

GENDER

The state of being male or female as expressed by social or cultural distinctions and differences, rather than biological ones; the collective attributes or traits associated with a particular sex, or determined as a result of one's sex.

(Oxford English Dictionary, 2023.)

this zine will be looking at the
HATE + VIOLENCE against
women in video game culture
and
its relationship to the history of
misogynistic character design.

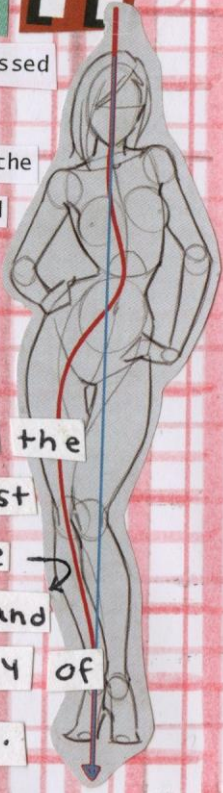
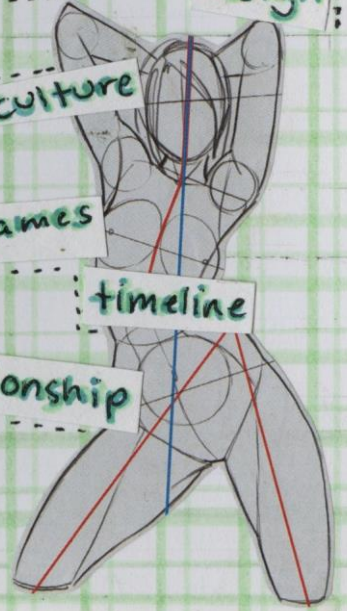


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HISTORY

The video game industry started off with men creating games for other men. When 2D and 3D animation technology was put in the hands of young men in the 90's, it was almost inevitable that many of them would create objective and idealized body types for female characters. Pleasure and fulfilling fantasy were the basis for game design.

When fighting video games were first created, the characters were oversexualized and overdramatized for effect (see: enfreakment), which created racial and gender stereotypes that are still present in video games and society. Although games have evolved from their original releases and new games have been developed, inspiration from original designs are still noticeable.

virtual Enfreakment : the grotesque amplification of identity attributes based on cultural, ethnic, and gender prejudices, which objectifies and demeans some groups for the pleasure and consumption of others.

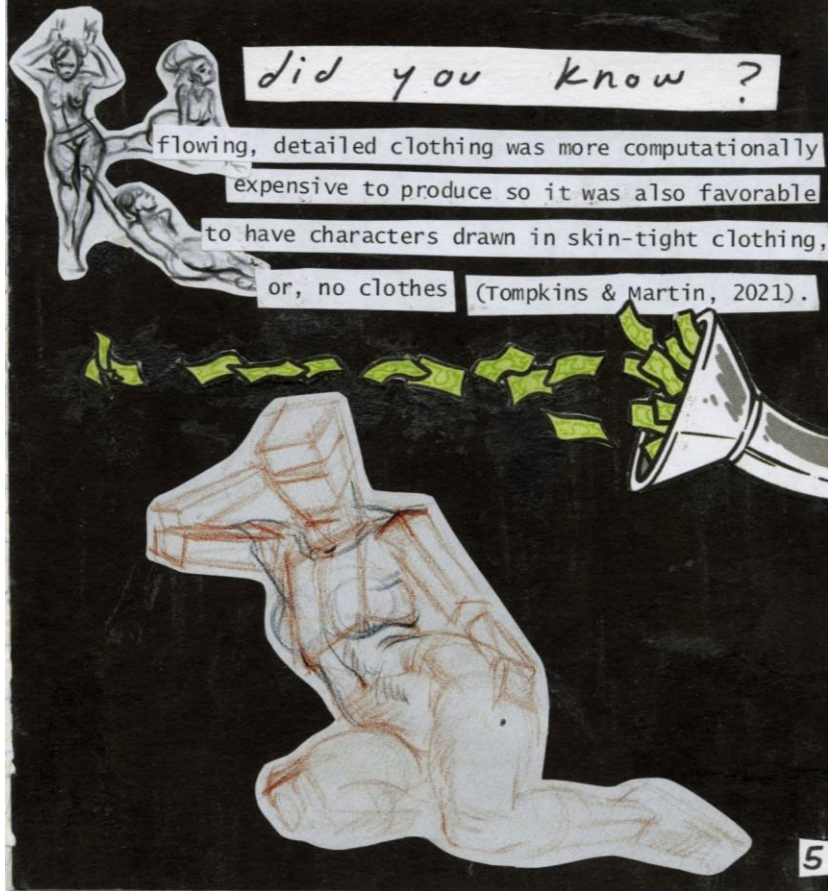
(Şengün, et al., 2022)

