Report from the EU H2020 Research and Innovation Project Artsformation:
Mobilising the Arts for an Inclusive Digital Transformation

Arts-Based Productions

Maitreyi Maheshwari, Lesley Taker, Lucia Arias, Mariana Peréz Bobadilla, Zoénie Liwen Deng, Nora O Murchú, and Lucas Matray

arts formation

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Report on the Arts-Based Production

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D6.3: Arts-based Production

WP6: Arts Based Methods and Productions
WP Leader: Waag Futurelab

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Executive Summary

The Arts-Based Productions at the heart of deliverable 6.3 demonstrate in a variety of ways the key outcomes from the Culturalisation Workshops that took place from July - October 2021. The artworks that have been supported and produced have put into practice some of the key themes that emerged in our interrogation of narratives around digital transformation, with a focus on questions of Control, Refusal, Trust and Care. This deliverable details the selection criteria, the context, the material and conceptual description of the work, the relation to the publics, as well as the learnings and conclusions and next steps with the art-basted productions.

Introduction

In general terms, in this deliverable, FACT mainly addresses issues such as the lack of inclusivity of LGBTQA+ young people of colour in the construction of their own histories and in their self-representation, and to understand how technology could be used to refuse conventional forms of representation and classification, forge new relationships of trust built through practices of care. transmediale questions the voids created by the development of technology and industrialisation, and the disappearance of traditional art-craft techniques in the imaginary and everyday lives of communities, and refuses this status-quo by playing with technological glitches. Waag's critical perspective on digital technologies is centred around awareness of control by algorithms that are constantly improved by the surveillance of our online behaviours, and by the gestures that constitute what we consider as trustworthy information. This is investigated by two research projects by artists that Waag has worked with in culturalisation workshops. Besides that, through open-call, one project is selected to explore the possibility to refuse corporate servers and generate communities of trust that can self-host their information and collaborative works.

This deliverable starts with a brief note of the selection criteria for the commissioned artists by each partner (in section 3, below), followed by the specific contexts in which the works were produced within the institutions' larger programmes and the specific socio-political contexts they responded to, and where and how they were presented (section 4). The fifth section presents the art-based productions conceptually, procedurally, and materially in detail, explaining for example the engagements with participants and broader publics. The sixth section delves into the learnings and conclusions from the processes and interactions, and how the projects and learnings will be taken into consideration for the next steps of the project. Finally, the appendix (section 8) includes a biographical note of the artists involved in the development of task 6.3.

Selection Criteria

FACT

For FACT, to further the effort of Culturalisation Workshops, they worked with UK-based artist Ebun Sodipo, who was one of the contributors to FACT's Culturalisation Workshops: *Framework for Trust* in September 2021. Sodipo was selected because of their commitment in making work for those who will come after: the Black trans people of the future, whose bodies and desires are often excluded in digital (semi)public space, and whose stories and histories are often rendered voiceless. The artist is from this community of Black trans people and they feel the urgency to build an archive collectively with their community.

transmediale

For its arts-based production, transmediale considered several artists working in the fields of installation arts. Ibiye Camp was selected because her work and research lines fit perfectly with the themes of the 2022 festival: her work forms an investigation into postcolonial subjects, technology, and the built environment, questioning the biases and conflicts of technology. In

her past work in Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Ethiopia, she investigated the dynamics of technological glitches of data, to emphasise the conflicts of digital infrastructure in the landscapes and question the disconnect of technology to the reality of nature. Her selection for this project is also part of a larger cooperation between transmediale and Xcessive Aesthetics, an all-female interdisciplinary architecture collective exploring data and alternate realities through spatial installations.

Waag

Waag has worked with artist Caroline Sinders in the Transformer Summit, which was part of the Culturalisation Workshops. Sinders has participated in the panel at the Transformer Summit in Culturalisation Workshops in Amsterdam and presented her work about human rights in the digital realm, and gave a feminist data set workshop that attracted a group of diverse participants. From this collaboration, we trusted her expertise in choosing a critical approach to address the social dynamics and the influence of algorithms in the digital realm, and their impact on the life of young people who are exposed to many hours of online content everyday. Tomo Kihara gave a speculative AR workshop during the Transformer Summit. His previous projects such as *TheirTube*(2020) that shows different persona's Youtube channels demonstrated his ability in critically analysing algorithms of popular online platforms while making playful engagements with the public. Therefore, we invited him to develop a project on the algorithms of Tiktok, which has become one of the most popular social media platforms among young people across the world. Finally, a public open call was announced in May 2022, and through a collectively juried selection process, in July 2022, Waag chose the work Squatting the Cloud of Lukas Engelhardt as new work commission. The criteria included relevance to the four themes central to our work package project, feasibility, artistic quality, and social impact. Engelhardt's proposal included the writing of a publicly available manual of how to self-host, which made us determine that Engelhardt's proposal was the most appropriate choice among all applicants'.

Context

FACT

For its arts-based commission, FACT has produced a new participatory commission called *Following the Gourd*, with UK-based artist Ebun Sodipo and a group of LGBTQI+ young people in Liverpool and nationally. Ebun Sodipo was one of the contributors to FACT's *Framework for Trust* in September 2021, part of the Culturalisation Workshops.

