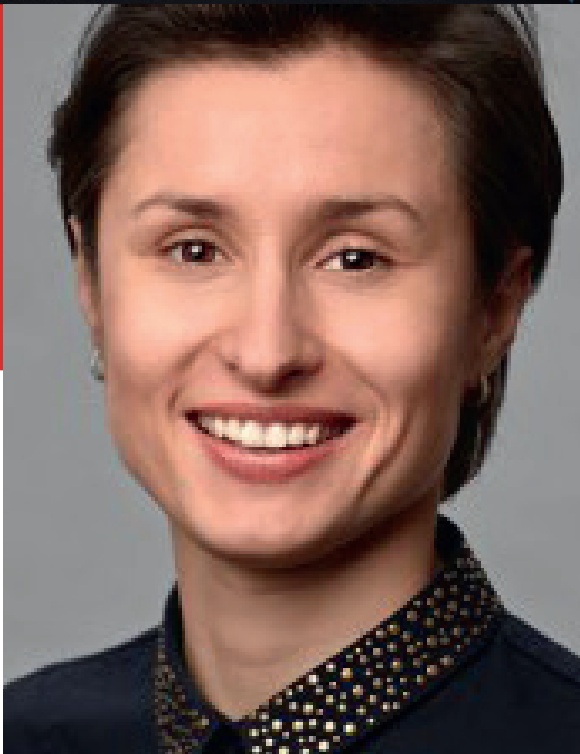


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P 207 (Philosophicum)



## Playing at a Distance

**Sonia Fizek**

**Cologne Game Lab (TH Köln)**

Sonia Fizek is a media and games scholar. She holds a professorship in Media and Game Studies at the Cologne Game Lab at TH Köln – University of Applied Sciences. Fizek is also a visiting professor at the University of Lower Silesia in Wrocław (Poland) and a co-editor-in-chief of the international *Journal of Gaming and Virtual Worlds*. In her latest book *Playing at a Distance* (MIT Press 2022), she explores the borderlands of video game aesthetic with focus on automation, AI and posthuman forms of play. Fizek's current research concentrates on the environmental aspects of video game development. Since 2021 she has been a principal investigator of "Greening Games" ([greeninggames.eu](https://greeninggames.eu)), an international project on the sustainability of video games (funded by the German Academic Exchange Service EU/DAAD).

Do we play video games or do video games play us? Is nonhuman play a mere paradox or the future of gaming? And what do video games have to do with quantum theory? In the talk based on her recent book *Playing at a Distance* (MIT Press 2022), Fizek will engage with these questions, proposing new ways to think about games and play that decenter the human player and explore a variety of play formats and practices that require surprisingly little human action. Idling in clicker games, wandering in walking simulators, automating gameplay with bots, or simply watching games rather than playing them—Fizek will argue that these seemingly marginal cases are central to understanding how we play in the digital age. Introducing the concept of distance, she will reorient the view of computer-mediated play. To "play at a distance", as will be argued, is to delegate the immediate action to the machine and to become participants in an algorithmic spectacle. Distance has been conceptualized as a media aesthetic framework that may enable us to come to terms with the ambiguity and aesthetic diversity of play.