The Larp Design Cards are a tool for LARP game creation. The goal is to aid the designer in visualising various elements of the game and the connections between these elements. Inspired by *The Art of Game Design. A Book of Lenses*, the Cards are meant to assist teams of creators in preparing a game together. Other influences include „The Mixing Desk of Larp” and „The Elements of Larp Design” but, contrary to those, Larp Design Cards are a practical tool and not a descriptive system. The formula given here is the first version, and I encourage you to experiment with it.

**TYPES OF CARDS**

**The Engine (Vision)** – These four cards pose the base question: What do I want to do? Though they do not enlighten you much in themselves, they will strongly influence other elements of the game.

**The Interface (Manipulation)** – These cards pose the question: How do I want to achieve that? I call them Manipulation cards because the solutions chosen here are what makes the players do what you want them to (Vision), while retaining an illusion of free will.

**The Packaging (Communication)** – These cards tell you how to sell your game – how are you going to speak to your players, and what are you going to tell them.
LARP DESIGN CARDS – MANUAL

I'M IN
1. Make a photocopy of the cards attached to this publication. Cut them into individual cards.
2. Fill in what you can. Be brief.
3. You don’t have to fill in all the cards. You can make your own cards.
4. Set the filled cards on a table:
   - the Engine cards in the center,
   - the Interface cards around the Engine – if you can see a strong connection between the two elements, put them close together;
   - the Packaging cards as the third, outer ring.

The player will experience your game in the reverse order. Entering your game, they will not know where are you proposing to take them. The important part is for you to know that, though. Do not start designing your game by designing the Packaging.

I CALL
1. Start on the inside. Do all the Engine cards fit together?
3. Pass on to the Packaging. It shouldn’t contain too many cards, because people don’t like being flooded with information. Don’t write long pages about the game, put down the elements important for the design. Is this circle conform to your Vision? Did the Interface define something that you need to specifically communicate to the players?

If you can’t fit an answer on one card, you’ve probably found an especially important element. It probably deserves its own card, so create it (e.g., when you find out that character sheets will be especially important in your game, create a special card for them) and write down what is the purpose of that element in your game.

I RAISE
1. You’ve gone over all the circles for the first time. Make corrections, check if all the cards form a coherent whole, add cards if you find that necessary.
2. Remove some of the cards. Yes, you do have some cards in there that can be removed. Wonderful ideas, perfect to use in a different game. Make sure you only have the cards important for this particular game on the table.
3. If you can see connections between the circles, mark them down. These are probably the pillars of your game.

YOU WIN
You now have a graphical model of your idea before you. Using it, you can:
- easily present your idea to somebody else,
- build your game on a strong foundation,
- make sure you don’t deviate from your vision, or that you deviate from it on purpose,
- run the game and see if the elements function as planned,
- if they don’t, analyse and correct the design easily,
- check which connections did the players discover,
- experiment and have fun.

Literature
- „The Mixing Desk of Larp” – Martin Nielsen i Martin E. Andresen, article published in Crossing Theoretical Borders Knutepunkt 2013 conference publication.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE MESSAGE</th>
<th>THE AESTHETICS</th>
<th>THE TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| What’s the game about?  
What story does it tell?  
What questions does it pose? | What does the game look like?  
What senses does it engage?  
Which element will the players remember and why? | Does it take place at a specific time of day?  
How is it timed, if at all (and how do players experience that)?  
Are there any pre-planned events? |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLAYERS’ EXPERIENCE</th>
<th>PLAYERS’ ACTIONS</th>
<th>THE PLACE</th>
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</table>
| What emotions and states do the players experience during the game?  
What relations do they form?  
What is left in them after the game, what do they remember? | What is the most important for them during the game?  
What physical actions do they perform?  
What character interactions can happen (rivalry or cooperation)? | Where is the game located?  
How does the space delimit the game, if at all?  
Do you need special space (like blackboxes) and how will you use it? |
How do they prepare for the game? What attitudes and behaviours do you expect before the game, what behaviour during and afterwards?

What game mechanics help lead the players to the Vision, if any? What are the rules of engagement and safety rules? Which rule could you forgo if you had to? Why?

Where will the players sleep, how will they eat? How does that influence the game experience? Can you do it differently?

Do the players create them, or you? If you – how? (Written sheets, other means?) How will they communicate the desirable interactions?

How do they prepare for the game? What attitudes and behaviours do you expect before the game, what behaviour during and afterwards?
THE GAME UNIVERSE (DIEGESIS)

Which elements are crucial for the players? Which elements lead them to the Vision?

Why is this element important? What do you want to achieve through it?

COMMUNICATION WITH PLAYERS

What communication channels do you use? What is the ratio of in-game information to technical descriptions? Do the players communicate before the game, and how do you influence that?

Why is this element important? What do you want to achieve through it?