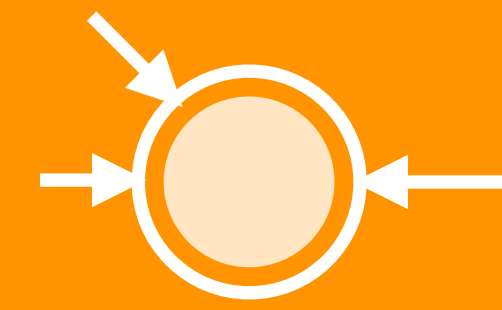


Digital Biedermeier

The ‚Über Genre‘



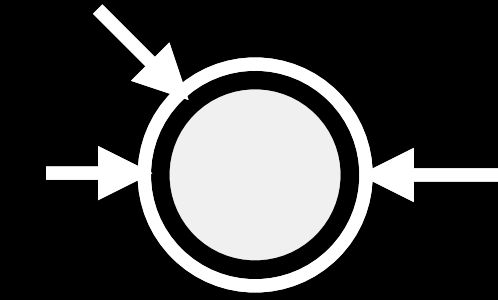
Dr. Beat Suter, René Bauer
Zurich University of the Arts
Gamedesign. Bachelor/Master.
Research incl. Game Studies. GameLab.
gamedesign.zhdk.ch



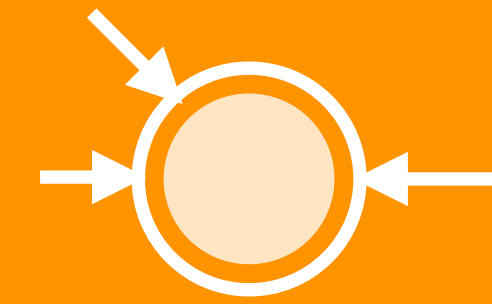
Digital Biedermeier



(Visual) Digital Biedermeier in Action in ...



Digital Biedermeier



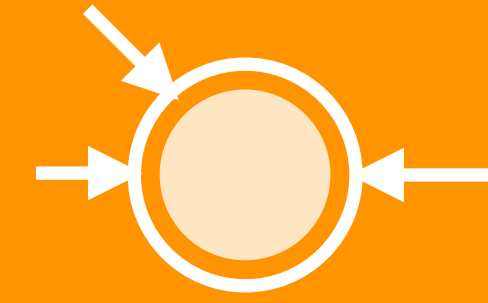
Game scenario

How is the "**game**" created in the **digital world**?
Mostly as an **embellished, trivialized model of rules**.

- > **Wholesome** agriculture / **Work pays off**
- > **Prices real**, everything else fictional
- > Modern **mechanical** and **good old world** in one!

No dirty hands and clothes, clean at home on the computer.





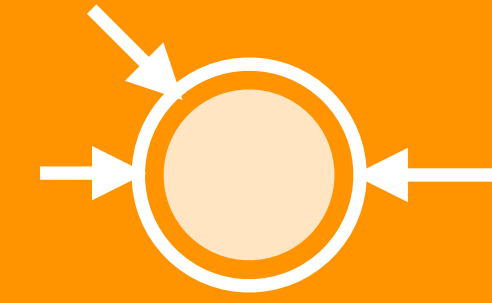
Biedermeier

"The term `Biedermeier' goes back to the German writers Ludwig Eichrodt and Adolf Kußmaul, who invented the figure of the Swabian village schoolteacher Gottlieb Biedermeier for the Munich `Fliegende Blätter' of 1855-1857. `His small room, his narrow garden, his unsightly patch, and the meager lot of a despised village schoolmaster help him to earthly bliss.'

"In itself, the fiction was intended as a parody of philistinism, but was later interpreted differently."



Painting by Carl Spitzweg: Der arme Poet (The poor poet) (1839)

