

The Stickman No. 14 Puzzle Box

(Checkmate Box)

The Stickman Checkmate Box is indeed an oddity, and almost borders on an automaton mechanism. In this puzzle, chess pieces automatically advance or retreat their position on the top chessboard as it rotates various degrees and directions. Secret drawers below will only open once a checkmate is achieved for either the black or white side. There are five different levels of difficulty to this puzzle, ranging from nearly impossible to moderately difficult, so it can be tailored to any individual taste.

All mechanical parts of this puzzle are crafted from solid wood, with the exception of embedded magnets that move game pieces and unlock drawers. Removing the top of this puzzle will show the upper layer of these mechanics, but even watching these in operation will provide very few clues as to how the mechanism works. The center assembly is a single device that produces three different forms of mechanical output depending on the source and direction of the inputs it receives. This leaves most scratching

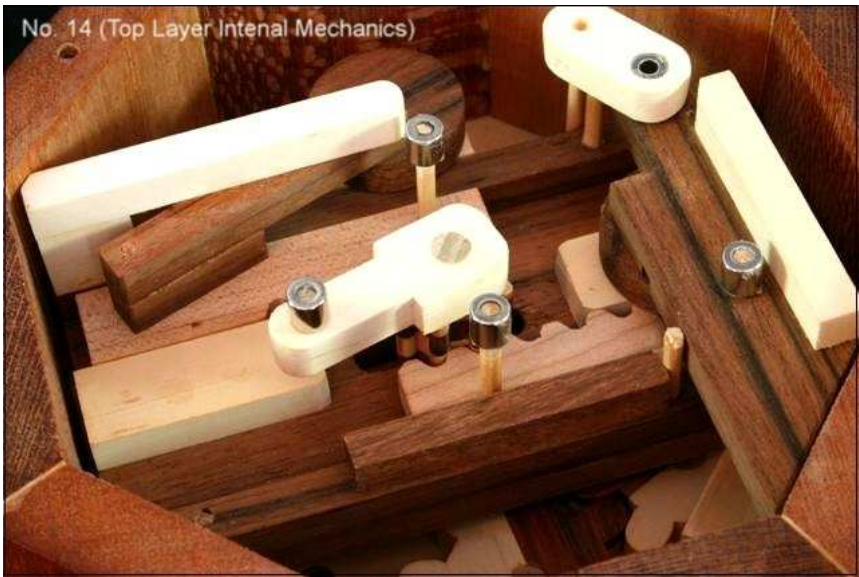
their head as to just

how this is accomplished. Tensions of moving parts have to be exact to make this system work.

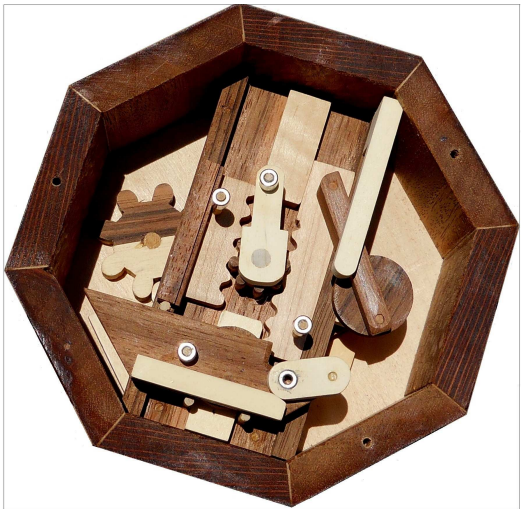
Originally, Robert planned a third layer to this mechanism, and its purpose was to move a magnet of opposing polarity under the king of the defeated side, so that at the time of checkmate it would fall over. Unfortunately, this project took longer than Robert planned (7 months in all) and he was unable to add this aspect to the puzzle. Still, it is a very intricate mechanism, so much so that even Robert does not fully recall exactly how he made it work.



An automated carving machine was purchased especially for the decorations of this project, and oddly the very first competition that Robert ever won came from that company for his unique use of this machine in the project. The exterior of this puzzle is crafted of leopardwood and holly, with decorative reliefs done in mahogany for its ability to show detail in carving. Holly and ebony were Robert's first choice for the inlaid game board, but a lack of ebony at the time altered this plan.



The center mechanism used in this puzzle is another of Robert's creations that, once completed, just sat in shop drawers waiting for him to devise some special application for its use. Between projects, additional mechanics would slowly be added to it until the idea for a chess game was finally born.



- Limited Edition Status:** Limited to 26.
- Production Dates:** (Jan. 2007 – Jul. 2007)
- Original Sale Price:** \$1085
- Wood types:** Leopardwood, Holly & Mahogany
- Variations:** N/A
- Size:** 7" x 6" x 6"
- Number of Compartments:** Two
- Number of Steps:** Minimum of 42.
(dependent upon starting positions).
- Difficulty Level:** Ranges from moderate to extremely difficult.
- Instruction Book:** 10-pages, color, illustrated.
- Special features:** Automaton mechanism, carved feet, decorative inlays.
- Goal:** Open both drawers by producing checkmate for both sides.