

The Practice of Everyday Technology

Seasonal Computing

Application for the 1-year Activities Program scheme (2024) of the Creative Industries Fund in the discipline *Digital Culture*.

Varia
Gouwstraat 3
3021 BA Rotterdam
<https://varia.zone>

Contact person: Simon Browne
E-mail: info@varia.zone

Profile

Varia is a Rotterdam-based initiative launched in 2017. Varia's activities span media literacy, collective infrastructures, technological interdependence, technofeminism, DIY culture and self-organisation. The initiative emerged from a need and common goal to create a collective-space in the city of Rotterdam through which a group of artists and designers can support each other's practices and the various modes of technical learning that are required to make these practices sustainable. Next to that, Varia emerged from a strong wish to open up these practices to other practitioners and connect to other networks that operate in a similar way. Since then, Varia has organised public and semi-public moments to work collaboratively and share the results of such efforts.

The current Varia members are amy pickles, Sofia Boschat-Thorez, Cristina Cochior, Danny Tirthdas van der Kleij, Niek Hilkmann, Artemis Gryllaki, Alice Strete, Simon Browne, Yoana Buzova, Antye Guenther, Benjamin Earl and Czarina Calinawagan.

Vision

Our activities are guided by the concept of **everyday technology**. Focusing on everyday technology means questioning the hierarchies in place within technical objects and therefore the valorisation of skills needed to design or use these objects. Using the term everyday technology is for us a way to break with dualist visions of technology, such as old versus new or smart versus not-so-smart, by looking at the appropriateness of each technology in a particular situation. With our work, we try to show that low-tech solutions can be complex, inventive and joyful. Everyday technology means to believe that not only experts should have access and decisive power in regards to how things should work. This is why we design and contribute to convivial tools, namely, tools that guarantee a certain degree of autonomy to their users.

We understand autonomy in Ivan Illich's terms: the possibility for each and everyone to use a tool in order to realise their own intentions and create meaning by leaving a mark, however small, in the world. Everyday technology means keeping in mind multiple and entangled perspectives, needs, and aspirations when it comes to the understanding of a technical object. We align with Ursula K. Le Guin's statement that technology is the "active human interface with the material world". We believe that theory is

a practice and that practice is a form of knowledge, therefore we neither fetishise the so-called "making" nor think of theorisation as a higher endeavour. While adopting this approach, we understand the everyday as a locus of plurality. We understand the everyday as a space of multiple world views, where people engage with technology in different ways. To shape dialogical learning environments, we aim to expand the context of art and design that we are departing from, by actively trying to build bridges with other fields and backgrounds, including digital archives, feminist projects, software cooperatives, independent publishers and radio collectives.

Missions

Varia has five main missions:

1. To **form and maintain a network of practitioners** through which we can support each other's practice.
2. To provide a space for long-term, sustainable, critical, artistic, hands-on, **dialogical learning** about everyday technology, where we **demystify the complexities of technical objects** and find ways to adapt them to the needs of different communities.
3. To **strengthen solidarity between local and international networks** by working together with artists, musicians, designers, technologists, theorists, activists and other practitioners that share a mission similar to Varia's and to provide space, resources and methods to these networks.
4. To **formulate critical attitudes and transform them into action** by explicitly engaging with technologies which do not rely on exploitative business models and which promote non-discriminatory standpoints.
5. To move away from the ideological dichotomies that inform the adoption and use of technology, such as "old" versus "new" media, "low" versus "high" tech, "smart" versus "dumb" devices. We focus instead on notions like **conditions, frugality, accessibility, transformability, and public interest**.

Contribution to collective practices within digital culture

Our network has evolved into a new ecosystem of support between cultural organisations and institutions. In the past year, we have continued our collaborations with organisations such as Constant, Institute of Network Cultures, the Master Experimental Publishing of the Piet Zwart Institute and Cultural Workers Unite, all the while expanding our network with commissions, collaborations and guest lectures at School for Poetic Computation, PrePostPrint, Centre for the Study of the Networked Image, SALWA Foundation, Aarhus University, CTM Berlin, and Lucerne University of Applied Sciences, among others.

In the past couple of years, we have been approached by several organisations who consider our space and collective work relevant to their practice and ask for us to host gatherings and visits. To name a few, Varia was selected as: one of three artist initiatives in the south of Rotterdam as part of the CBK 'Op de fiets' tour, a hosting institution for a gathering organised by Goethe Institute Istanbul and DutchCulture Amsterdam, a venue for visits from participants in the Akademie Schloss Solitude and for students of KABK, KASK and the Piet Zwart Institute. Part of our collaborations in 2023 has included building digital infrastruc-

ture with international organisations, such as the artist collective [Δ](#) in Ireland initiated by Shane Finan and the [offline](#) space in Berlin, Germany.

Varia provides a meaningful addition to an ecology of self-organised collective practices and vocabularies that describe, and make, digital culture. At the same time, we are initiating conversations amongst ourselves and networks concerned with everyday technology in Rotterdam, the Netherlands and other territories. We do this through making digital tools and publications, delivering public programmes around everyday technology and participating in networking events, such as publishing fairs, with other organisations. Within the constantly shifting discourse around digital culture, we want to organise the conversation and not just follow the threads that are circulating.

Reflection on 2023

Activity Program

In 2022 and 2023 we continued to have a diverse programme with a wide variety of research topics and activities. Some of these were subsidised, others in collaboration with other organisations, commissioned or organised from our own initiative. From workshops, presentations, collective discussions and work sessions to performances and publication launches, the past couple of years have allowed us to expand our audiences, both locally and internationally, to share our work and learn from other organisations, artists and researchers.

To stimulate discussions and share knowledge, Varia members have organised public events around their own research, inviting peers into conversation and collective experimentation. The topics addressed in our programme ranged from feminist technologies and libraries, to extraterritoriality, Rotterdam internet infrastructures and the relationship between everyday technologies and home economics.

Support from the Stimuleringsfonds in the past years has allowed Varia to continue to expand the programme, to present, co- or self-organise events, both within the space and online, supported by Varia's infrastructure. Out of the activities supported entirely or partially by the Stimuleringsfonds 1-year activity programme 2023, the following have, at the time of writing this application, taken place this year:

- Feminist Hack Meetings - Feminist Zine Collections
- Digital Depletion Strike (8th of March 2023 and 1st of May 2023)
- Workgroup Zines - [Hosting with Others](#)
- Varia Afhaal - [Chip Shortage or Chips on Demand](#), [Stock Exchange](#)
- SomeTimes / Af en Toe, Issue number 2

In addition to this support, a number of activities have also received financial support from several other funding bodies and subsidies:

- European Cultural Foundation - [A Traversal Network of Feminist Servers \(ATNOFS\) publication launch](#)
- Stimuleringsfonds - [Performing Patents Otherwise](#)
- Gemeente Rotterdam - Read & Repair sessions ([Who has the key?](#), [Innards of technology](#))
- Popunie Rotterdam - Extraterritorial Infrastructure ([#2](#), [#3](#), [#4](#), [#5](#), [#6](#), [#7](#)) and [Extraterritorial Education](#)

A number of activities have included collaborations with other artists, organisations or art spaces:

- Experimental Publishing Master programme, Cultural Workers Unite - [International Trans★Feminist Counter-Cloud Strike: Dancing in the ruins of Big Tech](#)
- Experimental Publishing Master programme, Piet Zwart Institute, Special Issue 19 [How Do We Library That?](#)
- Olia Lialina, SALWA Foundation - [Rotterdamse Belhuizen](#)
- Available & The Rat and School for Commons - [Sharing Programming Knowledge](#)
- Institute of Network Cultures - [Going Hybrid](#)
- Contribution to publication 'Epistemic Imaginaries – Learning as Festivity', [Errant Bodies Press](#)

Some of the work presented this year was commissioned by other organisations; in some cases, Varia members were invited to give presentations as guest lecturers:

- Digital Aesthetics Research Center, Aarhus University - [Toward a Minor Tech](#) - Commission
- School for Poetic Computation - Guest lecture
- Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts - Guest lecture
- Constant - [Now, think of a question that is at stake for you](#)
- The Institute for Technology in the Public Interest and The Hmm - [The Hmm's Data Centre Tour](#)
- Wiki-to-print, wiki2print, wiki-to-pdf and so on..., a conversation published in Hackers & Designer's [H&D Bulletin #01](#)

Last but not least, the following activities were organised at our own initiative:

- [Book Launch: Cyberfeminism Index by Mindy Seu](#)
- [Calm Coding Socials](#)
- [Clothes Swap](#)
- [Covert Technologies](#)
- [Performance Night, 'Fresh Myths, Different Times'](#)
- [Gardening as Electricity Making](#)
- Juggling Parenthood
- [South Explorer - Varia Radio Relay](#)
- [Care for Code](#)
- [Open Hours](#)



Photo from the International Trans*feminist Digital Depletion Strike on the 8th of March

Alongside the activities organised by Varia members, this year we also continued to share our space and resources with valuable local organisations, such as [Cultural Workers Unite](#), [Bond Precaire Woonvormen](#) and [Feministas Rotterdam](#).

