

Video game 'Death Stranding' bids to rekindle hope

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Japanese video game designer, writer, director and producer Hideo Kojima has created "Death Stranding" which centres on a mission to deliver packages and help rebuild a communications network in the United Cities of America

In a world fractured by political populism and divisive voices on social

media, can a video game build bridges to harmony? The Japanese auteur behind "Death Stranding" hopes so.

The much-hyped title comes out for Sony's PlayStation 4 on Friday and is the first creation of Hideo Kojima, the acclaimed designer of the Konami studio's mega-selling "Metal Gear" series, since he went independent in 2015.

Set in a post-apocalyptic future where the United States of America has broken up and a curious form of rainfall accelerates ageing, "Death Stranding" centres on a mission to deliver packages and help rebuild a communications network in what is now known as the United Cities of America.

Enemies abound, intent on keeping communities isolated, including the undead.

The protagonist, Sam Porter Bridges, is voiced by Norman Reedus from zombie TV drama "The Walking Dead". Other members of the A-list cast include James Bond stars Lea Seydoux and Mads Mikkelsen.

Kojima is explicit about the contemporary parallels to his storyline.

"President (Donald) Trump right now is building a wall," he told the BBC in an interview.

"Then you have Brexit, where the UK is trying to leave the EU, and it feels like there are lots of walls and people thinking only about themselves in the world.

"In 'Death Stranding' we're using bridges to represent connection—there are options to use them or break them. It's about making people think about the meaning of connection."

The concept goes as far as blocking any option to interact negatively with other players, according to Kojima. Instead, you can give them [positive feedback](#) and leave items for others to use.

It is a far cry from the all-against-one, fight-to-the death option on the hugely popular game "Fortnite", or the hate-filled commentary of so much [social media](#).

Titles like "Fortnite" and "Call of Duty" rely on bursts of furious action, and are lucrative propositions on the e-sports circuit.

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