

ART TO MAKE A FORTUNE

THE GALLERIST

AN INTERESTING TRIP AMONG THE MERCHANTS OF ART



The Gallerist is the new "son" from Vital Lacerda, a designer who brings us very interesting and complex games usually composed of a basic rule and some "sub-mini-games" that are necessary to complete the main one: Vinhos, CO2 and Kanban are his most renowned titles. The Gallerist is basically a Worker Placement game with resources handling, but frankly, as we will see, it cannot be firmly classed in this way



The big box (310x390x80 mm) comes completely full of components of high quality: a big board, 4 large player boards, 4 series of colored meeples (the Assistants) and 3 extra series of smaller ones (the customers), a deck of small cards and a lot of cardboard components. But the "eye-catcher" is the thermoformed tray to host all those components: every piece has its precise place and a transparent lid keeps everything in place. A very nice idea (similar to counter storage trays in wargames) that I would like to see in many other games. My only minor negative note goes to the three wooden easels that tend to fall down every time that the table



is shaken.

SET UP

The set-up of The Gallerist, as in many other games from Lacerda, is a bit longer as many components should be prepared and placed on the board: my suggestion is to store all the components in separate plastic bags, at the end of each game, in order to

sort and place them much quicker for the following one.

On the right side of the board is the ARTIST COLONY where the Artists and their "Works" are placed: paintings, sculptures, photos and digital artworks. There are two kind of Artists: let's call them "Unknowns" (blue color) and "Famous" (red color).

On the left side, we see the INTERNATIONAL MARKET, composed of 7 rows and 3 columns (21 cases): the first 4 rows are filled with 12 Reputation tiles that may be acquired by the players to get bonus or Victory Points (VP). The following 3 rows are important to score extra points.

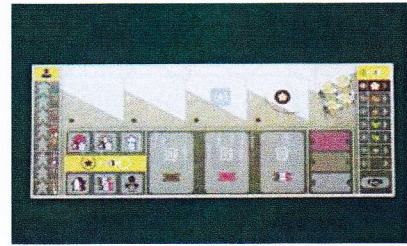
On top of the board is the SALES OFFICE with 4 Contract cards. Here the players will take the necessary contracts in order to sell, later, the acquired Artworks.

Finally, on the bottom, we have two separate zones: the first is the MEDIA CENTER, where the players will recruit new Assistants or promote their Artists in order to gain fame (and money). The second is the INFLUENCE TRACK, with 35 cases where are printed "Fame" stars and the "Money" coins (more on them later).



In the middle of the board there is a round square with 5 visitors (randomly taken from a bag) waiting to purchase their tickets and visit the four galleries around (one per player).

Each player takes a personal board, 1 Gallerist marker, 10 Assistants (2 are placed on the desks and 8 on the unemployment queue), 10 Coins, and 1 Reputation tiles (4 of them are available at the beginning, one per player). Finally, one Art Dealer card and one Curator card are randomly distributed: they are, in effect, a sort of objectives useful to gain extra VP.



THE GAME

The basic mechanics of the game are simple: in turn the players move their marker (the Gallerist) to one of the four zones on the board, eventually pushing out any other marker that was already positioned there. Then they select one of the two possible main actions and, if they wish, they may also make a secondary action. The owners of the "pushed" markers may now make a subsidiary action or a main action if they wish to pay part of their Fame. And everything starts again....

But let's look a little closer to each single sector

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A complex game difficult to crack initially but very rewarding once you learned the mechanics.

(1) - ARTIST COLONY

Here it is possible to "discover" a new Artist, turning upside his tile (if still covered) and placing a cube on the lower position of his "Fame track" (printed on the tile). Each Artist has TWO small "signature" tiles that allow the players to use their artworks: the first player to "discover" an artist takes one of them and places it on his personal board. This tile will grant him the purchase of one "artwork" of this Artist in the future, paying the initial cost even if his fame was increased (increasing the fame, of course, will also increase the cost of the artworks). Once an Artist's tile has been turned on and a signature tile is still available, any other player may purchase one of his "Artworks" paying the "current" price indicated on the Artist's fame track and placing the second "signature" tile on his personal board at the right case (according to the fame level). Now the works of this Artist are no more available until one of the first two is sold: if this happens the related signature tile will come back on the Artist Colony and will be available to purchase a new artwork.

The second available action of this sector is ... purchasing an artist's work, paying the price indicated on his fame track.

(2) - MEDIA CENTER

Here it is possible to hire new Assistants: each player may have a maximum of 4 Assistants in his personal board (4 desks are printed on the board to remind this point): two of them are already assigned at the game's start, while the other eight are waiting on the unemployment queue (on the left of the personal board). During the game those Assistants may be assigned to a temporary work on one of the four sectors: this happens when a player moves his Gallerist to another sector, leaving one of his Assistants (if still available) in his place. The reason? If another Gallerist arrives in this sector the Assistant is pushed out, but his owner is allowed to perform a secondary action before sending him back to the office. In the middle and final part of the game the Assistants are much more useful in the International Market, where they stay until the end of the game: this explains why at a certain point of the game it is absolutely necessary to hire new Assistants.

