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THE VIRTUAL BOY IS HERE!

Months of idle speculation were finally put to rest last month when, at the sixth annual Shoshinkai show, Nintendo unveiled their new 32-bit marvel - the Virtual Boy - and Nintendo Magazine System was there. Now we know exactly what it is, we're glad to put an answer to all the questions.

First of all, Virtual Boy is a stand-alone console - it is completely separate to the Super NES and Game Boy. The hardware is the result of a joint venture between Nintendo and Reflection Technology Inc. of Massachusetts. Nintendo developed the 3-D image immersion technology and Reflection devised the technology to make it all happen. The unit is being prepared for launch in April 1995 and is expected to cost less than £200 with software rolling in at under £50.

3-D Image Immersion Technology relies on 32-bit, RISC-based architecture and the use of two high-resolution, mirror-scanning LED displays to produce the kind of image standard televisions or LED screens are incapable of. All images displayed on this unit are red upon black. The result is something unique to Reflection and promises, according to the Nintendo press release, "full depth perception and complete rotational movement for the cost of a traditional video game system". More promising still are the comments made by the Director of the Media Laboratory at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) about the hardware, who said: "The cutting-edge technology developed by Reflection Technology has multiple future applications in the real world, such as telecommunications. Utilising this technology, Nintendo's Virtual Boy will provide players with a truly unique experience."

A truly unique experience, then? The initial batch of three games don't quite seem to match up to this potential including variations on Punch Out - 'Telero Boxer' - and the very first Super Mario Bros game, however the hardware itself does look extremely kooky. It's even stranger when you consider Nintendo obviously view their machine as a new portable, requiring six AA batteries, though there are accessories planned.

We have until Summer 1995 for Virtual Boy to arrive.

EXCLUSIVE FIRST LOOK

(ABOVE) When your Mum calls you for your tea now, you'll be able to ignore her 'cos, like, you'll be immersed in a Virtual World, man...

(RIGHT) Look familiar? That's because it's the first Mario Bros game except in three glorious dimensions and, erm, one rather shameful colour.

SHOSHINKAI SOFTWARE

This month we bring you the first ever report on the incredible Japanese equivalent of the American Consumer Electronic Show - the Shoshinkai Software Exhibition. Held in Tokyo, this is arguably a much more important event for those intrigued by the amazing developments taking place in the video game industry. This year's event was of special interest to the world of Nintendo as NCL (Nintendo Company Limited) had much to brag about. Though news surrounding the Ultra 64 remains closely guarded, with only a few secrets being let slip, Gary Harrod was there to bring back photographs and information to make any self-confessed Nintendophile drool with anticipation. Roll on 1995!

(ABOVE) This start-up shot demonstrates a little better how the 3D effect looks. Well, a little...

HUDSON HOARD

Bomber Man remains Hudson Soft's most popular character to date, and the Super NES is soon to be graced with two new explosive titles. Super Bomber Man 3 is the long awaited PC Engine game, regarded as the best in the series. In Bomber Man gets to ride Kangaroo-like animals called Lui, each one with different abilities depending on their colour. It's a beautiful game. The other title is a puzzle game with Bomber Man's head as the pieces. By the looks of things this game's gonna play almost exactly like Konami's Crazy Cross reviewed on page 79. It's more than probable that both these games will appear as official releases later this year. So hooray for that.

(ABOVE) Are you ready to take to the backs of blue Kangaroos and plant a few bombs? We certainly are

(ABOVE) When your Mum calls you for her tea now, you'll be able to ignore her... like, you'll be immersed in a virtual World, man...

(RIGHT) Look familiar? That's because the first Mario Bros game appeared in all its glorious dimensions and, erm, in one rather shameful colour.