

Transdisciplinary Design Research:

Open City Monastery

Mediamatic Plan 2025–2026

Mission

Mediamatic is an organization focused on developing and presenting cross-disciplinary art, design and science practices. Sustainability and social urgency are our core concerns. Since 1983, we have been at the forefront of contemporary culture. We provide the space for artists and designers to research, develop and prototype their projects. We actively work together with the makers to make their research more public and grow their projects to reach larger and new audiences. This process has led to a national and international audience interested in research and development within arts and design. We engage this audience through workshops, tours, presentations, articles and long-term installations to create an accessible and engaging experience for a diverse audience.

Mediamatic's practice has always been strongly inspired by its venue and environment. We understand our locations as a test-site for knowledge useful on a global scale. While our current venue, Biotoop Dijkspark on the Oosterdok in Amsterdam, is centrally accessible, it also forms a sequestered calm environment. Forming both a refuge and a hub, our program responds to urgent social and ecological topics. Our program for 2025-2026 aims to expand on this through the concept of the Open City Monastery.

Methodology: Working in the Biotoop Dijkspark

Mediamatic focuses on innovation by fostering collaborations between established and emerging artists, designers, and scientists. We seek out progressive thinkers who challenge norms and push the boundaries of their disciplines. Mediamatic offers space for their design questions, precisely because there is often no room for them in the field (yet). This requires us to be alert to new developments at the fringes and at the cradle of the arts and design sector. The following values are central to our program: originality, ecology and sustainability, social urgency and inclusive knowledge-sharing. We evaluate if makers and projects align with our values and objectives by asking the following questions: Does it offer a new perspective? Does it break an expectation, rule or law? How relevant will it be to culture and society? Is it done with care, fairly and sustainably? We answer these questions by discussing them in depth and inviting relevant partners and makers to serve as a sounding board.

We provide production guidance, communication assistance, technical support, and a platform for public presentation. Mediamatic prioritizes long-term collaborations and provides specialized workspaces. Through our core-activities, makers can acquire skills and knowledge alongside our audience. In our living labs experts from the field support the makers to develop their innovative take on these crafts. Our program puts a big focus on how art and design respond to social issues, and we're always looking for makers that have ideas about pressing problems. Mediamatic functions as a meeting place between its large existing network, audiences, and new practitioners to together push boundaries and create lasting cultural impact.

We believe it is important to include nature in our decisions and this year we are taking the step to formally become a Zoöp and join the Het Nieuwe Instituut (Rotterdam) network. This means, among other things, that we are linked to a 'speaker for the living', who, as a member of the program council, has a voice in the decision-making process.

Program: Open City Monastery

The model of the monastery follows a set of tools and practices such as rituals, introspection and meditation, food and celebrations alongside hard work. This structure is not dissimilar in the way that Mediamatic has worked over the last years. We recognise ourselves in the model of a monastery: as a safe haven for knowledge development and transfer, interests in practices that require an investment of time and close attention, shared responsibilities all based on a strong DIY mentality. We have invested and innovated on practices in our labs that found their origin in the monastery such as brewing, fermentation and community-gardening. This way, we see a connection with the form of the monastery in the past where people withdrew to dedicate their lives to topics like research, brewing, nursing/healthcare and gardening. The monastery forms a microcosm of an interdependent community, connecting with the outside world in a way that inspires belonging and change.

The regularity of daily life in the monastery provided a rhythmic structure that safely accommodated those who find it difficult to connect with society. We often see that people who struggle with the relentless pursuit of efficiency and convenience seek refuge in the creative industry. Through this struggle, they dedicate their energy to topics that are dear to them and actively seek solutions for the problems in society through design or activism. But also the sector itself suffers from the need to perform and high demands of self-sufficiency. In our close collaboration with neurodivergent makers over the past year, the need to create a more attentive space in the cultural sector became painfully clear. We seek to facilitate these makers and audiences that have a need for experiments and new ideas about creating such spaces by focusing on all the senses. Tapping into our experience in foregrounding often overlooked senses like smell, taste, touch, and proprioception, we investigate the foundations of physical and mental well-being.

In 2014, Mediamatic established its location at the Oosterdok in Amsterdam. This site has since become an integral part of our mission, inspiring our work for years. By removing fences and cultivating greenhouses, we transformed the surrounding area into a vibrant urban park in central Amsterdam and a fertile ground for urban innovation. We believe canals offer a particularly compelling model, as these aquatic ecosystems, teeming with diverse life, present a rich source of inspiration for designers, makers, and scientists. Like monasteries, we expand this research into water management to also include a broader understanding of organizational balance and belonging. This delicate balance between individual reflection and attentive exchange is central to our approach.

