

ARBITER



TRON: LEGACY

HAS THE GAME REALLY CHANGED AT ALL?

ARBITER



UNCHARTERED
PG.3

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome patron, faithful reader and future ARBITER devotee.

This magazine, solely designed for the internet, was started by myself and Mr. Josh Philpott. Our aim is create a monthly magazine of worth reading, just for you. Yes, you. At Arbiter we're dedicating ourselves to bringing you the finest of each month's selections. Films, games, exciting technological developments and a little art thrown in. This first issue has been the product of our hard earned time, money and all the coffee we could steal. As the bugs get ironed out and we find our feet, I hope you give our little homegrown magazine a chance and tell your friends.

To start with, we have a review of the exciting re-birth of Tron (and the highly rad soundtrack), talk of an Uncharted movie to get your blood boiling and some helpful advice if you're stuck for Christmas gift ideas. So read away, I hope you like what you see and come back in January.

- CALUM WILSON AUSTIN

LINKS

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a quick look at these quality sites.

rawdlc.com
bloodyjaw.com
geekactually.com
godhaspinkhair.com
weekendronin.com
moviefanhouse.com

EDITORS

CALUM W. A.

Calum spends most of his time down "the local" or attempting to deal with "those meddling kids." In between all that he manages to write an amusing (at best) blog, which can be found here.

www.bloodyjaw.com



JOSHUA PHILPOTT

Josh is actually an evil twin of the real Joshua Philpott, who he killed several years previously. You will usually find him "soap boxing" about what ever he feels is wrong with the world on that particular day. When he is not doing that he writes for Rawdlc.com and Geekactually.com.

OPINION: UNCHARTERED THE TIPPING POINT

Hate video-game films?
So does Josh. He's here
to tell you why the new
Uncharted film has
crossed the line.

It's amazing if you stop to think for a moment just how far gaming has come. As the years have passed games have gone from floppies to cartridges, cartridges to disks, then from that to Blu-ray. As technology advances it has transformed gaming from a scary basement hobby to a media seen everywhere we turn.

The reality is that games have become an accepted and respected form of entertainment. We have the greatest minds in writing and composing working with huge budgets to create the amazing visual experiences we have today with no loss of power or ability. Games can make us laugh, cry or scream at our TV's in anger, just like film. So, with all this talent behind the industry and gaming at it's best, why can't they get a single video game film to work? It seems hard to believe that the crossover can only work on one side of the scale. It has puzzled me for years as to why I continually get excited over these films knowing their history of repeated failures and the scars that they have left on me as both a gamer and a film lover.

The problem is the movies still sell and continue to be mindless cash cows. Why? Because we keep watching. Us and everyone else on the planet. Even if every fanboy on the planet stopped watching, they would still be making big bucks from all those people who want to see mindless popcorn flicks. The producers see it as a win, the director sees it as a win and the only one who loses out are the fans. The cycle seems like it will never end.

In the 80s, comicbook films were a joke, there was no love for the media and no reason, in the filmmakers eyes, to change anything. The underlying problem is that the generation of film makers at the time had no understanding of the material or what made them compelling. The same thing is happening here.

Uncharted seems to be the last straw for me. Both games are, in essence, interactive movies. It seems impossible to screw up due to the premise and characters already being so well established and on top of this it's not even a hard fan sell, as long as he is hunting treasure and being shot at we would all be in. On to top this, the project was looking so promising, a director known for being a good character developer (David O. Russell) and writers that can make a good action romp (Joshua Oppenheimer and Thomas Dean Donnelly). The film was looking like it had a chance. After all this, to hear news of the lead role (Nathan Drake) going to Mark Wahlberg, solidified my realisation that Hollywood still doesn't take game movies seriously. The character of Drake is a fast talking generic treasure hunter and the only reason to pick Wahlberg is because he's currently the "in" thing. He was picked purely based on his commercial appeal.

For these reasons I am taking a stand. I may only be one person but I can't give Hollywood one more dollar until I can actually believe there may be even a small chance of a decent film being produced. Something that will make geeks everywhere proud of our industry, instead of hurrying from cinemas in shame.

