Rulebook

Table of Contents

Intro

Welcome to Ego & Opus*, the PvPvE deckbuilding card game of careful planning and calculated (un)cooperation!*
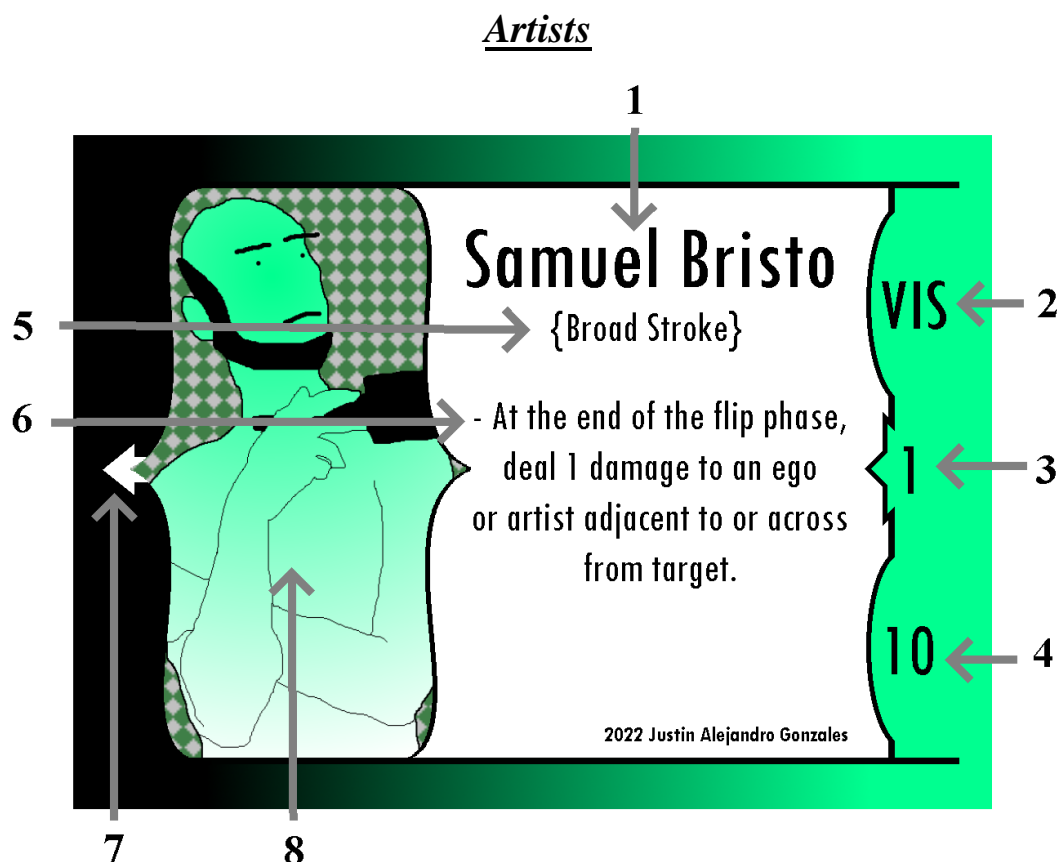
Assemble a team of eccentric artists and use their unique talents to fight through a legion of overblown egos given form. Defeat enough, and you win! You won't be fighting alone, however; your opponent's team will be there right alongside you with the same goal. Only one team gets the glory! Make sure that it's yours by any . . . creative disagreements necessary.

How to Win

To win a game of *Ego & Opus*, you must be the first Player to score 6 points by retiring egos and keeping your artists in play.

Card Anatomy

In order to understand the following chapters, you should become familiar the components that make up each card type, of which there are 3:

Artists

Samuel Bristo

{Broad Stroke}

VIS

- At the end of the flip phase, deal 1 damage to an ego or artist adjacent to or across from target.

1

10

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1) <u>Name</u> – The name of the artist.

