



## **Immersive Days #3: Agents in Play** ***Inter Arts Center***

22–24, 26–27 NOVEMBER 2023

### **PROGRAMME**

INSTALLATIONS AT IAC, 22–24, 26–27 NOVEMBER, 13:00–17:00

Ali Eslami

*A Stretch of time.* Video installation. Location: Black Room.

*False Mirror.* VR Experience.

Maren Dagny Juell

*Monument for Sim Inventory.* AR-work. Location: Research Platform

*Lick Pick Kick.* VR installation. Location: VR/Sound lab.

Halla Steinunn Stefánsdóttir

*Þytur.* Sound installation of 9 mono-channels. Location: Café area.

Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> November

13:00–13:45 *Mobilized: An essay pretending to be a game.* Nea Landin & Gabriel Widing  
Location: Red Room. *No registration needed.* [Read more about Mobilized here.](#)

15:45–16:45 *River Biographies.* Lundahl & Seidl. Max 20 pers. Location: Red Room  
*The registration is already closed.* [Read more about River Biographies here.](#)

17:30–18:00 *Violin with Þytur.* Halla Steinunn Stefánsdóttir. (Olofsson & Stefánsdóttir, 2021).  
Concert. Location: Café area.

**Full-day Seminar with registration only. *The deadline for registration has passed.***

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November

8:30–9:00      Coffee

**Seminars in the Red Room**

9:00–9:10      Introduction.

9:10–9:55      *Entangling Heritage: Supporting (new) Museum Communities, Stories, and Agencies Through Digital Games and Critical Play.* Lissa Holloway-Attaway.

9:55–10:20     *Artist talk.* Maren Dagny Juel.

Coffee break

10:40–11:15    *Ludo-Immersive Opera: Principles and Play.* Hedvig Jalhed.

11:15–12:00    *Open Play: the PlayLab Games and Performance research and community performing arts platform.* Lars Kristensen and Rebecca Rouse.

Lunch break

13:10–14:10    *Presentations/dialogue.* Gabriel Widing and Lundahl & Seidl.

14:10–14:40    *Of listening and mediation within ecological sound art.* Halla Steinunn Stefánsdóttir.

Coffee break

15:00–15:45    *A Stretch of Time / False Mirror.* Ali Eslami

15:45            Discussion.



## PRESENTATIONS

### **Entangling Heritage: Supporting (new) Museum Communities, Stories, and Agencies Through Digital Games and Critical Play**

Presenter: **Lissa Holloway-Attaway**, University of Skövde.

Interactive digital media, and in particular digital games, are increasingly present in museums and their newly extended communities and cultural spaces to help engage visitors. The ever-growing presence of games and playful digital forms offers multiple ways to mediate a wide variety of interactive cultural expressions. Through their unique narrative forms, these games and stories may re-tell and re-imagine histories and heritage through multiple perspectives. This multiplicity, often supported by enabling a range of entangled agents and agencies to re-tell traditional stories in innovative ways, may also support the inclusion of complex individual expressions and voices from traditionally marginalized communities. In my presentation I will share some experiences working within, and without, museums and emerging museum spaces to formulate new ways of telling and playing with histories.

### **Artist talk**

Presenter: **Maren Dagny Juell**, Oslo based artist working with moving image and installation.

Maren Dagny Juell is an artist working with moving image, installation and VR/AR. With absurdity and humour, the works deal with new technology and language with a focus on human adaptability and agency. She constructs scenarios and narratives borrowed from sci-fi literature, computer games and instruction videos.

Maren investigates embodiment in VR and AR installations by inviting the viewer to experience how the sensory apparatus can be effective in a virtual and physical space at the same time.

In this presentation she will present previous VR and AR works and a couple of work in progress. She will focus on how she actively uses game mechanics and tools to create a user experience but also as a way of referencing visual culture and storytelling.

### **Ludo-Immersive Opera: Principles and Play**

Presenter: **Hedvig Jalhed**, indie opera maker and PhD in Performance in Theatre and Music Drama. What kind of immersion can opera as live-performed artistic practice offer? And how can operas be designed as games to activate visitors as players? In her practice-led research, Hedvig Jalhed has developed artistic strategies for the integration of visitors as playing agents into ludic chamber operas. Her investigative works include the conceptualization and realization of promenade performance in urbex environments, blackbox music drama, and one-to-one micro-operas. The theoretical framework for what she refers to as “ludo-immersive opera” combines ludology with musically driven dramaturgy and relates to the tension between Wagnerian and Brechtian approaches to opera. With examples from her doctoral dissertation and her ongoing research, she outlines the creative and critical possibilities with the format and discusses how they affect the operatic artists as well as the understanding of the artform’s potential to engage and captivate people.

