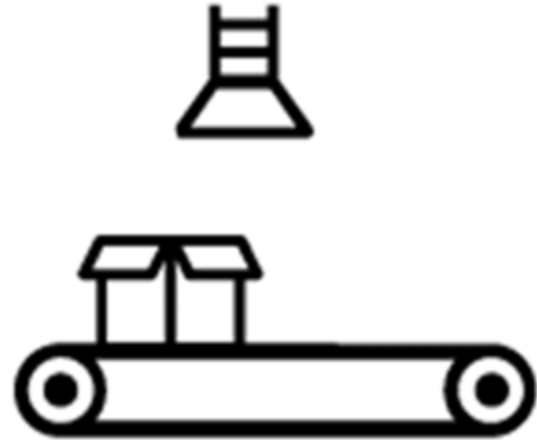


Spectacular **DISASTER FACTORY**



Immersive Theater Class - August 22, 2025

Take what thou wilt from us.

Tonight's Agenda

1. Written questions (do this now)
2. Icebreaker activity
3. About Aaron and Kirsten
4. Definitions
5. Everything up to the formation of Spectacular Disaster Factory (SDF)
6. SDF projects, process, methods, approaches, and mistakes
7. Questions, discussion, comments and...
8. Y'all play a simple larp! (if we have time and desire)
9. Informal hang out (meet each other, too!)

We will have 5-minute breaks around 45 minutes in and right before the larp.

- Please only ask clarifying questions, save the rest for the end

Hi! Who are you? (2. Icebreaker)



Public Domain Image



Photo by [Maxim Potkin](#) * on [Unsplash](#)

3. About Us



4. Definition of Terms

Immersive - That which *meaningfully* puts the audience on the *same level* as the *primary action* in a story / environment, usually *physically* and/or *narratively*.

For example: the audience is *part of the world* in an immersive piece, even if it is mainly as a physical obstacle.

(from No Proscenium)



Photos: IKEA Sleepy Immersive and Omega Mart (Meow Wolf), by Aaron Vanek

4. Definition of Terms

Participatory - productions that invite audience participation without *necessarily* invoking narrative agency on their part. Often the audience is participating as a whole or in aggregate (i.e. clapping, voting, polls, etc.) as opposed to having agency as individuals.

See also: **Interactive.**

(from No Proscenium)



Photos: ARTE Museum in Las Vegas, by Aaron Vanek

4. Definition of Terms

Interactive - An experience that gives some degree of *agency* (or the illusion of agency) — to members of the audience.

In other words: when a particular participant does something, the world / environment should respond back in some way to that individual's specific action.



Photo: "Special Ops – Mysterious Market" escape room, photo by Aaron Vanek

4. Definition of Terms

Agency - a measure of the freedom participants have in an experience. Generally, what the audience is *doing* in the piece; their purpose.

- **Traversal Agency:** the freedom to move around the environment
- **Narrative Agency:** the freedom to impact the outcome of a story and/or the fate of its characters
- **Emotional Agency:** the freedom to impact the meaning of a experience by shaping the performance(s) therein

(from No Proscenium)



4. Definition of Terms

Larp - Live Action Role Playing
(Aaron's definition from 2009):

Three Pillars (qualities)

Everyone is both participant and audience.

Participants perform actions; they do not narrate them.

Participants constantly create the magic circle.



4. Definition of Terms

Bleed

Coined at Ropecon 2007
by Emily Care Boss

When emotions bleed (like color dye) between character and participant.

