

Seasonal Computing: Collective Rhythms for Resourcefulness



Introduction - What is Seasonal Computing?

In 2024, Varia's public programme focused on the concept of Seasonal Computing. This programme was a response to key characteristics of contemporary tendencies in digital technology, which create a demand for constant availability in the service of profit-oriented tech-capitalism. In our last application, we wrote that these pervasive characteristics exhaust material and human resources, from the extraction of rare earth minerals to a widespread mental and physical exhaustion. We made space for other ways of spending time with the social, technological and political issues of today that focus on sustainability and resourcefulness. Through the introduction of seasonality in our programme, we tested the strategy of aligning ourselves with an alternative temporality to that of infinite growth.

While recognising that there are many other types of seasons than our own, we wanted to respond from, and be accountable to, our own locality. Our aim was to structure both the themes and our modes of working as a collective to the four Western European seasons. Through the theme of Seasonal Computing, we continued to expand and deepen Varia's practice of engaging with digital technology that prioritises co-creation, agency and solidarity. We connected with forward thinking practices and communities such as [Permacomputing](#) and the [Damaged Earth Catalog](#) in order to strengthen our connections and commitment to computing differently.

The 'Seasons' in Seasonal Computing

In 2024, we explored what Seasonal Computing could mean as a practice and guiding principle in our work. We became aware of how sensitising ourselves to seasons as a fluctuating structure for our personal, collective, material, and professional lives would allow us to care for our availabilities in a more resourceful and sustainable way. Taking shifting schedules into account made us more receptive to the cycles and needs of others; locally, connected digitally and in our extended cultural network.

This year has shown that our conception and management of time is deeply rooted in the demand for constant productivity. Whilst contemplating what it means to practise Seasonal Computing, we recognised the need for a broader variety of cycles, embracing patience and thinking holistically in order to truly test the concept of seasonality. More importantly, we also

became highly aware of how much we would need to expand our ideas on seasons and seasonality, to move beyond the conventional three-month period typically considered as a season in the Netherlands, Europe, and the Global North. In the context of the climate emergency, a profound moment which alters the reality of seasonality both locally and globally, we need to rethink what seasons mean.

Western seasons are increasingly unpredictable, with the rhythms of four seasons becoming less and less reliable. Instead, we now face erratic weather patterns and season creep, with warm winters and rainy summers. However, we need to think beyond seasons that are determined by climate and weather only. We need to expand our understanding of seasons from weather-induced patterns towards a conception that takes into account social, economic, material, and political conditions. Summer, for instance, is not only a time for taking a break, but also a time for writing applications, experiencing personal exhaustion, and coping with a lack of childcare due to the school holidays. Non-climatic seasons are intertwined with prescribed behaviours that are often unequal and classist. For one person, the holiday season is a time of leisure, while for another, it is a time for seasonal labour.

While we find it fruitful to continue exploring seasonal computing in relation to agrarian concepts (such as permacomputing and frugality), we must also consider seasons as being shaped by other forces and take these seriously in order to sense, acknowledge, and question the various seasons to which we are subjected. We want to collectively explore how to align ourselves differently with personal, collective, and communal cycles, in order to become more attuned to events unfolding in environments and communities we care for. Seasons can become a way to gather and discuss what is actually happening around us.

We want to envision weird seasonalities that reject techno-solutionist logics and help us to grow increasingly attentive to our surroundings. We want to consider our peers, neighbourhood (more-than-human included), the infrastructures of our city, fluctuations in our economies, social movements on the street, and the data flows in our browsers. By naming new seasons together and collectively understanding these new, strange seasonalities, we may come to understand better what external factors and internal drives enable us to gather. Once you begin to 'season,' you begin to formulate in a communal manner.

The 'Computing' in Seasonal Computing

As part of our 2025 programme, we will expand upon the idea of computing and go beyond the traditional notions of silicon-based computing, such as with a laptop or smartphone. We will move towards computing as a verb, specifically in relation to our own environmental and social conditions. Computing becomes a mechanism for ourselves and those around us to collectively observe and develop appropriate methods and tools for creating solidarity and resilience.

Along with this expansion of the concept of computing comes the need for new tools to compute with. Varia is committed to developing and distributing free/libre open-source software in order to foster agency with regard to the digital technologies we use. We will expand upon the development of tools for seasonal computing which move beyond technological responses and towards methods of parsing the world around us.

We expand upon the notion of tools to include methodologies for self-organisation, collective learning and a set of ethics that sustain our community. In this way a public event, shared calendar, borrowed bookshelf, collective field trip, publication series are all proposals of tools for measuring and reckoning with the complexity of our environments together. As well as building individual tools to help us compute the seasons, we aim to build toolboxes that can be collectively shared, borrowed and added to. The workgroups of Varia will create toolboxes through public-facing activities in order to allow others to take up the tools they need and adapt, change and reuse them in the way they see fit.

In our 2025 programme, we will continue to [take stock](#) of our environment. Throughout the five seasons of Varia, there will be an emphasis on time not only for production, coordination and making public but also for documentation and collective reflection. Through Varia's on and off-seasons, we aim to create a sustainable balance of both productive output and fruitful consideration that can provide space for different kinds of meaningful interaction with our community, a broader public and our own internal collective.

Reckoning Seasons and Computing

How can computing help us reckon with the increasingly weird notion of seasonality? If computing is processing or acting upon information, how can we begin to make sense of these times? As environmental conditions continue to degrade across the globe, how can the idea of technological progress, that prioritises faster, more powerful processes, be challenged? If striving towards bigger and faster computational processes moves us further into a damaged Earth, then should we not strive for new paradigms defined by computing within seasons?

Focuses such as frugality and degrowth begin to recenter what development and progress are in relation to computing. This prioritisation is a way to shift attention of both Varia and its publics from sustaining existing damaging practices to regenerative practices of computation. By creating collective understandings of, and approaches to, technology Varia seeks to find common ways to respond to our entanglements within it.

We recognise that Varia is part of extended communities. By including non-Varia members as co-programmers in our activities, we make our collective more permeable and situated within its localised context. By opening a communal Repair Cafe we aim to be more accessible to people around us, living in the same neighbourhood. By cross-pollinating between and within our research threads (seeds), we look for opportunities to work collectively and not from solitary, individualised positions. By recognising and reckoning seasons with our community, we find ways to connect through a common recognition of issues that affect our practical and emotional wellbeing and figure out how to approach them together. It will continue to be urgent and necessary for Varia to connect with its local environment but also to reach beyond our geographical location. To foster a regenerative practice with a focus on computation we'll need to nurture existing and new relations with people, places and tools beyond Rotterdam, the Netherlands and Europe.

Over the next two years, we propose exploring the social significance of acknowledging other, weird seasons within the communities Varia is and will be in touch with through our public programme and its facilities. For instance, what would it mean for a Repair Cafe to say that it is "Broken Screen Season", or "Old Laptop Season"? By collectively naming a season and under-

standing its ebbs and flows, peaks and wanes, we further explore the idea of seasonality, how it shapes our lives and how we could use the thinking of it to take back agency and shape our own lives. In doing so, we ask, how can we build community through the shared reckoning of the particular season we are experiencing and its particular tensions, frictions and possibilities? Through grounding the concept of seasons within a mix of resourcefulness, adaptability and conviviality, we see them as culturally co-defined periods of social activity and reflection.

