

LARPzeit

The Live Roleplay Magazine

Do it yourself

Travelers cloak

Postapocalyptic

Ruins of the Creators

Space adventure

The Monitor Celestra

Crusades

To Die in Jerusalem

Spreading ideas

Larpwriter summer school

Supplying the larp scene

Iron Fortress

and more



Larpers ... in their natural habitat

Stunning sceneries, fantastic creatures and participants with fairy-tale or historical costumes – Zaubfeder's photo books offer a great view into the creative and thrilling hobby of live role-playing. They depict a variety of impressions of game situations, the players and the magical atmosphere of some of the biggest and most beautiful larp events in the world.



For the seventh time the Brokeloh Manor near Hanover in Germany was the scene of a spectacular live action role-playing event in august 2010. Some 7,000 participants from around the world slipped into the roles of brave heroes, skilled mages, cunning rogues, dangerous monsters and other fantasy characters. They met over five days and brought a fictional game world to life: the mysterious continent Mythodea.

This photo book depicts a variety of impressions of game situations, the players and the magical atmosphere. The photographs are complemented with fictitious notes, describing the conflict about Mythodea from five different perspectives.



GAMES AND GAMERS

Empire – A fully detailed world, shared with players 2

Epic Empires – A paradise for builders and garden lovers 10

Familylarp in the Netherlands – Empowering kids, teens and adults . . . 28

Ruins of the Creators – A Fennolatvian postapocalyptic LARP 19



The Monitor Celestra – Space adventure in a real battleship . . . 22

Keeping it short and Swiss 30

DO IT YOURSELF

Stable water supply – Construction of a leather bottle 7

Travelers cloak – For cold days to come 25



LET'S TALK ABOUT ...

To Die in Jerusalem – How to play Crusades and immerse into medieval culture 4



Larpwriter summer school – Teaching, spreading ideas and building communities 12

PoRtal – Organizing a larp convention ... the Balkan way 18

Iron Fortress – “More people will get involved in a hobby if equipment is easy to get” 28

Editorial information

Publishing Company

Zaubfeder GmbH
Witzlebenstraße 2
D-38116 Braunschweig
+49 (0) 531 208 27 16
www.larpzeit.de
info@zauberfeder-verlag.de

Editor in Chief

Karsten Dombrowski

Art Director

Christian Schmal

Layout

Heike Philipp

Authors

Carola Adler, Thomas B., Marinka Copier, Karsten Dombrowski, Benjamin Frenzel, Yuri Molodykh, Tara Moritzen, Matt Pennington, Ana Rajner, Jupe Rantalainen, Bastiaan Smit, Anna Volodina

Special thanks

Nathan Hook, Joshua Robison, Richard Wynne

Legal Notices

Articles marked with the name(s) of author(s) do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editors or the publisher.

The editors take no responsibility for unsolicited articles and photos sent to the magazine. Submitted images may be returned only by prior arrangement. Manuscripts and pictures are welcomed by the editors. However, they must be free of rights of third parties. If they have been published before, this must be specified. With the submission, the author/creator gives the approval for publication and subsequent re-release. Furthermore, the publisher acquires the right to re-release once published texts, photos and artworks. With the submission of text, photographs and artwork the sender warrants the ownership of all copyrights on the material sent in and agrees to the publication of the submitted material. Fees for this will be paid by prior arrangement only. The publisher reserves the right to cuts and partial publication.

Adverts, designed by the publishers of LARPzeit, are subject to copyright. It is not permitted to use them in other publications without written permission. The magazine and all contained articles and images are subject to copyright. Reproduction or copy, in whole or in part, without the written permission of the publisher is not allowed. Infringement of these rights may cause the publisher to take legal action. Copying or digitalizing and/or posting of copyrighted data to the Internet will be prosecuted.

A fully detailed world, shared with players



Last year they ended their popular campaign, Maelstrom, now the UK larp company Profound Decisions is gearing up to the start of an ambitious new campaign called Empire. Featuring games with up to 1500 player that will run four weekends a year Empire will run alongside their classical era game Odyssey (see LARPzeit international 2012). Matt Pennington, Games Manager at Profound Decisions, describes the idea behind this new campaign.



Empire is the first classic fantasy game from our company. Set in a great empire beset by barbarians and enemies on all sides, the characters will be challenged to restore and extend their realms and fortunes. This will be a new world with epic battles against the enemies of the Empire at events supported by a simple downtime system. The idea for the battles is that the characters will be able to choose their battles and tactics based on influencing key events in the offstage

campaign – for example deciding between high-risk attacks on front-line outposts or conducting daring raids to cut off enemy armies' supply trains. As well as a fully detailed world, shared with players using a constantly updated wiki rather than printed material, our team even has been building a number of portable fantasy buildings to help players immerse themselves in the game.

This focus of immersion runs throughout the game. We want to make Empire an aspirational game, one where everyone strives to get the best possible costume and kit that they can. I believe that good costume, good kit and good sets really enhance an larp game. The more visually appealing the setting, the more immersive it is, then the more enjoyable it is to play in that world. This extends to another first for Profound Decisions – welcoming roleplayers of all ages to the game, and building children and families into the setting – and preparing the *heroes of tomorrow* to face the Empire's enemies. We plan to offer a game world for young players that is entirely natural and consistent with their age and characters within the setting – but which hopefully are still as much fun as we can possibly make them.

The game is set in a powerful Empire that is surrounded by hostile barbarians on all sides. The Empire has grown in power and

size for centuries but has experienced a decline in recent decades with territories along the borders being overrun by barbarians. Around a fifth of the territory the Empire controlled at its height has been lost to a series of incursions that an Empire focused on internal politics was ill equipped to repulse. There are several distinct barbarian powers which represent hostile tribes, kingdoms, and nations. These barbarians are designed to look cool in massive numbers in battles, to provide exciting and dramatic combat encounters, and to allow a range of interactions outside of combat. Most of the barbarian powers that currently surround the Empire are orcs, but there are also a number of human nations in the world. The Empress has recently been slain, leaving the player characters as the most powerful individuals in the Empire. Their overarching campaign challenge for the players is to restore the Empire to its former glory by regaining the lands that have been lost and to secure its future."

The Empire is formed from nine culturally distinct nations. Each nation has its own culture and customs but they are politically and legally unified. Although the players are all fundamentally on the same side there is rivalry between nations, with players competing with each other to lead the Empire and achieve their own goals. This is a change from Profound Decisions' Maelstrom game which was focussed on

competition between the players rather than external threats.

The inspiration for the setting is drawn from the late Byzantine period to the early Renaissance era. In creating the visual styles for the nations the art department, led by Jess Smith, have drawn on a range of inspirations. They have been inspired by the *Lord of the Rings* movies, the *Assassin's Creed* and *Dragon Age* computer games, HBO's *The Borgias* and the *Game of Thrones* television series, the Starz *Camelot* series and even the BBC *Merlin* series. The setting and the style of the game has also been influenced by modern fantasy literature, especially the highly political worlds of Jim Butcher's *Codex Alera* and Joe Abercrombie's *The First Law*.

There are a number of different parts of the game that players can choose to be part of. Political control of the Empire is primarily through the Senate. Each nation selects its own senators, who serve for fixed terms. Senators vote on motions and make decisions that affect the Empire directly. Religious characters can be part of the Synod – a political body and meeting place for the faithful of the Empire. It serves as the moral conscience of the Empire, but also possesses potent political powers supported by the Imperial Constitution. The Military is run by the generals who oversee war and conflict with the Empire's enemies. A position in the Military will give a character influence over the wars the Empire fights as well as the battles that take place at each event. The Bourse is an arena for characters who are interested in trade and commerce. A position in the Bourse allows characters control of valuable resources that can be used to influence the economic development



of the Empire. Finally the Conclave is a political arena for the powerful wizards in the Empire. Positions in the Conclave will be associated with magical prowess and power and characters involved in the Conclave will be able to shape the magical destiny of the Empire.

The world of Empire is known to touch six other planes of existence. These are home to magical entities called Eternals, some of whom are interested in the human world. Players – especially magicians – can meet and negotiate with the Eternals. The Eternals are not gods but possess magical powers that players will find useful. They have their own motivations and personalities, and characters will be able to bargain with them to advance their own agendas.

Characters may choose to be Humans or Orcs. Those that play Humans may also choose one of six distinct lineages. Lineage represents a supernatural quality in a human character's make-up. This quality might be due to Eternal blood in their ancestry or represent exposure to powerful magic. The strength of lineage varies between individuals and each lineage is supported by

a list of suggested roleplaying and physical trappings that offer guidance on how to play them. The more of the trappings the player adopts for their character, the more like an Eternal and less like a human their character becomes.

Alongside Humans, players may chose characters that are Imperial orcs. These are the orcs who were brought into the Empire decades earlier; as such, they are politically assimilated and loyal to the Empire. Imperial orcs have their own unique culture; effectively they are a nation of their own, although they lack territory and the political power that the nations of the Empire wield.

Of special interest to live roleplayers who are interested in coming over to the UK for Empire but are unlikely to be able to make multiple events are the foreign powers of the world. Foreigners are from lands that are not part of the Empire, which the Empire is not currently at war with. The Empire trades with many of these foreign powers, and may host delegations from them. Foreigners have no ability to directly influence the future of the Empire, but may have political agendas that guide their interaction with the players. Profound Decisions is interested in working with groups of visitors from Europe to play representatives of these foreign powers with briefs and support from the game organisers.

More information on Empire can be found at www.empirelrp.co.uk. If you're interested in finding out more, film maker Bill Thomas has made a trailer called *The Empire Mini Epic: Call to Arms* which is available on YouTube.



TO DIE IN JERUSALEM

How to play Crusades and immerse into medieval culture.



Thinking about larp, we are expecting adventures, especially adventures of body and soul. Sometimes we want to go deeper – in this case we could dive into the depths of psychology. The European larp communities have created interesting traditions and techniques for producing deep psychological experiences on small larps (mostly less than 60 players). But in Russia the mainstream larps have hundred players and more. There, unfortunately, most mechanisms designed for small larps simply do not work. For example: It would be a waste of time and resources to focus on the emotional experience of every person in particular.

