

All Gameplay Is Performance



Jane M^cGonigal

Performance Studies @ UC Berkeley

Pervasive game design @ 42 Entertainment

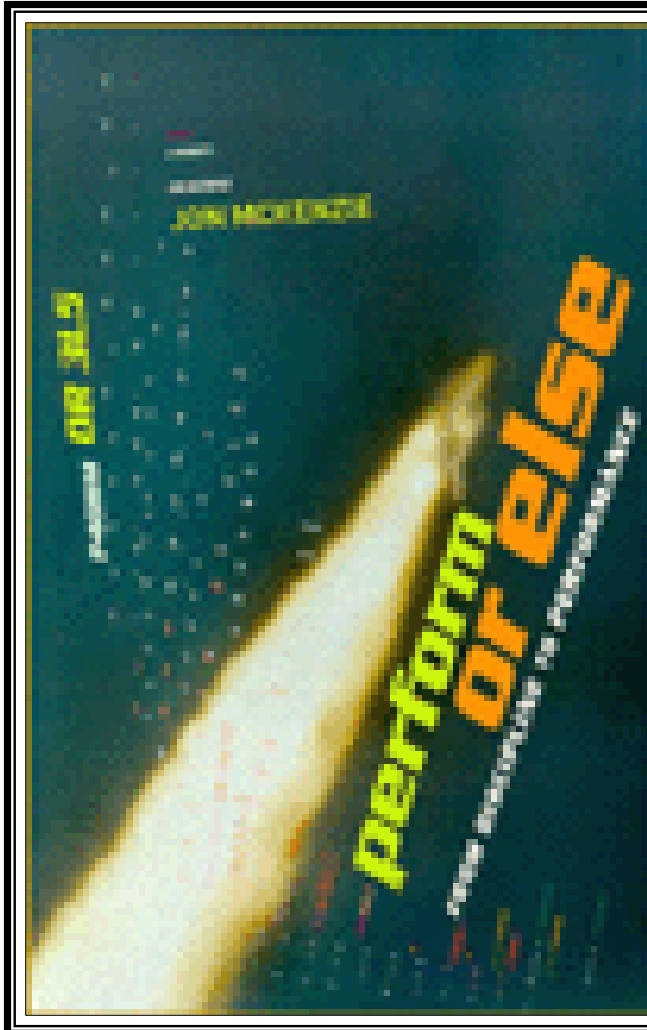
All Gameplay Is Performance



“The challenge of ‘perform — or else’ defines our age of global performance. [...] the whole world’s been framed as a high performance test site.”

- Jon McKenzie’s *Perform or Else*

Gameplay = Perform or Else



3 categories of the performance challenge in contemporary digital culture:

technological → efficient

cultural → efficacious

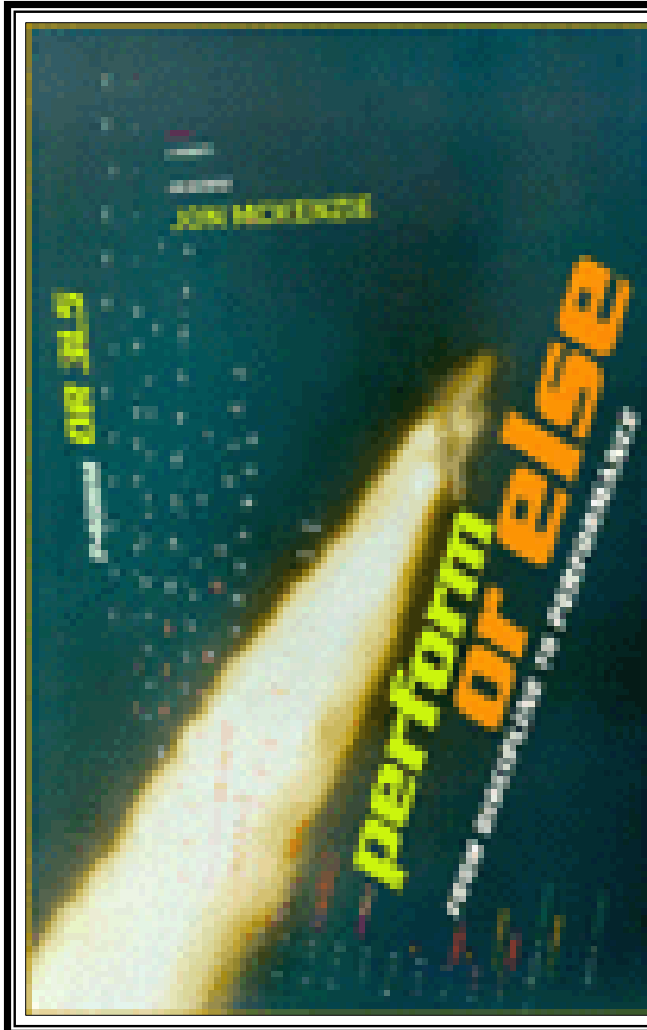
organizational → effective

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the state of the art game

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Gameplay = Perform or Else



3 categories of the performance challenge in contemporary digital culture:

