

experimental game cultures³

Master Program at University of Applied Arts Vienna

games for non-humans



Let's play!

Nach den ersten zwei Jahren Experimental Game Cultures betreten wir, so wie es Kafka wunderbar formuliert hat, "die unfertige Landschaft", den **Prozess** (siehe Hypertalk AMAZE24: **The case of Experimental Game Cultures**) einer spielerischen Konsolidierung: 2024 treten Studierende aus dem exzellenten ersten Jahrgang zur Masterprüfung an. Trennungsschmerz wird spürbar – Abhilfe schaffen wird ein **EXPERIMENTAL GAME ARTISTS CLUB**. Dort und in öffentlichen Ludic Method Lectures verknüpfen wir die Studierenden direkt mit Protagonist*innen aus zukünftigen Tätigkeitsfeldern. Dazu gehört das Reflektieren und Sinnieren über **Spiel als Methode** des genauen Hinschauens, des Untersuchens und **des Experimentierens**.

Unser aktuelles Herzstück ist die neue **Play Savings Bank, Virtual PSK**. In diesem Ausstellungs-Spiel haben wir unser headquarter, die einem Luftschiff gleiche Kassenhalle modelliert und in einen mobilen spielbaren Ausstellungsraum transformiert. Ich bin stolz auf die Leistung des teams, für eine mobile Ausstellungs-Form nicht mehr zu benötigen als eine tragbare Spiel-Konsole – für über 45 Prototypen!


In drei von uns 2023/24 organisierten **Symposien** zu Games und aktivistischer Praxis treten wir in den Austausch mit Peers und diskutieren aktuelle Themen zu Kunst und Spiel. Schlagwörter dazu waren **Non-human-play**,

absurdity und Flow (Bioludic Symposium Mai 2024/ Ludic Flow Symposium März 2024/ Insurgent Flows Symposium Oktober 2023). Ein weiterer wichtiger Vernetzungs-Move sind **Besuche in IndieGame Studios**. Perspektiven finden Studierende in Forschungsprojekten, wie etwa zum künstlerischen Games Art Archive als Kooperation mit Dr. Martina Griesser und dem Technischen Museum Wien (Computer-Games as Cultural Heritage).

In dem Studienjahr 2023/24 ist eine vertiefte „Lab“-Struktur gewachsen. Ein **BIOLUDIC LAB** wurde basierend auf interner Forschung (INTRA) im Standort Vordere Zollamtsstraße 7 eingerichtet, in Kooperation mit Prof. Petra Gruber (Institut für Architektur).

Das praxisnahe **LUDIC OBJECT LAB** propagiert ausgehend von künstlerischen Forschungsprojekten einen dringend notwendigen transdisziplinären Ort zum künstlerischen Spiel mit Materialität in digitaler und analoger Welt. Mit eigens entwickeltem Spiel-Mechaniken entstehen hier Ausstellungs-Schnittstellen zwischen Objekt und Kunst.

Im **LUDIC DRONE LAB** setzen wir einen Fokus auf Critical Play und Performance wie in zwei Aufführungen in der PSK Kassenhalle „Drones & Rabbits“ – Ludic Drones in Shannon's Labyrinth demonstriert wurde. Hier kooperieren Lehrende und Studierende um kontroverses "Gerät" – wie Dronen – kulturell im Spiel neu zu kodieren.



VIRTUAL PLAY SAVINGS Bank, VPS - Spielfiguren und Spielbrett als Ausstellung und Spiel-Zeug. Der potentielle reale Ausstellungsraum ehem. PSK wird nicht virtuell gespiegelt, sondern als neuer on-line und hybrid zugänglichen Denkraum mit exemplarischen Spielartefakten aller EGC Studierenden zu jedem Semester Finale repräsentiert - und international ausstellbar gemacht. Diese **mobile/ HYBRID LUDIC ASSEMBLAGE Ausstellung** ist ein kristallines, permanent wachsendes Kleinod der Abteilung. So entsteht **eine neue permanente Sammlung von EGC Artefakten**, um nachhaltig zu bleiben – im Spiel mit der Kunst als Experimentalsystem für die Bedingungen von Welt, die mögliche Zukünfte öffnet.

