

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE BEGINNINGS OF VIDEO GAMES EXPLORED AND DEMONSTRATED AT SPECIAL MUSEUM EVENT

Program to include rare public demonstration of legendary 1958 game and a video chat with the inventor of the home video game

Saturday, October 1, 2:00 p.m.

“Where did video games come from?” This question and more will be explored in “The Beginnings of Video Games,” a special event at Museum of the Moving Image on Saturday, October 1, 2011, at 2:00 p.m. The program will feature a live video chat with the inventor of the home video game, Ralph Baer, and the first public demonstration outside of Brookhaven National Laboratory of William A. Higinbotham’s legendary analog computer game, *Tennis for Two*.

The program opens with a conversation with Ralph Baer via Skype. A seminal figure in the history of video games, Baer’s iconic Brown Box prototype—which will be demonstrated as part of the program—led to the development of the first video game home console, the Magnavox Odyssey.

Higinbotham’s *Tennis for Two*, a simulation of a game of tennis on an oscilloscope, is considered to be the first of its kind to introduce modern conditions of game play: multiple players, a screen display, and external controllers for player-to-game interaction. A recreation of this 1958 game will be presented by Brookhaven National Laboratory scientist Peter Takacs and curators of the William A. Higinbotham Game Studies Collection (WHGSC) at Stony Brook University. Audience members will be invited to play *Tennis for Two* and to share their reactions.

“The Beginnings of Video Games” is presented on the occasion of WHGSC’s two-day Game Preservation Forum, to be held at Museum of the Moving Image. The goal of the Forum is to begin a dialogue between university archives, museums, and private collectors that contributes to the establishment of a national organization for the preservation of video games. Participating institutions include: The Computer History Museum, The International Arcade Museum, Museum of the Moving Image, Stanford University, Stony Brook University, The Strong National Museum of Play, Supercade, The University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and The University of Texas at Austin.

Tickets for “The Beginnings of Video Games” are included with Museum admission and are available first-come, first-served on the day of the event: \$12 adults, \$9 college students and senior citizens, \$6 children 3–12, and free for Museum members.

This program was co-organized by Museum of the Moving Image and the William A. Higinbotham Game Studies Collection (WHGSC) at Stony Brook University. For WHGSC, organizers are Raiford Guins, Kristen J. Nyitray, and H  l  ne Volat. Guins is co-curator of the WHGSC and Associate Professor of Digital Cultural Studies at Stony Brook. He is the author of the forthcoming *Game Saved: An Afterlife History of Videogames and their Preservation*. Guins is also Principal Editor of *The Journal for Visual Culture*. Nyitray is co-curator of the WHGSC and is the University Archivist and Head of Special Collections and University Archives at Stony Brook University. Her article on Higinbotham appeared in the April/June 2011 issue of IEEE Annals of the History of Computing. H  l  ne Volat is Head of Reference and Information services at Stony Brook University.

Museum of the Moving Image was one of the first museums in the nation to collect and exhibit video games, beginning with *Hot Circuits*, a historical view of the medium featuring 47 games, in 1989. The Museum’s core exhibition, *Behind the Screen*, includes a section devoted to arcade and home game history. Museum educators conduct demonstrations of Ralph Baer’s Brown Box twice daily.

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MUSEUM INFORMATION

Hours: Tuesday–Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday, 10:30 to 8:00 p.m. Saturday–Sunday, 10:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (Closed on Monday except for holiday openings).

Film Screenings: See schedule above for schedule.

Museum Admission: \$12.00 for adults; \$9.00 for persons over 65 and for students with ID; \$6.00 for children ages 3–18. Children under 3 and Museum members are admitted free. Admission to the galleries is free on Fridays, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. Paid admission includes film screenings (except for special ticketed events and Friday evenings). Tickets for special programs may be purchased in advance by phone at 718.777.6800 or online.

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

Subway: M (weekdays only) or R (all times) to Steinway Street. N (all times) or Q (weekdays only) to 36 Avenue.

Program Information: Telephone: 718.777.6888; Website: <http://movingimage.us>

The Museum is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and its operations are made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York City Economic Development Corporation, the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Natural Heritage Trust (administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation). The Museum also receives generous support from numerous corporations, foundations, and individuals. For more information, please visit <http://movingimage.us>.