

# PARTNERS

In the context of art curation, there are essentially two kinds of partnerships: those that involve money (or material loan), and those that do not.

The lowest level of partnership consists in simple exchange of logos, whereas the highest involves large sums of money and counterparts that can deeply influence the nature of the curation itself.

On a practical level, partnerships that involve funding will usually also involve paperwork and contracts, whereas more informal partnerships can usually be arranged by simple oral agreement. Do not hesitate however to put some basic principles in writing, as misunderstandings can happen even when little to no money is at stake.

Whereas one could be tempted to seek as many partners as possible, be sure to prioritize the need for mutual benefit. The more partners you get, the more interactions and constraints will need to be taken in account. Logos are a nice addition to your press release but keeping your project in scope is arguably better.

## List of potential partners

### Public institutions

A wide range of different public institutions might get involved in an art game show: museums, funding programs, universities, & government agencies. While in some contexts, public institutions can maintain a certain level of autonomy from governments and political agendas, in many cases they do not. At the same time, public institutions are probably the dream partner: they are well organized, effective, and they offer good visibility and a certain amount of prestige. More than often, public institutions will provide you with a venue for your exhibition, and therefore will act as the main partner of your curatorial project (See: [VENUES](#)).

### Private foundations

Private foundations are theoretically non-profit, and vary greatly on scope and size, from poorly funded charities to powerful institutions belonging to the wealthiest individuals and corporations. While they can provide a great deal of funding (See: [FUNDING](#)), keep in mind that conflicts of interest are a real concern here. If you plan to curate a show about video games with an ecological message, be sure to check that the private foundation you have partnered with is not directly linked to an oil company. In certain countries (i.e France), private foundations are a common tool used by billionaires for tax evasion, "greenwashing", and political gain.

### Art galleries

An art gallery is a privately run space that offers a space for exhibiting (See: [VENUES](#)). You can however establish a partnership with an art gallery without your show actually taking place in this gallery. The partnership can involve material loans (like computers), expertise, publishing a catalog, etc.

### Associations/NGOs

If your show explores sensitive issues, or is targeted at a certain type of audience, you might want to partner with an NGO that will help you better understand certain contexts. If you give them an

occasion to advertise their work through workshops or in other forms, it can be mutually beneficial.

## Media

Building a partnership with a media outlet goes beyond press coverage. It often involves advertising, exclusive access to certain content, or inviting journalists to take part in round tables or workshops. Having an influential media “endorse” you in the form of a partnership can be a significant form of recognition of your work.

## Publisher

If a publisher is willing to pay for the catalog documenting your show (See: [DOCUMENTATION](#)), it can be considered as a form of partnership, as it will almost certainly involve teamwork and mutual advertising.

## Editors and studios

If you want to exhibit commercial games you might need permission and access to archives (See: [PERMISSIONS](#)). In certain cases, creators or companies can be directly involved in the curation of an art show (example: Ubisoft in the 2019 “Behind the game” exhibition at la Gaîté Lyrique, Paris <https://gaite-lyrique.net/en/event/behind-the-game>). Some would argue that this practice is more akin to marketing than actual curating. Keep in mind that if you want to cooperate with companies, they will essentially be concerned about PR, and can be reluctant to embrace critical and innovative approaches.

## Manufacturers

Exhibiting video games involves the use of game consoles, VR headsets, screens and other expensive tools. They can be of great help when working on a tight budget. Sometimes it is possible to arrange a loan from the manufacturer. Some curators are trying to avoid such partnerships by prioritizing cheaper, more accessible, and open-source tools.

## Universities

They could be great allies when it comes to content, communication and even equipment. They also can work as validation for first-time events. You can find really interesting work being done by students, some universities also have their own game-labs or art collectives and are looking for places where to show their works. They can also be good partners for organizing workshops or talks.

## Embassies and International Cultural Institutions

They can be great allies when it comes to working with international developers and artists. They can cover fees for speakers, commission works, and even fund flights and accommodation. This kind of arrangement is always accompanied by contracts and some demands on the funding institution, they might ask for registered documentation once the event is finished (be sure to keep track of video recordings, amount of people attending and any additional info that could serve them), they could also ask for additional activities from the artist/developer/speaker. Be aware that this negotiation usually have to be done with a lot of time in advance, each embassy and cultural institution has its own schedule, also they might pay you once the event is finished, so you have to make sure to be able to cover the costs in advance.

## **How to find partners**

Finding partners is a process that usually goes along with securing funding. It can be a good thing to think of those two processes altogether (See: [FUNDING](#)).

There are three main ways to find partners:

Email people, brands and institutions directly: you are not always likely to receive an answer. But if your project looks professional and you already have some partners involved, it might work. Be sure your request is relevant and relates to their goals.

Answer open calls: they are usually essentially related to funding, but it is also an effective way of to establish partnerships.

Establish a network: finding partnerships is a subdivision of networking. If you surround yourself with people that share the same interest and build trust over time, opportunities will slowly develop. It takes time, but it is the most effective way in the long term.

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