Time may fix this problem but until then I take this stand in the hopes that others will follow. We may not sway the film industry, but we can still save our souls.

"SO, WITH ALL THIS
TALENT BEHIND
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VIDEO GAME FILM
TO WORK?"

EMAILS

If you have questions for us or maybe a rant that you wish to share with the world. We have dedicated this section of the magazine just to you.

Email us at : arbiter.magazine@gmail.com

Feel free to contact us for next months issue and you may see your words here!

TRON: LEGACY

BY C.W.A

With a movie that has been hyped as much as *Tron: Legacy*, the temptation was to come straight out and claim it's the most amazing thing ever seen by man. I have a tendency to get a bit over-excited by things like this. But upon reflection, the film is very good. Regardless of some surprisingly negative early reviews, *Tron* will stand out as one of the most exciting and visually impressive films of the year. Though it must be said it falls prey to some of the regular pitfalls of big-budget event films.

Interestingly, Disney is reluctant to release the original film on DVD or Blu-ray, apparently being embarrassed by the dated suits and graphics, and not wanting to put any prospective new customers off the sequel. While the original was seen as a turning point in the development of computer animation, by today's standards it seems almost childish.

Starring Jeff Bridges, Bruce Boxleitner and David Warner, the film followed Kevin Flynn as he is sucked into a computer and attempts to save himself and his career with the help of a security program called Tron. *Tron: Legacy* follows Flynn's son Sam as he is sucked back into "The Grid" to find his missing father.

Mind-bending frisbee fights and neon suits ensue. The story to *Tron* may not be its strong point, being aimed at a lucrative middle-ground between adults and kids means the film never delves into any of the complex and heady concepts Flynn frequently implies. Bad program bad, good program good is more or less it. And it falls slightly into the territory of predictable characters. Though that makes it sound like it's a bad thing, far from it, the whole film will keep you completely enraptured regardless of his bum-numbingly long run time and simple story.

Jeff Bridges and Bruce Boxleitner both return for the sequel, Bridges plays both Kevin Flynn and Clu (bad program bad) and Boxleitner reprises his character in the "real world" and briefly returns as Tron. All involved, including newcomer Garrett Hedlund and Olivia Wilde give perfectly fine performances, bordering on very good at times, but never quite making it.



Jeff Bridges in his role of Clu has had his face digitally de-aged. A technology which was previously used to great effect in, "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" and to much more embarrassing effect in "X-Men 3". Clu is very convincing and you soon forget about the CG trickery going on. Though at times Clu's face and body seem to have different ideas about what they're doing, mind you only subtly. The animators should be commended on making Clu and the brief appearance of Tron as realistic as possible.

Now the visuals are just plain amazing. Something completely unique to *Tron*, if fact. The suits (the wardrobe budget was \$13 million), the vehicles and the beautifully bleak environments everything has been pored over and made to look aesthetically fantastic as possible. Speaking of the visuals, the 3D which usually seems somewhat gimmicky is used to great effect in *Tron*. The scenes in the "real world" are 2D and "the Grid" is filmed in real 3D, and works seamlessly. *Tron: Legacy* demands to be appreciated in 3D, regardless of the extra expense.

Newcomer director, Joseph Kosinski, has already made a name for himself in certain circles directing some fantastic adverts (if you haven't seen them already, do yourself a favour and watch them here <http://www.josephkosinski.com/>) and already has two more science-fiction films lined up. Seeing as *Tron* is his first feature he's done a fantastic job wrangling a spiraling budget and almost two years of post-production to create a worthy successor to the original *Tron*, and once again setting the digital bar up with some of the best.

MUSIC TO GET DEREZZED TO



When composing the soundtrack for *Tron: Legacy*, Mitchell Leib and Daft Punk set out to create, "a classic film score that blended electronic music and classical in a way that had never been done before." In that respect they've certainly succeeded.

The soundtrack is 22 tracks of dark synth and orchestral thundering. There are shades of *Inception* in there (Hans Zimmer is thanked in the credits), but is distinctly epic in its own right. Though don't expect the usual Daft Punk fare, this is no "Human After All", the album swings wildly from dance-inspired "club" tracks, "End of Line" and "Derezzed" to the terrifying "C.L.U" and back to the wonder-inspiring "Outlands".