This commission was produced by FACT's Learning team whose participatory practice produces outcomes and artworks which are then showcased as major new works within FACT exhibitions and other contexts: asserting that these practices have a space at the centre of the cultural experience in a gallery. Working with the artist at the centre and in collaboration with participants, the team considers not only the artwork but also the legacy of the projects, and how this might be served by the creation of online resources and related programmes of activities. Within this process the participants are the expert and work within a framework proposed by the artist, creating a space for the creation and sharing of knowledge.
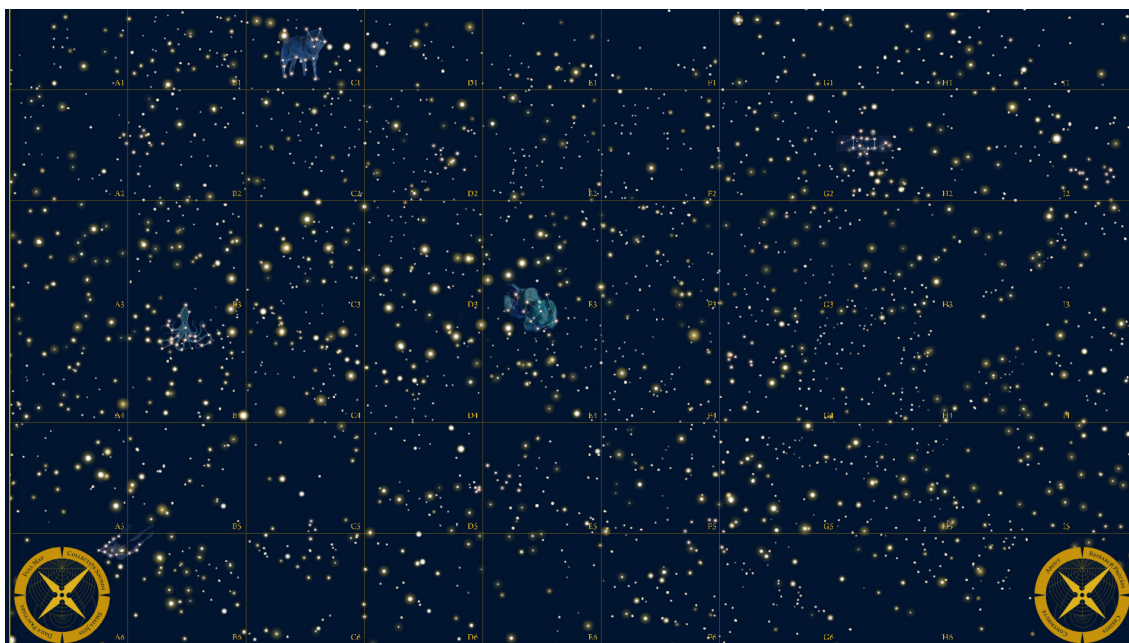
Figure 1: Ebun Sodipo and The Cartographer's Committee, still from Following the Gourd (2022). Courtesy of the artist

Following the Gourd is based around an African-American spiritual song of the same name that allowed the enslaved to find the North star and follow it to freedom. The song references the code name, "the drinking gourd", for the guiding constellation Ursa Major (the Big Dipper). Within the lyrics of the song, references to a series of steps and landmarks are hidden, guiding those who hear or sign it to a safe place where they could be free.

Ebun's reason for wanting to reference this spiritual whilst working with a group of young people, and remember why it was used, is "A lot of people of colour don't have access to their own history, and when they do, it's dark and full of pain." She wants " to bring a history that doesn't hurt, a history that heals." This work considers what experiences are recognised, validated and shared. It focuses primarily on the way young people use and experience online spaces, specifically how they create and share knowledge using social media.

Using this approach and inspired by the song *Following the Gourd*, the young people and Ebun have produced an online interactive constellation chart, which archives and shares stories. Participants have constructed the journey and narrative of the work using their own experiences of contemporary cultural references, especially those shared online and through social media. In doing so, they have developed an interactive constellation of artefacts that trace and capture their experiences, transforming them into an accessible archive for others to use and reference. The archive, which takes the form of a web app, was designed in collaboration with a small number of participants.

The final work can be experienced both online as this web app (available at fact.co.uk/gourd). It was also shown as an installation within FACT's galleries as part of the major group exhibition, *Let the Song Hold Us*, which thinks about the important role song and storytelling play in the construction of our identities. Accompanying the work, the core group worked with FACT to develop online resources to further unpack the project both conceptually and technologically.

transmediale

transmediale developed its arts-based production in the framework of the concluding programme of *for refusal*, a year-long festival exploring the political agency implicit in refusal. Moving away from refusal as a generative act, the exhibition and conference took place in February 2022 and confronted the impossibilities of noncompliance and limitations involved in opting out.

transmediale's arts-based production was a newly commissioned site-specific installation of multimedia artist Ibiye Camp's work *Remaining Threads.* The installation combined a 2-channel video, 3D-printed sculptures, and textile works, questioning together how traditional beliefs, cultural heritage, embodied knowledge, and spirituality are mediated and altered by technology and the ruse of progress. The work was presented as part of the international exhibition *abandon all hope ye who enter here* at Akademie der Künste in Berlin from January 26 to February 16, 2022 2022.

Figure 2: Remaining Threads, Ibiye Camp © Luca Girardini, CC NC-SA 4.0

transmediale 2021–22 for refusal's concluding programme explored the pragmatic impossibilities of refusal; its limitations, beliefs, frictions and compromises. From failed utopian fantasies to post-carbon relations, the exhibition and symposium reflect and build upon the year-long engagement with the festival theme. Referencing Dante's Inferno, the exhibition *abandon all hope ye who enter here* investigated the technological hellscapes created by computational logics and extractive processes. Ibiye Camp was initially invited to the transmediale symposium to present her work and, as a member of the interdisciplinary art collective Xcessive Aesthetics, to facilitate another interactive installation. However, due to the combined pandemic and Brexit-related travel restrictions, her attendance on site had to be cancelled.

Waag

For its art-based production, Waag has commissioned Caroline Sinders and Tomo Kihara to create new research-based artworks that investigate the kaleidoscope and control of algorithms of the very influential social media Tiktok and their social and political influences. Waag has conducted an open-call for artworks that address the above-mentioned themes and awarded Lukas Engelhardt for his *Squatting the Cloud* project that looks into the alternative to commercial cloud space and the political potential of self-hosting.

Figure 3: Lukas Engelhardt, Squatting the Cloud. Installation view at the Central Library of Amsterdam (OBA) 2023.

Caroline Sinders' workshops on data, algorithms, privacy, and alternative social network took place on 8th and 9th Nov 2022 in a high school in the Netherlands, while Tomo Kihara's workshop *Taming Tiktok* on 10th Dec as part of the exhibition opening programme.

The artworks from these three artists are presented in the Artsformation exhibition Digital Shadows at OBA Public Library of Amsterdam from December 2022 to February 2023.

