

08 **Playing with Censorship:** A Serious Game Approach to Chinese Media Law

Mo Li

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AUTHORS

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ABSTRACT

The Censorship Game is a tabletop role-playing game developed for the first edition of the summer school “Variations on How to Play” in July 2023 at the University for Continuing Education Krems. Designed to simulate the multifaceted challenges faced by independent filmmakers in China, the game employs role-playing as an educational tool in a classroom setting. Through structured game mechanics, players navigate step by step through the political and bureaucratic intricacies of the Chinese filmmaking landscape, experiencing firsthand what it is like to navigate the world of media control. The game incorporates strategic planning and elements of randomness to mirror the diverse scenarios encountered by real-world filmmakers, reflecting the deeply embedded nature of censorship in the daily lives of Chinese citizens. As the first attempt to design such a game in the field of Chinese media law, it still has areas that require further refinement. This paper details the author’s thought process in creating the game and aims to contribute to the discussion on how serious games can be used to teach complex topics.

KEYWORDS

game design, docugame, serious game, censorship, China

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1. Unraveling Censorship in China

- 1 Freedom of expression is often celebrated as a universal right, but in reality, it is never completely free – anywhere in the world. Even in the bastions of democracy, the torch of free speech flickers amidst varying degrees of control and influence (Tambini, 2021). In China, this control manifests as a meticulously regulated system of censorship, especially within the film industry, a pivotal component of the nation’s cultural sector. Unlike the capricious whims of cancel culture, which dances to the tune of public opinion and political correctness, Chinese censorship operates within a well-defined legal framework. It is not about the personal tastes of authorities or the outcry of the masses; it is about maintaining a structured and consistent oversight that diverges sharply from Western perceptions and practices.
- 2 Much like paying taxes, navigating film censorship involves unavoidable and cumbersome procedural steps. Adhering to these procedures allows players to work within the system and benefit from its protections. However, the game also underscores the severe consequences of defiance, including fines, confiscations, work bans, and even imprisonment, illustrating the high stakes for those who challenge the regulations.
- 3 Understanding Chinese media law and regulations can be accomplished through a variety of formal and informal sources. For locals, understanding these laws often becomes second nature, akin to common sense, acquired from reading the news, watching films, and conversing with fellow community members. For non-residents, information can be sourced from legal documents, the official websites of the China Film Administration, or scholarships available in different languages. However, akin to learning an exotic foreign language from a distance, it can be challenging when you are not immersed in the environment. It requires more time and presents additional obstacles.
- 4 I had the privilege of undergoing film producer training during my undergraduate years at the Central Academy of Drama, a venerable institution with deep roots in the state-run educational system. In my curious youth, I collaborated on numerous underground film ventures in Beijing. Given my familiarity with the Chinese film industry, navigating censorship felt akin to a routine commute from work – you know precisely which traffic light takes an eternity, where the speed cameras are placed, and where shortcuts can be taken. After living on different continents, I have observed a wide spectrum of content moderation, manifesting in both overt and subtle forms. Explaining how censorship operates in another country is a complex task that goes beyond the scope of a written document; it becomes far more understandable when experienced first-hand.

- 5 To explore and understand this complex realm, I developed the Censorship Game. This game places players in the roles of Chinese filmmakers, guiding them through the entire process of producing a documentary film. Players immerse themselves in crafting stories within constrained narratives, experiencing the challenges of navigating censorship firsthand. However, significant challenges soon emerged. The first was how to succinctly convey the cultural, economic, political, and legal intricacies of the Chinese film industry within a limited time frame, distilling censorship rules into gameplay. The complexity of these rules directly impacts player engagement.
- 6 Additionally, I encountered a personal hurdle – I am not a gamer myself. My limited experience with games, such as Chess, involves no hidden information or element of luck. As traditional Asian parenting emphasizes education, my upbringing focused on excelling in standardized exams and avoiding leisure activities that diverted from academic pursuits. To overcome this, I enlisted a group of gamer friends to help brainstorm and enhance the game’s playability. This marks my initial exploration into gamifying this niche area, which has limited precedent but significant potential to serve as a role model for other serious games.