As an alternative, players may select the second available action: promoting one of their Artists. On the top right of each Artist's tile is printed his original level (usually "0" or "1" for the blue tiles and "2" or "3" for the red ones). This level may be improved with the "promotion" action: the players spend a number of Influence Points (IP) equal to the new level that they wish to purchase (from 0 to 1, from 1 to 2, etc.) and place the new promotion tile on the Artist. This action will automatically increase the fame of the artist and, consequently, the value of his artworks (from the initial zero to a maximum of 20). As a side advantage of this action the players get some bonus: new tickets, new visitors, some money or an increase of the IP.

(3) - Sector SALES OFFICE

The more famous an Artist is, the higher is the price of his works. After a few turns, it will be necessary to make some cash selling the acquired artworks: to do that the Gallerist has to visit this section twice. The first, obviously, is necessary to take a "Contract": the player selects one of the four available cards and places it on his personal board. Which contract should be selected depends on the kind of artwork already on his Gallery (the icon on the card must match one of the owned artworks) and also on the special bonus depicted on the card. You may, for example, purchase a contract to sell one photo art that you already have in your gallery and the card allows you to take some money, or to collect IP, etc. if you send there an Assistant (during a secondary action).

The second visit should be paid if a player has one (or more) contracts and some matching artworks: coming in this section

allows him to SELL one of the artworks of his gallery. Usually these works are purchased for a low price, when possible, and then the fame of the Artist must be pushed in order to rise his value, possibly arriving to the maximum level of 20 (for a masterpiece). The player takes the money corresponding to the actual level of fame but must send one visitor from his Gallery back to the central place: he is in fact the person who bought the artwork!

(4) - Sector INTERNATIONAL MARKET

The final sector is the most complicated to handle: you have here the usual two possibilities, but you need an Assistant for both. The first action is: take a "Reputation tile" from the top four rows. Three columns are available and the access to each one is regulated by a special condition: to take a tile from column 1, for example, you must have one visitor of ANY color in your Ticket Office (the case between the round square and your Gallery); for column 2 you need 1 brown and 1 pink visitors, etc. Then you cross index that column with the row corresponding to one of the artworks in your Gallery.

(Confused? We were also confused in the first game, but look at Photo 5 while I make an example).



Example: to get the tile of the fourth row and second column you need to have at least one "Painting" work (row 4) in your gallery and 1 brown and 1 pink visitors (column 2) in your Ticket Office. You may now take the tile and place one Assistant in its place. Later you may activate this tile (with another Assistant) to get 1 IP and 3 coins for each Painting that you acquired.

As an alternative for this Sector you may BID for one of the cases in the bottom three rows: again, you need in your Ticket Office the requested visitors (columns 1-2-3) and you must pay the amount of money of the selected row (the values are on the left side of each row). Again, you must place an Assistant on the selected case, but you do not get any other bonus. Whatever you did in this section, after placing your assistant you gain some IP: 3 IP if he was placed on column one, 2 IP in column two and 1 IP in column three.

But why we have to spend money and Assistants on the International Market? Because at the end of the game each column is scored; the player with most Assistants on column one will get 6 VP (see again photo 4), the second 3VP and the third 1 VP. In column two: 10-6-3 and in column three: 15-10-6. Not bad!

Until now we described mainly the "primary actions" of each sector, but we said before that, after having finished his main action, each player may also select ONE extra "executive" action that allows him to use one or more tickets to move visitors or use an Assistant to perform the bonus of the Contract cards or Bonus Tiles.

If we pushed out another player's Gallerist (or Assistant) they are allowed to make an Executive action too or, alternatively, they may also decide to make a primary action spending their influence (i.e. sending back their IP marker to the closer preceding star in the Influence track). After that the Gallerist is sent back to his Gallery (or the Assistant to the personal board).

If one of tickets decks is exhausted (there are three kind of tickets: white, pink and brown, and each ticket may move a visitor of the same color) the game stops for a while and a certain number of VP and/or coins is given to the players, under certain conditions (tiles and/or visitors in their galleries).

The game ends when TWO of the following conditions are met:

- (1) - There are no more tickets in the reserve
- (2) - Two or more Artists become Celebrities (their Artwork reached the score of 20 points)
- (3) - There are no more visitors in the reserve bag

The players now transform everything in coins (International Market, tiles, Influence points, etc.) and add the eventual VP of the two "objective" cards received at the beginning of the game. The higher total wins

Bottom Line

I have to admit that our first game left my partners and me rather confused: we were so concentrated on the mechanics and on the sub-games that we had no idea of which strategy to try or which direction to take. A couple of games are absolutely necessary in order to really understand what you have to do and how to perform to try to win. Then, suddenly, everything fits and the players start to follow their own path while the game appears clear and competitive. Everyone knows and understands the many

ways to gain money, Influence Points and how to get the necessary tickets to "attract" new visitors in each Gallery. I do not wish to describe in detail all this points to avoid the risk to bore the readers, but if you try The Gallerist you will probably experience the same feeling.

