

Defragging the Magic Circle: From Experience Design to Reality Design

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the research results on Augmented Play conducted at the GameLab of the Institute for Postdigital Narratives at the Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design (Germany) from 2010-2012. With digital media, a playful mindset increasingly pervades aspects of everyday life, thereby shaping our understanding of reality. This expanded definition of play is the foundation according to which we analyze, modify, and apply the implicit rules of diverse media formats on Pervasive Games for artistic purposes. Therefore, our interdisciplinary artistic research focuses strongly on the ontological shift from game design as experience design towards the playful construction of facts as artistic strategy, a methodology we call “Reality Design”. Reality Design follows avant-garde practices, intending to merge and reflect upon theoretical and practical dimensions of the subject at hand, allowing for a critical and highly creative approximation to the contemporary value of reality games.

Keywords

Artistic Research, Augmented Play, Reality Games, Pervasive Games, Reality Design, Theater, Performance, Contemporary Art

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1. INTRODUCTION

Our research was driven by the impression that with digital media, a playful mindset increasingly pervades aspects of everyday life, thereby re-shaping our understanding of reality. We observe that since the 1960s the Magic Circle has been radically extended through cultural and technological developments. Communication and process became reality engines, while the speculative movement of play became a fact generating momentum. These developments call into question traditional limitations in game design. The differentiation between reality and fiction - a key motive of aesthetics - has become problematic in light of Augmented Play.

In order to research our hypothesis of Augmented Play, we developed “Reality Design” as a methodology. This allows us to analyze and demonstrate some of the core principles under which games operate today. They no longer just provide experiences, but rather shape reality from their design. Reality Design is a new interdisciplinary pedagogical research practice, which utilizes game design as an artistic practice. By incorporating elements of avant-garde practices, action research, and critical design, the methodology provides a critical and creative approach to investigating the value of reality games.

The goal of this paper is to contribute to discussions about the Magic Circle in contemporary game design, game studies, play philosophy and education. We begin by outlining how the extension of the Magic Circle is already rooted within the Speculative Dimension of Play. Then we identify key contemporary cultural practices in which Augmented Play is at work, from which our methodology draws inspiration. We are going to discuss two research projects to exemplify our methodology, discussing our design principles and research results. The first, “Paparazzi (Arbeitstitel)” (in English: “Paparazzi (working title)”), focuses on artistic production. This project birthed classes on Augmented Play: the “Reality Design Research Seminars.” These two classes utilized insights from Paparazzi (Arbeitstitel) and developed them further towards pedagogical implementation. We conclude with a brief meditation on what our results mean for contemporary art practices.

2. AUGMENTED PLAY

To research the border between reality and fiction we abandoned secondary literature on the Magic Circle, to specifically contradict Johan Huizinga’s original concept regarding the ontology of rules, with the speculative dimension of play exemplified by Friedrich Schiller. We did this to develop an understanding of the interplay between play and games. Together these present paradox ontologies, a phenomenon our research practice provides empirical access to. By contradicting the ontological and speculative dimension of play we were able to identify fragments of the Magic Circle in numerous cultural practices, which informed the design and research principles guiding our practice.

2.1 Magic Circles

The phenomenon of rule-based play is most prominently expressed by Johan Huizinga's (1938) famous work on cultural play theory, "Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture." In this essay Huizinga explained that games depend upon a clear framing of space and time. According to Huizinga this opens up a "Magic Circle" for the players: a safe environment in which they can generate meaning. Outside of the Magic Circle play is rendered meaningless. Rules form the engine of meaning generation in these otherwise meaningless activities. This core insight of Huizinga regarding the ontological vigor of rule-based-play is key to our research on the shift from experience design to reality design. The magic circle, sustained by the repetitive structure of the play process, defines conceptual borders between play and reality, generating artificial conflict (Salen et al. 2004).

Cyberneticist Gregory Bateson (1954) pointed out that a metacommunicative message, "let's-act-as-if," is found in the play attitude, which allows for paradox ontologies to occur. That metacommunicative message allows secret knowledge, which is accessible only to those who are part of the process. This necessarily means that the players are aware of the artificiality of this conflict, including the boundaries and thus the rules of the game. The Magic Circle becomes a metaphor for outsiders and a binding contract for the players. One function of the contract between players is to ensure that events within the game have no effect on ordinary life. While all activities are real to the same degree, actions within the Magic Circle receive a different significance. However Magic Circles can never be completely isolated from the context in which they are placed. The shift from profane to sacred play becomes possible through the contradiction between the inner experience and the outer experience involved in playful behavior.