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Additionally, oversexualization of female characters continue to be a reoccurring design technique because sex continues to sell as a commodity.

did you know ?

flowing, detailed clothing was more computationally expensive to produce so it was also favorable to have characters drawn in skin-tight clothing, or, no clothes (Tompkins & Martin, 2021).



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THE TIMELINE

of the first
influential fighting
games

STREET
FIGHTER

1987

by Capcom

No female characters were in the game.

STREET II
FIGHTER

1991

by Capcom

Dubbed the most influential fighting game ever made.

MORTAL KOMBAT

1992

by Midway Games

Became the most violent fighting game franchise.

Virtua
Fighter

1993

by Sega

Inspired by Street Fighter II.

First fighting game to implement 3D technology.

TEKKEN

1994

by Namco

Inspired by Street Fighter II.

Sega's arcade rival.

VIDEO GAME CULTURE

In the early 2000's, co-op gaming introduced ..

voice chat = **VC**

Many co-op and FPS (first-person shooter) games developed voice chat features so teammates and other players in-game can communicate. Since this feature was first created, it has been notorious for women or people with feminine voices to be harassed, mocked, and called derogatory names unprovoked.

what was #Gamer Gate?

Gamergate was a harassment campaign directed towards women who played video games (and worked in the industry).

Men enforced and supported violence against women by harassment in game, and on streaming and social media platforms (i.e., Twitch, YouTube, Reddit, Twitter, etc.)



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Zoë Quinn

was the first target of Gamergate, who was harassed and accused of engaging in sexual relationships with writers from gaming websites to receive positive reviews on her game, *Depression Quest* (2014). Since then, there has been lots of misinformation in the media regarding the allegations, however regardless of the fact, the #Gamergate movement was formed and hundreds of women in the gaming community and industry were made victim.

Anita Sarkeesian

started a web series in 2013 called "Tropes vs. Women" to discuss the misogynistic themes and gender representation in video games. She was heavily harassed online and sent numerous threats. Anita was also a victim of #Gamergate. She now has a video series/podcast discussing toxic video game culture, and runs a Hotline for people experiencing harassment online and in video games.



A study by Reach3 in 2021 said that

77% of surveyed women

experience gender-based

violence and harassment when gaming.



most common comments received by women in-game

Judgement of skill · gatekeeping
sexual harassment · derogatory names
questions regarding relationships
and physical appearance

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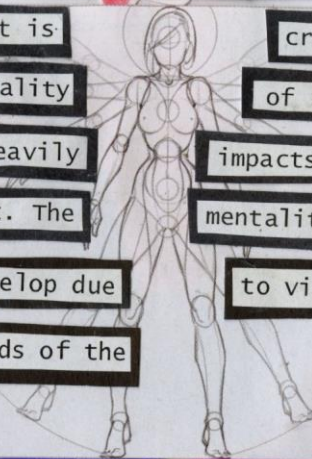
Is there a line between
the real and digital world?

In *Half-Real* by Jesper Juul, he discusses the complex
fabrication of the real and made-up aspects of video
games (i.e., code, rules, emotional reactions) and the
line between them. This idea is similar to the ways
that there are very real effects that stem from gameplay,
character design, and the (misogynistic) culture
that is created within these games.

Because it has always been highly profitable for games
to market women as sexual objects
The perception many men have of women online is skewed
Leading to misogyny being very prevalent
in video game culture

Video game culture is
part of our society.

The video game industry would not exist without
its culture. People are what give industry its
existence. It is
crucial to reflect
on the ethicality
of character design
when it so heavily
impacts the ways people
think and act. The
mentality that young men
and women develop due
to video game culture
is in the hands of the
developers.



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