Membership

During this past year, the composition of our group has greatly shifted. In some cases, the changing living circumstances of several members have led them to continue their practice outside of Varia and end their membership. Reflecting on these changes and the needs of our collective, we revisited the membership guidelines. For the first time, we organised an open call for new members beyond our usual network to widen our perspectives on what everyday technology is. Subsequently, we gained 3 new Varia members who are excited to further develop their research within our collective and join in the collaborative running of Varia.

Bridging towards 2024

The structural changes and programme of this year has brought an urgency to rethink our ways of working together within Varia. We have repeatedly expressed the desire to focus on activities that bring us together as a collective. We desire time for research that reflects our interests and aligns with the Varia missions, in order to meaningfully programme for publics and share knowledge that are urgent for us, and our networks. In the following sections, we will expand upon the urgency for this proposal under the theme of “Seasonal Computing”.

Communication Plan

In 2024, we will continue to communicate our work in ways that are in line with our practices, such as: publications of collective research, workgroup zines and free/libre open-source software tools. In addition, the motivations of our programme theme Seasonal Computing to focus on our local environment will inform our communication methods. By inviting external parties, such as those within our neighbourhood, we are able to create dialogues with people that are interested in the topics we address. We want to focus on cultivating strong communications with local partners, and through this sustain a network that allows us to form significant new relationships in our neighbourhood, in Rotterdam and beyond. Change begins at a locality and extends outwards.

In our regular communication practice, we use the following sites, methods and tools:

Monthly email newsletter

Our newsletter (in Dutch and English), is sent to our [announcements mailing list](#). The mailing list can be subscribed to via our website, or during an in-person event. Alongside sharing the Varia programme we include an “Open Tap” section to share the work of our trans-local community, including individual work of our members and the work of other self-organised groups in Rotterdam.

Varia website and archive

Our [website](#) (in Dutch and English), is the repository for all public programming involving Varia, including events and projects that happen in Varia and also through its members’ practices elsewhere. It also presents further information about Varia, how to contact us, where we are, and our ways of being together as a collective space, including our [Code of Conduct](#), a [collective statement](#) and [membership guidelines](#) for those interested in joining us.

The website has proven to be a very important digital presence for sharing the latest happenings as well as archiving previous ones, especially as we are not using corporate social media such as Facebook, Instagram or X (previously known as Twitter) to promote the things we do. It is also a crucial platform that speaks to Varia members, visitors and large communities of practice that are also working on the same, or similar topics.

Our [archive](#) provides a space in which traces of Varia activities can be recorded. These are generated using the digital archiving tool [Distribusi](#), which we develop, maintain and offer as open-source software for others to use.

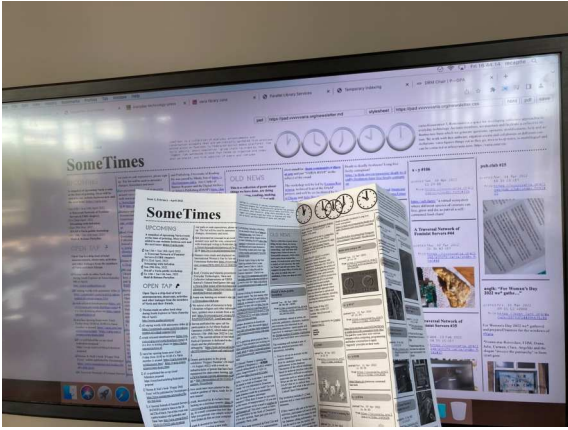
In 2018, Varia members designed and built the current website with the idea to explore ‘[what a website can be](#)’. In 2024, as part of the pending Het Nieuwe Instituut *Tool Sheds* Fellowship, we are planning to take some time to rethink some of the ways in which our website and archive show what is happening in and around Varia, and the language and interfaces we use to convey this. In building the tools we use, we have often prioritised minimal viable approaches in our designs, choosing lightweight frameworks and tools that meet specific needs. However, this approach also has its drawbacks. One clear example is the way our website currently only supports the display of public facing events, while the multifaceted aspects of our practice and the myriad of activities that happen in and around Varia are not (yet) represented.

Workgroup Zines

In 2023 we began to publish through Varia’s workgroups for those who have a direct interest in how we manage our collective space both inside and outside of Varia. These publications came to be known as “workgroup zines”. In 2024, we plan to continue publishing our workgroup zines *SomeTimes / Af en Toe*, and *SumTimes*.

SomeTimes / Af en Toe

SomeTimes / Af en Toe is a bilingual (English and Dutch) printed newsletter of everyday announcements and conversation snippets. It is also a way for us to reach audiences who are not yet following us in online spaces, through printed matter. The content is periodically gathered from a variety of syndicated sources; online posts on Mastodon, the Varia website, email newsletter, group chats recorded by the ‘logbot’ (an automated friend that helps us organise and index what we share), and from websites of peers and comrades. Some of the news is from public moments, while other news comes from behind the scenes. The newsletter is distributed by hand from our space in Rotterdam to the physical spaces of collaborators, art schools and other cultural spaces in the Netherlands and abroad. Our latest issue, [SomeTimes / Af en Toe, Issue number 2](#) was published in April 2023, with Issue 3 following in the coming months of this year.



The first issue of Sometimes / Af en Toe, in Octomode and in print

SumTimes

SumTimes is a financial report publication made by the Finance group at the end of each fiscal year, which makes the work of the group and the flow of finances visible to both members and people outside of Varia. It looks for ways to think with others about research into sustainable economical models for collective work. As a lot of our programme is publicly funded, we find it important to be transparent with our finances in the context of an increasingly precarious cultural sector in The Netherlands.

Collaboration

Working with others is an integral mode of how Varia operates, as well as a vital and generous communication channel. Our main collaboration partners who are listed in the submission form, as well as our guests, provide more details of the people and groups with whom we will or are already working together and share communication efforts.

Hosting

Hosting meetings and workshops

Hosting in-real-life meetings and workshops is a way for Varia to open up as a node for interaction and collaboration with other groups. Varia wants to be an inviting space, where people enjoy working together in a friendly, safe and discursive environment. Alongside our programme, Varia hosts initiatives such as Feministas Rotterdam and BPW (Bond Precaire Woonvormen). This is an act of solidarity that aims to build bonds of trust and deepen our relationships with local groups. Additionally, welcoming individuals and collectives to use our tools & infrastructure during our Open Hours every Friday, such as Rotterdam's Electronica Depot and our printing infrastructures, is a way of communicating our practices.

Online hosting

We host multiple services on the Varia server, including etherpads (collective writing documents), Varia broadcasts, an online radio streaming software with XMPP chat, and more. These tools are free for our wider community to use, through accessing these tools they learn more about the programme of Varia, our collective mission and individual practices. Varia's online radio intends to be used for public broadcasts in our 2024 programme.

Visits and tours

Every year we take part in several activities happening in the Rotterdam cultural sector. In 2024 we plan to participate again in [South Explorer](#), during which we open our space to visitors, show a selection of our work and host a variety of activities for the public. As we are often asked to host groups of students in our space, we will be part of the yearly Piet Zwart Institute Bike tour, as well as hosting and presenting our space to students from WdKA, KASK and KABK.

