



# ROUNDTABLE ANALOGUE CO-DESIGN: OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND OTHER NUANCES

## GAME DESIGNERS

Inka Brand and Markus Brand

Isra and Shei (Llama Dice)

## MODERATION AND INTRODUCTION

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## TRANSCRIPTION AND REVIEW

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Co-design is linked to a range of advantages, encompassing enhancements in idea generation, service or product development processes, decision-making, cooperation, creativity, as well as long-term satisfaction and loyalty among clients and users (Steen, 2013; Steen et al., 2011). Despite its widespread use as a strategic approach, co-design has received less scholarly attention, and critical discussions regarding its underlying concepts are infrequent. The occurrence of this particular circumstance can perhaps be attributed to the widespread practice of categorizing projects as co-design, which may lead to a dilution or confusion of conceptual understanding (Steen, 2013).

In the field of games, especially at an academic level, the idea of co-design has been used mainly to describe processes of horizontalizing research design, aligned with participatory paradigms (Brown, 2022; Hall, 1975). Specifically, where the player no longer plays a completely passive role, but co-creates the gaming world together with the designers (De Jans et al., 2017; Loos et al., 2019; Pedersen & Buur, 2000). Or when the games (applied as a serious game) deliver a tool for ideation and the co-creation of projects and solutions to a specific problem (Sousa, 2021).

Here, we have invited two of the most prominent duos of contemporary analog game designers – Isra/Shei and Inka Brand/Markus Brand – to reflect on how they complement and oppose each other in this process. Relational and gender characteristics, how they impact the creative process, and the players' vision of the games created, among many other issues, will be reflected here.

The following roundtable was conducted at LeiriaCon,  
*in* Vieira de Leiria, Portugal, on March 25, 2023

**Micael Sousa:** So we are going to do this roundtable. The theme is co-design and we have here Markus and Inka who are very famous game designers that created Village (I love Village, the game, I love it).

**Markus Brand:** Thank you.

**Micael Sousa:** And many other games. For example, they are very well known by 'The Exit'. And these games are published in Portuguese by Devir.

And we also have here Israel and Sheila that are very well known also by their recent game Red Cathedral and the new expansion. The small box games...

**Isra and Shei:** Walkie Talkie.

**Micael Sousa:** Exactly. That is also published by them (Devir). So these authors that we have here today have all games available in Portuguese, which is excellent for us. So we're going to talk about co-design. Do you want to start Carla?

**Carla Sousa:** I can start. So my first question would be if you have experience in processes that are not co-designing or if you only have experience in co-game design, and what are the differences in the process between designing more by yourselves or co-designing?

**Markus Brand:** We have only experience in co-designing, because when we started, our first ideas came together and we worked together in the beginning.

**Isra:** Yes. For our experience, when we started designing, I was the one that dragged Sheila to the dark side of designing. I started designing a game and it was terrible. Really bad game. It was terrible, until I showed it to Sheila and she told me, "No, this is terrible. You have to do this and this." "Ah, so do you want to join me to...". We were already...

**Shei:** To do better games.

**Isra:** We were already a couple. So that was my experience of designing by myself. One bad game and that's it. Yes. We co-design all the time.

**Carla Sousa:** My next question would be what was the added value? But you pretty much answered. What do you think is the added value of co-designing in terms of process?

**Shei:** We have two brains thinking at the same time.

**Isra:** Exactly. I don't know the exact expression in English, but you have to express your ideas. But then you have to take it back because Sheila's are better than mine. And then you are together all the time, you have to get along. You have to set some rules and there has to be consensus between both of us. So no one is right and no one is wrong. You have to mix everything.

**Shei:** Yes, we work together.

**Carla Sousa:** You want to add a point?

**Inka Brand:** Yes. It fits like a ping pong, you know? Yes? So fresh input. And you think in another way to do the same thing. And then you can discuss. We often have many, many discussions about things. And I say, "no, that will never work", and "let's try it", we try it. What I said, it doesn't work. And then get new ideas.

And we can always test together immediately, we don't need to wait to get a group to play test the game. So that's pretty easy if you have two people.

