

# Chapter 7

## Wanderlost

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### ABSTRACT

*In this chapter I will discuss a art and design project called wanderlost, where we through co-creation try to populate a virtual world with people, objects and architecture. In this project stages we have developed a method for gathering input and inspiration for early stages in the design process designing virtual worlds. I will through some example of work show how worlds, real and virtual are as much made as found, and how they can be used to challenged each other into new forms of experiences and expressions, of both physical and virtual spaces. Where the virtual space transformed into maps & instructions can challenge the physical with qualities that is very hard to achieve in the physical world itself, and in that conflict new insights and expressions can revealed. Today Hybrid creations have become a method for working with cultural production not only with different elements of form, but as blending identities of the creators as well, wanderlost support that process. We show how we from the virtual settings of the city of Traora we have extracted a series of walks as instructions and invited different co-creators to explore these algorithmical walks in their everyday surrounding in order to be surprised by rediscovery, using a digital camera/smartphone to capture and later communicate their findings. Allowing the unfamiliar to co-exist with the comfortably familiar. To create a process where digital worlds challenge and inspire digital expressions, tools and models with physical play and exploration. Supporting our long-term aim with research in new media is to set up design methods that can be used in a creative and collaborative process. We show how these findings played a crucial role designing the virtual city Traora. The wanderlost method turns everyday walks into discoveries of both urban contexts as well as ideas for possible virtual worlds.*

### WORLDS ARE AS MADE AS FOUND

For a upcoming theatre and performance project called “The journey to Abadyl” I have worked as part of The journey to Abadyl to put forward models for engaging participation in an interactive mixed reality space. “The journey to Abadyl ” should be seen as a synergy of the expressions of the theatre, the exhibition, the role-play and the amusement park, using dynamic new media, a non-linear dramaturgy and

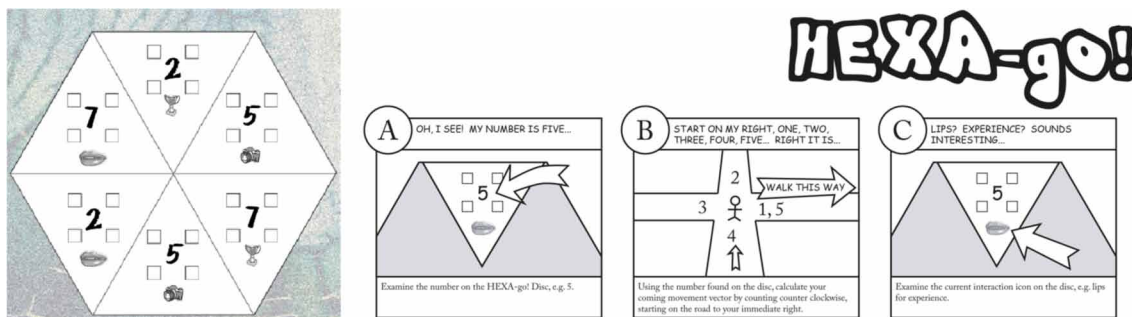
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theories from computer games, working with notions as “story world” rather than “script” and “game play” rather than “drama”. The task is to establish a contract of fiction with the audience, based on a variety of representations, illusions and meta levels, and to create an environment, which is believable. It will be an event, which takes place over a day, engaging its public in a structured game, using the new media in all their possibilities of creating illusions and presenting the results of intricate algorithms in a few seconds, and so able to engage the public in an interaction, which inside the structured frame will define the outcome of the game. It takes place in a larger venue for an audience of 100-200 persons, adults, youths and children above 10, together with their parents. Here the audience will explore “The Anatomy of Choice” - strategies and scenarios that are structured as a matrix in which the participating audience are exposed to distinct choices that include both moral, ethical, and physical dilemmas and challenges. A kind of computer game in spatial format. This mixed reality space contains digital film footage, sound, physical objects, augmented reality, computer games graphics and hidden messages that are all part of a story waiting to be discovered. Depending on how the guide and participants choose to explore the space and answer the challenges, the story will evolve differently at every performance (Lund, J. 2008).

The question for us this time was how to design a process to populate a virtual world with people, objects and architecture using our everyday environment as part of the input. We wanted to engage the audience early in the process to participate with materials and recordings week ahead before they actually comes to the theatre. Where the audience each night through their input modified the virtual city space created by the production team. We also wanted to have the production team (artist, performers, designers and script writers) to also provide input and handle audience participation to constantly evolve the city of Traora each performance.

To start we went back to 2005 for referencing and inspiration. At that time I was working with master students in Interaction design program at Malmo university. Here we in a project called the city as playground used Jesper Hoffmeiers book *Livstecken* (Livsteckn, 1997), to explore city spaces through the different perspectives of the chapters in that book. In short the chapters are based on how living organism are organised and how they interact with their surroundings – the “Umwelt”, and the idea that ones entire way of thinking is dependent on our surroundings. In relation to the chapter about habits, we worked with ideas of supporting and brake habits. Here we design an simple paper based device for walking in new directions in a familiar setting, exploring a city space through re-discovery that we later on called Hexa-GO and developed further into PerSceTo (Johansson, M., 2005). The basic idea was to take the user on a algorithmical walk that by instruction have the user rediscover the city. Later it was also used in a series of workshop in Malmo City evaluating qualities in a new part of that city.

Figure 1. Part of the Hexa-Go Kit. M Johansson, P Bergdahl, M Wallon & J Salo 2005



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