Games Happen

Design lessons from MirrorMoon & Fotonica

Pietro Righi Riva
Co-founder/Studio Director - Santa Ragione

INDEPENDENT GAMES SUMMIT

SANTA RAGIONE

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE EUROPE
COLOGNE, GERMANY
AUGUST 13–15, 2012
2012

SANTA RAGIONE

FOTONICA

LUNARCADE

INDIE GAMES CIRCUS

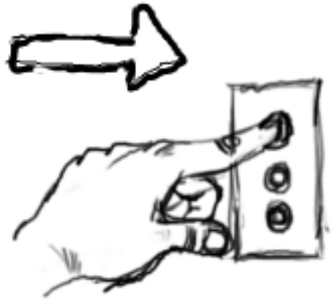
"The holy grail is to spend less time making the picture than it takes people to look at it."
Banksy

What **parts** of a game can we actually design?

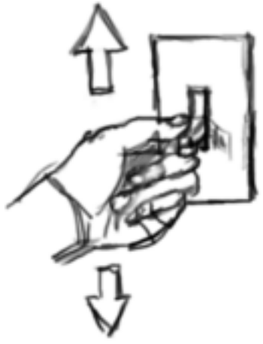
I LOVE
Baby Amore
PIPI POPO

AF.FOR.DAN.CE is a quality of an object, or an environment, which **allows** an individual to perform an action

AF.FOR.DAN.CE is a clue to the function of an object



Button - Push



Switch - Flip

Knob - Rotate

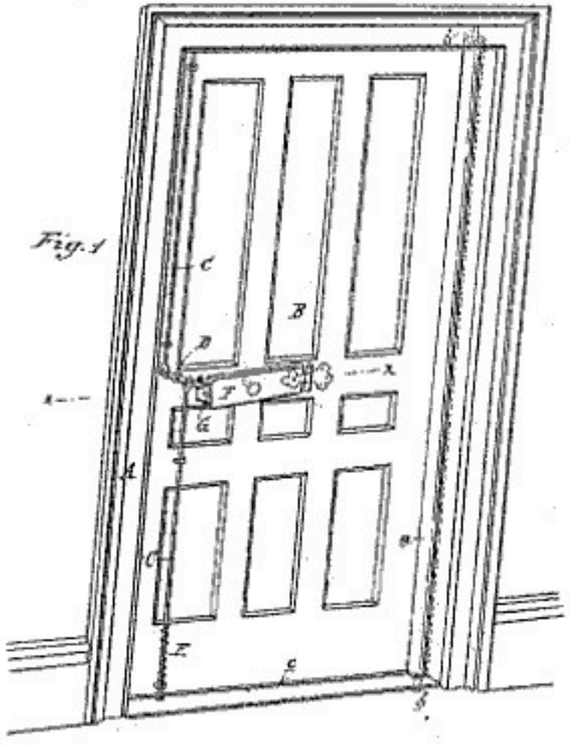
Light
Feedback

(No Model.)

J. M. J. WERNERT.

DOOR.