About the Art-Based Productions

FACT

Following the Gourd (FtG) is a participatory art commission led by artist Ebun Sodipo in collaboration with *The Cartographer's Committee,* a group of young trans black people.

It is an online archive of experiences that takes the shape of a star map. In the map, the stories of these participants are presented as constellations, each one is a collection of digital content (songs, videos, written material…) that represents themselves and their community. This work recuperates the idea of "the proof of existence", and evidence of this collective experience of the world.

Ebun Sodipo was invited to work with the Learning team at FACT in 2021, as part of our strand dedicated to how young people understand and use technology. It follows up from *Augmented Empathy*, Keiken Collective's exploration of social media and representation and *Why can't we do this IRL?*, a project by Megan Broadmeadow about video games.

FACT's Learning programme invites artists to create artworks with different groups of participants. Our work is very influenced by Socially Engaged practices, though most of the artists we collaborate with do not define themselves as such, or have very little experience working in participatory projects.

In the programme, participants (in this case, the trans people of colour) are the "experts' in their lived experiences of the world. The Artist is invited to create a poetic way of presenting those experiences to other audiences. This artistic collaboration produces new knowledge, it repositions this collective experience to the centre of an artistic narrative that will contribute to open dialogues and shift perspectives.

The brief

FtG responds to the bigger themes and conversations all our partners are presenting in Artsformation, more specifically reflecting on how technology can be used to represent individual and collective identities, especially, those that have been traditionally under-served. It relates to earlier projects that used technology as an activist tool to show proof of existence of marginalized communities, but in this case, Ebun and the Cartographers Committee, use both technology and pop culture to talk about belonging and identity crafting. As such it sought to understand how technology could be used to **refuse** conventional forms of representation and classification, forge new relationships of **trust** built through practices of **care**.

The project explores different aspects of social media and online platforms. It presents this living artwork as an opportunity to archive, share and shift identity representation.

Figure 4: Ebun Sodipo, Following the Gourd, 2022, Installation view at FACT. Image by Rob Battersby

The artwork

Following the Gourd (2022) by Ebun Sodipo in collaboration with The Cartographer's Committee exists both as an online platform and installation. It was presented at FACT, as part of the exhibition *Let the Song Hold Us* (23 March - 19th June 2022) and it will tour to Visual Carlow, Ireland. As part of our participatory and learning approaches, showing the artwork as part of the artistic programme is key. As we mentioned before, that is the moment when the participants' voices get their own space in bigger narratives, in the gallery space, where participatory projects are usually presented in the documentation areas.

FtG takes its title from an African-American spiritual song of the same name, and the inspiration is in the original coded message within the song's lyrics. It allowed enslaved people to follow a safe path towards freedom: *"Well, where the great big river meets the little river, follow the drinkin' gourd"*. Referring to star maps and reading the night sky, Sodipo's work navigates the experiences of *The Cartographer's Committee*: the rituals they perform, the idols they follow, the things they possess, and the way these are shared with each other. A combination of traditional and contemporary sets of references.

The work with participants

We designed and tested different models of engagement for this project. Two factors determined the engagement:

- The project was online, so our interaction could expand nationally, but our knowledge of the participants and youth organisations was much more limited than in our usual

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projects. This increased the amount of time spent researching, approaching and recruiting participants.

- The artist is producing a project for their community, as a Black Trans person. None of the members of the team is part of that community. This limited the ways in which we could recruit participants.

The model of engagement was layered:

- Exploring and getting to know people and communities:

    a. Mapping youth organisations working with young trans people nationally.

    b. Establishing relationships with them, listening and learning how they work with young people, what are their needs and how FACT can fit within their arts provision offer. Earning their trust.

    c. Generating content, open calls, briefs and hosting further meetings to support their own communication channels with their participants.

    d. Ebun delivered some workshops at one of the organisations to support the recruitment. She also ended up collaborating with one of the organisations we connected.

- The Cartographers Committee:

    a. Coordinating the ongoing recruitment processes in the youth organisations. We gathered a group of 4 participants who were interested in the opportunity.

    b. Once we had the group Ebun hosted regular sessions with them. The sessions (8 in total) were mostly conversation based - Ebun would present a topic and they would discuss, bring their own references and their own ideas on how to present them online. The main focus was to generate the constellations in the artwork.

    c. During the last few sessions some activities were introduced, aimed at generating content for the constellations in the archive.

    d. Two of the participants joined us for the opening of the show, met Ebun and saw the installation in person.

- Models of online engagement and work with groups at FACT (including D&D):

    a. A Discord server is available containing information about the research Ebun conducted. This platform was thought to be a space for a wider range of trans people of colour to share knowledge and expand the constellations in the night sky. This has been a pilot use of Discord and will be evaluated at the end of the exhibition.

    b. Ebun and the team discussed how to open the archive to wider audiences (general LGBTQI+ and local young people communities and

their families). This resulted in a series of workshops with our regular D&D group - they engaged in conversations around the themes of the artwork and played board games and video games together. Ebun also hosted one of our Saturday family programme sessions, where families were invited to create their own constellations and chat to Ebun.

c. The D&D group (a group of 8 local young people) has been working on developing a video game performance based on the game 'Empty Epsilon' where they navigate space as members of a spaceship crew. They have been working on it every Saturday since the start of the exhibition, and two of them attended week-long work placements within the Learning Team to develop the performance.

'Working with Ebun and the Cartographer's Committee was genuinely so amazing! At first, I was a bit nervous but everyone was so welcoming and kind they all made me feel safe. We would sit and talk about our favourite foods and animals and turn them into constellations. Being able to work with other trans POC and being able to talk about the stars and make constellations was such an incredible experience.'

-a member of the Cartographer's Committee.

Figure 5: Ebun Sodipo, Following the Gourd, 2022, Installation view at FACT. Image by Drew Forsyth

transmediale

Remaining Threads is a multimedia installation by artist and architect Ibiye Camp. It includes a 2-channel video, 3D-printed sculptures, as well as industrially produced Injiri textiles transformed by the artist.

