



QINDLE

The toys of 2019

- A peak into this year's trends in the toy and game industry -

January 2019

The toy fair you don't want to miss

As the nosy trend-hunters we are, the Qindle team visited for the second time the renowned Spielwarenmesse (toy fair) of Nürnberg, Germany. A lively place of 170.000m² bursting with nearly 3.000 exhibitors from 68 countries and over 70.000 visitors. Needless to say, that it is the place to be on this end of January.

For its 70th edition the fair didn't fail to impress us once more with its 12 different halls, each representing a different toy category, from dolls to AR to fireworks. With the always more *proper* introduction and therefore *proper* adoption of technologies into our lives, the

electronic toys section was definitely one captivating hall.

However, since we recently wrote quite a few lines on what technology is up to (cf. our CES 2019 and Retail 2019 trends reports), in this report, we will mention other Spielwarenmesse highlights that are not as much tech-related. We found it quite interesting indeed to see how the non-tech toy retailers are moving along in this digital era – at least partly – and how there is a genuine come back to not only basics, but also well-being.

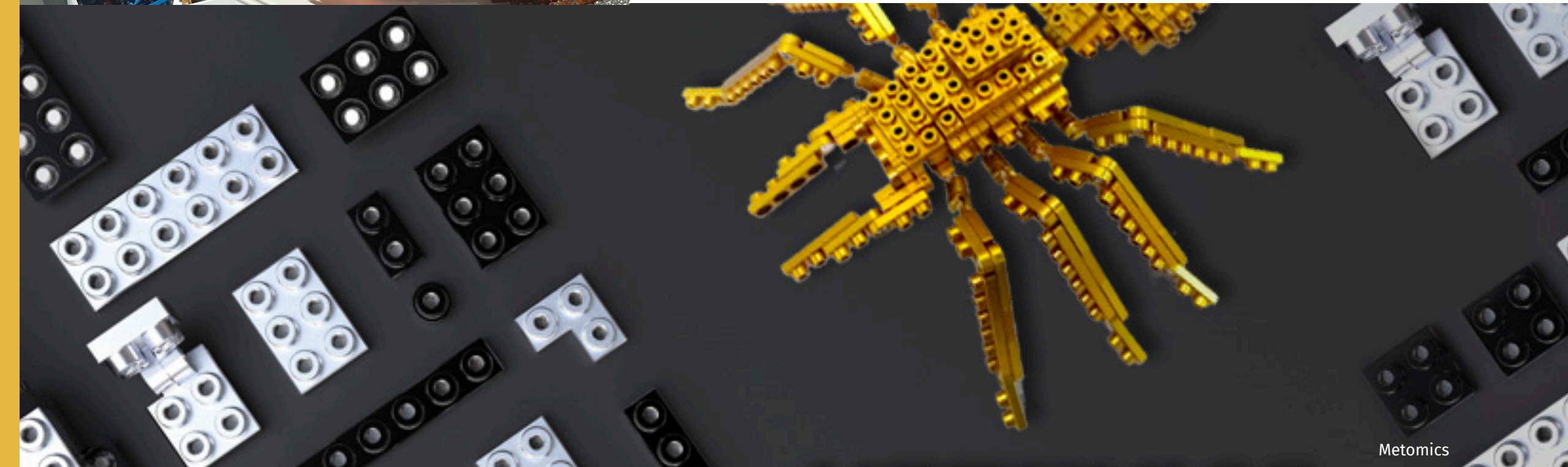
Following are four themes that encompass this movement.



#1 Wellness: Relax playing

What particularly took our interest this year is the rise of wellness through toys. With today's boom around healthy food & lifestyle, wellness is a topic that we usually associate with grown-ups, as they handle busy and stressful lives. Yet, the fair had a section of its own with "Kidults" toys that are meant to target this growing niche market of consumers that are ready to pay good money for the privilege of having an innocent and light moment of childhood - see for instance **Metomics**: the high quality aluminium building blocks.

Besides this, we were pleasantly surprised to find children games that revolved around spirituality and calmness (versus competition or materialistic collectable toys), such as **YOGi Kit / YOGi Dice** or the **Yogi** card game. These innovative games seemed to us to be a great way to step away from screens and add a new level of teaching that is no less important as the more cognitive or strategic games.



#2 Minimalistic: Simply playing

Minimalism has increased in popularity over the past few years, and in the toy industry parents will appreciate that notably in the first few years of age of their children. A lot of products at the fair did indeed: use raw materials and a light palette of colors, employ little amount of parts, show efficient designs or simply designs that are pleasant to the eye (through organic or symmetric shapes that easily blend with surroundings).

This tendency leads to quite unique, inventive designs, such as the multi-use **Wobbel** swing made out of a singular piece of

FSC-certified natural wood, the practical bunny kick scooters which can also be used as a sorting box, or the modular **Abel** cotton tents. The simplicity of these toys, incites children to experience play in a very different way, using their own imagination rather than being overwhelmed with buttons or sounds.

