

Batmobile revs up action in 'Arkham Knight' video game

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Gaming fans take a break beside the Batman "Arkham Knight" display at the annual E3 video game extravaganza in Los Angeles, California on June 11, 2014

The blockbuster "Batman: Arkham" video game franchise has a formidable new crime fighter: the Batmobile.

In the latest installment of the wildly popular game series, the caped crusader of DC Comics fame takes on villains with the help of weaponized wheels so intuitive that the car seems more like a partner than a mode of transportation.

A life-sized replica of the Batmobile drew crowds Thursday on the show floor of the E3 video game gathering in Los Angeles, where publisher Warner Brothers Interactive Entertainment let the press behind closed doors to sample "Batman: Arkham Knight," the release of which was delayed until next year.

"The car is a massive new character in itself," said Zafer Coban, lead animator at Britain-based game-maker Rocksteady Studios.

The Batmobile is smoothly woven into game play, from speeding through fictional city Gotham to catch criminals to blasting away with missiles or being integral to solving puzzles impeding the Dark Knight's path.

As Batman swoops and glides around Gotham, the car seems to always know where he is and remains only seconds away to be at his side when he hits ground.

The Batmobile dramatically converts at player command from a nimble pursuit mode for high-speed driving to a battle mode where it is akin to a black armored tank and bristling with weapons.

In the interest of staying true to comic lore that Batman neither uses guns nor kills, Batmobile weapons are aimed at threats such as unmanned tanks or drones.

Rocksteady tapped into the power of new-generation PlayStation 4 and Xbox One consoles to make Gotham "humongous," according to Coban.

The "Arkham Knight" [game](#) world is five times bigger than that of the preceding title in the series.

Rocksteady kept their Batman character's piercing gaze and stern face,

making sure he "never smiled."

"Batman is a man behind a mask," Coban said. "In the end, he is a man. He doesn't have super powers."

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