

The Antique's Mystery



- **A short and succinct core statement**

The Antique's Mystery is a game where each player's goal is to end the game with the most money by collecting genuine artifacts and avoiding fraudulent ones; players bluff, auction, and bid on mysterious antiques before revealing their true value.

- **A short paragraph contextualizing the game in terms of similar games you drew inspiration from.**

The game is inspired by the Chinese novel *Antique Bureau Midgame*, which explores the truth of antique trading, deception and hidden lies. We drew our inspiration from Sheriff of Nottingham, a classic game that involves bluffing and negotiations. In this case, players are trying to smuggle goods past the Sheriff. It comprises different strategies, social interactions, and deceptions. Other players are ultimately supposed to read others' behavior, so there are risks involved and persuasion in gameplay.

- **A statement of your three game pillars (for example: What, How, Why), one sentence per pillar.**

1. What - Gain the most money through trading artifacts
2. How - through discernment of your opponents and choosing the right artifacts to have in your possession
3. Why - You become the best Appraiser in the lands holding all the priceless artifacts.

- **Thematic backstory (characters, storyworld, premise of the action etc.).**

It's the early 1600's the peak of the Ming dynasty era, and all the top antique collectors in the world are trying to get their hands on the priceless artifacts of China. A system was made in order to trade these artifacts successfully, bringing together groups of clever and cunning collectors, to be overseen by one Appraiser

- **A visual gallery of all the game components other than the main playing board (e.g. cards, dice, pieces representing players, etc.).**



- **A description of the main game Dynamics (i.e. successful strategies that emerged).**

Our core game dynamic is about bluffing. Each player knows best their real and fake artifacts. Upon a player's turn, they will try to persuade and convince other players to buy their artifacts, or to try to leave them. Due to some of the artifacts out of your given 5 could be fake, the strategy is all about bluffing, trying to beg players not to buy your fake artifact, tricking them into wanting it. The Dynamics of this game are all social, putting it on you and the way that you react if your best artifact gets chosen. The appraiser then sets a 45 second timer for the auction. There must be a bid placed at least \$100 more than the original price, and if there's no bid at all, then the artifact goes back to the original player with an increased price. This brings about the problem of deciding if you think the artifact is fake, and leaving it will harm the player it goes back to, or if it's real and you don't bid on the artifact it will benefit your opponent.

- **A description of trade-offs and dilemmas that emerge in gameplay.**

Quite literally our game is all about trade-offs, where the entire purpose and goal of the game is about trading for each other's artifacts. A common dilemma that emerges is the struggle to discern from your opponent how exactly they're selling their artifact and if it's truthful or not. The mind-games around avoiding making the wrong decision that could end up benefitting your opponent and hurting yourself is where all the intensity comes up in The Antique's Mystery. Another example of a dilemma is the case where your best artifact gets chosen to be auctioned by the rest of the group, depending on how you react and sell the object you have to bluff to the rest of the group in order to ensure you keep a winning hand. Maybe you act desperate for them to buy it, you seem too focused on someone else's hand, or you frantically try to bid on another artifact. It's all about body language and how you choose to portray yourself.

- **A description of how long a typical play session lasts.**

Playing through each round of trading and appraising should be around 10-15 minutes, in order to switch around who the appraiser is fast enough for everyone to be able to enjoy the game. For a full table of 4 people, all switching around the role of appraiser, it will be around 40-60 mins for an entire game.