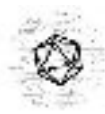


CLOSED HANDS (PASSENGER GAMES)



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



HOME HOME
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ORG

Press Release: **4th February 2021**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For access to demos, images, interviews and more info please contact:
sarahunwin@gmail.com / 07889814839

LAUNCH TRAILER: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vx5Pb09pfmw>

PRESS IMAGES: <http://bit.ly/closedhandspressimages>

Experimental video game **Closed Hands**, will launch as an online exhibition hosted by the arts centre **HOME** via **homemcr.org** as a part of **PUSH festival**, launching on the **5th March 2021**.

Closed Hands is an unflinching work of interactive fiction exploring the long-ranging complex effects of extremism on a range of cultures and communities. The sprawling 130,000-word story is presented through bold interactive narrative across five core characters and dozens of additional viewpoints and perspectives.

The game will be released for Windows/Mac/Linux, distributed on itch.io and Steam.

Closed Hands was developed by Manchester indie games studio **PASSENGER**, formed and directed by artist and writer **Dan Hett**, recent winner of the *New Media Writing Prize 2021*.

Made with support from **Arts Council England**.

Closed Hands examines the lead-up and aftermath of a terror attack in a fictional UK city, through the lens of five core characters and dozens of other lives brought together by the same event - the attack itself is intentionally never depicted, leaving the game to draw a complex picture of the reasons why it occurred, and long-last effects it had on people, communities, and the city itself.

The gameplay is a free-form fragmented narrative, allowing the player to weave their own paths through the story: both forward and backward in time. The story is told through interactive textual fiction, and the player can also engage more deeply in the narrative by exploring the desktops of the characters. This includes reading emails, exploring files, replaying conversations, finding secrets. **Presented as an interactive digital story, the game will also challenge wider preconceptions users have about video game storytelling.**

"We're really excited to present CLOSED HANDS to new audiences, and we really hope that it helps push forward the idea that games should, and can, boldly hold up a mirror to our reality in new and interesting ways. The story is deep and complex, and presented in a way that we hope can be explored by both games audiences and those outside it, too." - **Dan Hett, Director of PASSENGER**

The game will allow players to understand **the complex effect extremism has on people's perceptions of cultures and communities**. Prejudices and racism that exist in the moments after an attack in many communities will be explored in this game, as will the tabloid and media reaction to sensitivity and empathy to those affected.

"Nobody can make games like Dan Hett – but his work is moving the medium forward so other developers can." - **The Big Issue**

"There aren't many developers whose games are as bold and unflinching as Dan Hett's" - Wireframe Magazine

PASSENGER is comprised of: digital artist and writer **Dan Hett**, creative producer **Sarah Unwin**, writers **Dan Whitehead**, **Sharan Dhaliwal** and **Umar Ditta**, designer and illustrator **Loz Ives**, and musicians **Ciaran McAuley (RUMA)** and **Paul Wolinski (65daysofstatic)**.

PASSENGER is a new independent games studio, formed and led by artist **Dan Hett** and based in **Manchester UK**. *Closed Hands* is the studio's first work which builds upon the experimental games series developed by Dan Hett. The series explores his personal experience of losing his brother **Martyn Hett** in the Manchester terror attack in 2017. The studio's next project will be *The Long Night*, a commissioned reworking of Ernst Israel Bornstein's famous holocaust account. More info at passenger-games.com and danhett.com

<https://www.theguardian.com/games/2018/apr/26/dan-hett-indie-games-designer-manchester-arena-bombing>
<https://www.bigissue.com/latest/dan-hetts-video-games-take-on-grief-radicalisation-and-ethical-journalism/>
<https://www.thewhitetube.co.uk/c-ya-laterrr>

HOME

HOME is Manchester's centre for international contemporary culture. Since opening in 2015, HOME has welcomed over 2.9 million visitors to see thrilling theatre and dance shows, experience great independent films from across the world, dive into the new art in our galleries, relax in our café and browse our bookshop. We work with international and UK artists to produce extraordinary experiences, creating an exciting mix of thought-provoking drama, dance, film and contemporary visual art with a strong focus on international work, new commissions and talent development. Our ambition is to push the boundaries of form and technology, to experiment, have fun and take risks. We want to explore what it means to be human today, and to share great new art with the widest possible audience.

<http://homemcr.org>

PUSH Festival

Push is HOME's annual celebration of the North West's creative talents, and this year has been reimagined to become a strand across the whole year, allowing work to be seen both live and digitally, despite the coronavirus pandemic which is currently keeping theatres and arts venues closed. The first event, *Closed Hands*, will be available online from March 5.

<https://homemcr.org/event/push-festival-2021>