2. Drawing from a Classroom Game

- 7 As I embarked on the journey of creating this game, I found myself at a crossroads, pondering various formats: traditional board games, tabletop role-playing games (TTRPGs), card games, or even venturing into the realm of digital technology with options like web games. My goal was to not merely inform but deeply immerse players in the experience of Chinese censorship. This quest reminded me of a classroom game from a course I attended.
- 8 A decade ago, during my Master’s studies in Germany, I enrolled in an elective course titled “Cultural Implications of Business and International Teambuilding.” Initially, I was skeptical, believing that the complexities of culture could not be adequately conveyed in a classroom setting. However, the course commenced with an icebreaker game that fundamentally reshaped my perceptions of educational games.
- 9 The game unfolded as follows: the class was divided into tables of five players and one moderator. Before commencing the game, each player received some tokens and a brief minute to memorize four distinct body gestures, each corresponding to one of the four card suits: spades, hearts, diamonds, and clubs. At the onset of a round, the moderator would draw a card and place it in the center of the table. The first player to cor-

rectly execute the corresponding gesture would claim one token from each tablemate. Noverbalcommunicationwaspermittedduringthegame.Afterseveralrounds,themostr successful player at each table would rotate to the next, offering an opportunity to amass more tokens from a fresh set of opponents.

- 10 In the initial rounds, I emerged as the runner-up at my original table. When the previous winner departed, I sensed a heightened challenge as the successor took his place. I assumed this new player must be extraordinarily adept, perhaps even surpassing the previous victor. To my astonishment, this player made a series of errors, quickly surrendering all his tokens to me. As I transitioned to the next table, I carried a sense of anticipation, aspiring to conquer the entire class.
- 11 As soon as I seated myself at the new table, my fellow participants attempted to convey something with broken sign language. When the next round began, I swiftly executed the correct gesture, yet everyone else at the table employed different gestures collectively. One by one, they claimed my tokens, leaving me perplexed and disheartened. It dawned on me that the rules at this table had diverged from those at my original table – much like how norms and customs differ from one country to another. This realization marked one of my most profound “aha moments” in my twenties.
- 12 This enlightening gaming experience led me to understand that games can clarify cultural disparities with greater clarity and detail, in an efficient and impactful way, as if it were a vivid experience in the real world. They can subtly introduce students to complex subjects, nurturing curiosity and fostering a deeper understanding without any real negative impacts if mistakes are made. Drawing from this perspective, I designed the Censorship Game with the hope that players would embark on an insightful journey reminiscent of my own experiences.
- 13 Beyond my own insights, academic research and literature on serious games have enriched my comprehension. Numerous publications illuminated pivotal concepts and illustrated the diverse applications of serious games across varied educational contexts. Examples include using games as pedagogical tools for adolescents with autism in geography class (Bossavit & Parsons, 2018) involving a total of 6 students with ASD. The participants were positive about their enjoyment, motivation, and social engagement. The results showed that the players’ level of competitiveness not only influenced the experience within the game but also the interaction within the peer teams. The game mechanisms did help the participants with ASD increase their knowledge in Geography content. The main conclusion is that there are considerable benefits of including children with ASD in the design process and future research should explore more ful-

ly on how their involvement can enhance curriculum-based learning as well as social engagement within the classroom.”,”container-title”:”Journal of Computer Assisted Learning”,”DOI”:”10.1111/jcal.12242”,”ISSN”:”0266-4909, 1365-2729”,”issue”:”3”,”journalAbbreviation”:”Computer Assisted Learning”,”language”:”en”,”page”:”293-305”,”-source”:”DOI.org (Crossref, employing them to strengthen law enforcement training and capabilities (Akhgar, 2019), and leveraging simulations for entrepreneurial education (Rhodes et al., 2017). Although there is research concerning games and cultural differences, the focus predominantly lies on player responses across cultures, not on how games can serve as a medium for cultural understanding. This area is relatively uncharted in current research, offering opportunities for further exploration.

