

Counter Cultures Exhibition Game Design Contest

The San Diego Museum of Man is sponsoring a game design competition for its exhibition *Counter Cultures: The Secret Lives of Games* opening June 11, 2010. The contest will promote the design of a game in which two or more players race their pieces from one place to another without the use of dice, spinners, numbered cards, or other randomizers. The three best entries will be displayed in the exhibition, and the designers profiled on the Museum website. The Museum retains the right to publish any entry in the contest.

1. Games do not have to use boards, but any board should be submitted as a photocopy on *no larger than* one sheet of 11" x 17" paper. (Color is optional unless it is necessary for play). Games do not have to use cards, but any cards should be photocopied on up to seven 8 ½" x 11" sheets and left uncut. Pieces do not need to accompany the board or cards, but can be merely described in the rules.
2. Games must have the players race their pieces from one or more sections of the gameboard or table to another or other sections, or perhaps back to the beginning. The number of pieces run by each player can vary from one, as in Uncle Wiggily, to four, as in Parcheesi, to a large number, as in backgammon. They can differ from one another in function. All the pieces of a player, or perhaps only one or a few of them, must reach home first (or last?) to win. (Pieces may have other missions to accomplish before they reach the finish.) The "track" can be a single path, as in Chutes and Ladders, several crossable adjacent lanes, as in Speed Circuit, a reticulated (web-like) map, or a field of spaces, as in Chinese checkers.
3. Whether or not there are "spaces," how far or in what direction the pieces go cannot be determined by dice, spinners, numbered cards, or other randomizers. Even though the randomizing agents of some games allow for considerable strategy—the choice of which piece to move by which die in Parcheesi, or the choice of which of a handful of distance cards to play in some card-driven sports races—the whole point of the competition is to find a strategic way of racing pieces that avoids lucky draws and throws altogether. Randomizers may be used for non-strategic determinations, such as who goes first, where players begin (if there is no advantage in position), where they go, or where they end up, as long as all the players know these things at the beginning of the game. Cards may be held in the hand and kept secret from other players until played face up or down—but only as long as each player begins with the same complement of cards rather than drawing them in the course of the game.
4. The priority given to strategy also eliminates games of speed, dexterity, or substantial role-playing.
5. Although any graphics submitted for the contest must be clear (and playable in the space allowed), the contest is not meant to judge draftsmanship or artistry. The games submitted may have themes and pictures, as the Garis stories in Uncle Wiggily, but these will not be considered part of the game design to be judged. Games will be evaluated, rather, only for their elegance, strategic depth, and originality. In other words, a game stands a good chance of winning if it is easy to learn, difficult to master, and unlike any other game. Fun also counts.
6. Entries must be accompanied by rules and a description of the playing pieces needed for the game, together totaling no more than 1,000 words. Although the text should be clear enough to enable the judges to play the game, it will not be judged on its literary merit.
7. Winners will be chosen by a panel of games experts selected by the curator of *Counter Cultures*, Dr. Wayne Saunders. This panel reserves the right to determine whether a submission fits within the spirit of the contest. Questions should be directed to Dr. Saunders at wsaunders@museumofman.org.
8. Published games, games that have won other contests, games by present or former staff of the San Diego Museum of Man, and games by relatives of the judges are ineligible. A designer can enter twice.
9. Each entry should be mailed in an envelope no larger than 9" x 12" to Dr. Wayne Saunders at the San Diego Museum of Man, 1350 El Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego, CA 92101. Each entry should contain the designer's name, as well as postal and e-mail addresses, though a designer may signal his intention to remain anonymous until the prizes are awarded, as long as some method for reaching him is provided.
10. Entries must be received by July 1, 2010, and cannot be returned.