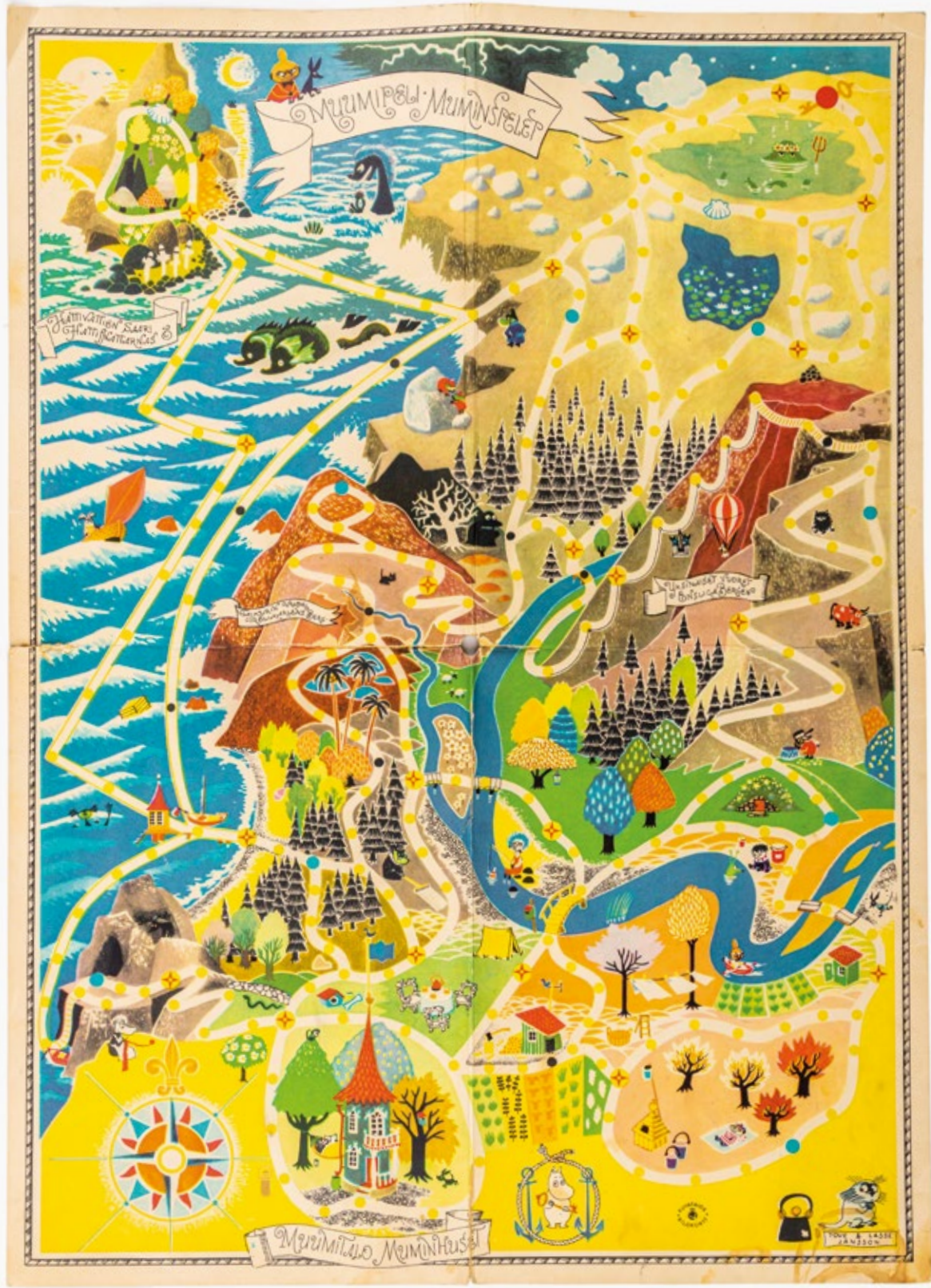




Fig. 1 Mikko Ryytty and Ira Nykänen, *Täällä kirjokannen alla* (Here beneath the multi-coloured sky), 2011. Original digital art.

