
Intro to live action roleplay (larp)

Raquel Robinson (she/her)

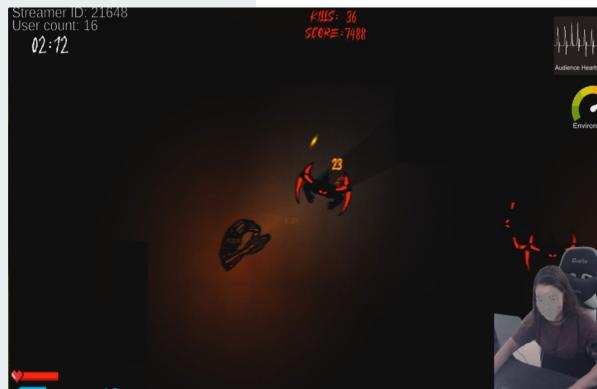
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Who am I?

University of Saskatchewan

University of Saskatchewan,
Interaction Lab

- PhD in Computer Science, 2018-2022 on affective gaming



Ontario Tech University

- Postdoc working with an indie studio making a VR game called Broken Spectre, 2022



Ontario Tech
University,
UXR Lab



University of California, Santa Cruz

- Postdoc working on an educational larp summer camp for middle school girls, 2023
- Taught edu-larp class Spring earlier this year



University of California,
Santa Cruz
Social Emotional
Technology Lab

Plan for the session

- **Ice-breaker activity (~15 min)**
- **Raquel talks about larp/discussion (~20 min)**
- **Bodystorming activity part 1 (~10 min)**
 - Debrief (~5 min)
- **Break (~5 min)**
- **Bodystorming activity part 2 (~15 min)**
 - Debrief (~5 min)
- **Raquel talks a little bit more/discussion (~10 min)**
- **Break (~5 min)**
- **Design a micro-larp (~30 min)**
- **Play through a larp (~15-20 min)**
 - Debrief (~10 min)

Two truths and a lie with Alberto, José, and Raquel

Two truths and a lie with yourselves (~10 min)

(Break into groups of four)

What is larp, or 'lajv'?

Who has larped?

Kinds of role playing games (RPGs)

- **Virtual/Digital:** text-based or graphical through a computer interface
- **Tabletop:** Usually played sitting at a table, sometimes with dice, character sheets, miniatures; less physical and more verbal
- **Live action role-play (larp):** Physically embodied role playing sometimes with costumes and props; special locations

What is larp overview

Live Action
Role Play

Co-created storytelling
in the physical space



Photo: Anna Gerdén, Tekniska museet

Elements of larp (loose structure with room to exercise player choice)

- World
- Story/happenings/agency
- Roles
- Rules

Roles and Characters

Roles - Functions

(pilot, doctor, bounty hunter)

Characters - Feelings and personality

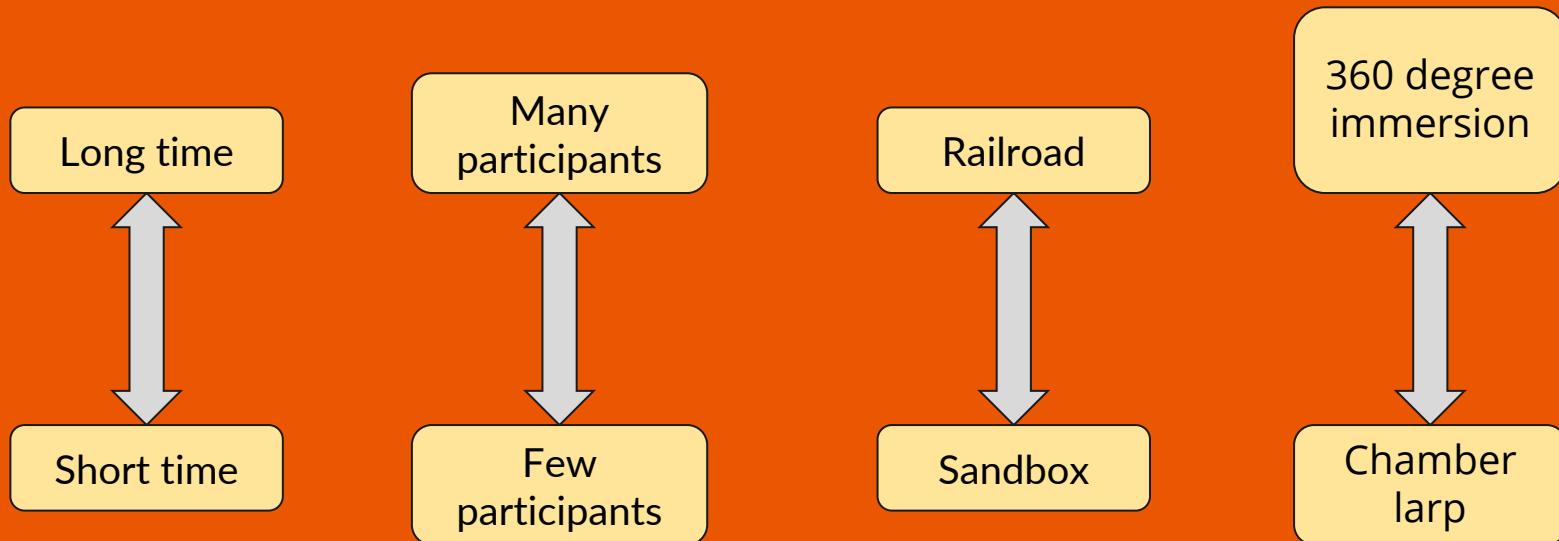
(grumpy, jolly, hopeful, nervous)



What is larp - deeper explanation

- 1) The enactment of a character in a **co-created fictional world**
- 2) **Magic circle of play** - rules of reality differ from daily life (Montola 2008)
- 3) Fiction exists mostly in the minds of the participants, e.g. **subjective diegesis** (Montola 2003)
- 4) Audience as co-creators, e.g. **first-person audience** (Sandberg 2004; Stenros 2013)
- 5) Role-playing games can be **any genre, setting, or theme.**

Spectras of larp



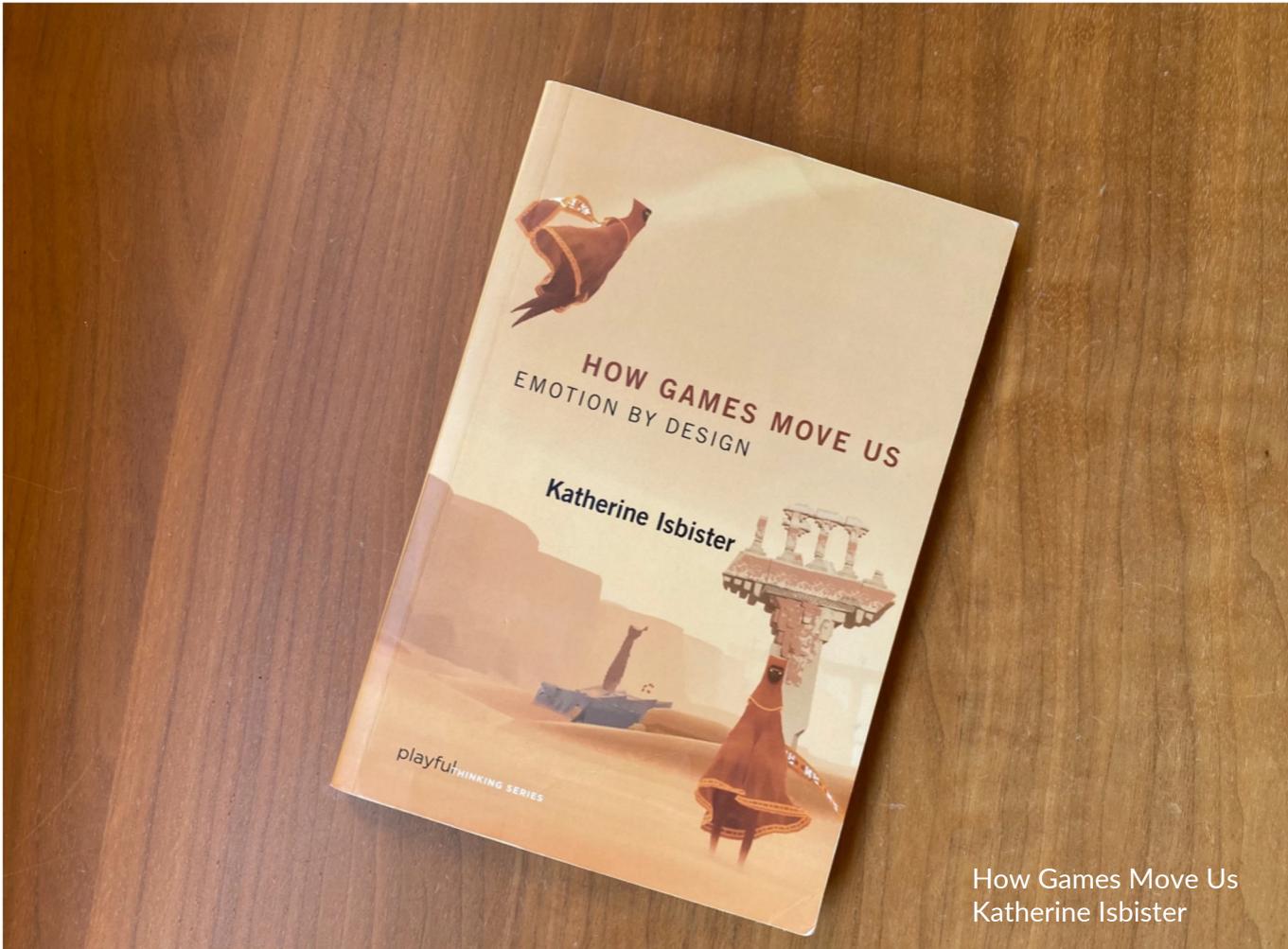
Other forms of larp

- **Childhood pretend play:** Loose frameworks for rules/characters, focuses on emergent imagination; sometimes played alone and sometimes played with others (e.g., chase play, domestic play, professional play, dark play)
- **Improv:** can range from entire performance to warm-ups in theater, usually comedy; short scenes and characters
- **Educational role-play:** Based on learning goals or parameters as a form of experiential learning, usually used to train specific competencies either technical or social or both (military, education, health care, therapy)
- **Therapeutic role-play:** Embodied role-playing (e.g., drama therapy, family constellations, internal family systems)

**What are some strengths of
games in more general terms?**

Strengths of roleplay and larp experiences (and games in general)

- Emotionally engaging experiences are more memorable
- Games can make you feel personal emotions such as “guilt” and “pride” that is hard to capture through other mediums like books and movies
- Can allow you to feel a sense of *community*
- Exploration of *identity*



How Games Move Us
Katherine Isbister

What is it not? (but related to it)

Reenactment

Theater/scene performance

Audience culture (there is no audience in larps!)

Embodied design methods (more on later)

Impro theater

Cosplay



Examples of embodied roleplaying games



Astaire
Jimmy Zhou



Mad Mixologist
Eddie Melcer

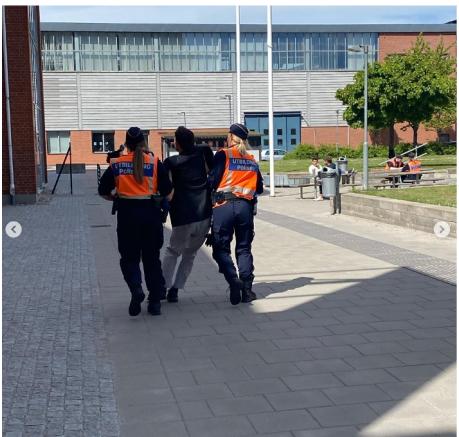


Hotaru
Katherine Isbister

YaMove!
Katherine Isbister



Larp in society (particularly in
the Nordic region)...