Play through!

After the first two years of Experimental Game Cultures, we are entering the unfinished landscape of playful consolidation: students from the excellent first year will be taking their Master's exams in the summer semester of 2024. The potential pain of separation is palpable - an EXPERIMENTAL GAME ARTISTS CLUB is intended to provide a remedy. Here and in our public Ludic Method Lectures Series, we connect students directly with protagonists from future occupational fields. This also includes reflecting and pondering on play as a method of close inspection, examination and experimenting.

Our passion project is our Play Savings Bank as a mobile exhibition space. With a mobile gaming console, we tour internationally and transdisciplinary with the Virtual PSK, at conferences, festivals and exhibitions.

In symposia on games and activist practice, we foster an exchange with peers and discuss current topics on art and games. Keywords were non-human-play, absurdity and flow (Bioludic Symposium May 2024/ Ludic Flow Symposium March 2024/ Insurgent Flows Symposium October 2023). Such exchange also takes place in IndieGame studio visits. Students find perspectives in research projects, such as the artistic Games Art Archive as a co-op with Dr. Martina Griesser and the Technisches Museum Wien (Cultural Heritage Research Project).

In the years 2023/24, an in-depth „lab“ structure was established - whereby we understand the term lab as an artistic experimental system in play.

A new BIOLUDIC LAB was set up based on internal research (INTRA) in cooperation with Prof. Petra Gruber (Institute of Architecture).

The LUDIC OBJECT LAB propagates an urgently needed transdisciplinary space for artistic play with materiality in the digital and analogue world. With specially developed game mechanics we create exhibition interfaces between object and art.

In the LUDIC DRONE LAB, we focus on critical play, as demonstrated in two performances „Drones & Rabbits“ - Ludic Drones in Shannon's Labyrinth. It is important here that teachers and students co-operate in the research and newly encode/recode the cultural understanding of controversial „equipment“ - such as drones - in play.

We organise weekly Research Fridays as a framework for artistic research projects, funded by the Austrian Research Fund FWF/PEEK: „Neuromatic Game Art: Critical Play with Neurointerfaces“ (AR 585, completion 2023), in 2024 we launched the new project „The Psycho Ludic Approach: Exploring play for a viable future“ (AR 787).

In conclusion, we can say that we are aiming to open up viable futures for our EXPERIMENTAL GAME CULTURES students in the systemic structural coupling of experiment and PLAY - for a sustainable world.



Ausstellungs-Spiel Virtual Play Savings Bank: Jede Spielfigur eröffnet ein Kunstwerk auf der Spielkonsole.

HYBRID play for Non-Humans

TOPICS 23-24

Do AIs hallucinate? Delusion, the crazy is always part of the game. In the phase 02 of Experimental Game Cultures at dieAngewandte, we shift the view to partially euphoric or fatalistic perspectives on the topic of Artificial Intelligence and our relationship to the non-human as „non-human ludic actant“.

We extend the question concerning hybrid games into political exhibition games to critically question the rapid development of art and theory generated with the help of AI/ Large Language Models. In exhibitions, like at parallel Vienna we connected face recognition, image prompting and generation with artificial intelligence, related to delusion and play.

Our questions were: who is our partner in play and art? For whom do we make art: Can game culture reflections, AI robotics and animals be approached via play. Is a game set a basis for new systemic research methods? Is motivational design, the conceptual testing of materialism of games a field for Experimental Game Cultures? Is the artistic-research, its application and implementation giving ground to content and the form of **“games for non-humans”**?