Like a monastery, Mediamatic fosters a close-knit community and nurtures its surroundings, emphasizing reciprocity with society. Together with makers and designers we want to further develop this environment and create new rituals. We will focus on the harmony between the individual; in our research supporting Neurodivergence, and the ecosystems; informed by our relationship with the water around our building. Our program is divided in phases focusing on 'collective introspection', rebirth, cycles of research and gatherings, and a collective celebration. We've divided this program in core-activities, facilities that we will provide throughout the year; and projects which are temporary. This model allows for a period of realignment with our work and our commitment with the change in the organizational structure.

Core Activities

Mediamatic is located in a unique site of more than 1600 square meters in the city center of Amsterdam, not far from the central station. Over the past ten years we built a greenhouse, a sterile laboratory and a scent lab dedicated to ongoing research and project development. Our yearlong core activities are a response to our location that provides makers the space to carry development, design research, production, participatory workshops, and presentations. These are public tools that provide makers with an alternative way to connect the audience with their practices beyond the presentational.

Living Labs

Monasteries were typically spaces dedicated to research, and knowledge sharing. Where activities were carried out in an attentive way, with care for the community and its surroundings. We offer public interactive laboratories not readily available elsewhere, providing a space for experimentation, discovery, and prototype testing. These open labs provide a playful community for makers and audience to come together and experiment with new creative ideas, engaging with our program from a more tangible approach. Mediamatic recognizes the value of the Living Labs as both a core ongoing activity and as part of our public program. We are transforming our workshops into Living Labs, empowering participants to transition from passive observers to active contributors. From January 2024 until August 2024 we had over 1177 visitors in our Living Labs, and we developed twenty-two new workshops together with (inter)national makers and designers.

Aroma Lab

In the Aroma Lab our audience and makers have access to one of the biggest public collections of scents in Europe, with more than 300 natural and synthetic fragrances. In addition to this collection, there is equipment to work with olfactory techniques such as vacuum distillation and extraction. We are still the only open fragrance lab in Europe. Both national and international makers and designers come to Mediamatic for this open facility. In the Aroma Lab we reflect on how scent can contribute to researching or presenting our projects. The beautiful thing about life is that it smells. Smell can determine and help shape the space, influencing trust, attraction and repulsion. As a trigger for memory, it is also a powerful tool for storytelling or rituals. Projects within our program take key lessons from working with scent. We are already mapping the effects of scent on the mental state and scent knowledge and experience among neurodivergent makers. In addition, scent is indispensable in projects about biodiversity. For example, being able to intimately map nature that is no longer there - such as the biodiversity of 200 years ago. The Aroma Lab is managed by scent artists Frank Bloem, and Maria Ilieva.

Haptic Lab

This playful environment for makers and audiences is dedicated to the sense of touch. With the introduction of the costume-lab in 2022 we discovered the need for a space where this research can be done collectively. Particularly neurodivergent makers from the 2022–2024 [a/Artist](#) program have played a key role in developing the notions that have shaped this workspace. Alongside fashion and textile design, this workspace has transformed to include spatial design and traditional crafts, all focused on how our body experiences its exterior. Haptic Lab focuses on tactile and proprioceptive research by challenging authority and established norms collectively, through ‘craftivism’ and parallel-play. We will focus this research in the Haptic Lab shaped as a series of ongoing events curated by designers Silke Riis and Margherita Soldati.

Clean Lab

The Clean Lab is a 100 square meter unique airlocked space, dedicated to microbiology, providing a sterile environment for working with sensitive organisms. Beyond biomaterials, (inter)national makers use this space for experimental fermentation projects, water research, and other wet processes requiring strict hygiene. The Clean Lab hosts workshops, research, and residencies and serves as an incubator facility. Designing with microbes was central to the monastery's way of living, demanding meticulous attention and significant time investment. Since 2022, we have been

exploring the monastic lifestyle and routine through the eyes of the medieval abbess Hildegard Von Bingen. Inspired by Hildegard's prognostic self-care routine we developed in collaboration with herbology experts Lynn Clemens and Tamara Last, a series of workshops to experience what a medieval abbess can offer the modern day. Over the next two years, we will continue welcoming in this space makers and designers to develop collaborative research. As an open space designed for young makers to explore with us, we will collaborate with designer Trang Hà, and community artist Noa Jansma (The Gramounce) on the Clean Lab program for 2025.

