

ACTIVISMO PSD: The Parliament of Social Design  
Project led by Mikel Horl (UK), Pete Nevin (Spain), Paul Elsam (UK), Mute Pigeon (Japan)

### **Deconstructive Play: Empathy, Distance, Diversity**

This workshop investigates the power of play between cultures, generations and disciplines, promoting empathy, compassion and positivity in human relations.

Groups will work together to deconstruct games and other source materials to invent new ways of playing. Deconstructive approaches from literature, art, theatre and architecture are employed to give insight and generate ideas for cultural and generational interaction. The workshop connects to a project by ACTIVISMO PSD, the Parliament of Social Design, investigating deconstructive, intergenerational play in Middlesbrough, UK.

This session will involve the making of short narrative works (written, performed, produced, built, installed) or proposals for new games to be played. Participation will lead to increased ability to work collectively across cultures and generations.

We will work in a studio space with tables, chairs, paper, computer, projector, internet connection and our own devices. We will set up a Video Booth to record descriptions of games to be shared with international partners of the project. Format can either be Workshop or Maker Space.

#### **What do we mean by Deconstructive Play?**

Looking at “games” we (or our parents and grandparents) used to play, taking them apart then inventing something else.

We will deconstruct games from Asia and Europe by connecting with a group in Japan. We will consider theatre, performance and role play in several cultures. We will learn to translate, interpret and deliberately misinterpret. We will consider **learning** and **unlearning** as key attributes in education and look at how we can apply deconstructive principles to the workplace and social spaces.

We will work in groups and connect with people from different backgrounds. We will find out if we can play in a foreign language, interpret and misinterpret instructions and rules.

#### **Key words:**

Intergenerational, Intercultural, Interdisciplinary

Technological, Transformational

Mood, Experience

Masks, Puppets, Games

Triggers, Rewards, Values

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### **Biographical information**

**Mikel Horl** is a graphic artist, designer, researcher and teacher, specialising in artists' books and printmaking, since 1982. Horl has applied book arts to commissioned works and is author and designer of several books for children. Workshops and lectures have been delivered in the UK, USA, Russia, Japan and Indonesia. Horl recently launched *Activismo PSD, the Parliament of Social Design*, a social enterprise designed to provide opportunities for post-graduate work experience that achieves social impact. Mikel Horl is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, UK.

**Dr Paul Elsam** trained as an actor at Manchester Polytechnic School of Theatre, and has worked widely as a performer in theatre, radio, film and television, including in BAFTA and Olivier-nominated productions on stage and screen. He has directed professionally with UK touring group *ImpAct*, and has also directed a range of public student productions, often staged 'in the round'. Research activities explore the use of emotion and mood within actor training. Paul has an ongoing interest in using drama as a means to support and enhance communication skills within both business and social contexts.

**Dr Pete Nevin** investigates the role of the designer in society and interdisciplinary practice, exploring the spaces between areas such as the interactive environment, performance, photography, video, painting and printmaking. As designer, educator, art practitioner, and writer, Pete Nevin has worked on creative projects and educational activities worldwide. In 1999 Pete's company *AgB* designed the *Play Zone* at the the UK's Millennium Dome in London. Projects utilise relationships between new and traditional forms such as "*Pepper's Ghost*" and the haptic nature of interaction.

**Mute Pigeon** is a graphic artist, illustrator and visual thinker, based in Kanazawa, Japan. Mute (not his real name) leads collaborative projects investigating language, interpretation, misinterpretation, colloquialism and distance. Design work is produced for a range of clients, establishing brand identities, products and services. Graphic arts work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions and publications in UK and Japan. Mute takes illustrations off the page and distributes visual ideas and juxtapositions across cultures, deconstructing manga, printed ephemera and figures of speech. Mute Pigeon makes *Super Heroes* out of old library books.