2) <u>School</u> – The school of art that the artist practices. There are seven schools:

     VIS / Visual
     MUS / Musical
     LIT / Literary
     PFM / Performing
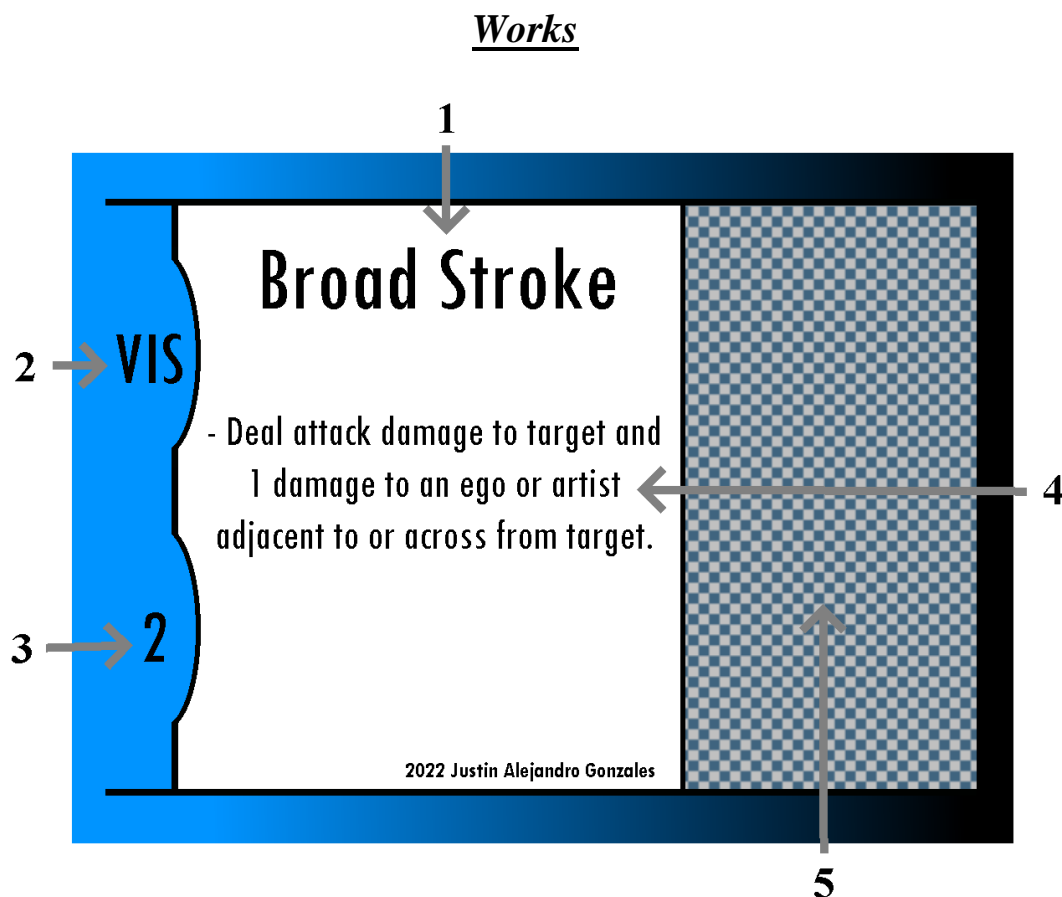   CFT / Crafting
     CUL / Culinary
     MRL / Martial

The school an artist practices determines the works that they can play.
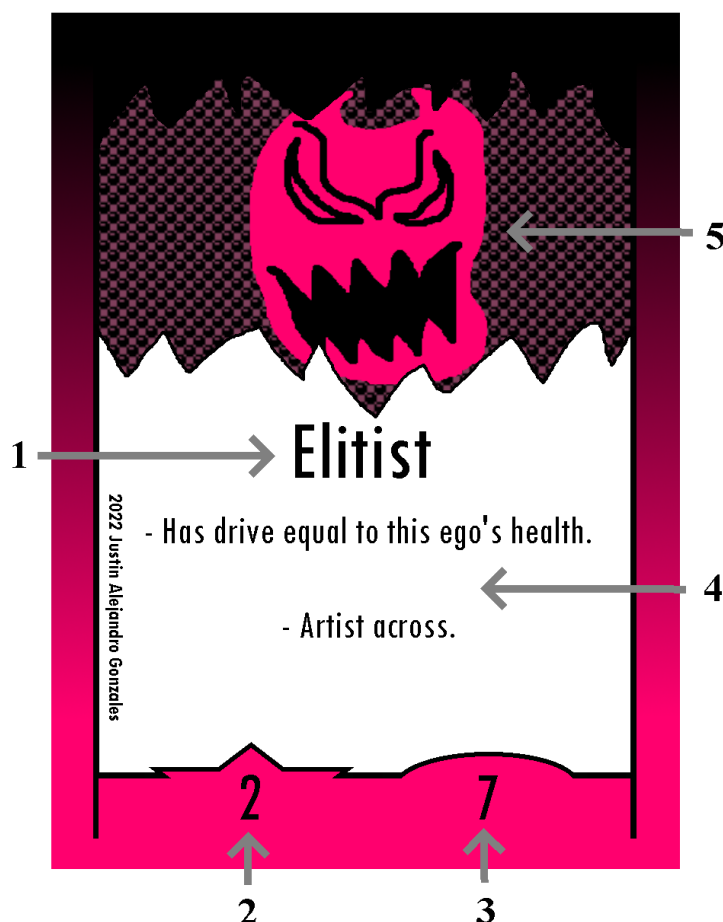
3) <u>Base Attack</u> – Represents the power of the artist's attacks without any additions or subtractions. The value of this number after additions and/or subtractions is just called "attack."

