

Tommi Vasko

Doctoral researcher, Aalto DoD

Gaming Sustainability Transitions

– Transition games as mechanisms
for emergent transition narratives

BA – Graphic Design, Aalto university
MDes – Design, Sandberg Instituut
MRes – Artistic Research, Sint Lucas Antwerp

- How do transition games reimagine and enact agencies and strategies for sustainability transitions?
- What kinds of game mechanics do transition games use to operationalise and envision socio-technical transitions and “safe and just” lifestyles?

Lecture / Intro

13:15-14

What is my
background in
games and LARPs?

How games and
role-playing
relate to design
and research?

What is
role-playing?

Role-play

14:15-15:30

1. Getting into
characters
2. Role-play
14:15-15
3. Debrief
15-15:30

Free play session

15:45-16:45

Time to try
different
sustainability
related
(research) games

or, play another
scene of the
larp



CLIMATE ACTION NEGOTIATION
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1046878119890643>



CLIMATE ACTION MEGAGAME
<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:liu:diva-173895>



Transition
games:

Narrate
sustainability
transitions

Social
processes

Models of socio-
technical and
ecological systems



How these games narrate sustainability transitions?
What kinds of narratives are possible?



What kinds of meaningful decisions and active roles players can take?



Transition games:

Narrate sustainability transitions

Social processes

Models of socio-technical and ecological systems

Summer Schools

TROJAN HORSE SUMMER SCHOOL
<https://trojanhorse.fi>

Critical practices

Embodied knowledge

Alternative
educational
institutions





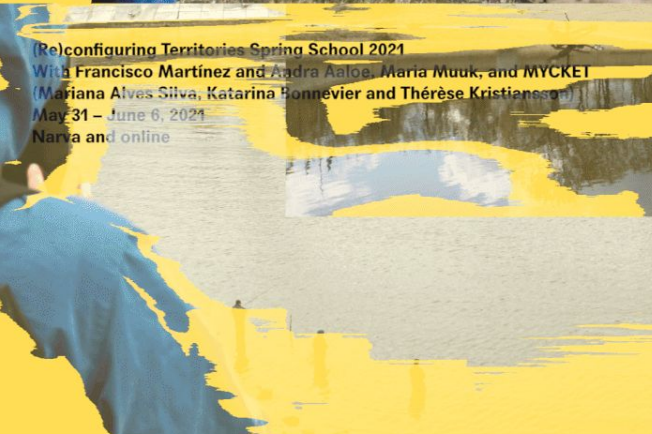
(Re)configuring Territories
With Mariana Alves Silva, Katarina Bonnevier and Thérèse Kristiansen
June 6, 2021
Narva and online



(Re)configuring Territories Research programme



(Re)configuring Territories
<https://reconfiguringterritories.net>

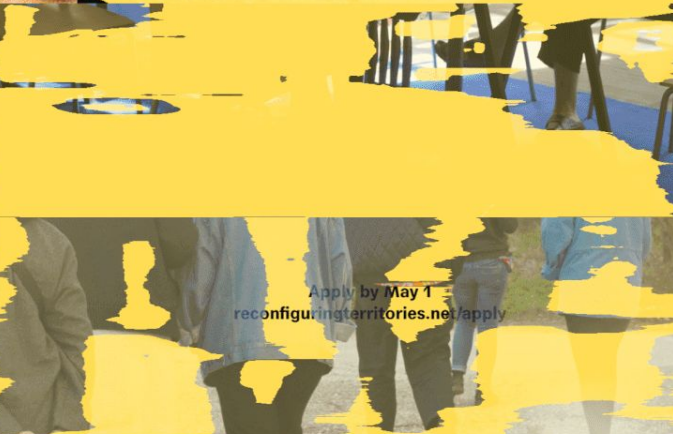


(Re)configuring Territories Spring School 2021
With Francisco Martinez and Aadra Aaloe, Maria Muuk, and MYCKEI
(Mariana Alves Silva, Katarina Bonnevier and Thérèse Kristiansen)
May 31 – June 6, 2021
Narva and online