### **Open Play: the PlayLab Games and Performance research and community performing arts platform**

Presenters: **Rebecca Rouse** and **Lars Kristensen**, University of Skövde.

The presentation introduces PlayLab, an experimental research, performance, and teaching space that is collaboratively led by the University of Skövde and Skövde Municipality’s Culture division. PlayLab defines games as structured experiences that centre play as an interaction mode, highlight social aesthetics, and often include boundary systems like rules; defines technologies as objects that are either digital or mechanical systems for experience design, which have a performative nature revealed through human interaction; and defines the performing arts as people-centred artistic traditions focusing on the human body as an expressive medium. Politically, PlayLab values incompleteness and work-in-progress aesthetics as productive and necessary for creative innovation, and reflects these values in the structure of the the organisation itself, which will always remain in progress and growth. Through this interdisciplinary theoretical and political perspective on games, technologies, performing arts, and people, PlayLab presents a range of new works, classes, and projects each year, now including the LudoKonst festival.

Reporting on initial offering of LudoKonst, we discuss the theme of intimate connection that emerged across all works, with several presented to a single audience member at a time, and offer reflections on ways in which this intimate configuration may be a response to current cultural and social needs. We interrogate the positioning of technologies in what we identify as a cultural longing for human intimacy. We also provide frank evaluations of the practical, technical and logistical challenges faced in producing a festival of immersive interactive new works for the public, and look ahead to future iterations of LudoKonst and more at PlayLab, inviting collaboration from fellow Immersive Days participants.

### **Presentations/dialogue**

Presenters: **Gabriel Widing** and **Lundahl & Seidl**

In this joint presentation we will learn from experiences by Nea Landin & Gabriel Widings explorations of the potential of immersive technology to stimulate new types of interactions, decision-making, movement and collective action that can provide an aesthetic experience.

The artistic duo Lundahl & Seidl will talk about their game-related works such as Garden of Ghost Flowers, an ongoing experiential lab of technology, resonance and non-human agency and also about Pseudomonas Fountain, a new commission of an AR work for the exhibition Vävda Rum. In this work the artists discuss reciprocity and the possibility of sharing a common world, within a monstrous digitally augmented aggregate. Can augmentation of realities afford a collective deepening and expansion of Hanna Arendts notion of common sense through a polyphony of different perspectives, including Umwelts that are more than human such as animals, plants, microbes, machines, weather systems and entire landscapes?

### **Of listening and mediation within ecological sound art.**

Presenter: **Halla Steinunn Stefánsdóttir**, Performer, composer and curator. PhD in Artistic Research in Music.

This talk aims to provide insight into the listening practices of ecological sound art, including its technological mediation, through examples from the author's own practice. By sharing documentation of performance, curation and composition I will unpack how phenomenological variation is inherent to its technologically mediated processes, as well as in the analytical forms of listening enacted through stimulated recall and micro-phenomenology. As a result, the presentation will shed light on the multiple entities at play in such listening practices.