But big larps give the ability to model, explore and run through the processes and phenomenon's that touch upon whole nations. Processes of this kind are usually described as mass psychology or social dynamics.

Russian larp experience traditionally is focused on immersion into culture and mentality. Therefore, the main topic of this

article is how we “play culture” in Russia. Traditionally, the most popular Russian larps have been fantasy or history based. Although recreation of imaginary worlds also implies the creation of the appropriate cultures, in this article we'd like to discuss history based larps – because no matter how great the virtual world is, it would never possess such a genuine and deep cultural context as the historical one. Larpers have enthusiastically recreated the lives of Medieval knights, Scandinavian vikings, ancient Slavs or nobles from the gallant 18th Century. There has probably been a larp on every historical period by now. Most of them included immersion into the culture of the given period and region.

First of all, we should highlight the difference between reconstruction of material culture and immersion into a culture. In comparison to some European countries, in Russia social groups of re-enactors and larpers are not completely disconnected from each other, therefore

the process of preparation to almost every history-based larp includes creating handcrafted elements of the appropriate material culture. However, from our point of view, it's more interesting to play the intangible aspect of a historical situation. In Russia players and larp-writers always tend to recreate not only the physical part of an objective reality, but also habits of the people's lives, rituals, social structure, and, moreover, the mentality of the characters. Therefore, together with their costume a player puts on the appropriate pattern of behavior or even the way of thinking of their character.

Larp as an tool of art allows us to discuss complex, versatile themes from different points of view. Moreover, the unique value of larp is the ability to feel, understand, and go through the meanings generated by the subject. Psychological larps let us explore a person's by looking at it from the outside. At the same time, playing culture allows the person to try out the mentality and the spirit of the past age. This type of larp usually includes much more ideas, meanings and values that game masters can discuss with their players.

For instance, a 12th Century character will be driven by religion in most of his actions and choices. So while playing the character one would be able to embrace the foundations of this kind of society easier and deeper than just reading a book. Quite similar ideas can be found in Mike Pohjola's article about folk fantasy in *States of Play – Nordic Larp Around the World*.¹

In the post-modern tolerant society it is hard to understand and embrace the internal logic of historical societies such as the Medieval ones. In the Medieval culture there was no relativity of values

nor doubts in understanding how the world worked. One of the most distinctive examples of such a way of thinking can be found in the history of Crusades – the period when people died for *the truth*.

Let's have a closer look at a particular example. In the summer 2013 we're creating a larp called *To Die in Jerusalem* based on the historical events in Palestine between the Second and the Third Crusade. During the game we want to discuss the values of honor, sacrifice and sincere faith.

But how can the medieval culture and its way of thinking be recreated on a larp? Scientifically, this issue can be solved by reading huge amounts of historical sources. One could work through an endless pile of books but it would be extremely time-consuming and still won't guarantee the required background. Game masters should not let the players drown in this flow. No one can guarantee that players would read the same sources in the same order either (and would read at all), so the game can just fail because of different visions. That's why we choose some main features of the era, while ignoring many other, probably interesting, details.

We considered the following cultural elements as the most important ones:

- Religion: Life, way of thinking and philosophy of the Middle Ages are based on the faith (either Christian, Muslim or Hebrew).
- War: In all times war has been the main form of conflict resolution. When cultures clash, war is always on the list.
- Economics: Trade is another important element of cross-cultural interaction and every social regime is determined by economic relations.
- Aesthetics: Medieval images and symbols fill the players' emotional background and help to immerse into the culture.
- Jerusalem itself: This city is the corner stone, the symbol and the eternal value for all European and Middle Eastern civilizations of that time.

Characters going to war is a typical situation for a larp. But cultural context fills the situation with a meaning. In this game they might be a Crusader, with red crosses on their clothes and a

prayer on their shield. A prayer they had written during a pilgrimage to a distant monastery. This makes them think of themselves as a part of something bigger, a part of the Christian community. During the war, they would remember the words that a confessor had told them earlier. Christian morality contained in these words would push them to spare the life of a wounded Muslim warrior, though they could kill him and steal his money. Or they can decide to kill that Saracen to gather money at any cost because of some church needs. Anyway, they would have to make a choice based on the religion – their main cultural context.

To communicate the cultural elements, game masters have a many of ways of creating the right kind of context for a character. Some methods previously used in large Russian larps:

- Rules: The rules create and limit possible actions as well as highlight the moments that are important from the game masters' point of view.
- In-game texts: The texts define common cultural context for both game masters and players. The texts also set a common semantics of diegetic events.
- Plots and story: The story is created in such a way as to enhance the general idea of the larp. The cultural archetypes are used to create historical situations.

To design the larp *To Die in Jerusalem* we will use all these tools and a lot more. We hope that these practices of Russian larp culture and this particular event will raise the interest of English-speaking larpers or even bring them to the fascinating adventure in the a Medieval Palestine.

Text: Anna Volodina, Yury Molodykh
Photo: Ksenia Kozlovskaya

The Larp *To Die in Jerusalem* will take place in the Moscow region, from July 31st August 4th 2013 with approximately 1500 players.

More information (in English):
<http://jerusalem.rpg.ru>

¹ Pohjola, Mike: Folk Fantasy. In: Pettersson, Juhana: *States of Play – Nordic larp around the World*. 2012

LARP BOW MARKSMAN

a LARP bow in traditional design



78.00 EURO

LARP arrows from 9.10 EURO
Assembly sets for LARP arrows from 6.30 EURO



Our popular strongbow Marksman (50" bow length) is also available in an authentic LARP design: bated in black and with a black grip of leather. This kind of bow is not only robust but also disposes of easy handling, the “Marksman” is the perfect bow for LARP. We also offer matching LARP arrows with a specially designed safety head.

Further information can be found at
WWW.LARPARROWS.COM

BY BEIER GERMANY®

WWW.BOGENSPORT-BY-BEIER.DE

STEFFEN SCHNEE

READY FOR BATTLE

MAKE YOUR OWN CHAIN MAIL ARMOUR



Whether it is for larp, theatre production, living history event or other related hobbies, with your own hauberk, coife, trousers or other chain mail objects you are ready for battle. But how do you create a custom-fit pattern for your own chain mail? What needs to be considered while making chain rings? And what are the best techniques for weaving thousands of rings together? These and other questions will be answered by the author step by step and with fully illustrated instructions. The reader learns the practicalities of how to transform a roll of wire into a chain mail armour.



Zauberfeder

Stable water supply

Construction of a leather bottle

Anyone who has been to a battle-heavy event during a hot summer (especially while wearing heavy armor) will appreciate a stable, handy, well closed "water supply". One, that is also fitting into the ambiance of the game. Wooden buckets would be impractical, jars of clay or ceramics are fragile. But leather bottles are a great alternative. And the good thing: You can build one quickly and inexpensively yourself.

Material needed

- vegetable tanned leather (about 2 - 2.5 mm thick)
- yarn (waxed or unwaxed)
- two needles, preferable blunt so they neither damage yarn or leather
- finely granulated sand
- a diamond shaped awl, alternatively nail and hammer
- scissors
- beeswax
- pencil
- craft pad
- wooden staff
- bowl
- funnel
- oven

Tips for the right leather

From personal experience I can say that cow leather is very suitable. It is thick, firm and holds its shape much better than any other leather. However, you should make sure to take no leather from cattle neck, as this is usually too tight. Vegetable tanned leather is preferable. First, because it contains fewer pollutants than chrome-tanned leather, second, because the latter cannot be hardened as well as the vegetable tanned leather.

The form

Before you can start to cut and sew the leather, you have to decide about the form the bottle should have. Personally



I prefer a simple, bulbous shape with no additional bottom but you can make a heart-shaped bottle, sew a bottom into your bottle, or make the bottle shape elongated or narrower. Anyway, one thing is important: the end of the neck of your bottle needs to run about four centimeters straight up, because otherwise the cork will not fit properly.

Once you have decided on a form, draw it twice on the leather. Again, think of the neck opening! Some spare material on the

left and right of the neck should remain, where later on you can make holes for a carrying strap. Simply cut these forms. Then you lay the two sides upon each other, the way they will be sewn together. Now prick the needle holes in the leather. For this a diamond shaped awl would be best, because the holes are tighter and the yarn will fill them better. But this step can also be done with a round awl or a nail. The holes should not be too far apart from each other (about 0,5 cm), since otherwise



it would be difficult to seal them. Make sure that you don't cut the "ears" for the belt and don't prick the seam holes to close to the edge.

Sewing

You should double stitch the seams: take a long piece of yarn and lace a needle on each end. Then pull the yarn through the first hole until you've reached the middle of the yarn. From now on, both needles are always pulled through the same hole - one from the left, one from the right. Waxed yarn will usually slide better through the holes, but non-waxed could be used as well.

It is very important to tighten the seam firmly, so the two parts of the bottle fit correctly onto each other.

Shaping

When you're finished with sewing, soak the bottle for about 30 to 45 minutes in water. This makes the leather softer and more flexible. Afterwards take the bottle out again and pour sand through the funnel into it. Bird sand from the pet store is preferable. Stuff the bottle until the brim and shape it as bulbous, as you want it. Now harden the bottle for about half an hour in the oven (50° Celsius/122° Fahrenheit).

Very important: The oven must be set to top and bottom heat, as convection would burn the leather.

The pouring

After baking, pour the sand back out of the bottle. The leather is now cured and maintains the shape of its own. Heat now



some water in a small pot and put a glass container (for example a jam jar) into it. Add the wax into this glass and heat until it becomes liquid. You will need around 300 milliliters melted wax for a half liter bottle. Alternatively you can, heat the glass and its content in a microwave. But beware! It gets very hot!

After the wax is melted, pour it carefully into the bottle. Take caution, because I know from my own, very painful experience, that the wax pours through stitching that wasn't dense enough, and can run over your fingers! It is very important that especially the seams get enough wax. Move the bottle gently back and forth, so the layer of wax spreads all-over inside. The outer surface should be covered with a thin layer of wax as well. Afterwards let the wax dry.



