



# FIGMENT

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**Please poke the art!**

**Fifth annual FIGMENT event brings participatory culture to Governors Island.**

*FIGMENT, a free, family-friendly participatory arts event held in multiple cities and attracting tens of thousands of participants each year, returns Friday, June 10th - Sunday, June 12, for its 5th incarnation on Governors Island, NYC, where it was first started in 2007.*

**More info:**

FIGMENT general info and hi-res images: <http://figmentproject.org/about/press-resources>

**FIGMENT in brief:**

Founded in 2007 on New York City's Governors Island with a handful of projects and a few thousand enthusiasts, FIGMENT has grown exponentially into a multi-day, multi-city event that drew over 30,000 participants in NYC and Boston in 2010. With the addition of Jackson, Mississippi and Detroit, Michigan in 2011, FIGMENT continues its mission to offer free, inclusive and participatory art to entire communities, removing the barriers of museum and gallery walls and entrance fees, and blurring the lines between those who create and those who enjoy art. FIGMENT NYC 2011 dates are June 10-12.

In addition to the weekend-long arts festival, FIGMENT presents three free season-long interactive exhibitions on Governors Island: the FIGMENT Minigolf Course, highlighted below; The FIGMENT Terrace Sculpture Garden; and the City of Dreams Pavilion, a centerpiece for arts activity on the island, the result of an international design competition created in partnership with ENYA and SEAoNY.

*FIGMENT is a project of Action Arts League, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, and is created and produced by a coalition of volunteers. FIGMENT is entirely funded by grants and individual donations, and accepts no corporate sponsorship of any kind. FIGMENT is supported by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council, as well as by the Fund for Creative Communities, supported by New York State Council on the Arts and administered by Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. FIGMENT Boston is produced with support from the Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy, the designated stewards of the Rose Kennedy Greenway and site of FIGMENT Boston.*

**FIGMENT in detail:**

Conceived by founder David Koren as a commerce-free and fiercely inclusive alternative to the city's more exclusive established arts scene, FIGMENT encourages both seasoned and emerging artists to create works for active "participants" rather than passive "audiences" or "viewers."

Koren asks, "If you could do anything at all, right now, what would you do? What would you create? What would you share? What kind of experience would you create for other people? FIGMENT asks the question of every participant, 'What are you bringing?' as a way to inspire everyone to really think about how they can bring something creative to Governors Island as a way to engage and interact with others. At FIGMENT, an artist is anyone who creates a framework for people to participate. And we are all artists."



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Every aspect of FIGMENT is intended to foster the spirit of inclusiveness, from the price of admission (free) to the location (one of New York City's most scenic public spaces, accessible by public transportation and a free ferry). This philosophy extends to artists as well: rather than pursuing big names, FIGMENT is committed to nurturing the passionate amateur, offering logistical support and listings on the event's map and website to as many artists as possible who submit participatory project proposals that meet FIGMENT's selection criteria. Volunteer curators encourage artists to practice "radical self-reliance" in funding and realizing their projects.

The 2010 event drew nearly 25,000 people to Governors Island to engage with 400 projects, including a Rose Petal Dome, with kids of all ages cavorting in rose petals, ElectricBubbleBus, an artistically altered golf cart turned roving dance party and random taxi, all-ages circus yoga, dance and hula hooping classes, and a game called Aqua Attack! in which participants dressed as super-heroes flung stuffed animals at each other from opposite wading pools.

All these audience favorites are coming back, in addition to new projects as varied as Plastic Fantastic, a 16 foot geodesic dome made from over 6,000 post-consumer water bottles; The Anywhere Organ, a giant, mobile, electronic pipe organ built out of recycled parts from discarded church organs; Seeing Inside, a puppet theater hidden inside a dress, as well as myriad spontaneous performances, art and activities. To further blur the lines between 'artist' and 'audience,' everyone is encouraged to bring something to share with the temporary FIGMENT community, whether it's a picnic blanket, song, game, costume or painting.

The centerpiece of the event is Liggett Terrace, with three season-long installations organized by FIGMENT. Visitors can explore a 17-piece FIGMENT Terrace Sculpture Garden, socialize and see informal performances in Burble Bup: The City of Dreams Pavilion (co-sponsored by FIGMENT with ENYA and SEAoNY) and even play 18 holes on Bugs & Features, a mini golf course in which each hole is designed by a different artist or collective.

The concept of a free participatory arts event has sparked inspiration across the country, with FIGMENT now happening in Boston, Detroit, and Jackson, Mississippi. Here in New York, FIGMENT's all-volunteer staff encourages everyone to experience a weekend on Governors Island not just as a visitor, but as a participant – and to not only poke the art, but to poke the very notion of 'art' itself.

## **FIGMENT essential facts:**

Fri, June 10 (10am – 4pm); Sat, June 11 (10am – 6pm); Sun, June 12 (10am – 6pm)

Cost: Free! Donations are cheerfully accepted.

<http://newyork.figmentproject.org>

## **Directions:**

Free ferry service on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from The Battery Maritime Building located at 10 South St, adjacent to the Staten Island Ferry in Lower Manhattan. On Saturday and Sunday, ferry service also runs from Brooklyn Bridge Park's Pier 6, at the end of Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn. Ferry schedule available on <http://www.govisland.com/html/visit/directions.shtml>

## **Useful info:**

Items to bring: sunscreen, snacks and water, bikes or rollerblades, a toy, game or activity to share. Please do not bring: pets (service animals are okay), cars, alcohol, weapons. Please see <http://newyork.figmentproject.org/figment-nyc-2011/what-to-bring> for more details. FIGMENT is a Leave No Trace event - please clean up after yourself and properly dispose of all waste in the barrels provided.