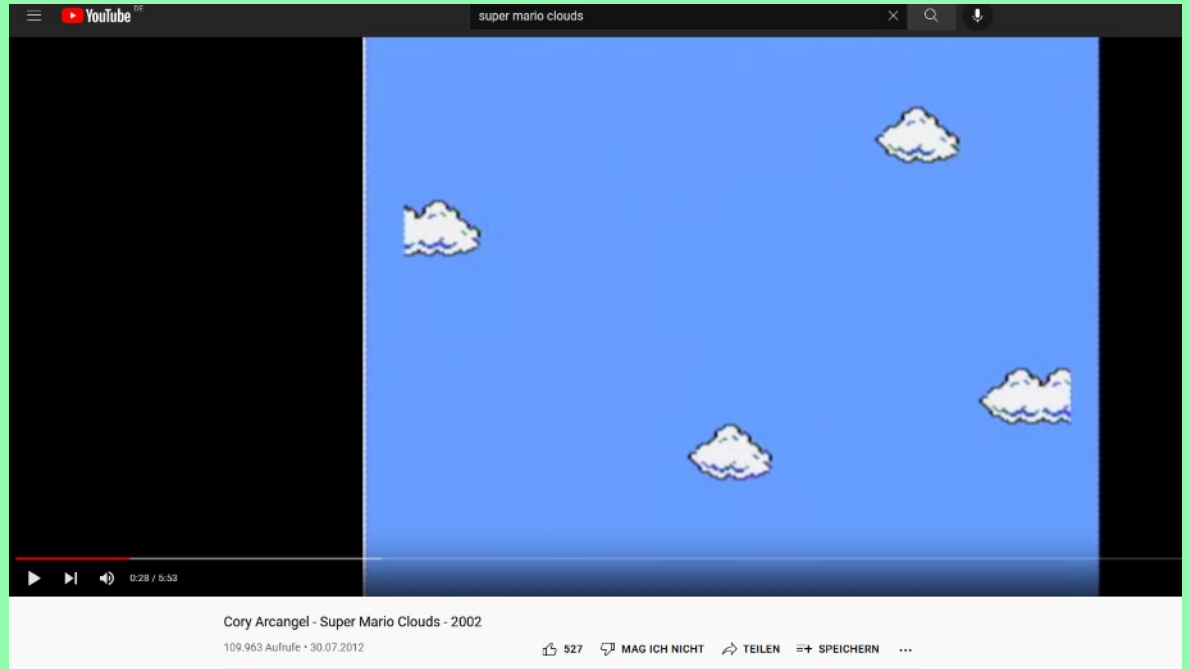


William Chyr (2019) <https://youtu.be/vLt4ZXcDdIQ>

# Game Art

(Artworks that are not playable, but derived from games)

(according to Thomas Hensel, who also showed us the theories of art)



# Game Art

(Artworks that are  
not playable, but  
derived from  
games)

(according to Thomas Hensel, who  
also showed us the theories of art)



Space Invaders  
(1978)



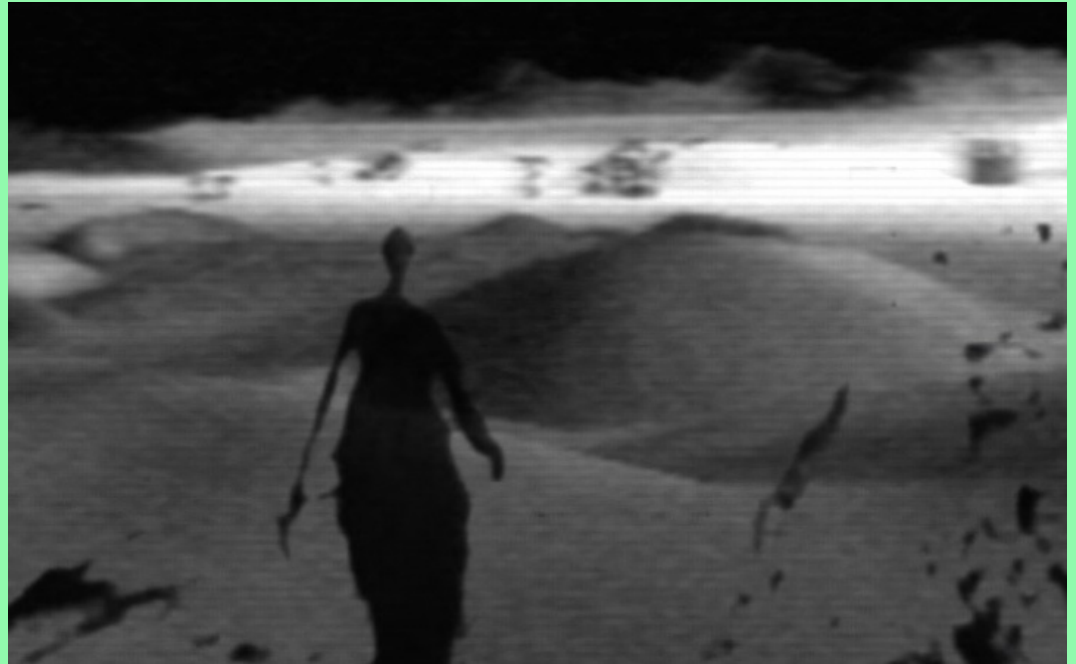
Invader (here in Avignon)