The cork

Take a piece of wood that is a little too thick for the bottle neck. Carve or cut it to fit. You can drill through a hole (of course not in a way, that it is connected to the interior of the bottle ...) and attach the cork with a ribbon to the bottle, so it won't get lost.

Now your bottle is ready!

Text and photos: Benjamin Frenzel

A few words about care

Oils and alcohol will dissolve the wax, so don't put these kind of liquids in

your leather bottle. Aromatic juices also shouldn't be filled into it because the bottle could take the taste and everything would taste like (fermented) fruit juice afterwards. Therefore only fill it with diluted juices or water.

If the bottle is not in use, store it open and let it dry. If you store it closed, there could be waterlogging inside, which can lead to mold growth.

Cleaning the bottle is actually quite simple. Just use mildly warm water.

Should it start to leak or accidentally gets broken "in the field", this is most probably not a big problem: Just pour in some liquid wax to reseal.





Your-LARP-Store.com

Your store for costumes, LARP weapons and accessories

The Spring is here!

Your LARP-Saison can be started.

EPIC EMPIRES



A paradise for builders and garden lovers

The Epic Empires might be the smallest of the three big annual summer larp events in Germany with „only“ about 200 participants in 2012, but it has some very interesting characteristics for gamers. As the game takes place at Utopion, a permanent larp site, that provides the possibility to create complex structures, which could remain after the game. By now there have been constructed a fortified tower, a chapel, a Viking fortress, an Elven tree platform in the woods and a living, growing willow-dome. All projects have been designed by different groups for the Epic Empires. Reason enough for us to examine this aspect of the concept a little bit closer.

Projects like these of course restrict the flexibility of the organizers, as Julian Blomann of the Epic Empires-team states. If a camp has built permanent structures



on a specific place it will become very complicated to relocate this camp to another place of the event side, even if it might be useful for reasons of logistics or space. Nevertheless he sees significant advantages. From his view, groups that implement such long-term projects for their camp, will identify very strongly with Epic Empire and with the game site. Therefore, the organizers actively support the further development of the area with building grants.

For instance in 2011 a building grant was given to a little but very active camp called Die Zusammenkunft (The Gathering) – not for an impressive fortress or something similar, but for the living hall of a willow

tree. As the group in-game portrays a camp with a deep respect for nature and the cycle of life, so a „growing“ building seemed quite naturally.

The structures we created for our camp are very important for our game play at the Epic Empires. During the last two years we were able to build not only the willow dome, but also several other little projects, like a garden, a small tree house and a bridge, says Martin Rück, one of the groups organizers.

Despite all preplanning, not everything in our projects worked out as planned. As more or less expected we experienced some minor setbacks. Nature follows its own laws, and not everything we planted actually



started to grow well. Nevertheless, many of our efforts turned out quite successful. The places for our tents we wrested from thorn bushes and our garden area is getting more beautiful year by year, the willow dome has started to grow and our tree sanctuary is also slowly taking shape.

The lovely garden paradise is still not finished yet (and won't be for long time). Further work is already scheduled, especially since regular meeting and working together on site help to strengthen the off-game team spirit of the group.

There is one man, who if anyone wants to implement a construction project for the Epic Empires cannot skip: Matthias Trennheuser, the owner of Utopion. His



declared goal is to enable groups to build things and to expand them over the years. Thus players should develop feeling of being part of a greater idea, and return to „their“ Epic Empires and „their“ Utopion. *We need a clear description of the project with pictures and text. If it's something big, especially if people will be able to climb and walk on it (it like a tower), we need a static calculation as well. If it fits, we meet and discuss the further procedure and try to find together a suitable location on the premises, tells Matthias on the usual start of a construction project. I will then take care of administrative procedures and such things. We also need to sign a contract that clearly states the rights of the owners of the construction, as well as my rights as the owner of the Utopion site. A very important rule: All structures need to be available for other games as well.*

As far as he states, there has never been a project he has had to reject completely, although details often had to be changed to fit the project into the Utopion vision German building and environmental law. Some projects however simply failed, because the makers never implemented or finished them.

It does not always have to be a full tower or a house: Matthias is really enthusiastic when groups have ideas for smaller projects like mysterious stone piles, a mystical fountain or even a real stone oven approach him. He also point out the great importance to ensure that all stationary installations correspond to his idea of larp sustainability, which means that they have not only to fit into the existing natural features but also shouldn't dominantly determine the surrounding terrain. The premises need to stay usable for many different kinds of larps during the year, without gamers stumbling everywhere on big wooden fortifications of the many Epic Empires camps. So, a lot of camp material still has to be torn down after the game, but the components can at least be stored on the site of the Utopion.

Text: Karsten Dombrowski
Images: Rafael Bienna, Deneriel

The next Epic Empires will take place from August 7th to 11th 2013.

More information:
www.epic-empires.de and
www.utopion.de



more safety
more durability
more reach
Made in Germany

Large variety of
Crossbows
available from stock!



Classic
design
available

Bows and arrows from IDV engineering
Leading in durability, safety and fun:
The Original with 4 years warranty
Sold exclusively through retailers
Inquiries welcome ☎ +49 8629 9878 33
info@idv-engineering.de



**Mut zur
Hässlichkeit**

Anfertigung individueller
Masken

www.Ungebil.de

LARPWRITER summer school

Teaching, spreading ideas and building communities

Five days of practical experiences, gaming, workshops, lectures and game presentations – the larpriter summer school is going to teach young people with few larp organizing experience how to make their own larps and how to use larps to tell a story. This intensive summer course in larp organizing will be held from 9th to 14th of July 2013 in the baltic state Lithuania, in a place close to the capital Vilnius. The programme aims to give its participants a practical and theoretical introduction into the art of writing their own games. For LARPzeit international editor Karsten Dombrowski asked the organizers about their concept.

LZ: How did you get the idea for this summer school?

The summer school was originally the idea of one of our Belarusian partners. We organize the school in a team with a very fluid structure, and the idea was quickly developed by the rest of the group. We just loved the thought of bringing together people from all over the world to spend time thinking about live-action roleplaying games as a tool for teaching, spreading ideas and building communities. In addition, those of us who had experience with summer camps in our (even) younger days really loved the idea of re-creating that special camp feeling.

LZ: Why do you think this summer school is relevant? Why do larpers or the larp scene in general need a training course like this?

The school is relevant mainly because it brings together some really smart and active people who get a unique arena where they can learn and get inspired to make more good larps! There are many gatherings for larpers - but the different

gatherings usually have fragmented programs and very different perspectives on larp. While we are very happy to take part in these gatherings as well, we saw the need for a place to spend a lot of time thinking about just one - admittedly large - aspect of what larp can be. There is a big difference between attending Knutepunkt, for example, where you're constantly bombarded with different new thoughts and larps - and having a week in a remote place where you follow a structured, focused program.

LZ: The training in is based on a tool called "The mixing desk of larp". How and why did you invent this method?

The mixing desk is a model used to illustrate the different parts of larp design. We needed an easy way to communicate the complexity of larp design - how there are very many different decisions to be made when designing a larp - to summer school participants with little larp experience. The idea was originally launched by Martin Nielsen, and he and Martin Andresen have been working

on refining it ever since, with feedback from the other organizers and from many members of the larp community.

LZ: What did you as organizers learn from last year's summer school? Did everything worked out as planned?

To our great surprise, things worked out even better than planned! We had invited people from all over the world to come to a remote, Soviet-era vacation camp in the forests of Moletai outside Vilnius, and we needed to transform the crumbling structures into a professional larp school. We had 37 participants in total from 10 different countries. In addition we had 17 experts and 7 organizers. We were incredibly fortunate to have a team of lecturers who worked closely together and used the framework we had provided to create a great and integrated program. Of course, the venue was not the most comfortable place to spend a week - cramped living conditions and run-down buildings - but the participants quickly created a community that more than made up for the living conditions.

LZ: Are there things or ideas you dropped or changed after your experience in the first run?

We are currently developing the program for this year, and we will make some changes. The biggest change is the inclusion of a "Larporatory", three days dedicated to larp design. The Larporatory runs in parallel to the summer school and is only open to participants from last year's summer school. It's a creative retreat where the participants join together and work intensively to create a finished larp. We are very excited about this - one of our main goals is to facilitate the creation of more good larps - and we're thinking of ways to help the participants' creative processes as much as possible without making any decisions for them.

LZ: What are the requirements to take part in the summer school?

We are looking for participants with limited larp experience, who are motivated to use

what they learn to create good larps. We are open to participants from all around the world.

LZ: As participation is free: How will you decide who will come and who not? Or is your space limitless?

We really wish we had even more space - we only have room for approximately 40 new participants. Last year we had to turn several people away, and we expect more sign-ups than we have room for this year as well. If there are more sign-ups than space we try to put together a diverse group of people from different countries. We prioritize those with serious motivations and will probably choose people with less larp experience over people with more experience.

LZ: Is it mandatory to come back for the larporatory follow up?

We hope many will join in the follow-up! This will be a great opportunity to

work with the same people and ask more questions after working on larp design a few weeks. However, it's not mandatory - we know people have busy schedules and it might be expensive for some to travel back to Vilnius, especially from outside Europe.

The larp writer summer school is part of project called *Free Your Mind Games*. Responsible are the Norwegian NGO *Fantasiforbundet* and the Belarussian NGO *Education Center "POST"*.


This years summer school will be held from 9th to 14th of July 2013 in the baltic state Lithuania, in a place close to the capital Vilnius. The age of participants will be between 16-35 and participation is free of charge. Food and lodging during the summer camp as well as travel to and from the venue will be provided by the organizers. For more information check the website www.larpschool.org.




No leadis dressed like an extra!

High quality, custom made, larp-proof costumes and armor.

www.leprecauno.com
www.facebook.com/Emporiolepre




www.leprecauno.com




LARP in Germany!