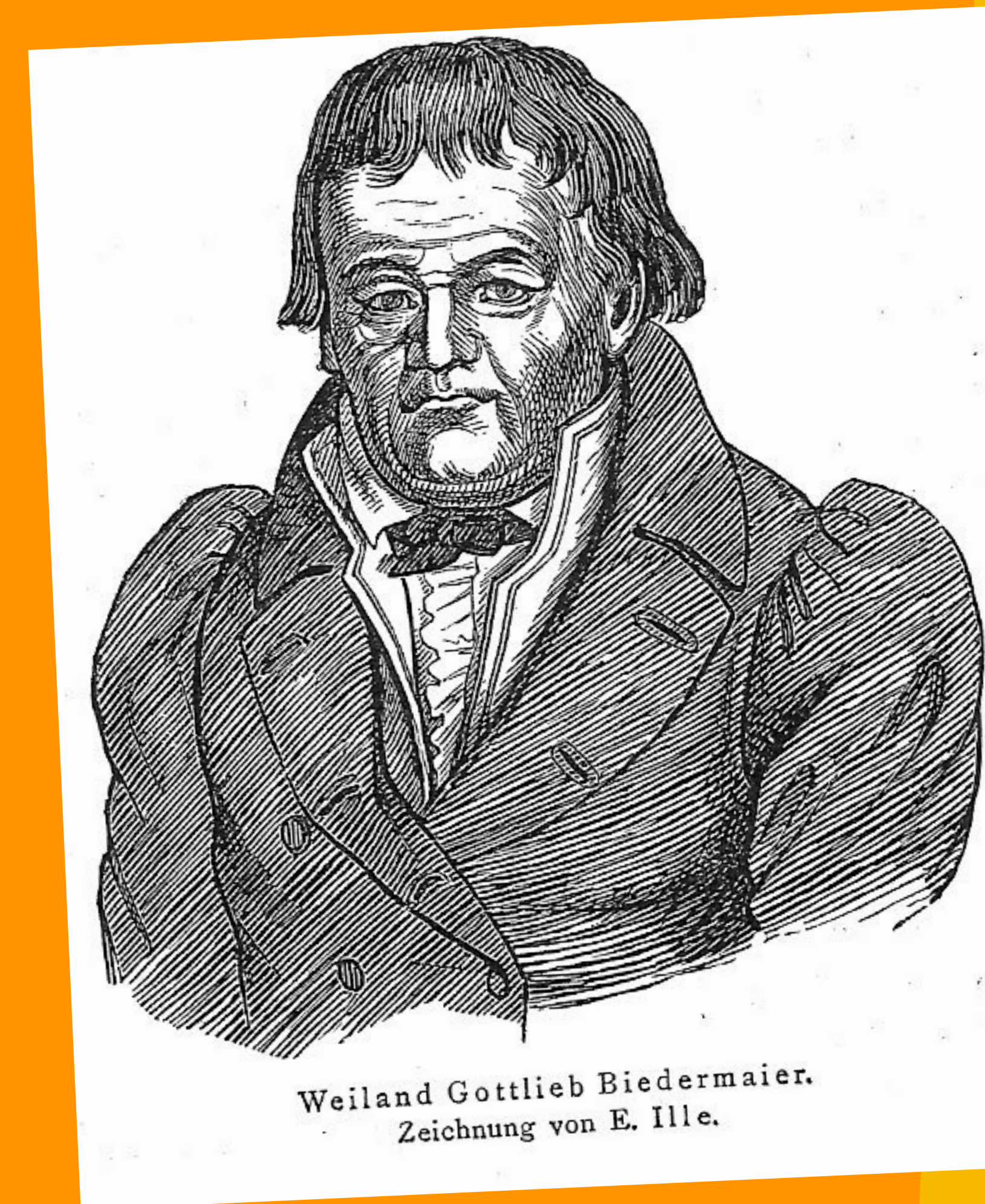


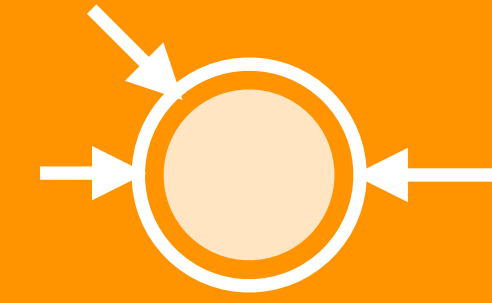
Biedermeier

„Schau, dort spaziert Herr Biedermeier
und seine Frau, den Sohn am Arm;
sein Tritt ist sachte wie auf Eier,
sein Wahlspruch: Weder kalt noch warm.“

"Look, there walks Mr. Biedermeier
and his wife, his son on his arm;
his tread is gentle as on eggs,
his motto: Neither cold nor warm."

Poem by Ludwig Pfau, 1847, in which he denounces bourgeoisie
and double standards.



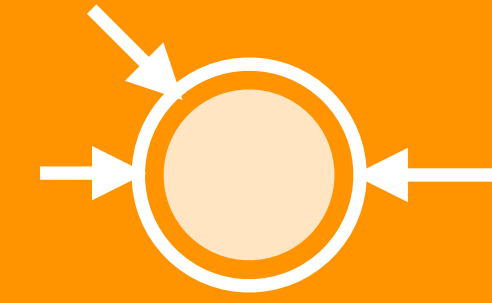


Biedermeier

Towards the end of the 19th century, Biedermeier began to be equated with **the `good old days`** and the term was used as a synonym for coziness, domesticity, sociability in the family and among friends, for the (also spiritual) retreat into the private sphere.

From 1906, the term was used for fashion and furniture from the period between 1815 and 1848, then also for a style of painting.





Biedermeier

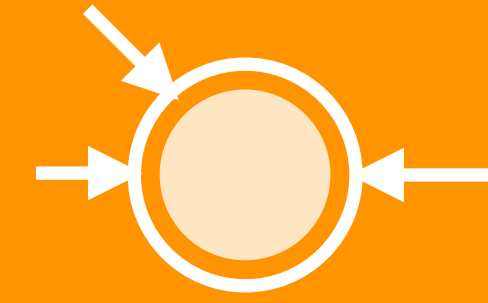
The literature of the Biedermeier era was supposed to depict an equally harmonious world. Their emphasis was on tranquility and order. Their poems and dramas portrayed the ideals of the time, such as subordination and being satisfied with small things.

Themes of the Biedermeier era included love and transience.

The language was mostly simple and popular (folkloric).



Am Fronleichnamsmorgen (On Corpus Christi) by Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller (1857)



Biedermeier & Glorification

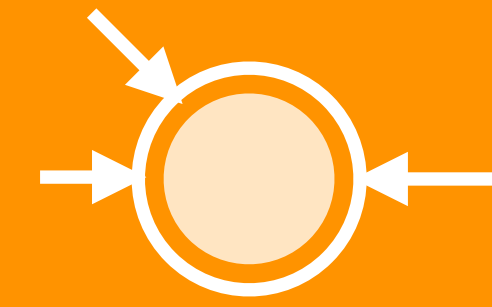
Preconditions

- > Clear world
- > Clear order
- > Focus on environment / the home
- > Control of the home