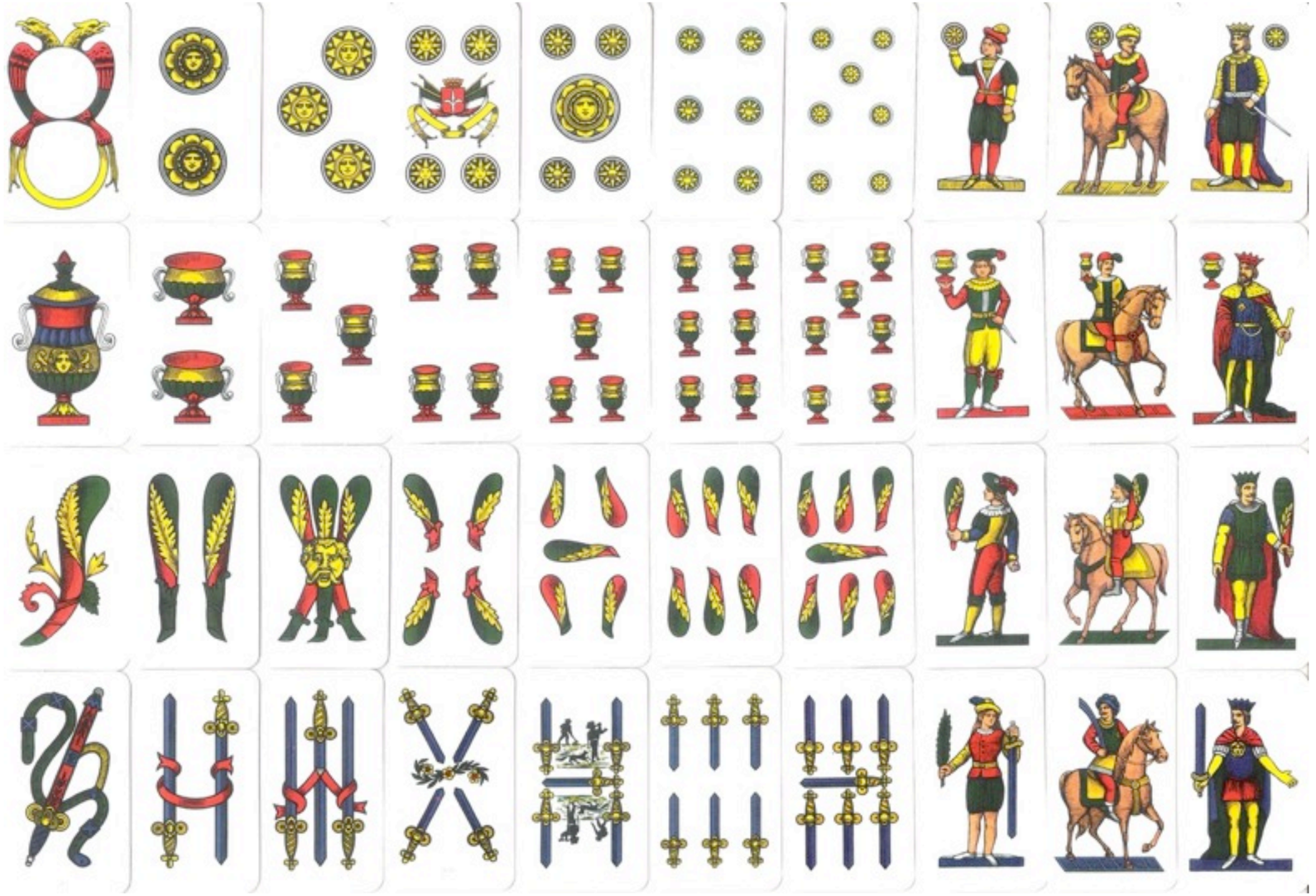
No. 278,066. Patented May 22, 1883.



AF.FOR.DAN.CE is the **array** of "action possibilities" latent in an object
Gibson, 1977

AF.FOR.DAN.CE is the object's quality through which the user is **invited** to act upon it in certain way