Border Lab

In light of our new focus on the dynamic interface between land and water, we are creating a new outdoor conceptual space: the Border Lab. Contrarily, this lab is not defined by borders like the walls in our regular labs. This lab includes our Anthroponics greenhouse, our gardens and the water under and around Mediamatic (Aquatoop). Together they form a porous boundary between land and water, working as public exhibition and research spaces for artists, and designers. While this boundary is often overlooked in urban environments, we believe it's a rich source of inspiration and innovation. Just as new initiatives arise at the boundaries of disciplines, the waterfront also challenges makers to new questions and experiments. Through long-term installations and research we invite designers, architects, and researchers to experiment with age-old practices, and innovate new ways of co-inhabiting this space. We are partnering with Gemeente Amsterdam, landscape architect Thijs de Zeeuw, and microbiologist Mas Jansma.

Guided tours

We offer public weekly tours of our Biotop's installations and labs, as well as paid tours for individuals and groups by appointment. Over the years we have received guests from research institutes, businesses, NGO's, local health organizations, governments, schools and universities. Eighty percent of 2024's private tours consisted of students and teachers from international architecture, science and design programs including the US and multiple countries from the European Union, some who return on a yearly basis. These tours create a way to present to the general public all the cultural activities taking place at Mediamatic, showing the interconnections between our diverse projects. Our visitors have the chance to smell unique scents in the Aroma Lab, taste the herbs from our greenhouse, interact with our installations, and talk with artists on location. We are also part of the Open Marineterrein tours.

Meet-a-Maker

The Meet-a-Makers are short meet-ups between audience and makers in residence or our ongoing collaborators, where people can pay a low fee for a session with a maker they find inspirational. This year, 2024, we have already scheduled over 100 Meet-a-Maker sessions. During the session, participants have a 30-minute consultation with a maker or designer to discuss anything relating to their practice: any ideas they may have, topics they are both interested in or challenges they may be facing. We also receive great feedback from makers about the value of these meetings and the people they meet through these sessions. It's a really simple yet effective way to connect our audience with our creative community.

Residencies

Since January 2023 we have welcomed nineteen national and international makers. We can provide makers with an on-site guest room, make our various labs and spaces available for exhibitions, and offer individualized guidance. Residencies give us and our collaborators the opportunity to work on a community based practice, that later reflects in the output of our program. We participate in the 3Package deal program of AFK/Broedplaatsen. We are forming a consortium for Bio-Art with Waag Society and the microbiology group of Toby Kiers at the VU.



Frank Bloem presenting a scent during Odorama



Letizia Artioli's Lullaby for Floods



Renske Tiemersma - Ruimte voor Kijken



Wouter (Deep Time Agency) extracting water from the river



Meditation Circus
Teun Vonk



Marjolijn Boterenbrood doing water research at the Biotoop



Water research for the Korreltje Zout / Grain of Salt project



Alejandra Alarcón - Edible Playscapes performance

Activities 2025–2026

Our program for the next two years is shaped by two main themes; the environment around our Biotoop (ecology) and Neurodivergence (social). We primarily focus on long-term research projects that we revisit regularly through practical and interactive individual activities/projects.

Long-term projects

Korreltje Zout / Grain of Salt

2023 – 2026: Research by Thijs de Zeeuw and 3 yearly exhibitions at Mediamatic's public spaces

The Netherlands has a long history of water management. As such, notions of what are good and useful ways of dealing with water are deeply ingrained in our culture. The strict methods employed have irreversibly changed our environment not just at the coast but within our cities as well. Considering that Europe will have to deal with dryer summers and heavier rain in the coming years, we inevitably need to change our relationship in the way we handle different types of water available to us.

Korreltje Zout is a design research focusing on the use of Oosterdok's brackish canal water for the gardens around Mediamatic and our greenhouse instead of valuable tap water. As a city by the sea, Amsterdam's vegetation historically was very tolerant to salt; this changed when the city got closed off from the sea. There is a lot to learn from Amsterdam's historic gardening practices and natural ecosystem that will become invaluable when we will need to make more space for natural waters and be more sparing with drinking water. Under the leadership of eco-scientist Jip Santen we have already re-introduced disappeared edible vegetation in our greenhouse and added a rainwater collection system to our building in collaboration with Weerproof. We have started redesigning our space to adapt to this new approach to water with Superuse and Dakdokters.

Together with eco-designer Thijs de Zeeuw, urban ecologist Ton Denters, designer Ermi van Oers and artist Erik Hobijn, we investigate how we can welcome the canal water back into our ecosystem, by looking at how we can get salt-loving plants back into our local environment. Collaboration partners are our immediate neighbors, Marineterrein, Shaffy's Tuin and Residents Dijkgracht, but also NDSM-Werf, Waternet, Superuse, Dakdokters, Weerproof, Wavin, Municipality of Amsterdam, Spatwater, Voedingstuin IJplein.

