

= Shadow of the Colossus =

Shadow of the Colossus , released in Japan as Wander and the Colossus (Japanese : ?????? , Hepburn : Wanda to Kyoze) , is an action @-@ adventure video game published by Sony Computer Entertainment (SCEI) for the PlayStation 2 . The game was released in North America and Japan in October 2005 and PAL territories in February 2006 . It was directed by Fumito Ueda and developed at SCEI 's International Production Studio 1 , also known as Team Ico ; the same development team responsible for the cult hit Ico . , which the game is considered a spiritual successor to . An HD remastered version developed by Bluepoint Games , that collects both games was released as The Ico & Shadow of the Colossus Collection (ICO & Shadow of the Colossus Classics HD in the PAL region) for the PlayStation 3 in September 2011 ; it features high @-@ definition (HD) graphics , content previously missing from the North American version , PlayStation Network Trophies , and 3D support . The HD version was released separately in Japan .

The game 's storyline focuses on a young man named Wander who enters a forbidden land . Wander must travel across a vast expanse on horseback and defeat sixteen massive beings , known simply as colossi , in order to restore the life of a girl named Mono . The game is unusual within the action @-@ adventure genre in that there are no towns or dungeons to explore , no characters with which to interact , and no enemies to defeat other than the colossi . Shadow of the Colossus has been described as a puzzle game , as each colossus ' weakness must be identified and exploited before it can be defeated .

Cited as an influential title in the video game industry , Shadow of the Colossus is often regarded as an important example of video game as art due to its minimalist landscape designs , immersive gameplay and emotional journey . It received wide critical acclaim by the media and was met with strong sales compared to Ico , due in part to a larger marketing campaign . The soundtrack was also widely praised . The game won several awards for its audio , design , and overall quality . Today , the game is widely regarded as one of the greatest video games of all time . Shadow of the Colossus is also referenced numerous times in debates regarding the art quality and emotional perspectives of video games .

= = Gameplay = =

= = = Basics = = =

Progression through Shadow of the Colossus occurs in cycles . Beginning at a central point in an expansive landscape , the player seeks out and defeats a colossus , and is then returned to the central point to repeat the process . To find each colossus , Wander may raise his sword while in a sunlit area to reflect beams of light , which will converge when the sword is pointed in the right direction of the next encounter . The journey to a colossus is seldom a straightforward matter : stretches of varied terrain often require that a detour be taken along the way . Most colossi are located in remote areas , such as atop cliffs or within ancient structures .

Once a colossus is found , the player must discover its weaknesses to defeat it . Each colossus dwells in a unique lair , and many colossi cannot be defeated without making use of the surrounding environment . Every colossus has at least one weak point , indicated by a glowing sigil that can be illuminated and identified by the sword 's reflected light . Each colossus has areas covered with fur or protruding ledges , which Wander may use to grip and scale the colossus while it thrashes about in an attempt to dislodge him . While scaling a colossus , the player must act quickly , as Wander has a limited stamina gauge that decreases while he hangs onto the creature .

Wander and the colossi have life bars to indicate their remaining health . A colossus ' health will decrease significantly when its weak points are attacked , while Wander can be harmed by a colossus ' attacks or a fall from great height . Throughout the game , Wander is equipped with only a sword and a bow with arrows , but may obtain other weapons from completing the Time Attack trials .

While the colossi are the only enemies , there are natural animals in the environment . Only one species , however , has any effect on gameplay : eating the tail of a certain kind of lizard increases Wander 's stamina gauge . Likewise , the player may find fruit that increases Wander 's maximum health .

= = = Agro and the environment = = =

Wander 's horse , Agro , plays a large role in the game . In addition to serving as a means of transportation , fighting from horseback is vital to defeat some of the colossi . There are , however , many environments that cannot be traversed by horse , and colossi often inhabit areas within deep water or beyond large obstacles that must be scaled . Agro cannot travel beyond these , and when separated from Wander by such obstacles , cannot participate in the following battle . Agro is referred to as a male in the English @-@ language version of the game , though director Fumito Ueda said that he saw Wander 's horse as female .

The environment must be used to the player 's advantage more often as the game progresses . The first two battles take place on simple , large , flat areas of land , with the only goal being to discover how to scale the colossi and attack their weak points . However , the majority of the following fourteen battles require that some aspect of the battlefield be used .

= = Plot and setting = =

During Shadow of the Colossus , the player receives little information concerning the backstories of the characters and their relationships with one another . The game takes place in a fantasy setting , with most of the game 's events occurring within a vast and unpopulated peninsula , known as the Forbidden Land , separated from the outside world by a mountain range to its north and sea to the south and east . The presence of ruins and other ancient structures indicate the area was once a settlement .

