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Fortnite superstar 'Ninja' takes gameplay to YouTube



In this file photo Richard Tyler Blevins, aka Ninja, speaks to the crowd at the start of the 2019 Fortnite World Cup Finals - Round Two on July 27, 2019, at Arthur Ashe Stadium, in New York City. —AFP

Fortnite superstar Tyler "Ninja" Blevins returned to the streaming world Wednesday with a match on YouTube, after Microsoft pulled the plug on the Mixer platform where he had an exclusive contract. Blevins had amassed nearly 24 million subscribers at his YouTube channel shortly into a Fortnite match he had tipped fans off to in a tweet. "You know what's crazy man?" Blevins asked rhetorically during banter with teammates during the game stream. "Like not streaming for a month I almost forgot that nobody knows what's going on with, like, me."

In August of last year, Blevins left Amazon-owned Twitch, telling fans they would only be able to find him on rival gameplay streaming platform Mixer. The move was considered a win for Microsoft, luring viewers to Mixer and playing into the technology company's efforts to bolster its gaming

community. But Microsoft last month said it is throwing in the towel on its Mixer livestream platform, and teaming up with Facebook to better compete with rivals like Twitch and YouTube. Microsoft Mixer will be shuttered on July 22 with gamers encouraged to transition to Facebook Gaming.

Online battle royale game "Fortnite" is a global sensation, with entertaining play and commentary a hit with online viewers. Blevins is one of a clutch of gamers who stream themselves playing Fortnite and recoup riches and rock star adulation from a vast and youthful following. He told AFP last year his life took a swift turn when he discovered Fortnite, a blockbuster that swept the gaming sector when it came out in 2017 and claims 200 million players, more than eight million of whom are playing at any one time. —AFP

US artist's holiday park sculpture fetches millions

A huge sculpture by American artist Alexander Calder sold at auction in Paris on Wednesday for over 4.9 million euros, auctioneers Artcurial said, after nearly six decades on display at a holiday park in southern France. The influential sculptor is known primarily for his colourful and abstract



This picture shows an untitled sculpture by US artist Alexander Calder in the courtyard of the Artcurial auction house in Paris. —AFP

mobiles, of which he made thousands over the course of his career. But he also made "stabiles"—the opposite of mobiles—one of which remained concealed from the general public in La Colle-sur-Loup village, a few dozen kilometres from the ritzy city Cannes. The black steel 3.5 metre (11 foot) structure was made by Calder in 1963. "It's the first time that a monumental stabile of this scale by Calder came up for auction in France," said Hugues Sebilleau, the head of Artcurial's contemporary art department.

It was installed six years later in front of a holiday park which aims to attract low-income families by maintaining affordable prices. The free-standing stabile was sold by the current owner of the holiday park Belambra Clubs. It was estimated to be worth between 2.5 and 3.5 million euros (\$2.8-4.0 million). "The stabile is completely characteristic of Calder's style at the time. The structure is very assertive and well planted on its four bearing points," said sales expert Serge Lemoine. "Rhythm and space are the vital compositions. The curves respond to the angles and the surfaces respond to the voids," Lemoine said. Trained as an engineer, Calder used a wide variety of media to make more than 22,000 works before he died in 1976. —AFP

Machu Picchu to reopen at 50% capacity, but no date set

Peru's iconic tourist attraction Machu Picchu will reopen at half capacity following a coronavirus-forced closure, the Peruvian government said on Tuesday, although it didn't set a date. "Admission to Machu Picchu will be 2,244 visitors a day," the government said in the official gazette. That's half the number of tourists usually allowed in to the ancient Inca citadel in the high season. The new limit has been suggested by international experts in a bid to avoid the gradual dete-

rioration of the crown jewel of Peruvian tourism, which has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1983. The new limited capacity has nothing to do with the coronavirus, though, and is part of measures the culture ministry was planning on taking anyway. The implementation was delayed by the country's virus lockdown. Before the pandemic struck, Machu Picchu used to welcome between 2,000 and 3,000 visitors a day, with peaks of 5,000 in the high season. —AFP



In this file photograph people participate in a culinary workshop in the "Cité Internationale de la Gastronomie", the first cultural centre fully devoted to gastronomy, recently opened in Lyon, south-eastern France. —AFP

French gastronomy complex gulped up by coronavirus crisis

A massive gastronomy complex in France's culinary capital of Lyon inaugurated nine months ago will not reopen after shuttering during the coronavirus lockdown due to the economic consequences of the outbreak, its management said Tuesday. Until the strict stay-at-home rules to contain the coronavirus, the Cité Internationale de Gastronomie de Lyon offered meals, exhibitions, workshops and tours for foodies—children and adults alike. "Faced with uncertainty for the economy and tourism, and despite our best efforts to save it, we have decided to not reopen the Cite," the directors of the complex said in a statement.

The 4,000-square-metre (43,000-square foot) facility was located in an 800-year-old building overlooking the Rhone

river, which was for most of its history was southeastern Lyon's main hospital. From its inauguration, the complex faced criticism for its lack of cultural content on offer and for being expensive. Exhibitions cost 12 euros (\$13.5) and lunch and dinner 29 euros (\$33). "The launch didn't go well, and the design didn't work. (...) There wasn't a clear principle, even if some things were a success, such as the children's area," said chef Regis Marcon, who was part of the strategic committee, adding he was "not surprised" by the closure. Freshly-elected green party head of the Lyon area Bruno Bernard said the closure was an opportunity for Lyon's dwellers to "reclaim the emblematic site" of the Grand Hotel-Dieu, a grand former hospital converted in 2010. —AFP