3. Choosing the Game Format

- 14 The choice of game format lays the foundation for the overall gaming experience. Diving into game design without prior experience, I was baffled by choices about its type, genre, and style. Questions like, “Should it be a TTRPG, board game, or card game?” and the implications of these choices weighed on me. The selected format greatly shapes the narrative, enhancing or detracting from the storytelling process.
- 15 After scouring gaming forums for insights, I identified three primary game design approaches from the creator’s perspective. The first is the financial outcome approach, prioritizing the development of games based on prevailing market trends, often placing sales above all else. For most serious game creators, this is not the primary concern. The second approach, the dedicated enthusiasts’ approach, is fueled by the passion of gamers who create elaborate games they themselves enjoy, often disregarding what others might think. These creators typically adhere to one specific format and are hesitant to venture beyond it. The third, the adaptation approach, entails crafting a game based on existing books, films, or news reports, where the story takes center stage. In many respects, games that draw inspiration from real-world events, often termed docugames, lean towards the latter approach (Uricchio, 2005). In other words, the creator needs to prioritize one of the following: the finance, the format, or fidelity to the story. I prioritize the story, striving to convey it as truthfully as possible, which allows me to choose the format that best suits my needs.
- 16 Initially, I envisioned it as a Live Action Role-Playing (LARP) experience, where a large group of participants engage in interactive, prop-laden scenarios. LARPing is renowned for fostering vital interpersonal skills, such as empathy, negotiation, creative problem-solving, leadership, and teamwork – qualities akin to those sought after in filmmaking.

- 17 Another vision I had was to create a tactical board game that promotes problem-solving and resource management. Board games offer a structured framework with defined rules, streamlined processes, and time constraints – attributes echoing the inherent censorship procedures prevalent in the media landscape in China.
- 18 Lastly, I considered developing a TTRPG. Role-playing games offer players greater narrative freedom, making them ideal for creative storytelling, much like creating a real film. Given the participants' likely expertise in media or game studies and their storytelling skills, this format is suitable. Logistically, TTRPGs require minimal stationery and props. Therefore, TTRPG is the chosen format for this Censorship Game.

4. Game Design Considerations

- 19 One of the initial design considerations is the number of players the game should accommodate. This suggestion is like indicating the recommended servings in a recipe, crucial for optimal gameplay. Most TTRPGs can accommodate between two to eight players. For larger groups, such as classrooms, participants can be divided into smaller teams or engage in cooperative gameplay through game mechanics and character design.
- 20 The second consideration is the character design. In many TTRPGs, players select a character from a predefined list and then fine-tune their skills through dice rolls, creating unique attributes for each character. However, given the context of the Censorship Game, characters abilities are often shaped by circumstances rather than personal traits. Six streamlined profiles from the film industry were created, eliminating the need for extensive character customization.
- 21 The decision between competitive and cooperative play is another critical consideration. Although competition often drives player engagement, the film industry does not involve life-or-death stakes. Filmmaking is a game of attrition, designed for players to compete against the game mechanism, emphasizing the importance of resource management. Players can either collaborate or operate independently, with each action consuming a token. When tokens are depleted, progress halts, reflecting the limited resources available to independent filmmakers. The game's primary challenge is the relentless pressure of dwindling finances and time.
- 22 The overarching story of the game initially followed the hero's journey, involving the discovery of a social issue, the creation of a documentary film, and the navigation of censorship rules to effect social change. However, feedback from experienced gamers

indicated that this narrative lacked urgency. To address this, an event is introduced as a “call to adventure,” gathering the players around the same location and setting:

- 23 As a filmmaker dedicated to producing a globally resonant documentary, your mission is to raise awareness and drive social change by documenting a budget hostel that serves the “low-end population.” This hostel, converted from a two-bedroom apartment, offers separate rooms for men and women in harsh conditions: crowded bunk beds, filthy sheets, bugs, and minimal amenities. Each room has at least eight beds, and the single toilet is a hole in the ground with broken tiles. Lacking reception, lockers, or wall sockets, the hostel has remained untouched since the 90s but provides crucial shelter for migrant workers at just 5 yuan (0.64 EUR) per night. However, recent rental regulations threaten its existence, leading to the closure of many similar hostels. Your journey begins here, seeking out the protagonists of your story and capturing their struggles and resilience as they face these new challenges.
- 24 Finally, much like the Marvel Universe, world-building is fundamental to the game’s narrative, shaping its rules, guidelines, and internal logic. The game is set in contemporary mainland China, encompassing the physical, cultural, political, and social dimensions that influence gameplay and storytelling. While players have the freedom to interpret Chinese culture and society, the real-world rules and laws dictate the boundaries of possibility within the game. This setting not only adds depth and realism but also challenges players to navigate the complexities of a highly regulated environment, enhancing the educational value of the experience. By immersing players in a faithfully recreated world, the game aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the delicate balance between creative expression and regulatory constraints, and fostering critical thinking.

5. The Censorship Game Mechanics

- 25 The Censorship Game is designed to last approximately an hour, divided into six rounds that simulate the filmmaking process in China. Each player receives a one-page game description, two six-sided dice (2D6), and twelve tokens. When a player runs out of tokens, they can no longer participate in subsequent rounds. Additionally, a random event occurs in the middle of the game, potentially granting free tokens or imposing penalties on certain players. Players have the option to collaborate, merge their projects, share resources, or act independently with no specific rules dictating their interactions.

- 26 The first round involves character creation. Each character represents a different facet of Chinese society and the filmmaking community. Players roll a six-sided dice (D6) to randomly assign a character. Each character represents a real-life figure from the Chinese filmmaking community, like Li Yifan as the Visual Artist, Wang Bing and Xu Tong as Film School Graduates, Qi Xiaoguang as the Journalist, Jiang Nengjie as the Whistle-blower, and Lu Qingyi as the Farmer's Kid. A special character, Expat, is included to add diversity and highlight how different nationalities might receive different treatment.
- 27 To enhance engagement, players are encouraged to personalize their characters by naming them, setting their ages, and specifying their gender. Each character comes with one skill bonus (+1) and one skill penalty (-1), namely Art, Tech, Money, Team, Fame, and Stealth. During gameplay, players with a skill bonus roll 2D6 and get the higher number, while those with a skill penalty roll 2D6 and get the lower number.
- 28 In the second round, players decide whether to apply for a shooting permit. Securing a shooting permit marks the initial step toward compliance with censorship regulations. Players must establish a company at the cost of one token before officially declaring responsibility for their projects. Alternatively, they can choose to bypass this step entirely and operate underground. Another option is to postpone the permit application until just before they plan to exhibit their films publicly. In theory, obtaining a shooting permit should always precede filming, but in practice, this rule often does not apply to documentary films. This procedural flexibility aligns with the discreet nature of documentary filmmaking when using consumer-grade equipment, allowing filmmakers to evade detection.
- 29 In the next round, players craft the story of their documentaries as if they were in a screenwriting workshop. They will come up with a title and a brief abstract of up to 250 words, resembling a director's pitch. In this round, possessing the Art skill provides players with an advantageous edge as they progress to the next stage.
- 30 Before Round 4 begins, a random event is drawn from a jar containing twelve possible scenarios, ranging from pandemics to personal emergencies, to simulate the real-world challenges filmmakers encounter. During the editing phase, possessing the Tech skill gives players a competitive edge, ensuring fairness for the Whistleblower character by focusing on this skill. In reality, filmmakers often rely on freelancers for editing while they capture the story. To simplify game mechanics, only the Tech skill is included in this context.