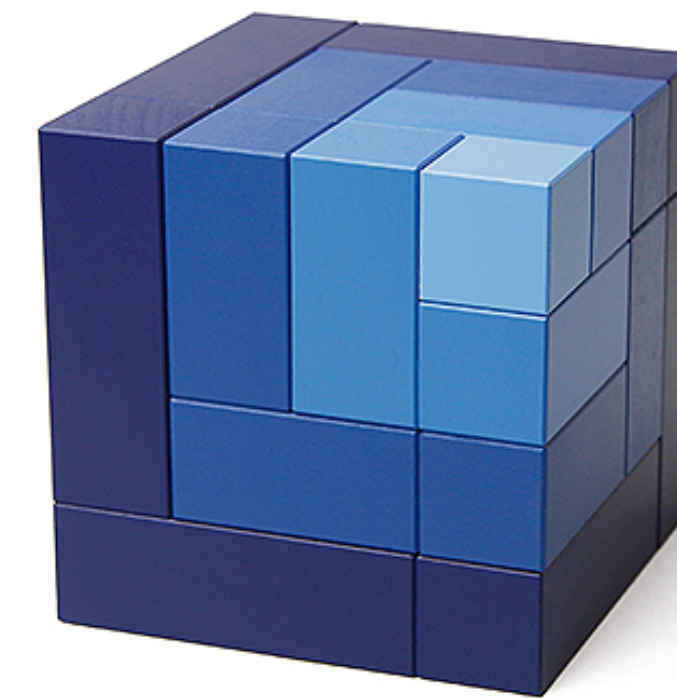
Just like toys are not only for children, simplistic shapes and well-balanced colours will also appeal to the older public, who will make use of such toys and games as decorative pieces for the house.



Abel



Wobbel



Cubicus



#3 Materials: Feel playing

Toys made out of natural materials had a large hall of their own at the fair, which is great. Wood was once again widely used in all sorts of toys and we clearly noticed the sustainable and organic topics empowered this year too. Qindle client Jumbo, for instance, sent a strong message showcasing a dedicated section within its stand with board games made out of 100% recycled materials. At the fair, you could see a sustainable dice we developed together!

Other noticeable materials included:

a. Foam: Award winner

Educational Insights presented its malleable “mess-free” games with foam which doesn’t stick, doesn’t dissolve, doesn’t dry-out and is non-toxic. The perfect blend!

b. Cork: **Corcodile**, a newbie on the fair, introduced us to its cork toys for children, which have the multiple advantages of not only being naturally clean (it is anti-

bacterial and doesn’t retain moisture/dust), but it is also a safe toy by its lightweight, doesn’t break and doesn’t make any noise. In short: a minimalist toy with new surface feature and that respects nature. A win-win!

c. Cardboard: With last year’s Nintendo Labo launch, it was expected to see new carton board-based games this year. We saw for example **Carboard Pinball**, an interesting pinball machine made out of carboard – a great, economical and hands-on way to learn and play. Back to basics!

d. Dust: The minimalistic concept of **Locomo** charmed us. This eco-friendly toy made out of rubber-wood sawdust gets children outdoors to observe, think and play with what the world has best to offer: nature. A winner for us!



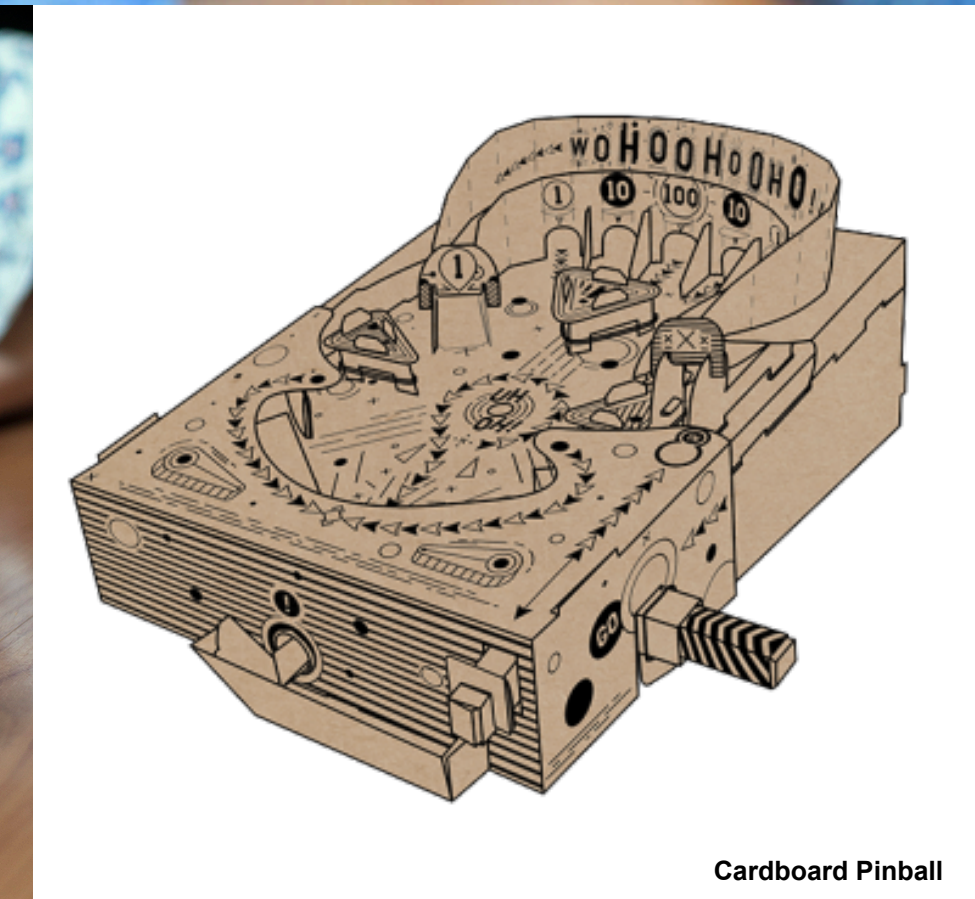
Sculpta Palooza



Playfoam Pals



Crocodile



Cardboard Pinball



Locomo



Locomo

#4 New Old: Relive playing

For us grown up it is always soothing to rediscover the good old classics of our childhood. Using basic materials or giving retro looks is one thing. Another is to revisit the Classics. Since Tetris' 30th anniversary and last year's 35th anniversary, the game got new spurs of inspiration and a few new versions were to be found this year, such as **Tetris Duell**.

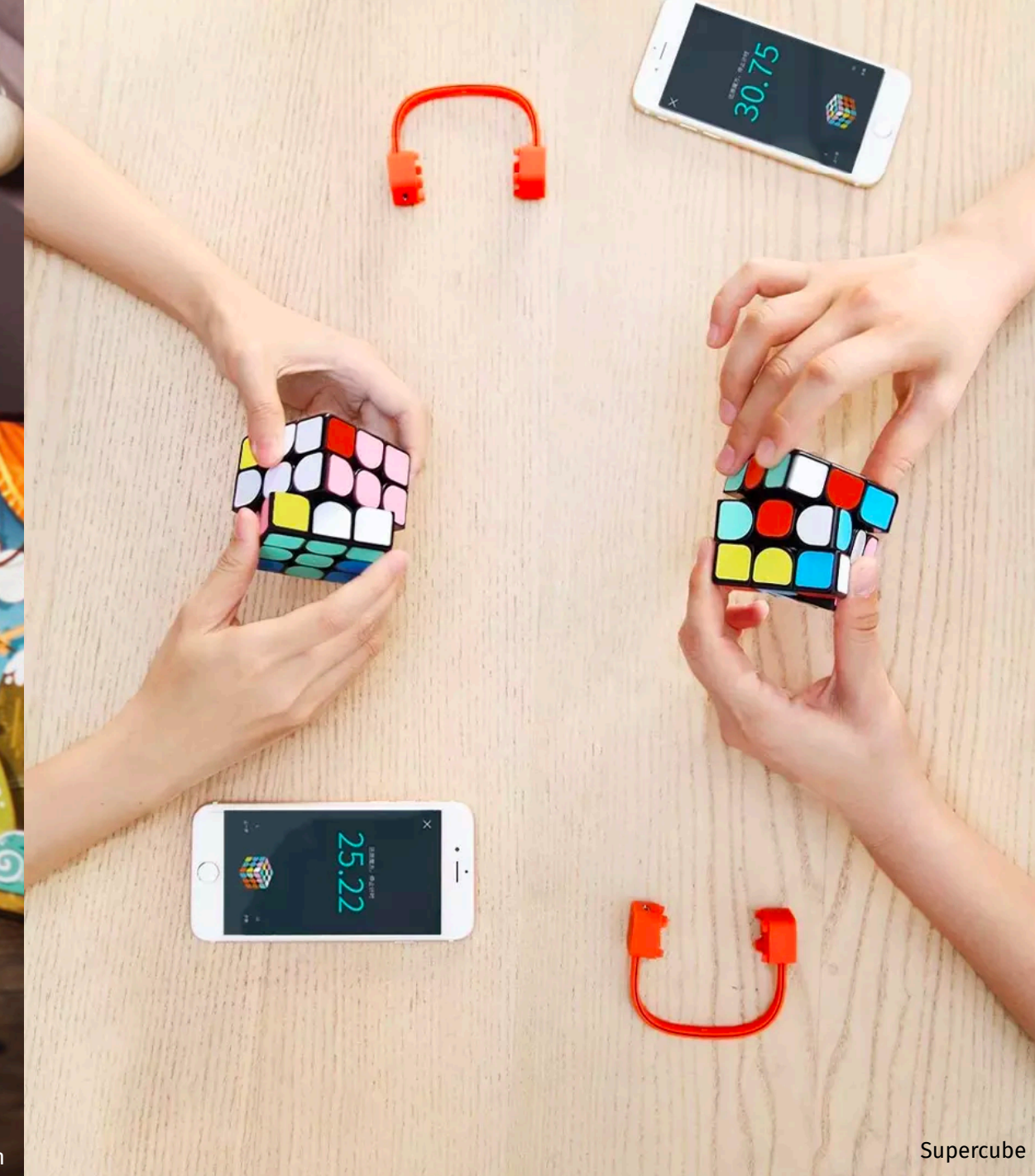
Other interesting come-backs are **STAX Hybrid**: reinventing the world-famous building block by adding light and sound, **Supercube**: the first app-connected rubric's cube enabling gamers around the world to compete or **Highwaykick**: an award-winning two-in-one kickboard - with or without seat. We also really

