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The way the **Magic** community works these days, it's hard for "hidden gems" to stay hidden for very long.

That said, I want to talk about a card that we here in R&D were very excited and apprehensive about printing, yet received a lukewarm reception from you, the internet playerbase as a whole.

That card is Blinkmoth Nexus. Originally designed by Mark Rosewater as simply a 1/1 Mishra's Factory, the Nexus--then called "Blinkmoth Factory"--was given flying by the development team to keep it from being a strictly-worse reprint and to give it a little "juice."

UL01\_LET

Blinkmoth Factory

Land

oT: Add one colorless mana to your mana pool.

o1: ~ becomes a 1/1 artifact Blinkmoth creature with flying until end of turn.

ooT: Target Blinkmoth gets +1/+1 until end of turn.



As you see, it was originally just a 1/1 flying Mishra's. And we started throwing them into decks... lots and lots of decks.

RB 2/18: seems like a fine Con card, needs testing of course, but a slightly weaker Mishra's variant is a good fit for the set

WW 2/20: Not sure this actually is weaker than Mishras...this is a REALLY good card.

RB 2/20: you might be right ... like I said, 'needs testing'

bs 2/24: these are tier 1.

Worth and Brian were right... the card was amazing. They hit for one in the air, which was good and all, but they were particularly powerful on defense. Without any mana necessary to pump them, it was easy to have access to a 3/3 flying blocker at all times (with two Factories), thus forcing your opponent to over commit. Then, of course, you'd play Wrath of God and start attacking. Understand that this card was developed before Skullclamp was made good, and you can see how it had the potential to start showing up everywhere.

bs 3/5: not really in love with this card as is... reminds me of how annoying mishra could be (remember, there were entire formats that revolved around the thing and entire decks that were dedicated to killing them). i'm not opposed to doing a good man-land but i think this one's currently too good.

RB 3/25: This needs attention soon ... it's too good now and it's time to start tweaking.

HS 3/25 Its very good now, yes,. Too good? Team is not sure. But, in the interest of finding out, we will start testing at o2 to activate.

HS 4/2 testing o1/o1 version.

It was clear that a mana had to be added to the card somewhere; Henry wanted to increase the initial activation to 2. That didn't solve the problem of having the Factory be too strong on defense (which, as I said before, was the developers' main beef with the card), so the alternative of adding a mana to the tap ability was suggested.

With no mana on the tap ability, it was always more efficient to attack or block with a single Blinkmoth, then simply tap the others for additional power. With the mana added to the tap ability, the decision of how many Blinkmoths to activate becomes an interesting one.

We moved it to rare to have one land at each rarity, and that's how it went out the door.

RL01

[Pile of Blinkmoths]

Land

oT: Add 01 to your mana pool.

o1: {insert:Cardtitle} becomes a 1/1 Blinkmoth artifact creature with flying until end of turn.

o1, oT: Target Blinkmoth gets +1/+1 until end of turn.

We honestly thought people would be excited by the card... after all, the "man-lands" (slang for a land that can turn into a creature) in *Urza's Legacy* are still very well loved to this day. But instead of a warm reception, Blinkmoth Nexus was met with a resounding "Eh." Some samples from *Darksteel* set reviews culled from other websites:

"As man-lands go, this is not good enough. Its greatest benefit is reducing Myr Enforcer's casting cost by one (if activated). Looks like the uncommon slot got the good land in this set."

"...Blinkmoth Nexus may be playable as a kill card in some Voltaic Construct / infinite mana deck."

"I'm disappointed they put a mana-cost on the bonus ability, though. That was rather unnecessary hosing."

"So, I guess Wizards was faced with the option of reprinting Mishra's Factory, OR going with something completely different and significantly worse."



Yes, it is worse than Mishra's Factory. But I suppose people forget that Mishra's Factory was insane. I'll say it again, "INSANE." Don't bother writing to me to tell me that it isn't insane, because I won't believe you. Insane.

For reference, Mishra's is still showing up in high numbers in Vintage play\*. If a land that turns into a colorless Grizzly Bears still cuts it in the uber-powerful Vintage arena, you know it has to be really, really good.

I'm including a Vintage decklist of a deck called "Landstill" more so because it's cool than because it's entirely relevant to this discussion:

Vintage Landstill		
Main Deck		Sideboard
60 cards		
4 Faerie Conclave	1 Ancestral Recall	2 Disenchant
2 Flooded Strand	1 Balance	4 Red Elemental Blast
2 Island	2 Decree of Justice	2 Slice and Dice
1 Library of Alexandria	4 Fire/Ice	3 Teferi's Response
4 Mishra's Factory	4 Force of Will	4 Tormod's Crypt

1 Plains	1 Lotus Petal	15 sideboard cards
1 Strip Mine	4 Mana Drain	
4 Tundra	3 Misdirection	
4 Volcanic Island	3 Nevinyrral's Disk	
4 Wasteland	4 Standstill	
	3 Stifle	
27 lands	3 Swords to Plowshares	
	33 other spells	
0 creatures		

Back to Blinkmoth Nexus. It seems that people were making unfair comparisons not just to Mishra's Factory, but also to Treetop Village and Faerie Conclave. I suppose the fact that it was colorless and came into play untapped were overlooked, because those are big factors in determining how good the card actually is.

And the current metagame has made the Nexus possibly even better than it was for us. It can be Clamped, for crying out loud! Brian Kibler told a funny anecdote over on Brainburst.com about how his Death Cloud/Oversold Cemetery deck was undefeated against Ravager Affinity until he realized he forgot to put Blinkmoth Nexus into the latter. After he made that change, the matchup went to 50/50.








The initial real-world resistance to put the Nexus into Affinity decks really baffled me. Paul Sottosanti, a recent hire here in R&D, was still receiving the mailing list for his old Pro team, and he would keep us updated on how their decks were shaping up. The question was always asked, "Did they put Blinkmoth in yet?" and Paul would say no. Even though Ben Stark made the Top 8 with the zero-Blinkmoth version, many members of the team commented that their exclusion of the card was a huge mistake.

As it stands now, I believe Blinkmoth Nexus ranks only below Arcboud Ravager in secondary market value for *Darksteel* cards. It is showing up in everything from Affinity to Goblins to TwelvePost to March of the Machines decks. Although no longer a "hidden gem," Blinkmoth Nexus teaches us one lesson:

Don't let comparisons to the past cloud your view of the present.



## Last Week's Poll

When you build your own casual/fun decks, which of these color combinations do you like the best?		
	3315	15.8%
	2678	12.7%
	2383	11.3%
	2216	10.5%
	1872	8.9%
	1766	8.4%
	1735	8.2%

* / *	1696	8.1%
* / *	1655	7.9%
* / *	880	4.2%
I don't build casual/fun decks.	850	4.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21046</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

It's interesting that all the allied pairs ranked above all the enemy pairs. I suppose that's a result of our enforcing the color wheel.

### This Week's Poll

**What was your initial reaction to Blinkmoth Nexus?**

What crap.  
 Decent but unspectacular.  
 Has real potential.  
 I need four right now!

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\*: Check out Philip Stanton's excellent current Type 1 metagame breakdown on StarCityGames for an in-depth look at what the "biggest format" looks like.

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