One thing should be clear: we all liked this game very much despite the initial problems.

Let me share with you some of our suggestions. During our first game, we were so busy in following the path "discover a new artist / purchase an art work / make publicity / sell the art work to get money and start again" that we went to the International Market very late in the game and without an idea of what to do there: in the following sessions, the competition for the International Market started very early and was a very hard fight as we were all aware of the importance of the points granted by this Sector.

Making a "contract" with Artist in the early phases of the game allows the players to spend some time and resources in publicity in order to rise his value while the opponents have to spend much more money for one of his artworks. There are only TWO signature tiles per artist, so very often the two players that have them will try to cooperate in order to rise quickly his value. Remember: you may have only ONE contract in your personal board, so you have to purchase artworks of other "discovered" artists before their value will increase too much.

Initially BLUE artists are the most searched as their cost is lower, but their artworks will rise slowly and soon the players realize that RED artists are a better investment: probably the best combination should be "making a contract" with a RED artist and "purchase an artwork" of a BLUE one. Now you may try to cooperate with the players that have the same interests in order to raise the values of your artworks, sell them for a good price to immediately invest in a new artist whose artworks are still at a reasonable value. Remember that when you sell an artwork you give back the related signature tile, which will be therefore available to get a new artwork of that artist.

As it usually happens in Lacerda Games, after a dozen games we were unable to find a "winning strategy" to use in every game to gain a certain advantage, especially in the very important early turns. This is because the game is very interactive and the decision of each player may strongly influence the operations of the others. Of course, you must decide a generic "rational flow" of your actions since the beginning, but then be

prepared to react to the situation that you find on your turn and after the "actions" of your opponents: what did they took? how many Assistants have I available? do I take that "favorable" contract now or it is better to rise the value of my Artist first? This is the kind of questions that you will ask to yourself when you have to select an action. In general, the turns are quick and there is no risk of "analysis/paralysis" as you have the time to decide what to do (or an alternative) when the others are playing.

Only one thing is certain: without tickets, you cannot attract visitors in your Ticket Office (and they are indispensable to act on the International Market) and in your Gallery (to purchase the collected Artworks and to get the available bonus in Influence or money) so it is absolutely necessary to have a regular flow of them. They may be collected:

- placing a "contract" on the personal board
- discovering new artists that have a bonus tile on them
- purchasing a new artwork
- covering with an Assistant a case in the International Market
- making publicity (first and third level tiles)
- etc.



Finally let's have a look at the INFLUENCE TRACK (see also photo 6): it is composed of 35 cases and the players start the game at case 10. Every 5 cases a little "star" is printed on the track: it may be used to make an extra "primary" action (when your Gallerist or Assistant are displaced in one sector) or to add extra Fame to one artist. In both cases the player must return his marker to the preceding star: if, for example, the marker is on case 10 it will go back to case 5, but if it is on case 11 it will just go back one case, as the first available star is on case 10 (see picture 6). On the bottom of the Influence Track you may also note some brown "coins" with a white number (going from "0" on case 1 to "20" on case 35). If you need some money at a crucial point of the game you may get 1 coin for each step back on the track: if you are on case 12, for example, and you need 2 coins you may go back to case 4 and get them (again see picture 6). Those considerations are very important, especially when you reach the "middle" game and you need

to boost your actions.

I had the opportunity to test THE GALLERIST with various player groups and, of course, it was particularly appreciated by the most expert of them, while the others were rather confused at the beginning. Therefore, I strongly recommend that this game is explained to all new players by an expert: he will then help the others on the first 2-3 turns with suggestions and more explanations. The "teacher" must initially "stress" to all new players how to get money and tickets: we never had big problems to get both of them during our games, but I think that it is necessary to clearly explain those rules since the beginning. With this system, most of the "dubious" players were able to learn how to act and to actively play since their second game.

The Gallerist has a difficulty level that push me to suggest it only to regular or expert gamers: they will have a hard start but the game will reward them in the following sessions. Be prepared to spend a couple of gaming sessions to learn it and then ... push its mechanics and follow your different strategies. ☑

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INFORMATION

Designer: Vital Lacerda

Artist: Ian O'Toole

Price:

Publisher: Eagle-Gryphon Games 2015

www.eaglegames.net

PLAYERS:
1-4

AGE:
13+

TIME:
120+

EVALUATION

Economy, worker placement

Users: For experts

Version: en

Rules: de en it pt

In-game text: no

Comments:

High access threshold * For experienced players only * Training games necessary * But then very rewarding game play

Compares to:

Vinhos and other complex games

Other editions:

Eagle-Gryphon (de), Giochix.it (it), Fire on Board Jogos (pt)



My rating:

