

This is my attempt to translate JagatPlay's interview with Hideo Kojima, sorry for my poor english.

Original article:

<https://jagatplay.com/2019/09/playstation3/jagatplay-di-tgs-2019-ngobrol-santai-bareng-hideo-kojima-exclusive/>

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The most iconic developer in the game industry. There's no more apt sentence to describe Hideo Kojima. A "prestige" that isn't too pompous considering his fantastical career for the past decades. He's the brain behind gigantic and mesmerizing franchise such as "Metal Gear Solid" and "Zone of the Enders". One of his signature styles is using a cinematic approach in his games that become the soul of his projects. Which sometimes exceeds big-budget Hollywood films in terms of quality. And all of that is wrapped in engaging gameplay with humour that will make you laugh and confused at the same time.

Kojima's departure from Konami forced him to leave "Metal Gear Solid" behind and enter a new challenging foray of creativity with a lot of potentials. That creativity challenge he answered with his next game titled "Death Stranding". Since the first teaser, it has mesmerized its audience with its mystery and it gets even more mysterious with each screenshot and trailers released that feeds into many people curiosities. Thankfully, with new gameplay that was released on TGS 2019, we now have a picture of what kind of experience we will get from "Death Stranding".

Like a dream becoming a reality, we finally got the chance to meet Hideo Kojima in person on his studio called Kojima Productions, located in Shinigawa, Tokyo. We also got the chance to ask many questions that's not only focused on Death Stranding but also questions about films - his favourite media. The good news? We were able to ask these questions without having a nervous breakdown, save aside from the fact that one of our biggest idols sat together with us.

We opened our interview with questions about films. We wanted to know what Kojima considered as "a good film" and how it impacts how he makes his games, including Death Stranding. Kojima said that one of his ways of knowing if a film is good or not is by "the emotional impact" it left behind, even after the film is over. Regardless of the emotions that left behind, happiness, sadness, fear, it lingers and stays in your life. Kojima said that such impact does not come from just films, but also novels and video games and he wished his video games would be able to do the same.

If you are a fan of Hideo Kojima's game, you'd know that he loves to put "breaking the fourth wall" moments in his games. The same thing was shown on "Private Room" session on TGS 2019 - where Sam looks directly to the screen and reacts as if there's a player with him. Of

course, we are interested to hear what Kojima has to say about this particular mechanic that becomes his signature.

Kojima said that in *Death Stranding* you'll be Sam, alone together with BB, forging unknown paths forward while constantly being under threat from enemies like BTs. When Sam is outside he always faces difficulties, anxieties, and fear. Something that the player will feel directly. And as a panacea for that, "Private Room" is where players will be able to feel safe and catch their breath. Sometimes the story will progress through the Private Room, but it's designed to be player's downtime moment. And because of that, he added gimmicks where it not only makes the player comfortable but also makes Sam comfortable.

One interesting thing about the Private Room, besides you, can control Sam (played by Norman Reedus) as your character, Kojima also designed the room to separate "you" and Sam. *Death Stranding* will touch upon the subjects of "body" and "soul", especially on the mechanics where if Sam dies he'd be transported to another world and has to find his body before he can return to the world of living. Kojima said that the fourth wall elements in "Private Room" can be tied to that mechanic, where you are looking from the outside of Sam's perspective.

We also want to know about the online connectivity requirement. As we know, the "Social Strand" genre Kojima wants to push and showcased at TGS 2019 clearly shows you can ask other players for help, or finding items they left behind. Would players with a poor internet connection will still be able to enjoy "Death Stranding"?

Without hesitation, Kojima said yes. "Death Stranding" is a game built with the structure of single-player games. You can play alone without internet connection just like any other game, but you won't be able to receive other players help. Kojima himself recommends that players to be connected to the internet while playing as that the experience he intended, considering one of the key themes of "Death Stranding" is connection. Sure you can still play the game just like games from 20 years ago, but in this game, the core mechanic is about being connected with the outside world.

In the "Briefing" trailer that was released on TGS 2019, a lot of the story seems relevant to the current situation in our world. A fractured America, social media "likes" becoming currency, and even Sam - BB connection seems to be a representation of a father-child relationship. Is "Death Stranding" another attempt from Kojima to offer contemporary commentary? Or it's better to be enjoyed without a thought?

