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# Sebastian Quack CV

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## Short Bio

Sebastian Quack (\*1982) works at the intersection of play, digital media and the politics of urban society, as artist, game designer and curator.

From 2021-2023, Sebastian was the director of *Now Play This festival of experimental game design* at Somerset House in London. Previously, he founded the *Invisible Playground* network, was co-director of *Trust in Play – European School of Urban Game Design* and co-organiser of *Drift Club*, a platform that facilitates random musical walks through cities around the world. He regularly teaches, gives talks and consults organizations on how to engage playfully with the world around them.

Sebastian holds an MA in cultural studies and computer science from Humboldt-University Berlin, as well a fellowship from the Graduate School at Berlin University of the Arts. Starting out as an artist, Sebastian worked on a number of ground-breaking playful projects including Area/Code's *plundr*, the world's first location-based PC game. Notable work has since included projects with HAU Theater, Oerol Festival, Metropolis Festival, Aichi Triennale, Urbane Künste Ruhr, Ensemble Modern, Imagine the City and many more.

## Education

- fellow, Graduate School for the Arts, University of the Arts, Berlin (2010-2012)
- MA in cultural studies and computer science, Humboldt University, Berlin (2002-2008)

## Work Positions

- director, Now Play This, festival of experimental Game Design (2021-2023)
- artistic co-director, Trust In Play – European School of Urban Game Design (2019-2021)
- artistic coordinator, EU project Labourgames – Work and Play (2017-2019)
- co-initiator, Drift Club (since 2016)
- co-founder, co-director Playful Commons (since 2015)
- lecturer at University of Art Berlin (since 2011), Ruhr University Bochum (2014), University of Art Braunschweig (2015-2016)
- co-founder Invisible Playground network (since 2009)
- freelance web developer (since 2008)
- independent artist (since 2004)
- researcher, Gameslab, University for Applied Science, Berlin (2009)
- intern, game design studio Area/Code, New York (2006)
- intern, Hürlimann + Lepp Exhibitions, Berlin (2005)
- civil service, Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp Memorial Site (2001)

## Awards & Scholarships

- Games Innovation Saxony Award, 2nd place category "Gamification" for project Tracing Remembrance (2022)
- Kreativpiloten, German federal government award for Invisible Playground (2015)
- student scholarship, German National Academic Foundation (2005-2008)
- Erasmus Exchange Program with Sorbonne University Paris (2004-2005)

## Cultural Projects (selection)

2024

- **Climate Casino**, Street Game about Climate Data at interspaces Festival, Tartu

2023

- **Mission Possible 2046**, a multiplayer audio expedition about the future of democracy, for Futurium Berlin
- **Now Play This** Festival and Exhibition themed around Love and Play, Somerset House London

2022

- **Tracing Remembrance**, a mobile game (android/ios app) about the history of Nazi forced labor in Leipzig, for Theater der Jungen Welt, Leipzig
- **Waste What?**, a serious game about the circular economy transition, with Haus der Materialisierungen, the Chair of Circular Economy and Recycling Technologies (Technische Universität Berlin) and the Stadtlabor for Multimodal Anthropology (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)
- **Now Play This** Festival and Exhibition themed around Democracy and Play, Somerset House London

2021

- **Boardwalk**, site-specific intervention with concrete board game boards as part of RE-TURN sculpture park exhibition, KUNSTrePUBLIK Berlin
- **interkit**, development of a digital platform for playful artistic walks with Museum für Gegenwartskunst Siegen, Marta Herford, Kestner Gesellschaft Hannover, Imagine The City Hamburg (ongoing)
- **Now Play This** Festival and Exhibition themed around the Climate Crisis and Play, Somerset House London

2020

- **BOTBOOT**, a mobile game about bots, boats and society for Imagine The City, Hamburg
- **Unboxing Mozart**, concert walk, interactive installation, online experience about making music together, with Josa Gerhard for Mahler Chamber Orchestra