Documentation of Activities

As part of the programme we will question what it means to develop, name and work with different forms of season. In order to formulate seasonality differently we will build moments of reflection into our programme using the tools that we are currently developing at Varia such as the new website and archive. In order to facilitate these reflections, we will make structural changes to our documentation processes so that we are able to access, look back and make connections between the different activities in the past. By creating internal documentation protocols, we will put in place systems for the creation, archiving, and dissemination of documentation of activities that take place in and around Varia. We understand documentation as a process of knowledge making, alternative archiving and community memory creation and therefore want to make space for different forms of documentation to bring in multi-vocal methodologies that prioritise different ways of seeing and being.

Workgroups

This year Varia continues as a self-organised model operating as the following working groups. Here we detail our ongoing tasks and our proposals for 2025.

Finance

Ongoing Tasks

Finance workgroup handles all matters related to the flow of money through the organisation, as well as other related administrative tasks. In 2024 we have started working on setting up a new booking system, as well as working on more professional administration, tax declarations, invoicing, expense reports and so on. At the same time, we want to spend time within the finance workgroup to develop ways in which to talk about finances within organisations in a transparent, sustainable way, and share knowledge with other similar groups. Once a year, we present to the rest of the collective a financial report and share insights into the way we work through presentation, 'SumHow' in 2024, or our ongoing 'SUMtimes' publication.

In 2025

In the next years we plan to further professionalise our way of doing finances, as we become increasingly aware of the responsibility of this role within our collective. Alongside our regular tasks, we plan to work together with the accountant on documentation that can be immensely useful to other cultural organisations and creative practitioners. We will organise semi-public 'Money Talks' toolbox sharing sessions with Varia members, our peers and network, around financial administration. The tools and reflections from these sessions will form the 'SUMtimes'

2025 publication.

Communication

Ongoing Tasks

The Communication workgroup is tasked with facilitating both internal and external communication channels for Varia, such as newsletters, website and any other meaningful connections with audiences beyond our current outreach. In 2024, the workgroup ran an internal workshop to think through alternative forms of communication that align with Varia's principles, which resulted in the publication [The Social in the Media](#). Together we have begun to put together a new communication strategy that overlaps with the infrastructure workgroups activities to think about new tools and mediums for broadcasting announcements, collecting documentation of activities and making space for reflection on the research carried about by Varia members and the local community.

In 2025

In the coming year we plan to expand our communication strategy to include several new tactics and methods that focus on our local environment as well as reaching beyond Rotterdam and the Netherlands. Whilst we prototype and test these new strategies, we will also be streamlining our existing methods to make it easier for Varia members to announce, document and reflect upon activities whilst also making the events more accessible via our website, newsletter and fediverse accounts. We also plan to host an event that brings self-organised groups together to discuss methods of communication that don't rely on commercial social media, this will be when we bring our toolbox to a wider audience.

Infrastructure

Ongoing Tasks

Infrastructure workgroup takes care of server maintenance and the digital infrastructure of Varia. This includes digital infrastructure that Varia members use (such as our wiki, website, archive and team chat), and also software we publish on the Varia [git repository](#). In particular, Varia's Etherpad (collaborative writing software) is used by our members and also many organisations and individuals outside of Varia (a growing database over the last 7 years). This year we have begun to address the social and technical issues that arise when running public services, and develop strategies that will make sure these services remain stable and useful for everyone (e.g. the improvement our backup system).

In 2025

With new members joining our collective in 2023 and a change in the membership of the Infrastructure workgroup, we recognise that it is important to share the skills of system administration. Rather than leaving the system administration to a few experts, we want to share knowledge on how to maintain a server. A series of skillsharing workshops within the Infrastructure workgroup, as well as the creation of a toolbox will support this effort.

Space

Ongoing Tasks

The Space workgroup is tasked with taking care of the physical

space of Varia, facilitating the use for members and external parties who wish to borrow hardware tools, access material from the library, host events and meetings. In 2024, this workgroup has carried out a detailed inventory and organisation of the space, in order to have a better idea of all available tools and materials, as well as their usability. More specifically, there is an ongoing detailed review of electronic components from the Rotterdamse Electronica Depot, with the aim to create an online database of available parts for sharing around the local community.

In 2025

The Space workgroup will continue working on the adaptation/ adaptability and availability of the space and its resources (hardware tools and parts, materials) for members and external parties during the development of our toolbox. The main goal is to keep improving the space's usability for the planned activities along the year, based on feedback and interaction between the different parties.

Mediation

Ongoing Tasks

Mediation workgroup was made to work through conflict, discomforts and interpersonal development. We are responsible for Varia's Code of Conduct to be upheld in the physical and online spaces of Varia and are the point of contact when it is not. This year an Anti-Racism and a Non-Violent Communication workshop were held. In 2024 we have also been giving attention to improving processes of joining, leaving and being a member of Varia, by revising and upholding more thorough onboarding, pausing and offboarding protocols. We have also been working on making our internal meetings more holistic and accessible for different Varia members, as well as internal facilitation training across our organisation to improve the structure and success of our internal communication.

In 2025

In 2025 Mediation workgroup will organise a follow up Anti-Racism workshop in collaboration with the Counter Coloniality seed. Alongside this we will organise an internal study circle around Layla F. Saad's book "Me And White Supremacy", for the white identifying members of our collective and peers in the field. A workshop on the 'Active Bystander' will take place to help us learn how to be aware of ourselves and others behaviours, and learn ways to intervene when witnessing inappropriate situation or threatening behaviours. Mediation workgroup will learn about Visual Stories step-by-step guides designed to help those with autism or sensory sensitivities to plan their visit- and work on a manual for Varia members on how to make a Visual Story for an event. We will also organise internal skillsharing sessions for members, co-programmers, and anyone hosting in the Varia space, to learn about implementing our Code of Conduct, Access Riders, Collaboration Agreements and newly developed Visual Stories. Additionally, we will share aspects of our internal mediation practices through public programming and our toolbox.

Workgroup Toolbox Sharing

In previous years we have developed small zine publications that shed light on the inner workings of Varia. For 2025 we intend to expand our notions of knowledge sharing by opening out to what

these publications could be. If a toolbox can be shared, borrowed and added to, then we can shift from printed publication to public skillsharing event. Each workgroup will make public their inner workings and their tools in a format that suits the contents of their toolbox. This is in effort to be generous to the digital culture network in the Netherlands and beyond, and as moments to constructively critique with others how we can better develop our methods and tools.

Varia members: all

Format: Public skillsharing events

Publication: SomeTimes, SUMTimes

Guests: Ying Que (Mediation), Hackers & Designers (Finance), The White Pube (Communication)

Seeds



Alfalfa growing from a Raspberry Pi computer

Following our programme's theme of Seasonal Computing we structured the thematic activities for 2024 within three different seeds. In 2025 we continue to nourish these three seeds we planted last year: Access seed, Counter Coloniality seed and Homebrewing seed.

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 and cultural hegemony, be that of raw materials, labour, cultural memory, and challenge false ideas of unlimited growth. A seasonal way of working must have counter-colonial efforts.
3. Homebrewing seed: wants to co-create alternative understandings about the technologies we use, through collaboratively experimenting with homebrewed DIY/DIWO materials and so-called "amateurish" techniques, exploring urban nature and collecting our common knowledges into manuals, strategies and almanacs

Access seed

Access seed proposes to focus on the ways in which we consider accessibility in Varia. Thinking of access through Seasonal Computing, how do different access needs evolve in changing seasons? In keeping with Varia's mission that technology is for everyone, not just the experts, how can we enact this 'everyone' for which we strive? Shifting seasons enhance precarious situations of the cultural sector, and emphasises the need for sustainable practices of self-organisation, building and maintenance of support systems through knowledge transmission and solidarity.

