PARTIJA
THE GAME
The Game is an operational model within which a specific space is created according to particular rules and temporal limitations.

According to Eugen Fink, the world of game is: “nothing ‘more’ or ‘less’, when compared to other things; it is ‘more’ only because it is also ‘less’ at the same time. The world of games is a symbol of the real world in the visual medium. /.../ Torn between perfect practical inefficiency on the one and rules and regulations on the other side, The Game is a metaphor of cosmos by its qualities and thus represents a medium that enables an individual to determine their relation towards being, fellow humans and the world.” (1)

The Game is both a game and a “playground” for 2–4 players, 16 electro motors and a string-table. It combines the principles and peculiarities of a card game (Rummy), of playing a musical instrument and of musical improvisation, all combined into one temporary performative situation. The Game begins by capturing the image of a played card.

A digital interface then relays a card-specific MIDI signal, composed in a 4/8 rhythm, as a looped command to the mechanized percussive parts of the string-table. The hierarchical power of the played card determines the rhythmical interactions, which are then composed into a score of commands and used to proportionally influence the current musical situation.
Every move by a card game player is based on a particular distribution of possibilities, ones competitiveness and response to opponent’s moves and risk. The players’ reactions and behaviour resonate the logic of musical improvisation where all of the aforementioned open actions and procedures shape the channels of communication.

The Game resolves according to a matrix of unpredictable variations of human reactions and random outcomes which form a controlled improvisation as the card game progresses. The improvisation is controlled through a pre-determined musical score of commands that follow one another in an endless cycle of possible combinations and interactions defined by the string of cards being played.
INSTALLATION SKETCH

RASPBERRY PI LED LAMP CAMERA

USB CABLE

CARD GAME (RUMMY)

CARD TABLE (2-4 PLAYERS)
LIGHTING

MOTORS

CONSTRUCTION

ARDUINO
CIRCUIT
POWER SUPPLY

WIRING

PIANO BACK
"The software uses computer vision methods to recognize an individual playing card. It converts a photograph of the card into a special form, which facilitates the program's recognition of the blue frame on that card. Once the card is sensed, the software looks into its corner and compares the figures, numbers and colours there with the previously stored software data. Some of the software's parameters have to be determined according to the distance between the camera and cards, lighting, the size of the cards and alike. We found the useful parameters by taking snapshots of the gaming table, writing down which cards were on specific photographs, and then running a software, which tested various parameter values and wrote out those with the highest degree of correct card recognition."

- Matic Potočnik
Each game revolves around two distinctive poles; around paidia, the pole of imagination and improvisation, and around ludus, the tendency to quench spontaneity with rules and conventions. The game is played at a surreal level which asserts the domain of the not yet established. Its power lies in the fact that it disrupts the continuity of ordinary activities.

By escaping from reality into fictional time and space, it establishes its territory as a temporary alternative world within our everyday reality. The project's multi-layered design assigns two different roles to the attendants of The Game. They are both participants of an improvisational situation, in which they follow the game and listen to the sounds it produces, and card players, who become a part of (un)predictable sound-interactive situation.
The Game combines the empirical processes of playing cards and its subsequent musical performance. This way, in heterogeneous space of communication, it emits the sounds of tension between free play and play by strict rules, between competition and unpredictability, arbitrariness and improvisation. It is a hybrid instrument or even a system for performing music that can be realised only at the level of interplay between forms.(2)

(2) Ibid., pg. 358.
Inside the temporary zone of The Game, sound opens up temporality, acting as a disturbance in the characteristic hierarchical relationships of our reality, inside which complex organizations, systems and networks influence the increasingly torn temporal structure.

The Game utilizes different mediums and techniques of relaying digital and analogue processes for connecting intentions contained in playing/performing. It is those intentions that enable manipulation of sound and events.

The Game speculatively s(t)imulates the potentials of (re)production, reception and participation processes and thus tests the relations between reality and fiction, the social and the individual.
The Game (Partija)

interactive sound installation

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MIDI score: Jaka Berger – Brgs

PCB design and programming: Brane Ždralo

Programming: Matic Potočnik

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Producers: Tina Dolinšek (Ljudmila) and Uroš Veber (Projekt Atol)

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Booklet:
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