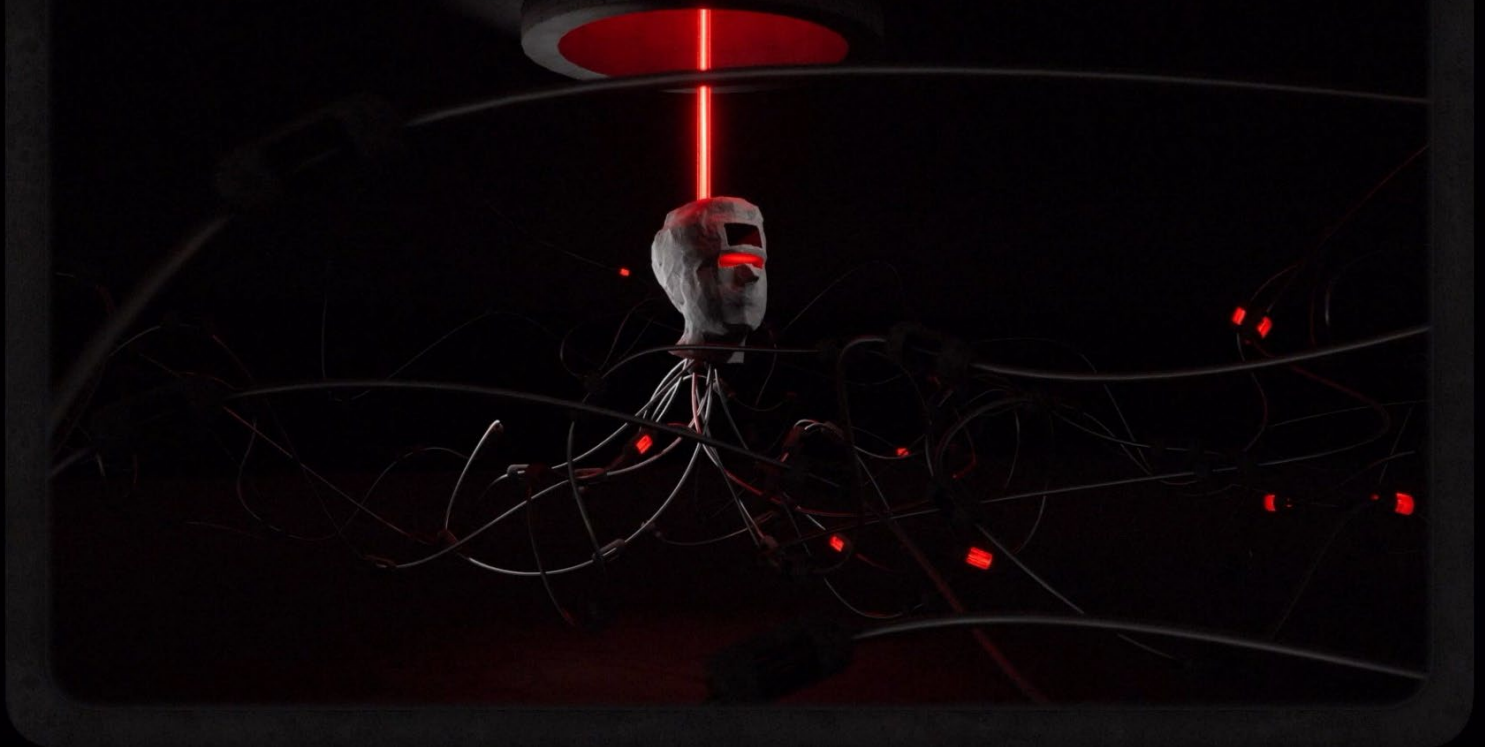
### **A Stretch of Time / False Mirror**

Presenter: **Ali Eslami**, Iranian artist based in Amsterdam.

The short film, "A Stretch of Time" is the final chapter in Ali Eslami's project False Mirror, an artistic exploration of post-human life in digital spaces, an open-ended VR initiative, where the primary goal was to explore and create a virtual inner space, emphasizing on process rather than the outcome. In the film, Eslami utilized the virtual domain of "False Mirror" as a film studio, further exploring the idea of discovering and interacting with a vast database of memories housed in a basement. Among these memories, some appear familiar and lived by the protagonist, while others manifest as virtual artifacts from unknown realms.

The five-year False Mirror project aimed to utilize imagination and engineering to construct new living spaces and confrontations. Over time, this process became a means of exercising agency that was not possible in the surrounding reality. The attempt was to synthesize a reality that buffers conflict imposed in the everyday enforced chaos of the Middle East, a situation that is never chosen but always given. Giving the courage to build a world from bottom up, developed through a practice of agency and play.





## BIOGRAPHIES

**Lissa Holloway-Attaway** is an Associate Professor in Media Arts, Aesthetics, and Narration in the Division of Game Development within the School of Informatics at the University of Skövde (Sweden). She is the leader for the GAME (“games, art, media, experience”) Research Group, and she teaches in the games and Informatics education, from undergraduate to PhD levels. Her background is in theatre performance, literature, and digital culture/media studies, and she works across many digital media forms, from digital art, to electronic literature, and games, with a focus on socio-cultural systems and user engagement. Her creative and critical work has been published, exhibited and performed in a number of international venues. Her current research is focused on emergent media experiences (AR/VR/MR), interactive digital narrative, sound-based digital interactive experiences, digital cultural heritage games, and environmental feminist posthumanities.

**Maren Dagny Juell** is an artist working with moving image, installation and VR/AR. Maren was born in Oslo, Norway where she currently has a studio. She received her MA from Chelsea College of Art (London) in 2004. Most recent solo shows have been at Trondheim Center for Electronic Arts (2023), Tenthaus (2021), Atelier Nord Oslo (2019), Trafo Kunsthall (2018), Podium Oslo (2017) and Trøndelag Senter for Samtidskunst (2018).