- Varied landscape
- Campsites for up to 5,000 participants
- Many locations in the area: mill ruin, runestones, norse stronghold and much more
- 80 heated sleeping-spaces in solid houses
- 7 houses overall (110 sleeping-spaces)
- Furnaces in 3 houses usable all year
- Offices for staff
- Electricity, drinking water, showers and lavatories in the field
- Fully equipped kitchen with cold and hot water in the tavern



UTOPION
Das Larp-Gelaende



larp-gelaende.de

The UTOPION.

FAMILY LARP IN THE NETHERLANDS

Empowering kids, teens and adults

What is expressed in play is no different from what is expressed in culture.
Roger Caillois, Man, Play and Games (1958)

Larp is a thriving cultural phenomenon, and it is being shaped by creative minds all over the world. Of course, it could be experienced as a game and nothing more. But larp has more to offer. We can invest in larp to reflect on social structures and learn about history, nature and culture. But most importantly we can stimulate creativity, pro-activity and improvisation skills through larp. The Netherlands hosts a team of larp designers who experiment which new forms of play to empower kids, teens and adults. They design larp events with a purpose beyond just entertainment.



The design team has taken the moniker of the travel agency *Lost & Found*, a steampunk-styled agency of adventurous travel guides who offer curious travels into other worlds.

With a focus on kids and teens to start with, their larps have grown into events involving all ages, aimed towards a unique larp experience.

Lost & Found

The travel agency *Lost & Found* was founded in the late nineteenth century after the discovery of *larp*, an abbreviation of

their first journey to the *World of Gruga*. This journey was made with 30 kids and 15 guides of which 30 children and 12 guides returned to this world in healthy conditions. It was considered a success. Ever since *Lost & Found* has facilitated multiple journeys for kids, teens and adults to the *World of Gruga* per year. It also joined brave travelers into the world of the *Wilde Hunt* for hunting the undead (vampires, ghosts, zombies and the likes) and *Camp Halfblood*, a training camp for children of the Greek gods based on the *Percy Jackson* series by Rick Riordan.

How to travel

A fellow learner of alternate reality perception might wonder: how does *Lost & Found* organize these journeys? When going on a journey a traveler best prepare well. The lead rule of a journey to another reality is this: when in Rome, do like the Romans. So when you go to the *World of Gruga*, you dress up akin to the local inhabitants. But adapting does not stop at dressing. You receive a travel guide that explains local professions, habits and costumes a week before the actual journey

Lost & Found often publishes a short newspaper for last bits of info. The traveler studies this information and integrates it to the best of his ability. Parents can support this preparation and teenagers can discuss on a forum prior to the journey.

Once prepared, all travelers meet at the designated location, present their passport and join an experienced guide at the gate. The gate, once opened through ritual or mechanism, lets them enter the other world where they explore, play and interact with the actual inhabitants for a long afternoon. By starting out as travelers and slowly taking up a role in the universe they are visiting, kids and teens easily learn what it means to role-play in a creative way. During their journey, they try to immerse themselves into the other culture as far as possible. Because if you let go of your own habits and start to experience the habits of other cultures, you are able to learn new habits. The focus of learning lies in social skills and creative improvisation. Interaction with all ages beyond the usual social structures creates awareness of your behavior. So when all adults are suddenly spell struck, it is up to the kids and teens to lead. And they do. Such is the nature of larp according to *Lost & Found*.

Ludus and Paidia

The ideas behind *Lost & Found* are not new. A fellow Dutchman, Johan Huizinga wrote his study *Homo Ludens* in 1938 about the theory of play. And Frenchman Roger Callois elaborated on this with his work *Man, Play and Games* in 1958, discussing the difference between game (ludus) and play (paidia). And the well known work of the American Mythologist Joseph Campbell told about the journey of the hero onto another world where he would face tests, trials and be transformed to return to his home with a gift to improve his own world.

Every game, according to Callois, ranges from the rules heavy ludus to the utter freeform paidia. While ludus creates a common ground to play with, it leaves limited space for creative input from players. Paidia on the other hand values personal input but requires far more effort to create a common ground. *Lost & Found* gears towards paidia-based larps in which the search for rules is a demand on everyone's creativity, rather than telling them where



doing became enthusiastic volunteers, adding creativity to *Lost & Found*.

Further explorations

After six years of work, *Lost & Found* finds itself only just at the beginning of their mission. To take people into other worlds, allowing them to experience themselves in a different role, to let them reflect on their role in daily life is not easy. But this fun journey of curious travels is certainly worth taking. Just like many of the journeys they arrange for other travelers, it is yet a mystery as to where this road will lead.

For more information on *Lost & Found* see www.lostandfoundtravels.org.

Text: Bastiaan Smit and Marinka Copier
Photos: Sylvia Be

FOR THE BEST
GERMAN MADE
PERIOD TENTS
AT EXCELLENT PRICES

ARTHUR

MERLIN

LANCELOT

PANTHEON

AVALON

DUKE

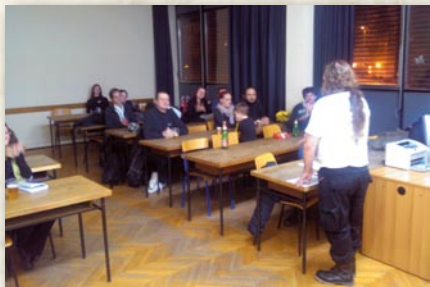
NORMAN

FAM WEST local representative in UK
Mr. Stephen Griffiths & Mrs. Genny Haines
5 Upper Way, Farnham, Surrey GU9 8RG, UK
Tel: 0044 (0)1252 717444
Cell: 0044 (0)773 6052328
E-mail: info@famwest.co.uk
www.famwest.co.uk

PORTAL

Organizing a larp convention ... the Balkan way

This March the stars were right and the stage was set for a (r)evolutionary step for larping in Croatia... hopefully. PoRtaL the first Croatian larp convention was held from March 1st to 3rd at the *Faculty of Humanities and Social Science* in Zagreb, Croatia. Ana Rajner tells about the project.



For other larp developed countries, starting a first convention might look like a small step. But for us, having a larping scene of just around 150 people, it was a clear sign that we are ready to evolve. Ready not only to import ideas and influences from others who've been on this stage of larping and done the same, but also to start developing our own thoughts about larp, with a local way of thinking and maybe even regional significance.

Serious thoughts about our own larp convention started last year at Croatia's biggest Science Fiction & Fantasy convention when we held a panel about *how do we see larp and Croatian larpers/organizers in 5 years*. This panel didn't get very innovative and in most cases not even imaginative at all, but the last year proved it wrong. For years we mainly



had a very firm construction of a tradition of fantasy larps, very often modeled after the US larp setting Amtgard. Now Croatian larp stepped into chamber larps, steampunk, science fiction and some other fantasy ideas.

The conference itself started with a clear *doing something the Balkan way* seal: last minute organization. We were thinking about it for some time, but the things only got seriously a few weeks previous to the actual convention, including announcing the date. So for most people outside the organizers team *PoRtaL* was a surprise larp convention.

Although it was announced quite late it dragged some wonderful participants from Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia and Croatia. The participation was free of charge and the participants could drop in any time for lectures, workshops or just larps – and they did, which made them quite difficult to count (the estimated number was something around 70).

As many participants didn't have an opportunity to attend some of the already established larp conventions abroad they really wanted to hear everything. We had lectures about larping in Hungary and Bulgaria, Hungarians presented their international friendly fantasy larp *Chronicles of Demgard*, and their fall out larp Projekt Prijot, soon to be international friendly. The sparks of theoretical thought appeared as well: Mesterházi Sándor presented *Generation Theory & Larp Evolution* based on Hungarian larp evolution. Beside that participants could hear ideas from Nordic larp and The

Larpwriter Summer School like *Mixing Desk of Larp* and *Pervasive Larp*. And of course many Croatian fractions presented their ideas and games. Hot topics were discussions about the purpose of NPC's as *neutral playing* or *non-playing* characters, *why do we larp* and about the local signification of what is *action* in larping.

The overall goal of the first PoRtaL convention was to open conversation and *get the feeling of the crowd* and from our



point of view it proved very successful in this. Much needed regional networking was accomplished, as larpers of all kinds and preferences could express themselves and find understanding.

Next years PoRtaL is already scheduled (February 28th to March 2nd 2014) so feel free to join us and contribute. You will be welcome!

If you can read Croatian or now how to use an online translator you can follow the project and the Croatian scene at facebook: www.facebook.com/LarpUdrugaLateralus.

REIINS OF THE CREATORS

A Fennolatvian postapocalyptic LARP

Ruins of the Creators is an international game that seems to be all about breaking boundaries. It was announced only four months before the actual game date; there wasn't too much hype before the announcement and the team consists mostly of your typical organisers and not so many artsy-larp types (correction: actually zero artsy-larp types). The game is in Latvia of all places, it does not have huge governmental or business sponsorships and hey, it doesn't cost an arm and a leg to sign up. So what is wrong with this thing? Not much, according to Jupe Rantalainen, who presents the visions of the organizers to LARPzeit international.



Our team is very experienced, with the two main designers combining over 120 events together and other organisers being larp and air soft veterans from Finland (and one from Latvia). Some of them even have international experience of sorts and one even participated as a writer in a little project called *Dragonbane*¹ for some time before getting smart. The tight schedule might be a thing that is "wrong", but really, the announcement generated a huge welcome for the game and as a 200-seating weekender, it seems like all the player spots will be filled quite soon. We don't need huge sponsorships

as the budget isn't meant to pay for moving dragons or the rental of real life warships. It's for food, props, site and air soft ammunition. This is the reason why we can market the game as package for bit over 100 euros in Finland, including travel expenses.