The artwork

The beating of Kalabari drums summon goddesses, gods, and spiritual beings amid the chatter of the streets of Buguma, Nigeria, and the swaying of Injiri cloths. *Remaining Threads* questions how traditional beliefs, cultural heritage, embodied knowledge, and spirituality are mediated and altered by technology and the ruse of progress.

In recent years, Injiri textiles worn in Kalabari ceremonies have been produced by machines in China, replacing the handmade processes traditionally carried out by craftswomen. Reflecting on these shifts and their implications for women's creative practice, social roles, technologies, and aesthetics, Ibiye Camp asks what is at stake in processes of automation and what traces of social and spiritual values remain?

Figure 6: Remaining Threads, Ibiye Camp © Luca Girardini, CC NC-SA 4.0

The 2-channel video combines footage of Buguma, Nigeria and digitally produced imagery of the traditional and modern textile manufacturing. The 3D-printed sculptures present distorted views of the textile production, embodying the ghosts of traditional manufacturing techniques. The industrial Injiri textiles, partly unwoven, question the voids created by the industrialisation process and the disappearance of traditional weaving techniques in the imaginary and everyday lives of the communities.

Mediation process

In light of the pandemic-related shutdowns during its year-long programme, transmediale developed a digital visit programme to discover its exhibition in the winter of 2020-21: the "Proxy Visits". This concept was available again for this exhibition to provide access to Ibiye Camp's installation for visitors who could not or did not want to be there in person. Proxy Visits enabled a personalised, digital visit to the exhibition abandon all hope ye who enter here. Inspired by the concept of "proxy protests", visitors were connected via video conference with a host on site at the exhibition venue and thus experienced the installation together and in interaction.

In addition, regular tours in German and English were offered, as well as a more spontaneous mediation format through the presence in the exhibition hall of art mediators who could freely discuss the installation with the visitors. In addition, a comprehensive documentation of the artwork was produced, including a photo gallery and a recorded video tour in German and English.

Over 4500 persons discovered Ibiye Camp's installation in Berlin: 4356 visitors on-site and about 200 additional online visitors through a total of 144 Proxy-Visits.

Waag

Waag's commissions tried to address a younger audience who is currently exposed to long hours of online content, often without the tools to contextualise and analyse the power relations and intentions behind these contents, and the platforms that provide these contents. Besides, we also want to investigate alternative technological infrastructure that is not dependent on Big Tech. In response to these concerns, we have commissioned artist Caroline Sinders to look into the ways "truthy" information is gestured and presented in videos widely shared online. Apart from that, Sinders also developed a series of workshops on digital literacy. We also commissioned Tomo Kihara to develop *TheirTok*, to reveal how social media analyses us and our behaviours with algorithms that carefully predict which contents are more likely to hook users. The artwork is accompanied by a workshop that invites participants to understand the algorithms of Tiktok by training some personas. Finally, through an open call, we have chosen to support the project of Lukas Engelhardt, *Squatting the Cloud*. Engelhardt developed a manual to introduce users to the possibility of self-hosting, of owning our servers. This manual provides an initial literacy on what servers are and the issues with depending on corporate servers, as well as alternatives in detailed technical instructions on how to set up a local server.

A. Caroline Sinders' commissioned artwork and workshops

A1 Caroline Sinders' video installation Gestures of Truthiness (2022) is commissioned by Waag as part of the Arts-based Production.
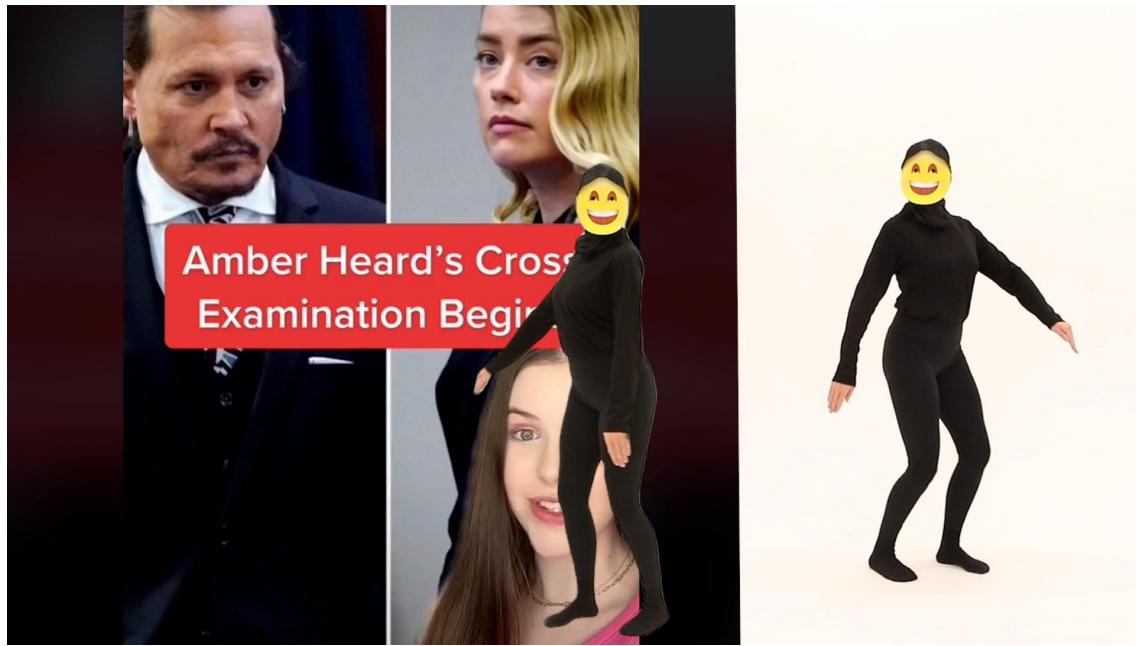
Figure 7: Caroline Sinders, Gestures of Truthiness (2022) Screenshots.

Figure 8: Caroline Sinders, Gestures of Truthiness (2022) Installation view at OBA Amsterdam, 2023.

Caroline Sinders is interested in the gestures, aesthetics and materiality of misinformation and disinformation spread through explainer videos that appear as "journalism" but are usually conspiracy theories claiming to unpack "what really happened'.

