

CREATORS

If games are art, then game-makers are artists. Creators are the teams of and individual artists whose work you seek to curate and display. This chapter seeks to present some tips for how to engage with creators, and some issues you may encounter when dealing with them.

The audience of games includes many players who do not view games in an artistic light, and this is also true of developers. You should expect to encounter creators who are not sure how to engage with your curatorial themes, who come from a culture of appreciating games primarily as entertainment engines (whether they mean to or not). In my experience, creators are almost universally open to thinking about games in a more artistic light, but need a bit of handholding. It's up to you how much you want to engage with this issue, but in particular if the creators are going to write an artistic statement or be present (see below, "will the creators be present?"), even a brief exchange could enhance the quality of your event as well as their confidence as artists.

Credit

Credit is a difficult challenge in the games industry: how do you credit a project that was touched by five people in differing amounts? Make sure you ask how they would like to be credited. In the case of an apparently solo creator, ask if there is anyone else they would like to credit. In the case of a team, ask if they would like to be credited by their studio or group name, or individually.

Will the creators be present?

Consider how much information you want to include about the creators as part of your exhibit. In some cases, the creators may be present to differing degrees. They may want to be on hand for instruction and technical setup/maintenance (things break), but this section is mostly concerned with their presence as artists.

- Who made it?
- Why did they make it?
- In what context did they make it?
- Will they present their game?
- Will they field questions about their intent?
- Will they provide an artist's statement?

None of these are requirements or expectations (except basic credit), but they are good questions to ask yourself: what, if any, of this is relevant to your curatorial goals? If you'd like to invite creators to be present, explain the relevance. It will help them to give better answers, strengthening both their and your audience's relationship to whatever you're putting together.

Contacting creators

If you don't have a personal connection with the creator(s) of a work you're interested in displaying,

reach out through any means of communication they have made publicly available themselves.

Although you do not have to lay out every detail in your initial communication, try to make your request clearly and concisely: "I'm curating an event and I would like to display game X, are you interested / can you give me permission to do so?"

This isn't a template, just an example. You may wish to include any of the below items that seem particularly relevant, but remember the focus should be the basic request above.

- Why are you (the curator) interested in this work or this/these creator(s)?
- What is the theme of your event?
- Will the creator(s) be paid?
- What will be expected, or not expected, of them? E.g. "I/we know you're very far away, so you do not have to be present for the event".

Maintaining relationships, sharing documentation

Especially in the case of events where creators are not present, they may never really get closure on what occurred, and a simple follow-up email sharing any photos and the response to the event and their work can help them understand what occurred, and build a stronger relationship between curators and creators.

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