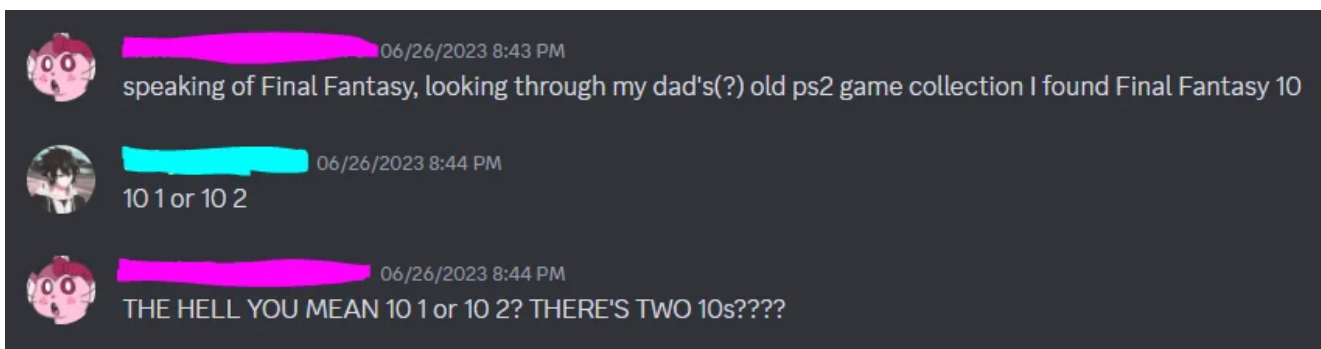


Time is changing Pixel Art. Its definition is changing, because the context is fading. And some day soon nearly all context will be lost on most people. It'll just be that one quirky art style collectively called "Retro." Like Minecraft except in 2D. Arbitrarily simple for the sake of being simple. Not everyone grew up with the 8-bit, 16-bit, and 32-bit generations. Honestly it's still hard for me to believe that some adults were born after the PlayStation 2 came out.

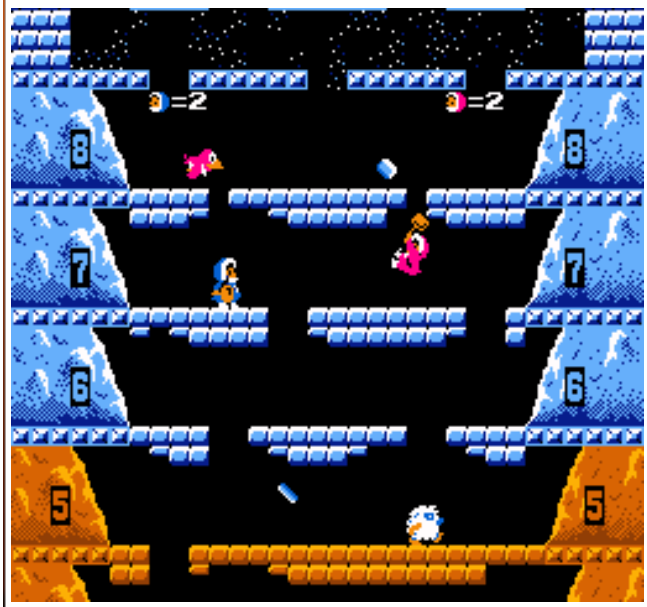


For me, sprite art represents hand-crafted graphics where every single pixel is hand-placed to create the absolute best art possible in spite of the limits of the hardware. But for more and more people, pixel-art literally just means art containing visible pixels. It's not their fault. The divisions between one console generation and the next are not automatically known unless you happened to grow up with them or spend time thoroughly studying video game history.