'Pataplay / 'Pataflow

In the phase 03 of Experimental Game Cultures at dieAngewandte, we were catapulted out of the present **cracyness of world politics and climate change** by an absurd approach that refers to a new terminologically coinage, introduced together and in discursive dispute with our students: **'pataplay - the ludic science of potential solutions to emergent questions.**

Being immediately confronted with the political absurdity of the present, we introduce the subject of absurd play. **If: `pataphysics= science of imaginary solutions, then=> play counts as the joke/r of the future.** Based on the **systemic distinction between game and play**, **'pataplay combines** very different areas, methods, theories, practices and discourses from art, technology and critical theory with **cultural studies, anthropology and political philosophy.** The analysis of the methods (LUDIC METHOD) used in this new field of research - **between game design, art and science** - includes art and literature research, discourse analysis and critical reflection on **case studies** as they can be found in the artist's own artistic practice. It always culminates in a rule-guided art experiment as an institution for collecting metadata, which is run and designed by active players and artists, in a participatory game art research. We aim to develop optional game mechanics, try out role changes in existing game systems - as shown in the following works.



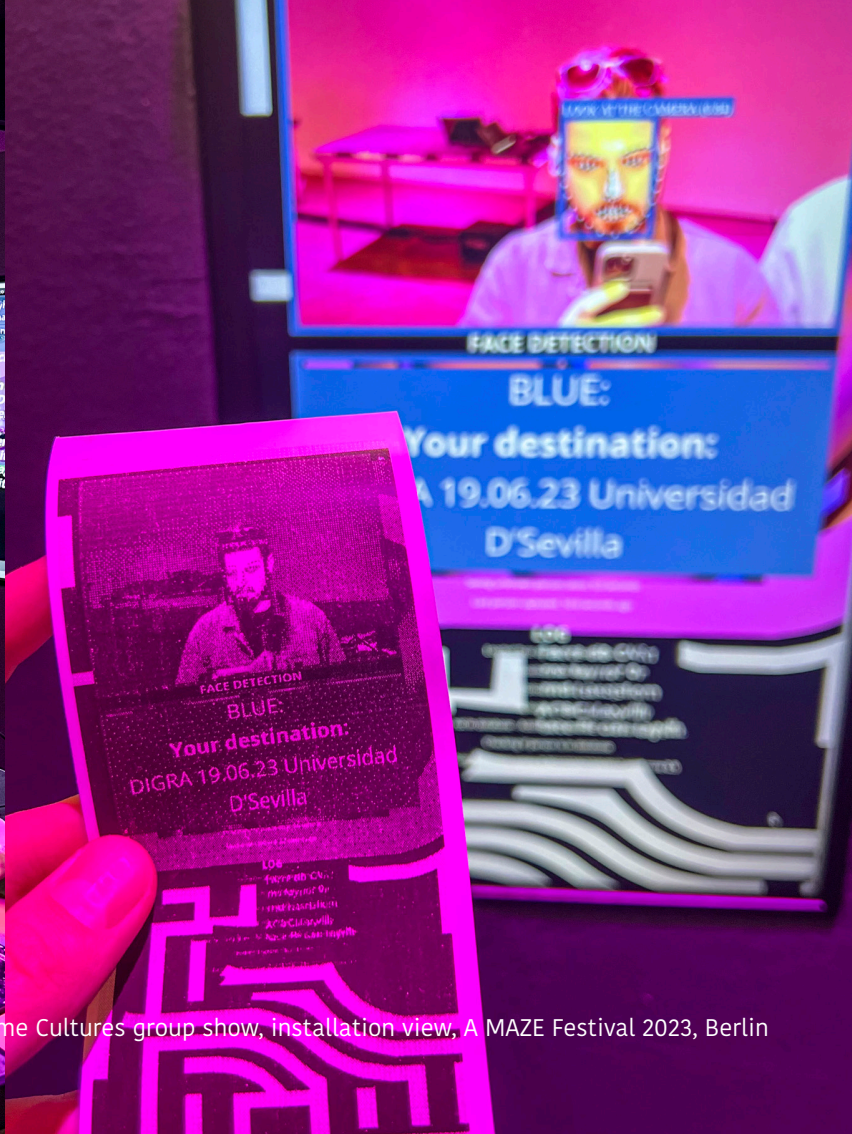
**PATA PLAY
EXHIBITION**

24 / 1 / 24 6 PM
Studio Experimental Game Cultures

24th January 2024 18:00  Georg-Coch-Platz 2
1010 Wien



Delusion, the crazy is always part of the game. In Experimental Game Cultures at dieAngewandte, we shift the view to partially euphoric or fatalistic perspectives on the topic of Artificial Intelligence and our relationship to the non-human as „actant“. Can game culture reflections, AI robotics and animals be approached via play itself?