In 2025, the Access seed will work through the notion of

edges and the value of the [marginal](#), from permaculture practices. In permaculture, the place where two eco-systems or habitats meet is more productive than either one habitat. Access seed will use Varia's edges as realms where different people can meet and hang out, both collaborators and audiences we want to meet. Giving attention to the margins of Varia, we intend for more generative and fruitful encounters with our public programme.

"We have the potential within our microcosms to redirect the flows of care, resources and power to redress broader societal and historical imbalances. This might mean offering additional resources to those around us who are systemically neglected. [...] This isn't about charity, it's about being aware of how the macro can influence the micro and vice versa. We need to recognise that we don't have equal access to money, education and networks [...] It's about being strategic in how resources and power are distributed to achieve equity". - excerpt from '[A manifesto for radical care or how to be a human in the arts](#)' by Tian Zhang

Activities in this seed are frequently related to community focused cofunding and programmes implemented with other local initiatives. This program intends to develop these relationships in attempt to give agency to different groups to engage with the space according to their needs and desires. For 2025, Access seed proposes activities to diversify our audiences and visitors to our space. New developments focus on regular and routine activities, in an effort to fit into a neighbourhood routine, increased attention to audiences that we don't reach (Doodle Dabble, Caregivers Unite), solidarity across the cultural sector in the Netherlands (How to Organise?), the development of a graphical free software tool (HUI) which aims to make Varia website publishing more inclusive, and improving the Electronica Depot and library through Repair Cafe.

In order to meet a diverse public, there are always different expectations and needs. As we are a space located in Charlois, this seed will continue to work towards accessibility for people who live nearby, and work together with them towards a better understanding of what Varia's role in the neighbourhood can be. We intend to make Varia a more porous place, to learn from their needs and to change our methods to a more accessible model.

Exhibition space: 'Openings'

Varia often receives requests to host exhibitions of artwork. These requests are usually refused because of the fluctuating needs of the space. As a proposal to open up access for those wanting to exhibit artwork at Varia, 'Openings' will be a small exhibition space located in a drawer, with four scheduled exhibitions in 2025. Curatorial decisions will focus on works that respond to seasonal urgencies in the Varia programme, in a series of open calls published on our website.

Varia members: Yoana Buzova, Niek Hilkmann

Format: Rotating art exhibitions

Guests: Allocated through open calls

Doodle Dabble & Caregivers Unite

From this year we have learnt that these events work well when programmed together. The audiences for each are interrelated, as are the needs in the community that each event fulfills.

Doodle Dabble

Doodle Dabble is a recurring children's workshop. The intentions of these questions- "what is Varia and what can you do in the space?" guide the workshop activities that helps children engage

in the space through movement, games, visuals, and mapping. We see the importance of including children in the conversation about everyday technology, learning from their perspective how to make the space accessible for them. Having the consistency of a recurring programme brings visibility and familiarity within the neighborhood, as well as the connection amongst the space, the children and their caregivers.

We will also develop the Doodle Dabble Corner as a space where books and literature for children are available, and explore tools available such as the printers to make zines, coloring and activity pads; speakers and microphone to play sounds and recordings; and also present outputs from the workshops. Having materials for this space also considers the access needs of caregivers and parents who bring their kids during events and activities.

Varia members: Czarina Calinawagan

Co-programmers: Chaeyoung Kim

Format: Repeating workshop

Caregivers Unite

Caregivers Unite continues from our 2024 programme, as a popular activity and one whose group is expanding quickly. It is a time for caregivers to come together and grow confidence to claim space within art institutions and the cultural sector in general, share their experiences and offer listening and support to one another. This serves 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.

For 2025 the growing group will organise workshops for one another. Their time in Varia is fed back to the Access seed by the involved Varia member, and informs us on how to adapt our space for increased accessibility. People they care for spend time down the road from Varia in W155. Caregiving isn't a synchronous activity that occurs at the same time. Therefore, alongside the gatherings and knowledge sharing meetings, we will take care to document and archive the discussions, strategies, and topics that come up during the meetups. This documentation will be made available and shared through online channels such as the Varia website for those who may not be able to attend these meetings themselves due to caretaking duties.

Varia members: Yoana Buzova

Format: Quarterly gatherings

Guests: Childcare experts

How to Organise?

How to Organise? will be a session with collectives and other small cultural organisations in the Netherlands to share and discuss strategies to become more self-sustainable within the current digital culture sector and economic climate. We aim to strengthen our network of mutual support by including a variety of organisations across the digital cultural field into the conversation. For this, we will put out an open call for participation, with the idea that everyone will be able to take away a set of strategies to implement within their own organisation and local network, and spend time learning about the inner workings of other groups. This activity develops from our 2024 'Self-Organised Spreads' and 2023 'Doing the Dishes and then Revolution'.

Varia members: amy pickles, Alice Strete

Format: Gathering of collectives, attendance via Open Call, 1 day

event

Counter Coloniality seed

Continuing from 2024, Counter Coloniality seed will further investigate the manifold ways in which colonisation—as an attitude, process, knowledge imposition, organisational model, force and output—is deeply embedded into the technologies we use every day. Syed Mustafa Ali writes in his text '[A Brief Introduction To Decolonial Computing](#)', that though "colonialism as a project of European political domination involving settlement formally ended with the national liberation and independence—or decolonisation—movements of the 1960s", the systems set in place during this period still pervade through the technologies and forms of knowledge organisation we use. He continues, "the modernity which colonialism engendered persists, albeit transformed under the condition of postmodernity, which has meant the persistence of certain "sedimented" colonial ways of knowing and being—that is, colonial epistemology and ontology—based on systems of categorisation, classification, and taxonomisation and the ways that these are manifested in practices, artifacts, and technologies".

This is evident in various aspects of technologies we use routinely; from the human and environmental cost of rare-earth element extraction like cobalt or lithium used in device components, to the outsourcing and underpayment of labour in Africa and Asia for annotating artificial intelligence data or moderating disturbing content on commercial social media. Similarly, expansionist goals of ubiquitous or pervasive computing demonstrate a continuation of logics of capture, commodification and accumulation, which has little regard on its impact on human and other than human forms of life.

In 2025, our public programme will foster practice-based collective experimentation that makes legible colonial mechanisms encountered through, or present within, technologies. This desire is rooted in a realisation from our current programme, that when the colonial order is revealed, and becomes tangible, is the most exciting point in our workshops. We want to hone in on these zones of learning that are confronting and generative. Counter Coloniality seed will share this with participants, by involving them in tool sharing and community discussions.

Considering that the global capitalist economy is creating its own new seasons that are oriented via colonial methods and incentives of production and consumption, Counter Coloniality seed's relation to Seasonal Computing intends to sharpen our responses to current urgencies. We have selected the themes below to dive deeper into through concentrated activities. Some respond to our current sociopolitical climate while others emerge from critical reflection on our 2024 programme. They are preoccupied with international solidarity movements in technology and the role of technology in their organisation, resistance to knowledge erasure, paranoid technologies in the Cold War and their continuation through policing technologies, and political commodities emerging through colonial trade routing.

International Tech Resistance

International Tech Resistance aims to learn from modes of technological solidarity as a way to root counter colonial approaches in our methods and attitudes. In this period when nation state sentimentality is growing, borders are solidifying and suffering ignored, global connection and meaningful relationships are paramount. This event looks into how technology is and has been

used across different struggles, for example tech workers organising, or artists subverting algorithmic violence.

Different modes of technological resistance will be investigated together with two guests, the [Arab Digital Expression Foundation](#) (ADEF) who will be sharing about their use of open source tools in a context of heavy state censorship, and [eeefff](#), who will present their collective experiment 'can colonialism be encoded into algorithms' as part of their ongoing work [The School of Algorithmic Solidarity](#).

