

Are Videogames Art?

A consideration of the relationship between videogames and art and why it matters

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This research paper focuses on a consideration into the relationship between videogames and art and why such a relationship might matter. Any inquest into such considerations raises much ambiguity and defining the videogame medium itself can be similarly unclear. A definition of videogames is established based on the ideas of narratology, ludology, and interactive fiction, and provides the foundation for the study to progress. To a greater extent the question of art is exceedingly difficult to ascertain; nevertheless, some of the classical theories of art are drawn upon and later serve as a basis for identifying why videogames may be considered art. The conversation then moves to discuss the possible distinction between art and craft, and the conclusions drawn here prove valuable as the study shifts to a discussion of the cultural industries. Highlighted are perceivable differences between art and cultural products, and in some instances the two may not be simple to distinguish. The study then moves to consider videogames as art. However, the notion of entertainment is often considered in juxtaposition with the art ideal, thus an examination is conducted accordingly. Drawing from the ideas considered earlier in the question of what art may be the analysis then looks at how art may be perceivable through the videogame medium. In this respect, videogames may share certain characteristics with art; however, it becomes apparent that the videogame medium cannot escape comparisons with its contemporaries. In this regard, the medium's unique gameplay characteristic is considered and the implications such a quality may have for its potential in attaining art status are examined. Finally, contemplating on why art classification might matter, an attempt is made to establish several of the positive and negative implications that this status may have for the videogame medium.