4) <u>Base Drive</u> - Represents the artist's artistic passion without any additions or subtractions. The value of this number after additions and/or subtractions is just called "drive." The more drive an artist has, the more works they can play and the longer they can survive.

5) <u>Signature</u> – A trait or quirk unique to the artist. Signatures are essentially passive abilities, and their text should be followed at all times.

6) <u>Specialty</u> – A work that the artist is especially good at. Each artist has a different specialty. For the rules of using specialties, see <u>Utilizing Specialties.</u>

7) <u>Pointer</u> – A helpful arrow that helps keep track of what the artist is targeting.

8) <u>Portrait</u> – A picture of the artist. How nice!

Works

Broad Stroke

VIS

- Deal attack damage to target and
1 damage to an ego or artist
adjacent to or across from target.

2

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1) Name
2) School – The school that an artist must match in order play the work. The only exception is "ALL" works, which may be played by any artist.
3) Drive Cost – Represents the passion required to perform or create the work. Reduces the drive of the artist doing the work by the printed value.
4) Result – How the work affects the artist's target when it is flipped during the Flip Phase.
5) Filler – Empty space. Enables more space-efficient stacking of works.

Egos

1) <u>Name</u>
2) <u>Base Attack</u>
3) <u>Base Health</u> – Represents the vitality of the ego without any additions or subtractions. The value of this number after additions and/or subtractions is just called "health."
4) <u>Strategies</u> – Describes which artist the ego intends to attack during the <u>Ego Phase</u>. Egos always have two strategies; if the one on top doesn't have any eligible targets, the ego goes with the one on the bottom instead.
5) <u>Portrait</u>

That's every part of each card type briefly explained. The specifics of each will be detailed in the following chapters.

Setup

Ego & Opus is designed to be played between 2 Players. In this game, it will be helpful to sit next to each other on the same side of the table.

Before the game starts, each Player must have or create a portfolio and a vault. If you don't already have one or the other, see Building Portfolios and Vaults. If you have both, continue with the setup.

Shuffle your portfolio and set it aside.

Determine who goes first for the next step by rolling a die. The winner will be Player 1 and the loser will be Player 2.

Player 1 places an artist of their choice from their vault onto the board face-up and then an ego of their choice to the left of that artist. Then, Player 2 does the same below Player 1's artist and ego. Then Player 1 below that, and finally Player 2 below that. At the end of this process, there will be four artists and four egos on the board. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1

Egos

Zone 1
Player 1

Zone 2
Player 2

Zone 3
Player 1

Zone 4
Player 2
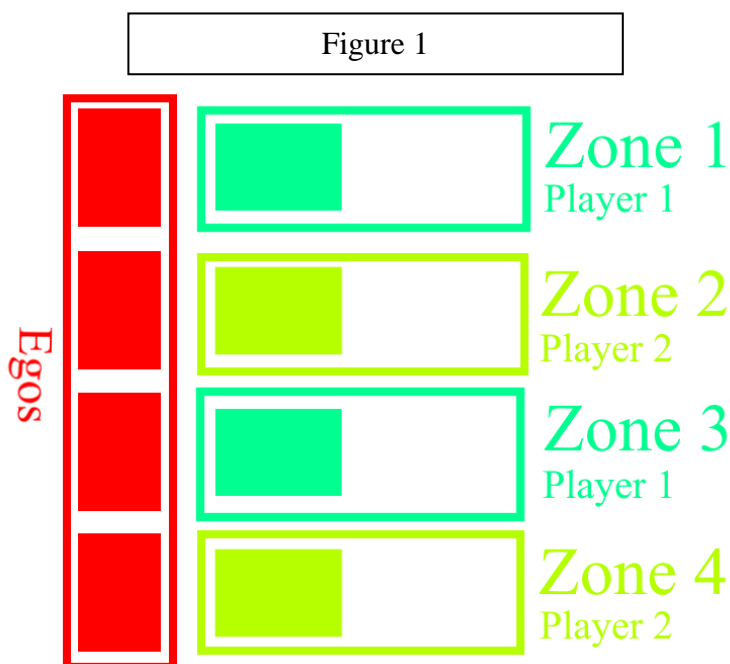
The red cards are the egos, and the green and yellow cards are the artists. Artists occupy their own spaces on the board, called zones. There are four zones; zones 1 and 3 belong to Player 1, and zones 2 and 4 belong to Player 2.