Norman, 1988



GDC 11
Europe

Pose like a ninja

Any player whose button
is pressed loses

1 Games Happen

2 We don't design games

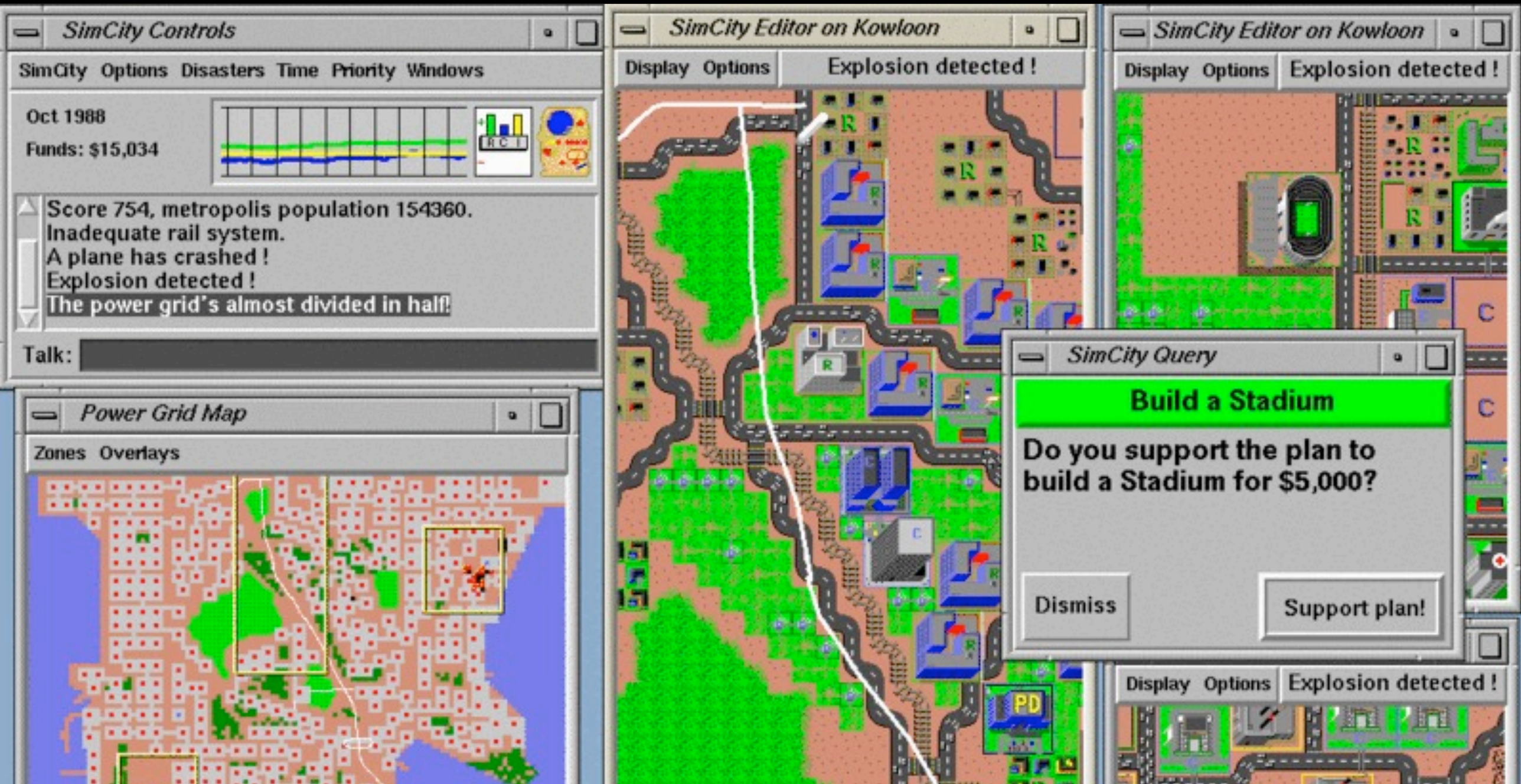
3 We hope for games to take place

RisiKo!
RisiKo!
RisiKo!
Armate
Oceano Artico
Oceano Atlantico
Oceano Pacifico
Oceano Indiano

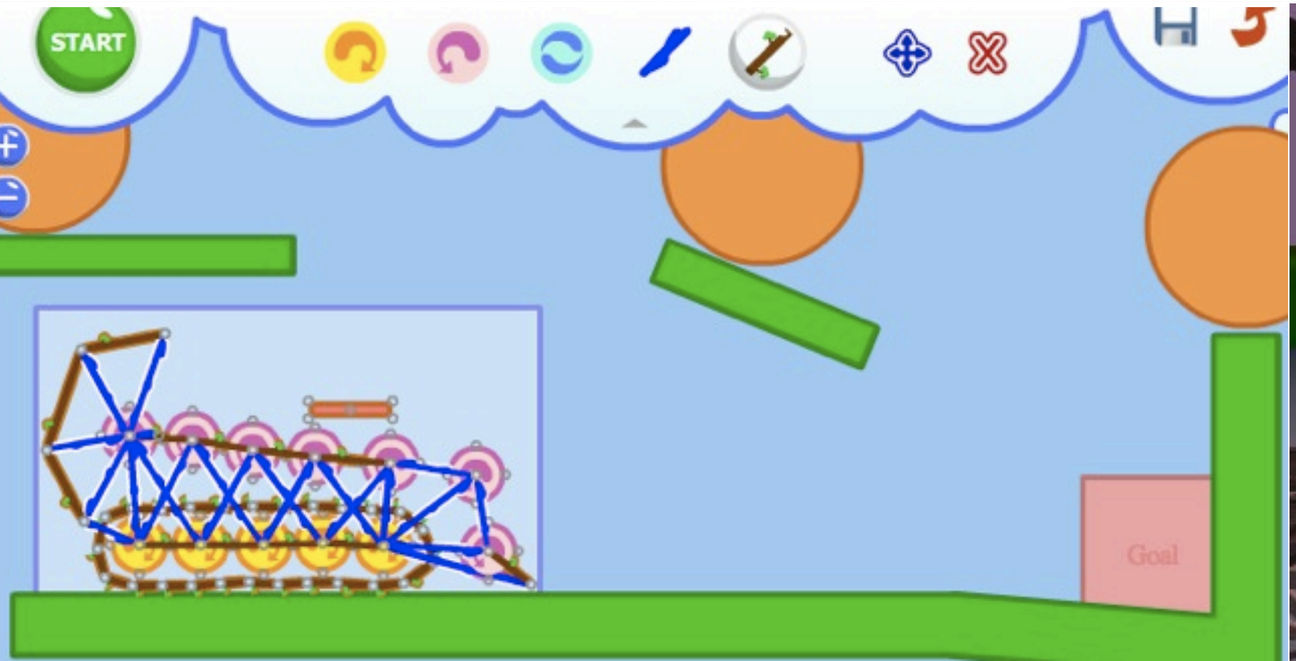
What makes a game “broken”?

QWOP © Foddy.net 2008
0.8 metres

L
B
C
S
X
G
Y
E
P
Z
U
N
T
D
F


SimCity Controls
SimCity Options Disasters Time Priority Windows
Oct 1988
Funds: $15,034
Score 754, metropolis population 154360.
Inadequate rail system.
A plane has crashed !
Explosion detected !
The power grid's almost divided in half!
Talk:
Power Grid Map
Zones Overlays
SimCity Editor on Kowloon
Display Options
Explosion detected !
SimCity Editor on Kowloon
Display Options
Explosion detected !
SimCity Query
Build a Stadium
Do you support the plan to build a Stadium for $5,000?
Dismiss
Support plan!
Display Options
Explosion detected !

