

Swedish game studio channels fandom in 'Star Wars Outlaw'

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Hundreds of developers spent years making "Star Wars Outlaws", a process the Malmo, Sweden-based studio's executives say took them from mere fans to craftspeople on the beloved epic.

From Yoda figurines to Lego stormtrooper helmets, Star Wars is

everywhere around the Massive Entertainment video game studio that's about to unveil a hotly anticipated title drawn from George Lucas's iconic franchise.

Hundreds of developers spent years making "Star Wars Outlaws", a process the Malmo, Sweden-based studio's executives say took them from mere fans to craftspeople on the beloved epic.

"We had to take a step back," said game developer Mathias Karlson, and "make the journey from fandom to being a craftsman together with Lucasfilms creating something new, a new perspective."

Anticipation is building ahead of the August 30 release of "Star Wars Outlaws", an open world game set between the events of the "Empire Strikes Back" and "Return of the Jedi".

"Many of us grew up with Star Wars," said the studio's operations director Alf Condelius. "I was 11 years old when I saw the first film and when I got home, I asked myself how I'd lived 11 years without Star Wars."

"It's been a fantastic journey almost like reconnecting with childhood", said Karlson.

The Swedish studios, owned by French giant Ubisoft, partnered up with the Star Wars creator's LucasFilm company and began chipping away at the project in 2020.

"We wanted to create a [video game](#) in which the player would be the director of their own experience, giving them all the possible options -- which vehicle to choose, where to go, which criminal group to pledge allegiance to, everything that makes a bandit or outlaw adventure really come alive", the studio's creative director Julian Gerighty told AFP.

While a plethora of games based on the Star Wars franchise already exists, and designers can only work in a specific fictional era, the creators of "Outlaw" promised players extra power and agency.

"We were given a lot of create freedom to come up with new things," Gerighty said.

Playing a thief

Players will step into the shoes of Kay Vess, who is about to pull off the heist of the century.

Wearing a leather jacket, heavily tattooed, a pistol on her belt, and always accompanied by her trusted galactic animal companion Nix, Kay Vess explores planets and navigates between crime bosses in order to gain her freedom.

The young woman comes from Cantonica, a fictional desert planet known for its casino city, which saga lovers discovered in 2017 in the eighth film, "The Last Jedi".

"It's easier to make something new than trying to recreate (the planet) Tatooine as accurately as possible," Gerighty said.

The sound and aesthetics echo the trilogies of George Lucas, whose own sources of inspiration influenced the designers.

"We make references to Wild West and samurai films," said Cloe Hammoud, who created the game worlds, adding that creators from 57 countries used "cinematic realism to get closer to the atmosphere (of the films), using for example the same objectives, the same style."

The game, which lasts about 60 hours, is appropriate for all ages and will

be available on PC, PS5 and Xbox X/S.

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