Federated alternatives

Instead of using commercial social media, we employ free software federated alternatives such as Mastodon from which we can meaningfully address a community of peers. Since this year, we use our own [Mastodon instance](#) to reach new audiences connected to this growing decentralised network.

The windows and walls of our building



Photo from the International Trans*feminist Digital Depletion Strike on the 8th of March

The space of Varia is broadly visible through big windows, situated on the corner of Gouwstraat and Wolphaertstraat. Our windows display posters for our events, the work of our trans-local community, as well as other relevant information for the neighbourhood we are part of. In 2024 we will use two of our windows as spaces to display a rotating monthly calendar of Varia events.

Programme Theme: Seasonal Computing



Seasonal Computing card from the Tangible Cloud Oracle Tarot set by Marloes de Valk

During a session of A Traversal Network of Feminist Servers (ATNOFS) in 2022, which Varia members Alice Strete & Cristina Cochior had initiated, a discussion of “Seasonal Computing” arose:

...we started thinking about Seasonal Computing, something that doesn't need to happen all year round, but only on one particular moment in time, in one specific location. Could computing be less like an always open supermarket thing and be more seasonal, like you would go to an orchard to pick fruit once a year, you could go to this space where one special computational task is happening which would be dormant the rest of the time?

— Excerpt from the [ATNOFS publication](#)

What is Seasonal Computing?

One important characteristic of today's approach and usage of technology, specifically when it comes to computing and digital practices, is a demand for constant availability in the service of profit-oriented tech-capitalism. This ideology exhausts material and human resources, from the extraction of rare earth minerals, which leave extended landscapes, oceans and their inhabitants devastated, to a widespread mental and physical exhaustion where the next burn-out is just around the corner. Thinking further; who can afford to have a burn-out? To what extent is the capitalist logic of economic circumstances deeply entrenched with colonial, classist and other discriminatory narratives? How can we address complex intersectional modes of exploitation within both our modes of working and our topics of research?

By applying seasonality to our 2024 programme we want to focus on resourcefulness. We want to deal with questions around sustainability and low-impact approaches, our own working conditions and the conditions of our audiences. We want to test and experiment with what the refusal of always being available and productive might mean for us within our collective, as well as in

the different environments we are engaged and invested in. We do not want to refuse for the sake of refusal, but as a way of sustaining ourselves, maintaining us within our different environments, testing out if it would make sense to work in response to changing seasonal conditions. We understand this Seasonal Computing approach as a testing ground, as a method and research trajectory for fruitful exploration, which will also help us to define for ourselves and our ways of working, what Seasonal Computing could mean.

But what do we mean when we use the word “seasonal”? Within a European context it commonly deals with the reckoning of four seasons: winter, spring, summer and autumn as divided periods of the year with distinct weather conditions and day lengths. While recognising that many other regions deal with other reckonings such as rainy and dry seasons, we want to acknowledge our own locality, structuring our activity around the seasons we experience. Seasons are of particular significance to agrarian societies. Understanding Seasonal Computing as non-industrial community gardening allows us to think with working conditions of preparing, seeding, nurturing and gathering in a way that takes into account the dependence on weather conditions, as well as a resourceful approach so as not to exhaust soils in order to continue further cycles of growth. But there are other, more radical seasonal approaches to think and do with, such as permacomputing and principles of foraging. While an agricultural context still comes with problematic notions of controlling nature and landscapes, permacomputing and foraging allow for a different kind of relation to resources. The foragers' etiquette, for example, might teach us to not take too much, to leave enough food for other foragers as well as animals, enough seeds to sprout next year, enough wood for animal shelter and so on. As permacomputing refers to principles in permaculture, it encourages a focus on minimising energy usage while extending hardware lifespans and on the use of already available computational resources, instead of always producing more. How to learn from these practices without enacting greenwashing? How to actively contribute in a non-extractive mode? What can we therefore learn from these concepts in regards to Seasonal Computing?

What are its politics?

While Seasonal Computing comes directly from discussions that happened around ATNOFS in 2022, it has roots in previous feminist and anti-capitalist articulations of collective practices. It connects to values described in the [Feminist Server Manifesto](#) of the work session organised by Constant VZW [Are You Being Served?](#), by celebrating *seamfulness* and not apologising for unavailability. It aligns with [A Wishlist for Trans*Feminist Servers](#) proposed by the Digital Discomfort Cell of BAK, as it is non-extractive and scales up or down as needed. It follows similar values put forward by the concept and community of practice around [Permacomputing](#) and the [Damaged Earth Catalog](#) with its different visions on technology that span [convivial technologies](#), [patchwork approaches](#), recognition of [limits](#) and calls for [de-growth](#).

Why do we see an urgency for this?

We are embracing the concept of Seasonal Computing as an experiment in doing things together. We do this simultaneously as a rejection of labour conditions that ask for workers to be always on, always ready to produce, but also as a way to propose an al-

ternative. We do this as a cultural space and collective because within the current system we work within, we acknowledge that something isn't working. As we see ourselves and those around us fall prey to burnout, extractive labour conditions and constant pressure to perform productivity, we have decided to do things differently. In 2024, we want to increase chances to meet with and cross-pollinate each other's practices and intend for our collective internal approach to widen the reach of our public programme. By considering our personal rhythms, availabilities and capacities we can anticipate moments for qualitative engagement with our audience. Questions we have for programming include; is winter a season that provides space for reflection? Would an evening of documentaries and discussion well suit an audience's energy levels? What can we do to become a more child-friendly space during the summer? How does the notion of spring cleaning relate to mitigating obsolescence of our technologies? In which seasons do you want to go home early and when do you want to stay out late?

Relationship to time and timeline

Although the reckoning of seasons differs greatly around the world as mentioned above, at Varia we respond from our locality in Rotterdam, from which we experience four seasons: winter (December-February), spring (March-May), summer (June-August), and autumn (September-November). We distinguish seasons not only by the length of day and weather conditions, but also by our, and our audience's proclivity for certain habits during particular moments of the year. The timeline of our 2024 programme is organised in direct response to changing conditions and times when we want to be active, to reflect, to nurture growth and to rest. Our timeline includes periods of observation followed by periods of action, which allows us to be sensitively pragmatic about how we organise ourselves, how and when we connect to our publics. By applying seasonality to our 2024 programme we acknowledge the cyclical implications the actions of this year will have on the years to come. This is not to be mistaken for trying to predict the future. Instead we are giving attention to the consequences of our actions and our shifting environment, for we recognise, and already experience, the way in which seasonality is rapidly changing due to climate breakdown. In the future, seasons might present very different conditions in this locality.

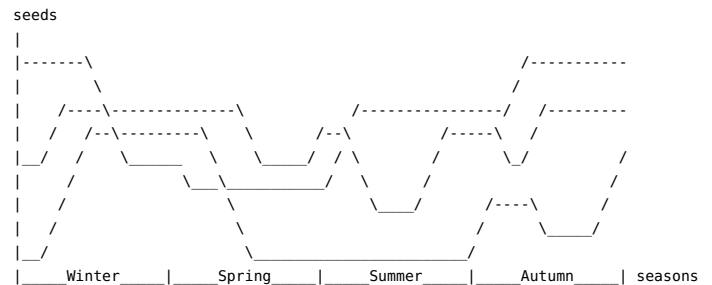
Translation into the programme

In order to reflect the idea of Seasonal Computing within the programme, our schedule, routines, and events will be guided by the change of season. This means that as the seasons ebb and flow, the activities will also change and evolve. Our programme will therefore have periods of more intensity in summer and autumn, whilst also making room for activities that help us maintain and develop Varia as a space. The amount and frequency will be guided by these principles, and at the same time the type of activity we do will change depending on the season. Spring and winter will involve moments that are about researching, reflecting and repairing. This will include reading groups, making publications, movie nights and preparations for the arrival of new seasons. During summer and autumn there will be activities such as outdoor hang outs, field trips, hands-on workshops and public presentations.

We are structuring our programme in this manner as an experiment in programming otherwise as a cultural space and collective. By embracing seasonality, we hope that it will provide us with space to dive deeper into our research threads and workgroups, whilst also giving us time to create an engaging and focused public programme that considers the seasonal social desires of our audience and community.

Public Programme

A visualisation of seeds and seasons



In 2024 we will focus on three topics that will run throughout the year. These will manifest as several research threads, otherwise known as *seeds*, that we will continue to explore in groups. Seeds have different moments for sowing, germination and growth. Following our programme's theme of Seasonal Computing we structured the thematic activities for 2024 within three different seeds:

1. **Access seed:** engages with the idea that public experiences are multiple, it wants to celebrate the various needs and contexts of diverse audiences.
2. **Counter Coloniality seed:** intends to make visible the injustices of extractive processes, be that of raw materials, labour, cultural memory, edible produce or land, and challenge false ideas of unlimited growth. A seasonal way of working must have counter-colonial efforts.
3. **Homebrewing seed:** challenges the common binary between so-called low- and high-tech, and so wants to co-create alternative understandings about the technologies we use, through collaboratively experimenting with homebrewed DIY materials and so-called "amateurish" techniques.

To describe how the seeds will practically operate, the organisers within the seed have different roles:

- 🍏 an *apple core* (core organiser)
- 🍌 a *mini-pear* (curious supporter)

These roles ensure a more community-based spread of responsibilities and kinds of labour across the different parts of the programme planned for the upcoming year. They take into account the different desires and abilities to act and initiate within a seed, opening up the possibility to shift engagement when unforeseen circumstances ask for this, while keeping it transparent for all the Varia members involved. With this structure we further explore the possibilities to differently organise labour within a self-organised space and collective, taking the potentially shifting abilities of each member into account. This structure reflects as well our desire for a Basic Income within Varia, where members have a financial basis through which they can support themselves.

An apple core receives 88 hours to structure and realise the programme, whereas a mini-pear receives 44 hours. This way of

working is inspired from the way in which workgroups organise themselves into “core peers” and “mini-peers”. Core members of workgroups organise the regular work, and mini-peers join in often short-term supportive labour for tasks that don’t require having an overview. Through acting in the role of mini-peer, work can be distributed to people who can also learn while doing. It introduces a flexibility into collective work that can increase possibilities of response in unforeseen circumstances.

Workgroups

Varia’s working structure grew out of an attitude of collective organising. We coordinate important aspects of Varia in small formations called “workgroups”. These include a Finance Group, an Infrastructure Group, a Communication Group, a Mediation Group and a Space Group. The members of each group differ according to the time commitment and energy the groups require. To keep the work running smoothly, a peer system has emerged in which members work together and rotate responsibilities to take care of these vital parts of the organisation.

In 2023, we experimented with publishing through the workgroups and in doing so they opened up a space to reflect on collective work. In 2024, the workgroups will have an active role in the public programme of Seasonal Computing by crossing them with the Access seed, Counter Coloniality seed and Homebrewing seed. We want to ensure that the workgroups’ labour does not become invisible and undervalued; labour that ‘simply’ facilitates Varia’s official programme. Instead we consider, and want to practise, workgroups as essential effort and research in the same way we consider the work and research of the seeds. The workgroups are spaces of learning, where members gain insight into various parts of managing the organisation. We do not want to separate the public content from the running of the organisation; through crossings and collaborations between the seeds and the workgroups, we want to make space for structural transformations of Varia to be possible.

The dedicated workgroups take care of the following ongoing tasks, and in 2024 will contribute to Seasonal Computing in the following way:

Finance

Ongoing tasks

The Finances workgroup meets monthly to balance Varia’s spreadsheets, manage the budget and disburse payments within our programme of activities.

In 2024

The Finances workgroup aims to improve insight into how our finances are managed and to add to discussions around collective funding models with other organisations. They will do so by publishing one issue of *SumTimes*, Varia’s annual financial report.

Communication

Ongoing tasks

The Communication workgroup is responsible for the internal and external communication channels of Varia. They communicate to self-organise and to reach a public.

In 2024

The Communication workgroup will also reach further audiences for Varia, through publishing two issues (Equinox and Solstice) of *SomeTimes / Af en Toe*, Varia’s occasional printed newsletter. It will also be involved with the efforts to make our digital platforms more accessible within the Access seed together with the Infrastructure workgroup.

Infrastructure

Ongoing tasks

The Infrastructure workgroup provides support for Varia’s self-hosted servers and public services including: the Varia website, an instant messaging platform (XMPP), the Varia NextCloud, the Varia online broadcast and streaming system, our digital archive, online collaborative text-editing software (Etherpad) and a repository of software developed by Varia members. These are used internally, and also by others in our network.

In 2024

The Infrastructure workgroup will work with Access seed, Homebrewing seed and Communication workgroup to improve aspects of digital literacy and accessibility of Varia’s online tools and resources.

Space

Ongoing tasks

The Space workgroup takes care of the physical space of Varia, facilitating and mediating use for external parties who wish to host events and meetings within it. They keep the interior and exterior spaces organised and host the Friday Open Hours.

In 2024

The Space workgroup will work with Access seed to adapt the space for neurodiverse needs and different visitors. They will invite accessibility experts to advise on improvements and changes.

Mediation

Ongoing tasks

The Mediation workgroup was made to work through conflict, discomforts and interpersonal development. They are responsible for our Code of Conduct to be upheld in the physical and online spaces of Varia and are the point of contact when it is not.

In 2024

The Mediation workgroup will organise a Conflict Resolution workshop with the Access seed, and an Anti-Racism workshop with the Counter Coloniality seed. The Mediation workgroup will rewrite our Collaboration Agreement and Code of Conduct with the Access seed.

Publications emerging from the workgroups

SomeTimes / Af en Toe

The production of *SomeTimes / Af en toe* is organised by the Communication workgroup.

In 2024, we plan to publish two issues of *SomeTimes / Af en Toe*, a Solstice edition (in Winter) and an Equinox edition (in Spring).

SumTimes

SumTimes is an annual financial report published made by the Finances workgroup. In 2024, they plan to produce a second edition.

Seeds

Access seed

Description

The Access seed is beginning a trajectory that will start with accessibility of the public programme for people who are caregivers and neighbours of the space. It is concerned with the *how*s of sharing, and the *who* of our audience. The core motivations of our Access seed are to practice hosting and communicating resourcefully and within limits that are appropriate to our means and to values we want Varia to represent. These resourceful actions are to pay attention to, imagine, and act on, different ways of hosting and of using our tools and forming our space. This is in order to connect with publics differently. The activities are organised as repeating public meetings, all of which are outlined below.

To meet a public, there are always different expectations and needs. For example, if a space is open and attended regularly, then visitors can better understand how they may enter. The importance of Access seed's recurring rhythm is to be locally situated, and therefore work towards accessibility for people who live nearby and who may have different appreciation and understandings of Varia's role in the neighbourhood. Caregivers Unite and Open Street Mic are two activities that will run throughout the year, both share an urgency to open up to people who may not be a typical Varia visitor. Caregivers Unite proposes to be a regular meeting streamed via the Varia radio for people who are caregivers for other kin, while Open Street Mic hands over our physical and digital spaces to amplify the voice of local community.

Activities

Caregivers Unite

Imagining Caregivers Unite, we learn from the intentions of the Counterflows Caregivers residency programme:

"Caring for family (bio or chosen), community and/or kin, either professionally or informally can form and create artistic practices as well as disrupt them. We recognise how difficult it is for artists with caring responsibilities to grasp time, energy, resources and focus for their practices. This is particularly the case when support networks have been disrupted, home and work have become tangled up and funding [is] systemically diverted away from caregivers infrastructures of support". [SSW X Counterflows Caregivers Residency](#)

Varia will facilitate a series of meetings, where people who care for kin can grow confidence to claim space for their presence and

the acknowledgement of their ebbs and flows within art institutions and the cultural sector in general.

