

## Proposal

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**Title** TOYs – interactive AV Performance Installation  
**Author** Paul Wiersbinski (freelance)  
**e-Mail Address** paul.wiersbinski@gmail.com

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Given the state of modern technical applications and the advance of the game industry, it is only a matter of time until interactive application will completely control all levels of entertainment and mass media. Also social interactions in general are subject to change. Usually these changes are only considered within in the digital context of the internet. Nevertheless the basic human need for direct communication and interaction remains.

The project “TOYs” creates a hybrid space merging concepts of sci-fi-films, where people can be controlled by he audience, with the direct notion of play. The participants can access this scenario from there home PC, using the online service “Skype”. This application is used to install a live-AV connection from the viewer to the performers, who is acting in the actual gallery space, using a wireless webcam and microphone. After the first call it is up to the viewer to determine what happens in the performance space, which will feature several stages of a toyshop. The performance lasts 30 min and can be repeated several times an evening.

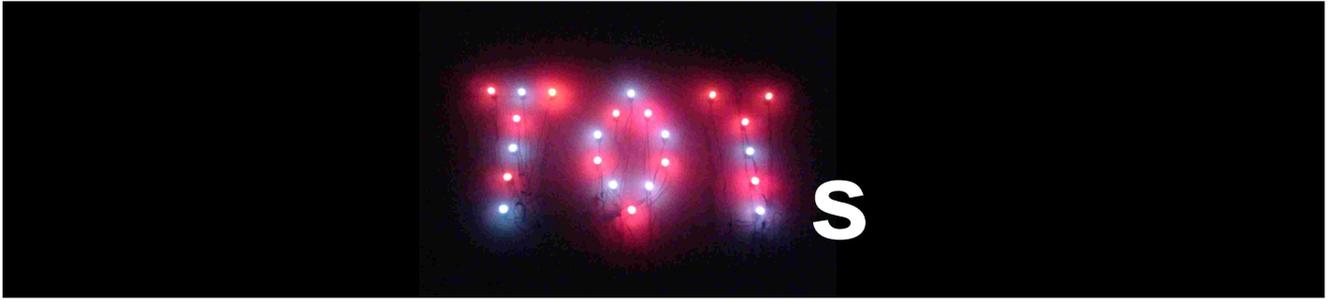
When carried out for the first time in April 2010 our project was not designed in order to transmit a certain moral or meaning but rather worked as an open scientific experiment or a social investigation on how people use technical devices, in order to hide their true identity, reveal personal details to a stranger, forced the performances into uncomfortable situation or were just enjoying the unusual setup of interactivity in a theater space.

In this way we combined classic theater, with live performance, the tradition of video art and the interactive possibilities of contemporary gaming.

The next presentations of “TOYs” will be at the conferences “Electronic Visualization in the Arts”, British Computer Society London and “ISEA”, Sabanci University Istanbul

### **Author’s Biography**

Paul Wiersbinski studied video art with Mark Leckey and Douglas Gordon at the Städelschule in Frankfurt (Main). His work has been screened in intl. exhibitions (e.g.. ZKM Karlsruhe / Mediations Biennale Poznan / Alma Enterprises London) and received several awards, such as the videoartprize of the filmboard Bremen and a project grand of the Federal Cultural Foundation of Germany. He has recently held lectures and presentations in Split, Croatia at “Video Vortex 4” (on “Online Narratives”), within the series “Electric Streams” at the Kunstmuseum Bonn and at the Villa Vigoni in Como, Italy (on „Violence as Entertainment in Video Art“) as well as at the Symposium “Artech”, University of Minho, Guimarães, Portugal (on “New Experiences with Digital Media”).



## 1. Synopsis

In the process of speculation, stocks slowly lose their function as representatives of real fortunes and instead become playful instruments of greed.

„TOYs“ looks at every day articles and the possibility of their unuseful application, through misappropriation of seemingly sense- and harmless objects, altered through propositions and actions.