Aquatoop

2025 – 2026: 6 (water) tours, Thijs de Zeeuw residency, installations, and 2 interactive presentations

Part of expanding our location to include the water through the Border Lab involves taking a serious look at the water habitat itself. As a counterpart to the Biotoop Dijkspark, we will introduce the Aquatoop as a space for artistic and social-ecological research.

Much of Amsterdam's biodiversity is underwater. Amsterdam's Unesco listed quays are facing one of the largest repairs in its history - 200 km of quay repairs. While focusing on preserving the land, this construction site will again rigorously affect this rich water habitat.

How can we design structures for the water, for its users and inhabitants? What do the banks of the city look like when we look at Amsterdam through amphibious glasses? Living underwater is not our primary focus, but rather the consideration of water when focusing on land and what could be a healthier exchange. We challenge the conventional division of these realms. In historic Cistercian and Buddhist monasteries water management was not only studied for practical reasons but also for its broader understanding of life, order and spatial distribution.

What do you feel underwater? How do we take people into that world in a non-invasive way? We will work on this topic through individual projects, like our collaboration with designer Letizia Artioli who designs sonic water installations, through our ongoing research in Border Lab led by eco-designer Thijs de Zeeuw and through swimming and diving expeditions.

The makers involved include Mariko Hori, Mas Jansma, Letizia Artioli, photographer Sanne Kabalt, and the collective Deep Time Agency. Expeditie Oosterdok consortium and Gemeente Amsterdam are our partners for this project.

Talking Scents

2025– 2026: 8 presentations per year on senses, culture and, science

As a new take on our successful *Odorama (2015 - 2026)* talks series, we are reinterpreting these presentation evenings focusing on how the sense of smell influences our lives. Every month, olfactory artist Frank Bloem curates a program where experts, artists, designers and scientists shift our perspectives on what we eat, drink, touch, inhale, secrete and smell. In our program we experiment on how all our other senses interact with our sense of smell, an organ that we often ignore. Many neurodivergent individuals have a heightened sense of smell (hyperosmia), experiencing many things with this extra layer of information. What do we miss without a developed nose and how can we develop one? Starting from a simple theme with a thought provoking question, we go on a journey inviting people from different disciplines to discover the world that lies behind everyday phenomena.

Collaborators are cacao expert Maria Salvadora Jiménez, sensory food designer Laila Snevele, and Oedipus brewer Sander Nederveen.

Multispecies Podcast

2025– 2026: 6 live podcast presentations

Being located in central Amsterdam, we realize the impact of human actions in our surrounding environment. In the monastery they cared for each other, but also for the monastery itself and the land around it. We are just beginning to discover the richness of our planet's biodiversity, and with it the value of each individual species within our ecosystem. At the same time, this biodiversity is shrinking at a great rate. How can we break out of our anthropocentric worldview and learn to feel more empathy for the other species on the planet? We challenge the relentless anthropocentric pursuit of efficiency and convenience, prioritizing multispecies needs and desires. Our monastery aims to be a place that is aware of its environment and its non-human community and looks for a new, inclusive way of life through rituals, introspection and celebration.

Multispecies Podcast are a series of podcasts curated by maker Arne Hendriks. Serving as a space for makers to present their work, come together to learn, discuss and rethink how we relate to our non-human neighbors. Some of our confirmed collaborators are designer Trang Hà, designer Minji Kim, and multidisciplinary maker Marjolijn Boterenbrood.

A Welcoming Space

2025– 2026: 4 yearly installations at Mediamatic's public spaces

By being an Open City Monastery we consider spatial design to create a safe space for those seeking refuge from the city or those who feel unwelcome in it. Traditional architectural practices often prioritize efficiency, maintainability and aesthetics. However, these priorities can lead to spaces that are acoustically harsh and unnavigable, creating barriers for many people, particularly those with neurodivergence and those who sleep in public spaces.

With this project we approach architecture and spatial design from a point of view of those prone to sensory overload. The eye wants something, but so do our nose, ears, and the rest of our body. For people with sensitivities such as increased stress or anxiety, design can mean the difference between participating or not participating in an activity in a given space. We are collaborating with Vera Lelie to design spaces that blur the lines between space and garments, in order to reflect on the impact that the space has to the individual. We delve into phobia-driven design with architect Kristin Maurer to explore how to make public spaces more accessible and pleasant for sensitive people. Our partners for this project are Architecture for Autism and the Van Eesteren Museum. We also take into consideration the homeless people around our community. Our secluded location in the city often provides a hideout for those seeking shelter. Together with artist Sophie Conroy we are investigating how we can learn and address this topic in our area. Drawing from her own experiences in being homeless for years, Sophie looks for ways in which we can make the city more accessible to those without a home, for example through public installations that can provide shelter and rest. By shifting our perspective and prioritizing the needs of all individuals, we can create spaces that are more welcoming and emotionally supportive.