- > Good old time of order

// part of the concept in many games



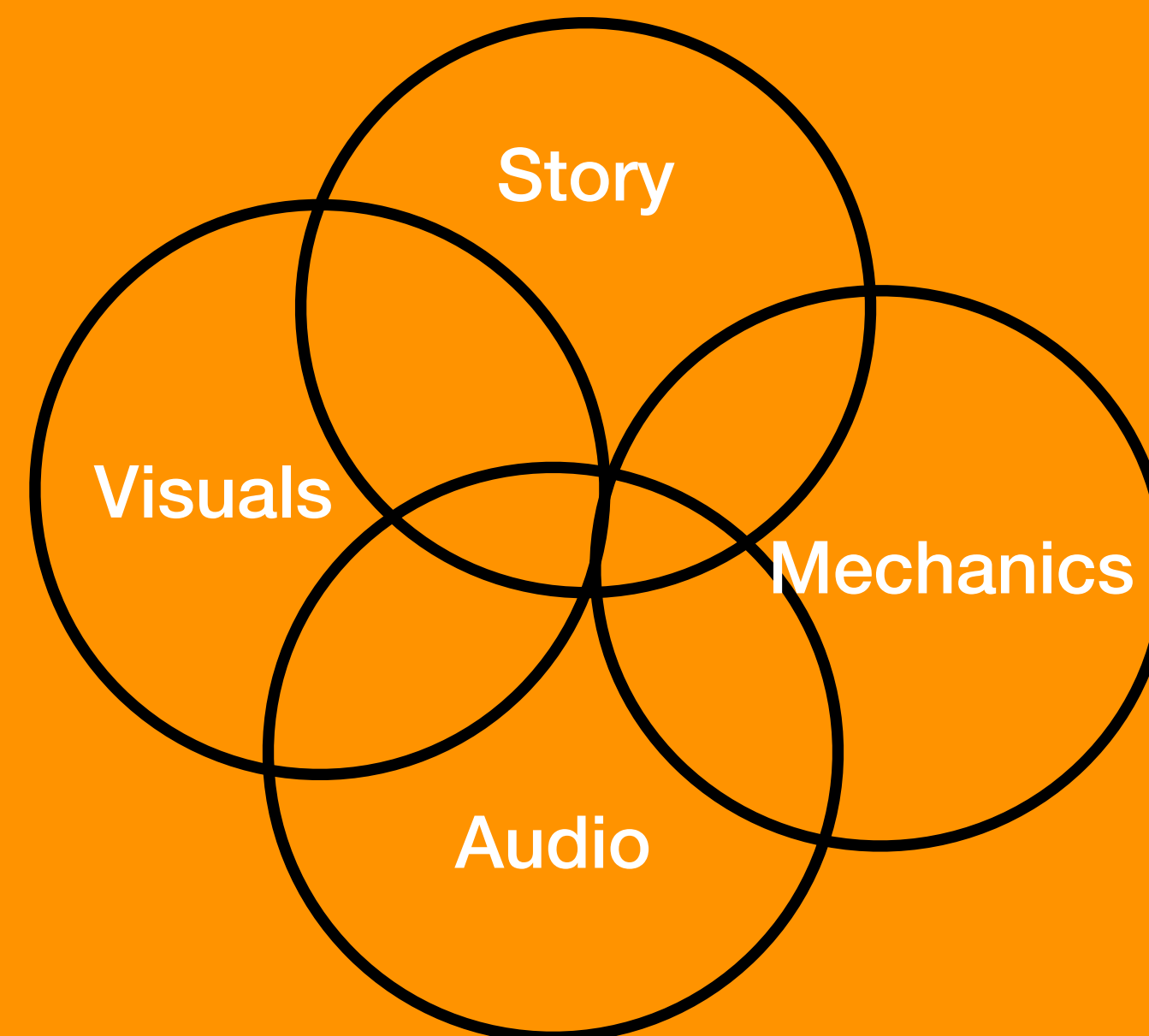


Digital Biedermeier

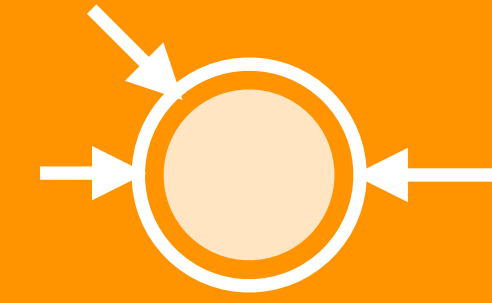
It usually begins at home, **in the comfort of one's own living room**, while playing games (such as Farming Simulator). People immobilize themselves with **small things**, the big revolution is far away..

Possible applications:

- Events, visuals, Furnishings
- In Games: Story, Visuals, Audio, Mechanik



Biedermeier today



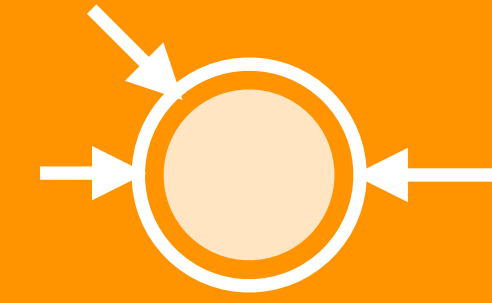
Digital Biedermeier

Home

Homey cozy, the world comes to the users and not vice versa.

Free time:
No more going out.
The world comes home.



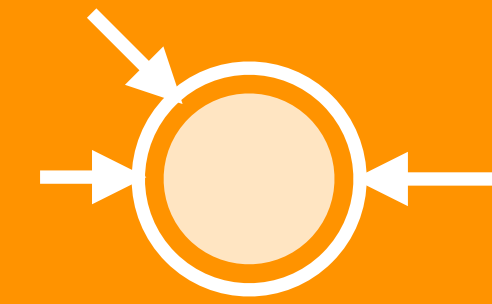


Services

In the past, people went out;
today, anything comes to your home.

> New kind of social life.





Living at Home

Our comfortable home with smartphone, Netflix, Amazon Prime, Uber eats, etc.