Experimental Game Cultures group show, Installation view, A MAZE Festival 2023, Berlin

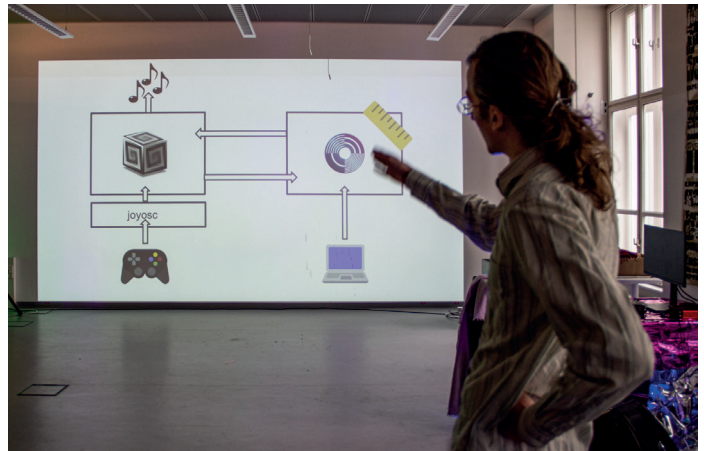


SemesterFinals_PataPlay, EGC Studio



△ Alexandra Gašparovičová, „:“

▽Martin Gius    





VODNIK MEET THE LONER

As underwater creature obsessed with his lonely Vodnik stores the spirits of drowned people inside his rare bottle caps that are always kept on display in his little underwater house. He spends his evenings reminiscing, mending and cleaning his clothes on a willow tree, skipping for himself and the stars, and pines for the company of fish over humans even though his appearance is more human-like.

Insomniac: Vodnik knows summoning spells connected to water and its dwellers. But a Spirit creature. Spend a Manifestation Point for automatic success.

Grumpy: Vodnik is really good at handy-work and sewing, all at related Ability Checks with advantage.

Dependent on water: Vodnik can visit the world outside of the pond only until his clothes dry out, then he needs to wait until a water source to rehydrate. If he doesn't, he loses 45 body for every hour he remains dry.

NEGATIVE CARD

BiO∞LudiC∞LaB

The BiO∞LudiC∞LaB functions as a playful experimental Wunderkammer and a symbiotic incubator for arts and biomateriality for experiential game art collaboration and production, in alignment with the ongoing projects of the University of Applied Arts Vienna - especially with EXPERIMENTAL GAME CULTURES and materiality in architecture and life sciences.

As a hybrid and experimental environment operating in both digital and physical realms, the Lab serves as a dynamic hub for connection and collaboration. Through immersive presentations, interactive workshops, and knowledge dissemination, students and experts are encouraged to participate in bioludic projects on diverse topics such as biocellulose, bacteria, fungi, algae, slime mold, soil, plants, and other non-human entities. Art pieces are then distilled through the creation of an experimental ludic glossary and biomaterial library, aimed at fostering the development of innovative artefacts and materials. Ivan Jakaric, Lab responsible

The impact of these activities is preserved in a continually expanding bioludic nexus, encompassing both digital platforms and physical exhibitions of current and future bioludic objects.

