

FIGMENT NYC Minigolf 2017: Artist Tips & Tricks Guide

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

Over the past nine summers, FIGMENT has worked with the Trust for Governors Island to create an artist-designed Minigolf Course on Governors Island that is free to play. The course has been a huge success, receiving significant attention from the media and the public. In 2017, the course will again be free and open to the public 7 days a week, from the FIGMENT NYC event, tentatively scheduled **for June 3-4, 2017, through August 2017.**

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, installation, and de-installation. Transportation is a huge expense for FIGMENT **and coordination for load-in efforts is critical.** It is also important to consider that you might need to make one or several trips back to the island over the course of the summer to repair your project, replace parts, etc. Please make your budget reflect anticipated maintenance costs. Below you will find a list of resources to help you stretch your budgetary dollars further. **FIGMENT does not reimburse for food, drinks, labor, or honorariums.**

Resources

- **Big Reuse** – Big Reuse is a FIGMENT partner. Big Reuse is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit retail outlet for salvaged and surplus building materials, with locations in Queens and Brooklyn. FIGMENT artists received an additional discount on materials from Big Reuse. Consider visiting the store or their website (<http://bigreuse.org>), and planning to use materials from there in your piece. We will keep you updated about any future discounts to FIGMENT artists at Big Reuse.
- **Materials for the Arts** - MFTA is an organization that provides materials donated by industry to non-profit arts organizations for free. MFTA has strict rules

regarding the number of appointments and they require artists to write “Thank You” letters to donors. Familiarize yourself with their rules and follow them so that FIGMENT artists can continue to use this resource.

Minigolf Hole Design and Fabrication Guidelines

Three months 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 3 months. 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 and de-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.

While FIGMENT does try to have a presence on Governors Island during all public hours, this should NOT constitute the extent of your safety plan. You should design your project to stand independently, plan on making at least monthly visits to ensure your project is matching your original vision and is not presenting a safety hazard.

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

Mini-golf 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 (see enclosed ramp build pdfs).
- 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". **There are no exceptions to this rule.**

Installation and De-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 Governors Island staff 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 island, install, de-construct and re-use.
- Contiguous platforms bolted together on-site work well.
- Food & sunscreen — There's food available for sale on the island, but they've got a captive audience so it can be expensive.
- Tools and 100+ ft. of electrical cord (if bringing corded power tools). Contingency plans for rain.

Maintenance

Plan on making at least monthly visits to ensure your project is properly functioning, matching your original vision and does not become a safety hazard. **If you do not live in NYC, you will need to designate one or several local people to respond to any immediate maintenance needs with your project, and all artists will be required to submit emergency contacts who can fix your piece within short notice if you are unable to respond.**

Minigolf Hole Reuse

Very few holes survive the season in a condition to be reused. Any decision about hole reuse, either in the following year's course, or at another location, will be made by FIGMENT in consultation with the artist. Even if we do decide to reuse a minigolf hole, it must be moved into storage. Everyone must be present for de-installation and/or send a delegate in his or her place, even if we will be reusing your piece next year.

Sustainability

Please consider the full life-cycle of your chosen materials—where do they come from and where they will go after the island closes for the season.

Approvals

Aside from FIGMENT, designs may need to be approved by the Trust for Governors Island, the Landmarks Preservation Commission, and the NYC Department of Buildings prior to installation.

Transporting Your Hole

We can't emphasize the importance of a modular design enough! It is important to consider the transport and final assembly of your project in the design. It is ideal to have practically ALL of the major construction completed before bringing it to the island. Projects should be created in pieces that are movable by a maximum of 4 people and ideally by 2. Be sure to coordinate a crew for your installation/de-installation. All materials must be able to be transported on the Governors Island Ferry, which has a maximum clearance of 11 feet.

Electricity

Limited electricity is available for installation and de-installation only. Keep in mind that the closest outlet to your project will be over 100 feet away. Plan accordingly and bring your own extension cords, power strips and all tools necessary for install and removal of your piece. Sharing of tools can be facilitated by the artist email list. Label all your personal tools and materials so they are not misplaced.

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.

Plants and Living Materials

If your project proposal contains plants or running water, it's important to note that the FIGMENT minigolf course is **not** in close proximity to a water supply, and access to any water supply is extremely limited when Governors Island is open to the public. If your piece does contain plants/living materials/running water, you must map out additional plans for maintenance and you will be expected to make more frequent trips to Governors Island to maintain it.

Wood and wood-like materials

While wood has demonstrated the ability to make it through the season, it can suffer in the environment on Governors Island. 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. In New York, FIGMENT hosts an annual summer-long exhibition on Governors Island that includes an artist-designed minigolf course, and an architectural pavilion co-presented with ENYA and SEAoNY.

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