Once these cards are set, the setup is complete and you're ready to start the game!

Draw Phase

Now that you're set up and armed with the proper info, we move on to the beginning of the game. Each round in a game of *Ego & Opus* is divided into four phases, the first of which is the draw phase.

At the beginning of the draw phase, on the first round only, both Players draw 7 works. On later rounds, draw 1 work.

The maximum number of works that can be in your hand is ten. If you draw your eleventh work, you must immediately discard 1 of your works into your graveyard.

Your graveyard is a pile of cards that you should set next to your portfolio.

If you have no more works in your portfolio to draw, shuffle all of the works in your graveyard into your portfolio, then draw as normal.

Play-Target Phase

After the draw phase is the play-target phase. This is the major strategic phase of any round of *Ego & Opus*.

On this phase, as the name implies, you may play works and set targets for your artists.

To play a work, choose a work from your hand and place it face-down to the right of an artist in one of your zones. The chosen work must be the same school as the artist, or else it won't do anything. However, works from the ALL school may be played on any artist without consequence. Artists may only play one work each per round.

On the first round, Players play works and choose targets from top to bottom. At the beginning of the play-target phase, Player 1 may play a work in zone 1 and then must choose a target for the artist in that zone. Then, Player 2 may do the same in zone 2. Continue like this until all artists have chosen a target.

On the second round, the order that artists may play works and choose targets shifts down by 1, such that the order looks like this: zone 2 > zone 3 > zone 4 > zone 1. On the next round, the order shifts down by one again, and then again on the fourth round such that every artist will have gotten a turn to go first. This cycle repeats for every round beyond the fourth. To keep track of who goes first on any given round, you may use the provided white pointer piece.

An artist's target may be the ego across from/above/below them, any other artist, or when the artist's work allows it, themselves. An artist's target is the one whom their work is going to affect in the next phase.

If the target is an ego, orient the artist card so that the pointer is pointing at the desired ego. (See Figure 2.) If the target is not an ego (as in another artist, themselves, or there is no specific target), slide the artist directly up against

the ego that's across from it. (See Figure 3.) When targeting a non-ego, Players do not have to reveal their specific target.

