

VENUES

Venues might be one of the most important parts of the curation process. You can't have an event without a space, digital or physical. A venue of any kind brings problems to solve. This sections give a broad over what one should keep in mind and do when approached by these challenges.

Things to Do When Selecting a Venue

- Make a list of your works and determine:
 - How many of them have a large footprint? (e.g. VR games, arcade cabinets, large custom kiosks).
 - What is the total number of devices that will be powered up? Include projectors, consoles, monitors, charging stations, etc.
- Survey the site and keep a note of how many power outlets are available and their locations within the space.
- Keep in mind spaces with a lot of natural light will interfere with projectors and cause screen glare. Be prepared to find ways to reduce such interference.
- In the case you have works that require ambient sound, consider the distribution of the works and the sound compatibility, does the venue have different rooms or the possibility to create different sectors?
- An ideal exhibition space will have power outlets available all around, this will give you more flexibility in designing your layouts.
- Check the set-up needs: which kind of equipment do you need, and what does the location provide (e.g. tables, chairs, pedestals, showcases).
- If your solutions include painting, tacking, or sticking on walls, floor or ceiling, check with the venue for permission well in advance.
- Scenification: are you planning on making a scenographic setup? Is that possible in the venue? Does the venue provide any kind of materials or props?
- Verify if you would have to share space with other works and consider how that could affect the curatorial script.
- Verify if the venue has technical staff prepared to help with the setup and maintenance or if you will have to bring your own team with you.
- Check security issues: do they have security guards? Have they had any previous cases of robbery or any kind of work damage? Do you need to consider implementing security measures? (e.g. locks, avoiding wireless equipment).
- Confirm if they have a secure storage room for all the packaging, additional instruments and work-related equipment.

Once you have this list it is important to determine if your prospective location is capable of handling the number of devices you wish to have installed. Remember, the space's lighting, climate control, and other devices will also count against your own power requirements and may result in you cutting works from your exhibition.

If you are planning to include networked video games, internet access is crucial. In this case, ensure signal strength is good, but ideally, try to have wired connections to all your devices and disable automatic updates. It is also wise to request that this access be given its own dedicated network to reduce the security risk to the hosting institution's network.

In short, a good space for a video game exhibition should have:

- Enough space to house all the works you wish to display.
- The electrical infrastructure to power said works.
- Little to no natural light or have a way to control the light's intensity.
- Wired internet access if possible.
- The possibility to use walls, floor and ceiling.
- Have a secure storage room.

If an exhibition space meets these requirements, at least from a technical perspective it should be ideal to host a video game exhibition. Obviously, other concerns such as the space's political leanings, values, audience, and context should also be considered, however, these aspects vary between curators and the artists involved so they must be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Adapting a Space

Adaptations to a space are to be expected for a variety of reasons such as the desire to create a black box setting for a specific work, the works themselves may require special furniture to be created, to block excess light from a specific area, or even to create a particular atmosphere through set design.

Most space alterations can be done with drywall and pinewood frames. One benefit of such structures is that they can later be reused in future exhibitions, are lightweight, relatively cheap and easy to build. These materials will allow you to create not only extra walls but even theater spaces and stages – proper sound proof installation will also allow you to isolate soundscapes which in turn open up design space for multiple video games to be playable with full volume. They are also ideal to block light leaks from windows and other light sources and can be easily painted or decorated and provide extra surfaces for wall texts and labels as well as hide projectors and computers. Finally, with some creative electrician work they can be used to extend the electrical network to areas of the space that lack outlets and wired internet access.

Drywall is also not the only solution to unwanted light reflections, a simple vinyl window film can also reduce glare without eliminating light sources!

Going Online

The coronavirus pandemic has provided ample room for experimentation with online venues. We are still in an experimental phase and have plenty to learn, but based off what has been done so far here are some recommendations:

- When going online you shouldn't try to emulate the physical experience, instead consider what you have to gain from the new medium.
- Online exhibits put the focus on the experience over the object. All experiences are different, you as a curator / producer can't have the same control as with a physical venue (e.g. can't control the ambience, the lighting, or the surrounding sounds, you can't control external interference). Choose the tool based upon the experience you want to create and the audience you are addressing, not the other way around.
- If you are running a video game exhibition then you should aim for a ludic experience. It might not be about showing the works but about creating a new way to experience that work through the internet such as: field trips to online games with a specific goal, virtual performances, ludic

gatherings, playgroups, or even playful video calls.

- There are a wide variety of tools that have arisen during the pandemic, some are better for reduced group experiences, others put the focus on the visual or the possibility to voice-chat. Some allow you to create your own worlds, others provide a fixed and more controlled experience. When choosing a tool you should consider your audience, the technical needs the tool demands and the kind of works you want to show.
- You can find more information on this in the [Online](#) chapter.

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