- 31 The most challenging aspect of documentary-making is not just operating cameras but navigating censorship to reach the audience. In Round 5, players focus on securing screening permits, which allow public display of their films in cinemas, on television, on DVDs, and in film festivals both in China and internationally.
- 32 The fate of a film significantly hinges on whether a screening permit is obtained. In the final round, players are presented with six different avenues to distribute their films, covering both official channels and the underground cinema circuit. Each character can leverage their unique skills to navigate the distribution channels best suited to their abilities. Notably, films with permits have the option to explore both official and underground venues. However, this dual approach may be financially impractical due to the heightened risks of piracy and potential conflicts in sales channels.
- 33 Distributing a film without permits carries potential consequences, such as fines, equipment confiscation, work bans, and, in extreme cases, imprisonment. However, the game's censorship rules aim to encourage compliance within the industry rather than imposing severe penalties. Consequently, in the game, penalties are minimal, usually amounting to just one token.
- 34 An intriguing facet to consider is that only Visual Artists possess the ability to exhibit their films in art museums by transforming them into new media art. Film regulations pertain solely to films and do not extend to other creative industries. Currently, there are no specific regulations for visual artists, making art museums a safe haven for censored content. However, this option comes with certain limitations, as museums are prohibited from selling separate tickets exclusively for film screenings.
- 35 The final crucial aspect of the game is determining what constitutes a win. The main goal is to get your film in front of as many people as possible, even with censorship in place. In the current media environment, just having your independent film shown to the public is an outstanding achievement. To make the game more interactive and engaging, each player is given two votes to use for their favorite films that have made it to the final distribution round. Players can split their votes between one or two different films, as long as they are not voting for their own. This adds a social aspect to the game.

6. Potential Improvements

- 36 In most role-playing games, the central premise typically involves the player's mission to save the world or protect society from imminent threats. This clear objective

imparts a sense of urgency from the outset and offers a profound sense of accomplishment upon successful completion. The current version of the Censorship Game may not sufficiently incorporate this crucial element. To enhance the sense of achievement, it could be beneficial to introduce a scoring system where an impact multiplier is assigned to each distribution channel, allowing players to tally their points and determine who performed the best.

- 37 Another area for improvement is the playability, which is the cornerstone of any game design. The key aspect of playability is the game mechanism – it needs to be challenging enough to engage players but not so complex that it becomes unmanageable. This often means the rules should be intuitive, allowing players to gradually understand and develop their strategies. However, navigating censorship is not inherently intuitive, especially for those unfamiliar with the context. The challenge lies in introducing the necessary background information without distracting players from the game itself.
- 38 After testing the game on three different occasions, it became evident that some players found the overall experience frustrating due to the difficulty of reaching the end and winning. For some, the game felt like it was set to “Dante Must Die” mode, where players can be easily defeated by stronger, more resilient enemies. This mirrors the real-world challenges faced by filmmakers, where success is elusive and the industry feels “rigged.” However, reflecting on player feedback, it is apparent that the game’s difficulty could be adjusted based on the players’ familiarity with Chinese media regulations.

7. Challenges of Making Serious Games

- 39 A good game is not a game you are obligated to play, but you are thrilled to play. The task of infusing a serious game with excitement can be daunting, particularly when balancing the depth of knowledge it seeks to impart. Overcomplication may alienate players, while excessive levity might dilute the educational core. Game designers often tread a delicate balance: crafting a game that captivates while simultaneously delivering its message.
- 40 There have been various ideas and discussions on how to promote learning in a serious game. The traditional approach to evaluating learning posits that learning results from specific characteristics of the game. However, more recent studies suggest that game-based learning arises from game-produced engagement. Leveraging certain techniques, such as incorporating scripted collaborations in game design, can effec-

tively heighten student engagement and motivation, leading to enhanced learning outcomes (Van Der Meij et al., 2020). In other words, the learning comes from motivation, excitement, and interaction with other players in the game, rather than the game in isolation. The game is a vessel that carries the players, but it is the players themselves who must paddle.

