

Synopsis

Video games are considered by many to be just entertainment-essentially void of skillful, artistic intervention. But as any gamer knows, there's incredible technical and graphic talent behind even a flickering Gameboy screen. You may have never heard Shigeru Miyamoto's name, but you've probably spent many a lazy afternoon absorbed in his work. Joining Nintendo as a video game designer in the late 1970s, Miyamoto created the powerhouse franchises Super Mario Bros., The Legend of Zelda, and Donkey Kong-games so ubiquitous that Miyamoto was named one of TIME's 100 Most Influential People in 2007. Combining critical essays with interviews, bibliographies, and striking visuals, Shigeru Miyamoto unveils the artist behind thousands of glowing gaming screens, tracing out his design decisions, aesthetic preferences, and the material conditions that shaped his work. With this incredible (and incredibly unknown) figure, series editors Jennifer DeWinter and Carly Kocurek launch the Influential Video Game Designers series, at last giving these artists the recognition they deserve.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“I came to this book knowing very little about Miyamoto, but, like anyone else who's been playing video games since he was a kid, and having played at least a dozen of his titles, several are permanently burned into my brain. DeWinter lays out his many influences, from his time exploring caves in the rural region where he grew up to his time as a teenage banjo player. There were

multiple moments when I came across some new (to me) piece of information about Miyamoto, thought back to a game of his - in some cases, one I haven't played in years - and felt the cognitive click of recognition.

— Jessie Singal, *The Boston Globe*

“Shigeru Miyamoto: Super Mario Bros., Donkey Kong, The Legend of Zelda really gets at the heart of Miyamoto's influence on the gaming industry ... Providing a great understanding of Shigeru Miyamoto's role in the gaming industry, it's a book that also gives readers an understanding of the history of gaming as a whole, as well as the many influences one influential designer can have ... it provides a fascinating look at how the gaming industry has evolved through the years.

— Games Fiends

“Summing up such a massive career is an unbelievable act of compression, and what is there is incredibly well-researched and well-synthesized to the point that it feels like its own tidy Miyamoto-like object... An incredibly well-rounded resource, brimming with anecdotes, interviews, and any document on-hand to provide a clearer understanding of a public-yet-enigmatic figure.

— Cameron Kunzelman, *Paste Magazine*

“As Influential Video Game Designers: Shigeru Miyamoto stands, the book is a must-read for young game designers and those who may be considering entering the field. The book provides the greatest insight I've ever read on the history, philosophy and creative process of perhaps the most beloved game creator in industry history.

— Patrick Scott Patterson, *SyFy Games*

“DeWinter expertly sifted through a varied assemblage of critical essays, interviews, biographies, and articles on Miyamoto to deliver one of the most definitive examinations to date of his astonishing career.

— Robert Marrujo, *Nintendojo*

“The Influential Video Game Designers series aims at a gap in interdisciplinary games studies: the game-'auteur.' To date, video games are considered goods-produced in economics without authorship. However, a close look shows that the "object" of the video game comprises not only modes of production or economics, but also the perspective of a maker. In this sense, the first volume of the series, about the Japanese game designer Shigeru Miyamoto, is conceptually and theoretically the right decision: Miyamoto is a game designer who is rather unknown to public, but certainly popular and ever-present (at least to a general audience) with his games. To discuss the work, aesthetic preferences, and strategies of production of a man who could be addressed as one of the 'father figures' of game design is the right decision. The book itself is not only a must-have for everybody interested in gaming culture, game design or the Japanese gaming industry, but also a great way to remember when you wasted your free time (and your coins) by playing Super Mario Bros. or Donkey Kong.

— Rolf Nohr, Professor of Media Aesthetics / Media Culture, The Braunschweig University of Art, Germany

“Historians of digital games have until now lacked a critical assessment of the game industry's most famous

and influential designer, Shigeru Miyamoto. This certainly held us back, but Jennifer deWinter has at last removed the problem with this balanced account of his achievements. The rest of us will have to get busy and build on her outstanding work.

— Henry Lowood, History of Science & Technology Collections and Film & Media Collections, Stanford University Libraries, USA

“With this book Jennifer deWinter and Carly Kocurek have made an enormous contribution to the study of videogame history, design and aesthetics. This is not only due to the work’s novel focus upon a single designer, but also due to the forensic manner in which they unpack the complex relationship between Miyamoto’s oeuvre and the material conditions which influenced every design decision. Written in an engaging, concise style, this is more than just a book for academics: it is essential reading for any designer or fan of the medium.”