The region is only accessible via a small cleft in the mountains to the north , leading to a massive stone bridge . This bridge spans half the distance of the landscape and terminates at a large temple called the " Shrine of Worship " located at its center . It is , however , forbidden to enter the land , which is characterized by diverse geographical features , such as lakes , plateaus , canyons , caves , and deserts in addition to human @-@ made structures .

= = = Characters = = =

The protagonist of the game is Wander (??? , Wanda , voiced by Kenji Nojima) , a young man whose goal is to resurrect a girl named Mono (?? , voiced by Hitomi Nabatame) . Little is known about Mono other than that she was a maiden who was somehow sacrificed because she was believed to have a cursed destiny . Wander and Mono were designed with long hair from the start of the design process , with Mono 's long hair specifically as a contrast to Yorda of Ico , who has short hair . Assisting Wander in his quest to revive her is his loyal horse , Agro (??? , Aguro) , who serves as his only ally in defeating the colossi . Wander also receives aid from an entity called Dormin (???? , Dorumin , voiced by Kazuhiro Nakata and Ky?ko Hikami) . The story revolves around these characters but features a small supporting cast including Lord Emon (??? , voiced by Naoki Band?) .

Speaking with two voices at once (one male and one female) , Dormin is a mysterious , disembodied entity . In legends of the game 's world , it is said that Dormin has the power to revive the dead ; it is for this reason that Wander enters the forbidden land , seeking its assistance in reviving Mono . Dormin offers to revive her in exchange for Wander destroying the sixteen colossi . " Dormin " , which spells " Nimrod " backwards , has been speculated to be a reference to the body of the biblical King Nimrod which was cut up and scattered .

Lord Emon is a shaman who narrates a vision in the game 's introduction , vaguely explaining the origin of the land Wander has come to , and emphasising that entry to this place is forbidden . He is

portrayed as having extensive knowledge regarding the containment of Dormin , and the ability to use powerful magic . He has a small group of warriors at his command , and is pursuing Wander to prevent the use of " the forbidden spell " , the ritual involving the destruction of the sixteen colossi and the restoration of Dormin 's power .

The colossi are armored , most often enormous creatures with forms ranging from various humanoids to predatory animals , and live in all manner of surroundings and environments including beneath water and flying through the air . Their bodies are a fusion of organic and inorganic parts such as rock , earth , fur , and architectural elements , some of which are weathered or fractured . Some colossi are peaceful and will only attack when provoked , while others are aggressive and will attack on sight . Inhabiting specific locations in the forbidden land , they do not venture outside their own territory . Once slain they will remain where fallen , as a mound of earth and rock vaguely resembling the original colossus .

= = = Story = = =

The story of Shadow of the Colossus begins as Wander enters the forbidden land , traveling across the long bridge at its entrance on his horse , Agro . According to Lord Emon later in the game , prior to entering the forbidden land Wander had stolen an ancient sword , which is the only weapon capable of slaying the colossi of the forbidden land . Led to the massive Shrine of Worship at the center of the region , Wander carries with him the body of a maiden named Mono . A moment later , several man @-@ like shadowy creatures appear and prepare to attack Wander before he easily dismisses them with a wave of the ancient sword in his possession . After vanquishing the shadow creatures , the voice of the disembodied entity known as " Dormin " echoes from above , expressing surprise that Wander possesses the weapon . Wander requests that Dormin return Mono 's soul to her body , which it states may be possible on the condition that Wander can destroy the sixteen idols lining the temple 's hall by using the ancient sword to kill the sixteen colossi located throughout the land . Despite being warned by Dormin that he may have to pay a great price to revive Mono , Wander sets out to search the land for the colossi and destroy them .

What Wander does not know is that the colossi contain portions of Dormin 's own essence that was scattered long ago to render the entity powerless . As Wander kills each colossus , a released fragment of Dormin enters his body . In time , after slaying his eighth colossus , the signs of Wander 's deterioration from the gathered essence is shown clearly ? his skin becoming paler , his hair darker , and dark streaks growing across his face . After the death of the twelfth colossus , it is revealed to the player that Wander is being pursued by a group of warriors led by Emon . Urged to hurry with his task by Dormin , Wander soon heads off to defeat the sixteenth and final colossus . On the way to this confrontation , he travels on horseback across a long bridge which begins to collapse as he is halfway across . At the last second when it seems he will not make it , Wander is thrown to the other side by Agro as the steed saves her master while falling into the river hundreds of feet below as the bridge finally gives way .

