

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

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MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE PRESENTS 'A WHOLE DIFFERENT BALL GAME,' AN EXHIBITION EXPLORING THE 60-YEAR HISTORY OF SPORTS VIDEO GAMES

Starting with 1958's *Tennis for Two*, the exhibition features more than 30 sports video games available for play

September 14, 2018–March 10, 2019 | PRESS PREVIEW: TUES., SEPTEMBER 11

Astoria, New York, August 16, 2018—The world's first video game, *Tennis for Two*, debuted at the Brookhaven National Laboratory's public exhibition in 1958. Though rudimentary, the ball and net depicted on an oscilloscope were enough to suggest a game of tennis—and marked the start of a long relationship between sports and video games. From September 14, 2018 through March 10, 2019, Museum of the Moving Image will present ***A Whole Different Ball Game: Playing Through 60 Years of Sports Video Games***, an exhibition featuring more than 30 playable video games to examine the complex relationships between game, sport, media, and culture.

A Whole Different Ball Game is organized by guest curator John Sharp and Curator of Digital Media Jason Eppink (MoMI). The exhibition's Presenting Sponsor is Psyonix, developer of the sports-action hit, *Rocket League*.

"Sports video games account for nearly half of best-selling video game titles, with 17 million regular players in the United States alone," said Eppink. "Surprisingly, they're regularly left out of contemporary histories of video games. This is the first exhibition to explore how important, unique, and groundbreaking these games really are."

"Sports play an important role in American life, something notable even in the kinds of video games we make and play," added Sharp. "By looking closely at sports video games, we can see the ways sports integrate into our lives, and the values we place upon sports."

The 30 games on view represent sports including tennis, football, track and field, basketball, baseball, and soccer, plus esports—multiplayer games that have developed their own professional leagues. Among the titles are *Tennis for Two* (1958, presented as a replica); video arcade games *Pong* (1972), *Track and Field* (1983), *NBA Jam* (1993), and *Atari Football* (1978); popular console games such as *FIFA 16*, *Wii Sports*

(2006), and *NHL '94*; esports games *Fortnite: Battle Royale* (2017), *Killer Queen* (2013), *Rocket League* (2015), and *Super Smash Bros Melee* (2002).

The history of video games is closely entwined with sports, dating back to the original *Tennis for Two*. Since then, sports have continued to be the games that Americans most regularly encounter, whether on TV, via apparel or other consumer product, or through play. The most lucrative professional sports leagues—NFL, NBA, FIFA, MLB, and NHL—are closely involved in the annual production of video games that simulate the rules, rosters, and visual experiences of their play and, just as important, their televised spectacle.

It's a Whole Different Ball Game considers what it means for full-body sports to be transposed to screens and controllers; who is or is not represented in sports video games; the ways broadcast sports and video games reflect one another; and the primacy of statistics in professional sports and sports simulators. The exhibition also considers how video games have recently become sports themselves, creating passionate communities and cultures of competition that were once only the domain of sports.

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PRESS PREVIEW: TUES., SEPT. 11. INVITATION TO FOLLOW.

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MUSEUM INFORMATION

Museum of the Moving Image (movingimage.us) advances the understanding, enjoyment, and appreciation of the art, history, technique, and technology of film, television, and digital media. In its stunning facility—acclaimed for both its accessibility and bold design—the Museum presents exhibitions; screenings of significant works; discussion programs featuring actors, directors, craftspeople, and business leaders; and education programs which serve more than 50,000 students each year. The Museum also houses a significant collection of moving-image artifacts.

Hours: Wed–Thurs, 10:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Fri, 10:30 a.m.–8:00 p.m. Sat–Sun, 10:30 a.m.–6:00 p.m.

Museum Admission: \$15 adults; \$11 senior citizens (ages 65+) and students (ages 18+) with ID; \$9 youth (ages 3–17). Children under 3 and Museum members are admitted free. Admission to the galleries is free on Fridays, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Film Screenings: Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, and as scheduled. Unless otherwise noted, tickets: \$15 adults, \$11 students and seniors, \$9 youth (ages 3–17), free or discounted for Museum members (depending on level of membership). Advance purchase is available online. Ticket purchase may be applied toward same-day admission to the Museum's galleries.

Location: 36-01 35 Avenue (at 37 Street) in Astoria.

Subway: M or R to Steinway Street. N or W to 36 Ave or Broadway.

Program Information: Telephone: 718 777 6888; Website: movingimage.us
Membership: <http://movingimage.us/support/membership> or 718 777 6877

Museum of the Moving Image is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and has received significant support from the following public agencies: New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; New York City Council; New York City Economic Development Corporation; New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; Institute of Museum and Library Services; National Endowment for the Humanities; National Endowment for the Arts; and Natural Heritage Trust (administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation). For more information, please visit movingimage.us.