**Carla Sousa:** So could you say that it's negotiation? Would negotiation be a good word to describe it?

**Inka Brand:** Sometimes.

**Isra:** Yes, it's the base of co-design and negotiation. Sometimes you really push for an idea that you really think is really great, because it's in your head and it's amazing in your head. But someone outside your head is telling you, maybe it's not that good, don't get too excited.

It's really good because, for example, in my case, if it was just me, I wouldn't be here.

So it's all negotiation. You need, as Inka said, fresh input.

**Shei:** Which means just...

**Isra:** Just arguing, discussing.

**Shei:** Yes.

**Isra:** Maybe not designing anything. Just discussing because "that people should be there? Or there?".

**Shei:** "No, there."

**Isra:** For one hour. "No, there. No, there." One hour... Two hours...

And then "Maybe the middle, it has to be in the middle".

**Shei:** Yes.

**Isra:** "No, to the right" or "to the left".

**Markus Brand:** Yes. If I did "The Exit" alone, I think nobody in this room could solve any riddle. So I need Inka to say that's much too hard.

**Micael Sousa:** And I would like to ask something about the two views, because you co-design as a couple, right? And with a female and a masculine perspective. Does this affect anything in the game? Or this makes no sense, these perspectives?

**Shei:** I think it makes no sense. Almost in all cases.

**Isra:** Yes. I mean, we think more or less in the same way. So it's not such a thing as a female perspective or something like that.

I mean, we... Of course, we need people in the game industry. We need even more than now that we have. But designing, it's not about gender.

I mean, there are two brains thinking and trying to solve some problem. We are engineers, so we are more used to just thinking about how to solve problems.

**Shei:** But we are two kinds of different engineers, so.

**Isra:** Yes. But the mindset is that. It's like I have a problem and I have to solve it.

You can even speak better than me about how to solve problems. We're talking the same things about solving problems.

**Markus Brand:** I think there are two board gamers. That's not a gender thing, and when we start designing a new game, both ideas are... Difficult to explain.

**Inka Brand:** Yes. Just two people. There is no difference between male and female. So a good idea is a good idea. If it comes from a woman or from a man, we don't care. And I hope nobody does.

**Micael Sousa:** So who's idea was to kill our families in the village?

**Inka Brand:** Oh.

**Micael Sousa:** I must ask this. I must ask this.

**Inka Brand:** That's from reading books from the Middle Ages, and I just love the stories, and they work with generations. If your father is a ...

**Markus Brand:** A farmer.

**Inka Brand:** A farmer. So usually the son is a farmer too. And so you read that always, and that people are dying, and then comes the next generation. And I thought that would be cool in a board game.

**Micael Sousa:** It is.

**Inka Brand:** Yes. So that was the idea, from reading books.

**Markus Brand:** But it's important that all of these people die in a normal way.

**Micael Sousa:** Yes.

**Carla Sousa:** I don't want to take it too much in general, because I was very happy that you said that it doesn't matter that much for you.

But some time ago I interviewed girls that were programmers in the field of digital games, and they told me that people, when they say they work in digital games, people expect them to be artists, for example, because they are women.

So my question is, what is the expectation, when you are, for example, doing interviews, what do people expect from you? Do people expect you to do like, as the female co-designer, like more of the soft work? Or sort of like, "oh, I'm the one doing, you know, soft things, the mechanics", saying that this is far too hard.

I would never be the one saying that families should be killed or something, you know.

**Inka Brand:** Okay, yes, maybe sometimes we had some play tests with some people we don't know, and I thought, but it's just a feeling, that they thought Markus was the main part to inventing that game. But when we are, while we're playing, they recognize that I have my own ideas and my own ways and they were kind of surprised. "Oh, okay, she's a real part too", it is not just Markus taking me with him.

But that happened maybe twice.

**Carla Sousa:** No?

**Shei:** Yes, it's the same problem here. Most of the time people talk with Isra, like he's the main designer of the game, and when we are chatting about the game, people say, "oh okay, she did this?".

**Isra:** Yes, not right now, but when we started at the beginning, I had to push her in front of me, like, okay, she's part too. I always say that I'm the 49% of this design relationship, because the 51% is because of her. The really good ideas, she had the really good ideas.

But as in the state of the, I don't know how to explain it, it's like I should be the one that has all the work, all the ideas, and she's just helping me.

