

LEGO GAME SERIES

As part of our BAFTA at 70 celebrations we are delighted to welcome **ARTHUR PARSONS**, for a special Games presentation, hosted by **KEZA MACDONALD**.



BAFTA was founded seventy years ago this year by the leading lights of the British film industry. Its original purpose was to 'recognise those who had contributed outstanding creative work towards the advancement of British film'. Entertainment technology has of course advanced exponentially since then; the original celluloid medium first eclipsed by the cathode ray tube, then by video and interactive gaming, and now by digital and online platforms. But whatever new media emerge the honouring and encouraging of superlative artistic achievements in these fields remain at the core of BAFTA's mission.

In 2006 BAFTA recast its remit to fully encompass technological advances, tasking itself to 'support, develop and promote all the art forms of the moving image, by identifying and rewarding excellence, inspiring practitioners and benefiting the public'.

But long before this BAFTA had already spotted the paradigm shift in the art of the moving image brought about by rapid sophistication in the video gaming industry. By the mid-1990s video games had become a fully-fledged art form. They had progressed sufficiently as a medium to empower their audiences with a completely new entertainment experience. This new generation of games evolved a new type of movie-

goer, the gamer. For the first time gamers could interact with life-like screen characters (rather than the basic and plodding, pixelated graphics of earlier releases); and they could influence the outcome of storylines rather than just passively enjoying them. These cutting-edge games gave birth to new professional design skills too, the artistry needed to craft smooth and enjoyable game-play and create rewarding and accessible replayability.

To recognise these new art forms, BAFTA's then Vice-President David Puttnam inaugurated the Interactive Entertainment Awards in 1997. This quickly expanded its categories to become today's BAFTA Games Awards Ceremony, arguably the most prestigious international awards ceremony for today's games-makers.

We are privileged to have with us today someone all too familiar with the Games Awards Ceremony - Arthur Parsons, the man leading the team at Britain's most popular and successful collaborations between a gaming developer and a gaming franchise - TT Games and Lego. Together TT Games and Lego have won five BAFTAs in the last ten years across numerous categories.

Arthur was behind the development of this world-beating Lego Game Series right from the beginning and he is now TT



Games' Head Designer and Lego Games Director.

Arthur has been a pivotal figure at TT Games' studio for nearly twenty years, moving there from famed Liverpool games house Psygnosis. He is passionate about his craft and about the importance of hardwiring fun into every production. He has helped develop more than 20 franchise titles whilst at TT Games, from the LEGO series to *Crash Bandicoot* and *Toy Story*. He attributes some of his success to the vital quality control tests carried out on each of his games by his nine-year old daughter!

Knutsford-based Arthur was nominated in two categories at the 2014 BAFTA Games Awards for his work on *Lego Marvel Super Heroes* (2013) (Best British Game, and Best Action and Adventure Game) and is currently Game Director for the forthcoming *Lego Marvel Super Heroes II* that we are fortunate enough to be showcasing at today's event.

LEGO's lucrative partnering with video game developer TT Games (originally called Travellers Tales) began with the launch of family-orientated best-seller *Lego Star Wars: The Video Game* (2005). This platinum-selling video game, with its many unlockable characters and fluid game-play modes, was rewarding to play whilst feeding



its players' own creative instincts, in an echo of the imaginative world of physical Lego itself.

The sequel, *Lego Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy* (2006) was the real breakthrough. *Lego Star Wars II* saw widely praised improvements in the quality of its level-environments, and a slick game-play that earned it the British Academy Games Award for Best Gameplay. Significantly *Lego Star Wars II* introduced gamers to Lego character adaptations that were, according to appreciative critics, funny, self-referential and adorable portrayals in their own right – characters that were to be reprised to great effect in the later big screen Lego movies.

In 2007 the then head of home entertainment at Warner Bros, Kevin Tsujihara needed no prompting to recognise the quality and potential of this important Lego gaming franchise. Seeing at once the incredible talents of the TT Games design team, Tsujihara quickly persuaded his studio bosses to purchase the developer – everything has been awesome ever since, with a stream of top quality Lego character games series, including *Lego Batman*, *Lego Indiana Jones*, *Lego Lord of the Rings*, *Lego Harry Potter* and *Lego Marvel Super Heroes*.

LEGO GAME SERIES BAFTA wins

Best Game Play (2006)

Lego Star Wars II

Best Children's Game (2008)

Lego Batman

Best Children's game (2011)

Lego Pirates of the Caribbean

Best Family and Social Game (2013)

Lego Batman II – DC Super Heroes

Best Children's Game (2016)

Lego Dimensions



KEZA MACDONALD

Keza MacDonald has been writing about video games for more than 12 years. She is currently Editor of Kotaku UK, a website about games and gaming culture. www.kotaku.co.uk/author/kmacdonald/

BAFTA HERITAGE SCREENINGS

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