Post-Brokenness

Obscenie



Apply by May 1
reconfiguringterritories.net/apply



Situatedness

Design anthropology

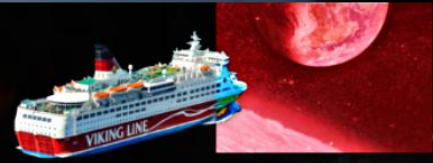






XENOPHILIA
XENOPHOBIA
XENOPOLITICS

COMING SOON
DYSTOPIA
FUTURE
NON-FICTION
UTOPIA



Sometimes one has to travel to another planet in order to understand what's going on in one's own.

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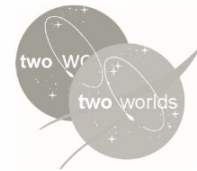
NÖRTTIMUOTOILU-
SYMPOSIUM

NERDY DESIGN SYMPOSIUM

FEBRUARY 10-12, 2017
HELSINKI-STOCKHOLM-HELSINKI

You will encounter a stranger
with whom you can build
whole new design worlds.

NERDY DESIGN SYMPOSIUM
<https://trojanhorse.fi/symposium>



NÖRTTIMUOTOILUSYMPIOSIUM THE NERDY DESIGN SYMPOSIUM

Schedule

Friday February 10, 2017

- 16:30 Gathering in Katajanokka Terminal, Helsinki, Planet A
- 17:30 Space Ferry m/s Mariella departs from Planet A
- 17:30 Interstellar Buffet (special vegan menu)
- 19:00 Symposium begins @ Meeting Room 11.
Theme: Comparative Planetology, Colour Blue.
- 22:00 Informal small talk, karaoke.
- 00:00-09:00 The Pause / Larp off-time

Saturday February 11, 2017

- 09:00 Off-time ends
- 10:00 Arrival to Stockholm, Planet MonsterJam
- 10:30 Guided walk to the most important events of the
MonsterJam Design Week with our local guide BabyBore
- 16:00 Meeting in Stadsgården (MonsterJam Time-Zone)
- 16:30 Space Ferry departures from planet MonsterJam
- 19:00 Interstellar Buffet (special vegan menu)
- 21:00 Last night celebrations!
- 00:00 Larp ends

Sunday February 12, 2017

- 09:00 Morning wrap-up, feedback discussion
- 10:10 Arrival to Helsinki, Planet A

Sometimes we need to
travel to another planet to
understand what is going on
in our own.

SASHA - FREELANCE CREATIVE

Lives in the hotspot of design scene. Studied abroad and has made zes interplanetary "career" on planet A's moon which is the art and culture hotspot for the people there. Doesn't consider moving back as an option. Has built a great personal brand and had few very cool clients but is actually rather lazy, lost and doesn't sustain economically. Comes from normal middle class background and was always considered a little weird. Got to know most of all zes friends in the internet, became a designer because of deviant art, flicker, Swarm magazine (google cybernetic culture research uni) and tumblr.

PASSION: clubbing, shoes

LOOK: strict

MIS LA - SPACECOMM-ENGINEER

Super scientist, knows zes business and more. Does design purely based on cost-benefit analyses. Loves to talk about algorithms as zir favourite designers. Studied computer science and design in the top most university in planet A.

PASSION: running, runs whenever possible

LOOK: experimental, functional, smart, sleek

KIM - ARCHITECTURE GODDESS

Kim studied near an ancient city and realised that architecture itself can be understood as a religion. Started building a cult around zes realisation. Isn't that interesting in the symposium itself but wants to spread the message and recruit members to the already quite succeeding cult. No one quite knows zir background and ze does not talk about it. There are rumors that ze is part of the old ruling family and that ze got zir education home schooled from all the masters.

PASSION: design stuctures of feelings

LOOK: extremely self-confident

KIM III - MOULD ARCHITECT

Old-school architect that has been working on same theory since ze wrote zes diploma years ago. Became an architect "naturally" what ever that means.