technological → efficient

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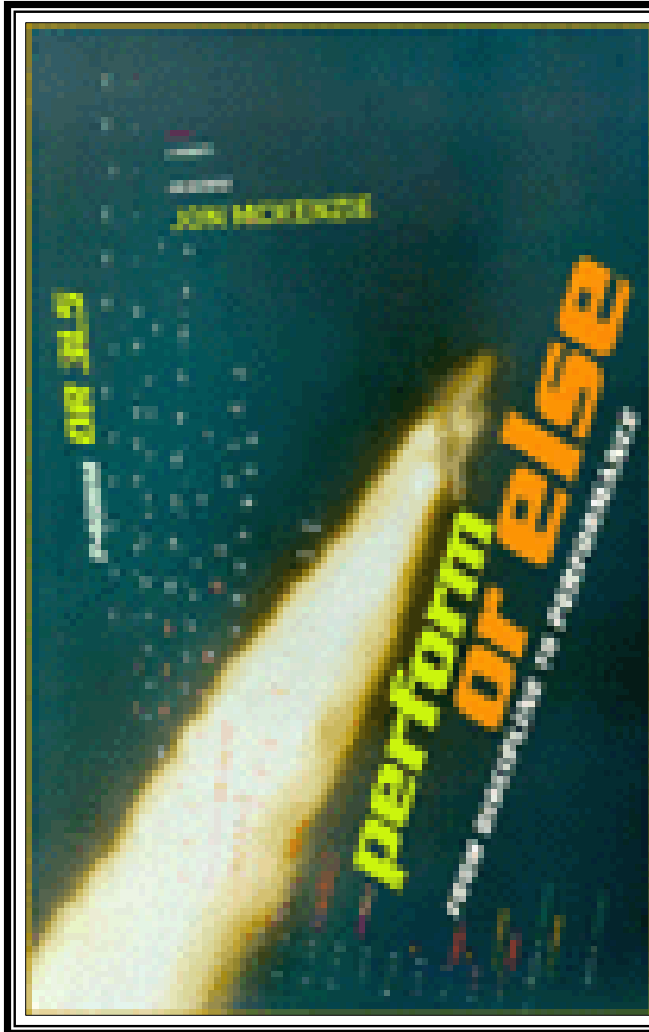
Digital gameplay also requires all 3.

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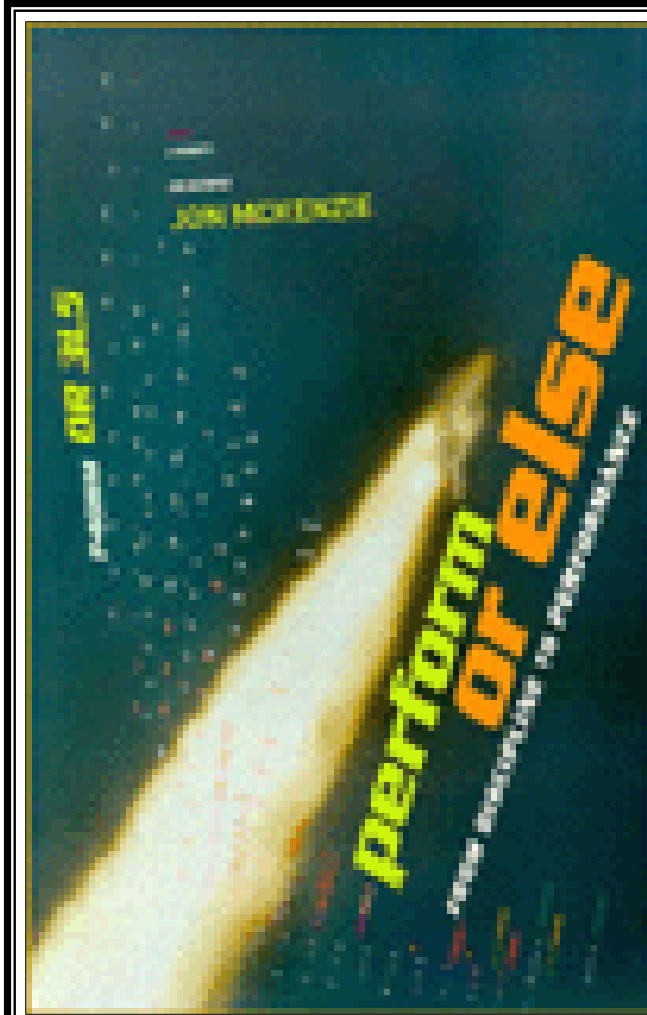
Gameplay = Perform or Else



“Perform — or else. There is no performance without **challenge**, without claims and contestations, demands and accusations, field tests and identity checks, as well as the occasionally untimely dare.”