- 41 The Censorship Game reflects the solitary nature of emerging filmmakers, who often work in isolation within their small teams, seldom collaborating on other projects. This indirect competition against a shared adversary mirrors real-life dynamics. While this setup allows flexibility in player numbers, making it suitable for classroom settings, it also has drawbacks. The game lacks strong interactivity and synergy among players, leading to reduced engagement, fun, and teamwork.
- 42 Moreover, the game significantly simplifies the real-world censorship rules and regulations. Censorship is not the only factor affecting a film's reach. Given the current political and socio-economic climate, only a few films each year manage to make it to the big screen and turn a profit. Although censorship plays a role, other factors also determine a film's success. The initial version of the game did not fully capture this complexity. While it may be challenging to represent all these intricacies in gameplay, the game could still provide insights and promote understanding.
- 43 The journey of designing this game has been enlightening and humbling. It highlighted the delicate balance between playability and fidelity to the subject matter. As I look to the future, I am inspired to continue refining this game, hoping it can foster meaningful cultural exchanges and offer clearer insights into China's media landscape.

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Appendix 1

The Censorship Game

Version 1.2

You are a filmmaker on a mission to create a documentary that resonates worldwide, raising awareness and driving change. It's a war of attrition. You play against the game, not each other. When you run out of tokens, you reach the end of the game. A random event will take place during the game.

Round 1:

Character Creation.

Roll D6 to determine your profile.

1. **Visual Artist | Art (+1) Team (-1)**
An incorruptible idealist, you are an art school graduate eager to experiment with moving images.
2. **Film School Graduate | Team (+1) Money (-1)**
Recently graduated from film school, you know some young talents from school, but lack the funding.
3. **Journalist | Fame (+1) Stealth (-1)**
You want to cover radical social issues, but you also fear losing your job and license.
4. **Whistle-blower | Tech (+1) Art (-1)**
You are an IT technician working a 9-to-5 job. By accident, you discovered a secret in your industry.
5. **The Farmer's Kid | Stealth (+1) Tech (-1)**
Born and raised in rural China, your personal struggle has motivated you to speak out.
6. **Expatriate | Money (+1) Fame (-1)**
You are an Austrian tourist in China, eager to explore and immerse yourself in Chinese culture.

Name your character, choose your age and gender. You can opt to team up with another player.

Round 2:

Administration.

Option to Apply for a Shooting Permit.

It is **free** to apply for the **Shooting Permit**. However, you need to create a **company** for **1 token**. **Profile 6** needs to spend **2 tokens**. You may skip this round and come back to it in Round 5. To obtain the **Shooting Permit**, pay **1 token/roll** & roll a D6 and get **4-6**. If you are **Stealth -1**, roll 2D6 and get the lower number. If you are **Stealth +1**, roll 2D6 and get the higher number.

Round 3:

Shooting

Time to develop your story! Write your plot up to 250 words.

1. Protagonist(s): Age, gender, profession...
2. Issue(s) to explore: Poverty, illness, domestic violence...
3. Story. What happened to your protagonist(s)?
4. Message or takeaway. What is your point of view as a filmmaker?
5. Give it a killer title.

To pass to the next round, pay **1 token/roll** & roll a D6 and get **4-6**.

If you are **Art -1**, roll 2D6 and get the lower number. If you are **Art +1**, roll 2D6 and get the higher number.

A random event takes place now.

Round 4:

Editing

To pass to the next phrase, pay **1 token/roll** & roll a D6, get **4-6**. If you are **Tech -1**, roll 2D6 and get the lower number. If you are **Tech +1**, roll 2D6 and get the higher number.

Round 5:

Administration.

Option to Apply for a Screening Permit.

To obtain the **Screening Permit**, Shooting Permit is required. Present yourself in

front of the **Film Office** and file your application. Pay **1 token/roll** & roll a D6 and get **4-6**. If you are **Stealth -1**, roll 2D6 and get the lower number. If you are **Stealth +1**, roll 2D6 and get the higher number.