One question does pop out. What in the world is Fennolatvian or to be more precise, why Fennolatvian? Well, there has been a dialogue between Finnish and Latvian larpers since Solmukohta 2008 and after the 2012 edition, the need to do something together just grew too big. Of course, as this is a first time for

everyone, there are many obstacles to overcome but now there's a game coming out and it promises to be seriously cool. From the Finnish point of view the project is more about the money than anything else; it costs as about the same to travel to Eastern or Northern Finland for a LARP as it costs to go to Latvia and we get a lot better production value for our sign up fee in this little foreign country than in other parts of Finland. So why not to do it? Of course it takes 5 or 6 days from our working schedule instead of 3 days, but it will most likely be worth it and hey, summer is time for travel in any case. The Latvian point of view? Well, they get a nice larp out of it. Seriously, Latvians claim to be lazy (although they are anything

¹ A famous and huge swedish fantasy larp that took place in 2006 (www.dragonbane.org)

WE DELIVER FANTASY! LITERATURE



www.ZAUBERFEDER-SHOP.DE

WIDE CHOICE · INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING

Games and Gamers



else, considering the amount of work Vilhelmine has done for the game) and that nothing is happening there, so now they have larp, an international larp, and there is clearly something happening. Perhaps when people see how many amazing sites and great players the Latvians have, more international games will find their way in. And why wouldn't they? They have a frigging ex- military base over there just waiting to be used. And castles and stuff. Of course it is challenging to throw a LARP in a different country with different LARP traditions; we already ran into some problems that we didn't anticipate – just because the communities are so different, but luckily you can just fix the problems and move on. The magic is happening and the controversies will be overcome.

The other reason is that most of the international games tend to be either artsy or grandiose in size. We have no idea why it is like this. *Heittämättömän Arwan Kilta*, the finnish organisation behind all this, has been open for international participation for years, though we don't advertise it that much. And now we just decided to go to our neighbouring country and organize a game there and invite all our friends. Why should we not throw a normal, run of the mill, larp open for everyone? We like our games, we like them enough to call them some of the best games available. We want to be better at what we do and for that we need more opinions than our organizations 120 or so members.

We have experimented a lot and continue to do so, but we usually aim

more at making a typical larp better, than having an artistic value of some sort. Now we experiment with making a larp outside our nation's borders with a huge (we rarely go over 100 players, so 200 is a double the max size for us) multicultural and multilingual playerbase. And yes, we are proud of our Finnish Larp tradition, but we are open for new influences.

The game will be priced differently depending on your home country. This was a decision we made on the basis that if the locals can pay 5 or 10 or 15 euros for a game where they get their stuff in their own language and they can speak Latvian and Russian, why the hell would they want to pay 30 euros for a game where they can't? So Latvians, Lithuanians Estonians and perhaps some other as well, will be paying reduced fees. For others, the fee is the said 30 euros, which is not much considering there will be 3 meals a day on both days. The fee is also negotiable for groups who brings something interesting, big and/or expensive to the project; I am sure we would grant a discount for an armored fighting with an integrated air soft minigun (and break our own no vehicles rules). Also, there is nothing to stop the players from getting sponsorships from their local governments, cities or roleplaying organisations.

The actual game is called *Ruins of the Creators – The Warlord Cometh* and it is a true post-apocalyptic world. No roaming armies of motorcycle and car operating gangs, no child tribes and no true recollection of what happened when the



world ended. The material is more or less based on mythology surrounding the end of the World event; it gives a slight undertone of a nuclear war ending everything, but it is painted as a war between gods instead of men. And it happened a few generations ago. There will be ammunition left, so air soft weapons are used, but they will go hand in hand with latexswords and self-made foam clubs or whatever. There will be technology, but only stuff you can repair yourself. There will be a new world, with new people, with old myths about the stuff that we take for granted. No magic, this is not Deadlands, but there might be some kind of mutants. And the Warlord? He is just your typical easygoing "join my empire or die"-kind of guy. He might show up. The game will be about the story. It will include combat, scavenging, survival, politics, religion, puzzlesolving and relationships. So something for everyone.

All the material will be in English, but you can use any language you know.

The reason behind this gameworld is something the design team has always missed in post-apocalyptic games; or actual something that has always been there instead of being missed. The world before. There has often been too much of it left. If there is an end of the World event, it will result with death and trauma, and to get over such things, the mind of a human will adapt. When the history is wiped out, the history will become myths very quickly. So instead of writing history with exact dates and names of the countries and who pushed the big red button and who shot the first shot, we will have a mythology. Goddess Europa, the Red Sun and other Gods engaging in an epic battle, destroying stone fortresses with the blaze of a million suns. Instead of "this

old technology" people will scavenge "relics of the old gods" or "gifts of the old gods". Even though we won't be having tribes of children, the way the *Mad Max 3* childtribe viewed their history has been a big influence on our game design.

So if you like air soft warfare, post-apocalyptic genre like *Mad Max*, *Postman* or *Book of Eli*, survival gaming, making strange looking gizmos that could be post-nuclear war items or just strange religious idols, *Ruins of the Creators* is a game for you. There is a lot of room for gamist, wargamer, immersionist (even hard core immersionist), simulationist and all the other larger stereotypes. And if it a success, we are bold enough to promise a sequel in 2014. But for that, the game needs you. Your participation, your immersion, your ability to play out the plot we have written.

See you in Latvia this Summer!

Photos: Rihards Rudzītis

Ruins of the Creators – The Warlord Cometh will be played from June 14th to 16th 2013 in Latvia. It is organized by finnish Heittämättömän Arwan Kilta. Main organizers are Jupe Rantalainen, Mikko Kari, Outi Mussalo, Esa Toivonen and Vilhelmine Ozonlina. Read more the website <http://ruinsofthecreators.wix.com/thelarp> or come to Fastaval in Denmark or Knutepunkt in Norway to meet some of the organizers. And there is this social network called Facebook which also has a lot of information about the game.





THE MONITOR CELESTRA

Space adventure in a real battleship

After several days on the run, this has been our last FTL jump. The Captain or whoever is in charge (one can't really know these days) decided to demand blood for blood and nuke some fraking Cylons out of the sky. I can't say I disagree. Feeling this ship, my lovely lady, is getting weaker and weaker every minute I know by heart she wants to show these toasters her claws.

We succeeded in destroying the dangerous Cylon space station and its colony, but got badly hit. Corridors are filling up with radiation. Should I go into the engine room, give my lady a final hug? But what if we, by any odd chance survive this fraking madness? Who will take care of her needs? Most (all?) of my fellow crewman of the FTL-engine team seem to be dead or MIA.

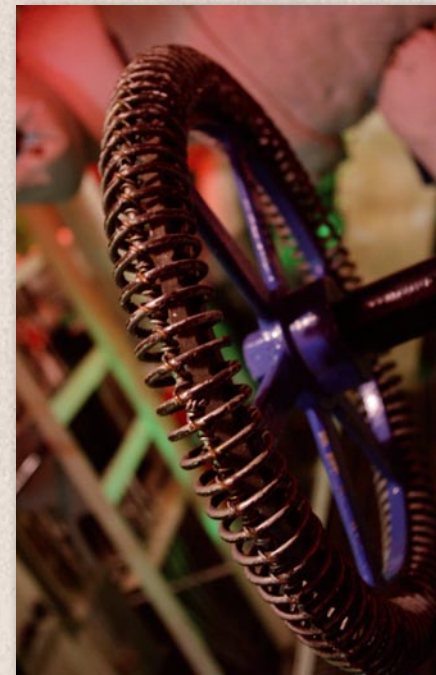
Frak it, I will face the end as a proud Tauron: going to the galley, having a final warm tea, thinking of all the good days I had on this marvelous ship. Here goes my toast to my dead or soon to be dead friends and the lady. Another impact. Whilst all around me crewmen, civilians and colonials shout and take cover I cannot help but smile. She is giving these toasters a glorious last stand, fighting until the very end and going out with a shiny blaze. Farewell, my lovely la...

On the weekend of March 8th-10th 2013 around 140 larpers from all over the world met in Gothenburg, Sweden to spend a lot of time in the belly of the Småland, a destroyer from the Cold War era. They played the larp *The Monitor Celestra*, set in the universe of the Battlestar : Galactica TV series (the re-imagined version, not the series of the 1970s). This series tells a thrilling story about the human race being pushed to the brink of extinction by the cybernetic Cylons, the struggle to escape destruction and to find a new homeworld; it is also a story about human nature, racism, political extremism and morality – a perfect setting for a very dramatic larp experience.

Action, Drama, Adrenalin

While the story of the TV series revolves around the mighty Battlestar Galactica, defending a small fleet of spaceships with survivors, the plot of this larp focused on just one ship: The Monitor Celestra, an old civilian ship that lost contact with the rest of the fleet.

The narrow corridors of the ship are cramped not only with the crew of the ship and the scientists working on it, but also with a lot of traumatised and frightened civilian refugees and a boarding party from the Galactica. Many things happen:



There are for instance conflicts between the civilian crew and the military boarding party, undercover Cylons, scientists messing around with weird experiments, an artificial intelligence with split personality on a rampage and mobsters and politicians fighting to increase their influence. Several factions fiercely battle over control of this ship (or the minds and souls of its passengers and crew) but slowly all of them also come to realise, that they are lost and alone in space, with very little hope of escape.

Every potential way out of this trap comes with a heavy price: When the Celestra made contact with a group

calling itself the Prometheus Coalition, it seemed as if they wouldn't have to be alone anymore. But it turned out they just found a group of violent anarchists, rebels and pirates, who demanded the execution of all officers, scientists and politicians, as the prize to join their little fleet.

Another false hope was a place called Elysium, promoted by Daniel, a seductive Cylon voice, trying to convince them to give up their struggle, make peace with him and his "children" and abandon humanity.