Soon after , Wander goes on to defeat the final colossus as Emon 's company arrives in the Shrine of Worship to witness the last temple idol crumble . With a paled and horned Wander appearing soon , Emon orders his warriors to kill the " possessed " man as he approaches Mono and finally falls once stabbed through the heart . However , Emon finds a newly whole Dormin possessing Wander 's body and transforming its host into a shadowy giant . While his men flee , Lord Emon casts the ancient sword into a small pool at the back of the temple 's hall to evoke a whirlwind of light that consumes Dormin and Wander . After fleeing with the bridge connecting to the temple collapsing behind them , forever isolating the forbidden land from the rest of the world , Emon expresses hope that Wander may be able to atone for his crimes should he have survived . Back in the temple , the revived Mono awakens and finds Agro limping into the temple with an injured hind leg . Mono follows Agro to the pool into which Wander and Dormin were pulled by Emon 's spell , finding a male infant with tiny horns on his head . She takes the child with her , following the horse to higher levels of the Shrine of Worship , and arrives at a secret garden within the shrine as the game ends .

= = = Connections to Ico = = =

Shadow of the Colossus is considered both a spiritual successor and prequel to Ico . For several months during and after the game 's release , the game 's director and lead designer , Fumito Ueda , maintained that the game 's status as a prequel was simply his personal take on the game and not necessarily its canon nature , as he largely intended for players to decide the specifics of the story for themselves , but he confirmed the two do have a connection . Moreover , the shadowy figures which appear in the Shrine of Worship are connected to the shadows which the player must fight in Ico . Both games feature " horned " characters for protagonists (Wander sprouts horns at the end of the game) . The Queen 's Sword from Ico is also available as a bonus unlockable item . Both games also use unique fictional languages .

= = Development = =

With a team of thirty @-@ five people , Shadow of the Colossus began development in 2002 under the project name Nico (a portmanteau of " Next Ico ") and was intended to be a sequel to Ico . An early technology demo for the project shown at the DICE Summit in 2003 depicted a group of masked , horned boys riding horses while attacking and defeating a colossus . However , Fumito Ueda expressed that , at the time , it was simpler to reuse the character design of Ico 's protagonist , and that he never explicitly desired a sequel to Ico . Japanese pre @-@ orders of Shadow of the Colossus later included a bonus DVD with the concept video , a trailer describing Nico 's plot , and an introduction the development team states they wanted to use in Shadow of the Colossus .

Ueda and producer Kenji Kaido held their team to a high standard throughout production . An admitted perfectionist , Ueda felt that only one or two out of 500 artists who applied to work on Shadow of the Colossus met his criteria , and often demanded thorough changes in design until it matched his vision . For his part , Kaido challenged the programmers to meet the concept of realistic physics in relation to the movement of the colossi and the subsequent effect this movement would have for Wander , both in terms of how he might be displaced and how he may be able to use this movement to his advantage . For instance , if a colossus were to shake , Kaido wanted Wander 's position to shift realistically in response . Additionally , if a colossus ' limb was currently horizontal , Kaido wanted the player to be able to run across the limb as though it were any other flat surface . He referred to these two concepts as " player dynamics and reactions " and " organic collision deformation " . The realistic physics engine produced as a result required that faster colossi had to be smaller as well .

Ueda wished the game to have a unique presentation and change how both players and developers perceived the idea of what bosses should be in video games . To achieve this , he ensured that the game 's only enemies would be the sixteen colossi , that they could only be approached one at a time , and that they would have various behavior patterns . Though limiting the presence of enemies to only bosses was partly intended to differentiate the game from others , Ueda also expressed that it was to ensure that the programmers ' focus was entirely on the colossi so that their quality would be as high as possible . In accordance with this focus upon the colossi ? and his preference for simple controls ? he intended that one button on the game controller be used solely for targeting the colossi during battles .

A theme of companionship between the player and an AI @-@ controlled partner was a concern for Ueda . In Ico , this theme was presented through the protagonist and the character Yorda , whom the player was required to work with and protect while navigating the game 's environments . Similarly , a key element in Shadow of the Colossus is the relationship between Wander and his horse , Agro . Intended to be a realistic representation of a horse , Agro will occasionally ignore commands . In Ueda 's words , " a real horse ... doesn 't always obey . It 's not like a car or a motorcycle , it won 't always turn when you say ' turn ! ' " However , he has admitted that the team had to seek a balance in how often Agro did not respond to commands so as to not sacrifice playability in the pursuit of realism .