These meetings will be streamed via Varia's broadcast platform [Narrowcast](#). They will serve as a platform for collective recognition of patterns of discriminative behavior directed towards caregivers within the art and design fields. Often, these experiences remain isolated and fragmented, lacking systemic recognition. By streaming and recording these discussions, Varia aims to create an accessible archive, fostering a collective awareness of these systemic grievances. Using the textual chat feature on the Varia Narrowcast would open space for input from participants from various localities, who may not be able to attend these meetings themselves due to caretaking duties.

We will be providing integrated childcare within events, which is a model borrowed from grassroots organisations that support the professional development of artists who are primary caregivers, such as the [The Mother House studios](#). There is an intent for possible collaborations with cultural institutions (such as TENT, Melly) to stream the voices of caregivers during moments and in spaces where they might typically be marginalized or excluded. It highlights the paradox where cultural institutions and art spaces often emphasise the concept of 'care', yet frequently fall short in creating programs and environments that truly accommodate caregivers. This approach not only enhances inclusivity but also underscores the need for systemic changes within the cultural sector to accommodate caregivers.

With this in mind, Caregivers Unite is a reciprocal activity because as well as making space for caregivers to connect and feel support, it will be a way for Varia to adopt better practices in becoming accessible to caregivers. This aligns with our mission to maintain networks of support for practitioners.

Open Street Mic

The intentions of Open Street Mic also grow from our mission to foster moments of artistic, hands-on, dialogical learning about everyday technology, as well as an attempt to counter conventional understanding of top-down cultural programming. We intend to use our audio streaming platform, [Narrowcast](#), as a space for dialogue through hosting various groups who want to experiment with the medium. Their conversations and content will be heard live online and inside Varia.

Open Street Mic will be open to people of all ages, in an effort to widen conversations outside of our usual networks. It intends to be a context in which we can collectively develop a better understanding of our local community, as well as learning with and from each other. Examples of Open Street Mic activities are a stand up comedy evening from and for neighbors, spontaneous broadcasts from the park opposite Varia and a proposal from the artist Chaeyoung Kim, who intends to host a curricula for neighbourhood kids about communication through the human body. This activity will develop the [Varia Broadcast publication](#) that makes public how to set up your own Icecast audio streaming service. It also builds on knowledges shared in '[Streaming with Infracem](#)' where we learnt about [decolonial gestures towards radio](#). [Pukllasunchi Radio](#) organises a broadcast for Andean children in Peru whose language, Quechuan, is not played on mainstream radio channels. As in the Pukllasunchi Radio broadcasts, Open Street Mic aims to amplify voices of those who often are unheard, while using non-extractive software tools.

Our urgency to work towards different access for all Access seed's activities, is intertwined with current technological devel-

opments we want to question. Artist and scholar Yasmine Boudiaf describes this well through her work, the *AI Justice Matrix*;

“the subheading of [this work] is the futility of policy craft, and I realise that each time there is an emergent technology that had the potential to do great harm and also great good, deciding on how it should be used, particularly in the case of *on* the public, those decisions often fell to people who were not affected by the greatest potential harm of that thing...”

[Yasmine Boudiaf, Son\[ila\] #379](#)

Varia's Access seed wants to have conversations on technology with different voices, with those who may be - including ourselves - excluded from decisions made on how technology is used in the public realm.

Self-organised Spreads

Another desire of the Access seed is to conduct research into how issues of accessibility are addressed within self-organised spaces who work with free software. Through establishing connections to different groups and learning together, we will ask how we can pool together methods to make self-organised spaces accessible in an effort to be more inclusive. Varia is often invited to share narratives of self-organisation and collective work with various groups. Through these invitations we learn the importance of sharing our 'behind-the-scenes knowledges' as a mode of sustenance for the digital cultural field. Learning from one another is a way to continue, to grow and to feel supported by one's network. Self-organised Spreads proposes to make the work needed for accessibility visible, and to spread these knowledges further afield. Our findings will be compiled into a publication, to continue Access seed's ethics of knowledges sharing.

This activity builds upon previous Varia activities such as [A Traversal Network of Feminist Servers](#), that explores what it means to build, and maintain collectively, a trans*feminist server, and Varia's zine '[Hosting with the Others](#)', that shares a discussion on self-hosting practices. However, we recognise that we need to consider and address different kinds of accessibility within these practices, such as: linguistic, visual, motor, or auditory.

Activities Summary

- Caregivers Unite: 4 events for invited audience
- Open Street Mic: 10 public events (5 with Chaeyoung Kim & 5 with neighbourhood guests)
- Self-organised Spreads: 1 act of publishing

Who is involved

🍏 apple cores: amy pickles, Czarina Calinawagan, Yoana Buzova
 🍌 mini-pears: Danny Tirthdas van der Kleij, Simon Browne, Alice Strete

Guests:

- Caregivers Unite: 2 childcare experts
- Open Street Mic: Chaeyoung Kim + 5 open mic guests TBD
- Space workgroup: 2 accessibility experts
- Mediation workgroup: Conflict Resolution workshop facilitator

Counter Coloniality seed

Description

Counter Coloniality seed intends to further our investigations into how colonisation is intertwined and embedded into the technologies we use everyday. Our research is organised around seemingly concise objects, such as FM radio signals, fake designer handbags, the karaoke machine, videogames, rates of pay on container ships, sand and the narration in an ethnographic film. These objects of focus will be a mooring point for learning as we try to unravel that vast colonial mesh of our futures, pasts and presents. The aim is to learn from subversive tactics that emerge as response, rejection, reuse and misuse of these technological objects and their infrastructures.

For Counter Coloniality seed, its relation to Seasonal Computing is multifold. It wishes to dig up the vast technocapitalist colonial networks that allow, for privileged, seamless and available experiences, be that in relation to digital tools, Amazon orders, fast fashion or the shelves of supermarkets. Coloniality is the dark side of modernity, as scholar Walter Dignolo tells us in 'The Darker Side of Western Modernity, Global Futures, Decolonial Options', with extraction being the submerged reality of capitalist accumulation. Counter Coloniality seed intends to make visible the injustices of extractive processes.

Our Counter Coloniality seed learns from the [Colonial Infrastructures Worksession](#) at Varia in 2022 that covered the circulation of news in colonial Algeria, control and resistance on and within Palestinian internet and non-extractive modes of archiving. As well as other previous projects including a collaboration with SALWA Foundation around [Rotterdam Belhuizen](#) and their role within local internet infrastructures.

Activities

Vernacular ways of organising knowledge and language

What is the role of the vernacular in language and technology? This activity further develops the previous Varia project and publication, '[Vernaculars come to matter: \(re\)orienting language and technology](#)'. It deals with, and explores the intricate rifts and power structures we experience between tech, technology and language use. The aim is to challenge these hierarchies and dominant, exclusive interrelations and look for other forms of knowledge sharing and organising. Next to working with the already comprised material from the book, we want to further think through vernaculars, and experiment, for example, with Karaoke and DJ nights to practise different kinds of operations with language. Together with guest [Sami Hammana](#), we will delve into topics such as [vernaculars numeracy and code switching](#).

Colonial Infrastructures Worksessions

For 2024, new Colonial Infrastructures Worksessions will be developed in the Counter Coloniality seed. These worksessions intend to make tangible the invisible colonial mechanisms of hierarchy and oppression that are prevalent in everyday technologies. This year we will focus on two intertwined supply chains, that of fashion and containerisation. Invited guests will share creative practices that respond to these topics.

Fashion

Digging into the mechanisms of the fashion industry, we will undertake collective research into wage labour disparity, fashion waste, utilisation of influencers by brands in the media, and creative reappropriation and subversion through fake designer products. Fashion designer and researcher [Denzel Veerkamp](#) will present an alternative way of practising fashion; translating decolonial studies and circular design approaches into new garments, with new stories. While [Chinouk Filique de Miranda](#), design researcher and critical (fashion) practitioner, will share her work on fashion as a communication vehicle, and the crossover between the fashion system and digital culture. Our research will work through shipping and transport of goods, which will lead us from fashion to containerisation.