**Shei:** Yes.

**Isra:** Like a waitress or like a flight assistant or whatever, like something.

**Shei:** Just putting cards.

**Inka Brand:** Yes.

**Isra:** Yes, or cutting cards or whatever, like my helper. No, it's the other way around.

Not because we made the game 50/50, and there's no "it was her idea" or "my idea" or this.

**Shei:** It's a mix of ideas.

**Isra:** It's our idea. We always talk in plural, because it's both of us.

**Markus Brand:** I think it depends on what games you design, because first we designed children games, and there it was Inka.

**Shei:** Inka thing, no?

**Markus Brand:** Inka was the person in the front, and then it turns to the games for adult board gamers, and now they often talk first to me. I have that feeling.

**Carla Sousa:** So, it's more like since it was something not simpler, it would be a question if kids games are simpler to design. But then it's like more something that is related to the role of educating, it's a female thing.

**Markus Brand:** That's right.

**Carla Sousa:** Yes, that's very interesting.

**Micael Sousa:** I have a question also. You two, as a couple of game designers, have you ever designed with other designers? Or is this a problem like "we are cheating with our teammates in co-design"? Is this a thing?

**Isra:** At least in our case, we did not design anything outside of us. I don't know if we...

**Shei:** At this point.

**Isra:** At this point. We are trying, but no, because as I said, we are a unit. We are... If we have to go to a convention, we have to go to an interview, we will go everywhere together.

**Shei:** We work well together... We have the same schedule... This is important for designing.

**Markus Brand:** Yes, and we want to be a unit. We don't want to design separately.

**Inka Brand:** Yes, but the question was if we ever design with a third one.

**Markus Brand:** Yes, of course.

**Inka Brand:** That's what we are doing. We have a friend and we do games together with him. So, we're three authors and that works very well.

**Markus Brand:** We work with Michael Rineck, the author of Pillars of the Earth. He lives in Kiel, it's about 500 kilometers away from us, and we often phone together when we work. Yes, it works very well.

**Micael Sousa:** Do you have any other questions Carla? Or do we let the audience...

**Carla Sousa:** Yes, we could. Yes, Yes, I would have many more, but I guess probably now we should ask our audience if you have any questions or...

**Micael Sousa:** Yes. Anyone want to question anything to our authors that are here today?

**Member of the audience:** I think you already answered this, but it would be nice if everybody earned the answer. You guys call yourselves Llama Dice.

**Isra and Shei:** Yes.

**Member of the audience (continuation):** Is that a decision so you are presenting yourself as a team?

**Isra and Shei:** Yes.

**Isra:** Yes, it originated like that because...

**Shei:** It's like a brand.

**Isra:** It's not like that Brand (referring to the surname of Markus and Inka), but our brand.

It was because at the beginning of our first three game designs, the names on the box were Israzy and Sheias. And they always thought it was me all the time, so we decided to flip over the names. So, at least they have to say her name. So, yes, since we got fed up about "we are two", "we are two", "she's also part", "I'm not only one", and we were like, okay, why not? Let's do something. Like not a corporation because it's not registered, but please don't register Llama Dice.

**Shei:** Yes, please.



**Isra:** And it was like, okay, we need something that represents us. And we came with Llama Dice.

**Shei:** Like a unique voice in social media also.

**Isra:** Yes, only one account for anything. And because we have a split account in Twitter, for example, personal, they only tag me when it is something about the game. So, then we came up with this, and even if they don't want to, they're tagging both of us.

**Shei:** Also in BoardGameGeek, people tag you, not me.

**Isra:** Yes, but because I'm really, really noisy in BoardGameGeek. I'm writing all the time.

So, I think that they are like, okay, this guy seems like he writes a lot. Let me write him.

**Micael Sousa:** Any other question?

I have one more. How do you solve problems when you have a disagreement and not agree about something? Do these make you abandon the game, for example?

**Inka Brand:** I think it's... You have to find the perfect solution, and that's part of our work. You can say the one is right or the other is right so let's play this.

Sometimes we ask our friends who play our games, "what do you think would be the better way? This way or this way?". But I think there's always a perfect solution. And it's no solution when we don't both say "that's it". It's just a process. But you will end at the right point sometime so maybe it takes a longer time. But..

