Gameplay

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game design

today's menu

- ☐ A quick look back: games as systems, toyplay, mechanics, rules
- ☐ Defining toyplay
- ☐ Defining gameplay
- ☐ Play, performance, play acts
- ☐ Rhetorics of play
- ☐ Rules?
- ☐ Challenges

what have we done so far?

Games as systems

Any game is a system of rules and procedures for interactions - and as such can be created (design), described (criticism), or defined (theory)

Digital fallacy?

- ☐ Toys: facilitators for playful activities
- ☐ Rules: Structures and frames for play
- ☐ Game Mechanics: rule-based methods for player agency in the gameworld, designed to overcome challenges in non-trivial ways

This is what we can say
but what can we design?

That unforgettable moment

What is gameplay?

The Masters

- ☐ Gameplay is players trying to overcome challenges (Juul).
- ☐ Gameplay is a consequence of the choices presented to players (Rollings and Adams).
- ☐ Gameplay is related to:
  - ☐ choices
  - ☐ challenges
  - ☐ players

The Playground Continuum

Play ⟷ **Toyplay** ⟷ **Gameplay**

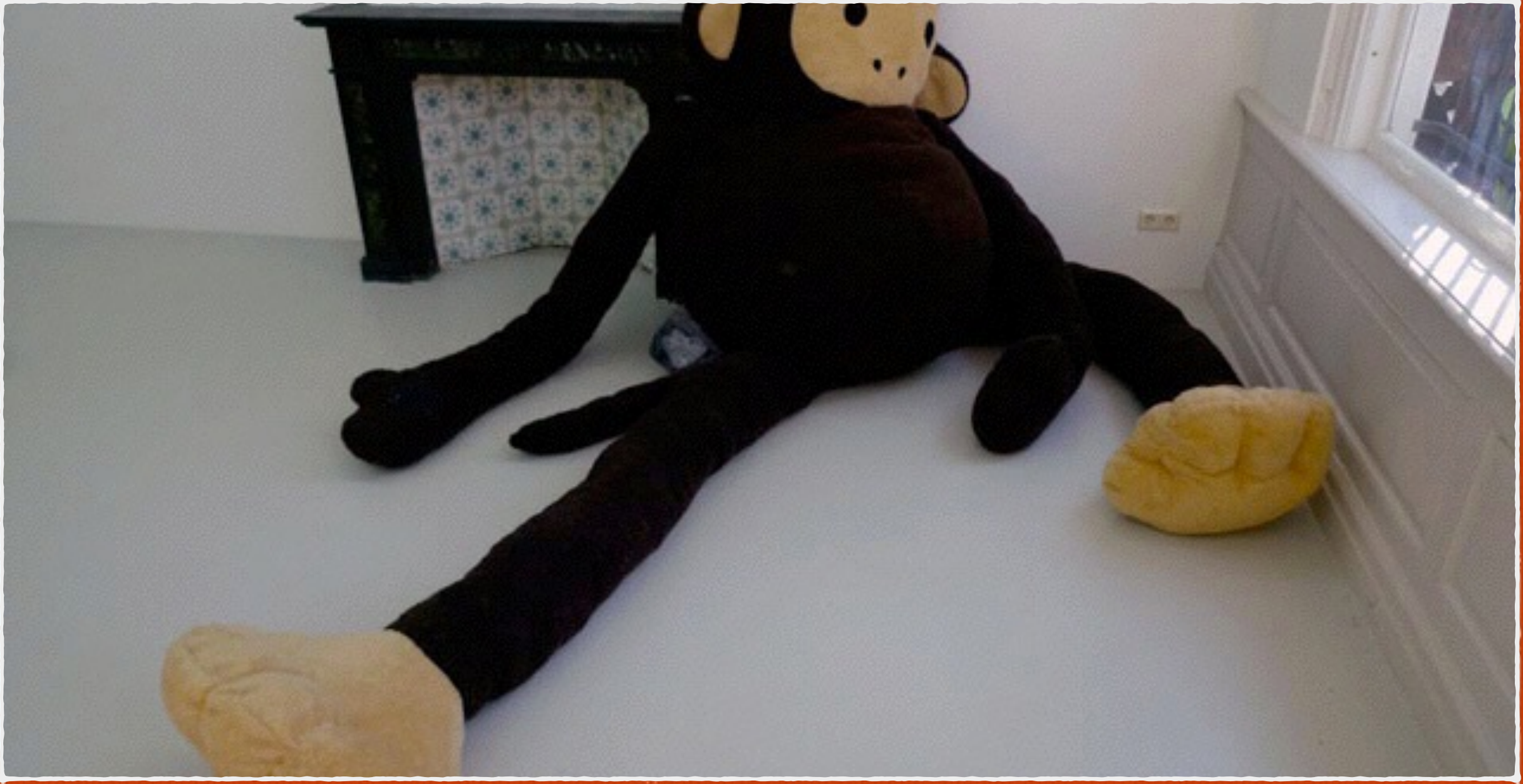
Freeform ludic activity, with no goals predefined or external to the player and not depending on the use of mediators or instruments

Freeform ludic activity with no goals predefined or external to the player, and mediated (constrained) by toys.