A Player may choose to not play a work on one or both of their artists on the play-target phase. However, they must still choose a target. Artists without a work will default to attacking their target on the next phase (see Attacking).
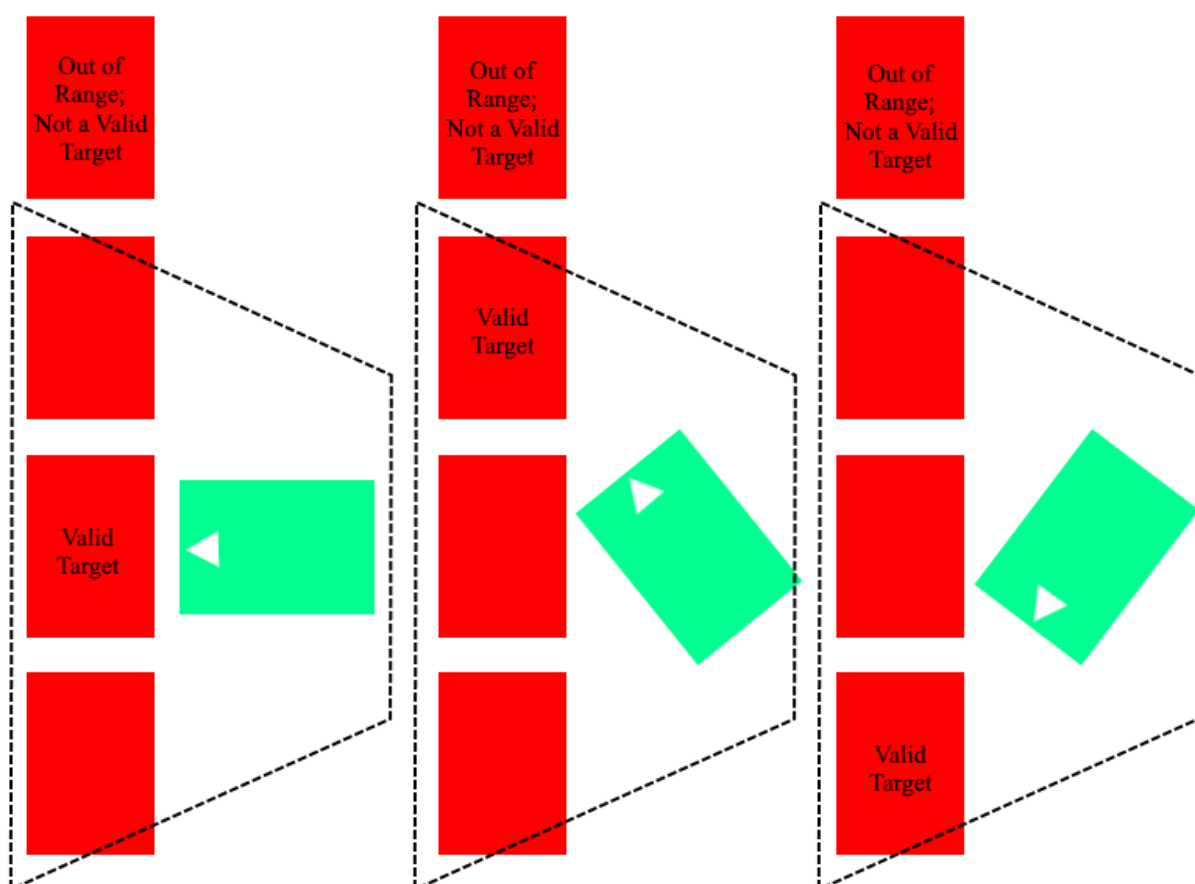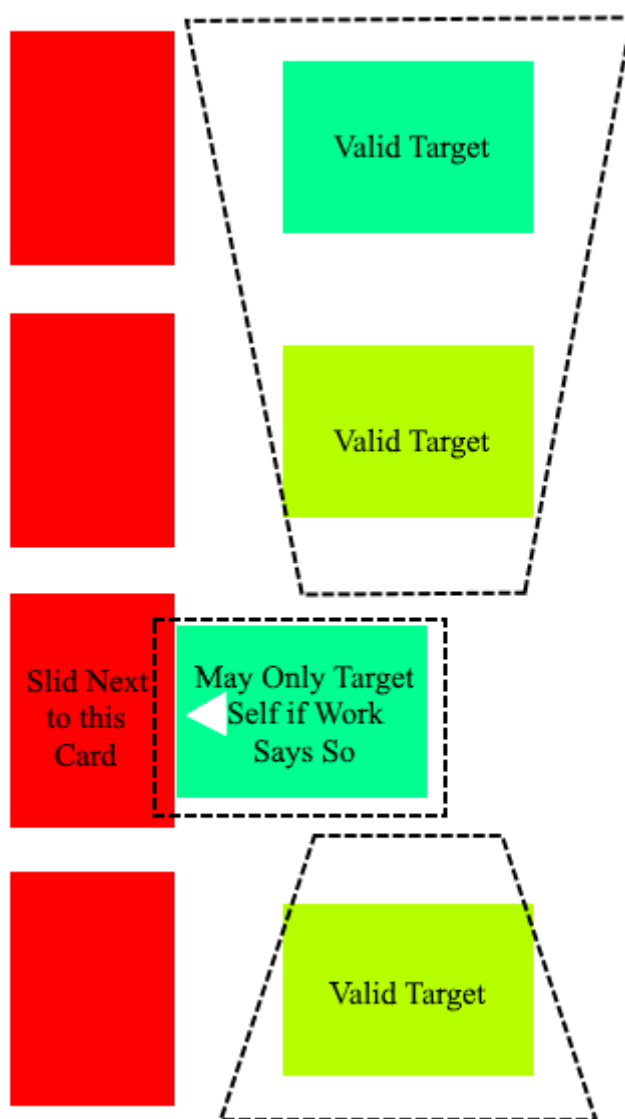
Figure 2

Figure 3

Valid Target

Valid Target

Slid Next to this Card

May Only Target Self if Work Says So

Valid Target

Flip Phase

After the play-target phase comes the flip phase. This phase is where your plans either come to fruition or are foiled by your opponent.