www.instagram.com/bioludiclab

Ivan Jakarić, „PATAOLFMOSIS: SMELLVERTIGO“ ▷





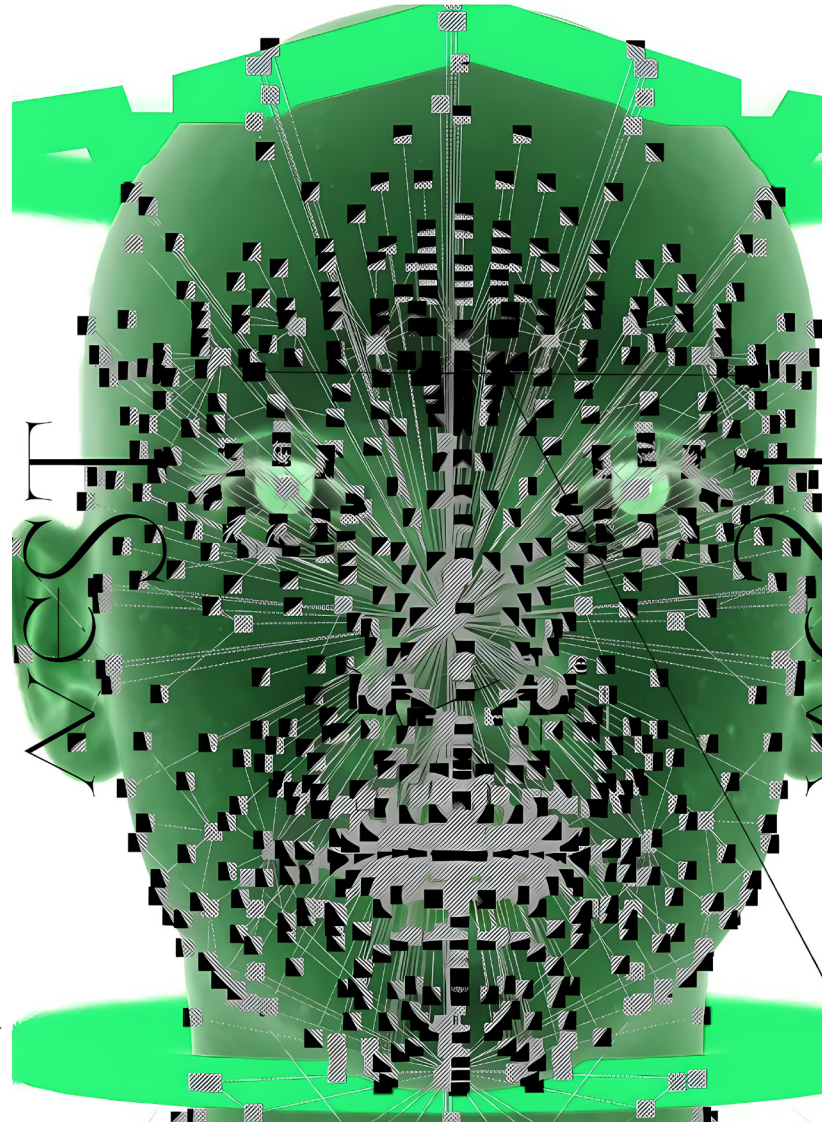
△ Janine Scheer-Erb, „Not So Strong“

Xenoludic Research, coop Tamás Páll

The research project “NEST” explores post-anthropocentric experimental game mechanics and play through “XenoLudic” artistic research. The term XenoLudic – refers to a form of game-based artistic research that explores nonhuman play and agency, and human-machine cooperation. Our research partner PÁLL guides this approach in exchange and workshops with students and staff. He is an interdisciplinary artist and developer based in Budapest, working with the Hollow Group on AR games, installation and performance to blend experimental game design, film, writing, installation, role-play, performance and mythopoesis, around technologies of embodiment and emergent agency, politics of technology and Eastern Europe, online subcultures, scientific world-views and games centering non-human agency.



△KOPFGELD. Ludic Eigenface Currency Converter Game, Jahrmann/Glasauer





1st Master Degree 2023: Klimentina Hristova

SKINS.II - Beyond the Click

Interactive Game Installation

SKINS.II is an interactive game researching the controversies of today's human interdependencies with technologies. It aims to reveal poetic research on the multidimensional notions of skin in the phygital* world, to uncover the intertwined and complex relationships between the extended reality of virtual media and the limitations in the design of A.I. technologies. The aim is to question the political prejudice behind social constraints related to the biological body and the following aspects of A.I. algorithms mirroring such actions.