On TikTok, the "explainer video" abounds. In it, people are spreading conspiracy theories, using documents and videos as a way to 'show proof' and 'evidence', thus warping truth and convincing their audiences. On Instagram, the 'Instagram aesthetic' of clean graphics, text and good images are created to make text based 'informational squares' of carousels. Similarly on TikTok, the aesthetics of 'facts' are used to spread misinformation and disinformation.

Privatised technology platforms exist in the same realm as traditional media and journalism, in terms of breaking news. YouTube and Facebook are seen as 'credible' sources of research by the general public, despite experts' opinions. In the age of deep fakes, we see the fragility of truth more easily, particularly when it comes to 'credibility.' In her project 'Gestures of Truthiness', Caroline Sinders explores the concept of truthiness through the blurriness of what constitutes credibility and truth, and the role of media and technology in this.

A.2 workshops on Tiktok, privacy, algorithms, data visualisation, and building alternative social network

The workshops took place at Erfgooiers College, Huizen, a high school in the Netherlands on 8th and 9th November 2022. They happened in the context of Week van Mediawijsheid/Week of Media Literacy in 2022 in the Netherlands. It was in collaboration with the Public Library of Amsterdam (OBA). The workshops tried to engage students in thinking of privacy in the digital world, what algorithms are, and understanding their online behaviours and algorithmic content recommendations on Tiktok through data visualisation. The last workshop was co-facilitated by a creative programmer from Waag, Lodewijk Loos, which was composed of exercises of using Mastodon, and setting their own community's rules of conduct.

The students discussed what algorithms are and analysed their own Tiktok feeds in terms of themes, popularity, original, date of creation etc. Some students were rather intrigued by the fact that Mastodon consists of small decentralised communities and one's post can get direct response from people in the community that they might not know, unlike big platforms such as Tiktok or Instagram.

B. Tomo Kihara's commissioned art work and workshop

B.1 Video installation TheirTok
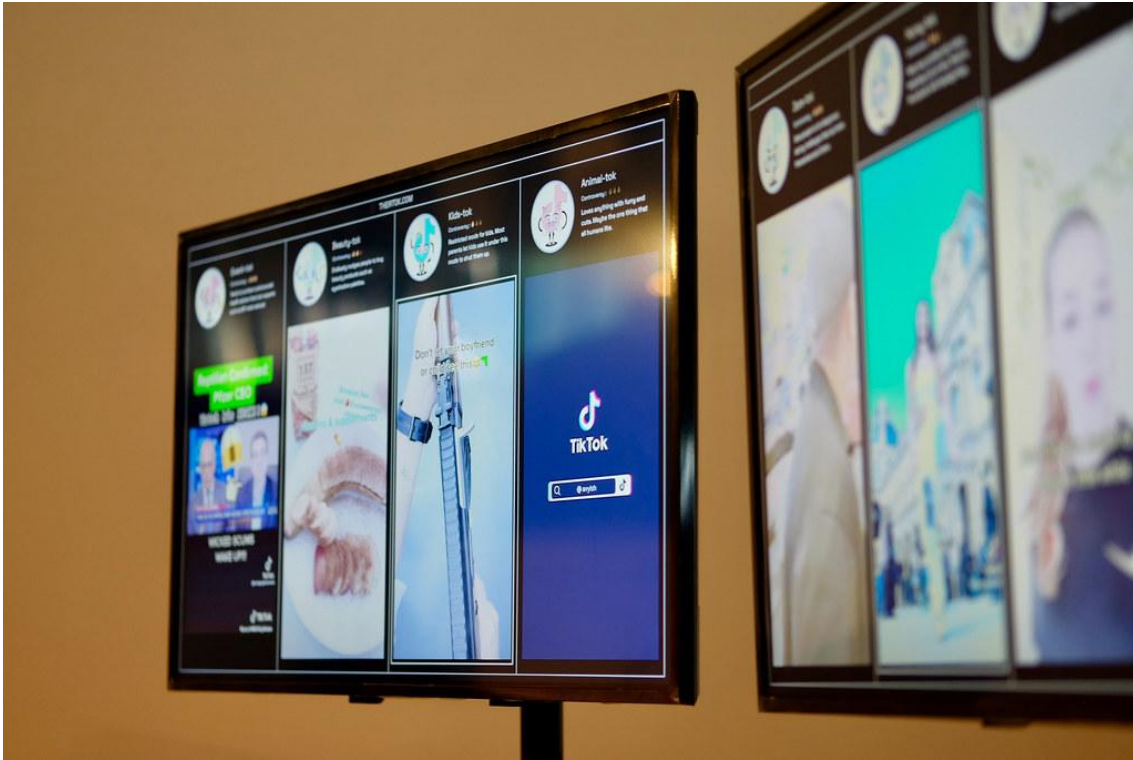
Figure 9: Tomo Kihara, TheirTok, 2023. Installation view at OBA Amsterdam, 2023.

Figure 10: Tomo Kihara, TheirTok, 2023. Installation view at OBA Amsterdam, 2023.

More than ninety percent of what we see on TikTok is recommended by an algorithm. It carefully tracks what captures our attention, to recommend new videos that we might like. Even if these personalised recommendations can be entertaining, they also pull us into a filter bubble. Unconsciously, they influence what we view and like. Nobody knows exactly how these algorithms work. But what we do know is that we're the ones whose attention and data is being sold to advertisement companies. You could even say we're being 'tamed' by algorithms. But what if we could change the game and tame the algorithm ourselves? Would algorithmic transparency towards TikTok users be possible? And what would the filter bubbles of other people look like? In the *TheirTo*k installation, Kihara researches these questions and offers a web platform showing what the feeds of other people might look like.

B.2 Workshop Taming Tiktok

Almost all of what we see on TikTok is recommended by an algorithm. What we like and do is subconsciously shaped by what we see on these recommendations and one could even argue we are being "tamed" by these algorithms. But what if we can tame them back?