Sanctuary for Sensory Participation

2025 – 2026: 4 participatory installations per year

In 2020 we started slowly and carefully with private sounding board discussions and then widened our reach with monthly public meetings about the autism spectrum. In the past year the project grew considerably and our network of neurodivergent makers increased. The strong foundation of our network has made us a safe haven for many creators to publicly explore their own mental diversity. With this project, we take a step forward by putting our research and findings into practice and making it public, whilst simultaneously aiming to learn more together.

In *Sanctuary for Sensory Participation* we dedicate space to the active exploration of mental well-being. The neurodivergent voice often does not find its expression through symbolic language but has a physical or visual form: in dance, images, impressions, color, smell and a fascination with objects. We've done a lot of research in the past about the human body, our own knowledge of it, and how we perceive it, but how do we take care of it? *Sanctuary for Sensory Participation* will focus on awareness through active participation, encouraging audiences to experience diverse mental and behavioral characteristics firsthand. Ultimately, together with neurodivergent makers we create a project that explores the intricate relationship between body and mind. Through sensory focused- interactive installations, we hope to shed light on the challenges faced by individuals vulnerable to sensory overload or underload, ultimately promoting a deeper understanding of mental well-being.

For this program, we are curating a selection of interactive installations and performances that promote reconnection with the body and mind. The designers and partners involved in this project are Teun Vonk, Alejandra Alarcon, Renske Tiemersma, VU Psychology and the platform shy*play.

ANVIA – Amplifying Neurodivergent Voices in Art

2025 – 2026: 4 neurodivergent artists in residency per year

Neurodivergence encompasses conditions like autism, dyslexia, hypersensitivity, ADHD, and ADD. Through extensive research, including network building, installations, events, residencies, and dialogue with neurodivergent artists and scientists, we discovered significant overlap between artistic and neurodivergent traits. However, the arts sector often treats neurodivergence as a limitation rather than an asset. This not only harms individual artists but also hinders the overall progress of the arts. To address this, we aim to create inclusive environments that value neurodivergent perspectives and contributions by building a research network with neurodivergent artists, academics, and organizations through residencies, meet-ups, and explorations in our living labs.

We are currently forming a consortium to investigate these questions more systematically in a European context and to share knowledge about our experiences. We expect to carry out that project from 2025 to 2027 with partners from the EU and the UK. Mediamatic is the initiator and secretary. *ANVIA* focuses on three main questions: How can we work better with neurodivergent makers; how do we become a more accessible employer for neurodivergent colleagues and how do we, as an art institution, facilitate a neurodivergent audience and field of participants. In addition, this research offers space for celebrating neurodivergence through lectures on autistic design and research into role models.

International partners are NEUK Collective - Scotland, PRAXIS - Oslo, Field:arts - Dublin, Atelier Luma - Arles, Akku.ev- Hamburg and Biruchiy - Zaporizhzhia.

Zoöp

2026: Design research by Anne Hofstra

We believe it is important to include nature in our decisions and this year we are taking the step to formally become a zoöp and join the Het Nieuwe Instituut (Rotterdam) network. Part of this process is becoming linked to an objective 'speaker for life', who, as a member of the program council, has a voice in the decision-making process. It is an interesting question whether we can leave the *voice of nature* to a human being. Humanity has a habit of putting itself in charge, even when it comes to speaking for nature. So, can we really be trusted to represent nature without

making it all about us? Could an AI serve as an unbiased advocate for nature, or are we just shifting the problem? Anne's project explores whether an AI, trained with ecological data, could take over this role.

To tackle this dilemma social designer Anne Hofstra teams up with our 'speaker for life' and hosts bimonthly interactive lectures with experts in the field. Together with AI software designer Moos Huetting they gradually create an AI that they will teach to become an advocate for nature - and to not prioritize humans in their output. The interactive lectures give space for experts on psychology, climatology and AI as well as the public to contribute to the AI. The AI itself becomes a growing and transparent installation that people can ask questions to, but they can also review all prompts used to create the AI. Is it time to let AI take the reins as nature's advocate, or are we just finding new ways to keep ourselves at the center? And what do we learn about ourselves when teaching an AI to advocate for nature?

Activities Timeline 2025-2026

- *Phase 1: January- March 2025:* In the first phase of our program for 2025 we are focusing on introspection. After a period of restructuring and changes, we take the time to reflect with our audience. From January until March, we are hosting installations that promote stillness and contemplation and begin our long-term research projects.
- *Phase 2: March - June 2025:* After our period of reflection we are celebrating our rebirth by focusing on actively opening our spaces to the public through participatory performances and interactive installations.
- *Phase 3: July 2025- September 2026:* In this long period we will be working in cycles of research and output. Research will take place primarily in the summer of 2025 and winter of 2026, with presentations in the autumn and spring. These cycles allow us to reflect on our projects providing the time and space to assess how they integrate with one another, fostering learning, adaptation and the ability to both connect deeply and gain perspective.
- *Phase 4: October- December 2026:* Rounding up our two year program, we will dedicate this period to evaluation and collective celebration. This phase will be planned more extensively in the coming months.

