

CRITICAL GAMES

Explore the playground of Festival SPIEL! Games as Critical Practice, and discover a network of performances, lectures, and discussions.

EXPLORE

A Closer Look at the Digital Documentation Platform www.criticalgames.ch

Prof. Dr. phil. Michel Roth, University of Music, Basel

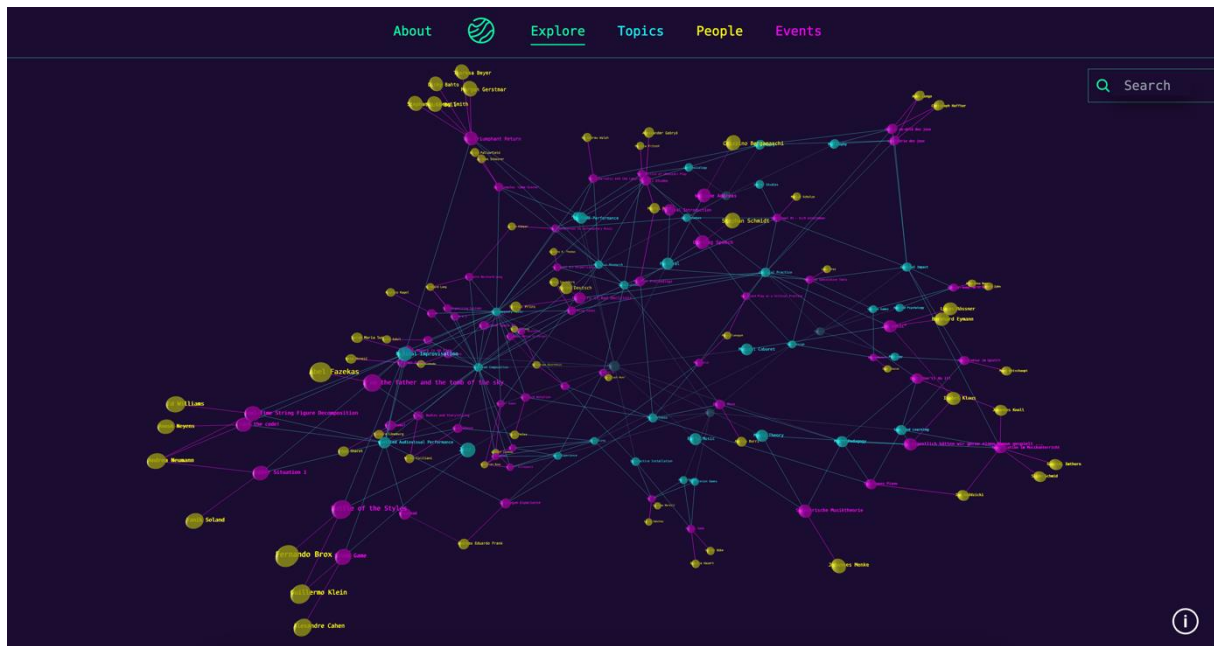
Outset

From January 26 to 29, 2023, the [University of Music Basel FHNW](http://www.unimusic.ch) hosted the festival *SPIEL! Games as Critical Practice*. Performances, lectures, discussions and participatory events reflected on social, technological and aesthetic impacts of games in a playful and critical way.

Festival curator, composer and music researcher Michel Roth developed a dramaturgy in which the various applications and discourses could be experienced with all senses. During the day, the festival operated as an intervention into the urban space of Foyer Public at Theater Basel. The evening performances took place at Musik-Akademie and Jazzcampus Basel.

All contributions were audiovisually documented and instead of a congress report, an online platform was created in a one-year development project in collaboration with eight students from the [iCompetence Program](http://www.unimusic.ch) at the University of Applied Sciences for Information Technology FHNW.

The website serves as "gamified proceedings" and offers an innovative digital archive for the festival and an interactive experience, allowing to delve into the rich network of performances and discourses. Like the festival's dramaturgy, this online documentation also applies playful and game-theoretical aspects to the form of presentation itself.