ADEF (Arab Digital Expression Foundation) is an Egyptian non-profit organisation that seeks to empower marginalised people, especially the Egyptian Youth, through visual arts, culture and supporting their knowledge through Arabic language. ADEF will speak about how they pursue their goal to promote the creative uses of information technology, spread the concepts and practices of free culture and support initiatives aimed at producing free Arab knowledge with free tools.

The session with eeefff looks into the recent leaked source code of Yandex, a big IT corporation which is very close to the Russian government. The source codes of the "Yandex" company were copied in July 2022 and published in the Internet on January 25, 2023. Together with eeefff, we will read the code collectively, and look at how ownership over territory is projected into algorithms, patterns of digital colonialism, and encoded violence.

Varia members: Sofia Boschat-Thorez, Cristina Cochior, Antye Guenther

Format: Public event, half-day worksession with lecture

Guests: eeefff, Arab Digital Expression Foundation (ADEF)

Miscalculating Risk: Supermarket Watching

Developing from the success of our 2024 event, 'Miscalculating risk: policing technologies in the Netherlands' with Jair Schalkwijk and Sanne Stevens, where we unpacked the use of new technologies to criminalise and surveil racialised people, and shared strategies to push back against policing technology in all forms, we will continue the series examining technologies of policing by looking into a recent addition in the Dutch supermarkets anti-theft arsenal: (not so) Smart CCTV. We will specifically study the case of [Jumbo's recent adoption of a software provided by French start up Veesion](#) which promises to detect shoplifting alongside "suspicious behaviours" via AI.

[Sanne Stevens](#) from Justice, Equity and Technology Project will host an in-person community workshop using the Algorithmic Ecology framework, which provides a [tool for organizing against algorithms](#).

The session will give participants the opportunity to contribute with their related stories and further their understanding of the widespread impact and implications of ever more present surveillance AI. Together we will look at how new technologies reinforce existing oppressions by stereotyping and categorising behaviours, looks and bodily movements, their colonial origins, how they create new harms and what strategies can be implemented.

Varia members: Sofia Boschat-Thorez, Cristina Cochior, Czarina Calinawagan

Format: One-day workshop

Guest: Sanne Stevens

Cold War Current

The times of Cold War seem long gone. They impact, however, the *what* and *how* of Cold War ideologies that are implemented and made operative in Big Tech today. During the Cold War many colonised/occupied countries became supposedly independent, with ideologically opposing super powers forcing, or seducing, newly established free states into their realm of influence. Fueled by paranoid anxieties, those superpowers started an absurd and deadly race for dominance, power, and tech superiority, while pushing hegemonic claims onto countries of Latin America and Africa to secure access to resources. In Europe the establishment of NATO conflicted with the Warsaw Pact, whereby Poland, the Soviet Union and seven other Eastern Bloc socialist republics signed for mutual assistance. These political alignments exaggerated East and West divisions, and the line that went through separated Germany.

Digging into this time period we will hone in on technological developments in this era. Taking the computer as our site of departure, with three guests we will trace the evolution of this tool: [Paul Feigelfeld's](#) project 'The Great Loop Forward: Cybernetic Incompleteness between China and Europe, 1700–2000' will shed light on how colonisation and global trade played a key role in cybernetics, a systems science developed across all sides of the Cold War. Francis Hunger's [investigations into Seturn project](#), the "first computer to make use of ternary logic (-1, 0, 1)" with a life-span of just twelve years, was thought to have the potential to go well beyond the binary schemes that the global IT industry and infrastructure still used today". As someone growing up in former East Germany, Hunger has performatively enacted this research and together we will facilitate a participatory evening event and humorous installation. Finally, with artist, writer and filmmaker Tiffany Sia we will learn how creative practitioners make work with machines. Sia's work investigates how material culture - particularly print, digital material and film/video - traces and enables governance, geopolitical power and perception. With an online radio broadcast (using Varia's Narrowcast) we will discuss her recent work '[On and Off-Screen Imaginaries](#)' to think about cultural work that moves through modes of censorship, playfully relating the conversation to [Basicode history](#) that interconnects youth radio in former East German broadcasting software as alien sounds for free to the Dutch broadcasting organisation (NOS), initiating the attempt to create a unified standard for this programming language.

Varia members: Antye Guenther, amy pickles

Format: 3 public events

Guests: Paul Feigelfeld, Francis Hunger, Tiffany Sia

Colonial Infrastructures: Resisting Knowledge Erasure

How is knowledge transmitted and shared in times of repression? How do we gather and disseminate knowledge that was erased and dispersed? Resisting Knowledge Erasure will focus on efforts of circulating knowledge via shadow archives, fugitive libraries, infoshops and other collections. In this session we will delve into destruction and censorship as acts of colonial force, and consider what repercussions these have on the field of digital culture.

This event will solidify and circulate work began in our 2023 programme, in collaboration with the BAK Community Portal in Utrecht, with the gathering 'LIBRARIAN SWARM (Fuzzy Mirror Solidarity Network for Palestine)'. This event began the collection and sorting of numerous writings around Palestine, that will be completed in 2024. In 2025 we will give attention to the circula-

tion and distribution of this existing library, as well as cultural practices that attend to both librarianship and vulnerable knowledges.

Led by artist and designer [Clara Balaguer](#), this session will take the form of a study day, in two parts. First, [Learning Palestine](#) will come and present the work process behind their 12 hours long mixtape stitching together various audio material. Later, participants will read, print and bind items from the 'Fuzzy Mirror Solidarity Network for Palestine' library into zines. Sonic libraries will be played in the space and digital libraries, stored on USB and SD cards, will be adorned and decorated. On this day a facilitated conversation between our guests, Varia members and participants will take place. Concerns shared will include censorship in relation to digital culture and creative work to counter and confuse knowledge erasure.

Varia members: Sofia Boschath-Thorez, Cristina Cochior, amy pickles

Format: Zine making half-day

Guests: Clara Balaguer, Learning Palestine

Colonial Infrastructures: Hair as Global Commodity

Learning from topics of Containerisation and Fashion under the previous Colonial Infrastructures worksessions in 2024, we continue to investigate systems of commodity, processes of labour and assembly, and global import-export relationships.

For this iteration, close examination of the global human hair trade will grant us perspective into, not only this extractive industry and the infrastructures that uphold it, but the colonial ideologies that are enacted within it and form a backbone of exploitation. We will collaborate with the artist Yi Zhang working on her ongoing research 'fall off: Tracing the Dynamics of Violence in the Global Hair Trade', learning from Zhang how creative practitioners can weave their positioning into a vast colonial research topic.

"As a Chinese visual artist living in Europe, I am surrounded by "Made in China" products every day. I choose to work with the wig, a commodity that is both common and specific, personal and industrialised," says [Zhang](#).

This work will be shared alongside the film '[An Asian Ghost Story](#)', by Bo Wang, that tells haunting stories of modernisation in China through a close reading of the hair industry and how the 'Communist Hair Ban' embargo affected the export oriented economy since the Cold War. Wang's work explores Hong Kong as "a transient space that mediates and sanitises the connection between different worlds, and the relationship between U.S. Imperialism and East Asia order in the Cold War era".

Varia members: Czarina Calinawagan, amy pickles

Format: Worksession and film screening

Guests: Yi Zhang (Eindhoven), Bo Wang (Amsterdam)

Homebrewing seed

The Homebrewing seed aims to create collective understandings about the technologies that surround us through the act of collaboratively experimenting with DIY materials and so-called amateur techniques. Amateurism provides space to practise outside of professional contexts, challenging the gap between those who make a technology and those who consume it. In 2025, the Homebrewing seed will focus on the process of co-learning by

organising moments of being together and learning from one another. With sufficient time for collective research and experimentation, our seed will thrive on cross-contaminations between the different threads it encompasses.

