

**Game Plan: Board Games Rediscovered**

8 October 2016 - 23 April 2017

FREE entry

Are you a *Scrabble* champion? A wannabe *Chess* grandmaster? Or a *Monopoly* megalomaniac?

The V&A Museum of Childhood's major autumn exhibition - *Game Plan: Board Games Rediscovered* - celebrates the joy, excitement and occasional frustration of playing board games.

Board games cross generations and have a universal appeal that transcends cultural and language barriers. They can mirror our lives and both teach and entertain us. The playing of board games is embedded into our culture, not just the games themselves but the act of playing, the interaction with family and friends, the lessons to be learned and the fun to be had.

Board games have enduring popularity even in the digital age. *Monopoly* is currently published in 47 languages and sold in 114 countries, and more than one billion people have played the game worldwide. And during the 2015 Christmas period, games were the second largest segment of toys sold.\*

*Game Plan: Board Games Rediscovered* presents some of the most iconic, enthralling and visually-striking games from the V&A's outstanding national collection of board games. Alongside current family favourites such as *Cluedo* and *Trivial Pursuit*, and traditional games such as *chess*, the exhibition looks at historical board games such as *The Game of the Goose* and beautifully-designed games from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The exhibition shows more than 100 objects, featuring games from around the world, and explores the important role of design. Throughout the exhibition, selected games of special interest are highlighted with a more detailed look at their history and influence. There are hands-on interactives and the opportunity to become part of one big interactive game which directs visitors around the exhibition, and invites them to think about game playing in their lives and what sort of player they might be.

The exhibition is divided into four sections:

## Square One

### Game in focus: Chess



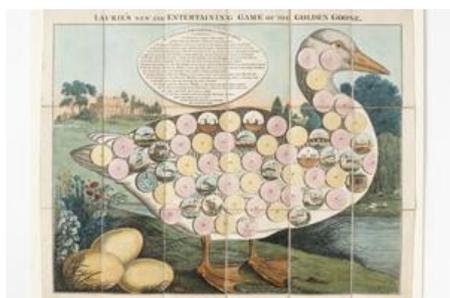
The earliest known games come from the Middle East and are thousands of years old. Many of the classic games still played today have their origins in the Far East. The game of *Go* was first played in China more than 2,500 years ago and the popular games of *Ludo* and *Snakes and Ladders* are derived from early adult Indian games. Playing these games was very much a part of everyday life.

A chess set made up from pieces of 16 different chess sets is on display demonstrating a range of material, design and country of origin.

### Game of Life

#### Game in focus: Game of the Goose

During the 18th and 19th centuries a particular type of board game was popular in Britain. These were



intended to be both educational and entertaining and were produced mainly for children. Topics of history, geography, science and moral values were covered and the games were attractively designed. A popular theme was a journey through life, an idea that was carried forward into the modern era.

*Gioco dell'Oca* or *the Game of the Goose* originated in Italy in the 16th century and is regarded as the father of the modern race game. It

introduced new elements of themes and illustrations into board games that have been copied and adapted ever since.

### Fun and Games

#### Games in focus: Monopoly



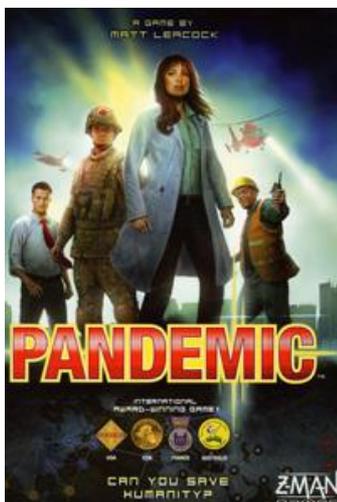
The 20th century produced the classic family games that are still played today - *Monopoly*, *Scrabble* and *Cluedo* among others. Easier and cheaper printing techniques led to an explosion of board game production. Games based on all sorts of human endeavor appeared, inspired by invention and exploration, sport and other leisure activities, travel and the factual and fictional world of television and film. Today, the influence of the outside world, particularly in the

area of popular culture, continues to be reflected in the games played.

There is an early version of *Monopoly* based on the Landlord's Game, and an early Charles Darrow design of the game before it was mass produced commercially.

## Game Changer

### Game in focus: Pandemic



During the second half of the twentieth century board games started to incorporate electronic elements. With the development of game systems such as the *ZX Spectrum*, board games were created in digital form and popular arcade games like *Pac Man* were turned into board games.

At the same time a new kind of physical board game emerged in Europe which has continued to increase in popularity. These designer games like *Settlers of Catan* have prompted a new wave of social and co-operative playing.

This section will feature early drawings and prototypes from American designer Matt Leacock, best known for the game *Pandemic*.

At the end of the exhibition visitors are invited to discover what kind of game player they are - a gloating winner, a cheater or a sore loser. And there is an opportunity to share game playing thoughts and memories.

The role of design, both in the games themselves and in their marketing, is explored throughout the exhibition. It examines how the design of a game reflects the time and place of its production and how design adapts to different forms of use. Early games had simple designs and some could be reproduced wherever one happened to be. Advances in printing techniques allowed for more elaborate and colourful game boards. Modes of transport have resulted in miniature travel versions of board games and the digital age has witnessed the development of new electronic games and the redesign of the old.