- Jon McKenzie's *Perform or Else*

Gameplay = Perform or Else



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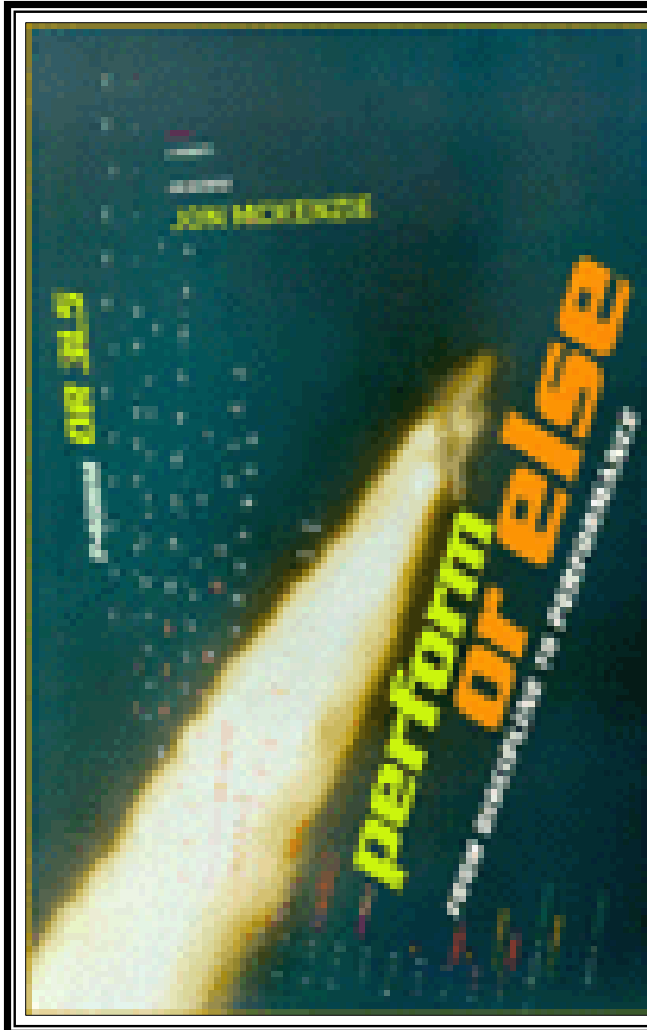
**Gameplay is the challenge to perform:
the challenge to be challenged.**

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Gameplay = Perform or Else



Performance will name **the embodiment of digital virtualities** [...] just as **theater** once actualized the virtual spheres of literary societies and **ritual** actualized those of oral societies.”

-Jon McKenzie's *Perform or Else*

All Gameplay Is Performance

“**Playing** is at the **heart** of all **performance**.” –
Richard Schechner, founder of Performance
Studies

The time has come for Game Studies to make the
corollary claim:

Performance is at the heart of all play.

The state of the (performing) art game

2005. This is the state of the art game:

High performance gaming is the embodiment of digital virtuality.

3 High Performance Games



The Organum Playtest (2005)

(multiplayer)



Twister Cage Match (2004)

(moderately multiplayer)



I Love Bees (2004)

(massively multiplayer)

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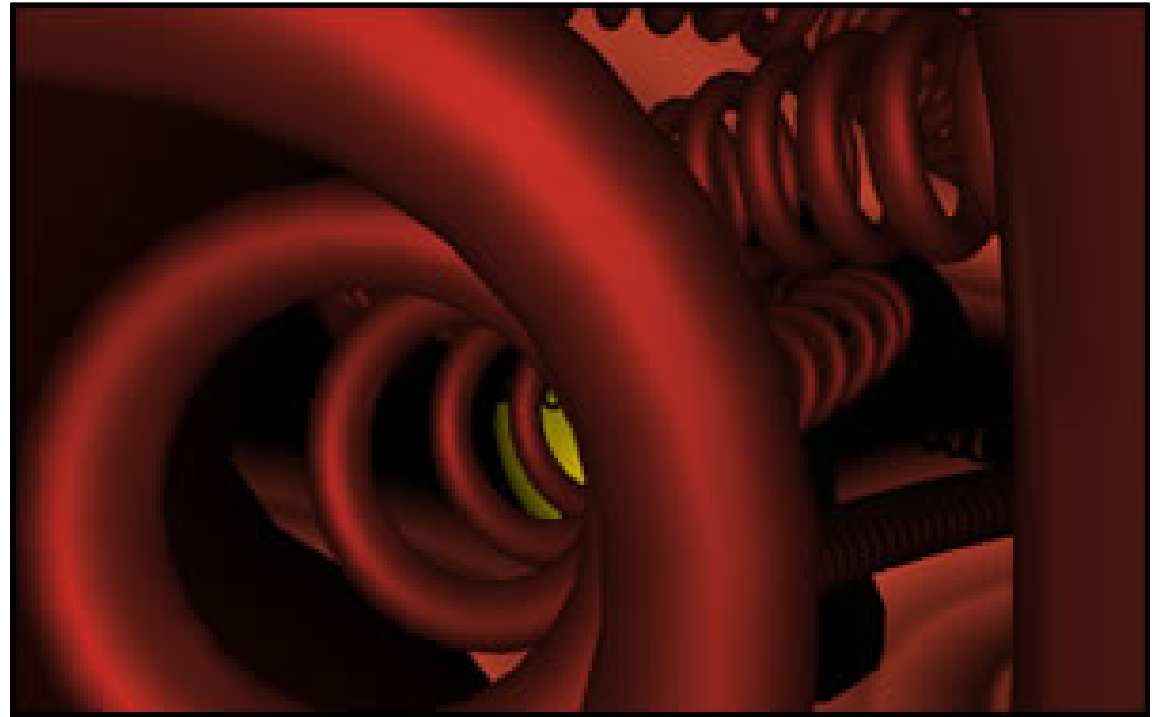
A **performance** lecture in 3 acts