Kojima said that his priority is to make "Death Stranding" fun. But he admits that there's a lot of things he wants to comment and tell the players about. He doesn't demand players to listen to what he has to say through his games, but he wants players to give it some thought. Hopefully, if the players thought about it, they'd be motivated to take action in the real world. *Death Stranding*, Kojima said, is a game about connection. Connection with the internet, connection with the community around us, connection with life and death, connection with family,

connection with friends, and connection with your loved ones. Kojima wants the player to feel those connections and he admits the action he hopes the player takes will depend on where the player is and how their condition is.

With so many actors and actresses involved, we are curious about the casting process. Did Kojima create the story first then find the right actor and actress, or it's the other way around? Kojima said that the story comes first. This is how Norman Reedus ended up in *Death Stranding*, who he knows since P.T. that unfortunately disappeared. Kojima imagined how it's like to have Norman portraying a character that he has written and how much adjustment he needs to make to match Norman's personality. And there's also case like Amelie, where Kojima has thought to cast Lindsay Wagner since the conception. But he admits he was nervous that Lindsay Wagner wouldn't join the cast.

We also want to ask Kojima's opinion on *Death Stranding* allure in the eyes of his long-time fans. With the "innovative genre" buzz that he pushed, what his long-time fans can expect, especially when *Death Stranding* is released?

Kojima laughs a bit at the question. He emphasized that "*Death Stranding*" is not a game in a "new genre". What he will offer is something that has never been attempted in the video game industry. Kojima said that he not only want to make money, but he wants to create something that has never been made before. In the end, "*Death Stranding*" is just like another open-world action game that will be familiar to players who have played an open-world action game. But after playing it for a few hours, players will find something new, something they never experienced before.

Kojima admits that early in the game, "*Death Stranding*" will feel slow. He doesn't hesitate to compare it with the opening scene in "*Metal Gear Solid*", where Snake comes out from the water and rides the first elevator. In that scene, he intentionally doesn't give Snake any weapons so players will realize that shooting isn't the "main path" in "*Metal Gear Solid*". He didn't make it as extreme as that in "*Death Stranding*", but it will still take hours of gameplay for players to understand what is the essence of "*Death Stranding*" experience. He doesn't want gamers, especially his long-time fans to see the game as FPS or RPG. As he reinstated before, *Death Stranding* is an open-world action with the mission to reconnect the world.

It's also not a secret that Hideo Kojima is a perfectionist. We are curious to know at what point he felt his creation is at the right place, where his creation has fulfilled the vision and mission he wants. Or does Kojima compromised on his vision a lot? Between small laughs, Kojima said that all creative process in a professional environment, whether it's a video game or a film, has a deadline. But those deadline allows him to set and prioritize what he has to finish. If he didn't announce the release date a few weeks ago, he'd ended up working without a deadline. He said such acts is unprofessional.

As a film lover, we are curious what films Kojima has to pick one film, and one film only, that he thinks people should watch at some point in their life, which film he will pick?

Kojima quickly answered Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey. He said that the film is not just a film, but an experience. He grew up in the Apollo era wanting to be an astronaut and saw The Monolith as the god of all creations. When he saw the film as a kid, he didn't understand anything about it because it's difficult to understand. But it left an emotional impact when he was young, and even when he rewatched it as an adult there are some things he still doesn't understand, and that's what keeps him coming back to it.

For Kojima, he wants to make something similar to 2001: A Space Odyssey. A product that is out there, it creates controversy because it's difficult to understand. Something when it's released the mainstream disliked, but has loyal fans who loved the film. Now, 2001: A Space Odyssey is considered phenomenal. Learning from that, he understands if there's negative to something radically different. He hopes that "Death Stranding" will go through the same phase where there will be people who either love it or hate it, especially for players who just want to barge and shoot everything.

Unfortunately, our attempts to dig even deeper at Kojima's interpretation of 2001: A Space Odyssey and his theories didn't get a conclusive answer. He was afraid it would be spoilers to talk about the ending.