LH 472 LAS PROYAS
CL 5794 ZAGREMBERG
OH 74 ALASBERG
IL 43 BAKLAYAMA
KA 758 YIRE RIVER
LH 987 LAS CREYAS
OH 9685 BUNYALIA
LA 4793 YORKOS
PA 47 NUEVOS VENUZIA
TY 7932 LE PANZA
LO 799 THEMORIO
MO 4783 USLAMIA

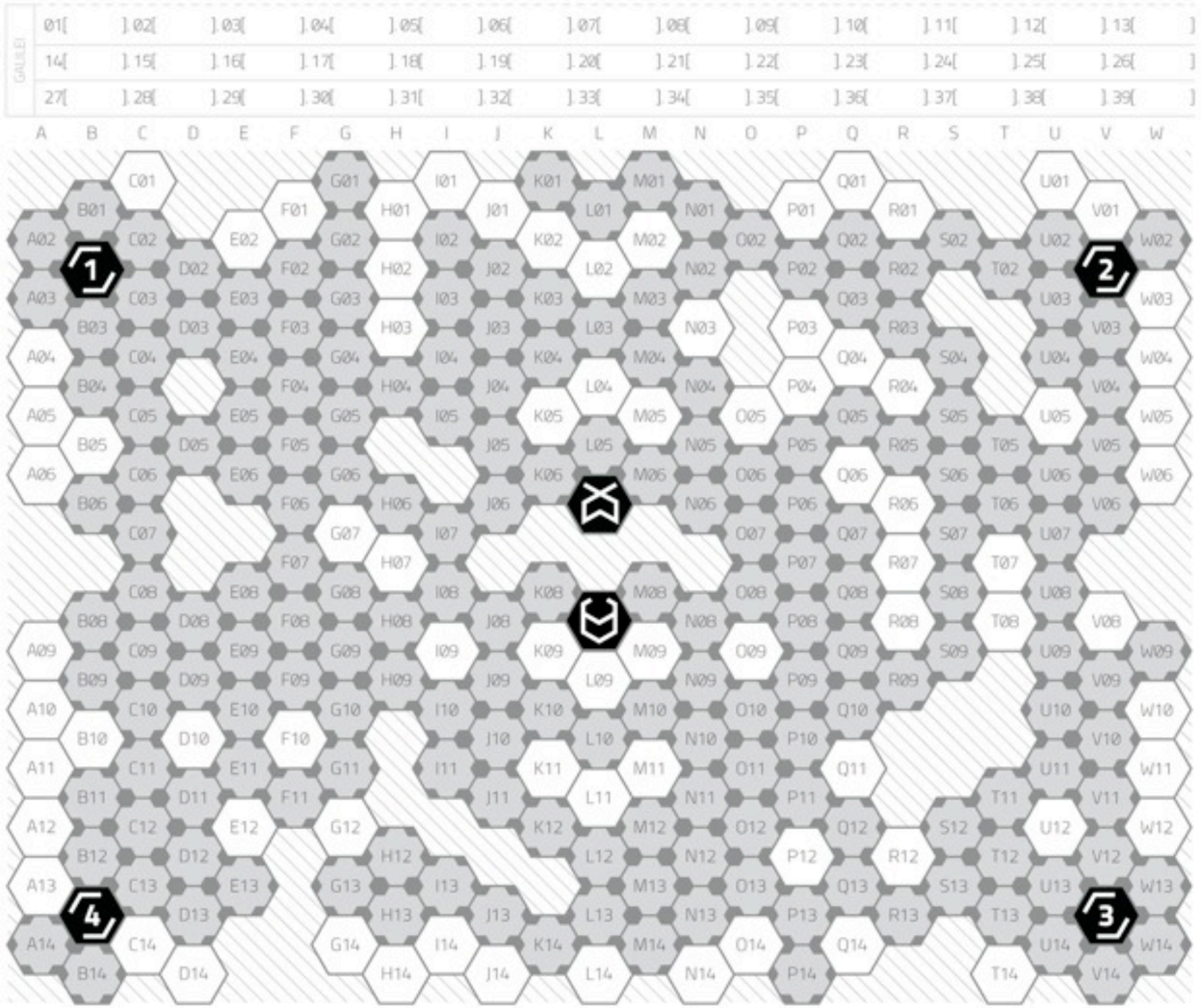

START
Goal

EDDIE'S BOOKS
USED AND NEW BOOKS · COMICS · PERIODICALS

I hate dreams like that.

Escape From The Aliens In Outer Space, 2010

ESCAPE
FROM THE ALIENS IN OUTER SPACE



"Now, one **neat trick** is that the **aliens can move 1 or 2** spaces per turn, whereas the humans can only move one. So, if you're playing as an alien **you don't want to run around too quickly and give away the fact that you're an alien**."