2.2 Speculative Dimension of Play

We argue that playing implies the ability to differentiate - a fundamental capability to access reality. But games also have the potential to communicate and balance highly complex structures. This ambiguity is combined in the German language into a single word, encapsulating both Game and Play: "Spiel". The usage of "Spiel" in a sentence defines its meaning. We wish to identify this connection as the speculative dimension of play in western culture. Plato's cave allegory (370 BC) states that behind the experienceable world is another dimension of truth, accessible solely through abstraction and differentiation. What would this so called Theory of Ideas be without the experience of play? One must act "as-if." One must be seduced by the artificial to wake from the dream, which before experienced as playful appeared in the first place to be reality. One must become sensitive to the Speculative Dimension of Play to be able to distinguish the dream as the dream and reality as reality.

Central to this understanding is Friedrich Schiller's (1794/95) play-theory. Through a close study of Immanuel Kant's (1788) "Critique of Practical Reason," Schiller developed an idea of play often found in the field of anthropological theory. According to Schiller, play oscillates between two fundamental human drives: the "sensual drive" and the "formal drive." This speculative movement between the two drives leads to a "Balance of Reality," with the goal to set man free and to cultivate him. His theory provides a deep understanding of the play dialectic. It shows that games have to frame contradictions, since outside of them there is nothing that is relevant to play itself. Breaking into reality creates the friction play needs for meaning. The contrast between passivity and activity - between "it-is-this-way" and "it-is-totally-different" - drives the paradox, its unity and exclusivity breaking the confrontation with reality. The Speculative Dimension of Play has the potential to break the Magic Circle constantly, and so becomes a key to understanding the reality-binding dimension of play activities. Play and games require one another.

2.3 Defragging the Magic Circle in Cultural Practices

We found cultural practices that defragment the Magic Circle, to provide context for our methodology.

2.3.1 Conceptual Art

Since the appearance Marcel Duchamp's work, Augmented Play entered the stage of contemporary art, influencing concept and performance art (Daniels 1992, Joselit 1998). Additionally, the rise and ongoing influence of avant-garde movements, such as Fluxus, undermines the production process of art by using strict rule sets in a subversive way. This ontological surplus of performativity calls for a conceptualization of both experienced and real actions. Thus conceptual art, which fulfills itself in the eye of the observer, became a methodological resource for our work.

2.3.2 Expanded Performances

Performance art emerged at the same time as conceptual art, and it naturally incorporates Augmented Play as a form of pretend play (Lehmann 1999). The merging of fine art with performance art is emerging as communicative praxis (Mersch 2002, Fischer-Lichte 2004). By placing the focus on communication, play is directly implemented into everyday life and its proceedings. Suddenly games involve people who don't like games, connecting strangers and creating an interplay between communication and play. These actions are often referred to as "Expanded Performances" (Jappe 1993). They dissolve the classical border between art and life, art and media, festivals, games, science, social work, etc. and are another central point of interest of our research.

2.3.3 Contemporary Theater

Another important point of reference for our work is postdramatic, contemporary theater. One of its characteristic elements is the inflow of reality (Lehmann 1999). Here real action finds a place beyond fiction. The work of Augusto Boal (1979) is illustrative of this development. We follow Uwe Wirth's (2002) understanding of contemporary theater as a deconstruction of theater itself. This leads to the assumption that one has to look beyond the borders of established cultural institutions to find contemporary theater.

2.3.4 Pervasive Games

Pervasive Games are another crucial methodological resource for our practice (Montola et al. 2009). Pervasive Games extend the Magic Circle. They challenge traditional limitations of games such as their spatial, temporal and social dimensions. A Persuasive Game enables a negation of the playful, artificial character of the game itself. But Pervasive Games also shatter borders between a playful and serious state of consciousness. Because they are staged in the real world and are driven by both uncertainty and ambiguity, the play consciousness inscribed in them slides back and forth between reality and fiction, work and play. Here social norms and behavioral rules are challenged, especially in regard to what is acceptable within the social sphere. Pervasive Games are a major resource linking contemporary art to design practices of Augmented Play.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

Utilizing key design principles of these fields, we choose to shape our research practice according to the following design principles:

3.1 Identity Play

3.2 Social Dimension

3.3 Being In-Control and the Loss of Control

3.4 Narration as Myth Generation

All of these are common in game design strategies that challenge the Magic Circle. However our design principles are unique in the way they apply the Speculative Dimension of Play to empirical research practice. We utilize the speculative dimension of play to balance out contradictions, by approximating the ontological paradox of "Spiel" in our design and research. This approach explains the impossibility of grasping Augmented Play theoretically or practically when enacted as a reality engine. Hence our research design can also be understood as a pedagogical approach for reminding people, in a platonic sense, about the possibility to peek behind the curtain of reality through play.