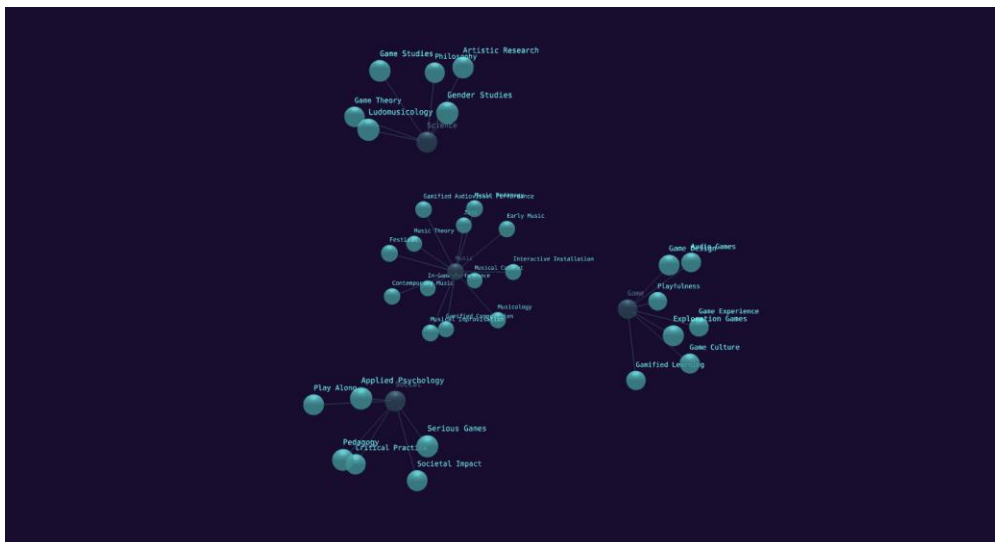


Website Functions and Functionality

The centrepiece of the website is an interactive network that visually represents the various festival contributions and their thematic and personal connections. The nodes are marked by spheres, which is freely inspired by the marbles of the original festival poster. Users can navigate freely in this network, with an intuitive colour code helping to distinguish between “Topics”, “People” and “Events”. In addition to zooming and rotating, the network can also be deformed by dragging balls, which makes it easier to explore and understand individual connections.

All nodes in this network can be clicked directly, and the title bar at the top allows the network to be filtered specifically:

1. Clicking on “Topics” causes only the blue spheres to appear, organized by the categories “Games,” “Social,” “Science,” and “Music.” The latter category was emphasized because the festival was organized by the Basel University of Music and a large number of contributions came from the field of experimental music and music education. These spheres can also be freely moved or rearranged.



2. Clicking on “Events” transforms the thematic network into a single line that shows the chronological order of the festival. This makes the festival's unusual dramaturgy comprehensible, while all lateral links remain visible (like a DNA molecule). Even here, an “intricate form of presentation” was chosen that continually allows the experience of the dense network of references or to follow free associative connections.

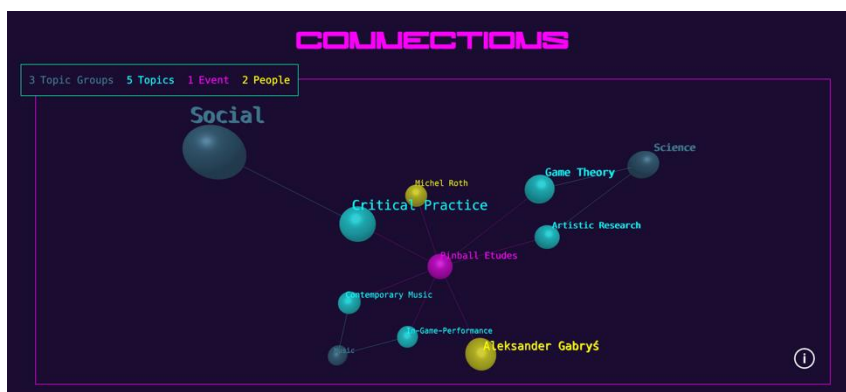


3. The subpage “People” dissolves the network more conventionally and allows you to explore the profiles of all scholars and artists involved.

When the page is restarted (with the cache deleted), all interactive networks are always rendered anew, so that a new visit to the festival also allows you to enter from a different point of view. This design thus also reflects the special dramaturgical situation in the Foyer Public of Theater Basel, which is characterized by a huge open venue with several floors and a correspondingly large number of access points. As a result, many festival visitors “stumbled” into certain events or experienced the interplay between the festival and the public space from a wide range of perspectives.

Detail Pages

As soon as you click on an event or a person, you will get detailed information, ending always with another “molecule” that illustrates the connections with the overall network again and encourages you to return to the main menu or to discover related content.



All events are provided with exact information about time, place and the type of contribution, and the participants are also listed. This is followed by an abstract and, in many cases, photos that convey the atmosphere of the festival. Finally, a video is embedded where the festival contribution can be viewed. Further documents can then follow, e.g. a bibliography, the script of the lecture, or additional links.

[About](#) [Explore](#) [Topics](#) [People](#) [Events](#)

Search

BUBBLEGUM EXPERIENCE

Andreas Eduardo Frank: Bubblegum Experience (2023, WP)

Date 📅 28.01.2023 Time 🕒 16:30 Location 📍 Theater Basel Event Group 🌟 Interventions

Andreas Eduardo Frank, Komposition und Performance
 Ye-Chen Tsai, Performance
 Marc Baltrons, Performance

About Page and Scientific Apparatus

Since the festival had a long scholarly history with several preceding and preparatory research projects and had also triggered quite a bit of media attention, the About Page is of particular importance. In addition to a trailer, various scientific publications can be downloaded, media reports can be read or listened to, and finally, a detailed imprint of the numerous persons and institutions involved can be found.