Game maps also serve different purposes. In some the functionality of a map to help movement or determining distances is important. For example, in the PC-game *Doom* (1993), the computer draws the map automatically with single colour lines as the player's character moves. A resulting map has a minimalistic wireframe structure which is optimised

to navigate the three-dimensional maze of the game environment. Other maps have little or no use for navigation and are mainly meant to fuel the imagination. A good example of this is the map produced for the game *Täällä kirjokannen alla* (Here beneath the multi-coloured sky, 2011, Fig. 1), which was showcased in the exhibition. It is a larp (live action



role-playing game) in which players physically embody the role of the game character, similar to improvised theatre. *Täällä kirjokannen alla* is set in a world that is loosely based on Finnish folklore and national epic *Kalevala*. It is based on popular poems and songs collected during the nineteenth century, describing heroic and tragic exploits and adventures of several human and semi-divine heroes. It is commonly understood to be set in Iron Age Finland. The game's map refers to the game's characters' understanding of the universe: it contains a pillar which supports the heavens and the river of the land of the dead, Tuonela, which lies at the edge of the world. The map doesn't follow the conventions of directions or projection used in traditional maps and is reminiscent of a medieval *mappae mundi*. Its relation to real terrain is vague: one can distinguish a rough tilted outline of Scandinavia, which hints at the game's characters' cultural environment. Although *Täällä kirjokannen alla*, like all larps, was played in real terrain, its map is useless as regards movement or determining distances. Instead, the map's purpose is to serve as a guide to the mindscapes of the game's characters.

Another example of a map with a strong emphasis on helping players to imagine, is the game board of *Muumipeli* (Moomin Game, 1957, Fig. 2). The game is based on the popular Finnish *Moomin* books and comics. Its map resembles an illustration from a children's book – it does not appear to be an exact simulation of the imaginary environment, but more of an inspirational drawing designed to feed the imagination. The map's purpose is to help turn the relatively simple rules of the game into imaginary adventures in a Moominvalley. The author of *Moomins*, Tove Jansson (1914–2001), drew several maps of Moominvalley, among them the map for *Muumipeli*. These maps are probably the best-known Finnish maps of a location that does not exist. Over the decades the Moomin characters have grown to become, Finland's national symbol and a lucrative international brand that every Finn has some familiarity with. For this reason, the *Muumipeli* map was the first and most obvious map that the curators chose to be showcased in the exhibition. *Muumipeli* underlined the prominence of maps of imaginary places in our culture.

Map, game board and terrain

What is a map, what is a game board, and what is a terrain? In games, the boundary between these three can be flexible. According to Sybille Lammes and Clancy Wilmott, when used in location-aware games, which use GPS- and cellphone technology to track player's movement over physical terrain a common map software such as Google Maps or Open Street Map becomes 'a game board that retains the original elements of their functional cartographical visual design while doubling as a playful surface'.²⁵ It is quite justified to ask whether the representation of the game world on the screen of a cell phone or game console is a map or a space. The boundary between the map and terrain may be as unclear in the context of analogue game formats as well. For example, miniature wargames are played across a three-dimensional space which is model of a battlefield where sightlines between locations may be significant in terms of the gameplay. For instance, a player will be undecided whether to fire at a character who is not in a line of sight of their character.

The exhibition's second theme introduced six examples to encourage the visitor to consider the fluidity of map and terrain on the one hand, and map and game board on the other. According to Lammes and Chris Perkins, board games such as mahjong and chess 'deploy the map quite literally as a game-board'.²⁶ In more thematic games, game boards are increasingly merging with maps, so that it is simultaneously a representational map and a game element. In the exhibition the fluidity between map and game board was showcased by *Japanilainen sotapeli* (Japanese war game, 1905, Fig. 3). The game is a variant of the Chinese game *Xiangqi*.²⁷ Like chess, the abstract game board of *Xiangqi* does not contain elements that viewers would normally associate with maps. However, even the chessboard describes the mutual relationships of the concepts in the game, and thus they can be seen as a symbolic representation of places in the game world. This means that they, too, can be interpreted as maps.

In the case of *Japanilainen sotapeli*, the board, consisting solely of rectangles, has a more direct relationship to geographic elements. The four large rectangles in the middle of the board represent a river, crossed by three bridges. Similar element in the *Xiangqi* game board has been traditionally referred to as 'boundary river' or 'Yellow River'.²⁸ Furthermore, it is often marked by four Chinese characters printed into the river area that roughly translates as 'River of the Chu, Border of the Han'. The text is a reference to a conflict between the Chu and Han nations during

Fig. 2 Tove and Lars Jansson, *Muumipeli* (Moomin Game), 1957. 67 x 48 cm. Photo by Saarni Säilynoja.