Our research took place within the GameLab Karlsruhe - a label for game art and pervasive games - situated within the Institute of Postdigital Narration, under the aegis of media art department head Prof. Michael Bielicky. The Institute is part of the University of Arts and Design Karlsruhe (in German: Hochschule für Gestaltung Karlsruhe, or HfG for short), which is located and was founded in close relationship to its partner institution the Center for Arts and Media Karlsruhe (ZKM for short). Around 400 students make up the student body. Most major in media art, others in communication design, product design, art history and media philosophy, or scenography and exhibition design. The HfG Karlsruhe encourages an interdisciplinary approach and thus provides a strong framework to do work on the edge of theory and practice. Consequently all classes are open for all students. This means that student participation is defined by each student's personal interests and motivations. This environment produced two research projects, which we will now introduce.

Paparazzi (Arbeitstitel) is a reality game and meta-artwork designed by Hannes Gerlach, Greta Hoffmann, Adam Rafinski, Marco Zampella, and Moph Zielke in 2011. The idea started as a modified version of the live action role-playing game *Assassins* at the HfG Karlsruhe (Jackson 1981). The team decided to apply its mechanics to the context of art production and reception. *Paparazzi (Arbeitstitel)* was staged as an experimental exhibition project on the border between photography and performance art. It was played between January 26th and May 31st, 2011, at the HfG Karlsruhe, followed by an exhibition and a publication.

From 2011-2012 we held two research seminars on “Reality Design” at the HfG Karlsruhe. The seminars were conducted as rule-based communications, resembling a reality game, tying together research practice, artistic production, play and instructional game design. As the whole class was structured as a game, we were able to research the reality game we played, our roles in it, the context in which it was staged, power structures that emerged from within, and the narration qualities of myth generation.



Figure 1: Scene from the first Reality Design Research Seminar held in the Winter Semester 2011/12 at the HfG Karlsruhe.

In the following we will discuss our principles of reality design according to their application in these two projects. A common emphasis is critical self-thematization, allowing self-contradiction through performance for our research purposes.

3.1 Identity Play

Our research practices emphasize a significant difference between role-play within the traditional model of games and reality games: in reality games the Magic Circle is no longer a barrier differentiating the playful from the ordinary world, but is instead a secret agreement between players who oscillate between the two worlds. A key for this oscillation is identity play within Augmented Play.

In the example of *Paparazzi (Arbeitstitel)* the game gave all participants, independent of their backgrounds, the right to call themselves “artists.” All players became artists after applying for the game, which was also announced as a call for participation in an experimental art exhibition. They participated in the exhibition process by submitting photographic portraits of other players (see Figure 2). After a portrait was taken and acknowledged by the portrayed, the player photographed lost his right to turn in artworks

for the show and then had to give up his target card to his paparazzi, who in return became the next target for the successful player. Even though they lost their right to continue participating in the game as “artists,” the players photographed became part of the exhibition as the subjects of the art.