MEDIA COVERAGE

Spielräume zwischen Himmel und Hölle

Wer sich mit Michel Roth über das Spielen unterhält, kommt nicht umhin zu entdecken, dass es eigentlich nicht nur ein Thema, sondern ein...

neoblog.mx3.ch

Lasset die Spiele beginnen: Ein Wochenende zwischen Flipperkasten und Wissenschaft

Ein Professor der Musikhochschule hat ein Festival initiiert, das sich mit Spielen auf ganz unterschiedlichen Ebenen auseinandersetzt: Vom...

bzbasel.ch

23.01.26 Spiel Game Critical Practice

Let's Play: In dieser Spielhöhle werden die grossen Fragen gestellt

"Die Welt ist eine Bühne" hatte es vor rund 400 Jahren schon bei Shakespeare geheissen. Und heute? Von zwischenmenschlichen Rollenspielen,...

radiiox.ch

FHNW: Hochschule für Musik: SPIEL! Games as Critical Practice

Alle Welt spielt, ist fasziniert von Games und drückt täglich Dutzende Male auf PLAY-Buttons. In allen Formen dominieren Spiele unsere Freizeit und...

presseportal.ch

Play, Stop, Interlude – Spiel als musikalische Praxis

Gaming ist allgegenwärtig. Auch die zeitgenössische Musik erprobt Spielaspekte in der Komposition und Improvisation. Die Basler Hochschule...

lastradiopoets.net

DrahtseilSchwungung und Spieltheorie

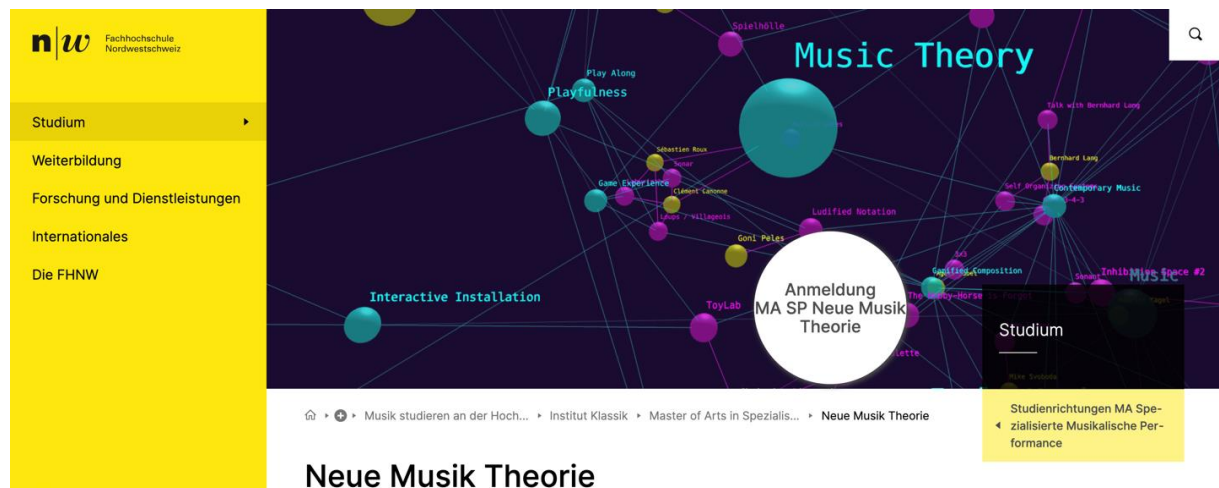
Michel Roth nähert sich den Gegenständen forschend. Dass er sich nicht nur intensiv mit Seilbahnen, sondern auch mit dem Verhältnis von...

deutschlandfunkkultur.de

Further Design Principles

The website was designed with a responsive layout and ensures optimal performance on a variety of devices, whether on desktops, tablets or smartphones. Due to this mixture of scientific symposium and intervention into the public space, particular attention was paid to personal and data protection. All contributions are subject to a Creative Commons license and thus freely accessible for academic or scientific use.

Meanwhile, this design has already proven itself in other contexts, in that screenshots from the original webpage with some “arranged key terms” now shape the corporate design of other services and courses of the University of Music (see below).



Conclusion

The website www.criticalgames.ch offers both an appealing and functional way to the festival *SPIEL! Games as Critical Practice*. Its sophisticated design and interactive elements make it an innovative case study of how web archives can be transformed into dynamic exploration tools, and how through a playful design, deeper thematic and aesthetic insights into the topics of “games” and “gamification” can be conveyed.

Website and further information: www.criticalgames.ch

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