Ludic activity regulated by game rules, mediated by game mechanics, and oriented to the satisfactory achievement of goals predetermined by rules agreed upon by the player or players

Choices (yet again)

A game is a series of interesting choices (Sid Meier)



Challenges

We have seen this before ...

More on challenges

- What are you challenging?
  - Players skills? (then think: with infinite time, what intrinsic level of skill is required?)
  - Stress coping? (what is the minimum time to overcome this challenge?)
- Absolute difficulty: intrinsic skill + time boundaries
- But this is not the only way of thinking about challenges!

Why are these great games?

Anna Navarre: You won't be able to hide it for long.

Those damn players!

Food for thought

- ☐ We need to re-think the idea of gameplay.
- ☐ Move away from system-centric, designer-oriented rhetoric and focus on:
- ☐ how to design for playful experiences.

How to design play?

- Main issue: understanding play, again.
- We play through play acts (Schechner).
- Play is flexible, performative, relational.

Play, for designers

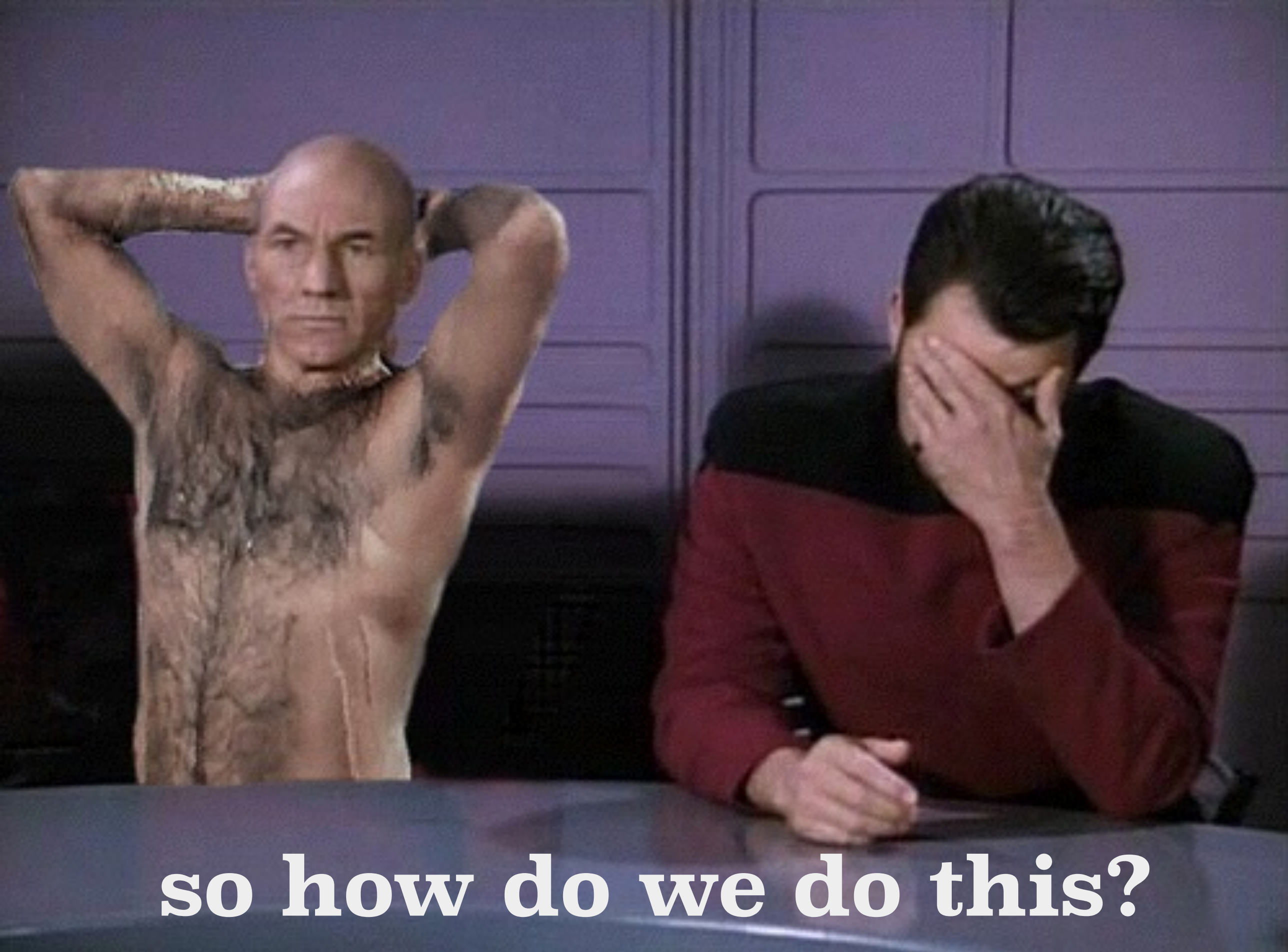
- ☐ Performative
- ☐ Festive
- ☐ Serious
- ☐ Subversive
- ☐ Critical

How to harness this?

