

Video games as art

[Entertainment](#), [Video Games](#)



Video Games as Art Dylan Armitage December 10th, 2012 100883983 Video Games Are Art Are video games art? Up until the early 21st century, the dominant ideology surrounding this topic is resounding " No". Art critics, such as Roger Ebert that state " video games cannot be art. " (Roger Ebert's Journal), and philosophers continually dismiss the idea. This ideology is no longer an accepted truth. I will argue that video games are a form of art.

Video Games have gone from simple games and concepts such as Pong (1975) to modern day, epic titles like Uncharted 3 (2011), and with that they have evolved from simple forms of entertainment to as sophisticated a form of art as any. Video games evoke great emotion from the players, much like the audience of any other form of art. Video games also should be considered a form of art because of the vast amount of tools and media that are combined to create the games that we play today.

The list of games that can be considered art increases each year and it ps over many generations, consoles, and genres. Art is defined as " The expression or application of human creative skill and imagination,". According to this definition, if things such as paintings, film and music are considered to be art, then video games clearly fall into the category as well. Video games today are as creative as anything. Video games allow for so much creative freedom to create any setting, any character and have the ability to interact with all of those and create a new world.

Games take creativity and allow you to immerse yourself within it. In games like the series of Mass Effect (2007-2012), you are able to put a certain amount of creative input into the game yourself. You dictate many facets of the game. You can customize your character, whether it be gender, race or <https://assignbuster.com/video-games-as-art/>

just the general way your character looks. Secondly, your decisions affect the world of the game. You can dictate what your character says and through that change the course of events and how other characters in the game think of you. It is essentially a new world.

The game includes its own lore, deals with issues that we deal with today but in a new world and in a more lighthearted fashion that definitely makes the player think. These issues include those of race barriers and the fear of technology taking over. When it comes to actual labour going into a game, it is very similar to that of a film. They include things such as motion capture. Which is essentially capturing the real life movements of someone and that translates to a sort of acting. The second element of that acting is contributed to the voice-over acting for characters.

This gives freedom of imagination to match any human with any voice you wish. The list then goes on for ages to include animators, set designers, sound designers and much more. The credits to people at the end of the games are much like that of movies and it all contributes to a fantastically entertaining piece of art. Many people view games as simply a form of entertainment. While they are indeed entertaining, they should be considered forms of art for many different reasons. Art evokes emotion, whether it be from a beautiful orchestral medley or a gorgeous landscape painting. Video games do the same.

In the modern day gaming industry, games are more than just getting from beginning to end and win the game, they involve the player in many ways. In *The Walking Dead: The Game* (2012), you are put in control of Lee Everett, a former university professor who is on his way to prison. The game is very

<https://assignbuster.com/video-games-as-art/>

unorthodox in many ways, it is much less about having action-packed gameplay or incredibly realistic graphics. It is focused on engrossing the player in the story and with the characters. It involves some point and click battles, which is necessary for the setting it takes place in, but it is heavily focused on choice.

Everything you do in the game has an effect. Whether it be from not giving someone a portion of rations or choosing to side with someone in an argument. The game world adapts to the choices you make and it all relies on the player. With such involvement the player finds themselves greatly committed emotionally to all facets of the game. The involvement tests a lot of boundaries with human emotion. “ It explores the depths of human tolerance, dissecting what it means to survive in the worst possible scenario, and what it means to keep someone you love alive in the same situation. (Joystiq) Through this, it evokes incredible emotion from the player. Video games can even mix elements of many other artistic media. Taking that into account, video games can do everything that all other artistic media can, but it can be packaged into one outlet. You get the wonderful story and script of a wonderfully written book but with you as the main character, effecting the world how you see fit. The stories of video games have become increasingly more complex and compelling. They even draw interest of film and novel writers and elements from other artistic works.

The Walking Dead: The Game from Telltale Games is a great example of this. The video game draws from The Walking Dead television series on AMC and the television series draws from a graphic novel with the same name. This franchise is a great example of how different artistic media can draw from

each other. All instances of the series are written by Robert Kirkman, the creator of the graphic novel series. The mainstream success of all these series are a testament to how the art that is The Walking Dead can be conveyed with great success whether it be the novels, the show or the game.

Another great example of a writer of film getting interested in video games is John Milius, writer of *Apocalypse Now* (1979) and *Red Dawn* (1984) being a story consultant to the video game closely related to his screenplays, *Homefront* (2011). You get the epic landscapes and imagery of film but with the freedom to explore and interact with it. In the game *Far Cry 3* (2012) you play as Jason Brody and you are on an island called Rook Island which is inspired by a real tropical island. You are abducted along with your friends and you escape, determined to rescue all of them.

The game is open-world, which gives the freedom to do almost anything within the limit of the game world. You don't even have to follow the games' story, which has received critical acclaim. You can explore the absolutely stunning scenery of the island, you can go hunt the local wildlife, you can go climbing or even sky-diving. The setting is very appealing and draws you in like any film would but also allows you to interact and do whatever you wish with the world given to you. There are also games that allow you to interact with the world without even starting to play the real game.