Our digital identities are encoded into a cluster system where humans become collections of categories. This data is divided into patterns of comparison, which causes reinforcement of biases. What does it mean to have skin in the virtual? In order to overcome the bias, non-binary methods must be embraced. With the power of digital media and extended reality, such a form of multiplicity can be visualised and virtually embodied. SKINS.II envision the in-between, where the simultaneous existence of definitions can thrive in unity.

*phygital - a blend of the physical and the digital. Collins Dictionary



△Maxim Shchapov, „Dancing on Bones“

▽Han Yuer, „Role Play Live Stream“



Ludic Drone lab: I CAN SEE YOU SEE ME

What are drones? Devices of war oder wonder? In a performative drone choreography we apply „ludic method“, explore how technology can alter our sensual perception within an artistic inter play of politics and critical use of technologies. Come and see the challenge of conventional notions of the body and technology by using drones as both performers and creative collaborators. Through the use of a real-time, real-world render engine - you can envision the world through the drones' eye.

Max Moswitzer, Lab responsible



△ Moswitzer & Maier, Ludic Drone Soccer



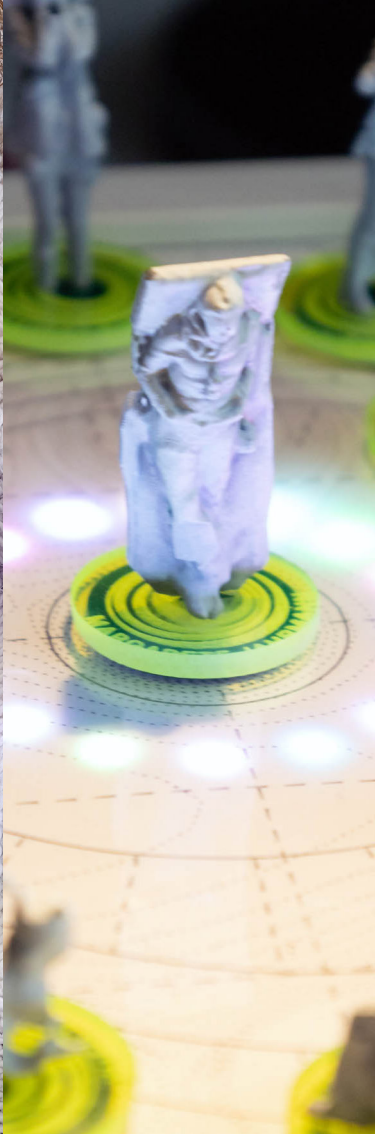
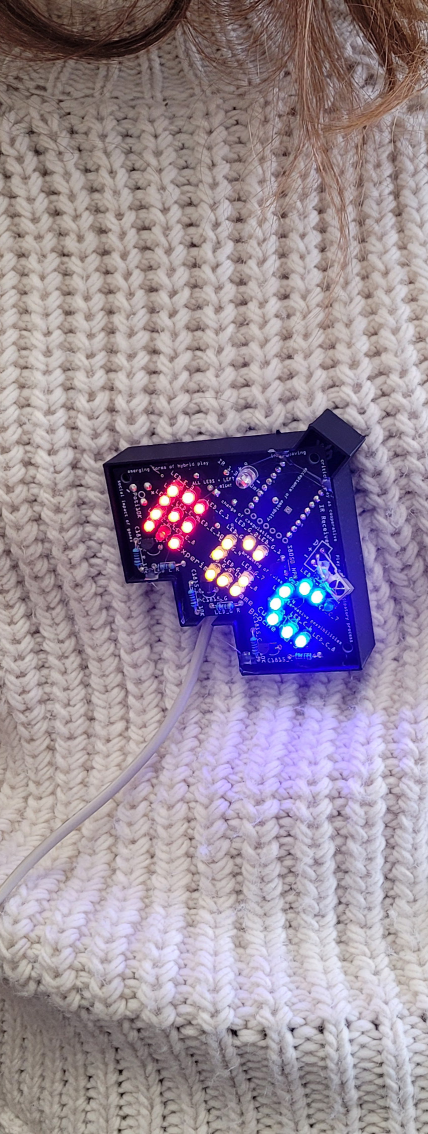
△ Dr Julius Neubronner's Miniature Pigeon Camera, 1908

As winter's icy grip tightens its hold on the vast, frozen wilderness, we find ourselves amidst the desolate beauty of the Tundra. The landscape, a seamless quilt of glistening snow, stretches out in all directions, a canvas painted in the harshest tones of winter's palette. In this frozen expanse, a modern marvel embarks on an intricate dance—a dance with the elements, a dance of technology and nature. Against the vast sea of white an extraordinary event is set to transpire. High above the snow-covered terrain, amidst the towering silence of the tundra, a novel explorer prepares for its maiden flight.

