Consulting Services

Knowledge Workshops

MARIE MEJERWALL

Game Director | Esports Veteran

About Marie

Marie Mejerwall is a long-time veteran of game design. She has led creative teams at more than six game studios around the world and has worked on several famous award-winning franchises, such as Dead Rising, Deus Ex, RollerCoaster Tycoon and the Batman Arkham series. She started out in programming, transitioned to game design, rose to become a Lead and eventually Game Director over her own game.

Having worked at many renowned studios, such as Capcom, Ubisoft, Eidos and Warner Bros, Marie has a developed a deep understanding of game design, and has added many pages to her own Designer's Handbook, that she now shares with studios, schools and by speaking at conferences.

Read on to learn which topics Marie teaches, and see some examples of her sessions.

Service overview

Workshop packages

Pre-made packages of masterclasses and foundational game methodology sessions.

Marie also offers game jams to help your team both learn design methodology as well as come up with and refine their game ideas.

Catalogue

Singular sessions

Catalogue that lists and details the actual sessions and their main takeaways.

Read or get in touch with Marie and tell her about your situation and let her suggest relevant sessions.

Catalogue

Workshops packages

Are you looking for an advanced package of classes to increase your team's design skills?

Do you want a fun game jam and let your team refine their ideas into pitches?

Do you run a school and am looking for a suitable course for your students?

Overview

Marie offers workshop packages both for foundational and advanced game design topics, aimed at specific design areas. She also offers game jams, where she guides the team through coming up with their own game pitches and presenting them for the team.

All packages contains a mix of talks and exercises for optimal learning. Marie also offers custom packages. **Get in touch** to tell Marie more about your situation and goals and she can suggest relevant packages of sessions.

Workshop Packages - Masterclasses

Core combat design

Full-day workshop on the basic building blocks of core gameplay and how to you build core combat

Core gameplay challenges

Verbs & Actions

Depth & Mastery

Combat roles & playstyles

Beats & Intensity

Player Coordination OR Bossfight design

Multiplayer design

Unique full-day workshop on multiplayer design, going from the game mechanics all the way to how to serve a community

Core gameplay challenges

Depth & Mastery

Player Coordination

Social Glue

Growing a community

Matchmaking Best Practices

AI Masterclass

Full-day workshop on AI, going into advanced AI systems and ending with participants designing their own bossfight

Core gameplay challenges

Realistic AI behaviours

Immersive AI Expression

Bossfight Design

Storyboarding

Make Your Own Bossfight

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Workshop Packages - Fundamentals

Design Theory evolved

Full-day workshop on game design theory, taken one step further with Marie's experiences from AAA studios

Design Pillars Evolved

Design Structure & Hierarchy

Experience goals

Core gameplay challenges

Verbs & Actions

Personas

Creative Process

Full-day workshop that shares best practices to strengthen the creative process and way your team works with game design

Creative Habits

Your team is your Superpower + Playtest practices

Collaborative design

Referencing Efficiently

Level Up your design docs

Prototyping Efficiently

Workshop Packages – Design Jam

Day 1 Sessions

Finding the fun

Find your fun

Design Pillars Evolved

Design your pillars

The Creative Brief

Write your creative briefs

About

Marie's Design Jam is a 2-day workshop aimed at finding and iterating on new game ideas – like a Game Jam, but on 'paper'.

The first day starts with an inspirational keynote about how to 'find the fun' and ideas that stick, and then goes onto having participants flesh out their idea to design pillars.

They then continue to immerse and describe the player experience they are looking for.

In Day 2, the participants get the expand their creative vision into featuresets, before diving down and learning about the very building blocks of game design and crafting their own core gameplay.

The jam ends with presentations on how they envision the full game to look like!

Day 2 Sessions

Design Structure & Hierarchy

Expand your vision into a featureset

Core gameplay challenges

Layer your challenges and build your core gameplay

The Steam page
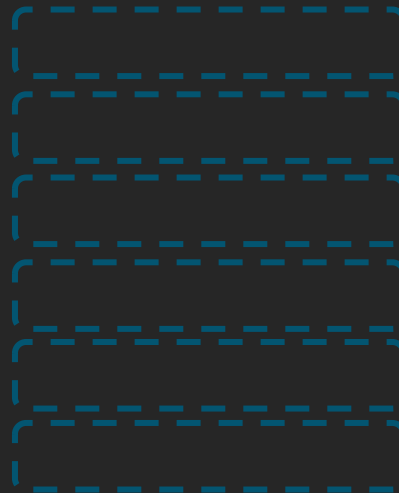
Make a Steam page for your full game

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Workshop Packages – Custom

Custom workshop

Get in touch with Marie to tailor your own workshop package! Find the session catalogue here.