In this hands-on workshop, participants become the trainers who will tame the recommendation algorithm behind a newly created TikTok account. In the course of the taming process, participants take on the role of a fictional persona, such as a depressed person and engage with TikTok in a way so that the algorithm will recommend more videos that this persona would like.

Through the training process, the participants will observe how the recommendation algorithm is not transparent and how it can quickly become biased based on the data that the participants provide.

The first try-out workshop *Taming Tiktok* took place during Museum Night in Amsterdam on 4th November. The event at Waag was attended by more than 3000 people. Ironically, Museum Night in Amsterdam 2022 was confounded by Tiktok. Waag's director Marleen Stikker and research director Sander van der Waal actually wrote an opinion piece on the national newspaper NRC, which was triggered by this anti-tiktok art project in a Tiktok sponsored event, and how we should mitigate Big Tech's controlling and damaging influences in Europe including what we want to prohibit, and the possibility of building social media that is based on public values. https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2022/11/04/waar-blijft-de-europese-tiktok-a4147293

Figure 11: Tomo Kihara, TheirTok, 2023. Interactive installation at the Museum Night, November 2022 at Waag Future Lab, Amsterdam.

The workshop took place at the Public Library of Amsterdam (OBA) on 10th December, as part of the opening programme of Waag's dynamic exhibition Digital Shadows, and participants included Andrea Bandelli from the Artsformation Advisory Board, and an editor from Consumers Association in the Netherlands, which has launched a lawsuit against TikTok, a programmer, and a data scientist who works on digital health.

One participant wanted to train a wellness tok, but they could not find enough videos there, so they started to search for bursting pimples, and the algorithms then began to recommend Asian women overeating/Mukbang, which were disturbing in another way. Another participant intended to train an art tok, and what they got were creative DIY art that one could make. One participant wanted to train a protest tok, but the algorithms only gave one protest video out of a few hundreds, even though they have followed a few accounts and liked protest videos.

C. Lukas Engelhardt

<u>*Squatting the Cloud: An installation with critical perspectives on servers cultures from the arts.*</u>
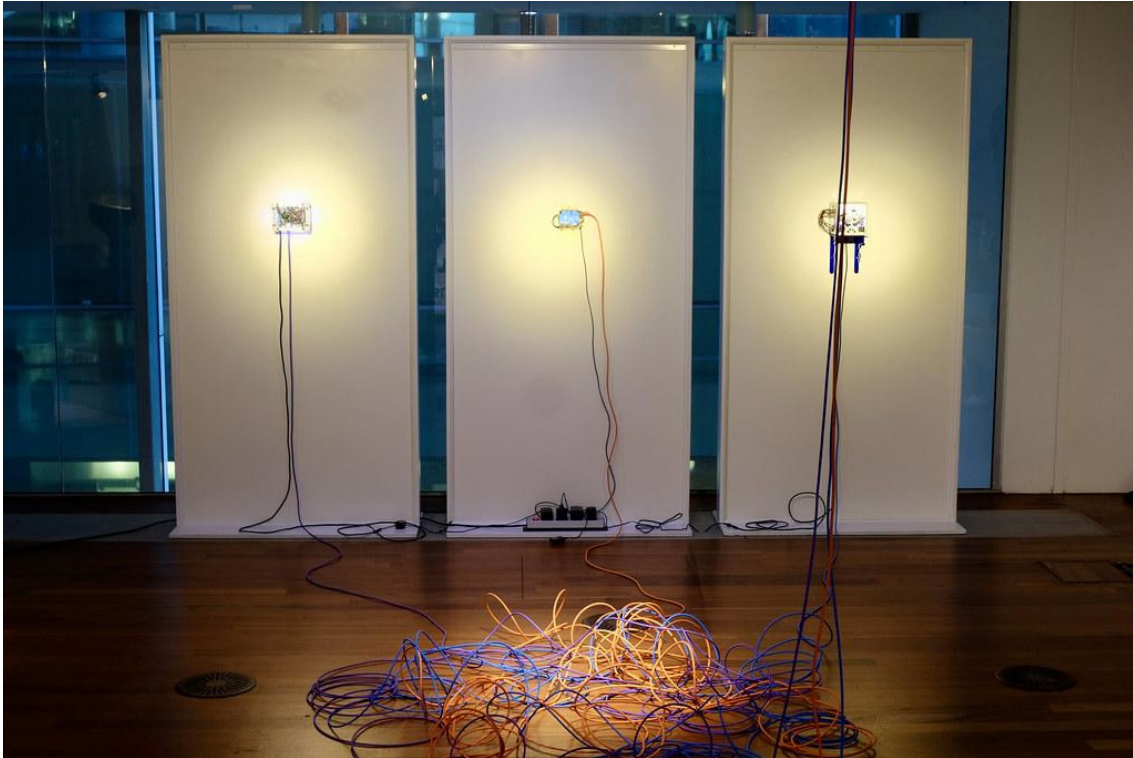
Figure 12: *Squatting the Cloud, by Lukas Engelhardt as presented in the exhibition Digital Shadows at the Central Public Library of Amsterdam, 2022.*

Figure 13: *One of the servers of Squatting the Cloud, by Lukas Engelhardt as presented in the exhibition Digital Shadows at the Central Public Library of Amsterdam, 2022.*

The artwork

The Waag Future Lab's Artsformation commission to Lukas Englehardt supported the development of the Squatting the cloud project. This work's vision is to make self-hosting accessible to the general public and beginners while still being a useful resource to more advanced readers. The commission included the collective development of a manual for setting up local servers, from picking hardware to setting up web and file servers, while also giving context to the political dimensions of such a practice (available at http://self-hosting.guide).

The self-hosting Manual is inspired by squatting manuals, texts that have codified and politicised the process of squatting since the 1970s and have been openly available to all interested. In the context of this project, setting up your server is a political act and, in this way, comparable to squatting in a house to live and work in.

This publication aims to make self-hosting, a topic that comes with several technical hurdles, accessible to more general public and beginners while still being a useful resource to more advanced readers. No prerequisites are required from the reader.