Containerisation

In 1956 Malcolm McLean invented the shipping container. The Bandung Conference, which occurred one year before, was a gathering of fifty-nine newly decolonised African and Asian states, who came together to ask what self-determination looked like in the aftermath of empire. Labelled as the “Third World”, they had to constitute political and economic co-operation. Counter Coloniality seed will dig deeper into these stories, to present to a public how the development of modular transportation and trade laws made between global north and global south perpetuate, and worsen, colonial dependencies. We will learn from scholar [Charmaine Chua](#), who will present her work on ‘The Logistics Counterrevolution: Fast Circulation, Slow Violence, and the Transpacific Empire of Capital’, in an online radio broadcast hosted by Varia. She will make connections between these post-colonial laws, and the current bypassing of the judicial system by Amazon, who are building their own ports off coasts so as to deny the rights of their workers. We will uncover acts of subversion by workers across times; from those who seized goods intended for the global north and refused trade agreements, to recent uprisings to shift hour changes from Amazon workers who recognised the change would exclude mothers from the ability to work.

With the presentation in spring, we will visit the port of Rotterdam on a field trip, to witness the objects that allow our current accumulation, the shipping container. Following this, Czarina Calinawagan will return our research to a personal level, by sharing her work ‘Sentimental Archive’, that “traces the ways of her sailor father, using memorabilia and correspondence to demonstrate the connection between maritime infrastructures and personal stories”. [Goethe-Institut Rotterdam](#)

Race and tech within Europe

In 2023, the Lighthouse Reports published [Suspicion Machines](#), which looked at the systemic discrimination that algorithms used by the Gemeente Rotterdam enact on its constituents. Following up with their publication we feel the urgency to acknowledge our locality/local positioning, aiming to develop a local approach that accounts for European realities when it comes to technology and discrimination (anti-islam, anti-roma, European anti-blackness etc). We would like to organise a public conversation around this topic together with the [Racism and Technology Center](#), where these topics will be expanded upon. This conversation will be held in the context of the annual [Digital Depletion Strike](#), which is a day to “withhold from using, feeding, or caring for The Big Tech Cloud.”

Game & Watch

Game & Watch will be structured around a series of semi-public workshops, some open for all and others open by invitation. During Game & Watch nights we will use games to learn about how identities and representation is mediated within a colonial order, colonial ideologies in game codes, how we could position ourselves differently, and consider what limitations or difficulties games hold.

Some works we will play include ‘Civilization IV- Colonization’ by Sid Meier, a turn-based strategy game about European colonial empires conquering lands and controlling resources in the “New World” and the game ‘[Never Alone Kisima Injitchujana](#)’, a platform game based on the story of “Kunuksaayuka” from the Iñupiat in Alaska. We will also explore the work of [Indigenous Futures](#) whose ‘Their Skin Workshops’ utilize game design to adapt First Nations storytelling to experimental digital media.

We will host a Movie Night with with Habi Collective Media to watch *Walang Rape sa Bontoc* (Bontoc, Rapeless). The documentary film discusses postcolonial realities of the Bontoc Igorots of the Cordillera Regions in the Philippines as the film challenges constructs on gender and patriarchy. The viewing will be accompanied by an online talk with the filmmakers for further conversation on the context of the film.

We will also develop an experimental role-playing game ourselves, entitled ‘a game for creative “freedom”’ that will use the setting of the Cold War as way to consider colonial attitudes embedded within the art ‘scene’, through research into military think tanks, CIA-funded Congress for Cultural Freedom, Cybersyn, surveillance technologies and both capitalistic and cybernetic ideologies to what ‘freedom’ could be. Counter Coloniality seed is invested in this historical moment as a pivotal shift, when tech development accelerated into what is now its current state.

This focus is also intertwined with Anti-colonial radio, through use of this medium during the Cold War.

Anti-colonial Radio

We will use Varia’s [Narrowcast](#) to broadcast to audiences near and far, on the topic of anti-colonial, and colonial, uses of radio. We will study uses of radio by the USA across Latin America in their attempt to spread capitalistic ideology, and the pirate radio stations that broadcast in opposition. With guest Arthur Asseraf we will learn about how radio technology changed space in the Mediterranean in the 20th century. This aspect of Counter Coloniality seed will be organised with Radius, convened by [Christian Nyampeta](#). Together we will make a sonic syllabus for autumnal evenings when the days are getting shorter.

Activities Summary

- Game & Watch: 4 invitation based evening events (3x Colonial Representations, 2x Cold War Ideologies)
- Anti-Colonial Movie Night: 1 public evening events
- Colonial Infrastructures Worksessions - Fashion: 1 public event
- Colonial Infrastructures Worksessions - Containerisation: 1 field trip and continued event in Varia
- Anti-colonial Radio: 1 act of publishing, online radio broadcast
- Colonial Infrastructures Worksessions - Containerisation: 1 act of publishing, online radio broadcast

- Vernacular ways of organising knowledge and language: 1 public evening event
- Race and tech within Europe: 1 public evening event

Who is involved

- 🍏 apple cores: amy pickles, Cristina Cochior, Czarina Calinawagan, Sofia Boschat-Thorez
- 🍇 mini-pears: Benjamin Earl, Antye Guenther

Guests:

- Colonial Infrastructures Worksession - Fashion: Denzel Veerkamp, Chinouk Filique
- Colonial Infrastructures Worksession - Containerisation: Charmaine Chua
- Anti-colonial Radio: Arthur Asseraf, Christian Nyampeta
- Game & Watch: Balay Habi Collective- Walang Rape sa Bontoc, Never Alone, Indigenous Futures
- Vernacular ways of organising knowledge and language: Sami Hammana
- Race and tech within Europe: Racism and Technology Center

Homebrewing seed

Description

This seed connects with the felt urgencies and joy for technical amateurism, and opens up accessibility for making, sharing and exploring tools. Instead of performing expert knowledge-making, our goal is to co-create understandings through collaboratively experimenting with other amateurs, using homebrewed DIY materials and techniques. Amateurism provides space to practise outside of so-called professional contexts, challenging the gap between those who make a technology and those who consume it. It refuses the common binary between so-called low- and high-tech, where “sophisticated” technology is made in far away, highly inaccessible places, and low-tech homemade approaches are considered hobbyistic, and therefore illegitimate.

“Home” for us is a place where we spend our time and find shelter. It is also a seat of common knowledges. According to [‘Thrifty Science’](#), the dawn of early modern science established a culture where everyday objects, materials and spaces were embraced in home experiments and a communal pursuit of knowledge. In this seed we propose and investigate possible approaches within the concept of homebrewing, emphasising the necessity of lower thresholds to everyday technologies. For us, this is not simply a mode of sharing, but an invitation to amateur publics to experiment with tool-making.

With this, we reject planned obsolescence, technological solutionism and the valorisation of so-called high-technology, while celebrating the joy in experimenting with low-impact methods closer to home and our local environments. An important approach is hereby situated within feminist thinking and doing. This means to demystify current technological practices (whether related to computing, design, preservation, mass-produced everyday objects, etc) and to make them more shareable as well as questionable, as an important step to the imagining of other kinds of practices.

Homebrewing depends on seasonal conditions. It means waiting, letting processes take their course, leaving time and resources to be able to react and deal with unexpected situations and collectively sharing the outcomes. We respond to these con-

ditions by choosing moments and locations, adapting to changes beyond our control. But what kinds of tools and approaches would we need to do so? Historically, “homebrewing” was used to describe a culture of home-made personal computers, assembled by enthusiasts. In Varia, the term ‘homebrew’ has also been used in the context of the [Homebrew Server Club](#), which was a monthly gathering open to all levels of expertise. In similar fashion, we want to approach homebrewing while celebrating the curiosity of the amateur in the relation to different understandings around technology.

Activities

Homemade Computer Club

We aim to imagine computing differently in a way that it can be more contextual, situated and social (whether social to human or more-than-human life). We will look at ways of building computers and computing infrastructure that aren’t proprietary, extractive or about increasing productivity. Initiatives such as the [Homebrew Computer Website](#) represent explorations in making computers that “may emulate a commercial design, but cannot be an off-the-shelf chip”. The Homemade Computer Club, in a similar spirit, will bring together computer users of all levels to investigate what the computer might be if it weren’t to be seen as a purely consumerist object. Through a series of meet-ups, presentations and workshops, we will engage with unconventional computing methods, explore the world of permacomputing and find ways to compute within season/reason.