— Steven Conway, Lecturer in Games & Interactivity, Swinburne University of Technology, Australia

Jennifer deWinter is Assistant Professor of Rhetoric and Interactive Media and Game Development at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, US, where she researches computer production and global circulation. deWinter is particularly interested in the cross media vampirism of entertainment media, with a focus on computer games and Japan. She is currently co-editing a book on the intersection of technical communication and games and is working with Steven Conway on a book about video game policy.

A mature and academic text of one of the most influential creators of our time. A fun read.

SUPER FAST AND PERFECT. THANK YOU AAAAA++++++

Unlike the other reviewer I have A) read the book in its entirety and B) don’t judge an entire book over a single typographical error (seriously dude maybe sit the next play or two out). This is the first book to take the videogame designer seriously as a profession that contributes to our culture, and in this sense I think it’s much overdue. deWinter’s scholarship is on point, summarising Miyamoto’s career in detail, avoiding the pitfalls of a dry recounting or superficial gloss. Instead deWinter strikes a balance between content and style, factual accuracy and insight. This is not an abstract philosophical pondering of auteurship, but an on the ground, practical discussion of Miyamoto’s enormous contribution to the games industry. I’d recommend it not only to people studying games or aspiring designers, but also to journalists who need an accessible history lesson, or videogame fans

looking to brush up on their favourite medium.

Shigeru Miyamoto is the first in a series of books about influential video game designers. The mastermind behind many of Nintendo's most beloved and successful franchises, Miyamoto's importance to the world of gaming cannot be understated. It is with this mindset that author Jennifer deWinter explores his contributions, with a keen eye on the socio-cultural impact of his work. Instead of providing a play-by-play of his time spent developing and producing games, she targets specific innovation in the areas of narrative, experience, expression and control. The book also includes a transcript of an influential speech he gave along with a gameography of sorts. By forgoing the traditional framework of a biography, deWinter is able to tell us something more about the man, lending credibility to the idea he is 'the father of modern video games'. Personally, I found the information presented to be both interesting and insightful. Written in an academic style and tone, it may come off to some as a little dry. There are no overarching narratives or themes other than Miyamoto's commitment to play as a design axiom. It's still a fast read, however, one that I would recommend to fans of his work. I look forward to future entries in the series.

This book is an analysis of Shigeru Miyamoto's design philosophy, starting from his college experiences in industrial design and ending with his involvement in the Wii controller and the Wii Sports software package. This book will be very interesting if you enjoy analysis of game design, engineering, or the technology of video games. It may also provide deep insights into the way humans and machines work together if you enjoy discussions of technological progress, or any kind of futurism. Miyamoto's design brilliance is very inspiring, and his desire to improve people's lives through play reveals a deep level of compassion that informs his design ideas. This is not a biography, but there is a narrative to be found here of Miyamoto's ideas and the way he was influenced by rapid technological advancements. The story is told through examples, highlighting the way Miyamoto adapted to changing conditions in his professional position and his personal sources of inspiration. The book lacks detail in some areas. There is a lot of excellent research, but I feel that the GameCube era was overlooked, and this may be due to the fact the DeWinter was rushing to get to the Wii era, when many of Miyamoto's aspirations came to light. There are other moments when I feel the topics presented were not thoroughly explored, revealed by the great depth of analysis provided by DeWinter concerning Miyamoto's business relationships and his design philosophy during the coin-op era. This is an exciting and inspiring book. I look forward to future books in this series, perhaps they will connect to previous analyses, that would be amazing.

deWinter provides an invaluable addition to game studies scholarship. Compellingly written, deWinter tackles a range of topics surrounding the great Miyamoto, from his personal inspirations and perspectives, to technical issues surrounding gameplay, to spatial narratives (which are so fascinating), to industry, so on and so forth. I highly recommend this book to scholars/academics and laypersons interested in Miyamoto or games broadly. Superb.

Probably need a genuine editor in Game Industry. Many pictures were mislabeled (Mario Kart 64 is not Super Mario Kart). The way it was written suggested that Smash Bros was Shigeru Miyamoto's baby (Though he has a hand in it, it was mostly Sakurai and Iwata's project). Constant reference to VGChartz instead of using the more reputable NDP. A lot of minor errors really bothered me.

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