Individual Projects - 2025

Phase 1

Adaptation of: *Ruimte voor Kijken* – Renske Tiemersma

Interactive Installation: January - March 2025

Renske Tiemersma (NL) is a visual artist, neurodivergent maker and a recent graduate from HKU. Her art aims to give people the opportunity to pay attention to their sensory experiences. Texture, weight, space, light, facial expressions and pressure on the body are all important considerations and themes. An adaptation of her graduation work *Ruimte voor Kijken* will be installed at Mediamatic in 2025. *Ruimte voor Kijken* is an interactive installation about looking and being looked at. The audience from the sidelines becomes part of the artwork while in the installation the environment is the subject of observation. Tiemersma aims to challenge the unwritten societal rules shaped around the act of looking, prompting us to contemplate our daily viewing behavior. This installation belongs in the *Sanctuary for Sensory Participation* program.

Link to the designer's website: <https://www.rensketiemersma.nl/>

Link to the project: <https://www.rensketiemersma.nl/ruimte-voor-kijken>

Meditation Circus – Teun Vonk

Immersive Installation: February - March 2025

Teun Vonk (NL) creates art installations that focus on individual physical experiences, as a reminder to the participant of what the body is and what it is capable of. As part of the *Sanctuary for Sensory Participation* program, *The Meditation Circus* offers a space to feel the body through a meditative experience for a broad audience. Entering in a white, cathedral-like space, that is sustained by air, you are slowed down and invited to transform waiting into being. As time passes the space becomes smaller, and objects come closer, eventually landing on your body. At last, the space reinflates and the objects return to their starting positions. The sessions last one hour. By offering subtle, sensory stimuli *The Meditation Circus* offers an opportunity for connection with our body and mind. After the experience, there is a short sharing round in which everyone can share what they have experienced.

Link to the designer's website: <https://www.teunvonk.nl/>

Link to the project: <https://www.teunvonk.nl/mediation-circus/>

Tides of Time – Deep Time Agency

Design Research: February 2025 - March 2026

Deep Time Agency was founded in 2019 by artists Miriam Sentler (DE) and Wouter Osterholt (NL). The project is set up as an interdisciplinary research initiative and a multi-year project.

The collective re-contextualizes archaeological and paleontological objects in industrially changed landscapes. By highlighting these objects, they seek to develop a sense of belonging in the disrupted landscapes. *Deep Time Agency's* mission is to bring back a form of memory to (post)industrial landscapes by bringing new attention to the objects found in these locations and by teaching inhabitants about their landscape's history.

For their research at Mediamatic, Miriam and Wouter will delve into the history of Mediamatic's unique heritage location and direct natural and industrial surroundings. For example, they will investigate the history of the Sluisdeurenloods on the premises of Mediamatic, next to dealing with the archaeological and natural finds that were found during the excavations of the IJ Canal. In this way, *Deep Time Agency* relates to the tension between culture, nature, and industry in Amsterdam. Cultural sites along the IJ river and central station such as Mediamatic are constantly under pressure from urban development plans that want to give the industry more space. By focusing on unusual finds, non-human influences and historiography. With their project *Tides of Time*, *Deep Time Agency* joins the *Grain of Salt* and *Aquatoop* programs, in which they critically relate to the intrinsic value and threats to the aquatic worlds of the IJ Canal.

Phase 2

Aquatic Soundscapes – Minji Kim

Installation: March - April 2025

Minji Kim's (KOR) project investigates the impact of infrasound generated by coastal infrastructures—such as wind farms and industrial turbines at ports—on underwater life. While infrasound frequencies below 10 Hz are inaudible to humans, they play a crucial role for marine species. By adopting a non-human auditory perspective, this project offers a situated approach to learning the underwater sonic environment that is crucial for our *Aquatoop* program. The project is based on three core methods: constructing an instrument to record infrasound, conducting workshops together with local participants, and showcasing the results—both sound recordings and a journal—through an exhibition. The exhibition aims to provide visitors with a bodily experience of infrasound, typically beyond human hearing, and to explore the journal, which captures local perspectives and the geo-social context of the area.