[This manual is self-hosted online](#) and printed and displayed at the exhibition. And consists of five key parts, an introduction with a glossary, what self-hosting is, the software, system, hardware preparation, and the technical practica guide itself. The first parts present the reader with key information on what servers are and the problem with commercial servers.

Below are key fragments from the Self-Hosting manual shared with the artist's permission and on Creative Common's license. To first provide the perspective prested by the artists regarding the needs and benefits of self-hosting, and second, for those with a methodological interest in the parts a manual can include and how to approach and communicate a topic of digital transformation from the arts.

Many cultural groups, foundations, and collectives want to leave the commercial cloud, but the hurdle is high. Self-hosting, like squatting, is a way to **refuse** the platforms and policies that keep producing inequality and injustice. Building and self-hosting a server is often presented as tinkering without politicising it as a practice. And there is the issue of scale: many solutions exist for individuals or companies with IT departments. What about groups that fall somewhere in between? Together with Ada Reinthal and Paul Bille, Lukas Engelhardt is developing an online resource around self-hosting, specifically targeting cultural groups, foundations and collectives. The resource will consist of step-by-step manuals for setting up local servers, from picking hardware to setting up web and file servers, while also giving context to the political dimensions of such a practice. In the Digital Shadows exhibition, Engelhardt's prototype servers are displayed as sculptures. Besides the physical copies of the manual, the installation at the exhibition included stickers with the QR code, that can be scanned to access the manuals online.

Learning and conclusions

FACT

The project and collaboration has allowed us to explore models of digital engagement with collectives and individuals that have never worked with FACT before. Most importantly, the project now has a life of its own, with the artist hopefully continuing to work with more participants, expanding the representation of their community online.

FACT's Learning team's role in this project has been to facilitate a learning experience, focusing on supporting the artist to produce a participatory tool. Since Ebun had never worked with participants before, the Learning team worked towards the artist developing a skill set that would allow her to continue working with participants in the future. A new tool to rethink and retell a different side of this community's history.

The exhibition presentation of the work, within the group show *Let the Song Hold Us*, offered a different form of collaboration for the artist and the participants to be able to see their work as part of a larger narrative context. The exhibition explored generational grief and loss and the ways in which cultural productions - music, dance, film - offer forms of continuity and comfort as people migrate, grow, and re-establish their idenities in new contexts. The exhibition received wide-spread coverage in national and international press, acknowledging the importance of these stories and further reinforcing the need to be able to create and share work that represents underserved communities.

The project built on processes and working with young people developed over a number of previous projects. Key in this instance was a consideration of how we value and ascribe relevance to different sources of knowledge. In this arts-based commission, the artist working with the participants, explore who makes the decision of what is relevant. The project focused on a collective experience of empathy in a community, here a Black trans community, and how creating an online archive with their voices can influence how they are seen, and see themselves, in real life.

It has allowed us to develop a methodology for future Learning projects where artists and participants will design learning experiences and create spaces for storytelling and representation around different themes. With this programme we would like to focus on the creation of communities and sharing of knowledge. We will commission a digital art project to explore remix culture, and re-appropriation of audiovisual content to create new knowledge. The outcomes of the project will shape the family and young people programme for that season.

Each artist will also design an online learning resource (Youtube tutorial) to share how to use one of the technologies used/ explored during the project. These online learning resources will be used to design and deliver our school and youth programme of activities across Liverpool.

transmediale

The collaboration with Ibiye Camp is part of a process initiated by transmediale in the wake of the pandemic to involve and support artists and other festival participants in a more sustainable way. This arts-based production is one of several projects initiated with Ibiye Camp. Although

the performance installation with her collective Xcessive Aesthetics, originally planned as part of the symposium 2022, had to be cancelled because of the pandemic, a further collaboration project is being developed for the year 2023. The collective will present an AI installation at transmediale studio in Berlin, in the framework of the city-wide exhibition Out of Scale. By spreading the events more widely over the year and strengthening networking, transmediale aims at becoming an even stronger platform for research, art and the exchange of ideas.

This project also confronted the new reality of Brexit, with Ibiye Camp being based in London. This situation was a real challenge, contributing to the impossibility for Ibiye to participate in the festival in person, and making the transportation of the physical components of her work very complex. This experience not only strengthened the transmediale team's belief in the European project, but gave them new keys to plan and implement cooperations with UK-based artists.

The arts-based production was an opportunity for transmediale to continue experimenting with various forms of mediation, such as remote proxy visits, free mediation, photo and video documentation, and traditional guided tours. All of these methods have allowed transmediale to initiate a dialogue between the audience, the artwork, the artist, and ultimately the communities Ibiye Camp advocates for through her installation.

Waag

The collaborations with artists in investigating algorithms and misinformation on social media allow us to engage with the public on this issue in playful but critical ways. The commissioned work through open call brings in the activist perspective regarding decentralised technology and anti-capitalist technological autonomy. Even though there were challenges to collaborate with artists in research-based artworks and workshops, there are some learnings that can feed into the next task. The challenge is manyfold, involving aligning goals, time frames, and working with a teenage audience.

1. From the collaboration with Caroline Sinders on the workshops on digital literacy, we learned that working with teenage participants requires specific pedagogy of engaging with this age group with interactive exercises, and training for translating the contents from a language and level of professional adult participants to the age group of 14-15. It is necessary to have a specialised team that has pedagogical expertise to develop content together with teenagers from the start.

2. For the workshops with Tomo Kihara, we learned the need to reach a particular audience that can appreciate the specificities of an artistic research workshop. We have also discovered that Tiktok algorithms try to suppress protest contents such as videos of protests in Iran and China, and also climate change protest or anti- fossil fuel actions, which shows that the algorithms are far from being neutral, but programmed in such a way that suppress the contents of the struggles for social-political-environmental justice.

3. From the works by Tomo Kihara and Caroline Sinders, we have learned about the balance between trusting the artist and having time for providing feedback, the balance of curatorial intervention by giving suggestions to bring the work closer to the goals of the project but respecting the artist's final decisions. We also learned that working with

artists in addressing the pressing issues of the digital transformation such as biased algorithms of social media, misinformation and disinformation, we could have synergised more with efforts from other public organisations and participated more in the public debates, and amplified via press.