Learning by Proxy

We will create intermediary learning contexts to demystify abstract concepts and processes, whether related to technology, home economics, data practices etc. In collaboration with the Access seed, we want to explore how digital practices could be understood using non-digital material tools as a way to make them (more) graspable for “non-techie”, but technically curious audiences. The goal is to mix different disciplines and materials while always searching for different entry points into complex topics. We will look, for example, at biometrical data practices through and with ceramics as an unorthodox material research tool. Together with guests Sami Hammana, and Marjolein van der Loo, we will explore fiction and fictionality as a tool to differently engage with and subvert Big Tech storylines. We will engage with reappropriating industrial processing of food and other consumer products (soap, organic batteries), make our own tools (dehydrator). We will also explore post-human technological approaches to living and learning together, with a specific focus on the fluidity of the roles of maker and consumer, in collaboration with the collective [Stadtfrauenküche](#).

Hosting with Varia

We will organise and host moments and spaces for curious practitioners to meet, cross practices and disciplines and informally gather around specific topics, such as: graphic design using free/libre open-source software, creating space for community around coding practices and collective learning environments. The spaces within Varia are physical, digital, social and pedagogical. Hosting with Varia happens in the physical space at Gouwstraat 3 and also on our various self-hosted servers, which offer tools for collective self-organisation. It crosses with the Infrastructure workgroups’ efforts in maintaining digital hosting

for our network as well as with satellite servers such as [CC \(Creative Crowds\)](#). While Creative Crowds is a server for publishing experiments, it is also an event that will be hosted at Varia in 2023 and 2024. Temporary maintainers in France, Belgium and the Netherlands of [PrePostPrint](#), a list of resources for experimental publications designed with free software, will meet to plan the coming 6 months and invite others to join them. While usually separated by distance, cultures and languages, the time to meet together and inhabit the same spaces is rare, precious and transformative. Creative Crowds is a way to facilitate these transformations and moments of informal learning, bringing a much needed conversation to the Netherlands while introducing Dutch design audiences to publishing practices usually outside of their frames of reference.

Urban Ecology Walks - Biotope Charlois

As part of the Homebrewing seed, we explore the interplay between municipal developments and the natural life of Rotterdam together with André de Baerdemaker of Bureau Stadsnatuur. During a series of collective walks we explore the places where the natural and technological spheres meet, and search for the tools, facilities and regulations that shape Charlois as a city biotope. Each excursion will be based around a seasonal theme: hibernation (winter), breeding (spring), nurturing (summer) and foraging (autumn).

Activities Summary

- Moulding/Un-moulding: series of three workshop events over 3 days
- Hosting with Varia - Creative Crowds: 2 days
- Fiction and Fictionality events: 3 days
- Learning by Proxy: 4 days
- Homemade Computer Club: 2 days
- Urban Ecology Walks - Biotope Charlois: 4 days

Who is involved

🍏 apple cores: Alice Strete, Benjamin Earl, Simon Browne, Yoana Buzova, Antye Guenther

🍇 mini-pears: Danny Tirthdas van der Kleij, Niek Hilkmann

Guests:

- Hosting at Varia: Quentin Juhel, Julien Bidoret, Zeste Le Reste, Manetta Berends, Julien Taquet, Raphaël Bastide, Martin Lemaire
- Homemade Computer Club: Elliot Cost, Lukas Englehardt
- Learning by Proxy: Stadtfrauenküche Collective, Isabel Burr Raty, Sami Hammana, Marjolein van der Loo
- Urban Ecology Walks - Biotope Charlois: André de Baerdemaeker

Other Activities

These are other activities that may be happening with Varia in 2024, pending funding by other bodies.

HNI Tool Sheds Fellowship: *Patchwork in the Public Interest*

The focus of this fellowship is on developing the sites through which our resources are accessed: our website and archive. These are the most public-facing channels through which Varia and our network express how we practice within digital culture. We want to offer these resources as tools for making public to other collectives, fellows and peers while involving them in the process of development.

This research path will allow us to reflect on our past and present practices and respond by taking stock, mending and patchworking. Our main focus is to explore how our website and archive are situated in the digital culture landscape of Rotterdam and how they can become a blueprint for: archiving a self-organised collective, documenting a solidarity network, activating an archive, increasing visibility and accessibility. All the while we aim to maintain our ethics and develop a collective understanding of contemporary digital culture from a localised perspective.

Who is Involved

Alice Strete, Simon Browne, Danny Tirthdas van der Kleij, with the potential inclusion of 3 more Varia members

CTM Radio Lab 2024 | Supreme Connections Inc.

Supreme Connections Inc. will be a live radio 'opera', made by multiple authors and performers across different geographies and broadcast as simulcast. It takes its name from a fictional media company of the future, that was imagined by the North American electronic music composer and installation artist Maryanne Amacher (1938–2009). Supreme Connections Inc. can be found in her proposition for a media opera entitled "Intelligent Life". Existing only as a storyboard and treatment, Intelligent Life was designed for television broadcast with in-home FM simulcast. As of yet, it has not been taped, recorded, or broadcast Intelligent Life was set in the then future, in the year 2021.

For CTM Radio Lab 2024 we propose to broadcast the future past, or past future potentials of Supreme Connections Inc. The company had an extensive media lab, where "music as we currently know it has in part been replaced by 'The Home Composing Teams': adventurous symbiotic partnerships between biological and silicon intelligences" (ibid). Through a series of workshops, occurring on Varia's digital infrastructure, a final collective live radio work will be made that will further imagine - and make - sonic possibilities for what could be created by Supreme Connections Inc. in 2024.

Who is Involved

amy pickles & Infrastructure workgroup

Extratonal Infrastructure

Extratonal Infrastructure is composed of a series of sonic (and neighbouring) activities that reject distinctions between high and low, exceptional and boring, serious and pop. In this programme we stretch the classical paradigms of music (balance, contrast, focus, movement, pattern, proportion, rhythm and unity) and expand them with conceptual, technical and performative principles that are more context-based and social. The programme manifests itself in the form of conferences, performance evenings, radio shows and workshops that relate directly to what is going on in our surroundings. At the core of the programme is a series of public events where we invite artists, musicians, poets and technicians from and outside of Rotterdam to demonstrate various phenomena and tools to engage with our space and facilities. These are not top-down lectures in which practitioners display their skills, but collective learning moments in which various subjects are explored. Topics for 2024 include Otoacoustic emission (I) and its acoustic potential; composing for different species: sound beyond the human/animal dichotomy; and turning trash into treasure: the (dis-)harmonics of e-waste. All workshops take place with a commitment to F/LOSS (free/libre open-source software) tools and access to knowledge commons.

1. Otoacoustic emissions (OAE) are sounds generated from the cochlea transmitted across the middle ear to the external ear canal, where they can be recorded. The production of an OAE is a marker for inner ear health and a simple way to screen for hearing loss.

This project is partially funded by Popunie, SKIP, Gemeente Rotterdam and ticket sales for the performances. Requested from Stimuleringsfonds is the coverage of the coordination hours for the workshops, detailed in the Toelichting.

Who is Involved

Niek Hilkmann, Joseph Knierzinger

Guests: Cristof Migone, Jiawen Wang, Michael Ridge, Clara Lissens, Sergej Vutuc, Nan Wang, Gunnar Gunnsteinson, Tom Johnson, Alnik, Bergur Anderson, Eliane Radigue, Juho Toivonen, Lieuwe Zelle, Dennis Tyfus, Robert Mathy, Diane Mahin, Victor de Roo, Inge Hoonte, Bert Scholten, Werner van der Zwan, Arthur Chambry, and more

Planning

Following the concept of Seasonal Computing, the planned programme will have an ebb and flow of activity throughout four seasons. Each season has a particular specificity and way of making public of research and gathering communities. The three seeds, with their thematic approaches, are woven through the different stages of the year.

