

Mario and his Mushroom Kingdom hopping into theme parks

June 25 2015, byDerrik J. Lang



In this Dec. 12, 2014 file photo, Shigeru Miyamoto poses for a portrait during an interview at the Montage Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif. While the Japanese creator of "Mario Bros." and "Donkey Kong" spent most of his trip to last week's

2015 Electronic Entertainment Expo hyping the upcoming video games "Super Mario Maker" and "Star Fox Zero," Miyamoto is equally excited about his next project: bringing his digital creations to life in Universal theme parks. (Photo by Casey Curry/Invision/AP, File)

For his next trick, Shigeru Miyamoto is working in reality, not virtual reality.

While the famed Japanese creator of "Mario Bros." and "Donkey Kong" spent most of his trip to last week's Electronic Entertainment Expo touting such upcoming Nintendo games as "Super Mario Maker" and "Star Fox Zero," Miyamoto was also enthusiastic about a totally different undertaking. He's helping to bring his digital creations to life in Universal theme parks.

"We've come to the point where the kids who grew up playing Nintendo games are now parents who have their own kids," said the veteran game designer during an interview translated by Bill Trinen, product marketing director at Nintendo of America. "I think for them it will be a tremendous experience."

Nintendo Co. announced plans last month for immersive experiences featuring the Japanese gaming giant's characters at Universal theme parks, but it didn't provide any details. Universal Parks & Resorts is owned by cable company Comcast Corp. and has properties in Los Angeles; Orlando, Fla.; Osaka, Japan; and Sentosa, Singapore.

Miyamoto suggested that plucky plumber Mario and his colorful Mushroom Kingdom would be hopping into Universal's parks, though he didn't elaborate on specific attractions. He noted Nintendo has been working closely with the theme park behemoth on the project.

"We have all the knowledge of who the Mario character is, what the Mario world is and how it's represented," said Miyamoto. "We have been in constant communication with (Universal) communicating our vision to them, and they're turning it into something that could exist within that park. It's really about that partnership."



In this June 11, 2014 file photo, Japanese video game designer Shigeru Miyamoto introduces the Nintendo's Mario Maker during a press event at the Nintendo booth at the Electronic Entertainment Expo, in Los Angeles. While the Japanese creator of "Mario Bros." and "Donkey Kong" spent most of his trip to last week's 2015 Electronic Entertainment Expo hyping the upcoming video games "Super Mario Maker" and "Star Fox Zero," Miyamoto is equally excited about his next project: bringing his digital creations to life in Universal theme parks. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong, File)

Despite the forthcoming release of the sci-fi space combat game "Star

Fox Zero" and the do-it-yourself platformer "Super Mario Maker" for Nintendo's Wii U console, the 62-year-old game designer has no immediate plans to retire—and his colleagues don't want him to, either.

"For me, because it's Mr. Miyamoto, I want him to continue making things as long as he wants to continue making things," said Shinya Takahashi, general manager of the software planning and development division at Kyoto, Japan-based Nintendo. "I really think that Mr. Miyamoto will continue to be creative—and not just in the area of video games."

Nintendo is celebrating the 30th anniversary of its groundbreaking platformer "Super Mario Bros." throughout the year, culminating with the Sept. 11 release of "Super Mario Maker." The new game allows users to construct and upload their own "Super Mario" levels.



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The designers at Universal, which has in recent years achieved success with Harry Potter-themed areas in its parks, likely won't have it as easy

as "Mario Maker" players.

"That's the challenge put forth to Universal Studios," said Miyamoto.
"How do you take something digital and bring it into the real world in a way that people can experience it in real life? That's where we're working together."

More information: mario.nintendo.com

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