Our desire within this seed stems from the urgency to utilise what is already there and expand its use, meaning, lifespan or potential. In this way, we see multiple connections between experimenting with homemade computers, exploring urban nature and collecting our common knowledges into manuals, strategies and almanacs. We place similar value on collective moments in which food is shared, dissected and placed in context as we do on moments of tinkering with electronics.

Inspired by the processes of bacterial growth in fermentation, in homebrewing we aim to have each activity pass something along to the next ones, in order to facilitate an exchange. We hereby continue to draw inspiration from the notion of "homebrewing" which was used to describe a culture of home-made personal computers, assembled by amateur enthusiasts. In Varia, the term 'homebrew' has also been used in the context of the [Homebrew Server Club](#), a monthly gathering open to all levels of expertise for those interested in hosting their own online services from home.

We plan to examine specific sites, objects, and materials, through which we will explore the history, context and communities working with amateur techniques. For example, self medicated practices, repair and salvage practices, software development, local resourcefulness, collective documentation practices, rural technologies, and the development of toolkits. We will do so by drawing from concepts of DIWO, in relation and extension to peer-2-peer methodologies and DIY materialities.

We consider other ways of documenting crucial to experiment with co-learning and co-sharing and plan to explore the notion of leaving traces by working on collaborative documentation. This documentation, inspired by almanacs, will allow us to zoom into the different practices within the seed, share our collective vocabulary and make our notes public. In relation to the extended concept of seasonality that we are proposing, we will imagine new ways of mapping out timelines and forecasts, relating our ways of working to how we experience these strange seasons. We will take cues from [David Benque's](#) exploration of the role of almanacs in today's cultural space in order to imagine what a 'networked almanac' could look like, and who it would be useful to.

Self medicated practices

Tools that perform a simple task in relation to tracking or monitoring vitals, or helping manage some bodily functions, can often be prohibitive in terms of price, or they can be unattainable, use an unnecessary amount of resources, or are difficult to maintain or repair because they are proprietary. We want to look into [DIY methods](#) of making such tools more accessible, demystify the way they work, make it easy to repair and source materials and keep track of data for personal use. We want to create documentation for such tools and maintain a network of people interested in these topics. In these sessions, we will question the role of biometric surveillance that is often taken for granted in healthcare, which has increased exponentially with the more common use of self-tracking devices and apps. Based on devices we already use (pulse tracker, iontophoresis machine) we will learn from our varied experiences and get new insights into the world of DIY healthcare.

Varia members: Alice Strete, Yoana Buzova

Guest: Pernilla Philip

Format: 2 public workshops

Extratinality

This programme focuses on intersectional activities between sound, art and technology, by exploring hybrid practices and homebrewed tools. Through the lens of [extratinality](#), we organise conferences, radio shows and workshops around specific technological and methodological questions. The core of the programme is a series of public events for which we invite artists, musicians, designers and technicians from in and outside of Rotterdam to engage with our space and its facilities. These moments function as collective learning experiences; an opportunity for exchange between disciplines, during which new tools and methodologies can be developed.

In 2025 we want to continue our programme through multiple thematic day-long events of performative showcases, combined with collaborative workshops. These are a continuation of the so-called ‘Extratonal Education’ events from 2024, where we looked at the correlations between digital culture and homebrewed tools in regards to specific topics, such as machine embodiment and the dis(harmonics) of waste. The selected future topics include sonic accessibility, multispecies composition and mechanical computation, which cross over with other activities within Varia inspired by the concepts of urban nature and frugality (Common Dirt, Frugal Disinnovation).

Varia members: Niek Hilkmann

Co-programmers: Joseph Knierzinger, Kauê Werner, Matthias Hurlt and Mitsitron (Mitsi Chaida)

Format: 4 day-long events of performances combined with 4 collaborative workshops

Guests: Amos Peled, Jiawen Wang, Robert Mathy, Luca Soudant, Natalia Sorzano, Clara Lissens, Gijssje Heemskerk, Johana Molina, hypercycle, Flavia Faas, Floris Vanhoof, Bert Barten, Loek Vellekoop, Yeon Sung, Sarah Grant, Giulio Erasmus, Nic Krog, more TBA.

Note on Cofunding

Extratinality is partially funded by Popunie, Fonds Podiumkunsten and ticket sales. Requested from Stimuleringsfonds is the coverage of the coordination hours for the programme, detailed in the Toelichting.

Common dirt

In the 2024 programme, we took a critical look at the cross-connections between biology and technology in Rotterdam and beyond by fusing together two activities originally intended to be separated, Learning by Proxy and Biotoop Charlois, into Common Dirt. In 2025 we want to continue with the threads that we have unravelled with the project ‘Common Dirt’. We will investigate the urban flora and fauna around our neighbourhood, as well as follow the paths of plants and pathogens across trade routes. Each event under this theme has a different topic, as follows:

Filtering

Hidden within the cracks of our urban landscape, hyperaccumulators quietly counterbalance the negative impacts of human technological innovation by filtering pollutants from the soil.

These plants have adapted to survive, and even thrive, in polluted environments. By absorbing contaminants from the soil, they offer a glimpse into nature’s resilience in the face of human-made challenges. Where and which plants perform this work in our immediate localities? Inspired by the work of [Andreas Zingerle and Raphael Perret](#), during one of the Common Dirt sessions, we will practice seeing those plants as well as their histories and create space for establishing a co-existence based on solidarity and empathy.

Spreading

Together with the ^ collective, based in the rural North West of Ireland, we aim to investigate the rapid movement of a plant-killing disease - fireblight (*Erwinia amylovora*). The fireblight has been found in hawthorn trees along the West coast of Ireland and seems to have spread from Germany through tree nurseries in the Netherlands. This tree is of great cultural and folkloric significance in Ireland. Unpacking this thread links tree and human in themes of occupation and enforced labour, which have perpetuated through to the present. Examples include producing monocultures of plants, the abuse of migrant workers, trade/migratory routes that provide passports for plants and often deny the same travel privileges for people, biodiversity loss and soil erosion, mineral depletion and the spread of diseases such as fire blight, Dutch elm disease, and ash dieback.

Swarming

Each year, on the 4th of April, [‘World Rat Day’](#) takes place. During this event, a more positive light is shone on the rat, an animal which is typically perceived as a pest. One could argue that this rodent is the most famous symbol for urban decay, but exactly in this characterisation lies a danger. In what way are urban policies influenced by public perception, which is nowadays mediated through very specific online outlets such as Buurt- or MeldR-Apps? How is pest control within Rotterdam regulated? Together with [Bureau Stadsnatuur](#), we will envision a different form of policy based on positive affirmation instead of negative characterisation.

Note on Cofunding

In ‘Spreading’, EUR 2500 for the guest fees, travel and accommodation of the ^ collective is coming from Leitrim County Council Artist Collective Bursary.