Games companies employing teams of designers have created board games, sometimes with great success, sometimes not. The exhibition includes designs and prototypes of games and features examples designed and made by players themselves.

\*Source: [www.npd.com](http://www.npd.com) covering the UK.

For further press information please contact the V&A Museum of Childhood: [mocpress@vam.ac.uk](mailto:mocpress@vam.ac.uk)

Press images can be downloaded, after registering, at <http://pressimages.vam.ac.uk>.

## Notes to editors

The V&A Museum of Childhood aims to encourage everyone to explore the themes of childhood past and present and develop an appreciation of creative design through its inspirational collections and programmes. The Museum is part of the V&A, housing the national childhood collection. The galleries are designed to show the collections in a way which is accessible to adults and children of all ages.

V&A Museum of Childhood, Cambridge Heath Road, London E2 9PA.

Nearest tube: Bethnal Green. Open daily: 10.00 – 17.45, last admission 17.30.

Switchboard: 020 8983 5200 [vam.ac.uk/moc](http://vam.ac.uk/moc)

*Game Plan: Board Games Rediscovered* is a FREE exhibition

The exhibition opens on 8 October 2016 and runs until 23 April 2017.

## The curator

Catherine Howell is Curator of Toys and Games at the V&A Museum of Childhood. Her main research interests are games, optical toys and soft toys and she has contributed her expertise to a number of exhibitions and publications.

She has played a key role in many of the Museum's major exhibitions including *Alice: The Wonderland of Lewis Carroll* (1998). She was the curator of the hugely successful touring exhibitions *Teddy Bear Story: 100 years of the teddy bear* (2002) and *Magic Worlds* (2011). Catherine Howell has worked at the Museum of Childhood since 1991 and is the collections specialist on the history of childhood toys and games.

## Family Events

### HALF TERM: PLAY THE MUSEUM GAME

Monday 13 – Friday 17 February

11.00-16.00

Experience the Museum like a giant board game. A series of workshops and activities inviting you to view the Museum's collection and building playfully and differently.

Drop-in, All ages

### THE LOST ROOM

Sunday 12 – Saturday 18 February

10.30, 11.30, 12.30, 14.30, 15.30, 16.30 (60 minutes)

The Lost Room by Art Of Disappearing is a unique immersive experience for two people, for ages 8-100 years plus! Once every hour, two intrepid adventurers put on headphones and enter a private interactive world. Get ready for a wonderful adventure through a curious landscape where your imagination takes flight...

£12 for two people, Age 8+

#### TOY GENERATOR CARD GAME WORKSHOP

Monday 13 – Friday 17 February

10.30, 12.00, 14.00, 15.30 (60 minutes)

Join artist Amy Brown to become a toy designer, through playing a collaborative game with your family. You will play a card game, which will give you a design brief to come up with a fun new toy to add to the Museum's display.

£5 per child, Age 4+

#### THE MUSEUM BOARD GAME WORKSHOP

Monday 13 – Wednesday 15 February

10.40, 12.30, 14.40 (80 minutes)

Design and create your own board game to play at the Museum or at home. Choose characters and locations from the wonderful and quirky collection, make game pieces with collage materials, and design the board like your own version of the Museum map.

£7 per child, ages 5+

#### **Grown-up Evening Events**

##### SETTLERS OF CATAN DAY WITH MINDSPORT OLYMPIAD

Saturday 18 March 2017

10.00 – 17.00

3 rounds with 4 players per table

Get ready to build and nurture your own civilization in Settlers of Catan. Catan is a multiplayer board game designed by Klaus Teuber and first published in 1995 in Germany by Franckh-Kosmos Verlag (Kosmos). Players assume the roles of settlers, each attempting to build and develop holdings while trading and acquiring resources.

Gold, silver and bronze medals will be awarded to the top three players of the event. The winner of the event will also receive a complimentary all you can play ticket (worth £120) for August 2017's Mind Sports Olympiad.

Suitable for Ages 8 +

£7 per person

##### PANDEMIC LIVE! CAN YOU HELP SAVE HUMANITY?

Thursday 23rd March 18.30 – 21.00

Can you help our team of award-winning comedians save the world? The Museum of Childhood is in lockdown as our host (and 2015 UK Carcassonne Champion) James Cook asks you to join us in a game of Pandemic unlike any you've ever played before. Based on the board game by Matt Leacock.

Comedic players include:

Seymour Mace - Edinburgh Comedy Award nominee, as seen on Dave's One Night Stand, Hebburn and Ideal

Miranda Kane - Perth Fringe Comedy Award nominee, Metro columnist and writer/star of Audible sitcom 'Slaving Away'

£10 per person

#### GAME ON: CONTEMPORARY BOARD GAMES STUDY DAY

Saturday 1 April 2017

10.00 – 16.30

We are entering a golden age of board game design according to renowned designer Matt Leacock. Discover more about this exciting board game renaissance and how the past has collided with the present to create an exciting contemporary playtime! Hear from games designers and academics; see early treasures from the museum's collection and join in the board game jam.

Check website for details

£20, concessions £15