PASSION: round shapes and organic forms.

LOOK: traditional, likes to get inspired by mushrooms and organic things

MIS LA

KIM

A person is seen from behind, looking out a window at a city at night. Their hands are pressed against the glass. The city lights are visible through the window, and the sky is dark with some clouds. The text "What would you pay attention to if you would look at the world as someone else?" is overlaid on the image.

What would you pay attention to if you would
look at the world as someone else?

FOREIGN AFFECTS
<https://fear.trojanhorse.fi/>



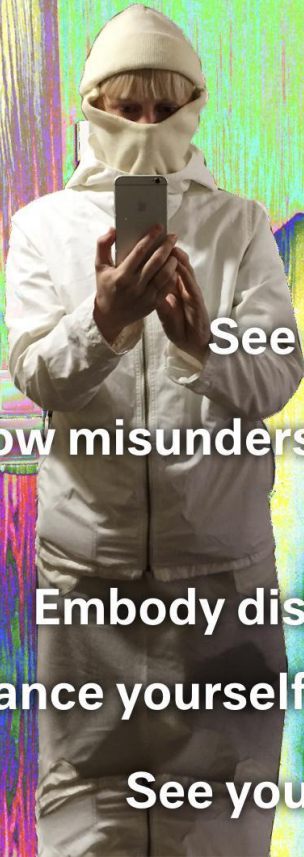
BORROWING POSITIONS

<https://trojanhorse.fi/borrowing-positions-role-playing-design-architecture/>

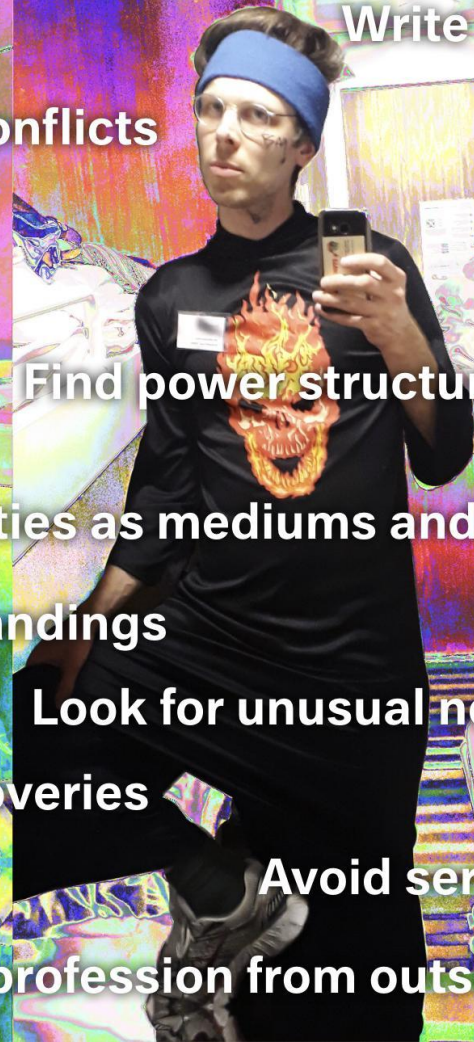
Borrow positions

Write fictional design characters

Look for fearless conflicts



Find power structures



See the city from within



See cities as mediums and products at the same time

Follow misunderstandings

Look for unusual networks of information

Embody discoveries

Take different roles

Distance yourself

Avoid seriousness

See your profession from outside

Listen to the city

Games and role-playing as a research method

Independent objects

Digital games

Rigid rules

Board games

Different game formats

Live Action Role-play

Tabletop Role-playing games

Policy Exercises /

Simulations

Game masters
facilitate

Rules can be
negotiated

Experimentation

Become aware of unconscious
prejudice