Flipping order is identical to the targeting order in the play-target phase. At the beginning of the flip phase, Player 1 flips the work attached to the artist in zone 1 (if they have one). The drive cost of the work is immediately subtracted from the artist's drive. If there is not enough drive to pay the drive cost, or if the work is of the wrong school, then nothing happens, not even an attack.

If the drive cost is paid, then the results of the work are executed upon the chosen target.

If an artist is reduced to 0 drive, they are retired. (For what to do in this scenario, see [Attacking](#).)

After the results are played out, Player 2 repeats the process of flipping, paying for, and executing the results of their work in zone 2. Repeat until all four artists have completed the same process.

-Additional Rulings-
Whenever you to search your portfolio, you must shuffle your portfolio after searching it.

Some effects may trigger passively at certain times in a round, such as "at the end of the flip phase." There may be situations in which more than one of such effects trigger at the same time. In these cases, trigger the effects from the leftmost card to the rightmost card, and from the topmost card to the bottommost card. Additionally, effects that **may** be triggered at a certain time always come after effects that **always** trigger at that time.

Attacking

If an artist has no work to flip, then the artist attacks their target.

If the target is an artist: deal damage by subtracting the victim's drive by the attacker's attack. If the victim's drive is reduced to 0, the victim's Player loses 1 point. The victim is retired and must be returned to the vault. All works attached to the victim are detached and sent to the graveyard, and a new artist must be chosen from the vault to replace the victim. The new artist cannot do anything until the next round.

If the target is an ego: deal damage by subtracting the victim's health by the attacker's attack. If the victim's health is reduced to 0, the attacker's Player gains 2 points. The victim is retired and sent to the graveyard. Then, the victim's Player must choose an ego from their vault to replace the victim.

As soon as a Player gains their sixth point, they win the game! Play cleverly to make sure that you're the one who claims the points for retired egos.

Note: point totals cannot be reduced below 0.

Utilizing Specialties

If an artist has not yet flipped their work, and the last work they flipped was their specialty, the Player may choose not to flip the work and instead declare it as a copy of the specialty. Then, treat the copy as if it was a normal version of the work (pay the drive cost as normal).

Copies of specialties may be used to create further copies.

Ego Phase

After the last artist has affected their target in the flip phase, the ego phase begins.

Once again, egos attack in the same order as the artist's flipping order. At the beginning of the ego phase, the first ego attacks the artist who fulfilled the conditions of their top strategy during the current round. If no artist fulfilled the conditions, the ego attacks according to its bottom strategy instead.

The Player whose ego attacks first should be the one who figures out the egos' targets that round.

If an ego encounters a tie using either of their strategies, roll a die for each potential victim. The artist that rolls the lowest is attacked.

After the first ego has attacked, the second ego attacks, and then the third, and then the fourth.

An ego's attacks work identically to an artist's attacks (see Attacking above).

An ego may only attack one artist per round, but an artist may be attacked by several egos.

After each ego has attacked its target, prepare for the next round by resetting the orientation of all artists. Then, the round ends and the next round begins with the draw phase. All works remain on the board.

Building Portfolios and Vaults

Basics

A portfolio is a deck that contains no more or less than 25 works. You may not have more than four copies of any given work in your portfolio. A vault is a collection of cards that contains 6 artists and 8 egos. You may not have more than one copy of any given artist or ego in your vault.

The work named "Idea" does not go into your portfolio; If you have works in your portfolio that refer to Ideas, you may put as many copies of Idea into your vault as you think you'll need.

Tips

We would suggest that you choose your artists first, then your works, and finally your egos.

There are no restrictions on how many schools you may have represented amongst works and artists you have in your portfolio and your vault. However, keep in mind that you'll only ever be able to play works from two different schools at any given time. If you choose to use more than two schools, consider including more ALL works in your portfolio.