Home office (Switzerland)

7% in 2001;

20% in 2014;

25% in 2019;

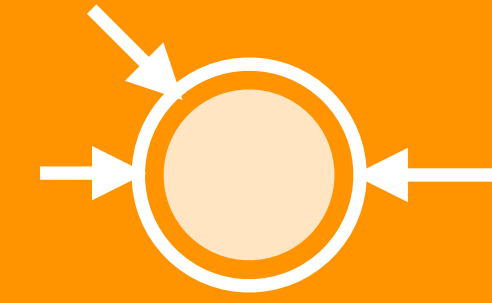
34% 2020;

40% 2021

37,6% 2022

Smarthome, smartliving,
the new digital coziness!





Sports at home

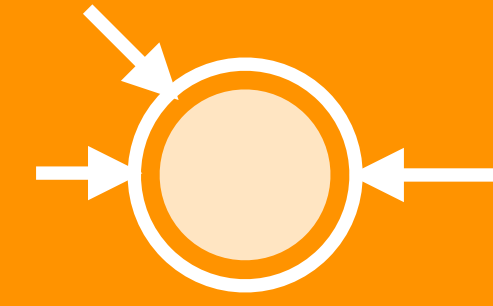
Peloton makes a billion-dollar business with videos on yoga, fitness, etc., and sells the home trainers with tablets through which you can access the videos and chat with other exercisers via WhatsApp.

Will Oculus soon offer virtual cycling?

(During the lockdown 2020 some races were held by means of home bike races!)



Biedermeier today

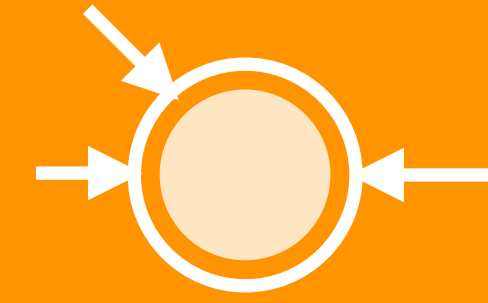


Digital Biedermeier

My "room"

John Thackwray photographed the rooms of more than 1000 millennials in more than 55 countries.





Metaverses

If one's own room/house gets too small, the digital world offers designable rooms – the metaverses. Here, anyone can set up their own house, their own grand world for little money.

Of course, the imagination often reaches no further than to the next Biedermeier setting.

One of these first metaverses with a lot of Biedermeier was/is Second Life: a world full of allotments and cozy retreats.





Digital Biedermeier

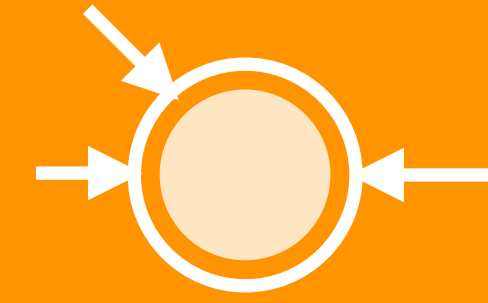
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5nP6mBo-oSw>



Digital Biedermeier



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5nP6mBo-oSw>



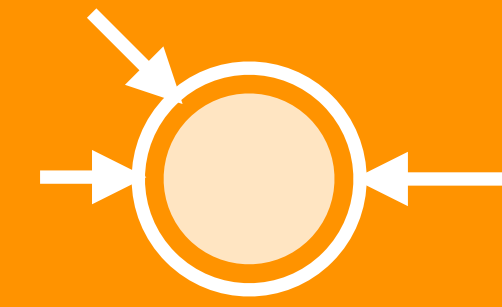
Games - Playing in a safe environment

Games often fulfill the search for **digital Biedermeier** in the best possible way. They are mostly **easy to use, follow simple rules, rewards and punishments** are built in, and they are graphically mostly close to **idyllic and kitsch**. That's why they give satisfaction to almost everyone. **Fun at home guaranteed**. Meanwhile, you can also meet with your friends in a common room. Completely without disturbing others, isolated - in the bubble.

The Biedermeier Super Mario, may also break out sometimes.



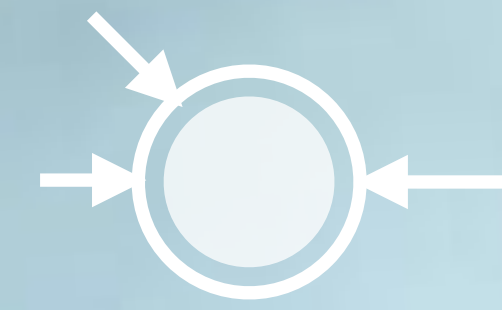
Biedermeier today



Digital Biedermeier

Into the distance ...





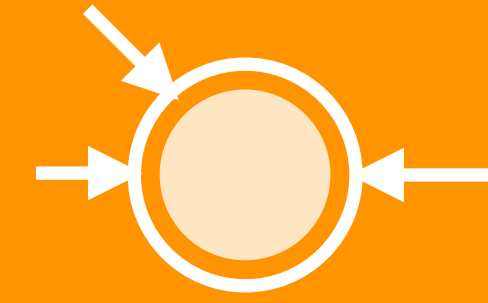
Digital Biedermeier

A Romantic knights tableau or Skyrim?



Digital Biedermeier

Fallout - the Biedermeier of the digital West
cf. Walking Dead



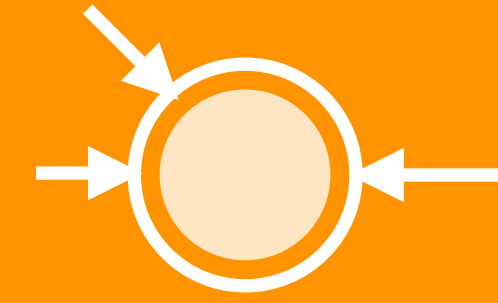
Fishing in war times

The idyllic and romantic has now even crept into first-person shooters like **FarCry 5**. One can comfortably fish with all the ideas of the Biedermeier: Instead of fishing with dynamite, bait the hook – it is a relaxing personal leisure activity.

