

CHARACTER DESIGN IN VIDEO GAMES BASED ON CROATIAN SLAVIC MYTHOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the potential of character design in digital games as a medium for the preservation and reinterpretation of cultural heritage, using Slavic mythology as a case study. Despite its rich symbolic meaning and narrative complexity, Slavic mythology remains underrepresented in the global video game industry. By engaging with mythological deities, heroes and supernatural creatures from Croatian traditions, this research demonstrates how digital art practices can revitalize neglected cultural narratives and adapt them for modern audience.

The design process combined historical and ethnographic research with artistic reinterpretation. Primary sources included historical chronicles, oral traditions, folk costumes and regional decorative motifs, which were then translated into a contemporary visual language suitable for interactive environments. Conceptual character designs were developed using Adobe Photoshop and Krita, supported by hand sketching and graphic tablet. Each stage of the design process from ideation and rough sketches to detailed rendering and final concept art reflected a careful balance between cultural authenticity and creative expression.

The character design is not merely a technical or aesthetic exercise but a form of storytelling that shapes both the identity of a game and its emotional resonance with players. It can inspire audiences to rediscover and appreciate their own cultural history while presenting it to an international audience in an accessible and engaging format. This study contributes to broader discussions on the role of digital art in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and highlights the capacity of video games to serve as a dynamic intersection of entertainment, education and cultural preservation.

Keywords: digital art, character design, video games, Slavic mythology, Croatian cultural heritage

INTRODUCTION

Video games have, over the past two decades, become one of the most dynamic forms of digital art, transcending the boundaries of entertainment and evolving into a medium of cultural interpretation, education, and the preservation of intangible heritage [1]. Their ability to integrate visual, narrative and interactive elements enables players to experience a fusion of contemporary technology with archetypal stories from the past. In this context, character designs an intersection of history, aesthetics and narrative emerge as a key element in shaping a game's identity and it's emotional resonance with audiences [2].