Act I: **Kinds** of performance that arise during game play

Act II: Factors in the complicated **relationship** between play and performance

Act III: **Design** strategies for high performance play

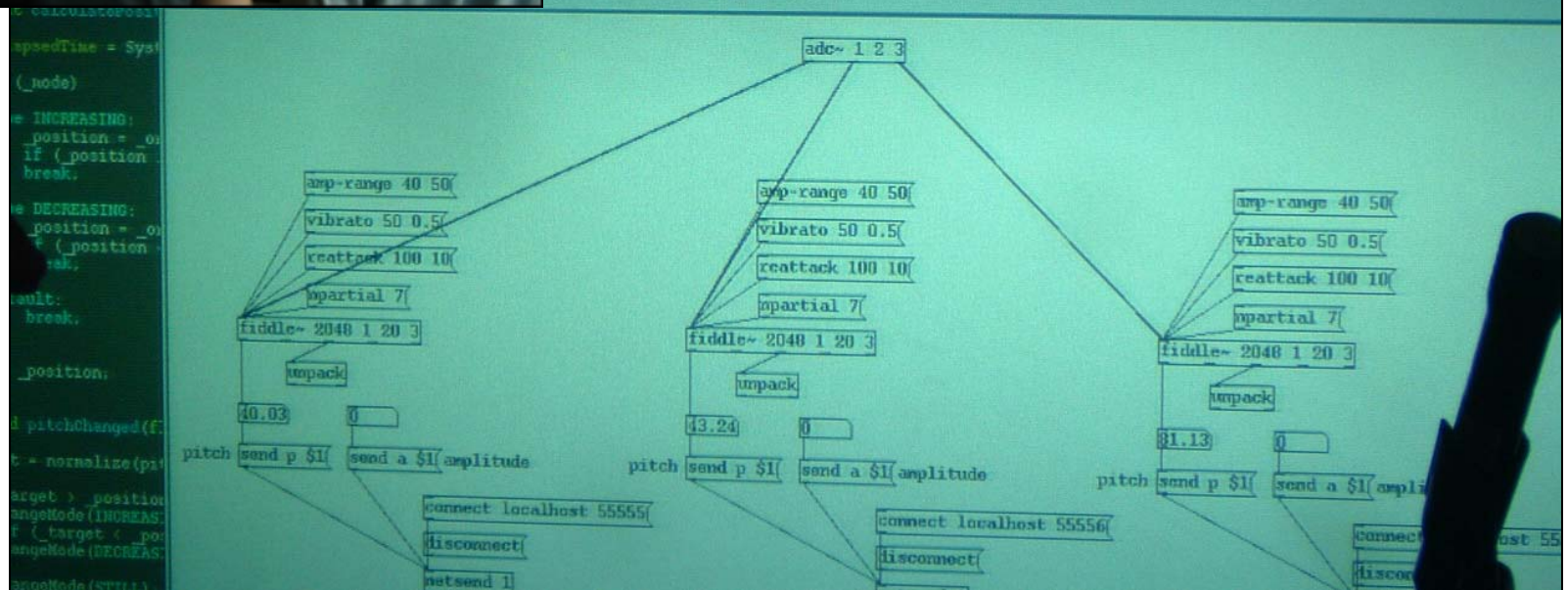
The ORGANUM Playtest (2005)



The ORGANUM Playtest (2005)



```
ava:organum:main:organum/targets/src:numbers.txt
removed:organum/Constellation.class'
removed:organum/Main.class'
removed:organum/Model.class'
removed:organum/MotionAxis.class'
removed:organum/OrganumInputDevice.class'
removed:organum/PDListener.class'
removed:organum/PDReceive.class'
removed:organum/PDSend.class'
removed:organum/PositionControls.class'
removed:organum/SensorBehavior.class'
removed:organum/TextureLoader.class'
removed:organum/VertexBehavior.class'
removed:organum/Vertex.class'
removed:organum/VertexListener.class'
removed:organum/Wrapper$1.class'
removed:organum/Wrapper.class'
ryan@dhcp-169-229-63-81 src $
Accessible: ImageObserver, MenuItemContainer, Serializable
JMenu
JMenuBar
Direct Known Subclasses:
fiddler.pd - /home/ryan/organum/pd
```