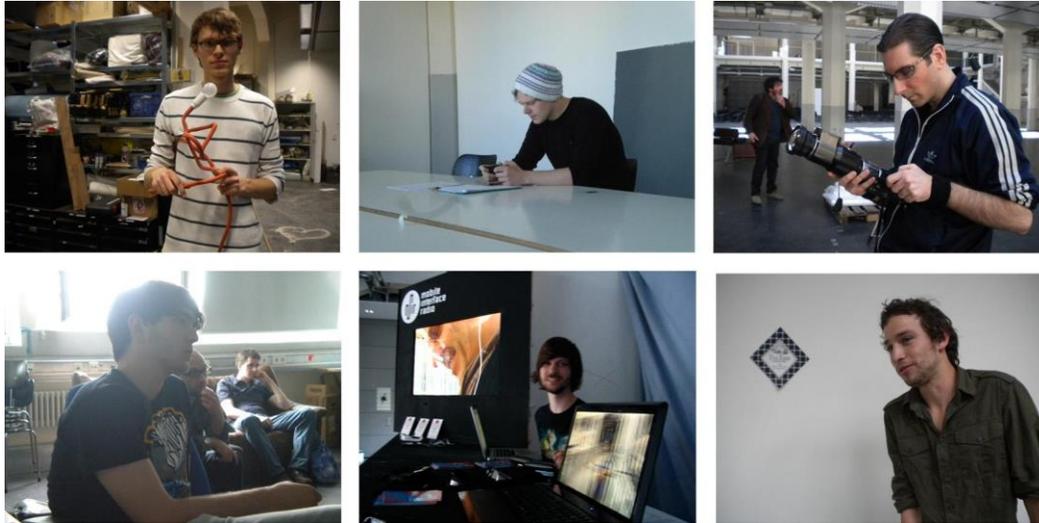


Figure 2: Examples of the Photographs produced through *Paparazzi (Arbeitstitel)*. Photos by Hedi Haase.

In the case of the *Reality Design Research Seminars (RDRS)*, identity play was emphasized through the whole overarching role-play of acting like “researchers.” Even though these seminars were structured as a game, it must be noted that compared with *Paparazzi (Arbeitstitel)* the ultimate goal of our research practice, to keep identity play ambiguously pervasive, was more emphasized since the role-playing students were still graded and frequently reminded about the seriousness of the situation. It is also important to mention that we did not title the research class as a game, either, so it was left to the interpretation of the participants how serious we, as a research community, were about our means and how they should act out their roles in the class. However participants that broke the rules were of course punished through exclusion.

We observed that participants found pleasure and personal strength in enacting their internal roles to the outside world. We decided to turn our attention to internal university politics for the new mechanics that we introduced for the second iteration of *RDRS*. The ambiguity between each character's awareness as a playful character and the seriousness of their efforts turned out to be beneficial for all participants, including us as conductors of the research group. To achieve this we introduced alternative ways to communicate and structured our collaborative research as an academic seminar, which is one of the unique qualities of our research practice.

Our educational reality games showed that players experienced with Pervasive Games are well equipped to define their own playworld situated within the ordinary world. This allows them to carry the playful attitude everywhere and to deal more critically with social constructions, institutions, media, and communication forms. Following our own identity play we can conclude by saying the following: in a ludic society we all become players. The game becomes an attitude of our lives

3.2 Social Dimension

Paparazzi (Arbeitstitel) and *RDRS* exemplified the social extension of games and the thematization of the difference between player and non-player consciousness. We had to develop strategies to introduce the participants in a playful way to the pervasive element of the new identities offered by these games.

In the case of *Paparazzi (Arbeitstitel)* we approached this by building it into the overarching question about the differences between artists and players. We decided to run two separate invitations to all students of the HfG, sent out from different people. The first was the invitation to play a modified version of *Assassins*. The second was a call for participation in an experimental exhibition, described as dealing with the border between photography and performance. Right from the start we blurred the line between artist and player, because we primed participants for each of those mindsets. Furthermore it was interesting to observe for us which invitation style would be more successful. For this audience the call to participate in an experimental exhibition turned out to be the more attractive offer.

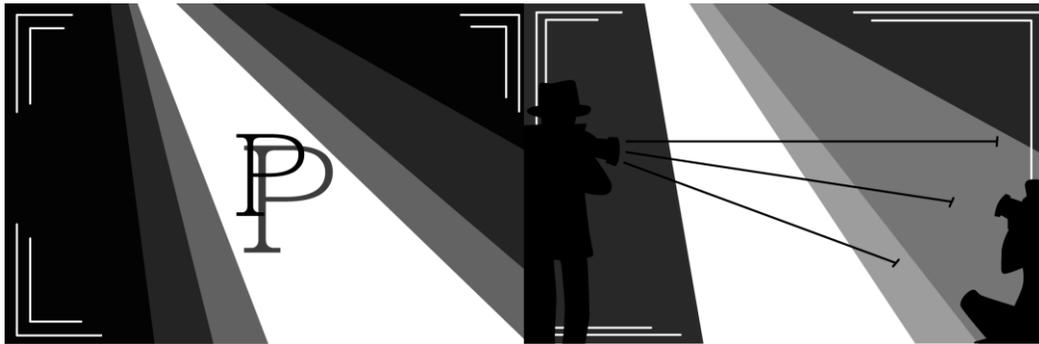


Figure 3: Front and Back of a blank target card for *Paparazzi (Arbeitstitel)*. Designed by Hannes Gerlach and Greta Luise Hoffmann.

