

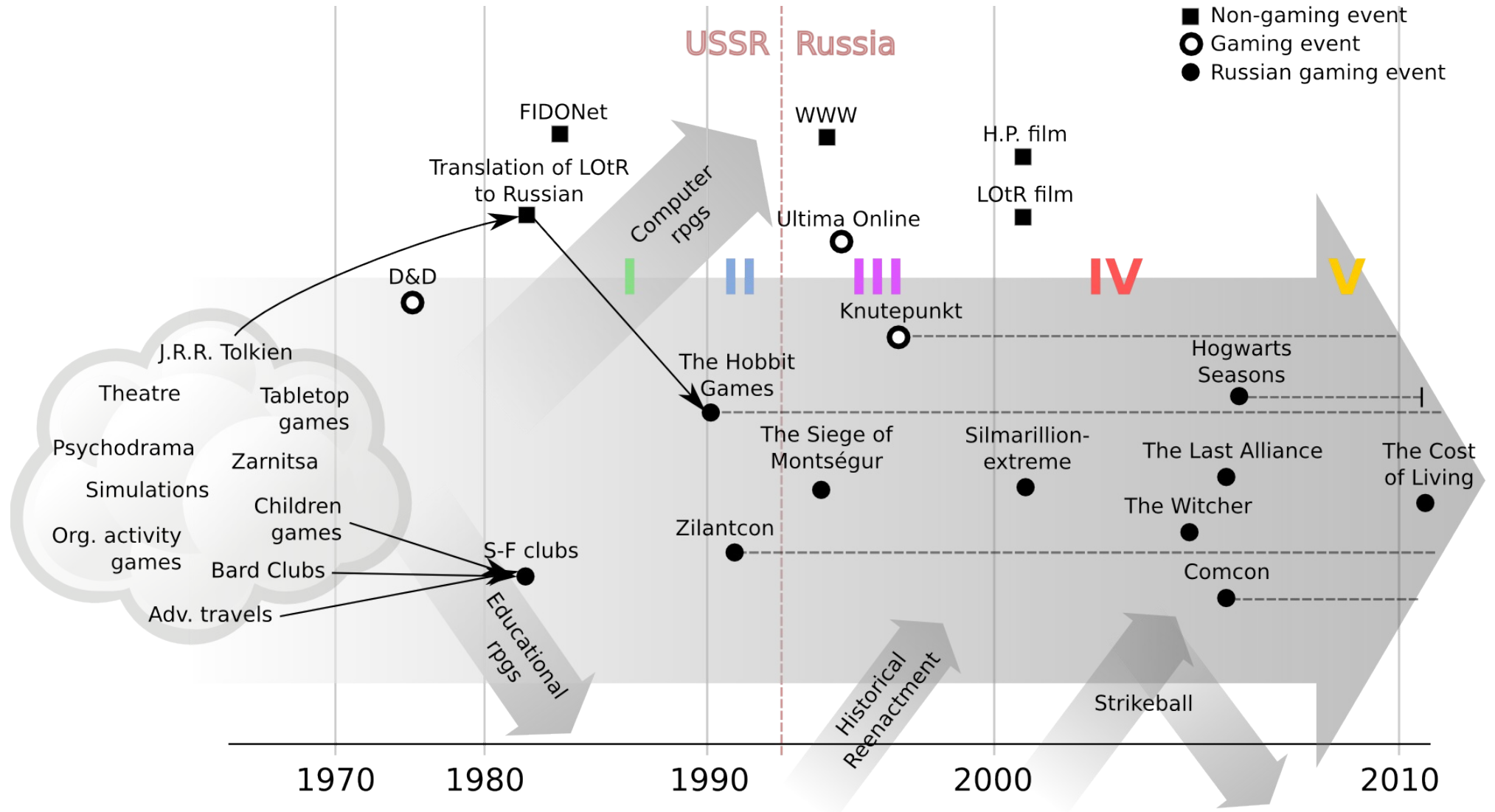
# **Russian Larps** as a Cultural Phenomenon

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photos by Ksenia Kozlovskaya and many others

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# The History



# We are big

- From some estimations: more than 50 000 larpers in Central region, more than 100 000 in the whole country
- More than 200 larps a year (e.g. see <http://kogda-igra.ru>) with more than 30 participants

# We are diverse

- Different formats: room, town and country-side
- Different sizes of larps: from tens to thousands of people
- Different social groups of players (from students to top-managers)
- Regional specific (Central region, Ural, Siberia, etc.). Different density of games and players
- Different “schools”: symbolic, modeling, theatrical, etc.
- More immersive and less immersive larps
- Different styles of pre-game preparation & activity

# But we have the common unique features

- Mostly collectively created (by a team of game masters)
- Unofficial, almost no government support
- Mostly carried out at country side (forests, wild locations, holiday hotels)
- Almost all materials are made by players' hands
- Totally non-commercial
- No copyright issues at all
- Almost no recurring games
- Russian language only. Except elven :)
- Playing rather culture than psychology
- Real interaction (e.g. real fight) is popular
- Character's death is the part of the game (post-death game, etc.)

