



PLAY - Creative Gaming Festival. Between media art and educational mandate: actively experience digital game culture

From October 31st to November 6th, 2022 in downtown Hamburg and online

“Digital games open worlds and are colorful and creative. They place people in new roles, challenge them and take them to their limits by having them play against others or with others,” says Vera Marie Rodewald, artistic director of the PLAY - Creative Gaming Festival. “Above all, however, they take the players into action in different ways and that is exactly what we address at PLAY.” The creative and discursive engagement with media art and the culture of digital games is central to this worldwide unique festival. Particularly important are: joy, curiosity and the collaborative exchange among different target groups.

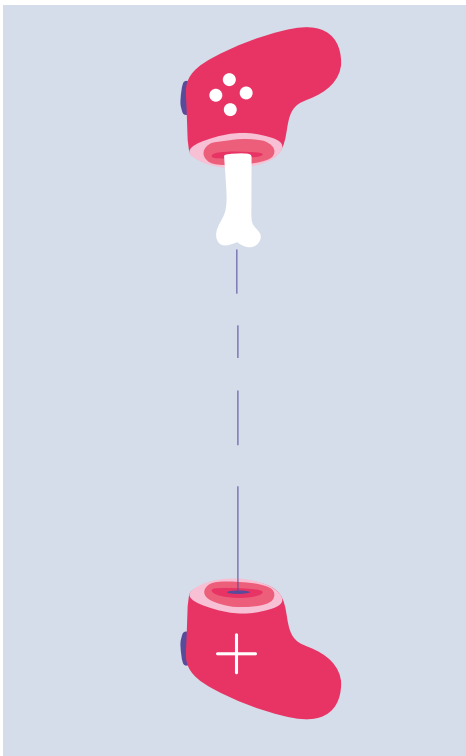
The Initiative Creative Gaming e.V. and the jaf - Verein für medienpädagogische Praxis Hamburg e.V. are hosting the PLAY - Creative Gaming Festival for the 15th time in 2022. From October 31st to November 6th, this year's edition will be held in a hybrid format. In Mönckebergstraße 2-4 (JUPITER), formerly the Karstadt Sport store, visitors experience the festival directly in a large games exhibition, workshops and various other program offerings. But during the pandemic years, the advantages of a strong online presence have become obvious; as a result, PLAY has a potentially even larger and more diverse reach - especially considering the international guests. The festival is aimed at all who like to play or work with and on games. Game lovers of all ages are addressed as well as professionals from the games industry, media art, science and pedagogy. About 5,000 attendees are expected this year.

Also, the exhausting experiences of the past two years are reflected in this year's festival motto. “Take a Breath” is to be understood as an invitation to put everyday pressure and stress behind us for a moment and thus create space for new, creative processes. The games and forms of play that are in focus in 2022 take into account mechanisms that are concerned with tension and relaxation, acceleration and deceleration, as well as such stories and universes that put us under pressure or let us disappear. As always, the main thing is to test the limits of the game worlds, to break rules and to create new elements in the “play space”.



Photo: Bente Stachowske

The exhibition of digital game art is the artistic heart of PLAY. The approximately 40 innovative games by designers and artists from all over the world selected this year are playable in Hamburg and also accessible online. A part of the exhibition is the internationally solicited Creative Gaming Awards. Curator Matthias Löwe says: “Several months before the start of the festival, I first concern myself with taking a closer look at the annual theme and with identifying various approaches. Only then do I start looking for games and interactive creations that reflect these perspectives. What also must be taken into account is that the artists bring along many different perspectives, for example through their personal experiences or unconventional types of production and circumstances. The aim is to provide a selection and arrangement of the creative works that allows the visitors to find an engaging entry-point to the theme complex by simply wandering, exploring and playing.”



In the exhibition, visitors are encouraged to reflect on their own actions. In workshops, hands-on formats and on the open stage, they are able to express their own ideas and thoughts directly. The program for young people is extensive. The festival invites classes to visit the festival on site. In media education expert led events focused on digital game formats participants discover, invent, tinker and program. Home visits provide an expanded offering on career orientation. Further training is organized for teachers and media educators. The Speakers' Corner, in which themes are chosen by the lecturers themselves, focuses on the exchange between specialist groups and all visitors who are interested in digital game culture. Exciting show formats conclude the festival days in a relaxed, exuberant atmosphere.

Playing is a basic human need and digital games have long been part of the everyday culture of young people and adults. As an independent art form, they participate in political discourse and reflect social processes. PLAY provides a stage for current developments in this space and actively works on them, conveys results and gives us impetus to contribute our own thoughts. The festival is an experimental field that stimulates changes of perspective and the active breaking of rules. For this is how we understand the societies and systems in which we live - and how we empower ourselves to make positive changes in them.

What the management team at PLAY22 - Creative Gaming Festival is most looking forward to

Vera Marie Rodewald, Artistic Director

"I am particularly looking forward to the playful approaches in the exhibition that this year raise the pulse or provide periodic respite. But I also hope for lively participation at the Speakers' Corner, which invites all interested parties to share their stories, ideas and concepts about the digital game culture with the PLAY audience. Of course, I can hardly wait to greet the school classes who take part in our game design workshops at the festival. And to finally sniff festival air again!"

Andreas Hedrich, Managing Director

"At PLAY22, like every year, I look forward to new encounters. To get to know different people with other ideas is a highlight for me every year. Celebrating the culture of digital games, being serious and laughing at the same time; these are important aspects of PLAY in its fifteenth year. I am particularly excited to be able to organize a genuine hybrid event. I look forward to the communities who come to PLAY and bring with them their perspectives on games and digital culture."

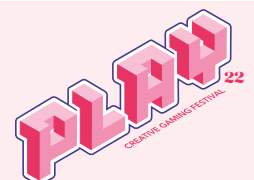
Matthias Löwe, Curator of the exhibition and spokesman for the Initiative Creative Gaming

"As a big fan of mysterious and unusual stories, I am really looking forward to our festival start on Halloween and the nightly actions associated with it. After having developed many interactive and immersive formats for an international audience in the past two years, I am also particularly excited to see whether we will be successful with a hybridity that combines the best of both the online and on site worlds. Appropriate to the theme, it already feels good during the preparation phase to work with the greatest of all teams in a relaxed and constructive atmosphere to connect the known with the newly learned."

I am available at any time for queries and further information and look forward to your editorial consideration.

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