Each school has an archetype or theme that they largely adhere to:
VIS / Visual: Interacting with your Graveyard and Vault
MUS / Musical: Effects that rely on and change specific numbers and words on cards
LIT / Literary: Gaining information about your opponent's cards and interacting with hands
PFM / Performing: Effects that rely on and change turn order and targeting
CFT / Crafting: Attaching, retiring, and detaching works
CUL / Culinary: Giving drive and health to cards
MRL / Martial: Attacking, increasing attack, and teamwork with MRL artists
Some combinations of schools may be more effective than others.
Experiment to find what works the best for you!

Your artists' specialties can be copied several times (see Utilizing Specialties) so you can get away with only putting one or two copies of them in your portfolio. If you do, you can free up more space for other works.

Egos will attack you and your opponent's artists. You can't predict what artists and strategies your opponent will employ, but you do know what you plan to use; focus on trying to choose egos that will target your artists as rarely as possible.

Stronger egos have less health, and egos with more health have less attack. Depending on how much attack and drive your artists have (or don't have) determine if you are willing to put more dangerous egos in your vault.

Starter Card Lists

If you're not sure what kind of strategy you'd like to use, or you'd simply prefer not to bother with putting together a portfolio or vault for yourself, we've prepared a number of pre-made card lists for you to consider:

"One Man's Trash . . ."

Portfolio	Vault
Branch Out (ALL)	Adrian O'Right (CFT)
Criticize (ALL) x 2	Gerald Busch (CFT)
Draft (ALL) x 2	Melven Mondo (CFT)
Homage (ALL) x 4	Carrie Glifford (VIS)
Muse (ALL) x 2	Lumnum Chickeroo (VIS)
Primary Attack (ALL) x 2	Samuel Bristo (VIS)
Blueprints (CFT)	
Finishing Touches (CFT) x 2	Bombastic
Prototype (CFT)	Elitist
Serrated Blade (CFT)	Overcritical
Wooden Chest (CFT)	Pompous
Action Scene (VIS)	Pretentious
Blackwork Tattoo (VIS)	Rude
Broad Stroke (VIS)	Snooty
Capture the Moment (VIS)	Stubborn
Scrapbook (VIS) x 2	
	Idea (ALL) x 8

"Well-Fed Fighters"

Portfolio	Vault
Branch Out (ALL)	Crimette Raquet (CUL)
Defense (ALL) x 2	Reed Whinchester (CUL)
Homage (ALL)	Wendolyn Smith (CUL)
Muse (ALL) x 4	Cash "Money" Rogadeux (MRL)
Overshadow (ALL)	Omar Uldi (MRL)
Strong Attack (ALL) x 2	Sergeant Malaney (MRL)
Undermine (ALL) x 2	
Chocolate Drizzle (CUL)	Haughty
Gluten-Free Bread (CUL)	Unimpressed
Mix (CUL)	Dismissive
Pure Vanilla Scoop (CUL)	Stubborn
Red Wine (CUL)	Pompous
Smorgasbord (CUL)	Self-Righteous
Cripple (MRL)	Rude
Grapple (MRL)	Overcritical
Counterattack (MRL)	
Hyeong (MRL) x 2	
Flanking (MRL)	

"Flip the Script"

Portfolio	Vault
Encourage (ALL) x 4	Carrie Glifford (VIS)
Moderate Attack (ALL) x 4	Ignal Sedim (VIS)
Muse (ALL)	Samuel Bristo (VIS)
Broad Stroke (VIS) x 2	Matt Cross (PFM)
Chisel (VIS) x 2	Orville McOrville (PFM)
Scrapbook (VIS) x 4	Waimlyn Wohwa (PFM)
Herkie (PFM) x 2	
Slapstick (PFM) x 2	Apathetic
Tango (PFM) x2	Arrogant
Yes, And (PFM) x2	Bombastic
	Defensive
	Deprecating
	Passionless
	Selfish
	Unimpressed

"Anti-Ego Propaganda"

Portfolio	Vault
Branch Out (ALL)	Amavelli Tutlio (MUS)
Build Confidence (ALL) x 2	Ottawa Stephane (MUS)
Captivate (ALL) x 3	The Ostentatious Rib (MUS)
Defense (ALL) x 3	Fuego Zipper-Saddle (LIT)
Moderate Attack (ALL) x 2	Hegemony Hark (LIT)
Primary Attack (ALL) x 2	Janet Dosen (LIT)
Diss Track (MUS)	
Glissando (MUS)	Defensive
Leitmotif (MUS)	Pompous
Sting (MUS) x2	Pretentious
Tune Up (MUS)	Self-Righteous
Brilliant Satire (LIT)	Unimpressed
Dramatic Irony (LIT) x 2	Self-Destructive
Encyclopedia (LIT)	Sleazy
Exposé (LIT)	Sloven
Proofread (LIT)	