Bleed in - attitude/biases going in affects how their character acts

Bleed out - Experiences as character affect how person acts outside the larp



Photos of *White Death* by Aaron Vanek

Spectacular **DISASTER FACTORY**

5. Origin Story

Chapter One: “Live Games” at UCLA’s Enigma



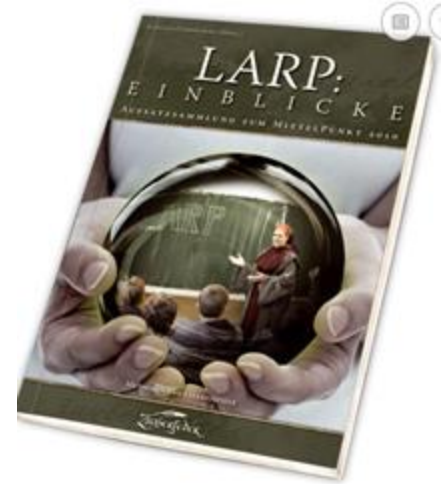
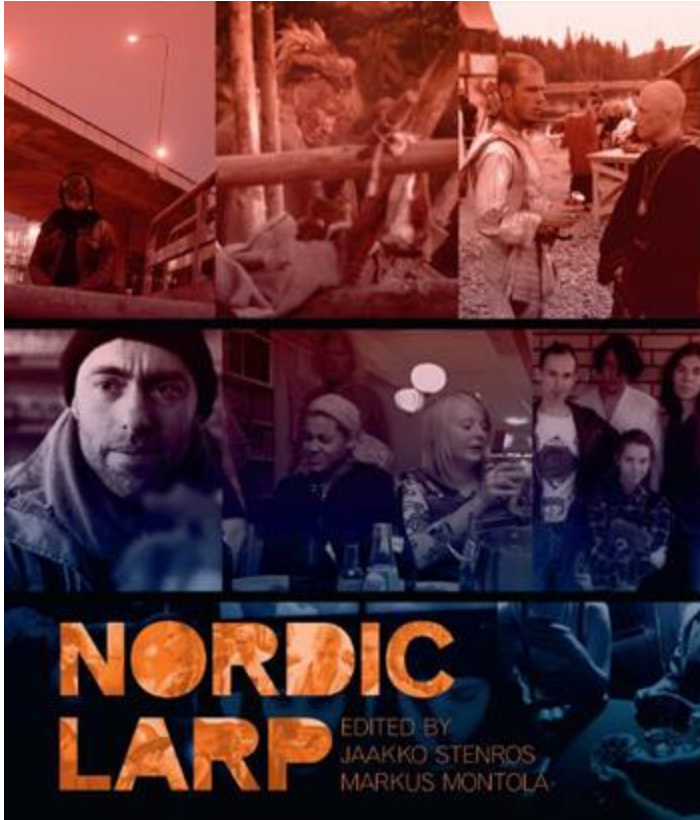
All larp
photos by
Aaron
Vanek

Chapter Two: The LARPY Awards (April 2006)



Images: all photos by Aaron Vanek except logo of LARPY Awards

Chapter Three: Nordic larp and expanded horizons

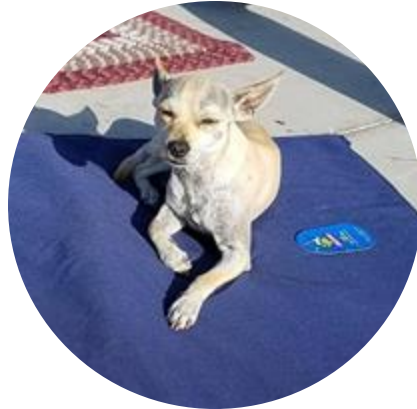


Chapter Three: (continued, and continues to this day)



Photos (clockwise from top left): Star Seekers (by Aaron Vanek), West Hollywood Book Fair (by Aaron Vanek), company logo, Ancient Mesopotamia (GameDesk), The Anywear Academy, Hogwarts Family Day at Rancho Cucamonga Library

Chapter Four: The Hollywood Fringe Festival (2017)



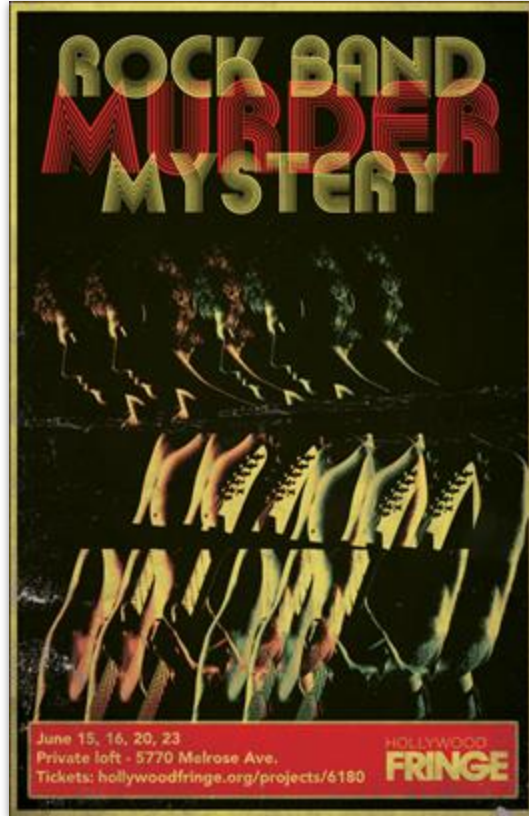
Fallen Stars by Vilde Herning,
Nils Hiorth, Magnar Grønvik
Müller, Martin Nielsen and
Linn Eik Pilskog