appreciated **Papaton** shadow theatre, a modern version of shadow playing that works with an app where stories, sounds and light effects are at children's disposal, initiating them to storytelling.

Finally, let's mention **Bookii** taking a new turn on educational books. With its innovative digital pen, the game brings children into an interactive world in which they can get curious and explore a wide variety of topics through text, visuals and sound. The book can even be configured to be read out to children with their parents' voice! Just like **Kumiita**, these self-reading games are fantastic for children's development.



Papaton



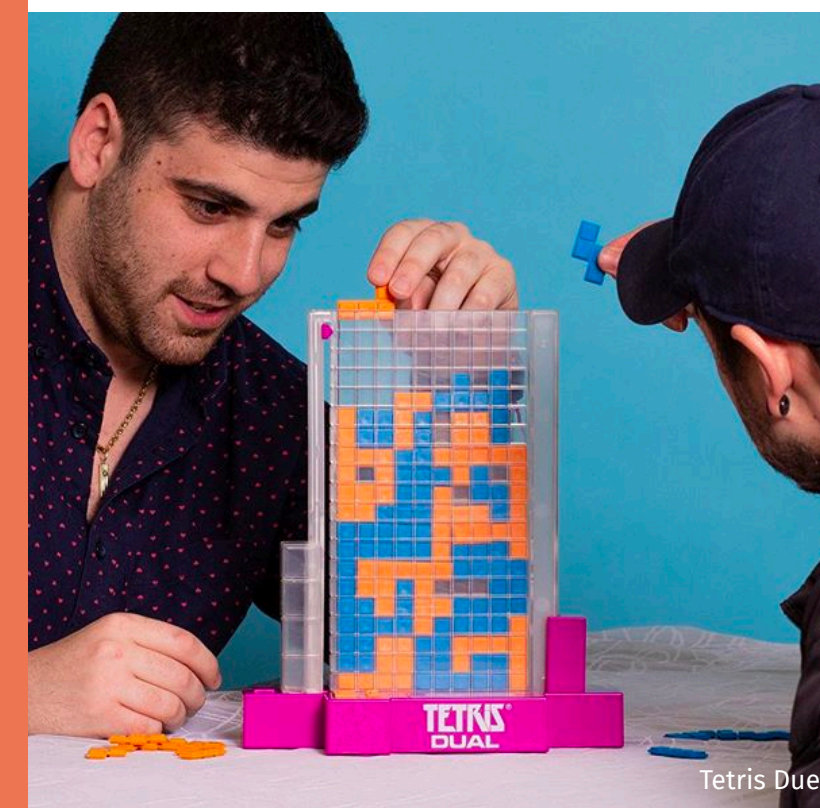
Supercube



STAX Hybrid



Highwaykick



Tetris Duell



Bookii



Kumiita

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A/N. Note that we are not talking about innovation here, rather we mean to point out trends: the discrepancy between the two is that trends are novelties that might not be evident everywhere just yet, but that do already have some traction and have been picked up by a few manufacturers already. Momentum is what differentiates trends from innovations.

What a fair! The busy and intense Spielwarenmesse is definitely worth the detour. It is simply a must for all those wanting to get clued up about what the toy retailers are up to, but also a great way to

immerse and engage in great conversations with professionals and clearly passionate people.

The plus? You get to have a great time with a first-hand experience on the latest and upcoming games and toys. Seeing a group of influential-looking businessmen around a board-game or company directors in mini-convertible cars is part of the décor. It would be fair to say that 50% is business and 50% fun at the Spielwarenmesse. Definitely see you next year!

- The Qindle team



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Thank you!

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— design and innovation

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