

Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to provide an outline for how to approach certain things within the furry fandom. In many ways, this document can be seen as a manifesto outlining cultural norms and behaviors within the furry fandom. This guide is specifically targeted at those who are just entering the fandom. However, some topics such as commission etiquette and roleplay may be of some interest to more senior members of the fandom. Specific topics covered include fursona creation, commissioning artists, roleplay, and which conventions are worth attending.

Fursona Creation:

Definition:

For the purposes of this guide, a set definition of the word "Fursona" should be established to avoid confusion. As far as this guide goes, the word means "An anthropomorphic character which has been created for the purpose of representing someone within the furry fandom. Such a character may be used in works of fiction. However, the primary purpose of the character is to represent its creator."

-Species selection

Species selection can be an interesting process. The specific species used is not limited by many factors. The only real limitations are your ability to communicate specific details about the species and your connection to the species. Many furies, a dominant portion in fact, have some form of connection to the species used in their fursona. The connection does not need to be particularly deep. A choice based upon a nickname from high school is just as valid as a choice based on a life-changing event involving an animal. For the purpose of the character and your involvement in the furry fandom, you will be looking at this animal a lot. This being said, the bare minimum for species selection is that you can tolerate looking at your selected animal for extended periods.

When considering a species, it is important to remember a few things. First and foremost, the animal you select doesn't need to be real. Dragons and Gryphons, as a result, are acceptable choices. Furthermore, the animal you select doesn't need to occur naturally. For example a "Folf" or fox-wolf hybrid is an acceptable choice. Bear in mind however that stranger selections will be more difficult to work with. The fandom is rather dependant upon artistic talent, so if you are not an artist then it is safe to say that you will need to communicate details about your Fursona to someone at some point. As a result, if you want 13 polka-dots on your Fursona's forehead in a very specific arrangement then you should be very good at communicating.

-Creation Process (Specifics)

- name is usually a animal-based screen name, but can be anything
- fur/scale colors can be anything
- height is complicated, several factors
- weight is complicated, several factors
- eye color is often something kept from real life
- hair can really be anything
- super powers can exist. Fictional animal people can fly, have eye lasers, etc
- basing the character off of yourself is good, please do this more
- please have a reference sheet or good full-body images sooner rather than later
- sometimes props can be involved (mallets, a certain shirt, etc)

-Feral vs Non-Feral

-What's the difference?

-Changing the fursona

It is not unusual to have someone wish to change their fursona. Many factors can come into play for wanting to leave a certain species or style. Much like the process of making your fursona, everything can vary. The only real difference is that you clearly communicate with everyone what has changed. If you originally were a shark, and want to change over to a giraffe, people need to know that the change took place. Else your friends might get confused.

The most common way to inform everyone is to post a journal or a widely seen text post detailing the new fursona. Often times, this includes an upload of some artwork featuring the new you. Most times, people don't share why the change took place. Though its generally accepted that its a personal matter, and its in bad taste if you pressed the question. Most of the people that do share the reasoning basically say that they are not "connected" with the species or character anymore, and its as simple as that. Its what happens with the old fursona that things can get a little complicated.

There are varying ways to handle the old fursona. Some people with multiple characters and OC's choose to keep the design but change the personality a little. This way they don't feel like they are losing a part of their past. Other people will get rid of the character completely and never speak of them again. Though its more common that they just keep the artwork uploaded and just don't do anything with the design again. Lastly, and least common of all, is to give away the old fursona. Sometimes the fursona just "fits" better with another person. They may be a friend or family member that is just more attached to the character that you are, and that is fine. Just be sure to make it clear that the change is happening! Again, you don't want to cause confusion if you can avoid it! It is also recommended that you change the name of the fursona as well, as a new person taking it may want it to feel more like them.

-Sparkle-dog avoidance

Lets start with what a sparkle-dog is. To put it simply, a sparkle-dog is a character or Fursona that is so over-designed that it hurts the eyes. Most sparkle-dogs consist of rainbows for no real reason, superpowers, and physical features that are there for the sake of having them. People that make sparkle-dog characters are attempting to make a really original character, but end up doing too much. Its not a bad thing to have a superpower, or to have wings. Just keep in mind that these should be a feature of the character, not THE feature of them!

