Call for Papers: Playful Materialities (Edited Volume)

Gaming culture has always been closely linked to material culture. This applies both to analog forms of rule-based play (ludus), which would hardly be conceivable without dice, cards, and game boards (Clüver 2020), and also to the act of free play (paidia) we can observe in children who transform simple objects into multifaceted toys in an almost magical way (Herron/Sutton-Smith 1971, Giddings 2014). Furthermore, materiality also affects digital play to a remarkable degree (Apperley 2012): Games are not only mediated by technical interfaces, which we access with hardware and tangible peripherals (Mauger 2013), but are also subject to material hybridization (Kultima/Mäyrä/Timy 2013), paratextual framing (Beil/Freyermuth/Schmidt 2021) and processes of de-, and re-materialization.

In this way, a blood-spattered chainsaw Playstation 2 controller for a game like RESIDENT EVIL 4, whose outer packaging is designed like a glass cabinet, raises questions about framing, museality, and transgressiveness (Beil/Bojahr/Taubert 2017). Cardboard-based experimentation kits like NINTENDO LABO aim to familiarize us through playful learning with the inner workings of the current console generation. And recent ludic AR and VR exhibitions invite us not only to experience past and future spaces in a new way but also to get in touch with them quite literally, e.g., through new senso-motor based controllers.

If playful materialities can be conceived as an unorthodox approach for embracing ideas, a way to experiment with sensual experiences, and as a method to engage with the imagination; if things can tell us stories and artifacts can become catalysts for actions, then playful materialities clearly deserve our scholarly attention.

The edited volume "Playful Materialities" (which will be edited by Benjamin Beil, Gundolf S. Freyermuth and Hanns Christian Schmidt) aims to reflect both on recent developments in this field as well as historical case studies. The anthology is published in the context of the Game Studies Summit of this and last year's CLASH OF REALITIES conference, but it intends to embrace a broader scope on meanings, methodologies, its limits, and its many opportunities.

The edited book will be published by the academic publisher transcript (Bielefeld) in summer 2022. The publisher's global distribution partners include Columbia University Press in the US, and Gazelle Book Services in the UK.

Please send an abstract of 300–500 words and 100-word bio to schmidt.c@uni-koeln.de by Mai 1st 2021. Selected abstracts will be invited to submit a contribution of 1,500-8,000 words by September 30th.

Works cited:

Apperley, Thomas H. and Jayemane, Darshana (2012): Game studies' material turn. In: *Westminster papers in communication and culture*, 9 (1), p. 5-25.

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Clüver, Claudius (2020): Würfel, Karten und Bretter. Materielle Elemente von Spielen und der Begriff der Spielform. In: *Navigationen - Zeitschrift für Medien- und Kulturwissenschaften* 20 (1), p. 35–52.

Giddings, Seth (2014): Gameworlds. Virtual Media and Children''s Everyday Play. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

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Tyni, Heikki; Kultima, Annakaisa; Mäyrä, Frans (2013): Dimensions of Hybrid in Playful Products. In: Artur Lugmayr, Heljä Franssila, Janne Paavilainen und Hannu Kärkkäinen (eds.): Proceedings of International Conference on Making Sense of Converging Media. International Conference. Tampere, Finland, 10/1/2013 - 10/4/2013. Association for Computing Machinery. New York, NY: ACM (ACM Digital Library), p. 237–244.

Beil, Benjamin; Freyermuth, Gundolf S.; Schmidt, Hanns Christian (eds.) (2021): Paratextualizing games. Investigations on the paraphernalia and peripheries of play. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag (Bild und Bit. Studien zur digitalen Medienkultur, 13).

Mauger, Vincent (2013): Interface. In: The Routledge Companion to Video Game Studies, M. J. P. Wolf and B. Perron (eds.), New York/London: Routledge.