Link to the designer website: <https://unknownkim.com/>

Thank you for Calling – Vera Lelie and Kwint Jongerius

Exhibition April - June 2025

Vera Lelie (NL) is a designer. Shaped by her neurodivergent perception, Vera uses her hyper-awareness of surroundings to create environments that blur the lines between objects and spaces. Kwint Jongerius (NL) is a neurodivergent filmmaker and musician who is inspired by the subjectivity of human dynamics and interactions, playing into the absurdity of life. Their work will explore an unusual interaction where unwritten neurotypical social rules are broken and blurred as part of the *A Welcoming Space* program.

Social interactions can be challenging for people with Autism, especially small talk or communication with strangers. Communication through a telephone poses its own challenges, as it creates a digital space where you come together, yet without seeing each other. The artists will show an interaction between a help desk worker and a caller. The roles in this kind of calls are clear and the script is predetermined, but what if we stretch the possibilities of the interaction and don't follow the script? Their exhibition at Mediamatic will consist of a film and an interactive installation, challenging the image often used to portray people with ASD: an image of being out of the loop and misunderstanding situations. By presenting a situation where the abilities of people with Autism create interesting and intimate interactions within unexpected frameworks, they aim to shine light on positive aspects of neurodivergence.

Adaptation of: *Edible Playscapes: An Embodied Dining Experience* – Alejandra Alarcón

Participatory Performance: May 2025

Alejandra Alarcón (MEX) is an interdisciplinary designer/artist working at the intersection of food and art. Her practice incorporates embodied knowledge, politics of belonging, and collective digestions to propose narratives around care in the context of environmental imbalances. *Edible Playscapes: A Embodied Dining Experience* explores eating as play to positively transform the traditional Western dining experience without the use of cutlery. By reimagining the dining table as a playscape, this project empowers individuals to explore with their bodies, experiment freely, and create food combinations that encourage reflections on our dining rituals. The shared metal surface, reminiscent of a food preparation area, provides a space where making a mess is acceptable and encouraged. Play becomes a means of engaging creatively and meaningfully, while emphasizing touch as a mindful and intimate way of eating, one that challenges conventional social and cultural norms. The project includes research, interviews, a workshop event and a final performance and is part of the *Sanctuary for Sensory Participation* program.

Link to the designer's website: <https://alealarcon.com/>

Link to the project: <https://alealarcon.com/edible-playscapes-a-hands-on-dining-experience>

Phase 3

Adaptation of: Lullaby for Floods – Letizia Artioli

Interactive Installation: September - November 2025

Letizia Artioli (IT) is an architect and designer investigating the relationship between human beings and environmental data, working with liquid data in a non-extractive perspective. *Lullaby for Floods* is a live sonic water installation taking inspiration from disruptive floods that happened between 2023-2024. The installation embeds live environmental data at the moment of the performance and the audience is invited to move through the dancing water particles. Included in our *Aquatoop* program, the adaptation will feature the use of instrument CEO02. This device allows the audience to become composers of hidden environmental data. By touching the water, the audience triggers archived sounds of landscapes that were lost due to climate change.

Link to the designer's website: <https://letiziaartioli.com/>

Link to the project: <https://letiziaartioli.com/LULLABY-FOR-FLOODS>

Datatariër – Collectief Extramens

Residency 2025

More and more people are making the conscious choice to suspend meat consumption and become vegetarian, contributing to a better world for both animals and the environment. But what about data consumption? Although it is less visible, data use contributes significantly to global warming. The enormous data centers that maintain this digital world consume enormous amounts of energy and produce significant CO₂ emissions. Yet this impact is still a blind spot for many people. While we are slowly becoming aware of reducing our meat consumption, reducing our data consumption often remains out of the picture.

In *Datatariër*, collective *Extramens* comes together to temper our hunger for data. With this project, the collective aims to design new rituals in a way that we can enjoy technology without using too much data. Can we store data more locally? The new collective is a collaboration between Pauline Wiersema, Reinout Scholten van Asschat, Janna Ulrich, Anne Hofstra, Naomi van Dijk, and a collaboration with the international Offline Club organization. This research is part of the Zoop program.

Communication

Our audience generally encompasses people who want to learn new skills or are interested in new ideas. We understand the following groups to be interested in our program:

People who are interested in ecology and people with an interest in urban placemaking, who we reach via our garden volunteer program, collaborative events with other organizations like Open Groen Dag and our web-articles and publications on the topics.

People who work in the cultural field (as makers, organizers or funders), people who are interested in design research who we reach via our own social media and the networks of our collaborating artists/designers, via LinkedIn events, via the communication of our funders, via the reviews and articles about our work in specialized.

People who work and study in (international) universities and research institutes who we reach via internal communication of our educational collaborators, via tours we offer at a discount for these groups, via LinkedIn events posted in specialized networks.

