

## **What is Play, Anyway? Toying with the Notions of Gaming and Playing**

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This talk will discuss ideas of play in history, theory and practice, primarily from the perspective of the recent interdisciplinary field of game studies. I will argue that playing is very different from gaming, and might in fact be considered as an independent phenomenon all together. Is play an activity or an attitude? Should we accept Schiller's notion of play as the fulcrum of humanity, or adopt Gadamer's dictum that when we are playing a game, the game is playing us, and that the real subject is the game itself? Is play an addiction, or a creative impulse? Using examples from digital games and gaming situations, I hope to show how recent insights from game studies could play a role back in the mother discipline of the study of culture. But is playing (*paida*) or gaming (*ludus*) the most relevant focus for contemporary culture?