

## The Mire of Artists and Designers

by Jonathan Morales-Rocha,

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### Description

The Mire of Artists and Designers (MAD) is a collaborative game where 2 players must work together to build a specified object out of LEGO bricks without communicating verbally.

However, only one player, called the “artist,” knows what the object is. The other player, called the “designer,” is given a certain design constraint that the object must adhere to.

## **Materials**

- Deck of “Artist” cards
- Deck of “Designer” cards
- Assorted red, yellow, blue, and green LEGO bricks

## **Setup**

1. Shuffle the Artist and Designer card decks and place them face-down on the table.
2. Place the LEGO bricks in the center of the play area and decide on a role for each player. One player will be the “artist,” and the other player will be the “designer.”
3. Each player draws a card from their respective decks. Players may not show the cards they draw to any other player.

## **Gameplay**

After the cards have been drawn, players are not allowed to speak, write, or draw until the game is over. Players must work together to build the object on the “Artist” card while adhering to the design constraint on the “Designer” card. Both players are allowed to build to illustrate their object or constraint.

Once the object adheres to the design constraint, the designer may raise their hands to indicate they are satisfied. Likewise, once the artist believes they are finished with the object, they may raise their hands to indicate they are satisfied. When both players are satisfied, the designer must guess what the object is. If they are correct, the game is over. If they are wrong, the artist must continue tinkering with the object until the designer can guess what it is.

## **Extending the Game**

Players are encouraged to build upon these mechanics. Feel free to add a time limit, or add new LEGO brick colors/types and tougher “Artist” and “Designer” cards to go with them!

## **Some History**

MAD was designed to emphasize the problems that emerge from poor communication between game artists and game designers. In the game, the object (or “Artist”) card is representative of a game’s art style and aesthetics -- the UX and playability. The design constraint (or “Designer”) card is representative of technical limitations (including skill limitations) and game mechanics. Many of our playtesters reported that our game evoked the same feelings of frustration that are prevalent in UCSC’s game design programs. Our game offers a safe and fun environment in which game developers can work through these frustrations.

Sample “Artist” and “Designer” cards by Shoshana Bortner

VVVVV

The **M**ire of **A**rtists & **D**esigners  
**ARTIST**

The **M**ire of **A**rtists & **D**esigners  
**ARTIST**

The **M**ire of **A**rtists & **D**esigners  
**ARTIST**

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**ARTIST**

The **M**ire of **A**rtists & **D**esigners  
**ARTIST**

The **M**ire of **A**rtists & **D**esigners  
**ARTIST**

Car

Fruit

Chair

Tree

Lamp

Plane

Rocket

Phone

House

Vehicle

Animal

Key

The **M**ire of **A**rtists & **D**esigners  
**DESIGNER**

The **M**ire of **A**rtists & **D**esigners  
**DESIGNER**

The **M**ire of **A**rtists & **D**esigners  
**DESIGNER**

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**DESIGNER**

The **M**ire of **A**rtists & **D**esigners  
**DESIGNER**

The **M**ire of **A**rtists & **D**esigners  
**DESIGNER**

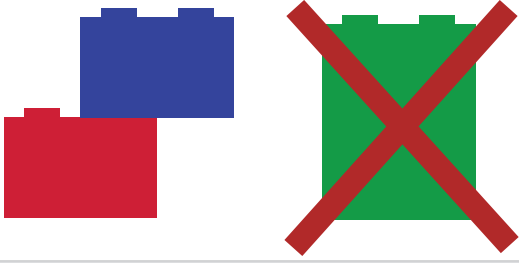
The **M**ire of **A**rtists & **D**esigners  
**DESIGNER**

The **M**ire of **A**rtists & **D**esigners  
**DESIGNER**

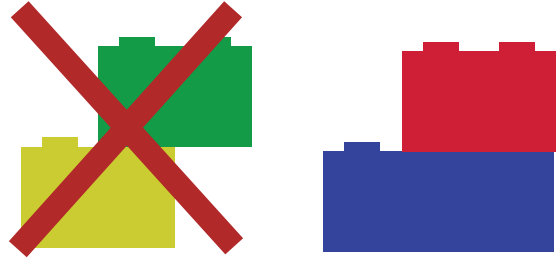
The **M**ire of **A**rtists & **D**esigners  
**DESIGNER**