Political Imagination

Anticipative governance

Second and third questions

Reasons for games and
playing

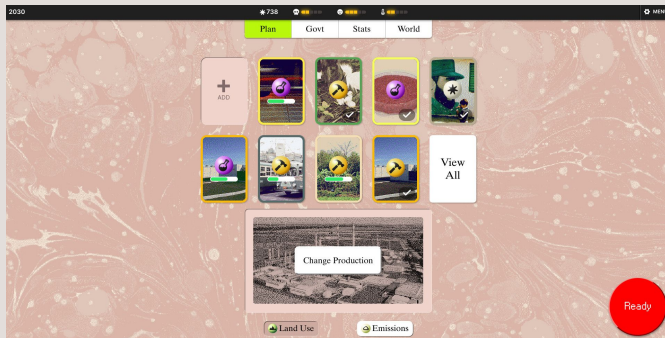
Interaction

Engagement

Social learning

Negotiation

Boundary Objects



Role
Design &



Independent objects

Digital games

Rigid rules

Board games

Different game formats

Live Action Role-play

Tabletop Role-playing games

Policy Exercises /
Simulations

Game masters
facilitate

Rules can be
negotiated



Games and role-playing as a research method

Vienne Chan & Trojan Horse
Playing Care / Hoivaroolipeli



INSTITUTE OF CARE
<https://www.m-cult.org/productions/institute-care>



Experimentation

Become aware of unconscious
prejudice

Political Imagination

Anticipative governance

Immersion

Reasons for games and
playing

Interaction

Engagement

Social learning

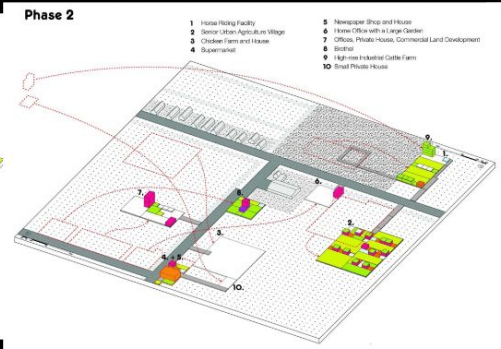
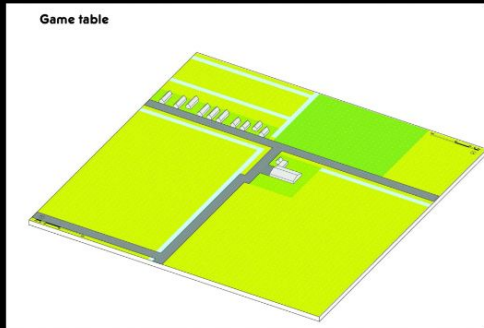
Negotiation

Boundary Objects



Playing Care Board Game Session Photo: Martina Seresova / m-cult





OOSTERWORLD (take this very critically!)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NSwtduhoHOU>

PLAY OOSTERWORLD

https://gamesforcities.com/database/play_oosterworld/



What is role-playing? How does it work?

Collective Writing

- Writing as worldbuilding

Immersion

- First person perspective (characters)
- Game world / Magic circle
- Playful seriousness

No right or wrong way to interpret the character and the game world!

What ever happens is real in the game!

