

THE GAME OF LIFE

Mark Ritchie

Game of Life

Drawing, gouache, watercolor, cut paper

Statement

This whimsical book-game is a departure from my main studio focus. Some of the imagery and the use of paper, printed layers and stenciling, and use of line and drawn marks are familiar working methods. The spiraling accordion was a challenge and the pop-up structures required a few “dummy books”. I am not a native three-dimensional thinker!

I took a literal approach to the theme of this book and produced a folding structure with pop-up folio elements that when completely unfolded creates a game board. The book was inspired by a late 19th century, lithographically printed steeplechase board game that I own. I like the appearance and ephemeral nature of paper games from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Life is frequently imaged as a series of tasks or obstacles that must be overcome. This book is linear and moves in a spiral to the center of the board through a series of metaphorical obstacles: hurdles, water, hoops of fire and dark forests. The lone racehorse playing-piece accommodates a single player that must move one space at a time.

Another artist looking at this work said, “It is snakes and ladders with just snakes”. It is certainly not a game of skill, but rather one of chance and perseverance.

Biography

Mark maintains a studio and residence in the windy solitude of Laramie, Wyoming. He earned a BFA. in Printmaking from the University of Kansas, studied in Cardiff, Wales, spent time at Peacock Printmakers in Aberdeen, Scotland, was awarded the MFA. degree in Printmaking from Indiana University and is currently a Professor, teaching printmaking, at the University of Wyoming. His work is exhibited nationally and internationally.

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