

Playtime Anti-Boredom Society

761 Oak Street
San Francisco, CA 94117
paragooogle.com

Games

Ghosts of a Chance, 2008 to present, Washington, DC

ghostsofachance.com

Sponsored by the Luce Foundation Center at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, *Ghosts of a Chance* is the first ever alternate reality game (ARG) made for a museum. *Ghosts of a Chance* invites gamers to create objects and mail them to the museum for an exhibition curated by two game characters posing as employees. But the "game within the game" is also a challenge to uncover clues to a narrative that binds those objects, and to investigate the way objects embody histories.

Flashback, 2007 to present, San Francisco, California

playflashback.com

A prototype online US history and civics social network game and TV show that challenges students to engage in real-world missions designed to teach valuable historical research skills and encourage civic engagement. Students are motivated by competition and supported by feedback from an online teacher and student community. Flashback is funded by a grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

SFZero, 2005 to present, based in San Francisco, played worldwide

sfzero.org

Playtime's groundbreaking ongoing project is a "collaborative production game". Players build characters and gain points by completing real-world tasks created by their peers. The goals of play include meeting new people, exploring the city, and participating in non-consumer leisure activities. Though initially focused on the San Francisco Bay Area, SFZero has expanded to include player communities from across the United States and around the world, from Los Angeles to Chicago to London to Baghdad. SFZero's unique player community and mission-based gaming mechanism have attracted attention from media outlets such as SF Weekly, London's Metro, Rhizome News, Current TV, and CNET, as well as from gaming scholars such as Greg Niemeyer and Jane McGonigal.

Helen Chanam, 2004 to 2005, Chicago, Illinois

A narrative-based immersive game whose story played out both online and in the "Loop" in Chicago. Players solved puzzles that advanced a story line about the kidnapping of an Art Institute of Chicago student named Helen Chanam.

D Fatower, 2005, Bologna, Italy

paragooogle.com/tower

A series of enigmatic and interconnected texts and objects that led participants to explore and investigate various locations in Bologna Italy while uncovering a narrative.

Virtual Visits to Para-Chicago, 2004, Chicago, Illinois

rhizome.org/object.php?o=24815&m=1030296

Created for the Helen Chanam project, Virtual Visits to Para-Chicago was a text-based multi-user environment that replicated the "Loop" in Chicago. It is featured in Rhizome's ArtBase Quarterly.

Live Events / Street Games

Journey to the End of the Night, 2006 to present, worldwide

A city-wide game of tag played out during a foot race. Players travel a roughly 7-10 mile course of checkpoints by foot or public transportation, avoiding “chasers” (fellow players who have already been tagged). Checkpoint locations are carefully chosen to create discrete atmospheres and expose participants to situations and neighborhoods they are unlikely to be familiar with. Playtime has run the game in San Francisco in June 2006 and June 2007, as well as in Brooklyn and Manhattan. With assistance from Playtime, others have organized iterations of *Journey to the End of the Night* in London (in May 2007 as part of the pervasive games festival *Hide and Seek*), Chicago (in April 2008), and Washington D.C. (in May 2008).

The Sweet Cheat Gone, 2007, San Francisco, California

“An investigation of guilt and innocence played out across the streets of San Francisco.” Players are divided into teams that either prosecute or defend the accused perpetrator. It is their job to collect evidence around San Francisco on foot, bike, or Muni (no cars or taxis allowed) that supports their case while hiding, destroying, or possibly tampering with the other side's evidence.

Seeing Beyond Salon, 111 Minna, San Francisco, California

An interactive exhibition about seeing and perception. In collaboration with the Exploratorium, Chronicle Books, the Craigslist Foundation and others.

Seeing Beyond Sight Challenge, 2007, nationwide

A blindfolded photographic scavenger hunt. Playtime organized the event in San Francisco, New York, and Raleigh, North Carolina.

Conferences / Festivals / Appearances

ARGFest-o-Con (alternate reality games conference), 2007, San Francisco, California

Panel: “What people do and keeping them safe”

Artsposure, 2007, Raleigh, North Carolina

Project: *Seeing Beyond Sight Challenge*

KQED's Forum (on National Public Radio), 2007, San Francisco, California

Guest speaker: “Seeing Beyond Sight”

KQED's Forum, 2006, San Francisco California

Guest speaker: “Fostering the digital commons”

Conflux (festival of contemporary psychogeography), 2006, Brooklyn New York

Game: *Journey to the End of the Night*

Come Out and Play (street games festival), 2006, Manhattan, New York

Game: *Journey to the End of the Night*

FILE (electronic language international festival), 2006, Sao Paulo Brazil

Digital presentation: SFZero.org

Press / Scholarship

“This Might Be a Game: Ubiquitous Play and Performance at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century”, Jane McGonigal

http://avantgame.com/McGonigal_THIS_MIGHT_BE_A_GAME_sm.pdf

“Gamers finding adrenaline rush offline”, Contra Costa Times, 2007

<http://sf0.org/SFmedia/ContraCostaTimes.pdf>

“Sweet Cheat Gone”, San Francisco Bay Guardian, 2007

http://sfbayguardian.com/entry.php?catid=77&entry_id=2809

“More Than Zero”, SF Weekly, 2006

<http://www.sfweekly.com/2006-05-31/news/more-than-zero/>

“Collaborative gaming takes to the streets”, CNET, 2006

http://www.news.com/Collaborative-gaming-takes-to-the-streets/2100-1043_3-6061171.html

Members

Playtime is: Ian Kizu-Blair, Sam Lavigne and Sean Mahan. All three attended the University of Chicago where Ian and Sean studied English, and Sam studied Comparative Literature. They have a warcat named Tarden.