



# NOW PLAY THIS 2024



6 April - 14 April 2024 (excluding Monday 8 April)

Somerset House New Wing and River Terrace

General Admission: £9 / Concessions: £6.50 / Family Ticket: £26 (Two adults and up to three children)

Events: daytime events free as part of general admission, ticketed evening events £6 each

Festival Pass: £30

- Experience cutting edge games over eight days this spring at Somerset House for the tenth anniversary of **Now Play This**.
- Game highlights include shapeshifting into animals within Argentina's Atuel River Valley ecosystem in **Atuel (Matajuegos)** and exploring unknown fantasy worlds in **Proteus (Ed Key & David Kanaga)**.
- Daytime events include **GOLF**, a build-your-own mini-golf course, and a series of behind-the-work talks and playful exploration of urban space with **The Sit-down Super-fun Psychogeography Reading Group**.
- Evening events include **Boring office party**, a twist on the classic murder mystery, the **Astro.Log.Ai open night concerto**, a collaborative symphony using visitors' star charts, and the experimental Live Action Role Play (LARP) **Living Spaces/Dead Spaces (Hamish MacPherson & Michael Such)** which investigates how we alter space, and how spaces alter us.

London's leading festival of innovative and experimental games, **Now Play This**, returns to Somerset House to celebrate its **tenth anniversary** as part of the city-wide London Games Festival. Featuring hit games from indie and big-name studios from across the globe, *Now Play This* explores how play can bridge the gap between generations, geographies and languages under a new theme, **Liminal: Playing Between Worlds**. Alongside a packed programme of daily events, the eight-day festival includes live play activities, screenings and a variety of family sessions over the Easter holidays, sparking playful encounters and deep conversations.

Presenting both a curated selection of games and submissions from the festival's annual open call, *Now Play This* spotlights pioneering art games such as **Proteus (Ed Key & David Kanaga)** where players can traverse different dream-like realms and create a soundtrack through interacting with their surroundings. In **Atuel (Matajuegos)**, players shapeshift into different animals and elements in Argentina's Atuel River Valley ecosystem. With real-life interviews from historians, geologists and artists punctuating play, the past, present, and future of the Atuel informs audiences about the intimate relationship between the land and its inhabitants. Meanwhile, **eFA (Technorisha Collective)** allows visitors to enter a techno-shamanist experience inspired by the West African Yoruba/Vodou divinatory tradition of the Fa, immersing audiences in a poetic universe where arts, technology and spirituality are closely intertwined.

At *Now Play This*, live-play activities accompany the festival. In **GOLF**, visitors are encouraged to experiment with temporary architecture and physical connections by building and playing three different mini-golf courses, whilst in **Boring office party** visitors are subject to bizarre happenings and twisted surprises in a new take on the classic murder mystery.

A series of events are scheduled alongside the festival. On the opening night of *Now Play This*, visitors can enjoy the participatory performance piece by **Astro.Log.Ai**, which fuses visitor generated star charts, allowing audiences to listen to a co-created symphony in an open air concerto. On Thursday evening visitors can explore how their physical perceptions are affected by bodywork and movement studies in **Living Spaces/Dead Spaces (Hamish MacPherson & Michael Such)** and on Friday *Now Play This* hosts a collaborative screening event with **Milan Machinima Festival** showcasing the world's most groundbreaking films made within game engines, spotlighting filmmakers who utilise video game technologies. The festival will also premiere **At Play: Between Reality and Make Believe** a dedicated day focused on the academia of game studies co-produced with **Cologne Game Lab**. Finally, on Sunday, a series of open-air workshops and walks inspired by landscape writing and performative techniques are hosted by **The Sit-down Super-fun Psychogeography Reading Group!**

## FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

- **Viewfinder by Sad Owl Studios:** Challenge the certainties we have about spaces we inhabit in this mind-bending adventure game which fuses past and present and turns reality upside down.
- **Crashboard by Emilie Breslavetz & Léon Denise:** Celebrate the radical alternative controller scene by surfing through cyberspace on a skateboard hacked to become a controller.
- **S/T Suitcase by Pamela Cuadros:** An interactive installation which invites visitors to go through a personal journey that emerges from memory when opening a sonic suitcase.
- **Today I die by Daniel Benmergui:** Explore inner emotions by pulling apart and reconstructing a poem, changing its narrative piece by piece.
- **Oneroom-Babel by Sanghee:** Experience the collective memory of young people moving away from home in this interactive VR game, diving deep into the sea to discover a one-room structure and what lies within.
- **Orchids to Dusk by Pol Clarissou:** Experience wandering through an alien planet as an astronaut with a few minutes left to live.
- **Border Riding by Jo Reid:** A map drawing, community building table-top game investigating Scottish Border traditions.
- **1001 Nights by Cheestalk Sun:** A rebellious retelling of the Arabian folklore collection Arabian Nights, allowing players to rewrite the stories with AI.

“*Liminal: Playing Between Worlds*’ celebrates a decade of *Now Play This* by delving into the transformative potential of games and play. This year, we’re invited to explore the in-between spaces where creativity and new identities flourish, embracing the dynamic interplay between reality and the digital frontier. It’s a call to engage with games as platforms for cultural innovation and reimagining the boundaries of our world.” - **María Luján Oulton, Artistic Director of Now Play This**

## **Morgan Stanley Lates**

Wednesday 10 April 2024

The first **Morgan Stanley Lates** of 2024 will celebrate *Now Play This* alongside other parts of Somerset House’s and The Courtauld’s cultural programme. Doors around the spectacular courtyard will be thrown open for after-hours access, exclusive experiences and activities, as well as drinks, food and music. Many activities will be free of charge to everyone, and those aged 25 and under will also receive free entry to some Somerset House and The Courtauld exhibitions.

For *Morgan Stanley Lates*, *Now Play This* presents a special night edition of **GOLF** and the large scale illuminated kinetic sculptures from **Kaleider**.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

**Dates:** 6 April - 14 April 2024 (excluding Monday 8 April)

### **Opening Hours:**

Saturday 6th - 11:00-18:00

Sunday 7th - 11:00-18:00

Monday 8th - CLOSED

Tuesday 9th - 12:00-18:00

Wednesday 10th - 12:00-18:00

Thursday 11th - 12:00-18:00

Friday 12th - 12:00-20:00

Saturday 13th - 11:00-18:00

Sunday 14th - 11:00-17:00

**Tickets:** On-sale 23 February 2024

General Admission: £9 / Concessions: £6.50 / Family Ticket: £26 (Two adults and up to three children). Events: daytime events free as part of general admission, ticketed evening events £6 each. Festival Pass: £30

**Website:** <https://www.somersethouse.org.uk/whats-on/now-play-this-2024>

**Link to images** [here](#).

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Website: <https://www.somersethouse.org.uk/>

Somerset House Facebook: [www.facebook.com/SomersetHouse](http://www.facebook.com/SomersetHouse)

Somerset House Twitter (X): @SomersetHouse

Somerset House Instagram: @SomersetHouse

Somerset House TikTok: @SomersetHouse

Now Play This Website: <https://nowplaythis.net/>

Now Play This Twitter (X): @nowplaythese

Now Play This Instagram: @nowplaythis

## **About Somerset House**

As the home of cultural innovators, Somerset House is a site of origination, with a cultural programme offering alternative perspectives on the biggest issues of our time. We are a place of joy and discovery, where everyone is invited to Step Inside and Think Outside.

From our historic site in the heart of London, we work globally across art, creativity, business, and non-profit, nurturing new talent, methods and technologies. Our resident community of creative enterprises, arts organisations, artists and makers, makes us a centre of ideas, with most of our programme home-grown.

We sit at the meeting point of artistic and social innovation, bringing worlds and minds together to create surprising and often magical results. Our spirit of constant curiosity and counter perspective is integral to our history and key to our future.

<https://www.somersethouse.org.uk/>

## **About Now Play This**

Now Play This is a festival of experimental game design running at Somerset House in London each Spring, showcasing interactive and playful work as part of the London Games Festival. With making at the heart of all programming, Now Play This champions innovative game-making in all its forms.

<https://nowplaythis.net>

*Image credits: Orchids to Dusk by Pol Clarissou. Image courtesy of Now Play This/Now Play This at Somerset House. Image by Ben Peter Catchpole*