

# **Artist Tips & Tricks Guide:**

## **FIGMENT Minigolf 2021 - Spaceport Gerlach**

This *Minigolf Artist Tips & Tricks Guide* is designed to guide you through the budget considerations, construction, maintenance, and installation of your minigolf hole.

Over ten years, from 2008-2017, FIGMENT created a free artist-designed Minigolf Course on Governors Island. The course was been a huge success, receiving significant attention from the media and the public. In 2021, FIGMENT is partnering with Burning Man to create a similar course in Gerlach, Nevada, that will be free and open to the public 7 days a week. The theme for this course is “Spaceport Gerlach.”

### **Disclaimer**

This document is by no means definitive. It is an attempt to consolidate and capture the knowledge gained from design and communication successes and pitfalls in years past. This document is not meant to replace communication with your curator. Please read and respond to all emails from us in a timely manner.

### **Budgeting Information**

Once you and FIGMENT have reached an agreement about the dollar amount of your grant that amount will be final. Include a budget with your submission that anticipates all costs of fabrication, transportation, and installation. Below you will find a list of resources to help you stretch you budgetary dollars further

## Minigolf Hole Design and Fabrication Guidelines

Being out in the elements is very hard on most materials as is constant public use. When you design a piece for FIGMENT Minigolf, imagine that it will be climbed on by 15 children at a time, kicked, walked on, and possibly hit with a golf club — 8 hours a day, every day, for a year. Grass will grow through open areas, and water will gather in low-lying ones. Build for the apocalypse and consider a modular design for ease of transport and installation. Although we have not had acts of intentional vandalism, anything that moves, is shiny or removable will be played with and pulled on in ways you did not imagine.

### Durability

- Your hole should easily support the weight of at least one adult and multiple children walking, climbing, and jumping on top of it.
- Anticipate and plan for all aspects of your hole being used in unintended ways.
- To combat weather damage such as rain - Drill drainage holes, paint and polyurethane all exposed wood including under Astroturf.
- Make sure your screws and bolts holding different sections together are strong enough to withstand wind and/or pressure. Avoid using only glue.

### Platform and Edges

- Edges need to be raised above the platform by about 3" to 4" to prevent the ball from bouncing off the playing area.
- Build your platforms like a framed wall, with additional crossbeams every 12" or so to prevent sagging. The platform itself should be at least ½", and ¾" is overkill.
- Use 2"x4" for the crossbeams with 2"x8" for edges, or 2"x3" crossbeams with 2"x6" edges.

### Surface Treatment

- All playing areas need to be covered with Astroturf or outdoor carpeting. Avoid using artificial grass rug as it is flimsy and needs lots of repairs.
- It is recommended to attach Astroturf with staples.
- Spray painting the Astroturf is not recommended, as it will not last.

## **Playability**

Minigolf should be fun, not frustrating. Remember that young children still developing motor skills will be playing. Simplicity is the key here. Even the simplest design will be much harder to build and take twice as long as you think if you are not a seasoned builder.

- Please design a hole that you can sink consistently in 2-5 putts.
- Steeply angled ramps are really hard. Ramps with a slope greater than 6" vertical to 12" inch horizontal need to be avoided due to the amount of strength and control needed to complete the shot. Anything but the smoothest curve and shock-absorbing surface will cause the ball to bounce into the air. Also please keep in mind that children love to climb up ramps: make sure any ramps are sturdy enough to handle the weight of multiple children.
- You need to box in the outside edges of your putting course or the ball will not remain on the green.
- Narrow passages are really hard - hitting a ball into any gap smaller than 12" wide is tougher than it sounds.
- Balls get stuck in hoses and tubes very easily, especially if longer or narrower than an arm can reach into. Open channels are easier for grabbing stuck balls or clearing debris.
- If you have a trick-shot, make sure it is a bonus and not a necessity. Have an alternate route that is easier for young kids.

## **Decorations**

- Small and or moving parts are likely to fall off and/or need constant repair. Anything shiny and pretty that can be pried off will be.
- Consider a child's mentality and curiosity. Avoid sharp-moving parts, or pointy things that stick up even if it seems obvious that they should not be touched.

## **The Actual Hole**

FIGMENT will provide the PVC pipe and screens for holes and signs to create uniformity. We will have a hole saw on site during install to cut the 4" diameter holes. You will need to devise some plan to keep the pipe in place.

## **Protecting the Ground**

Your project must be freestanding, and cannot penetrate the ground to a depth greater than 6".

## **Installation**

When making your plans for installation, here are things to consider:

- Smiles, patience and a cooperative attitude - you are a FIGMENT ambassador when interacting with Burning Man, local officials, and the public. Be willing to offer a hand to other artists through the install and de-install process.
- Modular designs are the easiest to move to the site, install, de-construct and re-use.
- Contiguous platforms bolted together on-site work well.
- Food & sunscreen.
- Tools and 100+ ft. of electrical cord (if bringing corded power tools). Contingency plans for rain.

## **Approvals**

Aside from FIGMENT, designs may need to be approved by Burning Man and local Gerlach City Officials prior to installation.

## **General Material Suggestions**

### **Metal and fiberglass**

These are suitable materials for holding up to the elements.

### **Glass and Plexiglas**

Glass and unframed or un-backed Plexiglas cannot be used.

### **Fabrics**

The weather can be particularly harsh on fabrics. They're faded by the sun, and tattered by the wind and rain. Keep this in mind, if you plan to incorporate fabric components into your design.

### **Wood and wood-like materials**

While wood has demonstrated the ability to make it through the season, it can suffer from the elements outdoors. Consider using a few extra coats of paint to increasing the durability of wood materials in your project. For durability reasons FIGMENT has determined that for the construction of your project to use:

- A minimum of 1/2" thick plywood for play area where people will be standing. ¼" plywood suffices for wall areas and/or decorative elements. And ¾" plywood can be heavy if in large sheets.
- Materials for ramps or other curved sections are outlined in attached pdfs.
- Under no circumstances should you use medium density fiberboard (MDF) or oriented strand board.
- Lastly, keep in mind the weight of each of your projects sections. If you cannot move a section with 2-4 people you will encounter challenges during install, de-install and during your maintenance visits. We strongly recommend your section your project into multiple sections so it is easier to install, de-install and move should the need arise.

## About FIGMENT

FIGMENT catalyzes and celebrates an abundance of creativity and passion, challenging artists and our communities to find new ways to create, share, think, and dream. FIGMENT's annual participatory arts event began in New York City in 2007 and has expanded to include roughly a dozen events in cities around the US and in other countries. Prior to the global pandemic that began in late 2019, FIGMENT had created 73 large-scale participatory arts events in 20 cities in 5 countries.

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