The **M**ire of **A**rtists & **D**esigners  
**DESIGNER**

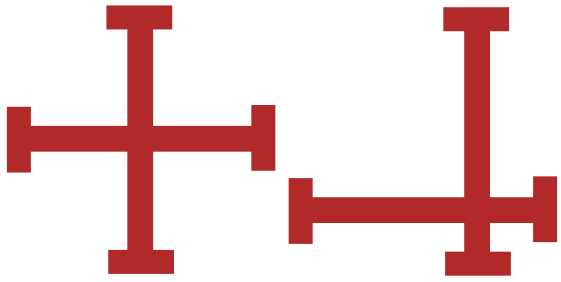
Bricks of the same color may not touch



Bricks of the same size may not touch



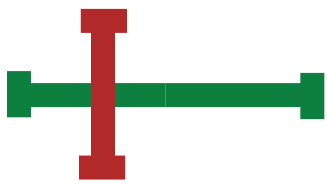
Object must be as wide as it is long



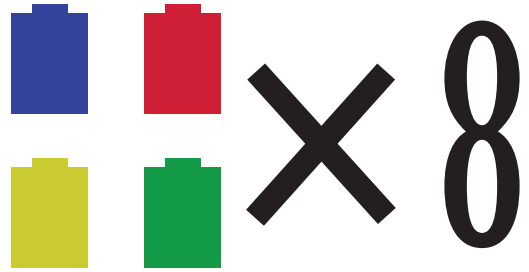
Object must be at least 12 bricks tall



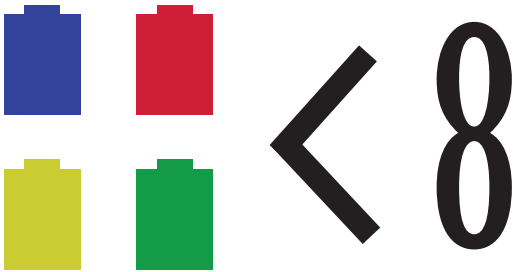
Object must be twice as long as it is wide



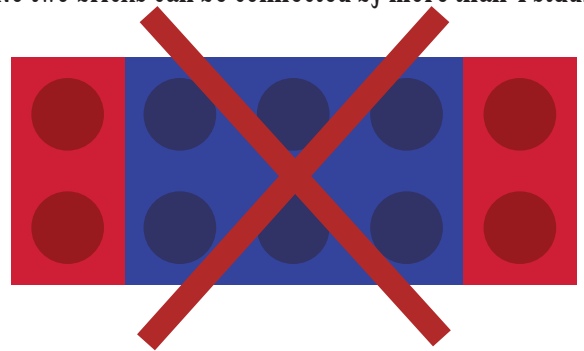
Object must include at least 8 pieces of each color



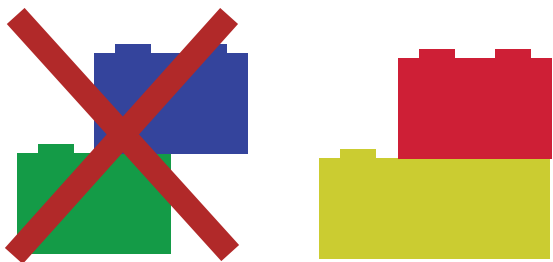
Object may not include more than 8 bricks of any single color



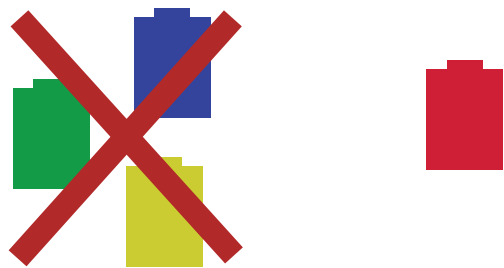
No two bricks can be connected by more than 4 studs



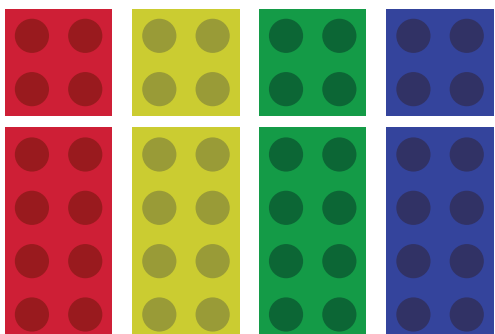
All bricks must be connected by at least 2 studs



Object must be made of only one color



Object must include a 2x2 piece & a 2x4 piece of each color



Object can only be made with pieces that are 2 studs by more than 1