"As a game, it's bad. Very bad. **Broken**, unbalanced, and not at all put together.

I have a cynical hunch that without the "minimalistic" art style that fans of the game get so wet about, the game would be far less popular.

Yep, you can certainly **turn this into a fun game** with a lot of work."

“With the wrong group of people, this is somewhere around a 2.
With the right group of people,
it breaks the chart.
[...] **So much** is done here with **so little**.”

"The game is extremely malleable; you can home rule the hell out of it, create your own variations and scenarios, yet keep the integrity of the game intact."

Author:	E.g. "Ennio Maria Dominoni"
Your Email Address:	optional@example.com
Scenario Name:	My Scenario
Suggested # of players:	E.g. "2-8"
Description:	E.g. "Tactical game scenario in which the Aliens need to escape from the ship before the Humans arrive to the nest."

A. GENERAL MOVEMENT CHANGES

A.1) ☐ Players draw one Dangerous Sector Card even when moving into Secure Sectors.

A.2) ☐ Players can stand still in a Sector, but must declare it by saying "I don't move."

A.3) ☐ Players do not declare when they have been eliminated by an attack. They are still eliminated, and take no further actions or movements for the rest of the game (each turn they must pretend to move by writing something in their Movement Record).

A.4) ☐ Players cannot move into Secure Sectors

A.5) ☐ Any player that is eliminated by an attack starts over in his Starting Sector at the beginning of his next turn.

A.6) ☐ Only Aliens can move into Secure Sectors

B. HUMAN MOVEMENT CHANGES

B.1) ☐ Human characters start the game in the Alien Sector.

B.2) ☐ Humans can move up to two sectors at a time instead of only one.

B.3) ☐ Eliminated Humans become Aliens, and continue the game from the Sector where they were eliminated.

B.4) ☐ Human characters start the game on one or more Escape Hatch Sectors (chosen by the players). You cannot escape from the ship using the Escape Hatch Sector you begin the game in.
E.g. "Hatch 1

B.5) ☐ Humans can attack, following the same rule as the Aliens. But, a human who successfully attacks another player does not increase his movement speed.

B.6) ☐ There are no Human players.

C. ALIEN MOVEMENT CHANGES

C.1) ☐ Aliens can move up to three Sectors per turn, or up to four if they have eliminated at least one Human.

C.2) ☐ Aliens increase their maximum movement per turn by one Sector for each Human they eliminate.

C.3) ☐ Aliens do not increase their maximum movement when

C.6) ☐ Aliens start the game on one or more Escape Hatch Sectors (chosen by the players).
E.g. "Hatch 1

C.7) ☐ Aliens cannot be eliminated when attacked.

C.8) ☐ There are no Alien players. All Humans who can escape before 39 rounds have been played win.

D. ESCAPE HATCH CHANGES

D.1) ☐ Escape Hatch Sectors are always open and can be used by all Humans. Do not use the Escape Hatch Cards.

D.2) ☐ Escape Hatch Sectors are all open at the beginning of the game. Do not use the Escape Hatch Cards. But, each Escape Hatch Sector can be used by only one Human, and becomes blocked after use.

D.3) ☐ Aliens can move onto Escape Hatch Sectors. If they do, they can permanently block that Sector by attacking it.

D.4) ☐ Blocked Escape Hatch Sectors can be opened by using one or more Item Cards (chosen by the players). You can choose to require specific cards, or simply to discard any cards.
E.g. "Telepo

D.5) ☐ Players can try to open a blocked Escape Hatch Sector by drawing an Escape Hatch Card when they move into an Escape Hatch Sector. Since players must move every round, you can only attempt this every two turns.

D.6) ☐ All Escape Hatch Sectors are blocked at the beginning of the game. They open automatically after a number of turns have passed (chosen by the players).
E.g. "10 Tur

D.7) ☐ All Escape Hatch Sectors are blocked at the beginning of the game. They are open only during specific turns (chosen by the players: e.g., only on odd-numbered turns, or turns in the 20's, etc.).
E.g. "10-20"

D.8) ☐ Only one or some of the Escape Hatch Sectors (chosen by the players) are open (or openable, if combined with any of the rules above).
E.g. "Hatch 1

E. WINNING CONDITION CHANGES

E.1) ☐ Only the last living Human survivor can leave the spaceship.

E.2) ☐ The Humans only win if all the Aliens are eliminated.