Singular sessions

Are you looking to boost your dev team's knowledge in a specific design area?

Do you need a lecture for your class of game design students?

Do you want an inspirational and interesting keynote to your internal event or conference?

Overview

Marie's talks and exercises are all **educational** and aim to **inspire creativity**. They are all based on her long experience within the games industry, have all been held before and met with great response. Several of them has been popular talks at game conferences.

Get in touch with Marie to tell her more about your situation and goals and she can suggest relevant sessions.

Topics

Design Theory

Design Methodology

Presentation techniques

Creative Processes

AI

Esports

Career

Diversity & Inclusion

Design Theory

The building blocks of game design

Core gameplay challenges

The core gameplay of everything you have played can be deconstructed into a few reoccurring mechanics and patterns. What are they, what do they challenge the player on and how can they be layered combine to create deep and varied second-to-second gameplay?

Takeaway: More varied core gameplay

Depth & Mastery

This session dives into different the different categories of gameplay depth - knowledge, mechanics and strategical, and speaks about how you can build features that touches upon them all to create cohesive gameplay that challenges all of a player's senses and abilities.

Takeaway: More gameplay depth

Combat Roles & Playstyles

Which common playstyles does different players have, and how to they harmonize with different combat archetypes, and different combat roles a player can assume? This session dives into how you can make your gameplay flexible to allow for several playstyles.

Takeaway: More enjoyable gameplay

Verbs & Actions

What are the decisions that the player takes second-to-second, minute-to-minute and hour-to-hour in your game? What are the tools that the players at their disposal to take said actions? How overloaded, or understimulated, is the player, in terms of both mechanics and tactics?

Takeaway: Balanced player stimulus

Beats and intensity

Beats and intensity can be described as a game's EKG. What does that mean in practical terms? How can they be used to your advantage when designing? In this session, we go over them and talk about ways to create and distribute them over the course of a game and session.

Takeaway: A more enjoyable game for players

Personas

Personas is a concept the industry has used for years, but what are they? How do they 'work'? When are they useful, and how should they not be used? This session tells how to use them in the best way to make informed choices in your design, and ensure it caters to many players.

Takeaway: A more rounded game experience

Design Methodology

Building your game vision

Design Pillars Evolved

What characterizes a good design pillar? Should they overlap, or stand out, or complement one another? How can they be used to inform the rest of your design? What elements bind them together to explain the full direction of the game?

Takeaway: Clear design direction

Experience Goals

Often when we design, we become prescriptive. The resulting gameplay isn't always as fun as was intended – but that's what experience goals can change. This session tells how to use them to align and motivate your team, and put the focus back where it should be: on the player.

Takeaway: Aligned team, more fun features

Creative Briefs

In this session, we walk through what Creative Briefs are, and how they can be used at early stages of design to align and connect your game across all design aspects – from narrative to progression to gameplay.

Takeaway: More aligned design across team

Design structure & hierarchy

In this talk, Marie walks through the concept of design hierarchy, and how it can be used to structure your vision to ensure your that the core aspects of your game gets to thrive and harmonize with one another, and make the game feel coherent.

Takeaway: More concise & coherent design

Scoping & Prioritization

Workshop to help sort and prioritize ideas and features. By establishing what's core in our vision, and what's not, we make sure to leave room for important features to grow and thrive, whilst darlings get put on hold for the time being.

Takeaway: Alignment, clear priorities, more solid design structure

Presentation techniques

How to convey your ideas

Leveling up your design docs

In this talk, Marie walks through some best practices for design documentation. We will then walk through the transformation of improving a messy design document and step by step turning it into something that is clear, concise and inspirational to read.

Takeaway: Improved design documentation

Leveling up your design docs

In this workshop, Marie presents examples and advice on how to write design docs so they are clear, concise and inspirational. The participants then to gets to try their learnings on messy fictional documents, and gets peer feedback on their changes.

Takeaway: Training to write better design docs

Referencing Efficiently

In this talk we will explore the art of using references to other games when working with teams. What characterizes a good reference and how can it be used to boost the immersive understanding of how your features should work? What are the pitfalls to look out for?

Takeaway: Clear and relatable design

Finding the Fun

Sometimes our design docs become dry and descriptive, focused on the what but forgets to include the why. Yet, the most effective way for a team to understand an idea is to align with the feeling a player should have - the fun. We practice ways to focus on and convey it.

Takeaway: More inspirational design docs

Storyboarding

This workshops teaches how to make storyboards as a design tool that is both inspirational, illustrative and informative. The team will then reverse-design famous boss fights into storyboards.

Takeaway: Improved ability to convey design

The Art of Pitching

We discuss the format of a pitch, how to find the most relevant and engaging message in it and how to deliver it in an inspiring fashion.