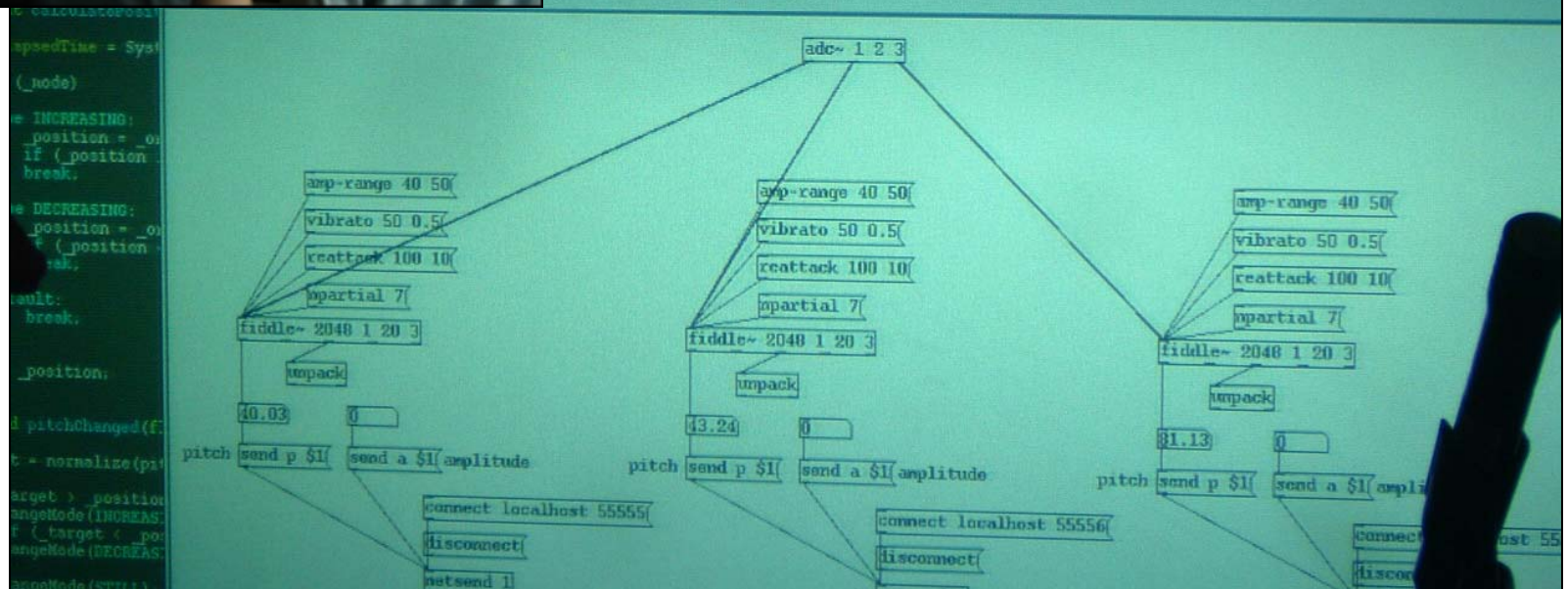
The ORGANUM Playtest (2005) **MEDIA**



```
ava:organum:main:organum/targets/act:numbers:act
removed:organum/Constellation.class'
removed:organum/Main.class'
removed:organum/Model.class'
removed:organum/MotionAxis.class'
removed:organum/OrganumInputDevice.class'
removed:organum/PDListener.class'
removed:organum/PDReceive.class'
removed:organum/PDSend.class'
removed:organum/PositionControls.class'
removed:organum/SensorBehavior.class'
removed:organum/TextureLoader.class'
removed:organum/VertexBehavior.class'
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```

Play
Organum
videos:

1. Learning
2. Master
3. Play



5 Kinds of Gameplay Performance



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5 Kinds of Gameplay Performance

1. Talent-based performance (art)

5 Kinds of Gameplay Performance

1. Talent-based performance (art)
2. Master performance (interaction)

5 Kinds of Gameplay Performance

1. **Talent-based** performance (art)
2. **Master** performance (interaction)
3. **Expressive** performance (identity)

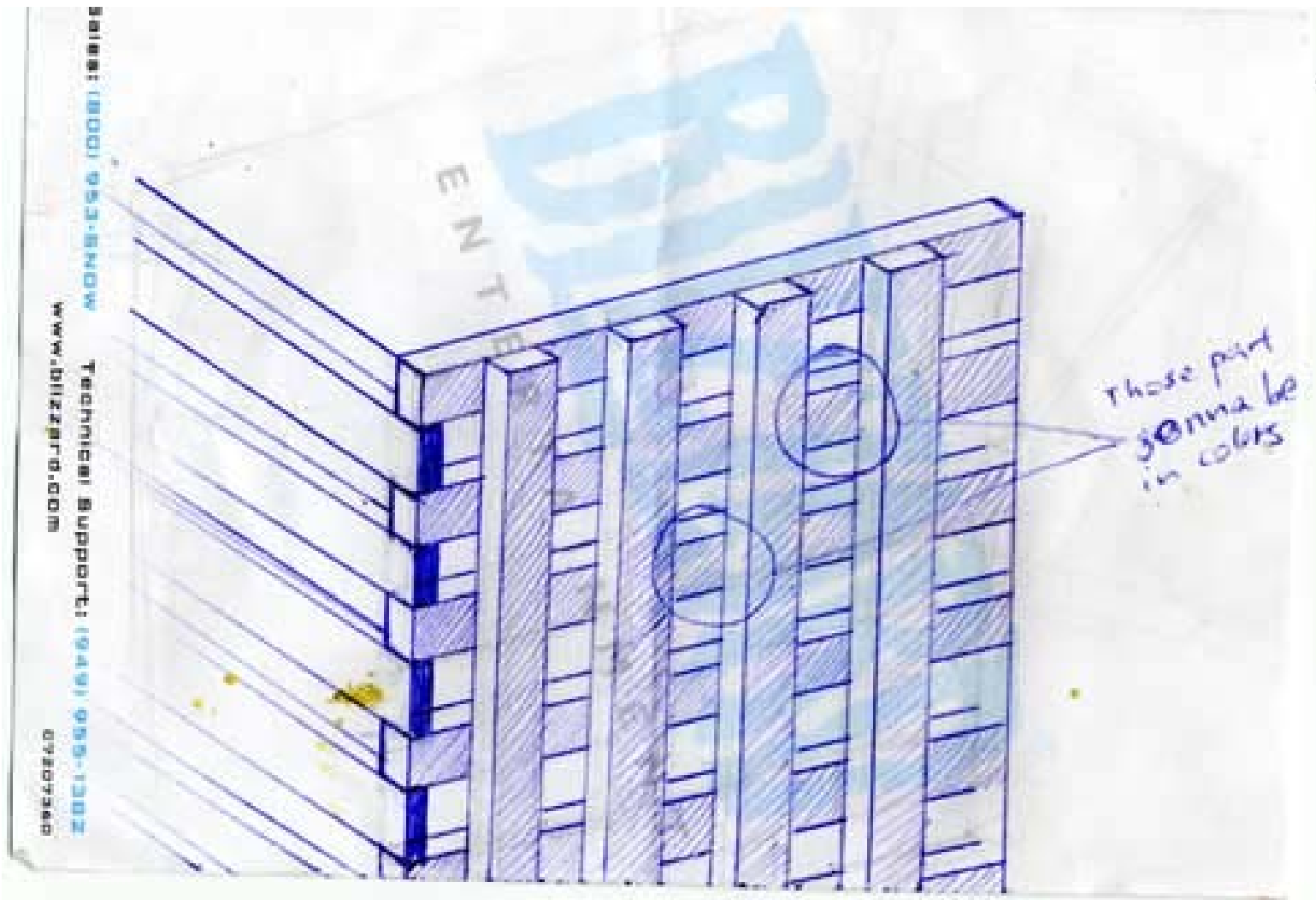
5 Kinds of Gameplay Performance

1. **Talent-based** performance (art)
2. **Master** performance (interaction)
3. **Expressive** performance (identity)
4. **Spectacular** performance (attention)

5 Kinds of Gameplay Performance

1. **Talent-based** performance (art)
2. **Master** performance (interaction)
3. **Expressive** performance (identity)
4. **Spectacular** performance (attention)
5. **Theatrical** performance (“as if”)

Twister Cage Match (2004)

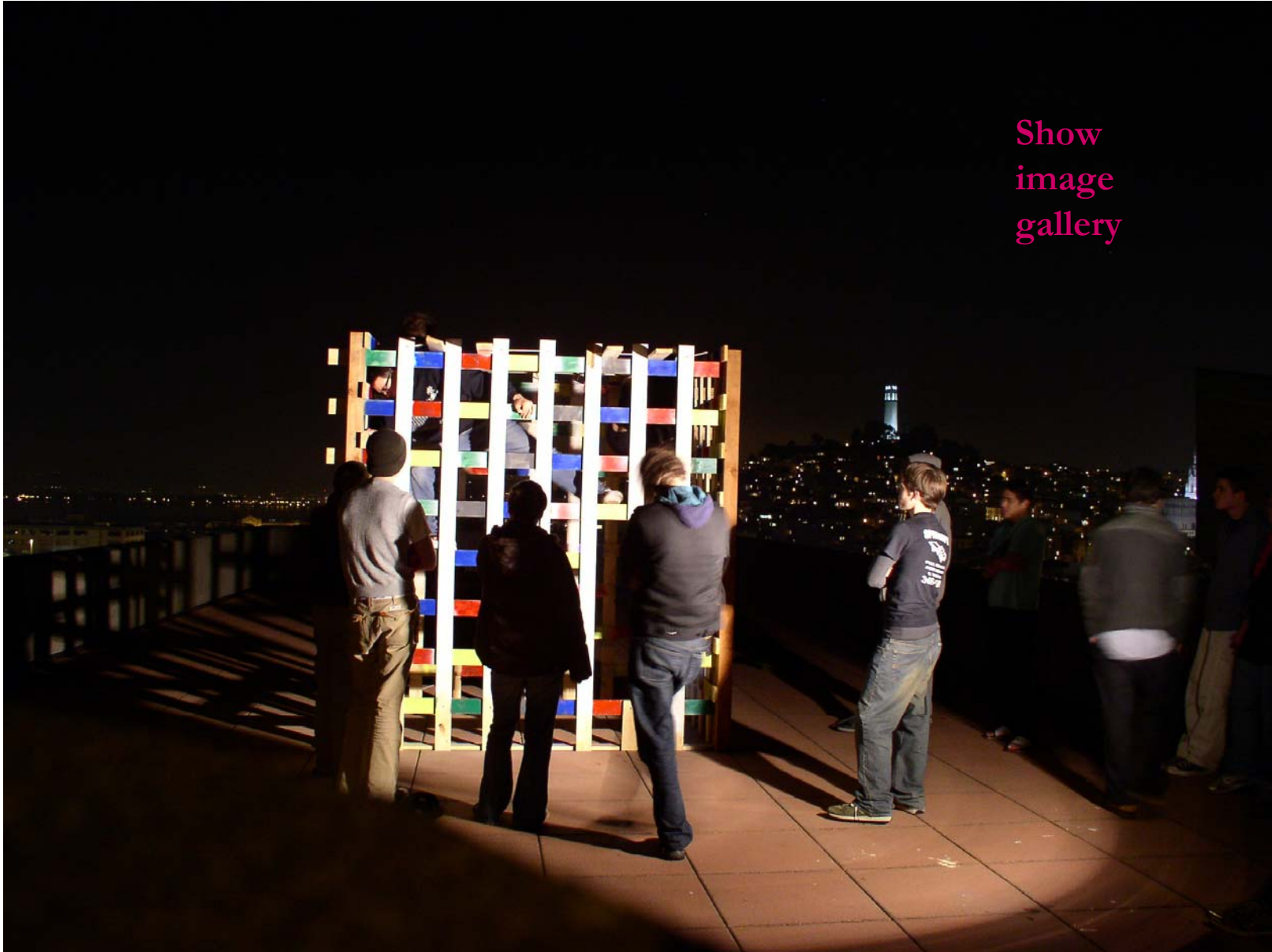


Twister Cage Match (2004)



Twister Cage Match (2004) **MEDIA**

Show
image
gallery



Play and performance

a complicated relationship



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Play and performance

a complicated relationship

1. All gameplay is performance.

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Play and performance