Call of Duty: Black Ops (2010) has an interactive section at the main menu of the game. If you were to mash certain buttons enough, you were able to walk around the room that the main menu is taking place in. You can even walk over to an arcade machine and play a game inside of the game. The same can be seen in the newest instalment, *Call of Duty: Black Ops 2* (2012)

<https://assignbuster.com/video-games-as-art/>

a similar section can be seen where you can interact with the world to play multiple games from the original Atari gaming console. You also get the beautiful noise of the in-game sound effects and soundtrack.

The audio of video games has evolved from simple, silly sounding noises and no dialogue to complete orchestral scores throughout the game and Hollywood famous actors voicing in-game characters. Actors that have made the transition to video games include Sam Worthington of in Call of Duty: Black Ops 1 and 2, Seth Green in the Mass Effect series and Burt Reynolds in Saints Row: The Third (2011). The sound of a video game has come from the game Pong that only has three noises, the sound of the ball hitting the paddle, the sound of the ball hitting the sidelines and then the sound of a point being scored.

This can not be attributed to be art as far as audio goes. In contrast, the soundtrack for Journey (2012) has been nominated for a Grammy. Gaming soundtracks have evolved to the point of having individual tracks for certain situations or scenes that involve an entire orchestra, much like a film. The soundtrack for Journey is among the company of other artistic wonders in film as well as sound such as The Dark Knight Rises (2012), Hugo (2011), and The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo (2011).

All of these media combine to form the art that is video games. Now that the ground for all the aspects of a video game being art have been established, which games fall into that category and reinforce that ideal? Many games fall under all the criteria but some stand out when it comes to the different aspects. The creativity of video games is very evident throughout almost all

video games but it is much more evident in the games of Mass Effect and Dead Space 2 (2011).

Mass Effect creates this vast world that includes multiple races, new planets and interesting lore that embody great creativity in video games. Creativity is also given to the players who are able to customize the character and how the character acts which dictates events and action within the story world. Dead Space 2 creates a vast world as well with great lore and the thought of where humanity would go as far as a space society. The game also talks about the issue of religion governing the state. This comes up in many ways including the game's main conflict.

The game also draw on the very interesting and creative aspect of not knowing if certain things are really happening, much like the game Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem (2002). The sanity of the character is never really certain and you are constantly doubting yourself as well as what is occurring. When it comes to emotional engagement, two games stand out. The Walking Dead: The Game and Heavy Rain (2010). The Walking Dead: The Game engages the player in an extravagant world with interactive environments and characters.

It engages you with the characters and deals with realistic issues regarding the time and place while developing an emotional connection to the story and characters. By the time the game is complete, you are torn through all the choices you've made and with the emotionally testing relationship between Lee, the character you play as, and Clementine, the little girl you take care of throughout the game. The other game that engages the player emotionally in a great way is Heavy Rain. The game puts the the player in

the shoes of Ethan and tests what the player is willing to go to to save his son.

You have the ability to push the character through the trials that reveal where his son is being held but with more information being revealed the closer to death Ethan becomes. As far as including all the artistic media, many games stand out. When it comes to the great writing of novels and screenplays, games such as *The Walking Dead: The Game* and *Homefront* use the talents of credited author and screenwriters to convey a great story through rich dialogue. The interactivity of games and beautiful set pieces is shown through games such as *Far Cry 3* and *Red Dead Redemption (2010)*.

In these worlds, great freedom is introduced which allows you to do really anything you desire through the many different characters, wildlife and locations the game introduces. Great strides in audio are introduced through games such as *Mass Effect* that include voice-actors such as Seth Green of *Family Guy* and Yvonne Strahovski of *Dexter* and the beautiful sounding and Grammy nominated soundtrack of *Journey*. In conclusion, the dominant ideology that video games are not art is a thing of the past.

Through the emotional engagement of games today, video games evoke as much emotion as any other work of art. Through its creativity and ability to create any universe as you see fit, much like other media. Video games also combine many different forms of media to create a brand new artistic form that is video games. They use great set pieces, beautiful audio through orchestra or voice over. Video games have evolved greatly from small beginnings and the list of examples is increasing very quickly. Through all these reasons and examples, video games are art.

<https://assignbuster.com/video-games-as-art/>

Clarke, Andy, Videogames and Art. Chicago: Intellect Books, 2007. Conditt, Jessica “ The Walking Dead Episode 5 review: All the time in the world” Joystiq. 26 Nov 2012, 8 Dec 2012 Ebert, Roger “ Video Games cannot be Art. ” Roger Ebert's Journal. 16 Apr 2010, 8 Dec 2012 ; http://blogs.suntimes.com/ebert/2010/04/video_games_can_never_be_art.html; Helgeson, Matt “ The Great Debate: Are Games Art? ” Game Informer. 1 May. 2012, 8 Dec 2012 ; <http://www.gameinformer.com/b/features/archive/2012/05/01/the-great-debate-are-games-art.aspx>; Melissinos, Chris, The Art of Video Games: From Pac-man to Mass Effect. New York: Welcome Books, 2012. Tavinor, Grant 2005. “ Videogames and Interactive Fiction,” Philosophy and Literature April 2005, vol. 29, no. 1. Tavinor, Grant 2009. The Art of Videogames. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. Young, Robert “ Gaming's first Grammy nomination” Neoseeker. 5 Dec 2012, 8 Dec 2012