Or as an overall concept:
Animal Crossing.

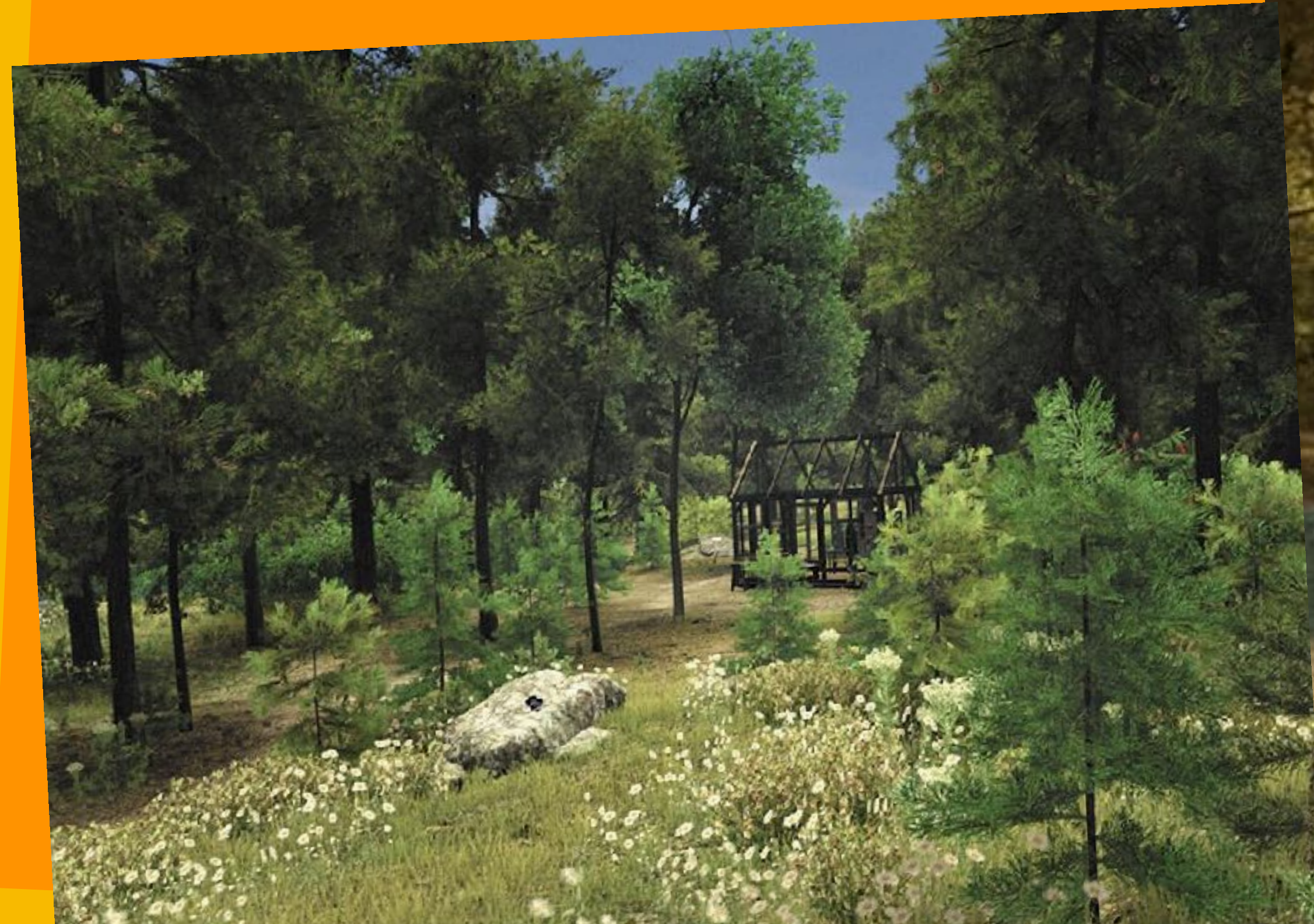
Japanese games are often 'homey' and familiar.

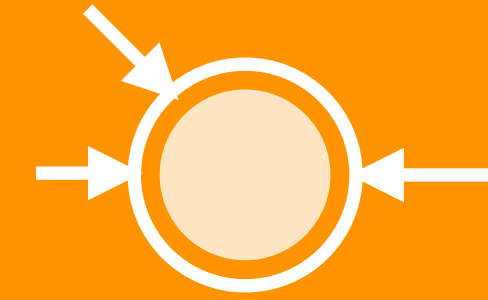




Walden

Video Game on Henry David
Thoreau's retreat to nature
In 1845 - 47.





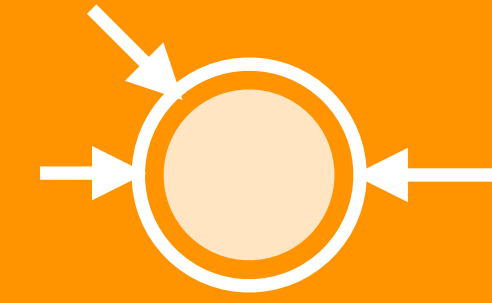
Escape from what? Into what?

Probably from everything that is **changing ever faster, is unsteady**, and can no longer be controlled: our everyday life driven by insecurity, exacerbated by social media.

So we take refuge in the self-**controllable**, in **simple worlds** with simple, **reassuring graphics** and **simple rules**, such as in games or simulators. This brings a bit of peace, serenity - the very private fairy tales.

> Possibilities of networked cyberspace: The **digital Biedermeier** has become **mobile**, for example in the smartphone. **Always with you.**





Everything must go ...