In the end the Celestra did not find a safe haven among the stars, but neither did its passengers give up hope or surrender to their various enemies. The crew decided not to abandon humanity but to die

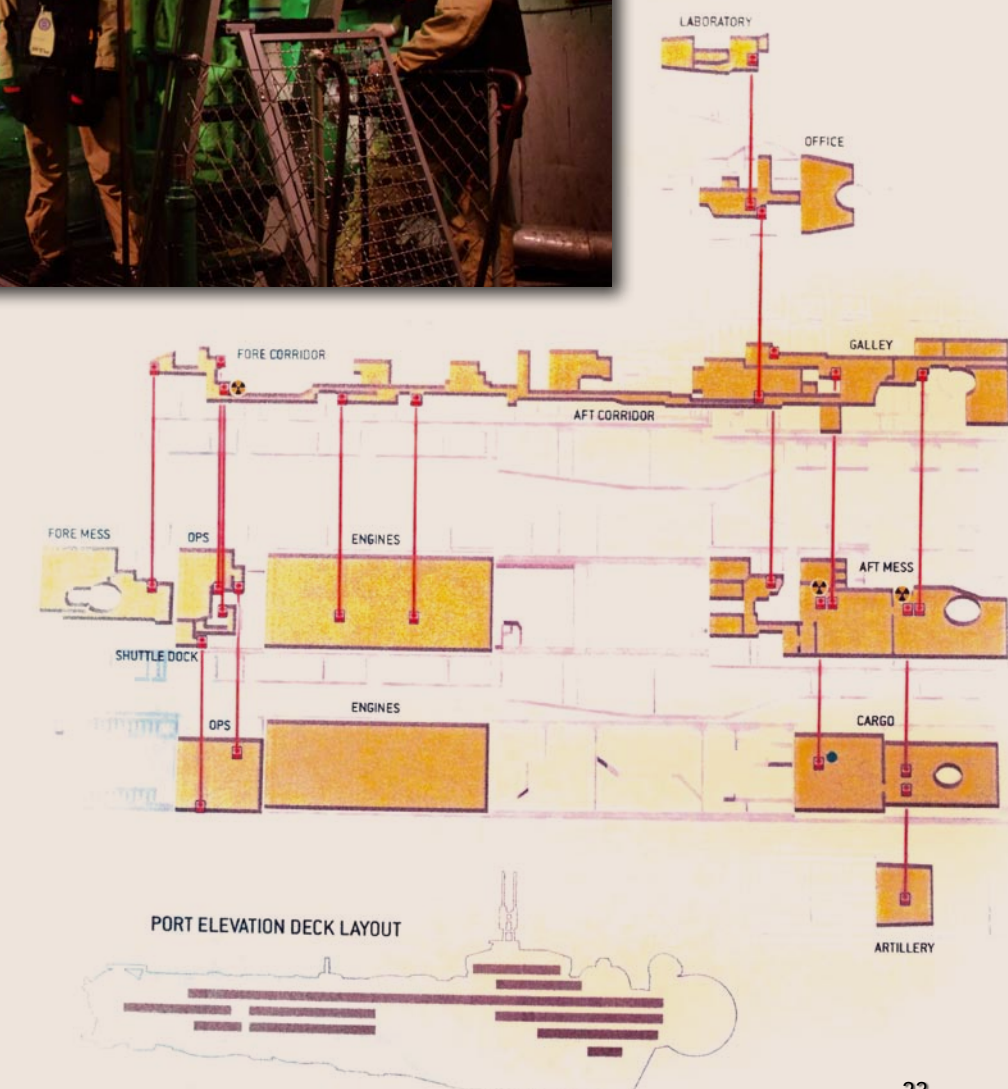
together in a proud last battle, sacrificing themselves to destroy a potential threat for the rest of the human fleet, which they themselves couldn't find anymore.

Design and game mechanics

It required quite a large, talented team to make this LARP happen in a very professional way. (By the way: three times in a row. In order to fund this big project the game was played with different players on three consecutive weekends.)

The game was advertised as *pay and play*, meaning that players would get a ready-to-play character and optional, for an additional fee, a costume for rent.

The high level of costume quality made it very easy to immerse fully into the game setting – especially when combined with the destroyer Småland, the perfect location to feel like being in a lone spaceship: No windows, a claustrophobic environment, six different decks connected by steep ladders, dark corners for conspiratorial meetings and even way too small bathrooms with tiny metal sinks. Communication between the different action stations via telephone and a set of connected terminals and consoles (with real programmed functionality) added very much to the feeling of maneuvering a vessel through space. For example: If the scientists wanted to continue work on their experiments, they needed energy distributed from the engine control room.





Energy, that would then be missing in the torpedo room or on the bridge.

The tense atmosphere of this larp was not only ensured through the location, devices and the costumes but also through a set of carefully applied game mechanics:

Episodes

The game was split into four different episodes, one by one raising the dramatic feeling. The breaks in between these episodes even enhanced this effect, giving the players time to rest after six hours of very intense play and then start all over again.



Phantom play

As a special mechanic, every person dressed in red was a 'phantom' and should be ignored in-game – unless he or she touches a player's character and talk to him. This *phantom play* was meant to create the type a dynamic of madness and weird behavior among the characters. This was not just a meta-technique but also an in-game effect of artificial intelligences messing around with the characters minds (and a reference to a similar effect in the TV series).

Play to lose

The game masters also made it very clear, that in this game nobody should try to *win* but everybody was asked to *play to lose*. So, the player of a rebellious engineer should not try to find the best and most safe way to overcome an enemy, but create a situation where he most likely will fail in a very dramatic way, to create a better story for everyone involved.

Gun control

At an ordinary fantasy larp, everybody has a sword – at the Celestra only a handful of guns and knives were present. On the one hand, this gave their owners a lot of power, on the other hand their use in the game was very firmly regulated.

Flaws

Even though the organizers proved themselves to be very professional and efficient, there were a couple of flaws that should be mentioned.

The pay and play did not work as well as expected. A lot of characters were handed



out quite late and would have required some effort to connect with other players beforehand. Some of the characters, distributed by the organizers, did not work as well for their players as others – their connections with other characters seemed more weak, their background not as satisfying and their relevance for the story not as important (thus making it easy to be bypassed in game). This seemed to have happened mostly to players of civilian refugees, but also to some players of higher ranking characters.

Also there was, especially prior to the first episode a lot of unnecessary delay and waiting in the cold, while on the other hand the briefing for the various technical devices and how to use them suffered from too little time. Thus at least the first episode suffered from off-game confusion of *[[kursiv]]*who is who?*[[kursiv Ende]]* and *[[kursiv]]*how do we fly this space ship?*[[kursiv Ende]]*

Compared to the overall experience those flaws were only minor disturbing factors. Visually and emotionally this has been one of the most intense games the author of this article ever played (but also the most expensive one). The organizers didn't achieve this because of the awesome location alone, nor because of the great costumes, the technical enhancement of the game experience or the dramatic story, but because all these parts of game design fitting together in a nearly perfect way.

For more information about the game see www.celestra-larp.com.

Text: Karsten Dombrowski
Photos: Larson Kasper

Travelers cloak

Difficulty:
Intermediate

For cold days to come ...



The Braies or Bruche (from Middle High German: bruch) are wide pants made of linen or other natural fiber, which are held by a The pattern for this cloak stems from the Codex Manesse, also called Grosse Heidelberger Liederhandschrift (Big Heidelberg Song Manuscript). This unique manuscript, written during the first quarter of the 14th Century in the area of Zurich, is the most comprehensive collection of ballads and epigrammatic poetry in Middle High German language and is famous for its many colourful full-page miniatures. They give a valuable insight into the contemporary fashion, although it should be kept in mind that it's not always possible to implement artistic representations exactly into real drapery.

The travel cloak in this instruction is modeled after a medieval Garnache, such as those on the picture board 158R (Der von Sachendorf) in the Manesse. This form of a travelers cloak is a good choice for traders, craftsmen, coachman and similar because it leaves plenty of freedom for movement.

Just a note: Unlike the version in this pattern the original Garnache probably had no buttons. So if you value a most

historically accurate garb set, then omit the button panel and close the front seam up to 10 cm to the chin.

Pattern

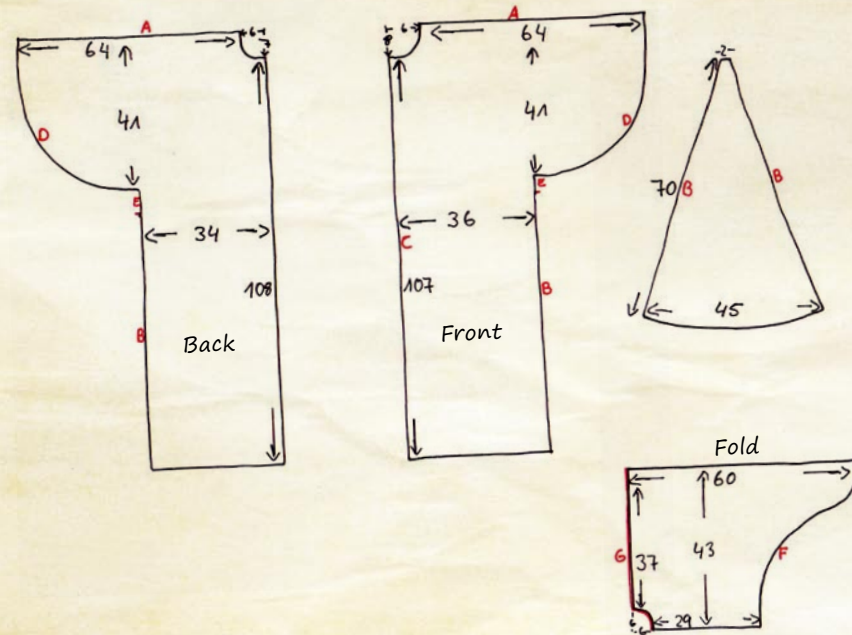
Draw the pattern on paper tablecloth (best to use a tablecloth with a geometric pattern) or wrapping paper. Special pattern paper is softer and thinner, but unfortunately also more expensive. A seam allowance of one centimeter has been taken into account for each seam in the pattern.