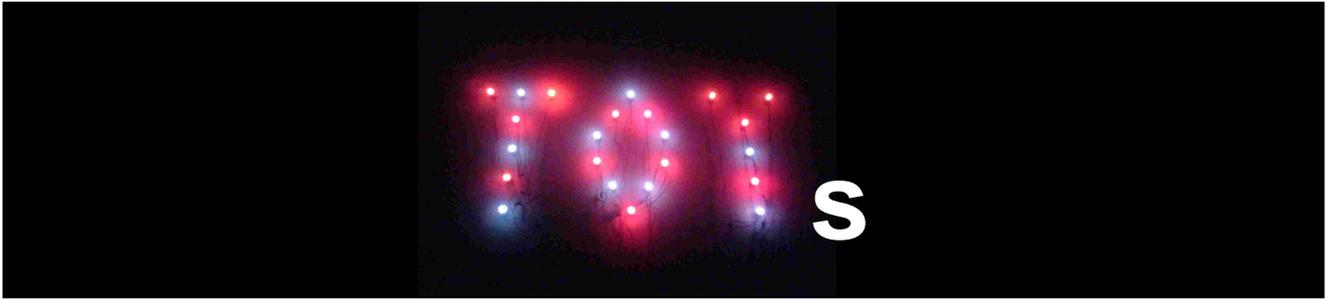
In an improvised Toyshop, in which our world of materialism, rationality and specialism is challenged, the audience can access and control the performers through the means of a live AV connection.



*members of the audience of the Plateaux Festival for intl. Performance Art at Mousonturm, Frankfurt am Main...*



*...interacting live with the performers, via an audiovisual device. Actual communication ranges from direct orders to private talks*



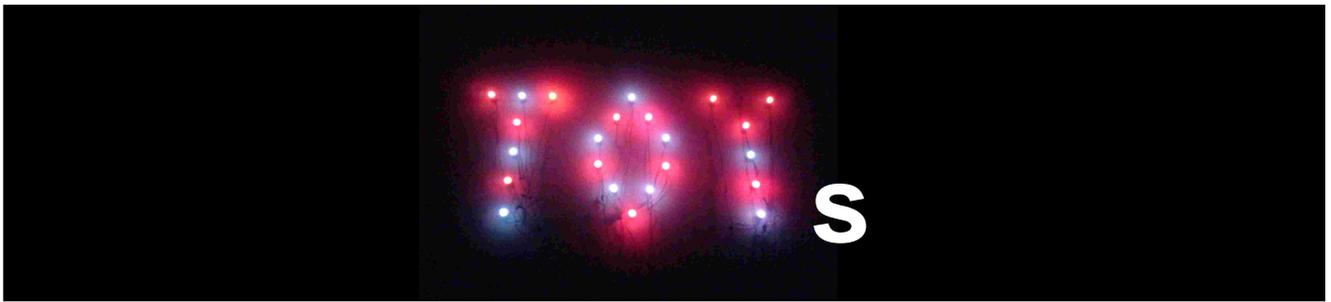
## 2. Theorie

From an economical point of view, the game industry enjoys enormous growing rates and will soon outnumber the biggest Hollywood titles in commercial success. Millions of players meet online to form groups and social communities in virtual landscapes, sacrificing their real life and instituting economic situations, in which Chinese workers have to play over hundred hours a week in order to provide in-Game items for western costumers.<sup>1</sup>

Games also activate a fantastic third space beyond the realm of our empirical and purely somatic experiences, ironically through a solipsistic medium. If the notion of playing is an existential element in the definition of mankind, a deeper look into its physical manifestation may be a legitimate method of pragmatically evoking the primary proposition of play: Toys.