**Hedvig Jalhed** is a trained opera singer and founder of the independent group Operation Opera (2010) and since 2013 the artistic director of the Halland opera & vocal festival. In 2022, she earned a PhD in Performance in Theatre and Music Drama at the Academy of Music and Drama in Gothenburg, after having conducted a practice-led artistic research project in interactive and immersive chamber opera. For the position as interim director at IAC, she is taking a time out from her work as project manager at the Malmö Academy of Music.

**Rebecca Rouse** is an Associate Professor in Media Arts, Aesthetics, and Narration in the Division of Game Development at the University of Skövde. Rouse holds a PhD in Digital Media from the Georgia Institute of Technology (Atlanta, GA), an MA in Communication & Culture from the joint program at York University and Ryerson University (Toronto, Canada), and a BA in Theatre Studies and German Studies from Brown University (Providence, RI). Rouse's research focuses on investigating new forms of storytelling with new technologies such as immersive and responsive systems for theatrical performance, interactive installation, movable books, and games. This design work dovetails with Rouse's research in critical pedagogies and design methods, media theory, and history of technology.

**Lars Kristensen** has an MA (European Civilization) and an MPhil (Slavonic Languages) from the University of Glasgow and in 2010 he completed a PhD (Film Studies) at the University of St. Andrews. After a couple of years as a post-doc research associate at the University of Central Lancashire, he started his position in 2013 as Senior Lecturer in Media Art, Aesthetics and Narration at the University of Skövde. His research focuses on the theory and criticism of moving images, which includes computer games. His approach is analytical and historical, examining both the visual representation and the industry that produces the images.

**Nea Landin** is a professional dancer, performer and artist. **Gabriel Widing** is a director and game designer. Together they will perform a Malmö premiere of their participatory, interactive work, “Mobilized: An essay pretending to be a game”, where the audience activates themselves and each other by following instructions, making choices and interacting via mobile phones in a shared space.

**Lundahl & Seidl** live and work in Stockholm. Their immersive solo projects reinterpret the medium of the exhibition as interpersonal processes via choreography, matter and time. Presented around the world, notably at Royal Academy of Art in 2014, Gropius-Bau in 2016, and Kunstmuseum Bonn in 2017. Group Exhibitions include the 8th Momentum Biennale of Nordic Contemporary Art 2015 (NO), ‘An Imagined Museum’ Centre Pompidou Metz 2016-2017 (FR), the 3rd Kochi Muziris Biennale 2016-2017 (IN), and a recent commission: Echoes of Alternative Histories at Staatstheater Kassel, which coincided with Documenta Fifteen. In the fall of 2022, the duo was visiting artists at the ACT Programme at MIT.

Violinist, composer, and curator **Halla Steinunn Stefánsdóttir** is born in Iceland but based in Malmö, Sweden. She has been the artistic director of Nordic Affect since its inception in 2005 and made numerous appearances with the ensemble at festivals and concert venues in Europe and USA. Her compositional output and commissions have spanned everything from electroacoustic compositions to sound and media installations. Stefánsdóttir’s playing and compositions are featured on albums by the Carrier Records, Brilliant Classics, Musmap, Bad Taste Records, Tally, and Sono Luminus labels.

**Ali Eslami** is an Iranian Artist based in Amsterdam. His work deals with long-term, practice-based research that builds and grows through speculative thinking and world-building. His work engages and plays with temporal and spatial investigations of memory, human cognition, and emotions. Often results in the form of poetic engineering as journeys to seek the potential that lies in the blurred lines between the real and unreal. His engineering background and passion for video games nurtured an obsession with cybernetics and computation and continue to build his curiosity towards the shifting roles of form and function that create virtual worlds. Often utilizing various mediums such as VR, Film, Writing, Installation, and performance lectures. In 2016, his VR project won the IDFA DocLab Award for “Best Immersive Non-fiction”. and in 2020 the Golden Calf for Best Interactive at Nederlands Film Festival with fellow artist Mamali Shafahi for Nerd\_Funk project.

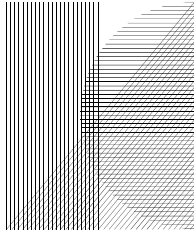
### **Immersive Days #3: Agents in Play**

22–24, 26–27 November 2023 (closed on Saturday)

Inter Arts Center (IAC), 4th floor, Bergsgatan 29, Malmö

[See the detailed programme here.](#)

Immersive Days #3 is organized in collaboration with the Division of Game Development at University of Skövde.



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