A total of 22 students ended up participating. They were asked to give their physical addresses to receive performance instructions, according to which they were asked to design artworks for the show. They received an official letter from the school via mail, which included the rules/performance instruction and a card (see Figure 3) with the name

of their first target. Each player received a card with a different name. The names were real, as was the reason to participate in the game. It was not stated when nor where the portraits should be taken, as this is important to the pervasive nature of the *Assassins* game, turning more than just the facilities of the HfG into the game's playground. We observed that participants reacted very differently to the rules of the game. Some took the game very seriously, starting arguments with other players about what a portrait actually is. Others tried actively to sabotage the game, which can be interpreted as a critique on the authority of cultural institutions hosting exhibitions, in regard to their understanding of what art is or what is not. Both extremes were in the spirit of the experiment, ultimately causing discussions about the social dimensions of important questions such as “what is art,” “what defines an artist,” or “who is the authority for deciding all this.”

In the *RDRS* the social dimension is even more emphasized. The introductory sessions were designed as initiation rituals, which can be regarded as performative acts or cultural performances of a bureaucratic society. (Singer 1972) For the first installment we had students sign a legally binding *research and non-disclosure agreement*. The signed document contained the binding commitment to participate and contribute, ensuring a productive working relationship between the participants to generate a temporal community. This was an unusual gesture for the context, since students at HfG are not used to signing up for classes or making commitments of this type. The *non-disclosure agreement* ensured that student felt secure discussing and working on their research practices collectively, knowing their work would not be shared outside the research group prior to intended release. The *research agreement* ensured that students would seriously pursue a project about Augmented Play, which we could frame as action research in the course of our Reality Design.

For the second seminar we launched a viral campaign, claiming that our seminar will hold a strict 50% gender quota. This targeted a topic prominent in the student body at the time: gender issues, specifically the subject of quotas and the smaller representation of females among the professorate of the HfG. The viral campaign generated the expected interest. To solve the situation we prepared one rule: the underrepresented gender had to decide if and how the quota should be implemented. This gave the underrepresented gender exactly what they asked for: power. They choose to use this power to promote the issue of equalization even further. A new rule was installed in the form of a special research assignment. It stated that all members of the overrepresented gender could remain in the seminar, neglecting the quota, only if they addressed the rector's office directly with the scenario that they would be dismissed from the research class because of a quota. Furthermore they had to ask for the legal basis of this procedure. The intention was to elevate the issue from the game we played up to the level of policy makers. The whole process was accompanied by rich and intense discussions about the topic, both

inside and outside the research community, as well as internal discussions about our methods.



Figure 4: Discussion of the *Gender Quota Rules* in the second *RDRS*, Summer Semester 2013 at the HfG Karlsruhe.

We discovered that in contrast to traditional games, which push for isolation, Augmented Play tends to relate to the surrounding context dynamically. Within this are dangers, as well as social critical opportunities, which are another concern of our research. The Magic Circle allows players to deactivate social conventions and norms for a certain place and a certain time, as in the case of the *Gender Quota Rules*. Thus games do not need to intend a social extension, because we find already within the Speculative Dimension of Play the desire to push these boundaries. The danger however comes into play when the playful reflection generator of the meta-communicative message “as-if” (Bateson 1954) becomes eradicated and totalitarian systems come into being. If one completely destroys the border between reality and fiction under the condition of Augmented Play, one also eliminates the opportunity for the player to have a choice over whether or not she wants to devote herself to this artificial system. To identify totalitarian structures and to learn how to deal with them is theb another key concern of our artistic research on Augmented Play.

3.3 Being In-Control and the Loss of Control

Another question is the alteration of having and losing control. For the game designer it is of interest to know when, where, and how the player is in control. It occurred to us that it is not a question of whether someone is going to be controlled or not, but rather to what degree. The loss of control is an emotional motive in entertainment. Humans want to be seduced. On a meta level the loss of control is philosophically loaded within reflexive play space, and so holds a practical relevance to the experience of the artificial world. However in Reality Games the question of authority is of highly ethical concern. Utilizing performative contradiction, we were able to thematize the question of control in both *Paparazzi (Arbeitstitel)* and *RDRS* in a way that not only led players to reflect upon the contextualized question of power, but also encouraged them to develop their own strategies for overcoming these.