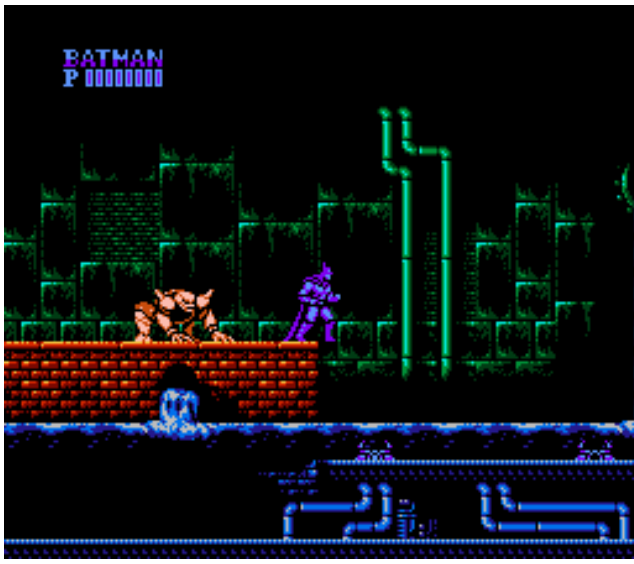
(1982) Atari 2600



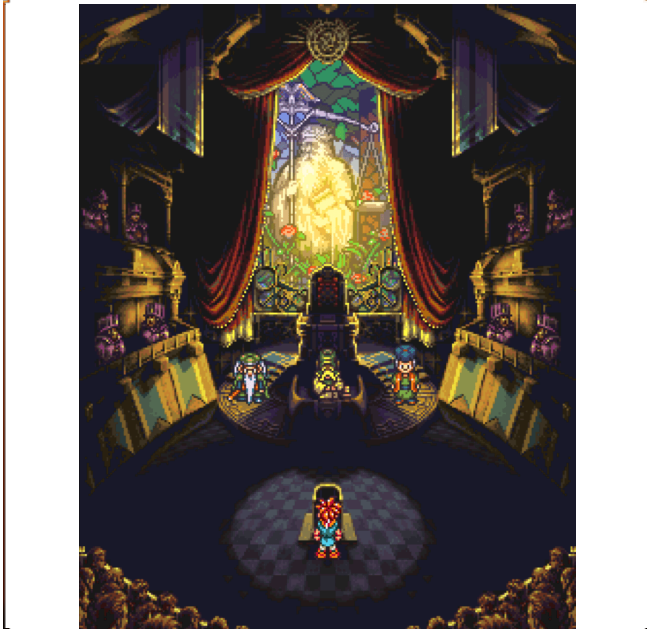
(1985) Early NES



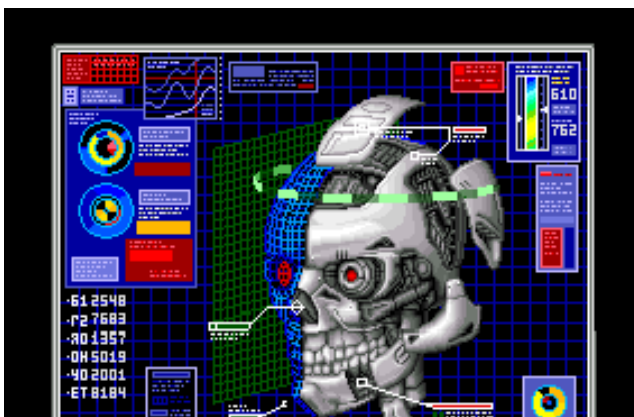
(1990) Late NES



(1995) Late Super Nintendo

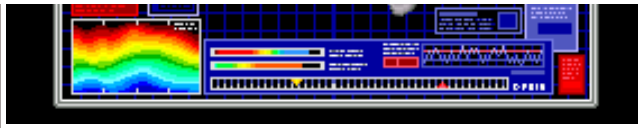


(1995) Sega CD

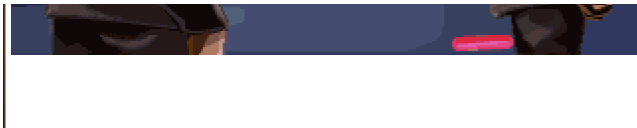
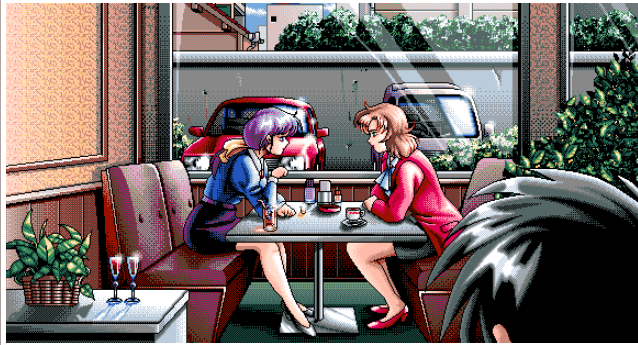


(1994) DOS





(1996) PC-98



(2000) PlayStation



Mark Ferrari



For people my age we “studied” game history when we read about the newest games in Nintendo Power every month. For people like me it’s not “history,” it’s just fond memories that we remember so effortlessly that we just assume the details are obvious to everyone. But this knowledge will eventually fade. The techniques will fade. And the many countless forms it took will become nothing more than curious art styles compared side-by-side with all other art styles, except it looks “blocky” and “pixelated” for some reason.

There's nothing simple about making light

The irony is that historically sprite art was never about simplifying. It was about

refract through glass with only 16 colors

never about simplifying. It was about achieving the most with the least. The exact opposite. You fought *against* the simplicity imposed on you by the hardware, to create the absolute best art you possibly could.

For my part, I enjoy the challenge of making every pixel count, and often impose artificial limitations on myself just so I can overcome them.