Varia members: Alice Strete, Yoana Buzova, Niek Hilkmann, Luke Murphy

Format: Research group, 3 public events

Guests: [the ^ collective](#) (Shane Finan, Tara Baoth Mooney, James Kelly, Laura Mcmorrow), Andreas Zingerle, tba (Bureau Stadsnatuur)

B(r)oilplates for Fictionality

“Semi-True Interpretation of Fictionality” was a series of events at Varia in 2024 that discussed fictionality as an artistic method to tell alternative stories and critically reflect on what is considered truthful or fictional, and questioned the often oppositional positioning of fact vs fiction. In the coming year, we wish to extend this programme in people power, time dedication and reach. The aim is to develop a collective toolkit for fictionality that departs from the idea of “boilerplate” text, which in journalism and computer science is known as text that can be copied and reused with

only minor changes. Similarly, “B(r)oilplates for Fictionality” will focus on an extended notion of text and language as the media of concern. Over the course of three hands-on work sessions and events, we will develop a publication that compiles fictional methods, experiments and approaches with invited guests and participants who are selected in an open call. The term “broiler” has multiple meanings: it can refer to a kitchen appliance for broiling food, a chicken bred specifically for this cooking method, or a person who cooks using it. “Broiler” also serves as a trigger word that, within an all-German context, still identifies its user as quintessentially East German, carrying with it various semi-fictional or fantastic origin stories. With both “boiler/boiling” and “broiler/broiling” tied to specific cooking methods for making food digestible, we intend to work within these kinds of linguistic and metaphorical (re)flexibilities in order to cook up digital stories and narratives that nourish various imaginations.

Varia members: Simon Browne, Antye Guenther

Co-programmer: Sami Hammana

Format: 3 public events: 2 evening events, 1 workshop

Guests: Doriane Timmermans, Marjolijn van der Loo, Lendl Barcelos

Frugal Disinnovation

Traditionally, frugality implies careful resource management, yet its pairing with innovation—a key driver of contemporary Western capitalism—warrants closer scrutiny. Some frugal practices/ideas that are already “coined” are: Jugaad (India), Gambiarra (Brazil), Jua Kali (Kenya), Rasquachismo (Mexico), Zhizhu Changxin (China), and Halletmek (Turkey). These practices, marked by resilience and a strong desire to survive and resist, challenge conventional narratives of innovation and offer valuable insights into our collective futures, as mentioned by [Deepa Butoliya](#). In this context, frugal practices represent a powerful means of interfacing with the material world, offering alternative pathways to autonomy that transcend the confines of Western industrial paradigms.

Frugal Disinnovation will focus on exploring frugality’s critical dimensions and the ways it has been co-opted by Western management literature, technology, design, and sustainability R&D. Through a series of events involving knowledge sharing from external cultures with experience in frugal practices, we aim to examine how such practices, often born out of necessity rather than choice, have been commodified, colonised, often romanticised, and transformed into marketable concepts in the global North, stripping them of their original cultural context and critical significance. We will also turn towards the margins of Europe to explore similar practices that haven’t had academic or popular recognition. This exploration aligns with our collective’s vision of everyday technology as a site of plurality, where diverse worldviews intersect, and people engage with technology in varied and meaningful ways.

Varia members: Danny Tirthdas van der Kleij, Yoana Buzova, Benjamin Earl

Co-programmer: Kauê Werner

Format: 4 public events

Guests: Gambiologia collective

Poetics of Computing

In the series of events called Poetics of Computing, we will explore poetic gestures in computing which collectively redefine

the meaning of computing as a practice that is attentive and reactive, and undoes technological alienation. If we consider poetry [“as an excess of language, as a hidden resource which enables us to shift from one paradigm to another”](#), then poetic forms of computation have the potential to reveal new facets of our relationship with code. These poetic forms create an excess of meaning in otherwise operational endeavours, able to disturb and challenge the order of expectations, which, according to Franco “Bifo” Berardi, “is one of the main social transformations that a movement could produce”.

Through an open call, we will establish a public Poetics of Computing research group, that will extend over the course of three events, and will delve into historical uses of poetry in computing, ternary logic, the relationship between metaphors present in code languages and physical environments, and the remaking of digital structures. As we get involved with these topics, we acknowledge the origins of the term “computer,” first used to describe women manually calculating data. Starting from the link between computation and the human body, the Poetics of Computing research group seeks to honor that history and embrace a vision of computing which is contextual, physical and embodied. We will explore coding as a practice that connects deeply with our localities and the lives around us. Poetics of Computing is in its core imagined as a radically collective practice.

Varia members: Cristina Cochior, Benjamin Earl, Antye Guenther

Format: Public research group (open call), 3 events

Homemade Computer Club

The Homemade Computer Club is a gathering space for those who want to imagine computing differently. It’s a club to think through what the computer would feel, look, and act like if it weren’t a commercial product, but instead something defined and built socially, in a situated and contextual manner. The Homemade Computer Club is based on the format of pre-existing computer clubs that are spaces for exploring, learning to build and using computers communally. The Homemade Computer Club utilises this social format, however, it focuses on exploring concepts such as frugality, low-tech and social computing through a partly practical and partly pedagogical programme. With a focus on open-source software and DIY hardware, we will test what it means to compute together and towards what end. We will build computers, test components, discuss computing within limits, and encourage a playful, experimental approach to computing.

Varia members: Benjamin Earl, Alice Strete, Danny Tirthdas van der Kleij

Format: public workshop and lecture, 3 public events

Guest: Spencer Chang

Rural Technology

Through a series of field trips and presentations, we will explore what it means to compute in the margins. Much of today’s internet infrastructure is located in rural areas around the world in order to profit from cheap power, cold climates, and large amounts of space with less densely populated areas. These infrastructures do not take into account the needs of those who live in those areas and often the benefits of such infrastructures are created for metropolitan areas.

The Rural Technology events will explore what kind of technology exists in the spaces outside of cultural, social and technological centres but is still affected by the infrastructures that facilitate such centres. We will begin to look at possible futures for rural technology that go beyond today's notion of technological progress through a two-fold approach. Firstly by looking at what current infrastructures are built in and impact rural areas (such as data centres) and secondly by examining frugal, appropriate and low-tech instances of digital technology that could be utilised in specific rural contexts. Through this approach we will avoid romanticising rural life, which is not autonomous or without its own share of problems, but see the specificities of a rural technology which contain a liberatory character, in the [Bookchinian](#) sense, which can be “used ecologically to reawaken [one's] sense of dependence upon the environment”.

Some locally relevant technologies we will investigate are rural self-hosting that utilises atmospheric conditions for small-scale computing, local-first communication systems such as radio, and communal digital literacy for communally owned and maintained tools and infrastructure. Through an organised field trip and a public working session, we will explore collectively what rural technology could be.

Varia members: Luke Murphy, Benjamin Earl

Format: field trip and public worksession

Guests: Marloes de Valk, Vida Rucli (Robida)

Homebrewing Almanac

Throughout the activities of the Homebrewing seed there will be a clear focus on documentation and reflection with the goal of making the knowledge, skills and understandings produced through the various events public. We will do this through the creation of a Homebrewing Almanac. David Benqué suggests that “almanacs reveal broader systems and histories in their tangible design details. By transforming collected data into predictions, they are rudimentary predecessors to the kinds of algorithmic systems at work today.”

Collectively, we will produce an publication that serves not only to document the activities tied to our research but also to reveal some of the “broader systems” at play that have influenced the programming of this seed. We hope that this almanac can serve both as a document of the current state of Homebrewing and also as wider call for others to embrace a resourceful attitude.

Varia members: Homebrewing seed participants

Format: Publication, 1 launch event

Other activities

The following activities are funded through other means than Stimuleringsfonds Creative Industry or by Varia members' volunteer labour.

Access seed Adjacent

HUI (Hugo User Interface) Development

In 2024, Varia was a Research Fellow in the [Tool Sheds](#) Fellowship at Het Nieuwe Instituut. During this Fellowship, we focused on quantitative and qualitative research around our public-facing channels of communication: our website and archive, which are static websites. Out of this research came a proposal to develop a graphical tool to make publishing on static

websites more accessible: HUI (Hugo User Interface).