a complicated relationship

1. All gameplay is performance.
2. All gameplay is theatrical.

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Play and performance

a complicated relationship

1. All gameplay is performance.
2. All gameplay is theatrical.
3. Performance is improved by gameplay's theatrical magic “as if”.

Play and performance

a complicated relationship

1. All gameplay is **performance**.
2. All gameplay is **theatrical**.
3. Performance is improved by gameplay's theatrical magic “**as if**”.
4. Performance is **scary**, games are **safe**.

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Play and performance

a complicated relationship

1. All gameplay is **performance**.
2. All gameplay is **theatrical**.
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5. Play is **autotelic**, performance is **telic**, and gameplay can be both.

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Play and performance

a complicated relationship

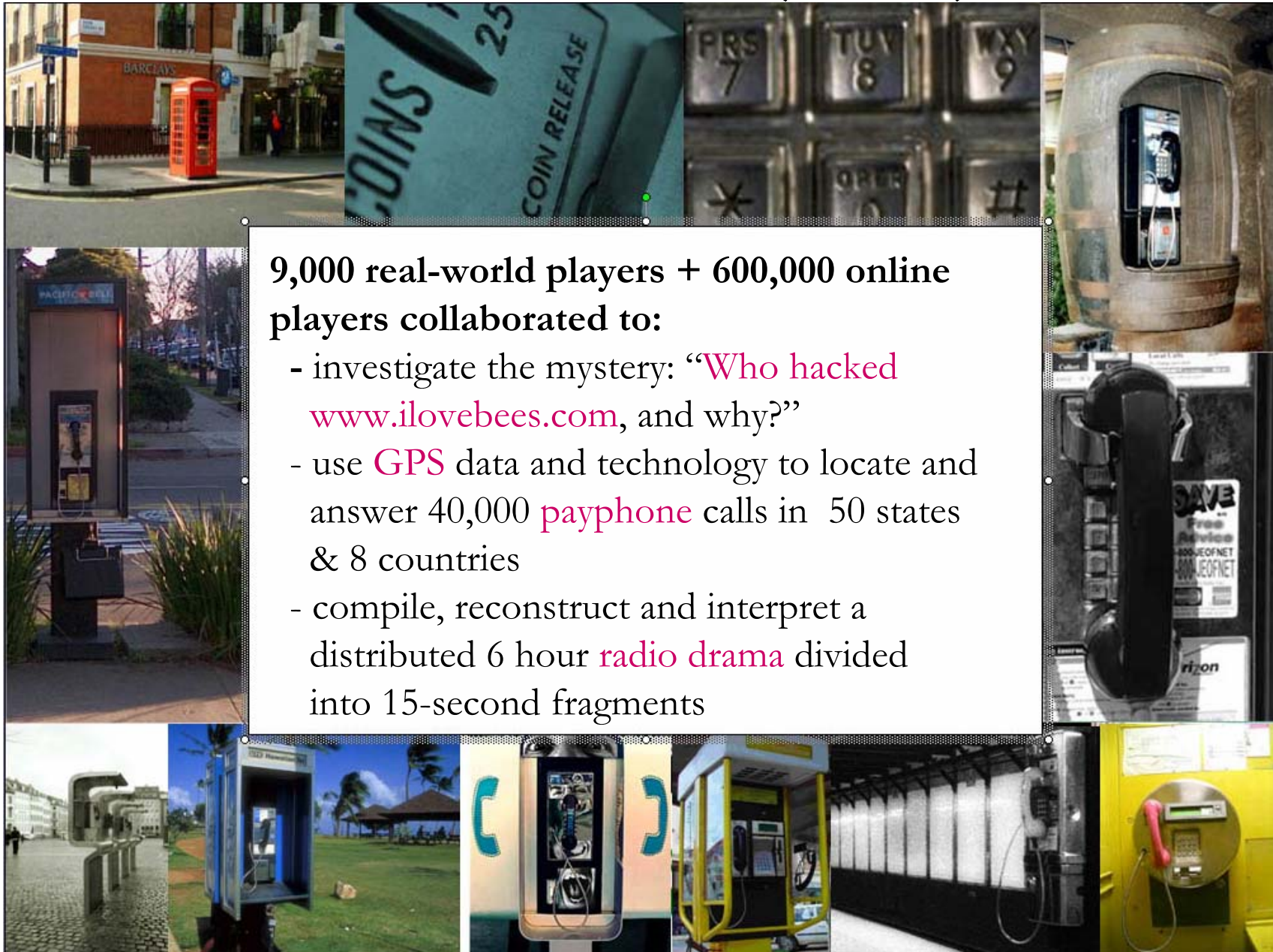
1. All gameplay is **performance**.
2. All gameplay is **theatrical**.
3. Performance is improved by gameplay's theatrical magic “**as if**”.
4. Performance is **scary**, games are **safe**.
5. Play is **autotelic**, performance is **telic**, and gameplay can be both.
6. Performance makes gameplay systems **legible**.

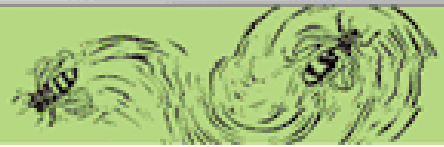
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I Love Bees (2004)





They
they
they make
Couldn't v
something
be

HALT - MODULE CORE HEMORRHAGE

Control has been yielded to the
SYSTEM PERIL DISTRIBUTED REFLEX.

This medium is classified, and has a
STRONG INTRUSIVE INCLINATION.

In 4 days, network throttling will erode.

In 18 days this medium will metastasize.

COUNTDOWN TO WIDE AWAKE AND PHYSICAL:
31:11:00:54:544

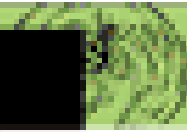
Make your decisions accordingly.

and I
like

FAQ

Q: What happened to this site?

A: No idea. Help me out here.



about me