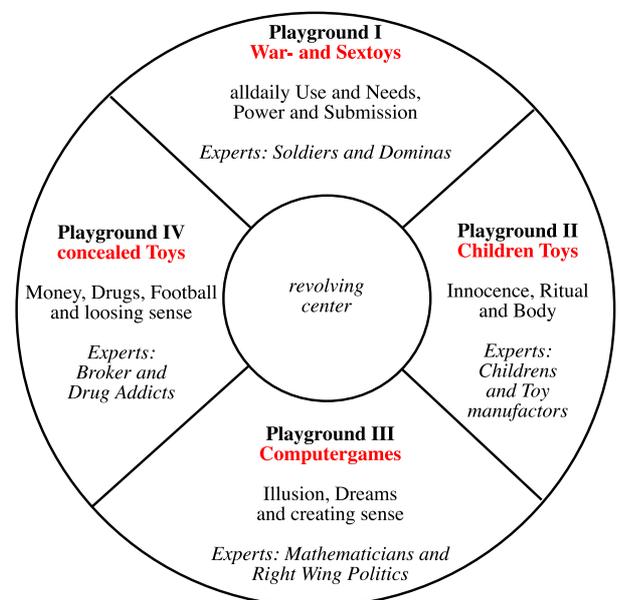


Toys serve both as means of constructing sense and unfolding it, depending on their use and abuse: An example is the Swiss right wing party SVP. By creating a seemingly harmless Computer game about black and white sheep as a euphemism for glorifying racial hatred<sup>2</sup>, a new level of meaning was created and an apparently innocent medium politically charged. The exact same logic applies reversed when monetary stocks are treated as toys of greed instead of a function to display real monetary fortunes.



### 3. Context

It is possible to look more closely into every regional and social context, by investigating common rituals. One way of approaching such an undertaking was to create a stage situation or a toyshop in which the conventions of a performance meet with different playgrounds and levels of social contexts within society:

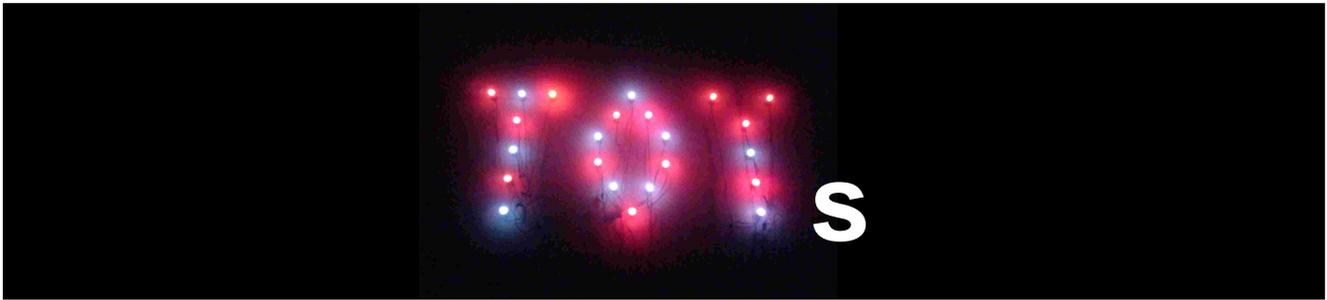


*expert talk with Oberst a.D. Kaestnet (former strategic coordinator of the German military forces), lecturing on the topic of “War and toys”....*

*...this was one of several experts lecturing on different concepts of playground and gaming*

Each Playground represents a stage, in which the public can interact with according objects and experts, represented either live, in video or reenacted.

*“...it is like sitting in a carousel, only enjoying the illusion of freedom, when in fact the monotonous revolving motion puts one in a state of trance, preventing you from recognizing reality clearly.”<sup>3</sup>*



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#### 4. Interactivity

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Our project was not designed in order to transmit a certain moral or meaning but rather like an open scientific experiment or a social investigation on how people use technical devices, in order to hide their true identity, reveal personal details to a stranger, forced the performances into uncomfortable situation or were just enjoying the unusual setup of interactivity in a theater space.

[www.toystaheterunkst.blogspot.com](http://www.toystaheterunkst.blogspot.com)

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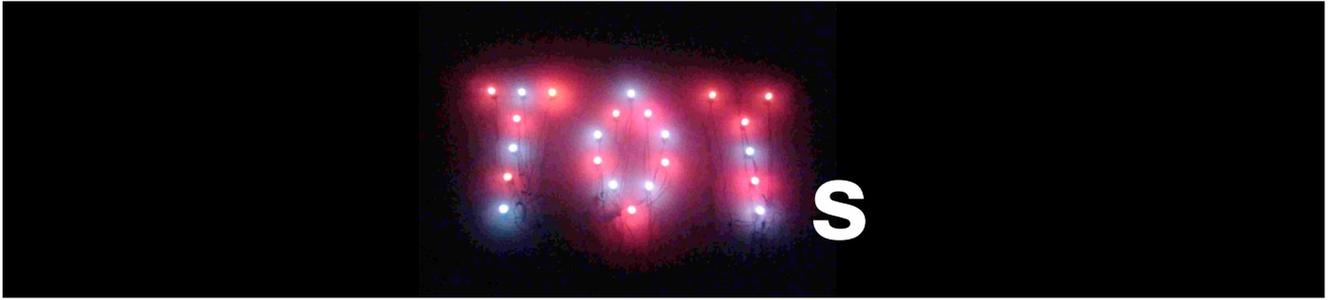
supported by



