

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

— of game design —

## WHAT IS A GAME

- Closed formal system
- Structured conflict
- Resolves to unequal outcome
- Supports aesthetic goal

## MECHANICS?

RULE-BASED SYSTEM FOR EXPLORATION THROUGH FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

## 4 MAIN ELEMENTS

### ① PLAYERS

- Player vs. game
- Player vs. player
- Multilateral competition
- Unilateral competition
- Team vs. team
- Multi-player co-op
- Multi-player player co-op

### ② OUTCOMES

- zero-sum & non zero-sum

### ③ PROCEDURES

- Rules & mechanics

### ④ BOUNDARIES

- The magic circle
- Where do you stop playing?
- Games are contexts from which meaning can emerge

### ⑤ OBJECTIVES

- Capture
- Race
- Alignment
- Outwit
- Forbidden action
- Construction
- Solution
- No objective / self-directed

# PLAYING LIKE A DESIGNER

## OBSERVE WHILE EXPERIENCING

Take in as many details as possible

Recognize your biases  
ex) familiarity

Focus on emotions  
(yourself / around you)

## BREAKPOINTS

- ① systemic breaks
- ② technical breakpoints

## PRESS ON ALL MENUS & BUTTONS

MOST IMPORTANT WITHIN GAME

## FIRST-ORDER OPTIMAL STRATEGIES

POWERFUL BUT EASY TO DO