Lawn mower simulator:

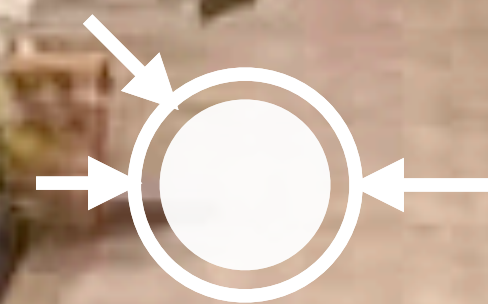
In the digital front yard on the go with the ride-on lawn mower —

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-8X4CqGSSE>

> Many games are increasingly classic civic work – voluntary and transfigured as a matter of course.



After the lawn has been cleaned ...



Digital Biedermeyer

Fortschritt

0,0%

0.52

Zeit

FAHRZEUGZUSTAND

MOTORZUSTAND

MESSERZUSTAND

Schnitthöhe ändern

Mit  und  stellst du die Schnitthöhe ein.

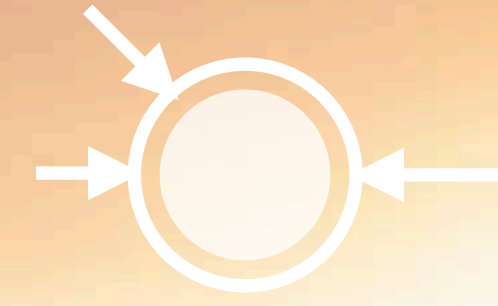
2400
rpm

DREHZAHL

0,0
mph

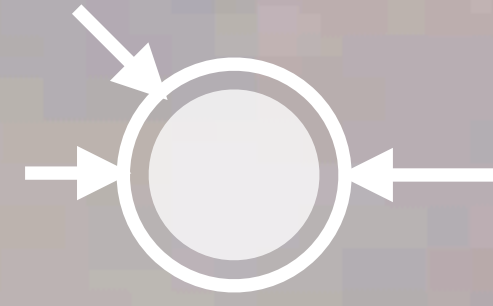


SNITTHÖHE: 9,0
NICHT AKTIVIERT



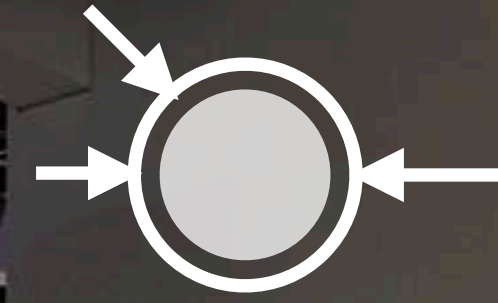
Digital Biedermeier

Irony or long since reality? (Radical Games exhibition) in Basel HEK >
Tendency in Artgames: Visual Biedermeier



Digital Biedermeier

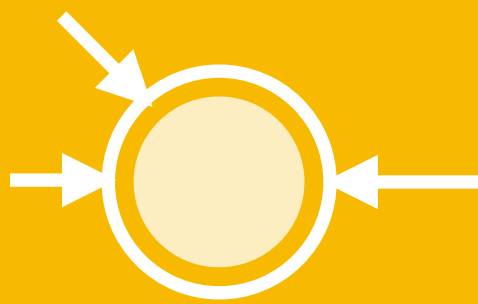




Digital Biedermeier

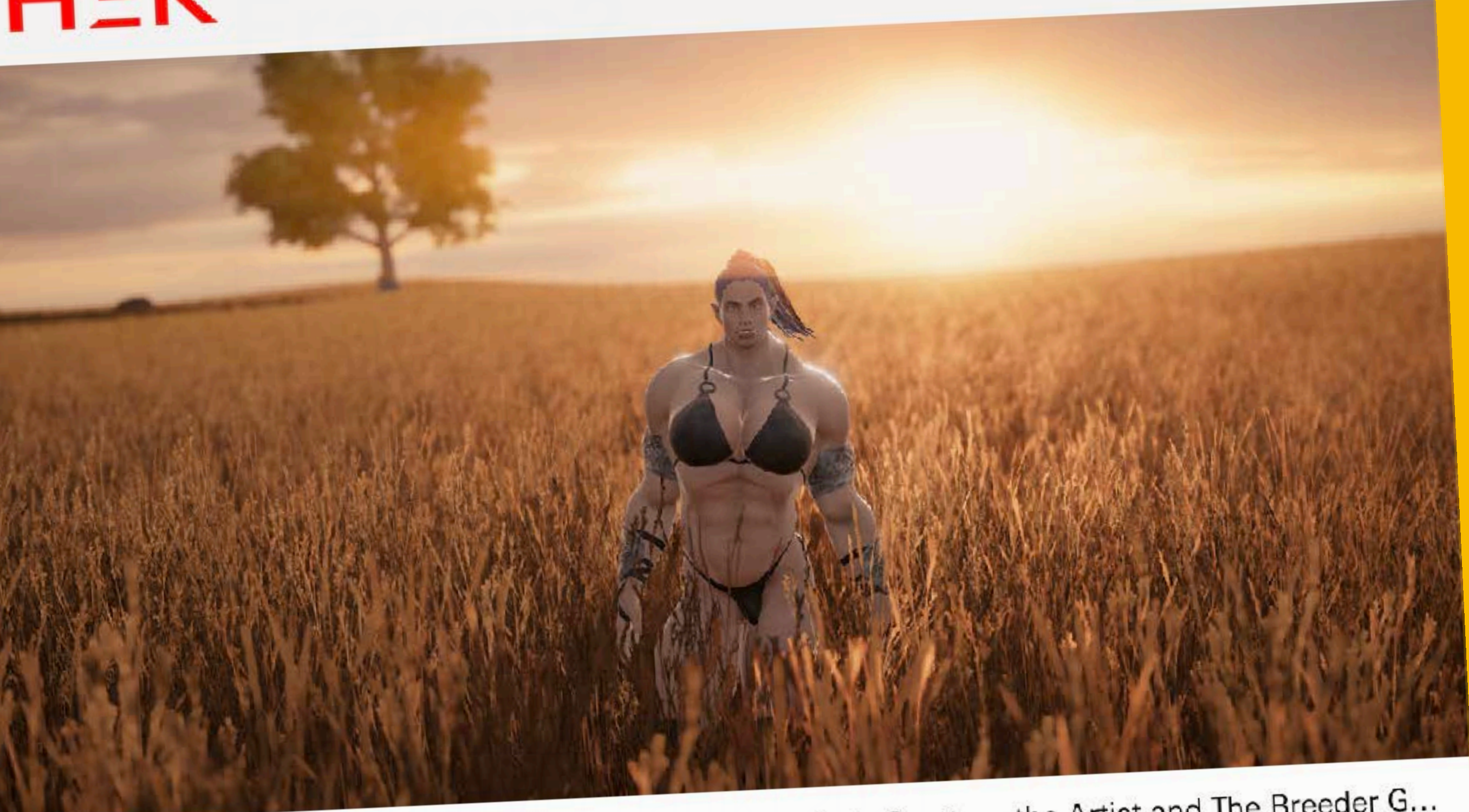
Hay bales and tapestry ...