<sup>1</sup> <http://gigaom.com/2006/11/26/world-of-warcraft-gold-farmers>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.spiegel.de/fotostrecke/fotostrecke-24988.html#backToArticle=507481>

<sup>3</sup> Bertolt Brecht “On Experimental Theater” (1939)



## Technical Setup

The following is provided by the artist:

- 4 wireless cameras (recording the performance live)
- 5 video glasses (receiving the signal)



*live Video signal  
(see docu video)*

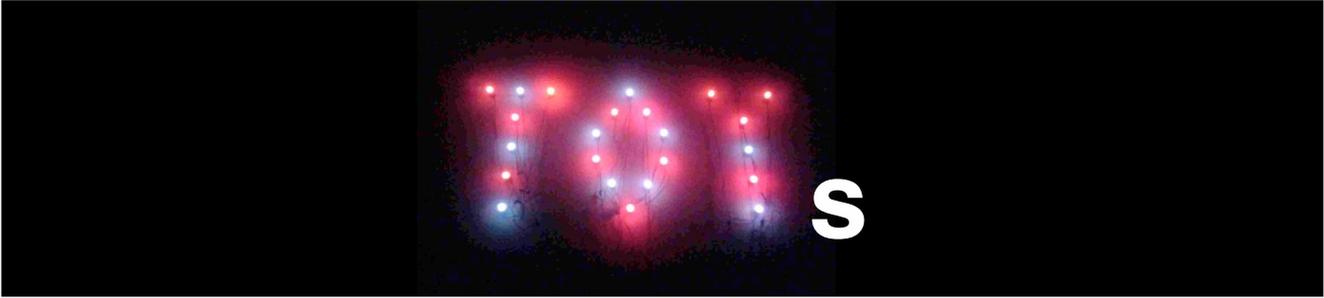


- 9 cell phones with handy flatrate (see budget) for live Audio signal
- several dvd players, AV-splitter and switches
- set of machine & toyshop, costumes, probs, etc.  
(all the equipment fits in one VW-Bus)

### **The venue should provide the following:**

**Space (see next page) and sheduling: Up to five shows every evening for a maximum of five audience members, duration about 30 min.**

**One technical assistant for building up (ca. 8 hours) and down (ca. 2 hours).**



## Space

The stage is divided into two parts: The Performance space and the machine, in which the audience can access the AV-devices.

The machine requires a space of about 3m x 3m x 3m and can be placed in a public situation, such as a lobby or foyer.

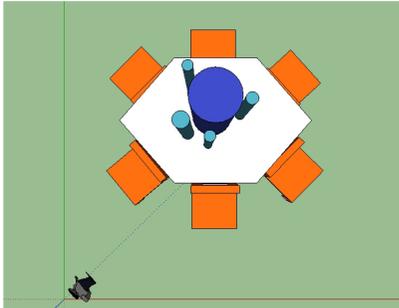
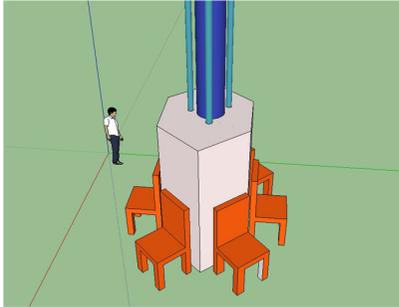
The performance space should be at least 50 qm and is not accessible by the public. It can be located on a stage, a storage room or a cellar.

There should be normal electricity available in both spaces.

If possible the two spaces should be close to each other.



## Gallery & Audience Space



## Performance & "Virtual Space" (Original Setup - optional)