2019

- **Balancing Acts**, thematic exhibition at Next Level Festival, Essen
- **Trust in Play**, European School of Urban Game Design, co-directing with Maria Saridaki, for Goethe Institute Athens
- **paper/mirror**, a game about humans and robots communicating with gestures to craft mysterious structures, with Axel Watzke

2018

- **Playsonic Festival**, A festival about the relationship between music and play
- **Uneasy Play**, exhibition of playful art exploring complicated feelings of difficulty and struggle, for NRW Forum / Next Level Festival, Düsseldorf
- **Der Spalt**, an app-based urban theater experience in the city of Essen, with Christiane Hütter, for Schauspiel Essen

2017

- **Marée des Lettres**, a playful installation along the Seine, invited the public in Paris to make suggestions and vote on what should be arranged out of 42 big letters and 3 special characters, using a custom made app (with Invisible Playground network), Nuit Blanche Paris
- **Island of Good Life**, a festival about migration and wellbeing, with Kerem Halbrecht, Anna Hentschel for Global Young Faculty, Interkultur Ruhr, Urbane Künste Ruhr, HUKultur, Bochum
- **Public Registry of Moments in Sunlight**, a platform to collaboratively create branching video walks (with Nina Westerdahl), Nuuk Art Museum, Greenland

2016

- **Drift Club**, an open club that organizes random walks in the city, while listening to a shared soundtrack (with Thom Kiraly), Drift Club Mexico City in collaboration with Goethe Institute and Museo Del Chopo (ongoing)
- **Failed Participation**, a conversational research project to learn from failure in participation projects (with Jennifer Aksu, ongoing)
- **Island of The Good Life**, a playful neighbourhood science festival, in cooperation with Kerem Halbrecht, Anna Hentschel, Interkultur Ruhr and Mercator Foundation (ongoing)

2015

- **Playful Commons**, a long-term research project exploring new licenses for playful use of public spaces (with Gilly Karjevsky, ongoing)
- **Phantom Synchron**, a 24 hour participatory soundscape for 12 live musicians, community groups and 40 mobile soundboxes, with Enrico Stolzenburg, Daniel Ott, Kirsten Reese, Kunstfest Weimar
- **Human Minigolf**, an 18 hole playful parcours, with Invisible Playground and 72 Hour Urban Action for Kultursommer Mainz

2014

- **Playpublik Kraków**, design camp and international festival for playful public spaces, Cracow, partner: Goethe-Institut, my role: curator

- **72 Hour Interactions**, world championship of gameful architecture, Witten, partners: 72 Hour Urban Action, Urban Arts Ruhr, local associations, my roles: format development, co-director, curator
- **Utopia Stock Exchange Dortmund**, participatory media installation and game event, Dortmund, partner: Hartware Medienkunstverein (HMKV), my roles: director, game-designer, programmer

## 2013

- **Wir Würden Hier Sein**, sleep-over and morning hike, Zürich, partners: Gessnerallee Theater, local experts, my roles: format development, game-designer, programmer
- **Dark Factory**, 2-week participatory installation, Mülheim, Ruhr, partners: Herr Wolke, Ringlokschuppen Theater, my role: format development, co-director, programmer
- **Museum of Minor Incidents**, set of site-specific audio games, Nagoya, partners: Aichi Triennale, my role: format development, game designer
- **Field Office Copenhagen**, 3-week participatory design space and set of site-specific games, Copenhagen, partners: Metropolis Festival, my roles: game designer

## 2012

- **Playpublik**, design camp and international festival for playful public spaces, Berlin, partners: Computer Games Museum, German Federal Cultural Foundation, my role: curator
- **Ruhrzilla**, 3-week festival and city-wide transmedia game, Mülheim, Ruhr, partner: Ringlokschuppen Theater, local associations, my role: format development, game designer
- **Flipside**, site-generic video production game for Berlin and Johannesburg, partner: artist Anthea Moys, local youth organization, A MAZE Festival, Johannesburg, my role: game designer
- **Lies In The Sand**, site-specific game, Terschelling beach, partner: Oerol Festival, my role: game designer

