

Clients v/s Architects

Modern Architecture

By Lincoln Stoller

Throughout history palaces were built for kings and temples for gods. This changed with the dawn of Modern Architecture in the 20th century. For the first time, architecture was a personal art, and the architect was the artist. Status symbols are now designed by famous architects, monuments to their own greatness and price is of no object. Why should it be?

The result was unprecedented designs, extravagant prices, and function that was sometimes missing. Some famous houses functioned so badly they can't be lived in. I explore the strange personalities behind this convoluted history in my book *From The Eye of the Beholder*, which is an extension of this game *Clients v/s Architects*.

This mix of conflict and alliance is a medieval battle. On one side are the architects defending their divine inspiration. On the other side are their clients looking for comfort and stability. Did the clients get what they paid for, their crazy monuments?

Books on architecture don't talk about these battles, but my father was on the job and knew the architects. His notes revealed the haughty attitudes, gamesmanship, and intrigue.

Games as Drama

Clients v/s Architects is the play between the practical and the idealistic. The clients want a practical product. The architects fight for a greater vision.

In *Clients v/s Architects*, each player represents both an architect and their client. Each architect works to secure the greatest amount of funds for their client while trying to claim all of their client's funds for themselves.

The players navigate different mazes while playing cards whose hands open and close actions, paths, and areas within these mazes. *Clients v/s Architects* reflects a conflict we rarely see where sponsors and artists are playing with and praying on each other.

In this game, you cannot tell who you're playing with or against. Your client and architect are in partnership, but it's your architect's advantage that wins the game. You play against the other players indirectly by playing cards that open your maze and close theirs.

Games as History

Architects aren't in direct conflict but they compete for advantage on the same landscape. In the battle for commissions, the winner takes all. In addition to being vanguards and artists, many were petty and childish.

People with strange characters lead strange lives. Many architects are more thought actors not thought leaders; great, childish artists, as I explore in the book. The game this is cartoonish; the book it's historical.

I'm not a board game manufacturer and I'm not aiming for a profit. I'll produce a signed, limited edition set of 150 games assembled from printed, handpicked, and handmade components. If people want more games, let a game manufacturer produce a retail version, but that's beyond this campaign.

The Print-on-Demand paperback of *In the Eye of the Beholder* doesn't have high quality reproductions, and doesn't do justice to my father's photographs. But this paperback is available immediately.

The high quality, hardcover edition requires the offset printing of at least 1,000 copies. So while the book is incidental to the game, the hardcover printing is half the cost.

I hope you'll be interested in both: the game, and the book. Everything is a game, but some games are more important than others!

— **Lincoln Stoller, January 2025**