This album is one of the best parts of the film, Daft Punk (shown on the right, even make a cameo) have shown their colours as multi-faceted musicians who, hopefully, will continue to write fantastic scores long into the future. The *Tron: Legacy* soundtrack is available from any good music store for around \$20.



WHAT DOES SANTA KNOW ANYWAY? TWO STOCKING STUFFERS FIGHT IT OUT

BY MUKISSA LEHURAY

BIOSHOCK 2: MINERVA'S DEN

Bioshock 2 was the 2010 first-person sequel to the widely popular underwater steampunk epic, Bioshock. Minerva's Den is the sixth downloadable package to be released for the follow-up (available on both 360 and PS3), but the first to feature a single player story. Now you're either saying, "oh when did that come out?", or, "Bioshock 2: The Uninteresting Sequel was not worth the money to begin with."

It's true, Bioshock 2 was just an expensive expansion for the original, but don't pretend you didn't buy the collector's edition with all that cool, albeit, unnecessary stuff. The Art book, vinyl record and CD made the excessive price-tag seem almost worth it, only to realise that the game itself was a lamer version of the first Bioshock.

That aside, Minerva's Den is what Bioshock 2 should've been all along. Not to spoil the plot as this is one of the best aspects, the story in Minerva's Den isn't as good as Bioshock 1, but it defiantly takes it to a different level. You get to see a different side of the humanity in Rapture and find out about events running concurrently with the previous two games.

The main character has a lot more depth than your average Big Daddy from Bioshock 2. They added a new plasmid that creates a vortex which sucks objects and enemies in, before blowing them all out in a shockwave. Why this wasn't included in Bioshock 2 is beyond me. Other than that the combat is your standard Bioshock-plasmid-the-face-shoot-the-torso affair but that's not the main reason you should be playing this. If you want to play more of what made Bioshock 1 great then this is defiantly for you. The new characters, the new plasmids and a final resolution all make this a must play if you ever were a fan of Rapture. You don't even have to wait till next year to do it; the add-on was released in late August this year and is only 600 points on Xbox Live, making it a cheap and entertaining gift for the gamer in your life. yourself.

VS

ENSLAVED

Enslaved is a third-person action game that takes place in a post-apocalyptic future. You know it had to be good when they packaged the game with its own soundtrack. I know it was co-written by Alex Garland (28 Days Later) but don't try to ride that wave of bullshit. You end up beaching your game, like a whale that got too cocky.

Your character is called "Monkey" who, of course, looks like a cross between a monkey and Vin Diesel. Then you have your, "I'm a nice girl but I have a lot of baggage save my people by defeating big robot monsters" girl who you're unwittingly partnered with. Typical.

His name being Monkey, just paved the way for a lot of climbing and jumping rubbish. You can't go five minutes without hanging from something or swinging. It looks cool when you can swing to each individual pole whilst dodging robot attacks, but then you realise that all you did was push the joystick while tapping the "A" button like a crack-head.

There was some potential in this game, destroying boss mechs is tons of fun. Random slow-mo finishes add a bit extra something every now and then. Level designs aren't awful and the voice acting (Andy Serkis and Lindsey Shaw) is surprisingly good at times. It's a shame more effort was not put into "Monkey." It's almost as if they cut out content just to get an "M" rating rather than a "MA15+." They take the old wolverine route, saying, "instead of fighting actual people with his fists we can just keep sending more robots". You never kill another person, creature, monkey or alien in the whole game, just robots.

There's a twist at the end, but so what? There's a twist at the end of every "Saw" movie and isn't it a little less unexpected every time? Unless this game drops down to around \$30, don't bother buying it.



A VERY GEEKY CHRISTMAS

BY JOSHUA PHILPOTT

Ahh christmas, It's that time of year when we all get stuck with the wonderful job of picking gifts for people we know and try our best to not get them things they already have (or hate). Never fear, the good folk at **Arbiter** have you covered. We've found a bunch of cool, cheap gifts.



LaCie 16gb USB key

We all have and use usb keys, right? Geeks especially. But rarely do you have one handy when you need it. Li Cie have redefined the "key" part to be more literal. This elegant gift is extremely useful.