fun stuff!

- Goodies
- Amazing facts!
- Hive-Ku
- The Fable of the Bee
- The Myth of Comana
- Bee-licious Chocolate Chip Cookies
- Bee Sting Cake
- Saffron Honey Ice Cream
- Honey Butter
- Honey Roasted Carrots
- Honey Cough Medicine

18.891883 -077.826117 06:07 PDT	41.511567 -081.607317 06:11 PDT
41.970906 -077.228967 06:13 PDT	48.652114 -070.289091 06:19 PDT
18.247483 -080.805150 06:23 PDT	48.451597 -079.932884 06:27 PDT
41.217289 -085.368847 06:31 PDT	33.794257 -084.387594 06:35 PDT
18.885250 -077.828167 06:39 PDT	39.404469 -077.428227 06:43 PDT
48.792165 -085.076517 06:47 PDT	41.667164 -070.291601

Time	Latitude	Longitude	Town(ish)	State	Rand City	MAP rand acme
11:00 PST	40.45897	-74.47242	Milntown NJ	New Jersey	North Brunswick	map rand acme
11:00 PST	43.2125	-71.53087	Concord NH	New Hampshire	Concord	map rand acme
11:00 PST	40.73203	-74.03955	Hoboken NJ	New York	New York	map rand acme
11:00 PST	40.34853	-74.66343	Princeton NJ	New Jersey	Princeton	map rand acme
11:00 PST	40.34987	-74.66295	Princeton NJ	New Jersey	Princeton	map rand acme
07:03 PDT	39.896	-75.036086	Haddonfield NJ	New Jersey	Cherry Hill	map rand acme
11:00 PST	33.922767	-84.342483	Dunwoody GA	Georgia	Dunwoody	map rand acme
11:00 PST	40.73863	-74.02931	Hoboken NJ	New York	New York	map rand acme
11:00 PST	41.82058	-71.49749	Cranston RI	Rhode Island	Providence	map rand acme
11:00 PST	40.77458	-74.0388	Union City NJ	New Jersey	Union City	map rand acme
11:00 PST	51.752101	-1.2579	Oxford	United Kingdom	Oxford	map rand acme
11:00 PST	39.682651	-75.754051	Newark DE	Delaware	Newark	map rand acme
11:00 PST	38.950344	-104.7993	Pikeview CO	Colorado	Colorado Springs	map rand acme
11:00 PST	36.087925	-94.170446	Fayetteville AR	Arkansas	Fayetteville	map rand acme
11:00 PST	33.12819	-117.16113	San Marcos CA	California	San Marcos	map rand acme
11:00 PST	27.98103	-82.386362	Mango FL	Florida	East Lake-Orient Park	map rand acme
11:00 PST	40.48053	-74.42428	Highland Park NJ	New Jersey	North Brunswick	map rand acme