Right from the start the rules of *Paparazzi (Arbeitstitel)* were designed to also work as a performance score. The authors decided deliberately to leave some aspects of the rules implicit. Because the rules stated that the face of a target needed to be in focus and recognizable, discussions emerged among the players about what a portrait actually is. By passing on their target card, portrayed players accepted the photograph as a portrait according to the rules. This resulted in personal interpretations and creative solutions of participants. On top of that, the winner of the game, meaning the artist who submitted the most artworks and managed to stay in the game, became the curator of the exhibition. This way the project brought up questions like: who is the actual author of the artwork? Is it the game design team, the players, or the winner of the game?

For *RDRS* we handed each researcher a facedown unique *Joker Card* at the end of the first initiation (see Figure 5). There were no explicit rules communicated for these *Joker Cards*, so that their function was left to the imagination of the participants - at least at first. In the next session we presented relatively vague rules for these cards: they could be handed in as an excuse for being late, or used beforehand to announce missing one day. We also stated that the cards could be used to enforce a decision in discussions of the seminar structure. These discussions were a core part of our research because they reflected upon the process. They were an elegant means for the participants to communicate with the game itself, making our research seminar subject to collective research.



Figure 5: Left: the only original designed Joker Card, transforming Michael Bielicky's logo. Middle: example of used Joker motive. Right: original design on the back of all cards in the deck. Design by Moph Zielke.

It was fascinating to observe that we as game masters, game authors, lecturers, and heads of the research group became part of the games that we created. We were constantly confronted with losing control to the game, and had to enact our roles in front of the class to ensure a balance between both the fictional and real dimension of the game. Our research practice proved the importance of focusing control in reality game design through the long and intense discussions we had in the course of the Reality Design Research Class about the rules of the game itself. How should *Joker Cards* be used? To which degree does a student have to break the rules of the game to be excluded? We were thrilled to realize that players actually love to experiment and provoke these questions after being introduced to Augmented Play. We encourage every teacher in the field of game design to utilize the insights we gathered from our research practice. It is in fact much more powerful to allow students to think and act by themselves than to shape their understanding according to a strict curriculum in every detail. In order to achieve devotion game designers have to learn to think outside of the box of their own disciplines. They have to accept that the loss of control has a playful nature. Simulation has technical limits unlike creativity and fantasy from which it derives. Sometimes it is necessary to include uncertainty and to treat the players as intelligent beings, rather than following the urge to develop closed illusions.

3.4 Narration as Myth Generation

Both *Paparazzi (Arbeitstitel)* and *RDRS* followed a procedural approach regarding their narration by working with known and unknown factors inside and outside the play communities.

Paparazzi (Arbeitstitel) for examples created a myth about a process that is constantly unfolding, yet disappears once one thinks that it be grasped. The project questioned the unwritten rules of the art world, including the role and understanding of the artist, the process of artistic production, the artwork itself, the curator, an exhibition, a publication, etc. All successfully taken portraits were sent to the game master and uploaded to <http://shuttbug.wordpress.com>. New entries for the blog were announced publicly through the mailing list reaching all students, so that they could rate and comment on the portraits. The blog served as a feedback mechanism for the players, and it also caused discussion about this mysterious process within the HfG since the rules were only given to applicants.



Figure 6: Vernissage Party in the *Paparazzi (Arbeitstitel)* Exhibition, 22nd of July 2011, HfG Karlsruhe.

The exhibition, where the picture of the “artists” were shown, was on display between the 22nd and 29th of July 2011 at the HfG Karlsruhe (see Figure 6). For the Vernissage a party version of the game was staged, also illustrating the process for the guests not involved. The party version was another way to reflect on the design of the game and to emphasize in a performative way the very absurdity of these activities. It also helped establish a myth about a process that nobody was able to oversee or to fully understand.

This way the project provoked discussions on the role and function of authorship, the mechanics of the art industry it mimicked, what an artwork actually is, and the difference or relationship between games and art in general.