**Shei:** It takes a little time.

**Isra:** Yes, it takes time. I mean, we're in our main jobs because we don't work only for games. We're used to working in a team. So, yes, eventually it's like another day in the office. You just have to get along with your teammates and then find a solution.

But for that, for who is right and who is wrong, when we started designing, we had the idea of writing designers to get an interview for a small blog, that is nowhere on the internet, and we asked Nuno and Paulo because we know them for Nippon, Madeira, and all this video game, and we asked them a funny question, "Okay, who is always right while designing?", and they told us something that got stuck in our minds, "Nobody is right. The game is right."

So, it doesn't matter if someone is right or not, the game will show you if it will be a good idea or bad. It doesn't matter if you're right or wrong, the game will be the one that will always be right.

**Micael Sousa:** And because you talked about the financial dimension. Co-designing is good to design games, but is it good from a financial perspective? Is it good to be designing games?

**Shei:** Not at all.

**Isra:** We're married, but yes, we just have the same account.

**Micael Sousa:** Because the payments are splitted.

**Shei:** Yes, we have the same royalty as one author. If you make a game with three designers, you need to split it into three parts.

**Inka Brand:** And I think nobody makes board games thinking, “I will be rich someday”. You want to do it, it’s a hobby. It’s a lot of fun to design board games and that’s the main thing. I think nobody’s thinking about the money.

**Isra:** You’re going to get disappointed so quickly. “I’m getting rich with this board game industry now.”

**Carla Sousa:** Maybe someone thought of it, but they gave up. So they’re not here.

**Isra:** So designing mainly is about having fun in the first place and then everything that comes later is welcome.

**Micael Sousa:** So do you have any suggestions for new designers that want to start a team?

**Shei:** Have patience.

**Isra:** Have patience?

**Shei:** Have patience. And spend time on prototypes, also go to a fair, conventions, and so on. Meet people, meet publishers, other authors, illustrators.

**Isra:** But for us, I think that the best advice to give someone that wants to design a game, or wants to start in design, or whatever.

**Shei:** We always say the same.

**Isra:** We always say the same. Just play. Play games.

**Shei:** A lot of games.

**Isra:** Forget about prototypes, forget about everything. Forget about industry, production, whatsoever.

**Shei:** Have fun.

**Isra:** Just play.

**Shei:** Have fun playing games.

**Isra:** Play and have fun and everything will come later. It will come along. You don’t have to even chase it. You don’t have to look for it, because if you play a lot, and you have the feeling that you want to design something, you will eventually design something.

**Shei:** For us, playing games is like doing research. If I am a scientist, I need to do research. Designing games is the same. You need to play games from other authors, other kinds of games.

**Isra:** It’s our excuse for buying games. Like, “No, no, this is for research. This is only for research.”, “Why did you buy like 60 games in SM?”, “No, it’s training.”, “It’s for my training.” “Are you sure that this game is about math?”, “Yes, yes, yes, this is very important.”

**Micael Sousa:** I use this as an excuse to my wife. “This is work, I need to buy games to study.”

**Isra:** It’s for the university.

**Carla Sousa:** We both are games researchers, so... Pretty much, no.

**Markus Brand:** And don't be worried if a publisher says, "No, thank you," to your prototype. We heard this for seven years.

**Micael Sousa:** Seven years trying to publish the first game?

**Inka Brand:** Yes.

**Markus Brand:** Yes. It will work anytime, so...

**Isra:** Yes, patience. And if you really want to do it, you're going to persist. And persevere all the time.

But I think that's like any other dexterity. I mean, if you want something, you're going to persevere. If you don't persevere, I mean...

I don't know, we haven't spent seven years trying to get our first game published, maybe we are not big here. It took us like three years and we were nearly about to abandon everything. Okay, we had fun, we worked a lot, nothing happened, so let's keep playing games. Luckily, it finally happened. And then until today, but... Seven years is too much for waiting.

**Markus Brand:** It's a passion.

**Isra:** Yes, exactly.

**Member of the audience:** I have a question, can I?

**Micael Sousa:** Of course.

**Member of the audience:** For Inka and Marcus as you have already designed children games. When you are testing with adults or young people, the feedback is verbal, I think. But with children, how does it work, the feedback?