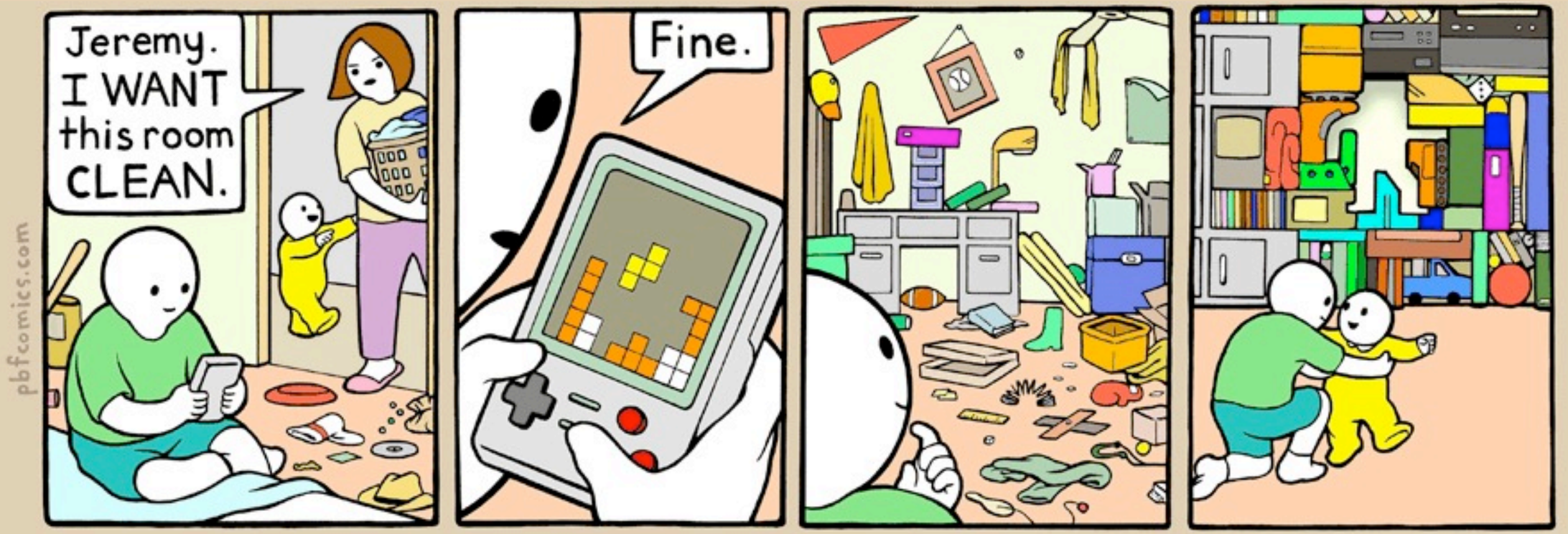
E.3) ☐ Any Player that eliminates at least a certain number of other players (chosen by the players) is a winner.
E.g. "2 Playe

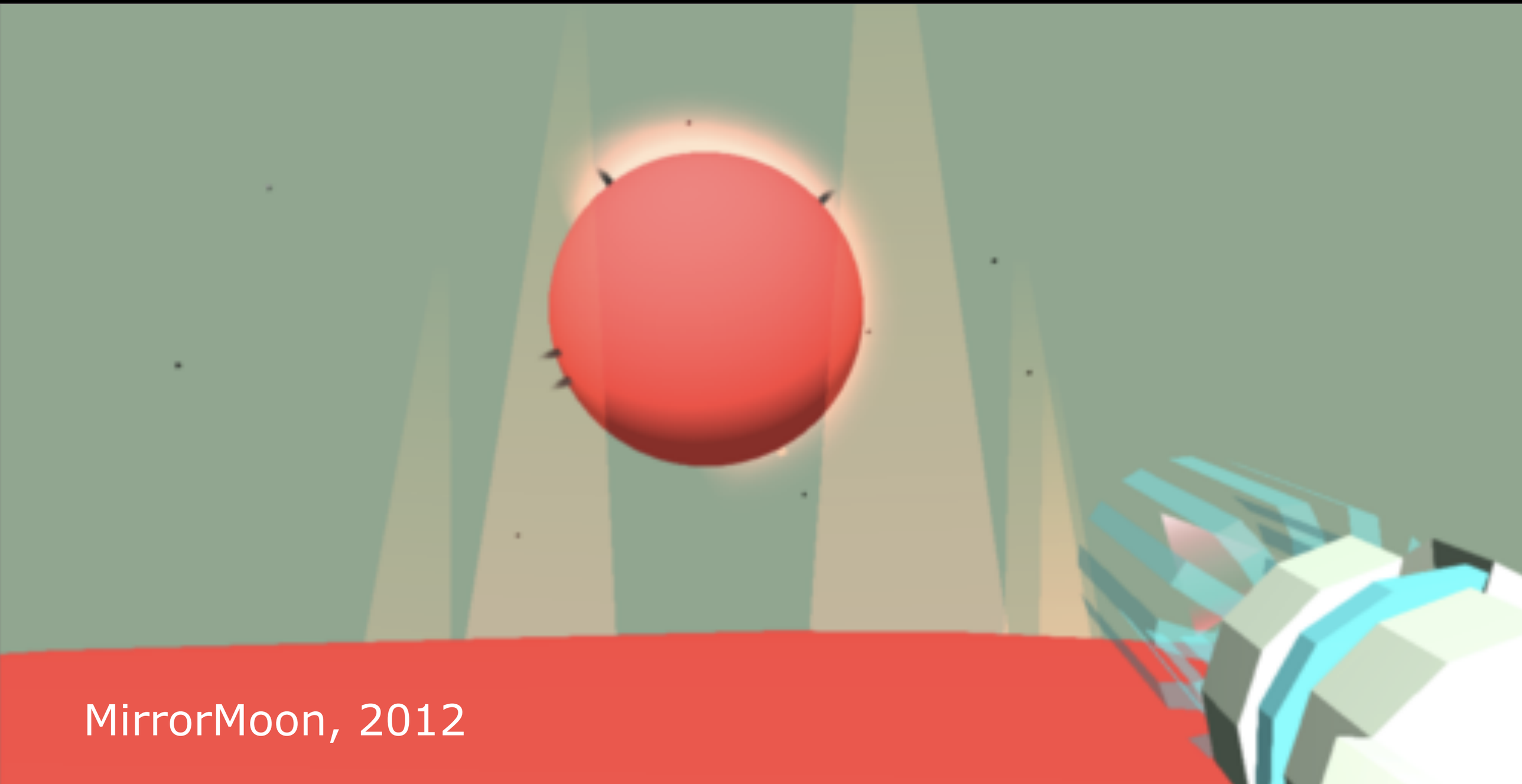
E.4) ☐ Any Human that survives a given number of turns (chosen by the players) is a winner.

