

Abstract AR787, The Psycho-Ludic Approach: Exploring play for a viable future

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 will 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.

We address this aim by means of the psycho-ludic approach, which combines artistic research with scientific methods from psychology and neuroscience. In *Hyperscan Flow Plays* we use scientific experiments, hyperscanning, i.e., the simultaneous measurement of the coupling of the brains of two or more people in a natural social setting, to achieve empirical and theoretical insights. In dedicated actions we will present our questions as public artistic games, in which viewers are at the same time co-players and self-researchers, with whom we investigate motivation, affect, empathy, and emotion for alternative strategies of play.

The present project is a unique, original, and much-needed attempt to find potential solutions to social and environmental challenges: We combine artistic and scientific methods with the psycho-ludic approach, using games as a petri dish for the development of alternative strategies that can replace traditional motivational mechanisms. This sets our project apart from educational approaches attempting to change the players. The new mechanics will be tested in public performances and psycho-ludic experiments, in which the inclusion of non-human "players" advances a structurally new component: measuring co-playing matter emphasizes its vitality but also demonstrates ambiguity.

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