**Markus Brand:** With children?

**Member of the audience:** Yes.

**Inka Brand:** It's pretty easy. When you go to kindergarten or school, you immediately see if the kids like the game or not.

**Shei:** Yes.

**Inka:** If they don't even talk with you, you just see it. Because all I see is this [demonstrates]... If it's finished and the kids go, "Again, again, again!" Okay, that's enough, thank you. That's the best feedback.

And if they're bored, they're going to say, "Oh, I want to play with the car over there", and they're doing stuff, some other stuff.

**Markus Brand:** But the same with the adults.

**Member of the audience:** Yes.

**Markus Brand:** When they open their cell phone, it's over.

**Inka Brand:** But kids are very direct, so it's easy to see if a game works or not.

**Member of the audience:** Even if the kids' games are simpler, do you think it's easiest to design?

**Inka Brand:** No.

**Shei:** No.

**Inka Brand:** You need one really, really good idea, and you can't put more stuff in to make it smooth. You just need one idea, and it has to work. Without anything you can do about it, because that's pretty difficult. So if you don't have a good idea, you can't make a game.

For adult games, you can use some tricks to make a game work better, you can put another rule in. You can't do that in a kids' game.

**Micael Sousa:** My question was about using our family. Counts as co-design?

**Markus Brand:** What is it?

**Micael Sousa:** Using our family to test and play the games counts as co-design? Counts? Is it part of the co-design process?

**Markus Brand:** Yes.

**Inka Brand:** Yes, but now we use our daughter, this is our daughter [points to a person in the audience], for real, she is co-designing. She helps a lot at home. She invents with us, she tests with us, she has her own ideas. Sometimes it feels a little bit like a family business now.

**Markus Brand:** The reason why we started with children's games, was because our testers were at home and they had to play everything we designed. We lost our son years before, but our daughter is still here.

**Inka Brand:** We lost him to the games.

**Markus Brand:** He is just a computer player.

**Micael Sousa:** Now it's time to share a traumatic experience.

**Carla Sousa:** I was thinking of a similar question. To what extent do you think participating is co-designing? When someone is a lot on play testing, giving that much feedback, what co-designing is to you?

Because we use that concept of co-designing in research also, but I'm not sure if it's the same extent.

**Shei and Isra:** It's different.

**Shei:** Because in research, I was researching in another lab. I do science, if you are in a lab doing the testing or things, if the PhD wants, they can put it in the paper. In the credits of the paper, in the last place. Because you are only the hands, not the head.

But in games, if we want to add another designer to the game, it's because it has a good idea for the game, or a mechanic that fits perfectly in the game.

**Isra:** I think the concept for co-designing is about who is making the game. If you are designing the game, you can get help from many other people, more heavy or less heavy, but in the end, it's your thing.

It's about, I don't know how to say, a famous chef that makes a dish, and he needs chopped carrots, whatever. The guy that chopped the carrots helped to build that dish, but it's not the main chef that originated all of that. More or less. We need the testers, it's a pillar of everything in designing. They are helping you, but they are not doing your thing. It's different.

**Shei:** You have a mechanic, but you work with a developer, and the developer...

**Isra:** Adds too much stuff to your... It will be co-designing. But if all the decisions are taken by you, you are the author. You just take inputs, and then come up with another thing. It's subtle, the difference, but I think you understand, right?

**Markus Brand:** You're right.

**Member of the audience:** Most likely you do a lot of prototypes, and paper prototypes, when and how do you know it's good enough to publish? Or do you just go with the flow?

**Inka Brand:** I think when we make our playtest, and you see it gets less things you need to change, you get at some point that you think, "That's okay, we can send it to the publisher now." In the end, it's their decision if it's ready or not. Sometimes we send it to the editor, and then we get it back, and they say, "Okay, this point and this point, could you change it?" So it's a teamwork with the editor and the authors, and that's the point when the game gets ready, sometimes.

**Isra:** For us, I think that it's the... When you're designing, there's a point in the design that everything makes 'click', and that moment, I mean, we work for that moment.

Everybody's like, "Now it's good." For us, that's the point that you can go to the publisher.