Final nail in the coffin

- “Being playful is an activity of people, not rules. Understanding the rules does not mean understanding the event”

- “Games aren’t much fun when rules, not relationships, dominate the activity”


so how do we do this?

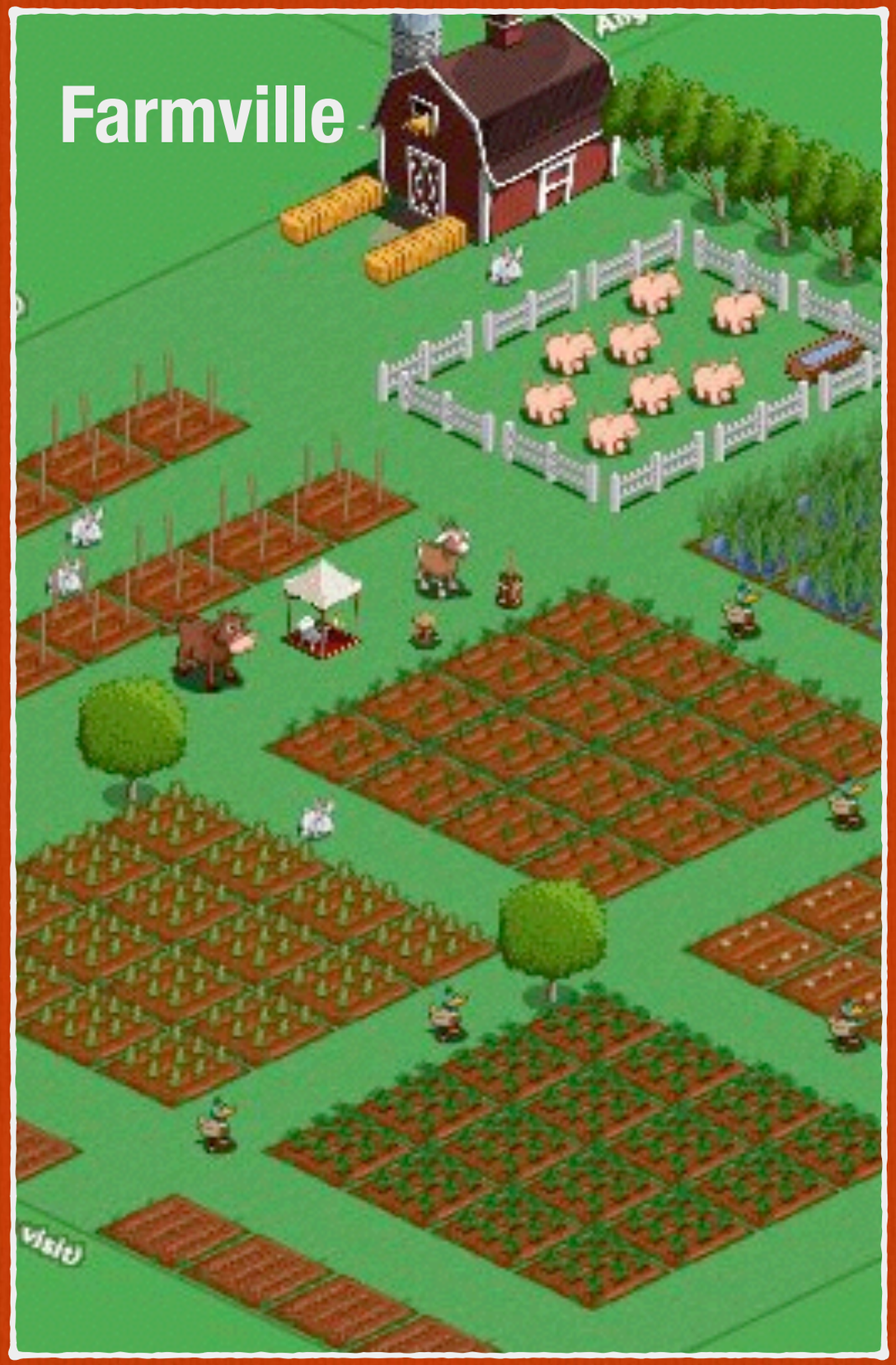
Gameplay through play

- ☐ A game designer creates a context.
- ☐ A space open for interpretation.
- ☐ A range of possibilities, and possibilities for appropriation.
- ☐ A system that is relatively unstable

Thinking play

- ☐ How do you allow players to play?
- ☐ Can they be creative?
- ☐ Where do you cut their freedom?
- ☐ How can they be playful?
- ☐ How can they be competitive?
- ☐ How can they express themselves?

how interesting is it to do what
we have to do (to play the game)


Farmville

Grand Theft Auto

B.U.T.T.O.N.

next time you think about what games you want to create,

think about how you want others to play

Summarizing

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