Participants then gets to practice together before presenting to get peer feedback.

Takeaway: Ability to inspire and to judge ideas

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Creative Process

Best practices for processes related to game design

Playtest feedback loop

How often should you play your own build? How can you get relevant, actionable quality feedback whilst also making the team feel like their time was spent valuably and that they have been listened too? This talk dives into best practices.

Takeaway: Better quality playtest feedback

Using your team as your SuperPower

Inspirational talk about how to tap into and use your whole feature team to your advantage when designing - and motivate them to achieve greatness in the process.

Takeaway: More team happiness and cohesion, better quality design decisions

Collaborative Design

Collaborative exercises used to both ideate and then align together which ideas to move forward with. After an initial demonstration, the participants are divided into teams and take turn to lead sessions using fictional topics.

Takeaway: Tools to get great ideas and an aligned and a motivated team behind them.

Prototyping Efficiently

When should you prototype, how should you prototype? Should you prototype in several layers? What answers can it give? In this session we discuss the concepts fail-fast and fail-right and discuss which way of prototyping works best when.

Takeaway: Quick and solid design decisions

Creative Habits

Have your creatives ever felt stuck, uninspired and drained of ideas? In this workshop, we explore the concept of Creative Habits and try a couple of short exercises that the team can do together every morning to keep their creative brain active and ensure ideas always flow.

Takeaway: More ideas, higher creative output

AI

Advanced knowledge about game AI (NPCs)

AI Basics

Basic crash course what Game AI is, which parts of a game that is controlled by AI logic. Marie discuss what an AI/NPC is in both philosophical and technical terms, how its brain works and connects to its body and how it can take decisions, move and act.

Takeaway: Crash course in developing Game AI

Bossfight Design

Having been the feature owner and responsible designer for all boss fights on an AAA game, Marie dives into and share some of her design secrets on how she approaches their design and work with devteams to create fun, intriguing and challenging boss fights that are satisfying to beat.

Takeaway: Better boss design

Realistic AI Behaviours

Session teaching some of my secrets in AI – a system developed that makes AI respond to player actions in immersive and realistic ways depending on both the nature and strength of the actions, the personality of said AI and its relationships with other surrounding AI.

Takeaway: More realistic AI actions

Immersive AI expression

Player immersion rests upon the whole package of what they experience whilst ingame, – the narrative, sound, VFX, animation and so on. This session walks through my *Mood System* – a model that seamlessly improves the appearance and expression of an AI, in parallell to it taking actions.

Takeaway: More realistic AI expressions

Esports

How to make an esports or multiplayer game and build a community that lasts

Depth & Mastery

Session where Marie walks through the foundational design principles of an esports game - what challenges players look for, what depth it should offer and what's needed to ensure the game has competitive integrity.

Takeaway: How to layer challenges to make your game easy to learn, but hard to master

Player Coordination

Session focused on how your game can serve players to help them understand what's happening in the game, promote them to follow the same decision logic and be able to coordinate their strategy.

Takeaway: Better teamplay

Social Glue

Session where we look at different ways to build and strengthen the social glue between players that both makes them want to excel, play together as well as keep coming back to the game.

Takeaway: Better retention

Growing a community

What does a pro player need to be able to rise to the top in your game? What tools does coaches require, and how do you ensure orgs can get enough exposure? This session goes into the features you need to ensure your game can grow a thriving esports community.

Takeaway: Making your game community-ready

Matchmaking Best Practices

Course in matchmaking algorithm configuration that goes through standard configurations, region adaption, latency adaption, common mistakes and many other bits of advice for competitive games.

Takeaway: More solid matchmaking algorithms and infrastructure

Career

Advice for students looking forward to a career in video games

The Career Masterplan

This session is aimed at students and devs in entry roles and speaks about how to plan your career in game development. What exists out there, which steps do you take to get to your dream studio? How do you relocate, and get visas? How can you get to your dream role?

Takeaway: How to turn your dreams into goals

Diversity & Inclusion

Various sessions on D&I both inside games and inside studios

Representation in Video Games

Session where Marie walks through the foundational design principles of an esports game - what challenges players look for, what depth it should offer and what's needed to ensure the game has competitive integrity.

Takeaway: Better design decisions, fewer iterations and more esports potential

Custom Sessions

Didn't find anything that fits your needs?

But wait, there's more!

You can also get **get in touch** to tell Marie about your situation and needs, and she can advise on how she can help.

She also does commissioned talks and exercises on request as long as it falls within her areas of expertise (game design, creative processes, leadership, esports, diversity).

Contact

For questions or interest in services, please get in touch by email:
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To learn more about Marie, visit:
https://mejerwall.com/about

Read more about Marie's other services:
https://mejerwall.com/services/