

# Temporal Worlding

## Remote Reality Games as Spatio-Temporal Navigation and Narration

The question of systems of time-keeping and the structuring of temporality is central to design processes and experiences of games. The very foundational theories of games and play (Huizinga, 1950; Caillois, 2001) argue that ludic spaces are defined by clearly delineated temporal durations that separate game temporalities from everyday lived experience. Allowing for the navigation of time through pausing, slowing down, rewinding, replaying, reactivating time, video games offer entirely new and malleable experiences of temporality (Hanson, 2018). In Live-Action-Role-Playing (LARP), time and temporality is an equally crucial tool to set game worlds apart from consensual reality, whether it is through the setting of a time frame to define the magic circle, meta techniques that allow scenes to be played out in non-chronological time, or fluid time structures to pursue multiple plotlines simultaneously.

Our workshop proposes a Remote Reality Game<sup>1</sup> for DiGRA participants, half of the participants should be in Guadalajara and half of them call in from around the world. Participants are paired and become one character with two bodies: player and avatar. Together, they go on a walk, in which the player directs the avatar and instructs their movement via voice call. The game play is facilitated through a narrative that overlays the real world environment of the players with a speculative framing using temporal navigation systems and narrative structures from games. While the workshop investigates hybrid or remote interaction, it also introduces embodied forms of knowledge production, tuning into cyclical and linear<sup>2</sup> rhythms that condition the body through somatic exercises.

Through different temporal logics the players record their avatars' narrations in a shared spatio-temporal map (a shared online whiteboard that connects all players), channelling the avatars' concrete embodied experiences into an abstract overview. In an intimate exchange in which the participants rely on each other's asymmetric means of perception, the avatars' bodies become the interfaces for the players to experience the city. The players trace and map the pathways of their real-life avatars walking through Guadalajara, as the city becomes the gamespace or playground.

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<sup>1</sup> Remote Reality Games (RRG) are hybrids between online gaming and Live Action Role Play (LARP). From the (literal) framing of a computer game, they open portals into mental, physical, and performative space. RRGs share features of Augmented or Alternate Reality Games (ARG) in that they use the player's physical environment as a playground through a virtual or narrative mediation, however the use of real time footage of a distant player as game world creates a dynamic between players specific to RRGs.

<sup>2</sup> Cyclical and linear rhythms refer to structures of repetition that can be analysed in the everyday as theorised by Henri Lefebvre in his (speculative) science of *Rhythmanalysis*. They separate under analysis as clock time (linear) and lived time (cyclical). Cyclical rhythms originate in the cosmic and natural, such as days and nights, seasons, cycles of the moon and the tides of the sea. Linear rhythms come from social practice and human activity, such as the daily grind, routines, the blows of a hammer, or the noise of an engine.

This project is an invitation to analyse, reflect on and conspire with and against modes of temporal worlding. Temporal worlding can be understood as the making and unmaking of worlds through infrastructures of time and temporal practices. From the first railway accidents to the logistics of global supply chains, the imposition of labour regimes and the affordances of high-frequency trading, the demand for synchronised clock time is inseparable from colonial conquest, militarism, financial and industrial capitalism. Within, against and beyond the social control of time, we find uneasy, weird and wayward temporalities produced through lived experience and experimental navigation.

We propose the use of role-play, nonlinear narration and collective worlding to examine and construct livable alternatives to existing infrastructures. Our aim is to experience and negotiate divergent conceptions of time as they exist within consensual reality. Negotiating the sometimes paradoxical patterns as well as conducive synergies that emerge between these temporal practices, we hope to develop the social and collective agency to launch operative fictions and heterogeneous worlds that have the potential to disrupt, undermine and reshape 'our time(s)'.

## **Structure**

The workshop is designed for a duration of six hours (including a total of 1h in breaks in-between depending on schedule) and is divided into five parts:

**1. Introduction and Warm-Up (0,5h)**

We will begin with an introduction of the Remote Reality Game and warm-up through somatic exercises.

**2. Pairing and Character Co-Creation (1,5h)**

Participants split up in pairs of players and avatars. They research their modes of (un)keeping time. Based on these modes, they create their shared character and are guided through exercises to embody their character.

**3. [RRG] Collective Worlding: Synthesis of Temporal Game Mechanics and Planning (1h)**

They design temporal manipulations and navigation systems for the walk through deeper philosophical, social and ideological investigations as their character. Participants set up the online whiteboard and prepare for the walk.

**4. [RRG] Walk (1h)**

The players guide the avatars through the walk using their navigation systems and narrative structures.

**5. Debrief (1h)**

We will lead the participants out of their characters, followed by a collective reflection on the navigation systems they created, as well as possible implications for their own work and research.

## **Objectives and outcomes**

The workshop uses remote play and role-playing methods as embodied forms of knowledge production, exploring:

- (1) LARP as methodology for collective research and body-based game design prototyping.
- (2) *Temporal Worlding* as a method that connects critical theory with narrative worldmaking.
- (3) How the integration of somatic scores and exercises within games can reframe players' perception and experience.
- (4) Mechanics as metaphors and game design as political playground.
- (5) Methods of designing adaptive game architectures with the goal to deliver guidance and enabling structures but (partially) leave the creation of the content to the player.

## **Participants**

The workshop is designed for 20-30 participants. Half of the group must participate physically in Guadalajara, while the other half can join remotely. Interested persons are asked to fill out a questionnaire to facilitate the forming of pairs and meet accessibility needs.

## **Organisers**

*Carina Erdmann* is based in Brussels and Berlin and works on the intersection of game design and performance, researching (role) play, and collective (un)worlding as methods for social speculation. In different contexts and collaborations, she develops adaptive game architectures through which players (de)construct (unspoken) rules and act out alternative agencies.

*Steph Holl-Trieu* is an artist and writer based in Berlin and Vienna. She is interested in questions of materialist aesthetics, that is, the historical contingency of our modes of perception. Her work materialises between writing, sound, (role-playing) games, and is often situated within collaborative or collective settings.

In their collaborative work, such as [OctOpOs.net](https://www.octopos.net), a platform for prefigurative play, they explore role play as a site for collective research. In 2022, they co-organised the role-played conference and workshop [Footnotes: Annotating the Future of Arts Education](#) at Zürich University of the Arts (ZHdK) together with School of Commons. They have been commissioned by LAS Art Foundation and the Curatorial Collective for Public Art to create games within larger collective projects.

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