Questions with no end



Digital Biedermeier

HEK



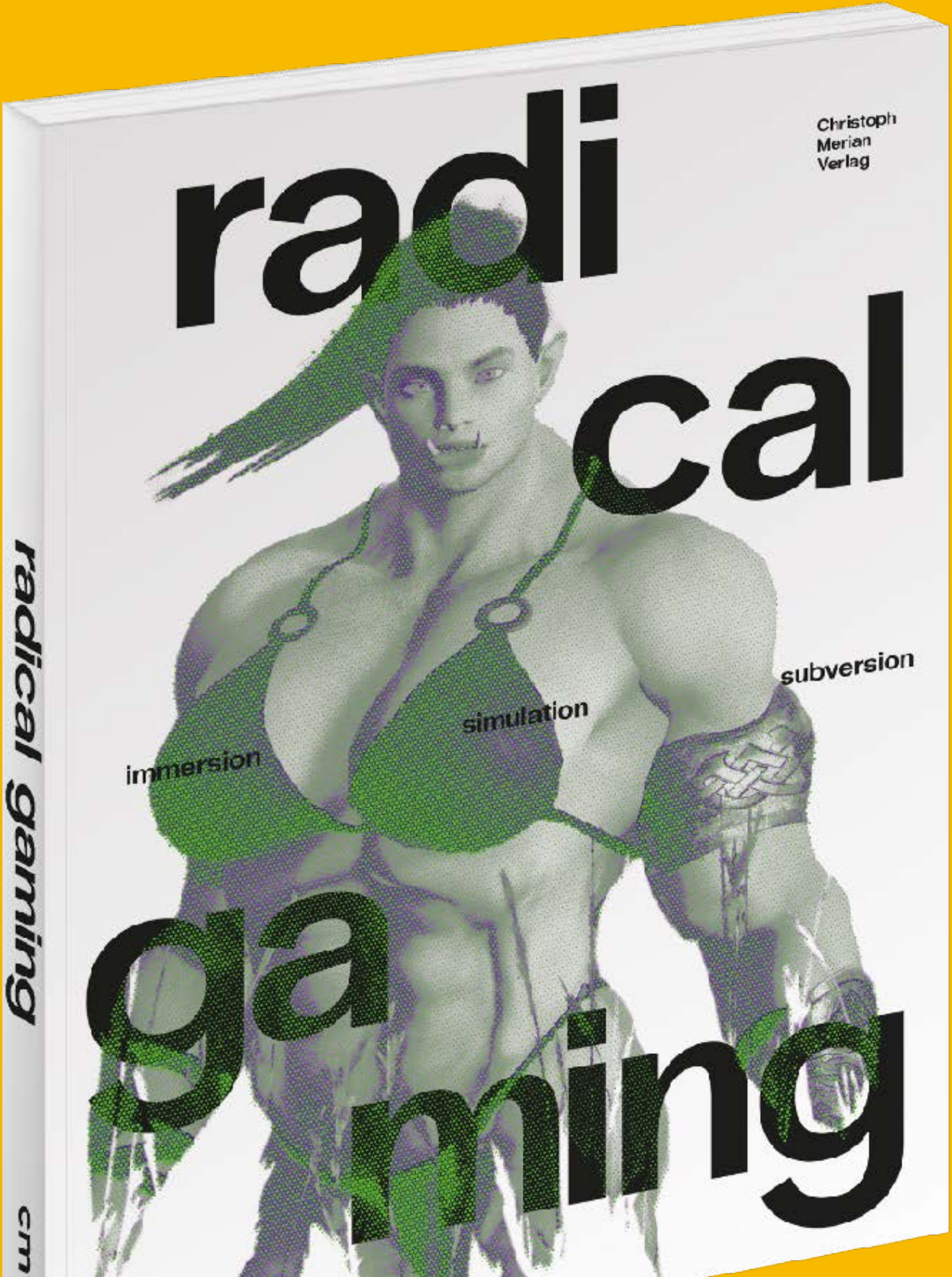
Theo Triantafyllidis, Pastoral (Video Game), 2019 , screenshot. Courtesy the Artist and The Breeder G...

Radical Gaming

Immersion Simulation Subversion

Exhibition

31





Digital Biedermeier

Interaction Design Show in 2019; no irony intended...



