ROPECON

Call for Papers

Characters and Figurines - Ropecon 2019 Academic Track
https://2019.ropecon.fi/ohjelma/akateeminen-seminaari/

July 26, 2019, Helsinki, Finland

Important dates:
Abstract deadline: May 05, 2019
Notification of acceptance: May 19, 2019
Full Paper deadline: July 15 2019

Throughout the history characters and figurines have had diverse roles in playful practices from rituals to role-playing games, and from dollhouses to *Warhammer 40,000.* In contemporary play culture tabletop game miniatures offer visual and tangible pleasure while acting also as objects of collection and enabling other hobby practices like painting and sculpting. In role-playing games characters provide value as tools for self-representation and instruments for advancing the story, amongst other things.

Recent technological developments and the ludification of culture have made characters and figurines even more central in play culture. Social capital is accumulated by sharing pictures and videos of figurines like *Blythe* dolls and miniature collections, through services like *Instagram* and *YouTube.* This form of social photo play also allows adults to play with toys with less fear of social stigma. Game characters like *Angry Birds, Lara Croft* and *Beholder* have become iconic pop-culture figures with their own product brands, including but not limited to, plush toys, action figures and board games. Indeed, transmediality allows novel uses for popular characters, and nostalgic feelings, which feed the popularity of phenomena like *Pokémon Go.*

The topic of the seminar, "characters and figurines", ties tightly into the Ropecon 2019 theme, mythology, as characters are central elements in mythologies, while figurines are used to represent various mythological creatures in games, religion and other activities.

We invite you to present on topics related to characters and figurines. The list of possible topics includes but is not limited to:

- Miniature war games and miniatures in board games
- Tangibility / visuality / aesthetics of game figurines
- Sculpting, painting, modding, and playing with figurines
- Collecting action figures and dolls
- Roles, characters, personae, avatars, pawns, and cursors
- Player-character relations
- Representation in role-playing characters
- Characters in transmedia
- Role-playing or larp characters: creation, enactment, development, leveling up
- Characters and mythology in games

Characters and Figurines is the 2nd annual Ropecon academic seminar, organized as collaboration between Ropecon ry and the Centre of Excellence in Game Culture Studies (2018-2025). The emphasis of the event is on multiplayer games that players engage in while being physically co-located as that is also the focus of Ropecon. Ropecon is a large, independent, convention devoted to role-playing games, larps, board games, miniature wargames, collectible card games, cosplay, and the like. The convention has been running annually since 1994.

The seminar focus is on working papers, and the presentations should encourage discussion. We want to encourage peer-to-peer discussion to refine and develop the papers further. Every paper will be presented for 10 minutes and discussed for 20 minutes. The sessions will be open for all Academic Ropecon ticket holders, but the presentations should be drafted with an academic audience in mind. We warmly welcome submissions from younger scholars and PhD candidates, as well as from more established researchers. The seminar is in discussion with a journal so that the best papers would be invited to be further developed for publication in a special journal issue.

The Academic Seminar of 2019 will be held with the support of The Finnish Cultural Foundation, which provides grants from a central fund and 17 regional funds.

Submission guidelines

The papers to be presented will be chosen based on extended abstract review. The abstracts should be 500–1000 words (plus references). Abstracts should be delivered in PDF format. Full papers are distributed prior the event to all participants, in order to facilitate discussion.

Our aim is that all participants can familiarise themselves with the papers in advance. Therefore, the maximum length for a full paper is 5000 words (plus references). The seminar presentations should encourage discussion, instead of repeating the information presented in the papers. Every paper will be presented for 10 minutes and discussed for 20 minutes.

Submissions should be sent to: academic.program@ropecon.fi

Organizers
General Chair: Mr. Ville Kankainen, Tampere University Game Research Lab, Ropecon Program Team
Program Chair: Dr. Jonne Arjoranta, Center of Excellence: Game Culture Studies

Further information and inquiries: academic.program@ropecon.fi