Material

- Sewing material
- 2.5 m loden or thick wool (1.4 m wide)
- 2.5 m linen (pre washed!) for lining (1.4 m wide) – 7 buttons



Picture 1



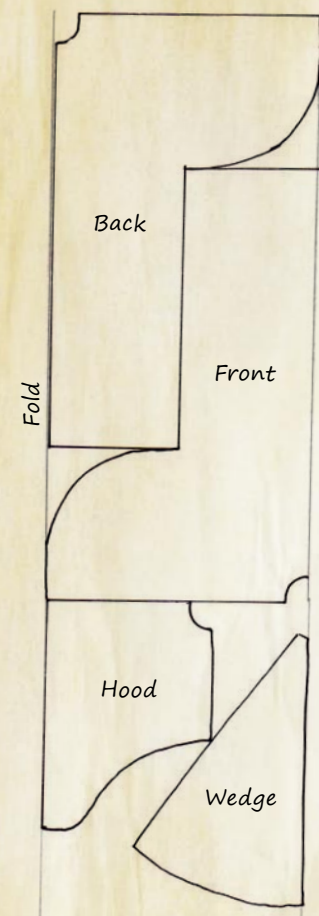
Cutting

Cut the front and the wedge twice each from the upper (in our example we have taken green wool) and from the lining (linen). The hood and the back are cut only once but on the fold.

In addition, you need 7 buttons, with an approximate diameter of 2 cm and seven small pieces of wool (each 5 x 9 cm)..

Picture 2

Fabric is folded at 70 cm



Sewing

1: First stitch the shoulder seams (A) of the front and back parts of the linen. After each step all seams should be ironed into the right shape. If the lining is sewn in, you will not be able to take care of them any more.

2: Then stitch together the front and the back at seam E.

3: Cut the corner up to the seam. In the next step the wedge is placed into seam B.

Close the seam on the back of the hood (F). Repeats these steps with the wool.

4: Stitch the two hood pieces together at seam G. Cut the rounding of the hood, in order to reduce the tension.

Turn-over the hood.

5: Sew seven loops from the small pieces of wool.

6: Fix one of them at the linen, around 3 cm from the neckline. The other six should follow at intervals of around 10 cm. Stitch the loops with a slight zig-zag stitch on the lining

Attach the woolen part of the cloak to linen part of the cloak and stitch them together at the seam C.

Turn-over the cloak.

7: To sew the hood, fix it to the neck of the upper. Now sew both parts. Afterwards the lining of the hood is attached and sewn together with a blind stitch by hand.

At the mock sleeves the upper and the lining are folded tight and fitted together. Try the jacket on and check if it fits.

Sew the two layers of the apparent sleeves together by hand.

8: Now try the jacket on again and check if the lining somewhere is too long. If it shows out under the upper, cut it with scissors to the proper length. Sew it together by hand (like the sleeves) or hem both seams (upper and lining) separately.

Finally, the buttons need to be fixed. Now the cold days can come.



Carol Adler has been designing and producing clothes for more than 25 years. A couple of years ago she founded Adelund-Volk, where she offers individual costumes (fantasy and medieval) for her customers.
www.adelundvolk.de



WyvernCrafts
Waffen aus Leidenschaft

With years of experience, **WyvernCrafts** stands for quality and durability when it comes to foam-weapons. A fine crafted foam-weapon is more than an accessory - it completes your character.

Visit our online-shop and see for yourself!



www.Wyvern.de/crafts
@ info@Wyvern.de
f /WyvernCrafts

Odenthaler Str. 339
51069 Cologne



IRON FORTRESS

"More people will get involved in a hobby if equipment is easy to get"



If you are doing fantasy larp you already might have had a product of *Iron Fortress* in your hands – perhaps without even knowing it. The Danish company acts as a manufacturer and distributor for various larp products (eg by the brand *Epic Armoury*), supplying small and large retailers in Europe and North America. Tara Moritzen interviewed CEO René Vendt about the founding of Iron Fortress and the challenges of the larp market.

LARPzeit: How is your personal connection with the larping scene?

René Vendt: I started off as a Pen and Paper role-player, but when I was introduced to the world of larp, I was amazed by the possibilities and fell in love with the hobby. I have visited and participated in various Larps around the

world, like *Nero* in the US, *Bicoline* in Canada or *Mythodea* in Germany, but my home base is the Danish Larp scene. There I have been part of a group that organizes larp since 2006. I love to take



on the role of a NPC or game master, and challenge the gamers on the field.

LZ: When and how was Iron Fortress established?

René: Iron Fortress was founded in 2007. Prior to this we operated two RPG shops in Denmark and began gradually increasing amounts of larp products to sell. We lacked at that time a merchant who would have been able to meet the needs of our retail stores. At first we bought a variety of products from small garage type larp producers throughout Europe, then additional metal and leather goods in Asia. These, however, were mostly designed for the SCA (Editor's note: Society of Creative Anachronism) or re-enactment groups. To exactly meet the needs of our larp customers, we had to change them – or develop new products on our own. That was extra hard work, because at the same time we had to manage our stores. After years of frustration in working with the existing larp producers, we decided to start a business on our own: a company that should be able to offer a full range of larp accessories and to grant a stable and



reliable service for merchants. We started off by making a wish list of how we would like a distributor to be, and the shape of the company behind Epic Armoury started to take form.

We are convinced that the larp scene and hobby will grow, if shops are able to sell interesting quality products that inspire the gamers to create well-dressed characters, and it will also make it easier for newbies to get involved. It is a fact that more people will get involved in a hobby if equipment is easy to get.

LZ: And when did you start going international in larp business?

René: I think we became international the day we opened a 250square meter booth at the Essen spiel Messe 2007 in Germany. We had a lot of international retailers that showed interest in our range and products. It was confirmed that other dealers had the same request and need, for a wholesale distributor, and producer. The business, just took off from there.

LZ: What has changed since then for you?

René: When a new company is founded, the owners have to do everything themselves, but as the company grows, more specialists are available. Every time we could invest more money in employees, we hired more specialists in different areas. For example, the latest employee we hired is a talented make-up artist, who designs prosthetics

and masks for the Epic Effect range. I think the products we produce, and the service we provide are getting better every year, and this is the result of getting a specialist in every area of responsibility.

LZ: Which challenges did you have to face during this development?

René: Well that's a good question... I think the fact that we have to accept that we have to do a lot of things 90% well, instead of 100% is the biggest challenge. When we have dreams of doing something perfect, and we have to compromise due to lack of resources, that is a big challenge. We at Iron Fortress have a lot of ideas, and would like to initiate them all at once, but we cannot, so we have to take one step at a time, and prioritize what to do next.

LZ: Do you notice changing trends in the demands of your customers? Like one summer everybody is buying pirate stuff, next it's all about high elves? If so, how do you handle these trends

René: Yes, off course we notice trends in the market, but sadly we are not able to react on such crazes before they are over. We are trying to inspire the gamers to try new ways, and challenge the classical ways we see characters, not that classical is bad, but new inspiration is always needed to evolve the hobby.

www.ironfortress.de

JOHO UND 'NE
BUDEL VOLL RUM ...

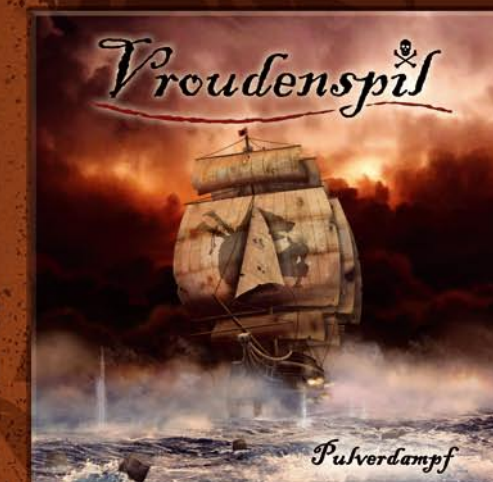
Neue Piratenmusik
unter der Totenkopf-Flagge



GROG 'N' ROLL

Eine gewaltige Portion
Seemannsgarn mit Pirattitüde -
gepresst in mitreißenden Folk.

Vroudenspil



PULVERDAMPF

Der dritte Langspieler der
Münchner Freibeutercrew
ist ein hochprozentiges Gesöff,
das jeden Hörer trunken macht.

AB 19. APRIL

KEEPING IT SHORT AND SWISS

With the exception of Nordic countries, national larp scenes are usually known abroad via their largest fantasy games: Conquest of Mythodea & Drachenfest in Germany, The Gathering in the UK, Bicolline in Canada, Avatar in Belgium etc. However, throughout the world, larpers do organize smaller, more experimental events for much fewer players, much shorter durations, on much smaller budgets and exploring a wider variety of genres. As this is the type of game my larp group Le Four Fantastique and me like to organize in Switzerland, here are some examples to showcase the diversity of the Swiss larp scene. French-speaking players who may be interested in attending re-runs should stop reading now due to massive spoilers.



Technoculte

Technoculte is a four player, one organizer techno-thriller larp lasting a maximum of two hours. It was designed both as a tribute to previous horror larps run by friends and to test various ideas and technologies introduced at larp conventions, e.g. Créa'Vapeur's¹ special FX workshops at the Parisian GNiales². It was also designed to test whether it was possible to instill a strong mood and develop a meaningful story in such a short game time, with rather high production value. Indeed, small, short games have often minimal sets and costumes, but here the idea was to have the game as WYSIWIG as possible. The basic pitch was that players would have very simple, archetypal characters that would separately enter a dark building, exploring it with their flashlights.

Plot

The back story to be discovered during the game was that the building was the lab and spiritual prison of Magnus Le Braz, a French techno-chemist looking for eternal life. Mixing medieval humorism³, kabbalah⁴ and artificial intelligence, he had nearly succeeded and was only missing one thing. Magnus' eureka moment came 33 years

ago when he extracted three of the four bodily humors (blood, black bile, yellow bile, phlegm) from four babies, leaving each of them with only one humor intact. This led them to grow up as humor generators, completely unbalanced individuals (both psychologically and physically): the player characters. *Yellow bile* was a violent special agent from the real-life Gladio network, *black bile* a melancholic member of Libra, a fictional religious spy network. *Blood* was a celebrity medium able to read auras with an iPad and *lymph* a cold scientist working on AI. Unbeknownst to them, they were drawn to the building through various reasons, to accomplish a dying Magnus' final transfer into eternal life. Scattered throughout the building were his work notes and pieces of previous failed attempts, including the prop cadaver of a child hanging from a bathroom stall.

