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First Arete exhibit features video games scrutinizing politics

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Most of us in the Philippines are still under the impression that video games are for kids, a fun, recreational activity for those who refuse to grow up.

An interactive travelling exhibition by the Goethe-Institut and ZKM Center for Art and Media, "Games and Politics" begs to differ.



All photos courtesy of Ateneo de Manila University

Launched last September 12, 2017 at Ateneo's newest creative hub Arete (<http://www.ateneo.edu/giving/project/aret%C3%A9>), the exhibit features video games exploring a wide range of political topics.

From gender issues tackled in the "Perfect Woman" game, to how state surveillance invades civil privacy in "Orwell and TouchTone" to mutiny against oppressive regimes in "Yellow Umbrella" to simulation of modern politics in "Democracy 3," the exhibition affirms that video games transcend mere entertainment and is indeed a legitimate medium for critical discourse and art.

"Games and Politics" also opens up dialogues for a deeper understanding of the culture of gaming in the country through a series of events that accompany the show.



There is the panel discussion "The Leisurely Legislation" where Senator Bam Aquino, physicist Dr. Randy Dellosa, addiction rehabilitationist Frances Kramer, Tier One Entertainment creative director John Paolo Bago, and Julius Raymon U. Mariano of Twitch.tv are speakers.

And then a public lecture, "Games World Views: The Potentials and Problems of Politics in Games" by cultural scientist and gamer Christian Huberts, who asserts as that as the future becomes more and more gamified, there's a need for a deeper cultural discourse on gaming.

"We can't let video games control our behavior. We can't be stuck with this legacy wisdom of using games to optimize work. We have to use video games to create new rules, a new world, a new reality," Huberts said.



As the world uses video game mechanics to motivate people to accomplish personal and professional tasks and goals, designers and players must pause and re-think what video games are good for.



~~Arete director Yael Buencamino explained that having "Games and Politics" as their first exhibit at Eduardo J. Aboitiz's SandBox Zone is the best way to explain what the space is for.~~

"This first exhibit is ideal to introduce the space because it brings in gaming, politics, leisure, computer science, history. It shows the convergence and collaboration of different disciplines that we want to happen here," Buencamino said.



"This isn't necessarily an exhibit space. It's a sandbox. We envision it as a co-working space for research. You can configure it the way you want depending on your project." — LA, GMA News

The exhibition will run at Ateneo until October 21, 2017. Follow Games and Politics on Facebook for updates (<https://www.facebook.com/events/1881155235483441/>).

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