11:00 PST	26.706022	-80.049062	West Palm Beach FL	Florida	West Palm Beach	map rand acme
11:00 PST	37.9913	-121.313	Stockton CA	California	Stockton	map rand acme
11:00 PST	51.512801	-0.132001	London	United Kingdom	London	map rand acme
11:00 PST	40.435801	-79.957633	Pittsburgh PA	Pennsylvania	Pittsburgh	map rand acme
11:00 PST	36.964052	-122.020054	San Lorenzo River CA	California	Santa Cruz	map rand acme
11:00 PST	36.000883	-78.94045	Durham NC	North Carolina	Durham	map rand acme
11:00 PST	37.792786	-122.396824	San Francisco CA	California	San Francisco	map rand acme
11:00 PST	39.97775	-105.243039	Marshall CO	Colorado	Boulder	map rand acme



I Love Bees (2004) [Play audio and show image gallery](#)



High performance design strategies

1. Make play more **physical**.

High performance design strategies

1. Make play more **physical**.
2. Make play more **visible**.

High performance design strategies

1. Make play more **physical**.
2. Make play more **visible**.
3. Make play more **spectacular**.

High performance design strategies

1. Make play more **physical**.
2. Make play more **visible**.
3. Make play more **spectacular**.
4. Make play more **demonstrative**.

High performance design strategies

1. Make play more **physical**.
2. Make play more **visible**.
3. Make play more **spectacular**.
4. Make play more **demonstrative**.
5. Make play more **conspiratorial**.

High performance design strategies

1. Make play more **physical**.
2. Make play more **visible**.
3. Make play more **spectacular**.
4. Make play more **demonstrative**.
5. Make play more **conspiratorial**.
6. Make play more **psychological**.

All Gameplay Is Performance

More physical

More visible

More spectacular

More demonstrative

More conspiratorial

More psychological



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Go play! Go perform! thank you.



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42 Entertainment: www.4orty2wo.com