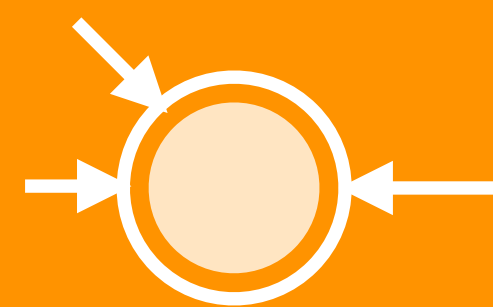
Digital Biedermeier

Österreich.
Hier geht's uns gut.

Willy Brandt

ÖVP

Our Austrian friends love „Heile Welt“ too ...



Digital Biedermeier

HOTEL *Vue des Alpes*

PROJECT CHECK IN INFO

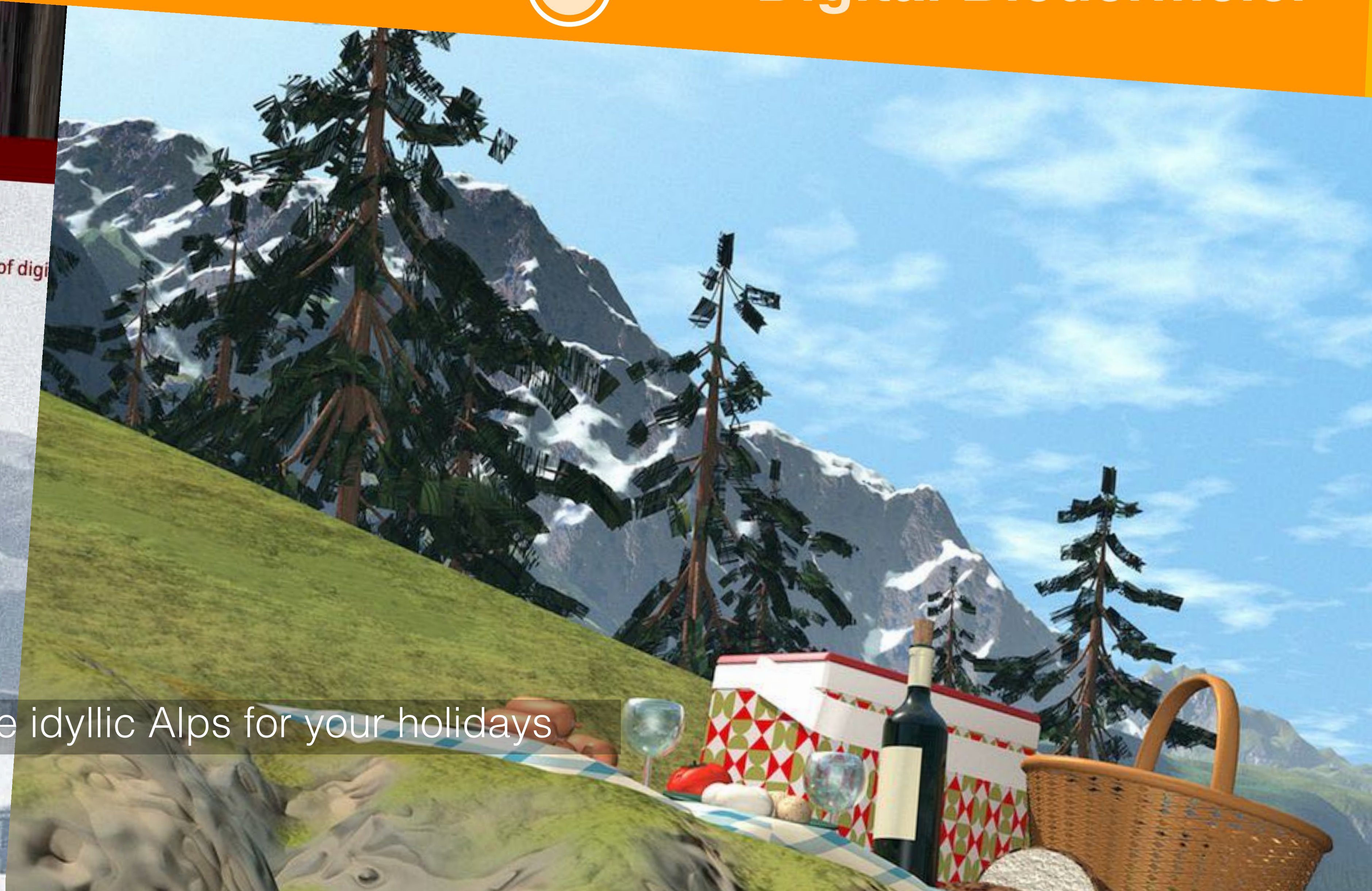
A warm welcome to our virtual hotel!

Use our room booking services to spend three relaxing days of digital holiday in the virtual Alpine region of Hotel Vue des Alpes.



And the Swiss recreate idyllic Alps for your holidays

We are looking forward to your visit!



Grimoire Groves

Digital Biedermeier



Grimoire Grove: How cute is that?



Digital Biedermeier



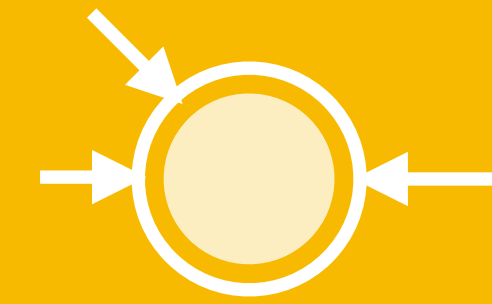
Cozy Games: back to the analog



Digital Biedermeier

Retro Games: Memories from childhood

Questions with no end



Digital Biedermeier

Questions?

beat.suter@zhdk.ch
rene.bauer@zhdk.ch

- GameLab ZHdK
- Games and Rules (2018),
Narrative Mechanics (2021)
> Open Access with transcript