A cinematic observation capturing the journey of Artificial Intelligence learning the art of flight.







LOL - The Ludic Object Lab

The Ludic Object Lab is conducting research on ludic devices and interfacing technology with customized game controllers. Its' aim is to facilitate the input and output of data, sound and images. Additionally, we develop PCB's and intercommunication with microcontrollers.

More than 10 controllers have been produced utilizing tailor-made PCBs. Initially, we prototyped the boards and tested them extensively. Subsequently, we utilized Fritzing to design the PCBs, ensuring their aesthetic appeal aligns with the intention of showcasing them as artifacts during exhibitions. Following this, all the components were soldered onto the boards, and these finished products were not only presented to students but also actively featured in various exhibitions.

Georg Luif, Lab responsible



Ludic Method EGC studio Visit

speaker guest Aaron Kimmig (Akbild Wien), presentation of “f19 creativity appropriation”, “public cache”, “Xinjiang Sentinel 2”

Aaron Kimmig (1989, DE/AT) is a digital artist and activist, working in a self-organized webdesign/programming since 2016. Before starting his studies in Post-Conceptual Art at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna (2017) he did his bachelor degree in International Development at the Main University of Vienna. He focused on postcolonial studies, gender studies and critical whiteness. For his thesis he did research on how the refugee protest movement in Vienna used Social Media for organizing itself.

In his artwork he mainly deals with questions concerning technology as a (societal) tool for both: repression and liberation. He also explores the algorithms behind biological processes and their digital implementations (swarm, artificial intelligence, human brain and creativity). In 2021 he won the “Different Worlds” prize for young contemporary art photography for his research project “Xinjiang – Sentinel2”, on the oppression of Uyghur minority in Xinjiang.

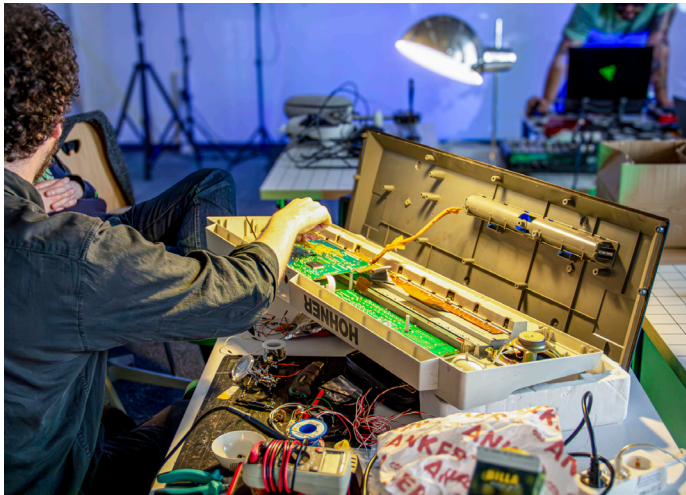
Ludic Lab tour guide, Jogi Neufeld/ Subotron

Studiotour, Broken-Rules, Vienna ►



Strands of Play - Workshop

Originating from the seminar “Experimental Game Mechanics” held by senior artist Thomas Wagensommerer this ongoing workshop format theoretically and practically reflect on the approach of opening, inquiring, modulating and connecting closed systems of play, like toys, crafts, instruments and digital, analogue and role-playing games to spawn new way in experimentation to create game mechanics in a playful, yet empowering way. In this format students introduce individual skills, knowledge and workflows to the group and host simultaneous sub-workshop groups to give others the possibility to jump between those groups to find, test and strengthen new strands between topics, concepts and narration, while actively engaging in basic practical skills and techniques.