# Game Art

(Artworks that are not playable, but derived from games)

(according to Thomas Hensel, who also showed us the theories of art)



Bill Viola - "The Night Journey" (2007 - 2018)

<https://youtu.be/jDiob1mETZ4>

## 3. Further resources and readings



Exhibitions &  
Events

Research &  
Production

Collection &  
Archives

Education &  
Participation

About the ZKM

Exhibitions & Events / Exhibitions / zkm\_gameplay. the next level

# zkm\_gameplay. the next level



© ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe

Sat, 29.09.2018 – Sun,  
03.04.2022

Cookie Settings

### level 1: retro

In section of »level 1: retro«, the origins, milestones and developments of the medium from the 1970s to the 1990s are presented. For example, visitors can play »Super Mario« at historical arcades and consoles.

### level 2: modern narratives

The section of »level 2: modern narratives« is dedicated to the unique narrative possibilities of computer games – from the interactive thermal paper stories of »Choosatron« to the surreal dream worlds of Bill Viola's »The Night Journey«.

### level 3: aesthetic & creative games

Exceptional audiovisual presentations and surprising game mechanics await the visitors in the section of »level 3: aesthetic & creative games«: For example, you can explore the almost infinite universe of »No Man Sky« or let haptic fireworks of light from »Wobble Garden« stimulate your synapses.

### level 4: political games

Visitors to the section of »level 4: political games« learn how computer games can playfully communicate political processes and their background. For example, political differences of opinion can be clarified together at the »Democracy Machine«. In addition, works from the Goethe-Institut's worldwide »Art Game Jam« are presented in this section.

### level 5: in the spotlight

The section of »level 5: in the spotlight« provides regular information on current debates and discourses on game studies, game culture and student projects.

### 3. Further resources and readings

## Eco Games

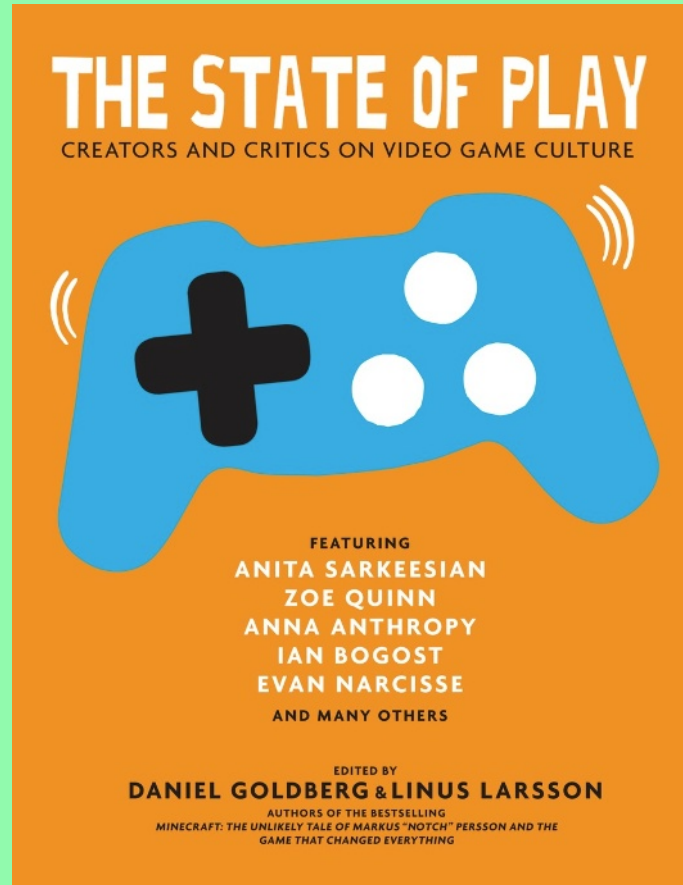
A special exhibition  
within 'zkm\_gameplay.  
the next level'



© Strange Loop Games

Can computer games help to stop global warming? What influence do games have on our behavior towards the environment? And how many resources do we consume while playing? These and other questions are addressed by »Eco Games«, an exhibition as part of »zkm\_gameplay.the next level«. Discover games that explore the relationship between serious games and the environment.

### 3. Further resources and readings



## 4. Outro

Richard Vreeland aka Disasterpeace

AbracaDATA! (GDC 2018)

<https://youtu.be/-KuXRlG6rp4>