We really really like:

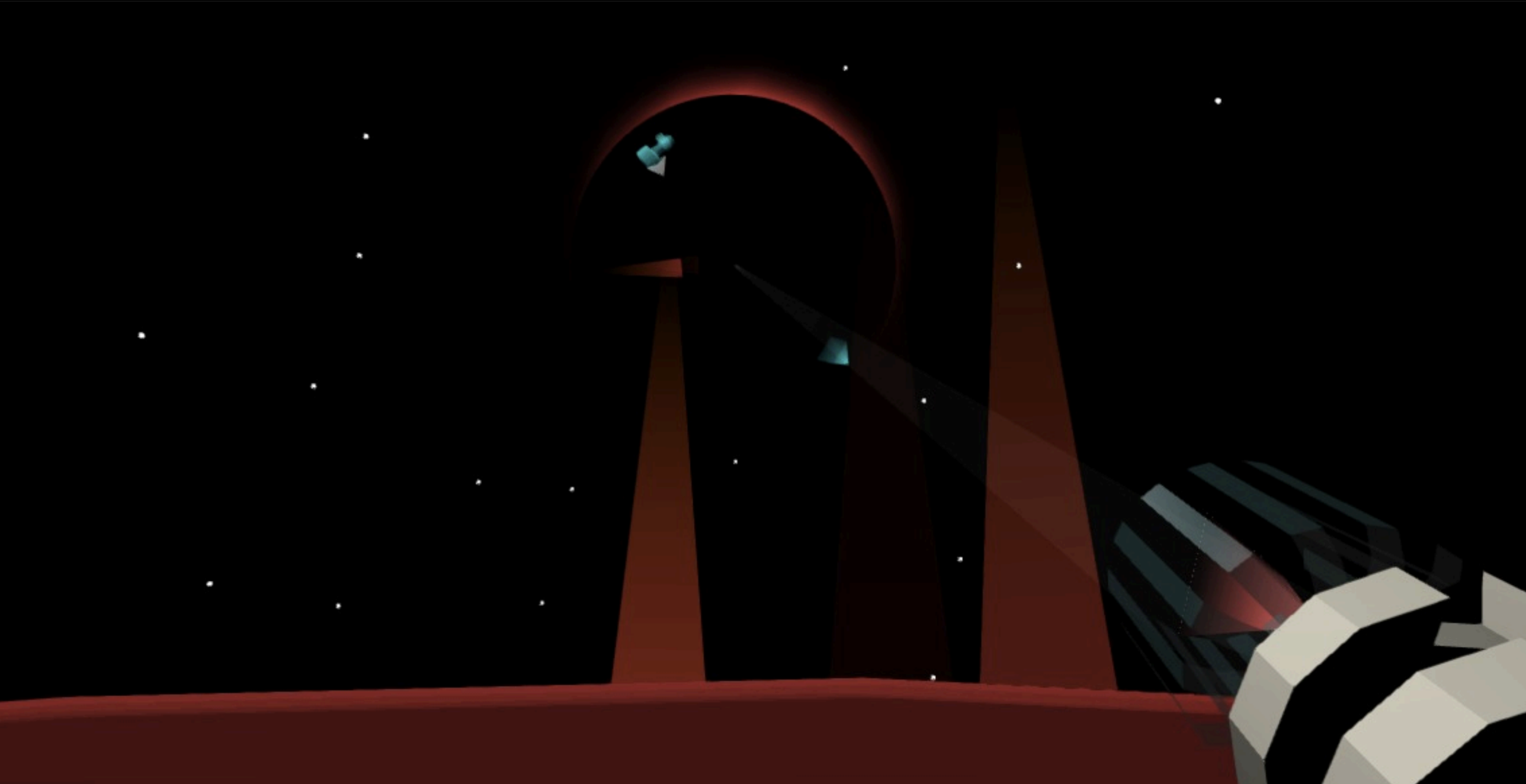
- unclear victory conditions

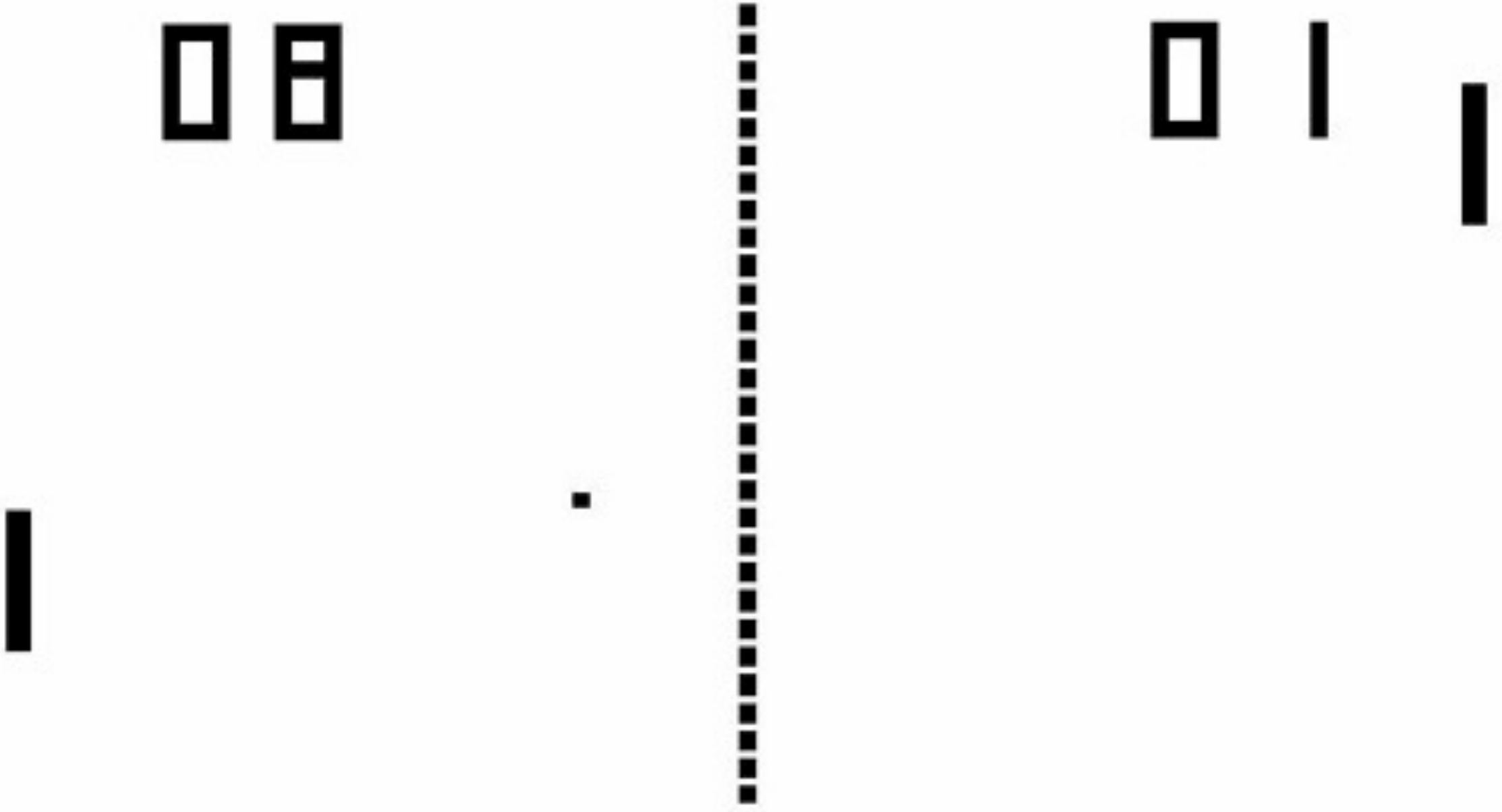
- consistent mood <3


Jeremy.
I WANT
this room
CLEAN.
Fine.
pbfcomics.com



MirrorMoon, 2012





INDEPENDENT GAMES SUMMIT
GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE™ EUROPE
AUGUST 13-15, 2012
WWW.GDCEUROPE.COM
Fotonica, 2011

"The holy grail is to spend less time making the picture than it takes people to look at it."
Banksy

Thank you!

-

pietro@santaragione.com

info@lunarcade.it

@santaragione

@mello42