For *RDRS* we produced the *Themenspielfeld* (Subject Play Board) as an alternative to a reading list for required presentations. Drawn from the world of the classical videogame “The Legend of Zelda” (Nintendo 1986), three different areas: “Garten der Kunst” (Garden of Art), “?-Gebirge” (?-Mountains) and “Friedhof der Theorie” (Graveyard of Theory) composed the playfield (see Figure 7). Within these we placed our readings, names of artists, game genres, or cultural phenomena. In the research agreement every researcher had committed himself to at least once “visit the Cemetery of Theory, promenade in the Garden of Art, and lead an expedition in the ?-Mountains,” during the research class. After each presentation we drew a line between subjects that had a connection. This way the *Themenspielfeld* was also a feedback mechanism over the course of our collaborative research. The board was on display during all sessions and became an artifact of the project.

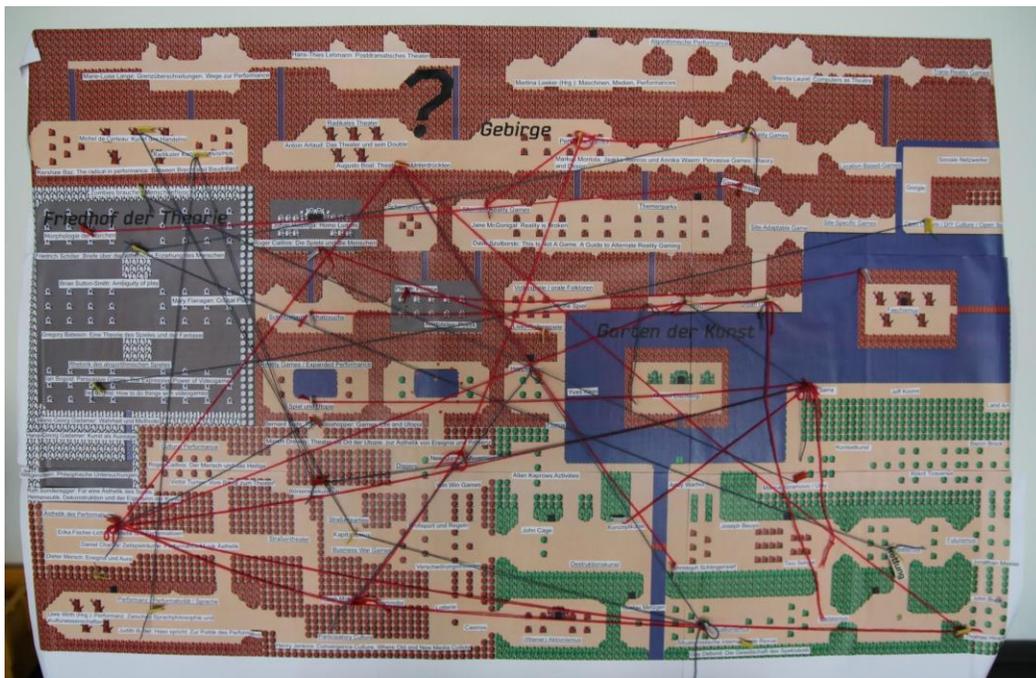


Figure 7: *Themenspielfeld* at the end of the first installment of the Reality Design Research Seminar with all applied connections. Design by Adam Rafinski.

In the case of Reality Design the *Themenspielfeld* shows how the procedural narration inscribed in Augmented Play can be utilized to conduct interdisciplinary research. By placing assignments on a map we created the ground for a loosely lusory narrative, in

which the participants could position their proceedings. In general our very practice itself, for example the usage of a *non-disclosure and research agreement* representing students as researchers or part of the *Gender Quota Campaign*, developed a mythology around the seminar. This mythology was strong enough to not only work as a highly immersive learning experience for the students, but also provoked questions about institutional policy and education practices.

Narration as Myth Generation is demonstrated by the discussion and reactions our research practice received within the context of the academic institution itself. It should be noted however that we were constantly aware of the risks concerning our responsibility as puppet masters and class conductors. The way we were able to adapt the design of our research through playful dialog with our participants proves that narration and myth generation can be utilized as fact generating mechanics in a highly reflective way without corrupting the integrity of the participants.

