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«Games»

13.11.2021 – 13.03.2022

The history and fascination of video games

Within only a few decades, video games have evolved from a mere gimmick to probably one of the most favourite pastimes – and to a global and highly profitable business. Following the huge success at the National Museum Zurich and at Château de Prangins, the history of video games is now being shown in the exhibition “Games” at the Forum of Swiss History Schwyz from 13 November 2021 to 13 March 2022.

Fortnite, Super Mario, and Minecraft are the talk of the town. This shouldn't come as a surprise, after all, roughly 2.5 billion people across the globe are into gaming, in other words, about a third of the world's population. The fascination for video games reaches back to a US physicist in the 1950s, a man called William Higinbotham who invented *Tennis for Two* for pure entertainment

From family fun to virtual reality

Video games became commercialized in the 1970s and thus accessible to a wide audience. They were marketed as family fun, sweeping across all living rooms rapidly. At the same time, video games also became a feature in public space. In restaurants, shopping centres, even at airports, so-called arcade, or coin-op, games began to seriously compete with the hitherto popular pinball machines.

In the 90s, gamers began getting together for LAN parties, linking up their computers to a local network in order to play together. The development of the Internet opened the door to online games, at the same time, the ever-increasing power of servers enabled evermore complex games.

The noughties brought us home video game consoles, allowing us to immerse ourselves ever deeper into the new and fascinating world of interactive virtual reality.

Forum Schweizer Geschichte Schwyz.

Simultaneous fascination and education

In the exhibition “Games” from 13 November 2021 to 13 March 2022, the Forum of Swiss History Schwyz describes the history of video games from the beginnings up to the present day, not least with a critical look at their social impact and the debates they have given rise to: what makes video games so appealing? How can they be used in schooling and to the benefit of elderly citizens? What kind of stories do video games tell?

The temporary exhibition invites visitors to try their hand at gaming in a time-typical setting and give their all at good old-fashioned computers, consoles, and game machines while the kids get dressed up in Mario Land and get the chance to play analogue games. And who knows, maybe Lara Croft, Dark Elf and the all others are actually watching on, disguised as life-size figures.

A rich complementary programme – including workshops like Mario Maker for families and kids, as well as level-up workshops of parents along with guided tours by experts from the Swiss computer industry – provides in-depth insights into the gaming behaviour of young people as well as the development of skills through gaming and game designing.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact us:

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