**Shei:** You can have a good idea, but not a good game.

**Isra:** Exactly.

**Shei:** You can have a really good idea, but not a good game. At least our games have a good, original idea, but you have to build a game around that idea. If the wrap is not good enough, your idea is just an idea, and you're not going to show it to the publisher with that good idea, because the publisher will say it. They'll be like, "Yes, but the other thing is crap, so why are you wasting my time?"

**Isra:** So I think that when you have everything that works well together, and you feel like it looks like a published game, I think that you can go to the publisher. Or at least it's our way, because we know designers that have a raw idea written on a paper and go running to the publisher, "I'm going to sell you this." And sometimes they work.

**Isra and Shai:** Not for us.

**Micael Sousa:** Any other questions?

**Member of the audience:** What do you guys think is the hardest thing to do on a board game production?

**Isra:** Marketing.

**Shei:** Yes.

**Isra:** Because you can have a really good game, a really good production, but if it has no marketing or got advertised or whatever, can slip over the... I don't know the expression in English, but it will be like a slip of that year's releases.

Yes, because it's like the concept of a hidden gem. There's 1,000 games every year, and you cannot try them all. And sometimes you play one game from 2015 that nobody knows about, and it's better than any other game that got famous.

So I think that is the most complicated thing. You can have the perfect game, the perfect everything, but sometimes it's just... Nobody knows about that game.

**Micael Sousa:** It's lost in the wave. There's a huge wave of games today.

**Carla Sousa:** And do you think the fact that, going to co-design and the cooperation again, do you think that all these marketing barriers being two of you help you with these issues, or does it bring more barriers into the process?

If being two people helps you with marketing and all the other processes around game design that are not necessarily game design, around production more?

**Isra:** As we said, we are a unit. They treat us as one.

**Shei:** Our publishers know that if Isra can go to an event, I can go.

**Isra:** She's not going to go and the other way around. We have to both be there.

**Carla Sousa:** Okay.

Do you have the same experience (to Markus and Inka)?

**Inka Brand:** I think when we started, it was something special to be a couple, married. There were many people who asked about that.

**Shei:** Is it still exotic for Americans?

**Inka Brand:** Yes. Maybe it helps just to remember. "Ah, that's from the couple, the game, and that's the new one," I think. But now, no, I don't know. But at the beginning, yes, I think.

**Shei:** It's pretty popular to not only sign in with a couple or with other authors.

**Isra:** We have a curious thing that I have my last name, Sheila has her last name because in Spain you don't change your last name when you get married. And any other interview from the United States or any other country, "but we don't know if they are a couple, if they are married or not."

**Shei:** "May I ask this question? Are you married?"

**Isra:** "We have a personal question that maybe...," "Yes, we are married, don't worry.", "Oh, great thing.", "You are together, but you don't have the same last name."

**Isra:** And one of the new games from Devir are from two brothers, and they have more or less the same age and the same last name, they created "Winter". And I'm expecting that they are told that "You are married?", "No, no, we are brothers." I will ask them this question.

**Micael Sousa:** I have another question about that, about marketing. Because usually the buyer identifies with the people that created the game and we know that there are not a lot of women playing games. Do you think that co-designing as a couple or co-designing as a woman, can bring more room to the hobby, to board games? Is this a thing?

**Shei:** Yes, absolutely. The market needs women's faces or trans or whatever.

**Isra:** You need references. If you don't see women designing, that's in any other aspect, if you don't have women in music, there won't be musical women. If you don't see female faces or women faces working in this industry...

**Shei:** Not only like an author, also...

**Isra:** In any other aspect.

**Shei:** In any other aspect, like publishers or whatever.

**Isra:** So, yes, it helps. It's necessary.

**Shei:** It's necessary, Yes.

**Micael Sousa:** Do you want to add something to this?

**Inka Brand:** No, I think it's the right way to see it.

**Isra:** I'm representing them. I am talking for them. Don't answer that question.

**Shei:** You are a Brand now.

**Isra:** Yes, I'm another Brand. I'm going to change my name.

**Micael Sousa:** I think you can co-design a game, the four of you.

**Isra:** Too much royalty to split.

**Micael Sousa:** So, we have three more minutes. Any other questions from the people that are here? Would you like to ask something to our guests?

**Member of the audience:** So, we are often in the position of having students who are doing projects and games and they are forced into co-design when they would much rather be working by themselves. What advice would you give us for convincing them that this is in their best interest?