HUI aims to be a copyleft licensed graphical desktop application for sustainable static website publishing. It does not rely on proprietary cloud services and maintains a simple and accessible design focused on content publishers. In the context of Varia, this refers to our members current workflow for website content publishing. Due our software choices, regarding resource efficiency and technical minimalism, the tools we use for publishing our website are less accessible.

In our text [“Stock Taking Sense”](#) we reflected on this as part of our Tool Sheds Fellowship research question: who has the privileged technical skills, time and energy to create, publish and maintain their own website? If we look specifically at smaller cultural organisations, such as Varia, how do they achieve a sustainable web presence?

In 2025, we will work towards publishing a working prototype as part of the [Pioneers project funding](#). At the end of this period, we will hold a public prototype launch party and demo of the software at Varia.

Varia members: Luke Murphy, Alice Strete, Simon Browne

Format: Prototype public launch party and demo

Repair Cafe

For 2025, Access seed proposes a monthly Repair Cafe that utilises our Electronica Depot and our extensive library on the development and maintenance of electronic devices. There will also be a more literal cafe component that serves hot drinks and snacks. The emphasis of the cafe should be on sharing knowledge and understanding the slow process that repair can be.

Varia will join the network of 3000 repair cafes listed on [repaircafe.org](#).

Varia members: Danny Tirthdas van der Kleij

Format: public gathering, once a month

Counter-coloniality seed Adjacent

Doing data justices – A collective, trans-disciplinary search for more pluralistic citizenships and doing the digital differently

The objective of this project is to consider how migrant and minoritised communities – based in Rotterdam and beyond. – can articulate, circulate, and translate concepts of data justice using decolonising and feminist tools. Data justice is a new concept, developed to bridge anti-surveillance and social justice activism. The Netherlands is home to many of its key theorists, who have been connecting the power of data to intervene to social justice agendas and are fostering situated approaches towards data activism. The project builds on their work and brings activists, academics, artists, and community members together to explore what data justice can mean in the different migration-and-diversity contexts we work in.

Scholars have developed concepts such as ‘data colonialism’ (Couldry and Meijas, 2019) and ‘technocolonialism’ (Madianou, 2019) to describe how the unequal processes of data extraction by public and private actors draw on colonial ruins. However, they easily reify a Eurocentric positioning (Mumford, 2022) and gloss over important material and cultural specificities. In the many South(s) and North(s), people (not yet) on the move navigate the different potentials and restrictions relating to data practices. Alternatively, a more radical strand of politics has led to the term

‘data justice’, which decolonising and feminist actors are mobilising in their work. How this translates into specific local contexts and what it enables concretely is yet to be explored, further explaining the purpose of this project.

Varia members: Danny Tirthdas van der Kleij, Sofia Boschat-Thorez

Format: 4 half-day meetings with a group of community members, designers, activists and academics; 1 reading group; 1 public event

Homebrewing seed Adjacent

Contestable Urban Transitions: Hacking the system

Varia has been selected to be an artistic partner as part of a consortium who will be examining technological transitions such as 5G and other contemporary communication technologies and how these technologies are contested through public activity. Through the premise that “most actual contestation of transition infrastructures happens outside of institutionalised frameworks for public participation”, the project aims to examine “how can new types of partnerships between government and residents account for — and cater for — the inevitable contestation of transition infrastructures”.

In 2025, Varia will host a field trip in the form of an infrastructure walk in Enschede, followed by a workshop that examines and dissects a particular form of communication technology that we found on the field trip. As part of this workshop, we will produce a collective zine that documents the activity and findings of the group.

This activity is part of a four-year project that begins in 2025.

Varia members: Danny Tirthdas van der Kleij, amy pickles

Format: Infrastructure walk, workshop, and zine

Calm Coding

Calm Coding is a lowkey social hangout for those who like to write computer programs in the company of other people, that happens twice a month. Within Varia, we are interested in creating space for coding practices and would like to build community around this idea; especially in relation to addressing the politics and social issues surrounding coding. We recognise the historically muddy waters of mainstream coding communities and the dominance of patriarchal and capitalist mindsets and behaviours within them. We aim to build an inclusive space and we ask all those who attend to read the Varia code of conduct. The Calm Coding sessions sometimes have special themes, for example drawing with ANSI characters.

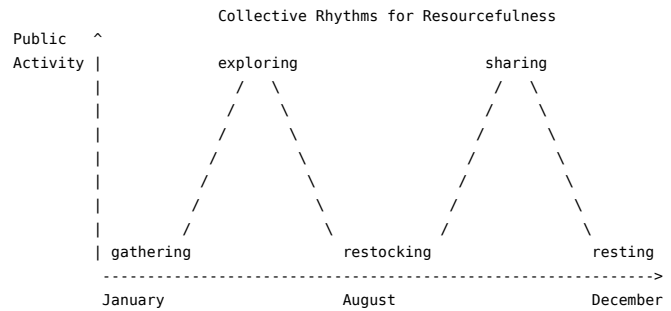
Varia members: Danny Tirthdas van der Kleij, Antye Guenther, Cristina Cochior, Benjamin Earl, Luke Murphy, Simon Browne

Format: Work sessions, twice a month

2025 Year Planning

For 2025 we made a new structure for our activities, that incorporates both shifting climates and shared scheduling issues. Our vernacular calendar is composed of the following five seasons: Gathering, Exploring, Restocking, Sharing, and Resting. The timeline of our 2025 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. These five seasons reflect how we envision the programme of Varia to unfold while taking into account personal availabilities, resources, as well as environmental factors, such as August’s summer heat and lack of child-care.



January (Gathering)

Homebrewing seed: Frugal Disnovation

February (Gathering)

Access seed: Openings

Toolbox sharing session: internal study circle (mediation work group)

March (Exploring)

Access seed: Repair Cafe, HUI launch

Homebrewing seed: Extratinality, Self-medicated Practices, Homemade Computer Club

Toolbox sharing session: Money Talks (finance work group)

April (Exploring)

Access seed: Repair Cafe, Doodle Dabble, Caregivers Unite, How to Organise?

Counter-Coloniality seed: Resisting Knowledge Erasure

Homebrewing seed: Common Dirt, B(r)oilplates for Fictionality, Rural Technology

Toolbox sharing session: Self-Organised Communication Meetup (communication work group)

May (Exploring)

Access seed: Openings, Repair Cafe, Doodle Dabble, Caretakers Unite

Counter-Coloniality seed: International Tech Resistance

Homebrewing seed: Poetics of Computing, B(r)oilplates for Fictionality

Toolbox sharing session: Anti-Racism workshop (mediation work group)

June (Exploring)

Access seed: Repair Cafe, Doodle Dabble, Caretakers Unite

Counter-Coloniality seed: Cold War Current

Homebrewing seed: Homemade Computer Club, Extratinality, Common Dirt, B(r)oilplates for Fictionality

July (Restocking)

Access seed: How to Organise, Repair Cafe

Homebrewing seed: Poetics of Computing, Common Dirt

August (Restocking)

Access seed: Openings

September (Sharing)

Access seed: Repair Cafe, Doodle Dabble, Caretakers Unite

Counter-Coloniality seed: Hair as Global Commodity

Homebrewing seed: Poetics of Computing, Extratonicity, Common Dirt

October (Sharing)

Access seed: Repair Cafe, Doodle Dabble, Caretakers Unite

Counter-Coloniality seed: Miscalculating Risk: Supermarket Watching

Homebrewing seed: Rural Technology, Self-medicated Practices, Homemade Computer Club

November (Sharing)

Access seed: Openings, Repair Cafe, Doodle Dabble, Caretakers Unite

Counter-Coloniality seed: Cold War Current, Hair as Global Commodity

Homebrewing seed: Self-medicated Practices, Homemade Computer Club

Toolbox sharing session: Active Bystander (mediation work group)

December (resting)

Access seed: Repair Cafe

Homebrewing seed: Frugal Disnovation, Extratonicity

Communication and Digital Strategy Plan

In 2025 we will continue to solidify the already existing communication channels that Varia sustains. Simultaneously, we will develop new methods of outreach to create meaningful connections with a variety of audiences. We will continue to work with mediums and tactics that align with the core values of Varia, such as publications of collective research, workgroup zines and free/libre open-source tools:

Monthly Newsletter/Mailing List

Each month we send out a newsletter containing the upcoming events for Varia and a selection of other activities conducted by its members and our local community. This newsletter is written in both Dutch and in English and can be subscribed to during events or remotely via our website. Our newsletter continues to grow as we make meaningful connections to new audiences.