Having a sparkle-dog character is not necessarily a bad thing. Its just that most of the time, it feels like a copout to taking the time to design and fully flesh out a character. With a Fursona, it feels even worse. If you feel like your fursona is getting a bit much, then show someone. Most of the time, a fresh set of eyes will be able to tell if something is going too far.

The main reason that people make sparke-dogs is that they want to make a unique character. Though there are many more ways to do so without changing the look of them at all! Things like personality and the stories you can tell will make someone stand out much more than being made of sparkles and glitter.

Commissioning Artists:

-Getting information

There are so many artists in the furry fandom. Because of this, there are a few ways that they display their commission information. Some have journals linked in their profile ID's on websites such as furaffinity and weasyl that explain what their prices are. Some even have pictures with an example of each style they are offering and a price point. Though a few artists have a more fluid system of commissions. These artists don't have anything open all the time, but instead post journals with limited slots and a specific style. This can get a little annoying, as you will have to follow them and keep updated with their journals to try to snag a spot. In the end though, if you have any questions about their commissions and what they offer, just ask! Most artists are friendly and will be willing to answer a few questions about their artwork and prices.

-Making payments

In most every situation, artists accept payment through PayPal. If you do not have an account there, then you will be hard-pressed to find an artist willing to work with you outside of conventions where you can pay with cash.

Some artists will accept art in payment for art! This is called an art trade. While not all artists accept this as a viable form of payment, it might be worthwhile to see if they do. Most artists will have it clearly labeled near their commission information if they accept art trades. If they do not, or you cannot seem to find it, then assume they will not be willing to do an art trade. If an artist doesn't want to art trade, then do not push the subject. Some artists get all their money to live via commissions, and the idea of giving art without monetary payment can be really offensive. If you do find someone willing to accept your art for a piece of theirs, then contact them to set up the terms. Most of the time, you will have to settle a bit and you may not get exactly what you want. Art trades are fun to get something random for a little something random from you.

-Is free art acceptable?

Yes and no. For this, it REALLY depends on the artist. Most of the time, it will be a no. Again, some of these artists live their lives by their art. To get nothing for their effort will be about the worst thing they could do. Though some artists will do free artwork. These artists might be just starting out or wanting to expand their fanbase. Free art is just one way they can do so. Usually, they give out free art in one of three ways. They can offer them as a raffle, where you submit your name or leave a comment on a journal and they pick a winner by using a random number generator. Alternatively they can have some type of contest, like 10000 viewer or to color a lineart of theirs. Finally, they could simply have a free art livestream. In the streams, the artist will be giving away some style of artwork to people in the chatroom. These may be simpler versions of their commission work, but free art is free art, and it's in poor taste to complain about something you paid nothing for. This is true for the same reason you don't tell someone handing out free samples at the supermarket that you want a different product because you don't like what they gave you.

As a general rule it is rude to complain about the quality of free art or the specific details. Unless the artist is drawing your character in an offensive manner, comments should be limited to relevant information to the character. Relevant information includes weight, height, fur color, eye color, and special items that the character is typically depicted

with. It is fine, for example, to mention that a character has green eyes. Generally the artist picks the pose, background, style, and specifics of any art produced without payment.

- What defines an acceptable time-table for commissions?
- Making contact with the artist
- Requesting changes/adjustments

Roleplay:

- How to play to your character's species
- When is it too much?
- Where to roleplay
- Good roleplay groups

Which conventions are worth attending?:

- Where to find them
- people to talk to
- first con

Authors:

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Zaezar - Changing the Fursona, Which conventions are worth attending (outline), Sparkle-dog Avoidance, Getting information, Making payments, Is free art acceptable?

If you're reading this, please take a look at the fursona definition. I'm not sure if that's an accurate description of the definition that everyone is using.