Location, location, location

The first draft run was played by French, Belgian, and Swiss players in a group of houses in the French country side. Then five sessions where organized at the cinema of Echallens, a historical movie house. Players came from all over Western Switzerland and neighboring France. We had access to the projection cabin with antique projectors, the main movie room, lobby and basement, including creepy and cold rooms originally used to develop films. I as organizer remained hidden for most of the game, listening in the dark with a walkie talkie or using a babyphone camera as a way to follow some of the action.

Technology

Technoculte was pretty high tech and included paper character photos that would animate and talk in augmented reality using an iPad app. All players had RFID tags inserted into latex skin patches glued to their arms, which could be scanned to give numbers to enter in a



kabbalah software and to trigger identity and health status check with another character's laptop. Various toys were recycled, including a simple neurofeedback machine and hidden messages in UV ink, only seen by special UV flashlights. Finally, motion and light sensors enabled a mini-ritual allowing Magnus' spirit, trapped in the building, to talk through the electromagnetic spectrum (enabling the organizer to roleplay his NPC through the player's walkie-talkies).

Play it again Sam!

To make the rental site affordable, 5 games were run in 2 days. While this cadence was very tiring, it enabled same-day adjustments and next day improvements in some of the scenes and effects, e.g. adding a creepy heartbeat sound effect to the room with the cadaver. As an organizer, it was fun to see how different players of either gender interpreted the same character and how different larping cultures managed cooperation vs. secrecy. And of course seeing different endings was particularly entertaining. Still, *Technoculte* was not perfect and the technology was not foolproof, causing some bugs. Some larpers were amazed by it, others would have liked the atmosphere to be way scarier, but all agreed that

yes, it was possible to have a strong larp experience in less than two hours, with only four players.

After such a gloomy and stressful game, it was time for more fun things... and the re-run of my old Love boat larp.

The Loath Boat

In the 1990s, a French game company produced a line of *soirées enquêtes*, murder mystery larps in book format for 8-9 players and one organizer NPC. The organizer just had to photocopy everything, from character sheets to the many paper clues, send the sheets in advance, let the players find costumes and the game was pretty much ready to run. Themes varied from classic Agatha Christie-style to adaptations of tabletop RPGs like *Call of Cthulhu* or the French hit *In Nomine Satanis/Magna Veritas*. Gamist metatechniques enabled the games to be run in a couple of rooms with minimal decoration and costumes, with *action points* being spent to search off-game locations or to pick pockets. Most of the investigating was done by talking with other characters, and in case of blockage the rules included ways to learn about other character's secrets, e.g. calling a cop friend to search their criminal file, or mind reading for games with supernatural elements. Using this format, I wrote *La*

LARP ARROWS - MADE BY BEIER GERMANY

LARP arrows from 9.10 EURO

Assembly sets for LARP arrows from 6.30 EURO

LARP arrows with specially designed safety heads can be found at :

WWW.LARPARROWS.COM

BY BEIER GERMANY®

WWW.BOGENSPOBT-BY-BEIER.DE

croisière s'accuse (loosely translated as *The Loath Boat*), based on the 1970s series *The Love Boat* to add to the rather small body of comedy larp. After a change of publishing company and production strategy, the game was never published, but photocopies were salvaged and kept by various larpers throughout the years. I first ran it in 1997 in a suburban Parisian apartment but swore that one day, it would be run in an actual boat.

Come aboard

Fast forward to 2013, and having moved to the shores of Lake Geneva, you'd expect finding a boat wouldn't be too hard... but it was. Switzerland is an expensive country; I don't know private yacht owners and regular ferry companies did not offer private spaces to larp in their boats without renting the full thing. The solution came from *Le bateau Genève*, a floating historical monument now permanently moored in Geneva, managed by a non-profit organization helping the homeless with a soup kitchen. The boat was undergoing construction work and renting it became affordable.⁵



We're expecting you

The player characters were straight from the TV series, with the captain, his daughter, the bartender, the doctor, the yeoman purser and the cruise director. I added a chief of security, a badass cook and a DJ. An originality of that game was that each role came with a corresponding organizer duty: the cook prepared cakes, the bartender drinks, the DJ a four hour disco playlist and so on. Compared to the one-man show that was *Technoculte*, I can say I was very happy to have chosen this distributed approach. Not only does it relieve the organizer from burden, it also motivates and keeps the player involved before game start.

Love, exciting and new

Love triangles were of course part of the plot, but this being a murder mystery series, the captain's mother died from unexplained causes just before game start. One of the passengers was revealed to be a police officer (played by the organizer) who sequesters everyone in the Captain's quarters until a plausible suspect is identified. Players improvised a short memorial ceremony with enabled everyone to say something about the late lady, thus revealing some teasers about their personalities etc. There were talks of drug trafficking, mafia, past scientific activities and a lot of lying and scheming. And of course there was disco and pole dancing, heartfelt revelations on long lost family members, infidelity, all in a lighthearted kind of way. As often in larp, clichés and player appearances held, and the suspicious-looking Latino head of security was accused of being a gangster for example. However the true culprit wasn't found this time.

From oldies but Nordics

Nowadays, murder mystery larps try to avoid this action point system and find other ways to distribute information. But re-running this game exactly as is, from the actual photocopies, had a quaint nostalgic feeling that matched the theme. The only new technique used was a pre-game workshop to get the players ready to do funny things in stupid uniforms. All game materials will be made available online for free, so if any bilingual larpers interested in translating it into English is more than welcome to contact me.

Text: Thomas B.

Photos: Julie Bluefairy,
Maud Jenni-Hédiguer, Thomas B.

What's next?

Two music-inspired larps: the kung fu hip-hop Afroasiatic and then *Space Disco 3000*. Both will require music and very specific game sites, but as the above pictures show, finding the right location is worth the wait!

For more coverage of Swiss larp:
www.thomasbe.com

For more photos and to download the game material:
www.lefourfantastique.org

¹ www.creavapeur.com

² www.gniales.com

³ A theory of the makeup and workings of the human body, positing that an excess or deficiency of any of four distinct bodily fluids in a person directly influences their temperament and health. It is now long outdated but has been historically very important, going back to Ancient Greek and Roman physicians and philosophers.

⁴ An esoteric method, discipline and school of thought.

⁵ It also happened to be the boat where Empress Elisabeth Sissi of Austria bled to death after been stabbed by an anarchist (but we learned this after the game).



Make your own medieval clothing

To be dressed historically correct as a medieval reenactor – it could not be simpler. The range of garments that those interested in the Middle Ages can now make themselves stretches from the High to late Middle Ages.

- carefully researched and richly illustrated
- clear descriptions and pictures leading through the work process
- easily comprehensible sewing instructions

SHOES OF THE HIGH AND LATE MIDDLE AGES

80 pages, 21 x 29,7 cm,
softcover with flaps,
ISBN 978-3-958922-25-5,
27,90 Euro



HEADWEAR FOR MEN AND WOMEN

64 pages, 21 x 29,7 cm,
softcover with flaps,
ISBN 978-3-958922-17-0,
21,90 Euro



BASIC GARMENTS FOR WOMEN

64 pages, 21 x 29,7 cm,
softcover with flaps,
ISBN 978-3-958922-15-6,
21,90 Euro



BASIC GARMENTS FOR MEN

64 pages, 21 x 29,7 cm,
softcover with flaps,
ISBN 978-3-958922-14-9,
21,90 Euro



**more safety
more durability
more reach**
Made in Germany

Design
by
Eisenkleider

Available from stock: Bolts and Crossbows from IDV engineering

**Leading in precision, safety and fun:
The Original with 4 years warranty**

Sold exclusively through retailers
Inquiries welcome Fax: +49 8629 987855
info@idv-engineering.de

EPIC EFFECT[®]

MASKS

Epic Effect is all about getting into character. With an ever growing range of high quality masks, prosthetics, trophies and makeup colours, the Epic effect provides you with that extra touch of details which makes your character ready for the next adventure.

Epic Effects masks are made from natural latex. Each mask is hand painted and detailed with realistic effects to the highest standards.




They are designed with role playing in mind, having wide eyes holes for better vision and a unique open mouth design that allows for better comfort and expression in play.

BEASTIAL ORC - BLUE

51420950
Medium
57-59cm

66,99 €

MAKE-UP

-  Black - K360707
-  Grey - K360714
-  Zombie Pale - K360717

LENSES

Epic Blue EE809 26,66 €




FERAL ORC - GREEN

51421455
Large
59-61cm

66,99 €

MAKE-UP

-  Black - K360707
-  Dark Green - K360701
-  Grass Green - K360702

LENSES

Epic Green EE810 26,66 €




RODENT BROWN

51421751
Movable jaw
Medium/Large
57-61 cm

66,99 €

MAKE-UP

-  Black - K360707



WATER BASED
MAKE-UP
6,99 €



CARNAL ORC RED

51420250
w. Mohawk
& Sideburns
Medium
57-59cm

79,99 €

MAKE-UP

-  Black - K360707
-  Bright Red K360704

LENSES

Red Eyes EE597 26,66 €



CARNAL ORC - BROWN

51420350
Medium
57-59cm

66,99 €

-  Black K360707
-  Dark Brown K360713
-  Brown K360711



FERAL ORC - ORCHER

51421555
Large
59-61cm

66,99 €

-  Zombie Pale K360717
-  Umbra Yellow K360706
-  Black K360707
-  Bright Red K360704
-  Brown K360711



BEASTIAL ORC - WHITE

51420850
Medium
57-59cm

66,99 €



-  White K360712
-  Grey K360714
-  Bright Red K360704



MALICIOUS GOBLIN - GREEN

51420550
Medium
57-59cm

66,99 €

-  Black - K360707
-  Dark Green - K360701
-  Grass Green - K360702



AT YOUR LOCAL EPIC EFFECT DEALER
SUMMER 2013

EPIC ARMOURY[®]