"Spice of Life"

Portfolio	Vault
Branch Out (ALL) x 4	September (ALL)
Encourage (ALL) x 2	Crimette Raquet (CUL)
Homage (ALL) x 2	Orville McOrville (PFM)
Muse (ALL) x 2	Pizantz Swirne (PFM)
Share Knowledge (ALL) x 4	Bjonnevi Årud (VIS)
Strong Attack (ALL)	Carrie Glifford (VIS)
Pure Vanilla Scoop (CUL)	
Red Wine (CUL)	Apathetic
Death-Defying Stunt (PFM)	Callous
Hypnotic Trance (PFM)	Disillusioned
Slapstick (PFM)	Dismissive
Tango (PFM)	Fickle
Action Scene (VIS)	Self-Destructive
Capture The Moment (VIS)	Snooty
Portrait (VIS)	Stubborn
Blackwork Tattoo (VIS)	

Alternative Forms of Play

Ego & Opus is designed around the rules that this rulebook outlines, and therefore are the rules that we expect Players to enjoy most often. However, the systems present in *Ego & Opus* allow for different formats to be experimented with. Below, we offer up a number of alternative formats for you to consider trying out once you've gotten a hang of the main game or if you'd like to get more than two Players involved:

4-Player

Four Players control one zone each.

During the setup, determine Player numbers by having each Player roll a die. Player 1 is the one who rolls the highest, Player 2 is the one who rolls the second highest, and so on. Player 1 places their artist in zone 1 and then their ego to the left of their artist. Then, Player 2 places their artist in zone 2 and then their ego to the left of their artist, and so on.

The number of points needed to win is reduced to 4.

Effects that reference an "other artist" will not be effective in this format.

All egos are in range of all artists.

You have less options to work with, but more opportunities for chaos! In a free-for-all, your strategy will have to change significantly.

Solitaire

One Player controls all four zones.

During the setup, the Player may place artists and egos in any order.

Effects that reference an "other artist" may refer to any of the Player's other artists.

Challenge yourself to see how quickly you can gain 6 points without any opponents to foil your plans!

Schism

The egos are replaced by a second set of artists that are mirrored to the left of the first.

During the setup, both zone 1s place artists simultaneously. Both zone 2s then place their artists simultaneously, and so on. Flipped works and/or attacks in mirrored zones are also executed simultaneously.

Players gain 2 points for retiring an artist on the opposite side of the schism.

Effects that target egos will not be effective in this format.

Before the game starts, each side of the schism may decide to play by normal 2-Player rules, 4-Player rules, or Solitaire rules. Have fun experimenting with different combinations; Schism may be played by as few as two Players or as many as eight!

Superego

During the setup, a third Player chooses the egos instead of Player 1 or Player 2.

Player 3 draws works just as Players 1 and 2 do, but they do not control any zones.

At the start of the ego phase, Player 3 may play a work from their hand onto each ego, placing it to the left of the ego. If they do, the ego will execute the results of their played work on their target instead of attacking.

Players 1 and 2 share a point total. Player 3 gains 1 point for retiring an artist.

For Player 3, any effect that refers to "this artist" may refer to "this ego" instead. In addition, effects that affect drive may also affect their egos' health.

Credits

"The Mexican Elf"
Playtesting

"Capt. Wasabus"
Playtesting
Card Design Assistance

"Wobbus"
Playtesting

"Wolfmama"
Playtesting

"Schwahpower"
Playtesting

"Dein Bien Phu"
Playtesting

"Aesyric"
Playtesting

"KingKazador"
Playtesting

Justin Alejandro Gonzales
Card and Logo Art
Game and Card Design
Graphic Design
Packaging Design
Rulebook and Lore

"Skyyuh"
Playtesting

Special Thanks
My friends and family who've supported my love of games and the development of this one since the beginning

All of the playtesters who chose to go uncredited; you know who you are, and you're awesome

The Games Crafter
Tabletop Simulator

And to all of the players who have given their support to this game:

Thanks for playing!
Good luck and have fun!