# The interesting distinctions

## **How larps are made**

Based on the game world ↔ Based on the idea

“Rich”, natural games ↔ “Poor”, symbolic games

Player vs player ↔ Player vs the world (model, NPC, etc)

Straight scenario games ↔ Free agency games

## **Larps and culture**

Entertainment games ↔ Art / “Meaning” games

Pure art (“self-valuable”) ↔ Social-oriented

Traditional ↔ Art house

←————→

Based on the game world



A Song of Ice and Fire



Tolkien's World



Ancient Egypt

Based on the main idea



The tragedy of a revolution



The critique of the modernity



# “Rich” / natural games



Costumes,  
buildings,  
environment

The feeling of the history



Real player's emotions

# “Poor” / symbolic games



Not things, but  
ideas



Accent on  
characters'  
activity



Symbolic  
space



# Player vs Player



Violent  
conflict



Unpredictable story



The  
feeling  
of the  
reality

# Player vs World (model, NPC, ...)



Complex  
models  
(science,  
medicine,  
etc.)



Easy to create effects



Complex stories  
(e.g. detectives)



# Straight scenario games

# Free agency games



Common expectations



Playing feelings



Mystery play

Living world



Playing choice



Unknown end



# Post-larp discussions

- Post-game reflection
- Creativity, secondary art (texts, songs, etc.)
- Trying to obtain a technology
- Larpers conventions. Art ↔ Science contradiction
- Lack of publications. Almost no papers on English
- The problem of prizes
- The separateness of Russian larps
- No real working schools or well-established genres
- Larp critique: from a game critique to a conceptualization



# Entertainment games



Hack & slash



A beauty of time



A quest

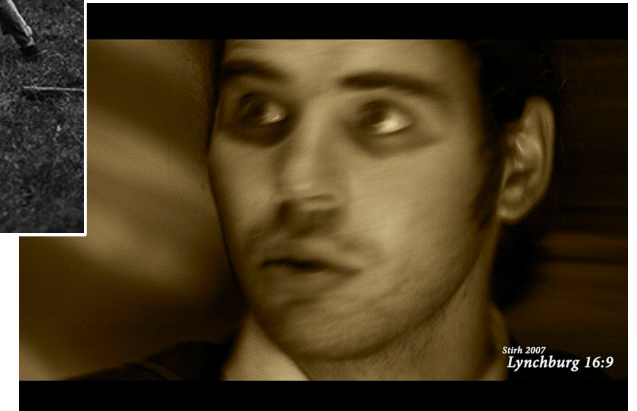
# Art / "Meaning" games



Discussing an idea  
with players



Concerning  
reality



Making impression



←————→

Pure art

Social-oriented  
game



The feeling



The joy of life



The eternal values



Designing the  
future

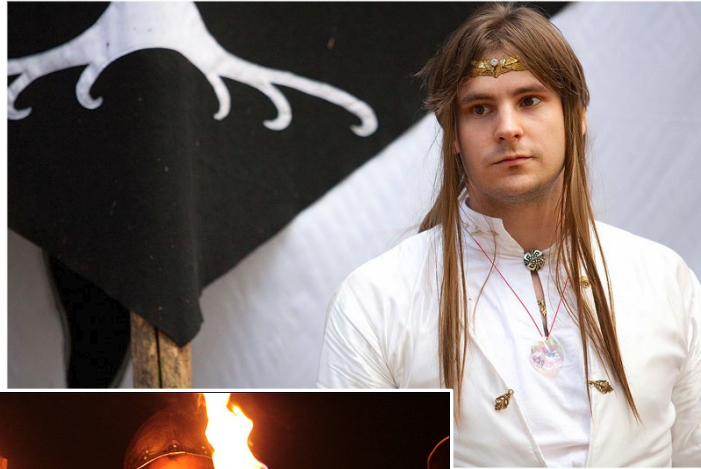


Educational games

Understanding  
the past



# Traditional



Well-know  
source



Predictable  
interactions



The size

# Art house



The primary text



The story



The rules

Come to Russia.  
Play our games :)

Thank you!