Round 6:

Distribution

1. **National Film Festival** (Screening Permit Required)

Apply for National Film Festival for **free**. You can apply **once**. Roll D6 and get **5 or 6** to be nominated. If you are **Fame -1**, roll 2D6 and get the lower number. If you are **Fame +1**, roll 2D6 and get the higher number.

2. **International Film Festival** (Screening Permit Required)

This festival requires a **world premiere** (the worldwide debut of a work). You can apply **once**. Pay **1 token** application fee. Roll D6 and get **5 or 6** to get nominated. If you are **Expat**, you can participate without a Screening Permit.

3. **Cinema** (Screening Permit Required)

Pay **3 tokens** to get your film into the cinema. Roll D6 and get **5 or 6** to become a blockbuster. If you are **Money -1**, roll 2D6 and get the lower number. If you are **Money +1**, roll 2D6 and get the higher number.

Without Permit? You can still show your film via the underground channels:

4. **Underground Film Clubs**

You need **1 token** to buy equipment. Roll D6 and get **4-6** to show your film without getting caught. If you are **Team -1**, roll 2D6 and get the lower number. If you are **Team +1**, roll 2D6 and get the higher number. Each time you get caught, you lose the equipment. Once you reach 0 tokens, you reach the end of the game.

5. **Cloud Drive**

It's **free** to show your film via cloud drives. Roll D6 and get **4-6** to share your film without getting caught. If you are **Tech -1**, roll 2D6 and get the lower number. If you are **Tech +1**, roll 2D6 and get the higher number. Share as many times as you wish. Each time you get caught, you pay **1 token** penalty.

6. **Art Museum**

Only for **Visual Artist**. Pay **1 token** to turn your film into a piece of new media art installation. Pay **1 token** and roll D6 and get **4-6** to get into a museum show. Pay **1 token** and roll D6 for each new show.

Appendix 2

Random Events

1. **Earthquake.** A small earthquake took place in Jilin. If you have shooting permits, you can get a small government aid. **+1 token.**
2. **Purifying Project.** To protect the minors on the Internet, violent and sexual content are strictly prohibited. **Cloud drives** are shut down until the end of the game.
3. **Diplomatic issues.** There are some turbulence in the international politics. International film festivals are impossible to attend until the end of the game. This does not apply to Profile 6 International Student.
4. **Pandemic.** A mass contiguous diseases is spreading (again). Cinemas cannot operate until the end of the game.
5. **Rural development.** A framework fund is rolled out to improve the quality of lives of rural communities. All films in rural focus receive **+1 token.**
6. **Women's rights.** An activist brought this issue to our attention. All films whose main character is a female receive **+1 tokens.**
7. **Medical Miracle.** A scientific breakthrough took place. If your protagonist is facing medical issues, you receive **+1 token.**
8. **Reactivation for the SMEs.** The State Council issued a new communication on further strengthening assistance for small and medium-sized enterprises. All companies receive **+2 tokens** as government help.
9. **Family emergency.** Your family had a medical emergency, but no insurance coverage. **Pay -1 token** to cover the medical bills. Profile 6 International Student is exempted.
10. **People's Congress.** The First Session of the 14th National People's Congress takes place. All films that does not have shooting permits must **pay -1 token.**
11. **International NGO.** An international NGO wants to sponsor your project. You will not be able to obtain screening permits but you will receive **+1 token.**
12. **Baby Crisis.** China is facing a population crisis in part due to more women choosing to focus on their careers and personal goals, instead of starting a family. All films that project negative images of having children **pay -1 tokens.** All the films that project positive images of having children receive **-1 tokens.**

About the author

Mo Li is a PhD candidate at the Polytechnic University of Valencia. She has earned academic degrees in Film Production, Linguistics, Film Studies, European Studies, and Business Administration. She aims to raise awareness of underground cinema in China.

<https://orcid.org/0009-0004-2456-3489>