Malmö University
Department for police work



Østerskov Efterskole





Activities where everyone participates, in opposite to being observers, teach people to take responsibility for themselves and others. Our aim is to help people practice their imagination and creativity and to offer a space where they can dare to challenge themselves and grow. We want to contribute to the making of a braver world where mankind, the

Our contribution is our method that effectively enhances the participants growing as people and develop their own initiative, self trust and abilities for cooperation. Our goal for larp as a artform is to make it available for a wider audience. We work towards this goal by organizing short free of charge larps where we contribute with all



Turings Fråga

Some common genres and types



Fantasy larps

Photos: sosayweall_photography, Larpology



Historical



Scifi and post-ap



Photos: larpology



Photo: Milon Ekbom



Abstract/ symbolic

And many others...

Edu-larp

Educational larps

Larps used as a tool for learning

Formal and informal learning situations

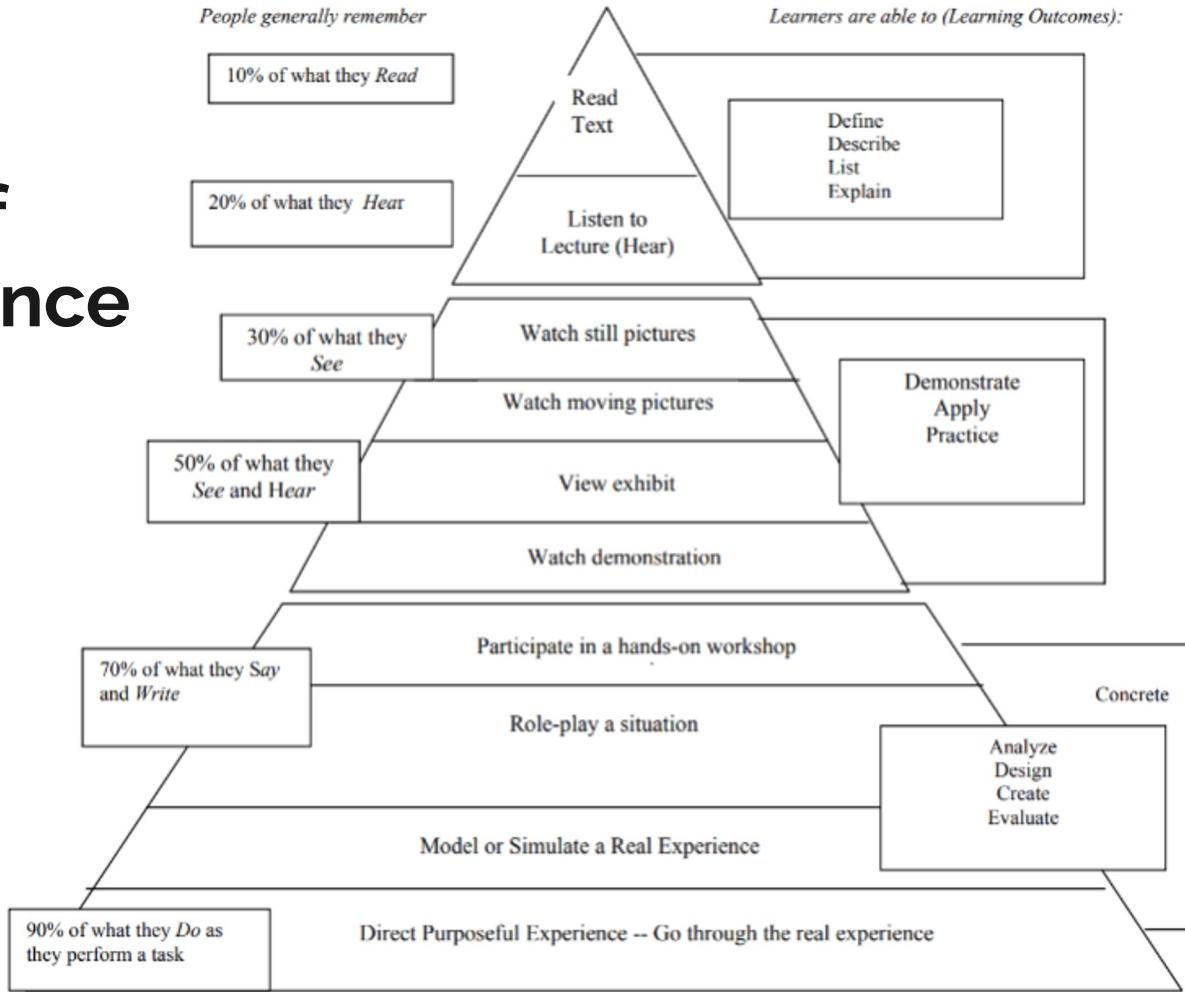


Photos: LajvVerkstaden, the GIFT project

Dale: Cone of experience

People generally remember

Learners are able to (Learning Outcomes):



Source: Adapted from E. Dale, Audiovisual Methods in Teaching, 1969, NY: Dryden Press.

How is all this applicable to you as game designers?

Benefits of engaging in larp and larp-like experiences

More diverse range of prototyping skills

Get better at thinking on the fly, hones your improv and problem solving skills

Allows you to better design for more physical experiences in VR/AR

Embodied Ideation Methods

Repping

Experience
Prototyping
Interaction
Relabeling
Brainstorming in-the-wild
Use-case Theater

Scenario
Enactment
Bodystorming
Service Walkthrough

Embodied Storming

Strong Prototyping



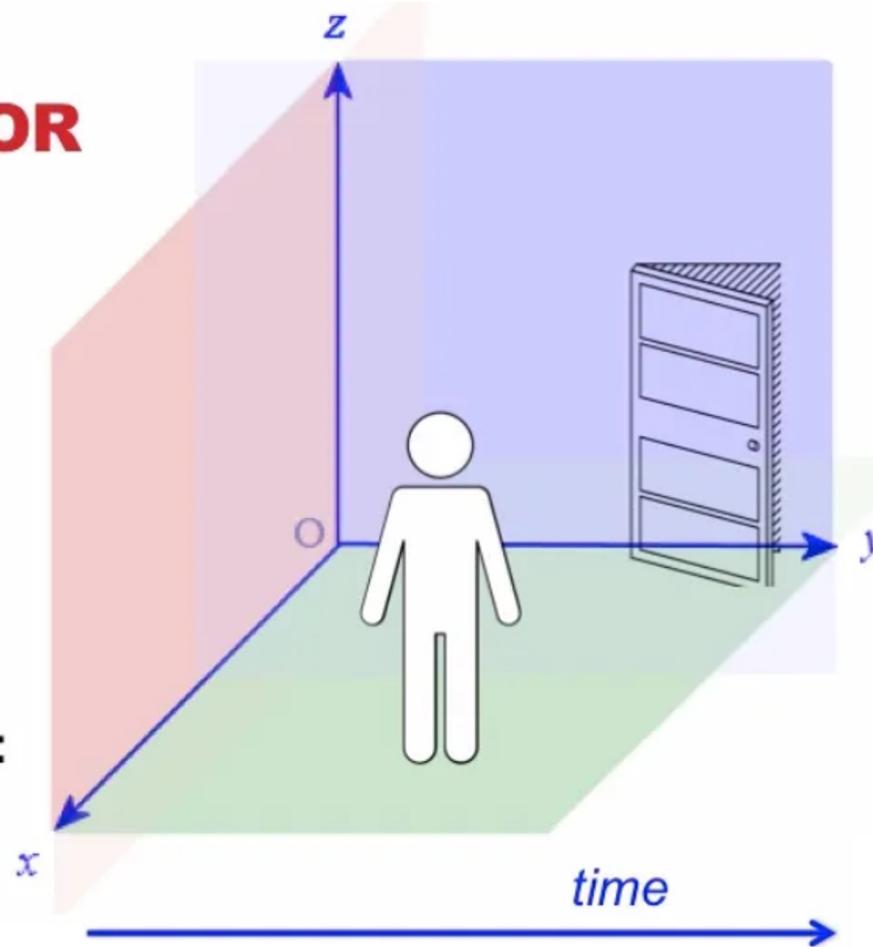
Why bodystorming?