All elements of the game ? including audio , gameplay and visuals ? were used to achieve an atmosphere of a " lonely hero " , which Ueda considered important in the development of the game . Lighting , in particular , was used to establish a dark , fearsome setting for the forbidden land , while the protagonist 's sword would provide a means of navigation that was " direct and only expressible visually " . Like Ico , Shadow of the Colossus uses a distinct style of lighting . The game 's engine uses elements such as desaturated colors , motion blur and partial high dynamic range rendering , with a heavy emphasis on bloom lighting .

A PlayStation 3 remastered version of Ico and Shadow of the Colossus was announced at Tokyo Game Show 2010 and released in September 2011 . Developed by Bluepoint Games , both were improved graphically to take advantage of the PlayStation 3 's hardware and HDTVs , and now run in up to 1920x1080 (Ico) or upscaled from 960x1080 (Shadow of the Colossus) , with numerous other improvements implemented .

= = Audio = =

While the game has an extensive orchestral soundtrack , the music is only heard during cut scenes and colossus encounters , while time spent at the Shrine of Worship and traversing the landscape is silent save for the sounds made by the protagonist , his horse and their surroundings . The open nature of the game world and lack of life , coupled with this limited use of music , aids in establishing an atmosphere of solitude , similar to that of Ico .

On December 7 , 2005 , a soundtrack album containing music from the game was released only in Japan , titled Wander and the Colossus Original Soundtrack : Roar of the Earth (Japanese : ?????? ?????? ?????????????? , Hepburn : Wanda to Kyoza Original Soundtrack : Daichi no H?k?) . There are currently no announced plans to release the album in other territories . The game 's score was composed by Kow Otani , whose previous video game work included the soundtracks to the PlayStation 2 flight simulator Sky Odyssey and the PlayStation shooter Philosoma . He has also worked on several of the 1990s @-@ era Gamera films , as well as a variety of anime . Roar of the Earth won the award for " Soundtrack of the Year " in the US @-@ based video game magazine Electronic Gaming Monthly .

All music composed by Kow Otani .

= = PAL release = =

The PAL version of the game was released in February 2006 . Much like the PAL release for Ico , the game came in cardboard packaging displaying various pieces of artwork from the game , and contained four art cards .

The game also came with a " making of " documentary , a trailer for Ico and a gallery of concept art , accessible from the game 's main menu . Sony Computer Entertainment also re @-@ released Ico in PAL territories at the time of Shadow of the Colossus 's release , both to promote the game through Ico 's reputation , and to allow players who did not buy Ico during its original limited release to " complete their collections " .

Some confusion has arisen in PAL regions concerning the official name of the protagonist primarily because of the manual 's usage of " Wanda " , while the North American manual and the game itself uses the name " Wander " . In fact , the Japanese version of the game spells the name " Wander " as ??? (Wanda) , which is also the common transliteration of the English name " Wanda " , hence the mistake in the manual .

= = Reception = =

Shadow of the Colossus 's commercial reception was positive , with sales of 140 @,@ 000 copies in its first week at retail in Japan , reaching number one in the charts . Almost 80 % of the initial Japanese shipment was sold within two days . These figures compare favorably with Ico , which was well received by critics but failed to sell a significant number of units . The game was placed on

Sony 's list of Greatest Hits titles on August 6 , 2006 .

Unlike Ico , Shadow of the Colossus received far more exposure , due in part to Sony putting its weight behind a massive advertising campaign . It was advertised in game magazines , on television and on the internet , including a viral marketing campaign launched in October 2005 . The site posted links to several websites claiming that the remains of five giants resembling certain colossi had been discovered in various parts of the world . The website has since been taken down . Some speculate that Ico 's sales figures could have been improved if similar advertising efforts were made before its release .

= = = Critical response = = =

Shadow of the Colossus received critical acclaim , with an average critic score of 91 % at GameRankings , making it the 11th @-@ highest rated game of 2005 . These include the Japanese magazine Famitsu , who rated the game 37 / 40 , the UK @-@ based Edge , who awarded an 8 / 10 , and Electronic Gaming Monthly , who granted 8 @.@ 8 / 10 . GameSpot 's review gave it an 8 @.@ 7 , commenting that " the game 's aesthetic presentation is unparalleled , by any standard " , while multimedia website IGN hailed the game as " an amazing experience " and " an absolute must @-@ have title " , rating it 9 @.@ 7 / 10 . GameSpy described it as " possibly the most innovative and visually arresting game of the year for the PS2 " . A retrospective Edge article described the game as " a fiction of unquestionable thematic richness , of riveting emotional power , whose fundamental artistic qualities are completely fused with its interactivity . " Dave Ciccoricco , a literature lecturer at the University of Otago , praised the game for its use of long cutscenes and stretches of riding to make the player engage in self @-@ reflection and feel immersed in the game world .