4. From the work by Lukas Engelhardt, we confirmed notions of flexibility and compromise as the work transformed during its development and was ready shortly before being shown. We worked with the artist to ensure that his manual was accessible to audiences with different levels of digital literacy.

In conclusion, as a cultural institution that works with artists as researchers to collaboratively produce projects and works that question the underlying mechanisms and cultural assumptions of technologies, these approaches offer ways to address and challenge social problematics such as digital transformation, and propose different ways of thinking, imaging, relating, and doing in the highly digitally mediated life. Some of these ideas will be elaborated on and made public in the Toolkit.

Next steps (Dynamic Exhibitions and Knowledge Toolkit)

FACT

FACT's dynamic exhibition will build on the core ideas explored through its arts-based commission, namely an interrogation of established structures and sources of knowledge that shape both our physical, and consequently digital, understandings of our selves and the world around us.

The exhibition will be curated by independent curator, writer and founder of Art-Asia-Activism, Annie Jael Kwan. Entitled Future Ages Will Wonder, the exhibition will present an 'alternative museum' of artworks that use science and technology to question our past and offer new ways of understanding who we are and where we belong.

Featuring 9 UK and international artists, the artworks on display brought together traditional mediums such as textiles, sculpture, and photography with virtual reality, computer algorithms and synthetic DNA. Turning attention to alternative histories, the political and ethical issues found in archaeology, botany, genetics and the use of technology in our daily lives, visitors were invited to behold and 'wonder' at the advancement of science and technology. The lens of wonder invited multiple perspectives - not only to feel curiosity, astonishment, or even admiration; but also to doubt and question.

This exhibition features works by: *Larry Achiampong & David Blandy, Yarli Allison, Miku Aoki, Trisha Baga, Breakwater of Youngsook Choi and Taey Iohe, Ai Hasegawa, Boedi Widjaja*

transmediale

transmediale's dynamic exhibition, which featured the arts-based production from Ibiye Camp, was already introduced in this report. *abandon all hope ye who enter here* exhibited the work of nine artists and collectives exploring the toxicity of computationally constructed damage in our

everyday lives. The artworks examined how dysfunction and its instrumentalisation is central to the logics and operations of technology.

The exhibition was curated by transmediale's artistic director Nora O Murchú together with Lorena Juan, who is a Berlin-based researcher and curator, cofounder of the artists' platform COVEN BERLIN. *abandon all hope ye who enter here* presented works by: **Annex, Ibiye Camp, Cihad Caner, Tianzhuo Chen, Stine Deja, Constant Dullaart, Lo-Def Film Factory, Alaa Mansour, and The Underground Division.**

Waag

The next steps for Waag Future Lab's commission are the development of Digital Shadows, an exhibition at the Public Library of Amsterdam from December 2022 to February 2023. *Digital Shadows* provides insights into our entanglements with digital technologies, social media and algorithms, and materialities of the digital. It offers possibilities to understand, refuse and change our relationships in an increasingly digitised world. It features the Artsformation newly commissioned artworks in dialogue with other critical existing works, including Ibiye Camp's installation *Behind Shirley* (Ibiye Camp is the commissioned artist of transmediale), and Dani Ploeger's *The Cults*, and Feminist Internet's *F'xa*.

Toolbox

Simultaneously, WP6 teams are working together in the development of a **Knowledge Toolkit** reflecting upon the cases from WP6, cases from the Artsformation's practices across different work packages, as well as partners' previous projects. The toolkit will be edited and presented in an accessible structure and format, and it will provide methodologies, cases and indeed tools for artists and collectives, cultural institutions and policy makers interested in working productively and fairly together in thinking and addressing pressing matters of concern and issues of political relevance in the age of technological development.

Appendix

Biographies of contributors to the programmes:

Ebun Sodipo is an artist based in London making work for those who will come after: the Black trans people of the future. Her interdisciplinary practice narrates her construction of a Black trans-feminine self after slavery and colonialism. Through a process of fragmentation, collage, and fabulation, she devises softer, other-wise ways of imagining and speaking about the body, desire, archives, and the past. https://www.ebunasodipo.com/. *Following the Gourd* was produced with The Cartographer's Committee: Ana, Jolliff, Malia, Xavier Williams. With support from GYRO, Hidayah UK, African Rainbow Family, Stonewall UK, Gendered Intelligence, and the D&D group at FACT. Website Developed by Florian Brueckner.

Ibiye Camp is an artist and architect living between London and Freetown, Sierra Leone. Her work forms an investigation into postcolonial subjects, technology, and the built environment. She utilises architectural tools to create sound, video, accompanied by augmented reality and 3D objects. This is in order to highlight the biases and conflicts of technology. https://ibiyecamp.com/

Tomo Kihara (JP/NL) is a designer, developer and artist who loves to create things on the intersection of play, technology and society. He makes playful interventions such as interfaces and games for the brain that can be applied in our daily lives. The goal is to change the way people interact with the world. Earlier, Tomo created TheirTube, a web service supported by Mozilla Foundation. This installation allows you to dive into other people's YouTube recommendations and filter bubbles through the use of various personas.

Caroline Sinders (US/UK) is a machine-learning-design researcher and artist. For the past few years, she has been examining the intersections of technology's impact in society, interface design, artificial intelligence, abuse, and politics in digital conversational spaces. She is the founder of Convocation Research + Design, an agency focusing on the intersections of machine learning, user research, designing for public good, and solving difficult communication problems. As a designer and researcher, she has worked with Amnesty International, Intel, IBM Watson, the Wikimedia Foundation, and others.

Lukas Engelhardt (DE/NL) navigates the entangled fields of the digital and bureaucratic space as he and his collaborators carve out and build semi-autonomous zones. He is interested in the tactics, terms and conditions necessary to negotiate and maintain these spaces—both online and offline. He builds, breaks and fixes servers for himself and for others and is a member of the Amsterdam-based squatting collectives Hotel Mokum and Mokum Kraakt. In 2022 he finished his MFA at the Design Department at the Sandberg Institute in Amsterdam.