Chapter Five: *One Last Thing Before You Go* (2018)

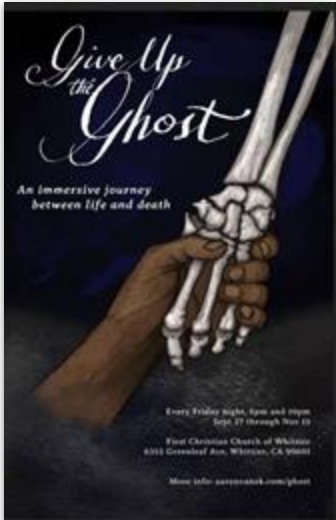


Images: *One Last Thing Before You Go* © SDF

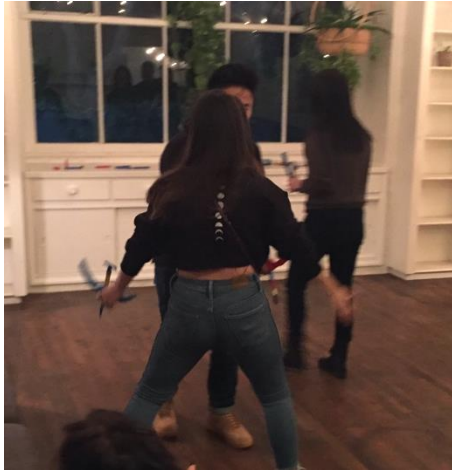
Chapter Six: Rocking and Rolling (2019)



Chapter Seven: *Give Up the Ghost* (2019) & SDF founded (concludes origin)



6. SDF projects and process - *Temp Cupid* (2020)



6. Pandemic and Post-Pandemic Projects



Images: All images by SDF except *Delta Green: Need to Know* Audible © Arc Dream Publishing (cover art) and Audible logo

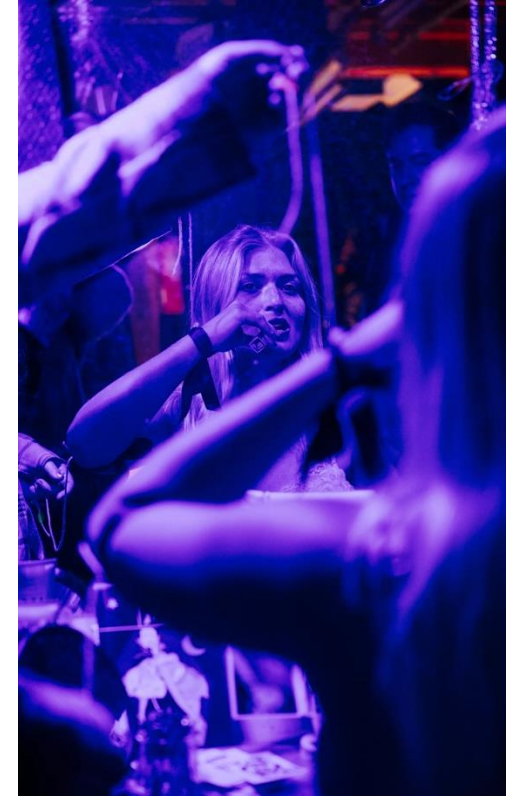
6. *Stringed Instruments* (2025) and the SDF process

Sections

Los Angeles Times

TRAVEL & EXPERIENCES

The future of theater is immersive.
These L.A. artists are creating it in
real time



LA Times photos by Chira Alexa
(first and last), middle two by SDF

Influences and Resources

Odyssey Works
Transformative
Experience Design



Patterns of
Transformation
by Ida Benedetto



Nordic larp
(book as PDF)



Nordic Larp
(website)



*Pattern Language
for Larp Design* by
J Li and Jason
Morningstar



Currently reading
*50 Secrets of Magic
Craftsmanship* by
Salvador Dalí



*Cooler Than You Think:
Understanding LARP*
(Aaron's essay)



What's Next?



Images: "Wizard" for the *Dreamland* ttRPG by Jason Bradley Thompson; sample cover image for upcoming ttRPG, *The King in Yellow* and *STEEDS*, all by SDF

FINALLY! Time for your questions & comments (7.)

If you want, and we have time, we can run a simple, 15-20 minute larp (8)
Or just go to informal hang and chill, chat with us and EACH OTHER! (9)

THANK YOU!

