

29.09.2018 – 31.12.2019, ZKM_Atrium 1+2, 2nd floor

zkm_gameplay. the next level

The legendary gaming platform at the ZKM

Since 1989, the ZKM has been collecting computer games and invites all gaming enthusiasts, but also visitors who have little experience with computer games so far, to exchange critically and to engage creatively – and of course to play – in the exhibition. The gaming platform can be run through in five levels.

***zkm_gameplay. the next level* is not only based on the experiences of *ZKM_Gameplay*, but also on the exhibition *Games and Politics*, which has been touring all continents since 2017 in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut.**

Medium of the digital society

The fact that the computer game has developed into a leading medium is hardly a bold thesis today anymore about the importance of the interactive and multi-media medium. It has moved far from its origins as a laboratory experiment and toy and has turned into “the” medium of a digital society, between pop culture, entertainment and art.

Indie Games

The approximately 50 works of the playsite are so-called “indie games”: they mainly come from artists and small independent game studios. The artistic handling of the medium, which does not always follow a classical game design, is in the foreground. In the interactive installations of the exhibition, the real space becomes part of the virtual game world and playing becomes a collaborative experience with which the creative possibilities of the medium of computer games are redefined.

Through the exhibition in five levels

The gaming platform *zkm_gameplay. the next level* is divided into five themes: ***retro, modern narratives, aesthetic & creative games, political games*** und ***in the spotlight***.

The ***retro*** section shows the origins, milestones and developments of the Medium from the 1970s to the 1990s. At historical arcade machines and consoles, visitors can experience Mario's first steps in *Donkey Kong*, go on a punk hunt through labyrinths in *Ms. Pacman*, or fight gripping duels together in *Pong*.

The theme ***modern narratives*** is dedicated to the unique narrative possibilities

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Duration of exhibition
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Location
ZKM Atrium 1+2, 2nd floor

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of computer games – from the interactive thermal paper stories of *Choosatron* to the surreal dream worlds of Bill Violas *The Night Journey*.

Exceptional audiovisual presentations and surprising game mechanics await the visitors in the section **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.

Visitors to the section **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.

The section **in the spotlight** provides regular information on current debates and discourses on game studies, game culture and student projects.

Platform for creativity

The exhibition is supplemented by an extensive program, which especially invites computer game developers to use the exhibition as a platform for mutual exchange and events. The ZKM also offers numerous participatory mediation formats for everyone, ranging from the creation of their own Let's Play videos to school class tours and coding workshops.

The ZKM and computer games: since 1997

Since its foundation, the ZKM has seen itself as an interface and mediator between art, new technologies and the social discourses that follow on from them. Even before the ZKM moved into the hall construction, computer games were part of the ZKM collection. With the opening of the building in 1997, the *World of Games* exhibition was dedicated to the classics and artistic works of the medium. In 1999, LAN parties in the foyer of the ZKM could inspire hundreds of visitors night after night. With the exhibition *World of Games: Reloaded*, the successful concept was continued and expanded to include historical computers and consoles. With *ZKM_Gameplay. start new game!* a new gaming platform was created at the ZKM in 2013. Current trends such as the growing indie sector, commercial games with an artistic focus and art games have shaped the appearance of the exhibition ever since. With the tour exhibition *Games & Politics*, the exhibition has been on a world tour since 2017 in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut.

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