**Shei:** It's better working in a team.

**Isra:** Yes, in a team.

**Shei:** You have more inputs, more ideas, and you can select the better ones.

**Isra:** Yes, but in the end, I think to sell them into working in a team, you have to tell them “if you’re doing it by yourself, you have to do all the work by yourself. If there’s two playing, you have to help. And if there are more people, you have to do less.”

And if you’re working with a student, I mean, when I was a student, you could do everything by yourself, or just a tiny bit. Okay, just a tiny bit.

I wanted to go to parties and work.

**Markus Brand:** As Sheila said, you have more input and you have more output. I think we have published so many games only because we are a couple, a team, and if we do everything alone, it is much harder.

If you change a rule, you have to go to the next test group and test it before you can say if it’s a good rule or a bad rule. And that’s what we decide at the kitchen table in five minutes. So it’s much easier to work in a team.

**Shei:** Yes, sometimes we are at home and we are just making home things, and in one second we change our mind like, “okay, in this design we can do this or that”.

Or we are designing properly, in a proper way, and we change our mind and we need to do this at home.

**Isra:** You’re constantly thinking about designing. Like, I don’t know, maybe you can be in the bathroom and then yell, “You know what?”. So that happens.

But you cannot, if you have that kind of thing about thinking in design, you cannot stop that. At any moment you can have an idea and you go directly writing down a note.

Maybe you can read that later, one week later, like, what is this? It was so important back then, but now I cannot even understand it.

**Shei:** And for example, for testing the games, we split our testing groups. He plays with the test one player.

**Isra:** Yes, when we do play test sessions, instead of doing just one, we can split and go with one group.

**Shei:** We play online also, so we can play around the world. It’s a good tool.

**Member of the audience:** Thank you very much.

**Isra:** You’re welcome.

**Micael Sousa:** So, we ran out of time.

**Carla Sousa:** There is one more question.

**Member of the audience:** Is there any type of game which you can’t imagine yourself designing?

**Isra:** Wanted to do or?

**Member of the audience:** That kind of game that... I have some friends that do, for example party games and I’m designing for them.

**Isra:** Oh, that’s a good question because we only design games about Eurogames or card games or whatever, and then we did walkie-talkie.

That is, we don’t like cooperative games, we don’t like real-time games, we don’t like word games.



**Shei:** People are...

**Markus Brand:** We like walkie-talkie.

**Isra:** Not now, because our family wants to play it every day. "No, not again", "Another one."

**Shei:** People ask us to design a game with campaigns.

**Isra:** Yes, with campaigns, we cannot do that. The bottom line of everything is we design what we like. We have fun. If we are having fun doing this silly thing about walkie-talkie, we will do it.

We are not just in our place like "okay, no, we are Eurogame designers". No. If it's something that's funny, why not?

**Member of the audience:** But in that regard, you came up with the idea by yourself or it was a briefing from a publisher?

**Isra:** Always by ourselves, right?

**Shei:** Yes.

**Isra:** Yes, because I mean, a publisher can tell you "hey, give me a game, do me a game about whatever", like "okay, give me a contract". And I can work... So that didn't happen to us. But normally it's our thing like "hey, you approach the publisher and say we have that idea, I'm interested".

**Shei:** We do whatever we want.

**Isra:** We go with the flow. I mean, we take this very seriously, but we don't have a schedule.

I mean, these guys have to do a lot of stuff for "The Exit" and they have millions of euros, depending on them. No pressure. But for us, we are smaller, so we can relax. You can't [pointing at Inka and Markus Brand].

**Member of the audience:** And do you have any type of game that you can't imagine yourself designing?

**Inka Brand:** A war game, I think I would never do a war game. I don't want to think about it in my free time, so I don't want to play games like that. But every other kind of game. We did party games, children's games, card games. Yes, whatever.

**Markus Brand:** All the games we like.

**Inka Brand:** The ideas.

**Micael Sousa:** So.. We're done?

**Carla Sousa:** Yes.

**Micael Sousa:** So, thank you a lot.

**Carla Sousa:** Thank you so much.

**Markus Brand:** Thank you.

**Carla Sousa:** It was great.

**Inka Brand:** Thank you.

**Isra:** Thank you.

**Shei:** You're welcome.

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