Fediverse

Varia does not make use of commercial social media platforms. Instead, we make use of free software and federated platforms to broadcast activities to a like-minded community of practitioners in a meaningful way. The fediverse is such an example, being an ecosystem of interoperable and interconnected social media platforms. Growing communities on the fediverse are able to communicate with each other without being locked in by a single vendor. Since 2023, Varia has its own [fediverse instance](#) that is dedicated to Varia's activities and those within our trans-local

community.

Varia Website and Archive

Our current website features a full list of all the public programmes that involve Varia. These include events and projects that take place in the space, as well as elsewhere. The website also gives an overview of what Varia is, how to contact us, where the space is located and how we maintain ways of being together, such as our code of conduct, membership guidelines and collective statement. During 2024, several members of Varia participated in a research fellowship run by Nieuwe Instituut which will lead to the launch of a more accessible version of the website.

Publications

The workgroups of Varia contain knowledge about the internal workings and infrastructure of Varia. We want to share this knowledge with people and organisations outside of Varia. In 2025, we plan to continue publishing workgroup zines, alongside new event formats that will share internal knowledges and skills in public. We currently have plans to publish:

SUMTimes

As a form of tools sharing, Finance workgroup will organise semi-public 'Money Talks' skill sharing sessions with Varia members, our peers and network, around financial administration. Skills, methodologies and pedagogical reflections from these sessions will form the 'SUMtimes' 2025 publication.

SomeTimes/Af en Toe

Twice a year we will produce SomeTimes/Af en Toe, a publication that summarises the activities of the space, whilst also making public some of our findings as Varia. We will use it as an editorial space for collecting contributions from members about the research they are doing and reflections on how the public programme is going.

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, and our other guests, provide more details of the people and groups with whom we will or are already working together and share communication efforts.

Hosting

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 2025 programme, allowing us to reach a wider audience.

Visits and Tours

Every year we take part in several activities happening in

Rotterdam's cultural sector. In 2025 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, KABK, and De Montford University from the UK.

Windows and Walls

The space of Varia, situated on the corner of Gouwstraat and Wolphaertstraat, is broadly visible through several big windows. 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 have commissioned a local artist to make a design for them. In 2025, we will continue using two of our windows as spaces to display a rotating monthly calendar of Varia events and neighbourhood activities.

New Communication and digital strategies for 2025

Promote Publications

Publications have had a significant role in the communication of the approaches, tools, and research that take place in and around Varia. In 2025, to continue to broaden our community and audience, as well as expand our network, we will take the publications that Varia has produced to a variety of book fairs, such as Miss Read (Berlin), etceteras (Porto), The Other Book (The Hague), and Zine Camp (Rotterdam).

Communication Toolbox - Self-Organised Communication Meetup

Starting from the publication Social In The Media, which we published in 2024, Varia will reach out to other art and design organisations, such as The White Pube, that want to work together on alternative modes of building publics. In 2025, we will organise a meet-up between self-organised spaces and organisations to discuss communication strategies that do not rely on big tech or commercial platforms. We aim to invite both local and international groups that are engaged with different methods of making their activities public, in order to share knowledge and resources in a practical act of mutual support. Part of this event will be available to the public and shall be translated into a small publication in 2026.

Varia and the Cultural Governance Code

The application of the Cultural Governance Code (CGC) is adapted to the principles with which we organise our group. This can be summarised in an example, namely the idea of a "Manager / Management" within the context of Varia has acquired a radically different meaning from the CGC provided definition in our 7 years of operation. We therefore take care to carry out a "translation in terms" in our application of the code.

We recognise and appreciate the principles-based approach of the CGC which allow different forms of governance to find

equal footing across our diverse sector. We do not see the form of governance that has developed within Varia as an end in itself. By this, we mean that an alternative approach does not take priority over the need for an effective and healthy governance and all the benefits thereof. We believe our approach should be seen in the light of adaptation based on the needs of our members.

A collective approach

Varia is an association founded in 2017, with 12 currently active members. Of these, 5 hold positions on the board. Since 2021, the day-to-day running of Varia is done through a collective process. Members participate in 5 workgroups which fulfil the association's main responsibilities: communication, finance, space, mediation and infrastructure. Varia members join a monthly member's meeting to coordinate their activities and an annual general assembly to reflect, review and plan for the future.

Members are encouraged to rotate their workgroup roles and participate in multiple workgroups in order to broaden their experience through the "mini-peer" model; if members cannot commit to full workgroup participation they can be delegated smaller tasks. Board membership is reviewed annually.

Our financial model is based on quarterly membership fees, a 15% contribution fee for commissions carried out by members which goes into the common fund, and a publicly funded cultural programme.

Decisions are made by consensus where every member's vote is equal. Using a "levels" model, depending on the answer to the question of "who is affected by this decision?". Subsequently, a proposal can be small, medium or large. For "large" decisions, full consensus of all members is required. Medium decisions require a majority consensus. Small decisions can be passed with a minority consensus. This means that organisational changes are most agreeable to members who are more likely to carry them out.

Varia maintains an open and accessible culture externally through the work of the space and communication workgroups. On the local level, there are weekly open hours every Friday at Varia itself and hosting of regular meetings for groups in the neighbourhood: the Wijkraad, Zon op Zuid, FNV Voor16, Bond Precaire Woonvormen, Queer Bar and Cultural Workers Unite.

Internally, the mediation workgroup addresses the needs of membership, training opportunities and assists in resolving disputes. Self-learning workshops for conflict resolution and anti-racism have been organised in 2024 based on the needs of the members.

Recent developments

Varia is in a moment of transition with regard to the concept of Supervision. For several years, we have evaluated the need for an advisory board (Raad van Toezicht). As described in previous applications, we believe our collective process fulfilled the function of supervision, allowing a broader discussion and self-critique both internally and within our network of peers. However, Varia has developed in scale and ambition and the process for forming an advisory board is underway. Alongside forming of an advisory board, members are undertaking a full review of the Varia by-laws to ensure they reflect the reality of how Varia operates today.

The finance workgroup has reported a need to deepen their skills in financial accounting with external training and support. This trend can also be seen in the tasks and responsibilities of the

infrastructure and communications workgroup as workloads increase. To adapt this need to our governance model, we have invited a professional bookkeeper to support the finance workgroup on a fixed basis. We see this as a further step in the professionalisation of the workgroups.

Finally, commissions by members are carried out on a voluntary basis. Until now, accepting commissions has involved some form of decision-making, depending on the type of employment. Since 2023, Varia has begun to develop an ethics protocol to formalise how we collectively decide what kind of work is suitable.