- It's fast. Nothing to build. Nothing to program.
- Every action on stage tells a story, encouraging the marriage of narrative and mechanic.
- Act First. Think Last. Get out of your head. Welcome the unexpected action or response.
- Play as a team. Fun, low-pressure collaboration.
- Immediate Feedback. The dynamic between the performer and audience is powerful and the response to bodystorming is immediate, requiring little synthesis.

ACTOR AS CO-CREATOR

your choices
create a
composition...

- In 3-D space
- Over time
- In relation to:
People
Objects
Architecture



Use to create mechanics/rules/stories

Create a “Game” recipe by detailing:

- Environment
- Events
 - Player A moves ahead of Player B
- Ingredients
 - E.g., 1 potential action and response
 - E.g., create a physical representation of the environment

To consider while boystorming the next activity...

- Turn-taking (as a way to manage participation)
- Show, don't tell
- Continue until exhaustion (of each idea)

Bodystorming exercise: Designing a more engaging classroom (~10 min)

Setting: this class

Objective: Make the learning experience more engaging

Debrief

Break

Bodystorming exercise: Design powerups in an audio racer game (~15 min)

Objective: Design power ups for a racer game that uses audio cues as the primary mechanic

Constraint: No use of eye-sight

Debrief

Post-larp debrief/reflections (always good to have!)

Questions to guide the post-larp discussion such as:

- How did it feel to play the scenario?
- What did you learn?
- How would you change it?

What does a larp facilitator do?

Facilitation! (to name a few)

The facilitator will indicate clearly when the larp starts and ends!

Provides rule guidance

Assigns roles to folks joining the larp

Larp setup logistics

If there are educational goals, makes sure to guide the experience so they are met



Aspects of larps to consider in your design...

Who will facilitate?

Vision for the larp

World building - backstories

Happenings/Events

Facilitators and Non Player Characters (NPCs) (e.g., list of roles/characters)

Practical planning (e.g., what is the actual setting?)

Game organization doc



Safety techniques

Cut - hold your hands above your head to stop scene anytime

Door is always open - leave the room anytime, no questions asked!

Checkin - OK symbol to ask if buddy is OK during the larp?

Design Exercise! Design a larp + then we will choose one to play

World

Happening

Roles

Rules

Educational goal (if there is one)

Make a micro larp/scene or edu-larp we can play out in this room together

More larp resources for you...

NORDIC LARP WIKI

Nordic Larp Wiki
NordicLarp.org
Nordic Larp talks

Navigation
Community portal
Recent changes
Random page
Help

Tools
What links here
Related changes
Upload file
Special pages
Permanent link
Page information
Cite this page

Print/export
Create a book
Download as PDF
Printable version

Knutepunkt-books

From Nordic Larp Wiki

Since 2001 the Knutepunkt conferences have been accompanied by books on larp theory with the exception of the Knutepunkt 2002 conference in Stockholm.



The official Knutepunkt books series of Knutepunkt 2013

Contents [hide]
[+] 1 List of publications

List of publications

2000's

- *The Book - Knutepunkt 2001*
- *As Larp Grows Up - Knutepunkt 2003*
- *Beyond Role and Play - Sömlukkota 2004*
- *Dissecting Larp - Knutepunkt 2005*
- *Role, Play, Art - Knutepunkt 2006*
- *Lifelike - Knutepunkt 2007*
- *Playground Worlds - Sömlukkota 2008*
- *Larp, the Universe and Everything - Knutepunkt 2009*



Nordic Larp Talks

@nordiclarptalks 931 subscribers 122 videos

Nordic Larp Talks is a series of short, entertaining, thought-provoking and ... >

nordiclarptalks.org

LARP DESIGN

CREATING ROLE-PLAY EXPERIENCES

Edited by
Johanna Kujala, Jarkko Stenvinkel, Anne-Sophie Grön,
Anna H. Mjøsland, and Ole Nissen