Many reviewers consider the game 's soundtrack to be one of its greatest aspects . In addition to Electronic Gaming Monthly 's award of " Soundtrack of the Year " , GameSpot commented that the musical score conveyed , and often intensified , the mood of any given situation , while it was described as " one of the finest game soundtracks ever " by a reviewer from Eurogamer .

However , the game has been criticised for its erratic frame rate , which is usually smooth while traversing the landscape , but often slows down in fast @-@ paced situations , such as colossus battles . Concern was also expressed about the game 's camera , which was described by GameSpy as being " as much of an opponent as the Colossi " , " manag [ing] to re @-@ center itself at the worst and most inopportune times " . Reviewers are often mixed about Agro 's AI and controls ; while gaming website Thunderbolt insists the realism of Agro 's movement and behaviour " create [s] a videogame experience unlike any other " , Edge commented that the controls were " clumsy , crude , and unpredictable " . Other critics like Game Revolution and GameSpot felt the game was too short (average playthrough time estimated 6 to 8 hours) , with little replay value given the puzzle elements to each colossus battle .

= = = Awards = = =

Shadow of the Colossus has received several awards , including recognition for " Best Character Design " , " Best Game Design " , " Best Visual Arts " and " Game of the Year " , as well as one of three " Innovation Awards " at the 2006 Game Developers Choice Awards . At the 2006 DICE Summit , the game won the award for " Outstanding Achievement in Art Direction " at the Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences , while it received one of two " Special Rookie Awards " at the Famitsu Awards 2005 . It was nominated for " Best Original Music " , " Best Artistic Graphics " and " Best PS2 Game " , yet also " Most Aggravating Frame Rate " in GameSpot 's awards for 2005 , while it won " Best Adventure Game " and " Best Artistic Design " in IGN 's Best of 2005 awards , who cited Agro as the best sidekick in the history of video games . Two years after its release IGN listed Shadow as the second greatest PlayStation 2 game of all time . Games Radar awarded it Best Game of the Year 2006 (being released in the UK in early 2006 , later than the US) , and appears in the site 's " The 100 best games ever " list at number ten . The game 's ending was selected as

the fourth greatest moment in gaming by the editors of GamePro in July 2006 . The readers of PlayStation Official Magazine voted it the 8th greatest PlayStation title ever released . Destructoid named the game # 1 in their list of the top 50 video games of the decade . IGN named Shadow of the Colossus the best game of 2005 , and the second best game of the decade , behind Half @-@ Life 2 . In 2012 , Complex magazine named Shadow of the Colossus the second @-@ best PlayStation 2 game of all time , behind God of War II . In 2015 , the game placed 4th on USgamer 's The 15 Best Games Since 2000 list .

= = = In other media = = =

The game plays a significant role in the 2007 Mike Binder film Reign Over Me as one of the ways Adam Sandler 's character copes with his primary struggle ? with aspects of the game mirroring the tragedy that befell Sandler 's character ; Shadow of the Colossus falling giants mirroring the crashing towers of the September 11 attacks in which his wife and children died , and the game 's lead character trying to resurrect his deceased love are two of the main themes which strike a similarity . Sandler is said to have ad libbed a detailed description of the control scheme in a scene with Don Cheadle , who plays his old friend . Both actors are said to have become experts at the game during the filming .

= = Further adoptions = =

= = = Film adaptation = = =

In April 2009 , it was reported that Sony Pictures would adapt Shadow of the Colossus into a film . Kevin Misher , producer of The Scorpion King , The Interpreter and the recent attempted remake of Dune , is negotiating to produce . It was revealed that Fumito Ueda , the game 's creator , will be involved in the film 's production . On May 23 , 2012 , it was reported that Chronicle director Josh Trank would be directing the film adaptation . Kevin Misher will still be producing the film . Seth Lochhead will be writing the film . On September 4 , 2014 , Variety reports that Mama director Andrés Muschietti will direct the film after Trank has dropped out due of his commitment to one of the upcoming Star Wars spin @-@ off movies . As of 2016 , no cast or release date has been announced .

= = = Deathcore band = = =

There is a deathcore band named Shadow of the Colossus . Many of the band 's lyrics and album art are inspired by the video game .