Symposium: Bridging Bodies, Technology, Theory, and AI for Civic Resistance

In this cooperation of EXPERIMENTAL GAME Cultures/ University of Applied Arts Vienna and Academy for Fine Arts Vienna, Studio for Post-conceptual Art Practices/IBK, Prof. Marina Gržinić we invited the speakers Jill H. Casid, Elisabeth Bakambamba Tambwe. In an increasingly digital and interconnected world, the intersection of bodies, technology, theory, and artificial intelligence (AI) presents an engaging and thought-provoking topic for a performative conference. This conference explored the connections between these domains and examined the power of civic resistance and the embodied fugitive intelligence of those made marginalized and outcast bodies, embracing how their resistance can align with new technologies and AI.



Ludic Flow Symposium

In this symposium we discussed a new form of Ludic Flow in artistic research, in a more direct use of a flow state of mind in performative plays. The measurement and analysis of play in Flow serves as the core game design principle of all artistic research experiments and games presented. We will delve into the ways in which experimental games, framed as means to a more viable future of play based on a playable future in mind. This means that the relationship between play and world through technology and ludic state machines can also be a thought-provoking area of experimental systems. Our guests and their topics were: **Sofia Braga:** Conjuring Counter-Realities – Social Media disruption, Online Trends and New Technologies to create speculative fabulations. **Rainer Sigl:** Let's Play: From Kinetic to Frantic Flow Several games will be used to reflect on the concept of FLOW and its application in the games industry.



The Psycho Ludic Approach: Exploring play for a viable future (AR 787), Austrian Science Fund FWF/PEEK

The current global crises demonstrate that human strategies based on exploitation have come to an end. These strategies, now leading to failure, are reflected in games and their mechanics: it's all about winning, accruing possessions, conquering new worlds.

Using methods of artistic research, experimental psychology, and neuroscience in a combination that we term the PSYCHO-LUDIC APPROACH, we investigate alternative motivations for game-playing, how we can learn from these about possible future forms of society, and whether, by using new game mechanisms in experimental, playful contexts we may unlock better means of mediating reflection, thoughts, and action, creating a powerful, transdisciplinary basis for ecologically respectful ways of living.

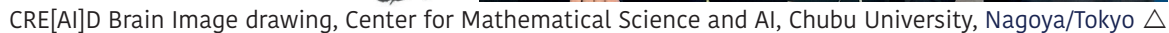
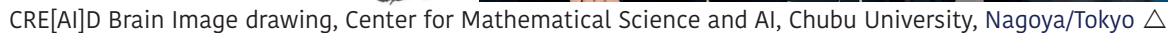
We propose that intrinsic forms of motivation, such as curiosity, creative work, participation, and emotional flow could replace profit-oriented game mechanics, enhance emphatic bonding, and foster a positive exchange with the environment. We will develop a scenario of future play that can break up established structures and suggest alternative games that point beyond the purpose of play: Signposts to possibilities of new forms of society, politics, and coexistence.

Objective: Strategically reinterpreting existing metaphors and concepts in artistic cooperative play and the meaning of game mechanics in society through a deliberate use of cooperation and empathy mechanics. In contrast to established game mechanics of conquest, linear development, and accumulation, we explore, using the psycho-ludic approach, a new field of alternative empathic game design and connect it to an experiential design of “agency,” actionability.

International research partners:

- Brigitte Felderer, Social Design, University of Applied Arts Vienna
- Matthew Pelowski, Dept. of Cognition, Emotion, and Methods in Psychology, University of Vienna
- Stefan Glasauer, Computational Neuroscience, Brandenburg University of Technology, Cottbus, Germany







Installation View A MAZE Playful Media Festival 2024, Silent Green Berlin △



CRE[AI]D; Psycholoudi8c approach. AI generated Art Installation with Random Buzzer, trained by drawings.
A MAZE Festival 2024, Berlin ▽





Psycholudic Research Lab, Masao Ono in the experiment

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