## 2011

- **Field Office Prague**, 3-week participatory design space and set of site-specific games, Prague, partners: 4+4 Days in Motion Festival, my roles: co-director, game designer
- **Field Office Budapest**, 3-week participatory design space and set of site-specific games, Budapest, partner: PLACCC Festival, my roles: format development, co-director, game designer
- **You Are GO!**, international street games festival, Berlin, partners: HAU Theater, Capital Culture Fund, my role: curator

- **Spreezone**, 3-week city-wide transmedia game, Berlin, partners: matthaei & konsorten, HAU Theater, my role: format development, co-director, game designer
- **Hold The Line**, site-specific game, partner: art exhibition "Based in Berlin", my role: game-designer

2010

- **Schwellenland**, 10-day city-wide transmedia game, Vienna, partners: matthaei & konsorten, Wiener Festwochen, my role: format development, game-designer
- **Silent Relay**, site-specific game, London, partners: Hide & Seek, Victoria & Albert Museum, my role: game designer
- **StadtRundKlang**, participatory, city-wide music event, Eisenach, partners: Daniel Ott, Netzwerk Neue Musik, my roles: format development, game designer, co-director

notable earlier projects

- **Utopia Stock Exchange** (2008), participatory media installation and game event, Berlin, partners: Jutta Wangemann, Carolin Hochleichter, HAU Theater, my roles: format development, game design, programming
- **Südliche Autobahn** (2007), site-specific music-theater tour, highway outside Berlin, partners: Daniel Ott, Jutta Wangemann, HAU Theater, my roles: format development, co-director
- **Il Treno** (2004), music-theater tour, moving train between Göttingen and Kassel, partners: Daniel Ott, Festival Experiment Geschwindigkeit, my role: video artist

## Publications (selection)

- *Treffen sich Digitalisierung und Gamification in einer Bar*, in: Svenja Reiner et al: Systemkritik! Essays über eine kulturpolitische Transformation, transcript 2023
- *Spielend Hören, Hörend Spielen*, in: Marion Saxer et al: Musik als Spiel, Spiel als Musik, transcript 2021
- *Compassion for the Play of Others*, in: Bernhard de Koven with Holly Gramazio: The Infinite Playground, MIT Press 2020
- *Stadt, Spiel und digitale Technologie jenseits von Nostalgie und neuer Wildnis*, in: Institut für Kulturpolitik: Jahrbuch für Kulturpolitik 2019/20, transcript 2020
- *What's at stake when imagining neighbourhoods as playgrounds?*, in Sachs/Westerdahl: Place Listening, Game Manual, Oslo Architecture Triennale 2019
- *Site-Specific Game Design as a Public Service – Changing Metropolis III*, 2016 (with Christiane Hütter)

- *Playful Locative Ensembles in the Urban Soundscape*, in Ackerman et. al (ed): *Navigationen*, 2016 (with Michael Straeubig)
- *Endlich über Spiele reden?* – Blogpost Berliner Festspiele Blog, 13.07.2015 <http://blog.berlinerfestspiele.de/endlich-ueber-spiele-reden/>
- *Schwindel Handeln. UTOPIA STOCK EXCHANGE – eine Auswertung*, in: Ilinx 1: *Wirbel, Ströme, Turbulenzen*, 2009.
- *Handeln auf den Plattformen des Alltags. Agenten und agency in Alternate Reality Games*, in: Günzel et. al. (Ed.): *Digarec Lectures*, Vol 2, Potsdam 2009.
- *Lucky Letters. Zwölf Stationen des Zufalls* (in collaboration with Natascha Adamowsky), in: Natascha Adamowsky (Ed.): *Die Vernunft ist mir noch nicht begegnet. Zum konstitutiven Verhältnis von Spiel und Erkenntnis*, Berlin, 2005.

