Call for Papers

The Evolution of Story III
Having a LARP: Immersion, Liveness, and the Qualities of Experience
Date: 17th June 2025 Location: Solent University, Southampton, UK.

The Evolution of Story III

Having a Larp: Immersion, Liveness, and the Qualities of Experience

Date: 17th June 2025

Location: Solent University, Southampton, UK.

Submission Deadline: 29th November 2024

Overview:

We are delighted to announce a one-day academic symposium titled "Having a Larp: Immersion, Liveness, and the Qualities of Experience," hosted by Solent University on 17th June 2025. This symposium aims to provoke debate and challenge orthodox views on the evolution of storytelling and immersive experiences, particularly focusing on the increasingly mainstream phenomenon of Live Action Role Play (Larp).

In recent years, Larp has transitioned from the fringes of entertainment culture to a more mainstream and recognized form of experiential storytelling. This shift is highlighted by high-profile ventures such as Disney's Galactic Star Cruiser, whose launch and subsequent demise underscore both the potential and challenges of themed entertainment experiences. Conversely, other organizations like Netflix are investing heavily in immersive experiences, suggesting a growing interest and market for such forms of practice.

Symposium Theme:

This symposium will explore the theoretical and practical dimensions of Larp and immersive storytelling, with a focus on the concept of "liveness." How does the audience discern between live and pre-made content? What unique qualities does liveness bring to immersive experiences? We are interested in examining the special characteristics that real-time interaction brings to narrative engagement and how these qualities impact the audience's experience.

Topics of Interest:

We invite submissions that explore various aspects of LARP and related immersive experiences. Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

Theoretical Perspectives:

- The ontology of liveness: Defining and understanding live performance in immersive contexts.
- The role of spontaneity and real-time interaction in creating immersive narratives.
- The psychological and emotional impacts of liveness in immersive storytelling.

Practical Applications:

- Methods and strategies for achieving deep audience immersion.
- Techniques for balancing narrative control and player agency.
- Innovations in technology that enhance immersive and live experiences.

Duration and Commitment:

- The challenges of maintaining immersion over varying durations.
- Safeguarding participants in long-duration immersive events.
- Strategies for catering to different levels of participant commitment and engagement.

Social and Cultural Implications:

- The societal impact of LARP and immersive experiences.
- Inclusivity and diversity in immersive storytelling.
- Ethical considerations in the design and execution of immersive experiences.

Workshops, Performances, and Non-Traditional Presentations:

In addition to traditional paper presentations, we welcome proposals for workshops, non-traditional presentations, performances, and live LARP sessions. We encourage contributions from scholars, practitioners, and creatives in the field of immersive storytelling. These sessions are intended to provide hands-on experiences, practical demonstrations, and innovative approaches to exploring the themes of the symposium.

Hybrid Participation:

Recognizing the evolving landscape of academic and creative exchange, the symposium may include hybrid elements such as video papers, webinars, online open space encounters, e-networking, and other hybrid approaches. We encourage submissions that can take advantage of these formats to engage a broader audience and facilitate dynamic interactions.

Submission Guidelines:

We welcome submissions from scholars, practitioners, and students across disciplines. Please submit an abstract of no more than 300 words, along with a brief bio by 29th November 2024. For workshop, performance, and non-traditional presentation proposals, please include a detailed description of your session, your preferred format, and any special requirements. Full papers will be considered for inclusion in a planned journal special journal issue. Selection for a special issue will occur after the symposium has taken place. Please indicate your interest in being part of the SI with your abstract submission.

1. Title
2. Abstract (200-300 words)
3. Keywords (4-6)
4. Authors titles, names & affiliations
5. Contact details
6. Author biographies (100-200 words each author)
7. Type of presentation (traditional paper, workshop, performance, or other form of non-traditional presentation)
8. Do you wish to be considered for inclusion in the proposed SI (Yes/No)

Submission email: roy.hanney@solent.ac.uk by 29th November 2024.

Approximately 10 articles from the symposium will be selected for publication in a journal special issue, which will be published through a reputable journal in the field. An invitation is not a guarantee of publication. We endeavour to publish as many articles as possible of sufficient quality subject to peer review and editorial decision making.

Keynote Speakers:

We are thrilled to announce our keynote speaker, who is a leading expert in the field of immersive experiences and storytelling.

Dr. Simon Brind: is a writer, game designer, and larp researcher. His primary academic interest lies in the tension between the larp writer's vision and what the players make of it. His PhD thesis on 'Combat Narratology: Strategies for the resolution of narrative crisis in participatory fiction' is available from the Digital Cultures Research Centre, (UWE), Bristol. He has been a larper since 1983 and a larpwright since 1986 and is a founding member of Avalon Larp Studio.

Important Dates:

Submission Deadline: 29th November 2024

Notification of Acceptance: 7TH February 2025

Symposium Date: 17th June 2025

Review Committee:

Dr Roy Hanney, Solent University, UK.
https://pure.solent.ac.uk/en/persons/roy-hanney

Dr Ian Sturrock, Teeside University, UK.
https://research.tees.ac.uk/en/persons/ian-sturrock

Dr Sarah Lynne Bowman, Uppsala University, Sweden
https://www.uu.se/en/contact-and-organisation/staff?query=N21-387

Hazel Dixon, Newcastle University, UK.
https://openlab.ncl.ac.uk/people/hazel-dixon/

About Solent University, Southampton:

The Film and Media Department at Solent University focuses on conducting innovative research that significantly impacts both academic understanding and practical applications in the media

industry. Our primary aim is to explore contemporary cultural and societal issues through a multidisciplinary approach, combining expertise in film, television, digital arts, and media production. We are dedicated to producing work that not only advances knowledge but also creates social value and addresses global challenges, aligning our efforts with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The department provides a supportive environment for researchers, encouraging collaboration and the development of ground-breaking methodologies and technologies in media research.

https://www.solent.ac.uk/research-innovation-enterprise/research-at-solent

Sponsors and Partners:

If you would like to sponsor this event please get in touch.

Contact Information:

For more information, please contact Roy Hanney at roy.hanney@solent.ac.uk or visit https://evolutionofstory.info/call-for-papers-2025/

We look forward to your contributions and to a stimulating day of discussion and exploration into the fascinating world of Larp and immersive storytelling.