\$79 for the 16GB model
or
\$29 for the 4GB model

<http://www.lacie.com/au/products/product.htm?pid=11587>

Bluetooth Keyboard

iPads are the hot ticket this Xmas. If you know someone who is getting one then this is the ultimate companion gift. This sexy case manages to maintain a low profile even though it is rocking a bluetooth keyboard in it's design for use when it's in an upright stance.



A comparative steal at

\$59.99

<http://www.thinkgeek.com/gadgets/cellphone/c65a/>



Tron T1 Headphones

To commemorate the release of Tron: Legacy, Daft Punk and Monster have created a neon beast to sooth your ears. There are two designs, black and white, and both look super sleek. Perfect to listen to your Tron soundtrack on. (Reviewed pg. 4)

A bit pricey at \$349.95 but the sound quality will pay for itself if you're an audiophile like us.

<http://www.tronbymonster.com/products/t1/default.asp>



Weighted Companion Cube

Portal fans rejoice! Now you can have your very own plush companion cube! This is a perfect addition to any geeks toy wall, guy or girl.

If the Weighted Companion Cube could speak, and the Enrichment Center takes this opportunity to remind you that it cannot, it would tell you that it is available for **\$29.99**

Please take care of it!

<http://www.thinkgeek.com/electronics/retro-gaming/a9e0/>



iRobot Roomba 560 Vacuum Cleaning Robot

This one really is a must have for any geek. We all hate cleaning, now imagine a device that cleans for you. The irobot Roomba is a small vacuum cleaner that will clean up to 4 rooms on a single charge and will then dock itself to recharge! you know you want one.

A mere \$249.99
A small price to pay
for your own robot
army.

<http://store.irobot.com/product/index.jsp?productId=3143269>

Tetris iceblock tray

Ice isn't cool. It's just frozen water. It serves its purpose and keeps our drinks cool. Ice in the shape of tetris blocks, now thats cool. The chaps over at thinkgeek.com are having a sale at the moment on these great stocking fillers.



At **\$6.99** what
are you waiting
for?

<http://www.thinkgeek.com/interests/retro/b34a/>

All Prices subject to change.

ART: JOSH SPENCER

Comics are a large part of modern culture. As the big names go from geeky to a household presence its good to keep an eye on the up and coming heroes. We speak to comic artist Josh Spencer about his work, his process and more.



Josh, How long have you been drawing?

I'm 26 now and I've been drawing since I could hold a pencil, but I've been drawing professionally for about 6 years.

What inspires you?

There really is so much stuff to list. It really can be anything, if I'm watching *Mad Men* and I start wanting to draw Christina Hendricks, I listen to the Radio and draw Katy Perry or I watch some cartoons and draw Jessica Rabbit. There is a theme going there but I can't put my finger on it *smiles*. But really I have a soft spot for the old school, like early Looney Toons. A lot of the retro cartoons and pin-up art inspires me, there were some great artist back then.

Lets talk about process, what are the motions for making a picture?

I always start with an idea in my head about what I want in an image. Sometimes I will already have the picture in my mind, other times I will use need reference material. I start by working up a sketch either on paper or directly on my Wacom (Digital drawing pad). If I am going to draw in ink then I will scan that image to be coloured in photoshop, then I will extract the black line-work and lay the colours underneath.

A lot of what I do now is work directly on photoshop using my Wacom. I may do a thumb-nail sketch by hand to refer to but for the most part its all on computer.

I know it's a hard choice but... Favorite artists?

I'll list a few of my favourites. Gil Elvgren, Charles Schultz, Herge, Bill Watterson, J. Scott Campbell, Michael Turner, Mike Mignola, Dean Yeagle, Bruce Timm. They all have influenced me over the years.

Now the geek question. Who would win in a fight between Marv (from *Sin City*) and The Punisher?

Wow, that's a tough one. I like them both. Punisher has all the guns and the Kevlar suit. Marv is just one tough bastard... Man, he doesn't need a gun. I'd say Marv.

If you could work for one company who would it be?

Pixar for sure.

Thanks for your time Josh. Keep up the good work.

No Problem.