Winter Slumbers (January-February)

Access seed:

- Caregivers unite
- Self-organised Spreads (collective research & publication)
- Improve the accessibility of the physical space (with the Space workgroup)

Counter Coloniality seed:

- In-house Anti-racism workshop (with Mediation workgroup)
- Vernacular ways of organising knowledge and language (1 public evening event)

Homebrewing seed:

- Learning by Proxy: Moulding/Un-Moulding (semi-public collective reading), Fiction and Fictionality (public events with guests)
- Urban Ecology Walks - Biotope Charlois #1: hibernation (field trip)
- Extratonal Infrastructure #11: radical printers - democratic rationalization of peripheral machines (public event)

Other activities:

- HNI Tool-sheds Fellowship (collective research, public event)

Spring Time Exuberance (March-May)

Access seed:

- Caregivers Unite (semi-public event)
- Collective work into access riders / Code of Conduct (with Mediation workgroup)
- Open Street Mic
- SomeTimes / Af en Toe Equinox Edition (Communication workgroup publication)
- Improve the accessibility of our Digital Infrastructure (with Infrastructure workgroup)

Counter Coloniality seed:

- Colonial Infrastructures Worksession: Fashion with Denzel Veerkamp & Chinouk Filique (public event)
- Race and tech within Europe (1 public evening event)

Homebrewing seed:

- Hosting at Varia: Creative Crowds (semi-public gathering)
- Learning by Proxy: Dirty soap, Moulding/Un-Moulding (workshops)
- Urban Ecology Walks - Biotope Charlois #2: breeding (field trip)
- Extratonal Infrastructure #12: Turning trash into treasure: the (dis-)harmonics of e-waste. (public event)
- Extratonal Infrastructure #13: Otoacoustic emission and its acoustic potential (public event)

Other activities:

- HNI Tool-sheds Fellowship (collective research, public event)
- CTM Radio Lab 2024 | Supreme Connections Inc. (public event)

Summer Wrap Up (June-July)

Access seed:

- Caregivers Unite (semi-public event)
- Open Street Mic (public event)

Counter Coloniality seed:

- Colonial Infrastructures Worksession: Containerisation Charmaine Chua (public radio broadcast)
- Colonial Infrastructures Worksession: Containerisation Field Trip Rotterdam Port & Sentimental Archive Presentation (public event)

Homebrewing seed:

- Learning by Proxy (collective research, semi-public work sessions, field trip)
- Urban Ecology Walks - Biotope Charlois #3: nurturing (field trip)
- Extratotal Infrastructure #14: (anti-)technologies: building towards a-dynamic objectivity (public event)

Autumn Foraging (September-November)**Access seed:**

- Caregivers Unite (semi-public event)
- Open Street Mic (public event)
- SomeTimes / Af en Toe Solstice Edition (Communication workgroup publication)

Counter Coloniality seed:

- Anti-colonial Radio with Christian Nyampeta & Arthur Asseraf (public radio broadcast)
- Game & Watch workshop: Cold War Ideologies (semi-public, invitation based)

Homebrewing seed:

- Learning by Proxy: Fermentation / food and beyond, dehy-dration (collective research, semi-public worksession)
- Hosting at Varia: Creative Crowds (semi-public gathering)
- Homemade Computer Club (work session)
- Urban Ecology Walks - Biotope Charlois #4: foraging (field trip)
- Extratotal Infrastructure #15: sonic anatomy: compositional intestines (public event)
- Extratotal Festival (public event)

Winter Slumbers (December)**Access seed:**

- Caregivers unite (semi-public event)
- Conflict Resolution workshop (Mediation workgroup)
- SomeTimes / Af en Toe Winter Solstice Edition (Communication workgroup publication)

Counter Coloniality seed:

- Movie Might - Colonial representations with Balay Habi Collective (public event)
- Game & Watch workshop: Colonial Roles with Never Alone & Indigenous Futures (semi-public, invitation based)

Homebrewing seed:

- Extratotal Infrastructure #16: composing for different species: sound beyond the human/animal dichotomy (public event)

Other Activities:

- SumTimes (Finance workgroup publication)

Fair remuneration and business operations**Financial position of Varia****2021**

- Income: € 31,814.32
- Expenses: € 31,714.95
- Balance: € 99.38

2022

- Income: € 100,586
- Expenses: € 89,315.33
- Balance: € 11,271.17

2023

As of the time of writing (September 2023), the following income and expenses are detailed below.

Income

The total income for 2023 so far is € 99,481. This includes the following:

Membership contributions

Varia has currently 12 active members who contribute a quarterly membership fee of € 127.05.

Funding

Sources of funding in 2023 include Stimuleringsfonds, Gemeente Rotterdam and Popunie. To date, a total of € 82,495.70 has been received.

Commissions

Varia members regularly do commission work on projects. This income goes towards paying Varia members, while the solidarity tariff applied to it goes towards our common fund. So far in 2023, this amounts to € 10,020.87.

Donations

Revenue from donations this year amounts to € 928.53.

Donations mostly come in during public events, for food, drinks and publications, and go towards our common fund.

Use of tools/space

Varia often rents the space at Gouwstraat 3 to other organisations and funded initiatives who wish to use it for meetings and workshops. In the past year, several individual researchers and the following organisations have rented the space at a cost of € 250 per day: Wijkraad/Gemeente Rotterdam, Hogeschool van Amsterdam/Institute of Network Cultures, the International Mobility Program 2023 of the Goethe Institute Istanbul and DutchCulture Amsterdam and KABK Research Group. This income goes towards our infrastructural and space maintenance.

Expenses

The total costs to date for 2023 are € 79,075.28. This comes from a variety of sources, including:

- Rent
- Utilities (gas, water, electricity, internet)
- Milieuservice
- Insurance
- Travel
- Maintaining collective infrastructure
- Fees for members
- Fees for non-members

2024 funding mix and modes of support

Our programme in 2024 includes the following confirmed and pending cofunding:

- Het Nieuwe Institute Tool Sheds Fellowship (pending)
- Popunie (pending)
- Gemeente Rotterdam (pending)
- SKIP (confirmed)
- CTM Radio Lab (pending)

Remuneration policy

In 2023, the Varia hourly rate has been € 31.25, which amounts to € 250 per day (excl. VAT). We use the same hourly rate for all Varia members, collaborators and guests, as part of the programme and work groups that support our organisation. Varia is a member's association. We work with the Fair Practice Code, a solidarity tariff (outlined below) and a common fund, which acts as a buffer to mitigate risk.

Based on the Fair Practice Code, current inflation levels and the estimated amount of labour that Varia members commit to throughout the year, we are calculating our 2024 budget on an increased hourly rate of € 35, which amounts to € 280 per day (excl. VAT).

Our shift towards basic income

As many of our members divide their energies between other commitments and Varia, we are working towards a model of remuneration that is consistent, and allocates a predetermined number of hours each member can be paid. This is reflected on our proposed budget for the 2024 programme, in which hours are distributed across the 3 different seeds in a manner corresponding to the time and responsibilities each member can contribute to the programme.

Risk Analysis

Our income comes from commissions, rent of our space, donations, membership contributions and funding from private and public institutions. Our expenditure comes from maintaining our collective infrastructure, seeking financial advice from an accountant, insurances on the building and paying rent on the space.

Varia has a 15% solidarity tariff on all our commissions and invitations. This is a mode of fair practice for our collective infrastructure. Varia is composed of many people, and we as a collective entity want to recognise the different forms of labour that go into Varia, and how we benefit from Varia in different ways.

The 15% share goes into our common fund (outlined below) which is used to maintain Varia's different capacities, such as our rent, bills, machinery care, events, emergencies, and other needs. The 15% applies to the day rate of Varia on work commissioned to one or more Varia members by an outside entity.

Through negotiations with Woonstad Rotterdam we have secured low rent for the coming 5 years. This rent is paid for by each Varia member through membership contributions. Should some members be unable to pay rent in particular moments, the common fund is used to cover these payments.

All of the equipment used at Varia is owned by its members. Apart from rent, Varia does not have any financial liabilities, for our public programme is not organised without confirmation of funds. If any pending funding is not confirmed, then we will try to find funding for the proposed activity from other sources.

The common fund is an amount of money that is used for our internal needs, expenses and unexpected occurrences. The fund includes an emergency buffer of 2000 EUR, which has remained consistent over the 2021-2023 period.