## Teaching University Courses

- SS 2016, Seminar "Human Street View", Hochschule für Bildende Künste Braunschweig (HBK), Darstellendes Spiel
- WS 2015/2016, Seminar "Spielräume Inszenieren", Hochschule für Bildende Künste Braunschweig (HBK), Darstellendes Spiel
- SS 2014, Seminar "Gameplay vs. Participation", Ruhr Universität Bochum (RUB), Szenische Forschung
- SS 2011, Seminar "Street Games! Einführung in die ortsspezifische Spiele-Entwicklung", University of Arts Berlin (UdK)
- SS 2008, Seminar "Computerspiele im urbanen Raum", Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (HU), Institut für Kulturwissenschaft

## Talks, Workshops, Consulting (selection)

2024

- "The Practice of Power - Game Design, Commoning, and the Planet", Keynote at IMPACT24, PACT Zollverein, Nov 6 2024

2022

- guest lecture "Now Play This & Political Games", London College of Communication, University of the Arts London

2021

- talk at Cyberia Festival, Pune

2020

- workshop for Junges Nationaltheater Mannheim
- workshop for Goethe Institute Venezuela

2019

- workshop "site-specific game design", Spiel- und Lerndesign, BURG Halle
- talk at Kongress der Kulturpolitischen Gesellschaft
- workshop at Performing Arts Festival, Berlin
- workshop for Kompetenzzentrum für Kultur- und Kreativwirtschaft des Bundes

2018

- workshop at "The Most Dangerous Game", Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin
- workshop "street game design" Pottfiction summer camp, Hamm
- workshop "Drifting" at FH Potsdam
- consulting on Neighbourhood space development for PACT Zollverein

2017

- workshop at Playful Arts Session, Den Bosch

2016

- teaching/coaching at "StoryMakers" game jam, Goethe-Institute, Athens
- lecture "Smarter Regulations for Creative Citizens", RMIT Barcelona
- lecture at "Generation Game", Play Festival Hamburg and Next Level Festival, Düsseldorf
- consulting for Ensemble Modern and Alte Oper, Frankfurt am Main
- workshop at University of Art, Berlin
- workshop for Medienwerk NRW at PACT Zollverein, Essen
- workshop for students of MA "Art in Context" at University of Art, Berlin
- lecture and workshop "Vermittlungsräume" at Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin
- jury member A MAZE video game festival, Berlin
- lecture at Now Play This Festival, London
- Frühstücksfernsehen, podcast on cultural production in Berlin Mitte

2015

- lecture at re:publica conference, Berlin
- panelist at MakeCity conference, Berlin
- lecture at w00t festival, Copenhagen

2014

- consulting design studio Framework, Seattle, as part of "Connect Kendall Square" open space competition, Cambridge, MA
- workshop, Federal Academy of Cultural Education, Wolfenbüttel
- workshop for multimedia production students at HTW, Chur
- panelist, "Playstorming" conference, Goethe-Institut Krakau
- panelist, "New Industries" conference, HMKV, Cologne



2013

- presentation and panelist, "rePlay:theCity" conference, Zürich
- lecture, conference "Forum Baukultur", Frankfurt am Main
- workshop for young people, Tate Modern, London
- public workshop, FFT Theater, Düsseldorf
- public workshop, HafenCity Universität, Hamburg
- workshop for children, "Winterakademie", Parkaue Theater, Berlin

2012

- workshop on transmedia development, "Scholz & Friends Digital Camp", Berlin
- workshop and table talk, conference "reArt:theUrban", Zürich
- workshop, "Metropolis Lab", Copenhagen
- lecture and workshop for architecture students, Technical University, Munich
- lecture, ZHDK, Zürich
- lecture, "sub.40" lecture series, Kassel University
- workshop "Student Affairs", Berliner Festspiele

2011

- lecture, "Next Level" conference, Cologne
- lecture, "Bauwelt" event, Berlin

2010

- workshop for theater students, Centraltheater, Leipzig
- lecture, "Quo Vadis" conference, Berlin
- course for media design students, HTW Berlin
- public workshop series "Macht Spiele!", HBC, Artitude, Kunstraum Kreuzberg, Berlin

2009

- lecture, "NMI" conference, Berlin
- lecture, "interfiction" conference, Kassel