A key element to ensuring this security was the publication of our research practice, which revealed the process of the ambiguous methodology that we thematized in our games for a broader audience. Consequently this paper is part of that narration. The publication for *Paparazzi (Arbeitstitel)* revealed the whole process to everyone, continuing the game on another level. The book was published in limited edition of 50 print copies, and given to participants as a gift. The *RDRS* publication became part of a final installation at the annual exhibition of the HfG in 2012, called "Sommerloch." Only three copies of the physical publication were produced (see Figure 8). Folders with research materials derived from the seminars were made available to visitors, who were invited to work with them within the exhibition or even to take them home. Both publications are now also available online:

For *Paparazzi (Arbeitstitel)*: [http://postdigital.hfg-
karlsruhe.de/sites/default/files/paparazzi.pdf](http://postdigital.hfg-
karlsruhe.de/sites/default/files/paparazzi.pdf)

For *Reality Design Research Results*: [http://postdigital.hfg-
karlsruhe.de/sites/default/files/Brosch%C3%BCre-RealityDesign_0.pdf](http://postdigital.hfg-
karlsruhe.de/sites/default/files/Brosch%C3%BCre-RealityDesign_0.pdf)

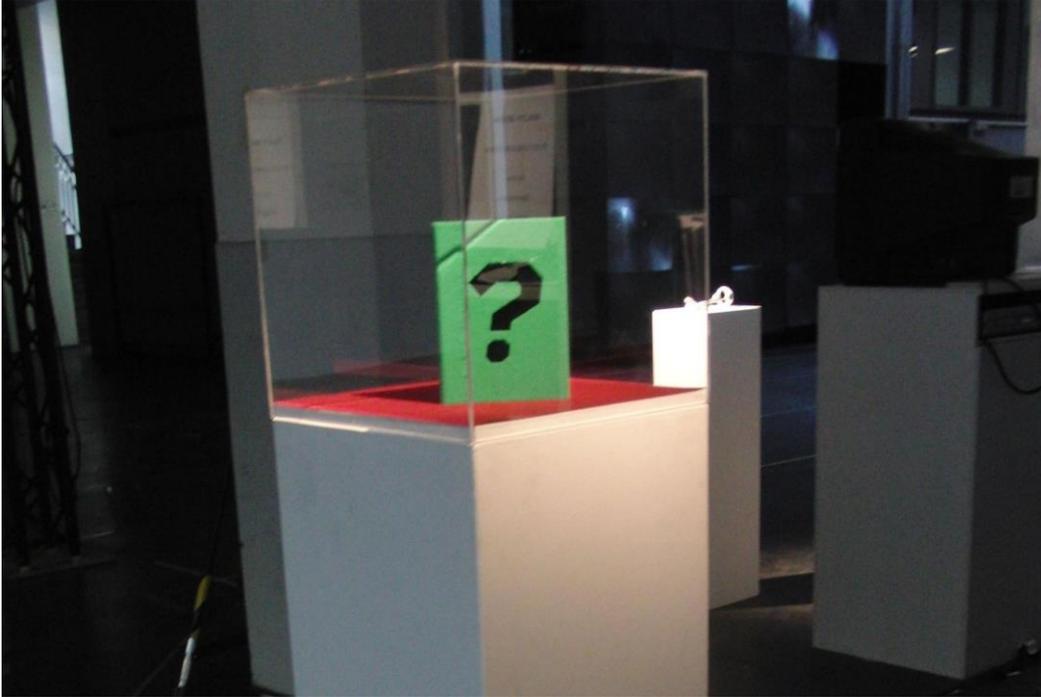


Figure 8: Display view of the *Reality Design Research Results* publication at the “Sommerloch” exhibition 2012.

4. CONCLUSION

The biggest contribution of our research practice concerns the dogmatism of scientific investigation in regard to play and games. One cannot do justice to the ontological paradox of gameplay within a controlled research environment. Consequently play remains an “open term” (Wittgenstein 1953), which cannot be totally structurally deduced and thus does not hold any closed borders. Is Augmented Play at all graspable, when it is impossible to frame the term conceptually? What does this mean for an understanding of art and design practices? Ludwig Wittgenstein underlines the resistance and alterity (or otherness) of the artwork through the experience of play. It is impossible to find an endpoint in play, in which all options are utilized and the game as game would end. On the contrary, the constant reopening of opportunities and challenges in play, in particular of art, is continuing to fascinate and challenge us. Art becomes more than art, it becomes an experimental field of ideas, creativity and responsibility: a research practice. We welcomed the opportunity to test the ontological limits of game design through our methodology, and to present our artistic research practice as a guideline in approximating Augmented Play for the research community. Our research demonstrated that Augmented Play holds the potential to merge art and life, fiction and reality, form and content for a generation of gamers. Reality Design proves that it is possible to free art, design, research,

and theory from the restrictions of both their reasonability and functionality by declaring them as forms of play.

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