Safety Mechanisms

- Off game interaction
- Leave the scene
- Metagame

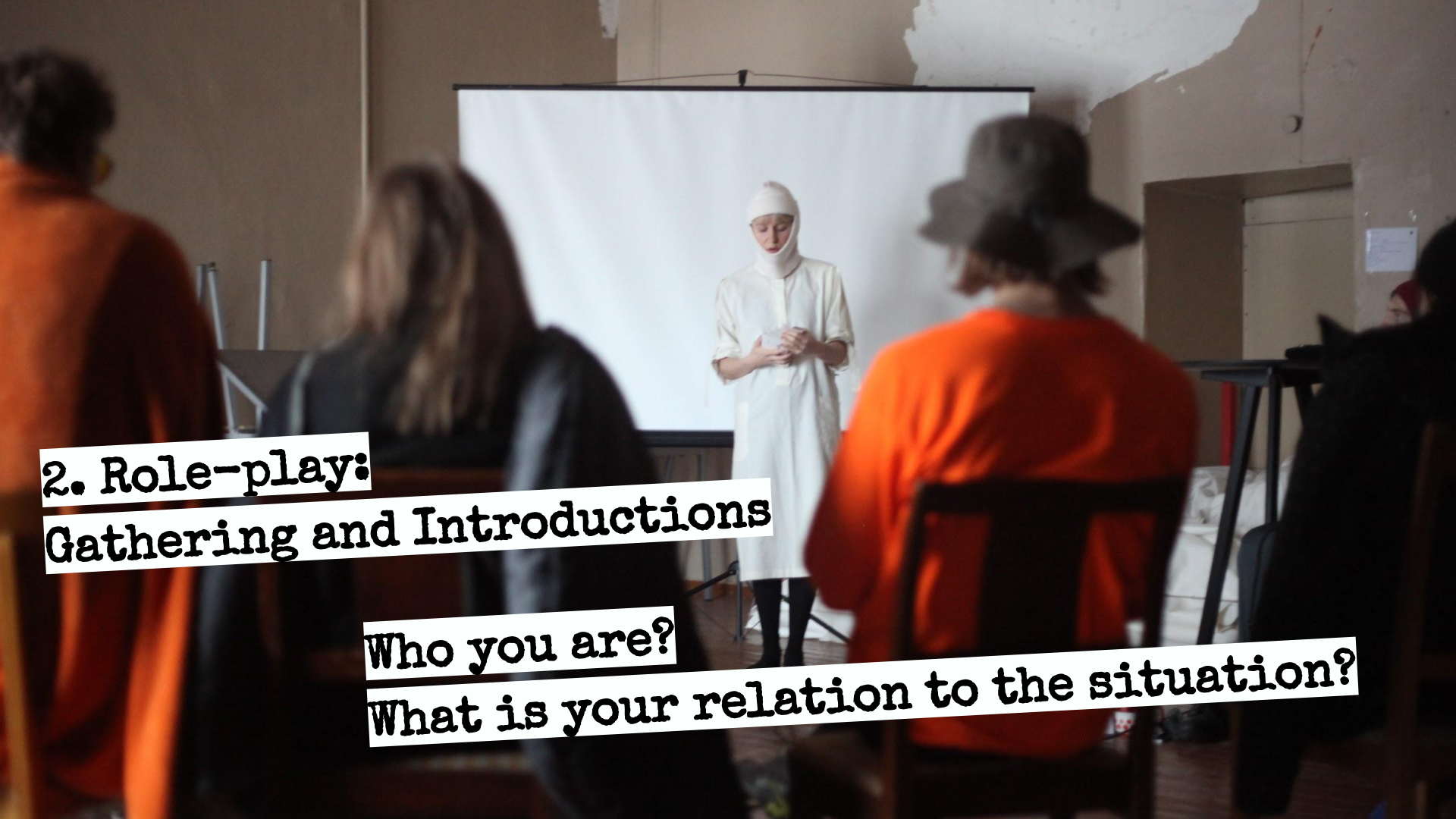
Debrief

- What happened?
- Why players did what they did? (chance to say sorry!)
- What does all this mean?



Writing and...

1. Getting into characters

A person wearing a white hooded robe stands in front of a whiteboard in a room. Several other people are visible in the foreground, some wearing orange shirts, suggesting a workshop or training session. The person in the white robe is looking down at something in their hands.

2. Role-play:

Gathering and Introductions

Who you are?

What is your relation to the situation?



Do you have a problem to solve, conflict to settle, or goal to achieve?

2. Role-play: Interaction



How does it end?

3. Debrief

What happened?

How did you relate to your character?

Why players did what they did?

(chance to say sorry!)

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The Green New Deal Simulator

<https://molleindustria.itch.io/green-new-deal-simulator>

Half Earth Socialism

<https://play.half.earth/>

Tragedy of the Commons Game

[https://pages.uoregon.edu/rmitchel/commons/lcow/
index.shtml](https://pages.uoregon.edu/rmitchel/commons/lcow/index.shtml)