People who want to learn new skills and people who are interested in craft(ivism) and/or people on a lower budget who we reach via our workshop newsletters, broader event-listings like iAmsterdam, listings of activities by independent media and blogs for specific groups (like families), via our garden volunteer program (who get free workshop tickets)

People who want to learn about (their own) neurodivergence, people with (family/friends with) neurodivergence who we reach through dedicated newsletters on the topic, our shared discord and via (media of) interest groups like NVA, via the internal communication art and design academies.

People interested in gastronomy/food design or people with an interest in our food systems who we reach via food and vegan-influencers, via specialized blogs and platforms about food and articles and reviews about our work on this topic.

Our prizewinning website (290.000 pages in 2024, also part of the MoMA collection) acts as a living archive for all the knowledge we build up and as a platform for collaboration. It contains blogs and articles by makers and thinkers reporting on their research. Special attention is paid to knowledge sharing, to inspire our readers (400,000 visits in 2023).

To expand our reach and engage a broader audience, we aim to seamlessly integrate our website and Instagram/Facebook, ensuring a continuous flow of information and engagement between these channels. We monitor important indicators including website traffic, social media participation, workshop and lecture attendance, and media coverage to make sure our communication and dissemination efforts are effective and reaching our target audiences. Our Instagram account ([@mediamatic](#)) has established itself as a powerful platform for showcasing our projects, programs, and initiatives. With a fast growing following of over 17.100, we believe it serves as an invaluable tool for connecting with our audience and promoting meaningful engagement. We also stream our events via livestream, with an average attendance of 400 people. Last year, more than half of website visitors were international. That is why the main language of our communication is English, translating important expressions into Dutch.

Our monthly newsletter serves as a centralized hub for project updates and insights, reaching over 15,000 subscribers, with an opening rate of approximately 35% - a 50% above-average percentage. We work closely with our cultural partner IAmsterdam, and we make partnerships with major events such as: Museumnacht, Fringe Festival, We Make the City, Pride, Weekend van de Wetenschap and Expeditie Oosterdok.

We spread a wide variety of self made and printed flyers, posters and booklets with our cultural partners in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht and Eindhoven among others. The press reports projects, in the last 2 years we have been in many media articles from Parool, AT5, NRC, Volkskrant, De Telegraaf, and Trouw among others. We are also part of the documentary series How We Eat by Waterbear. Through cooperation with the municipality, cultural organizations, neighborhood teams, the Salvation Army, OBA Amsterdam and the Voedselbank we will invite a wider variety of visitors to become part of our program.

Cultural Governance Code (CGC)

We are currently in the process of restructuring our organization. Due to the recent developments, we have submitted an “aanbiedingsbrief” with our application, that expands on the changes and how we are adapting to them.

Value for Society

Mediamatic centers on creating a safe space to learn and collaborate. We want to emphasize the work of the underrepresented. In the coming period, one of our two pillars is neurodivergence. By placing neurodivergent makers at the core of this program, we not only ensure that their perspectives, talents, and experiences are acknowledged but also shared and celebrated. We understand it is important to constantly learn and grow when it comes to topics like this. A part of our management will follow the course Increase Inclusiveness by The School of Life.

We want to remain accessible to those with low income. We do this by offering free tours of the exhibitions, installations and labs. We also accept the City Pass, we have discounts for artists and students and we are part of the Voedselbank Cultuur. We believe it is essential that everyone can always and easily walk into Mediamatic and experience something new or experimental, even if your personal situation makes it difficult for you. In order to verify and check our work we are establishing a monitoring and evaluation program. Regularly measuring the impact of our activities and collecting feedback from participants, audiences and staff with the intention of improving as a cultural institution. Every year we support the PRIDE, with boats of the Gemeente Amsterdam and Queer365 leave from Mediamatic.

Integrity, Role Awareness and Careful Management

Mediamatic is in a state of transition. Founders Jans Possel and Willem Velthoven reached the average age of 70 this summer. They remain available for knowledge transfer and heritage, but are

no longer involved in the organization operationally or policy-wise. A dedicated team is working on new plans under the leadership of new General Director Marcel Sturing, who has been involved with Mediamatic for several years. He receives guidance and input from different professionals in the field, Piet Boogert (Lloyd Hotels) and Lodewijk Reijs (Reijlsbureau, BAK) amongst others.

We are actively working to improve our diversity efforts together with Colourful People. We find an inclusive working atmosphere very important, which is why a large part of the communication is in English to facilitate communication with colleagues from diverse backgrounds.

There is a confidential counselor in the organization to address any possible conflicts, and we have a weekly meeting for all staff to keep each other informed of all activities and to collectively welcome new staff members. In addition, we have clear house rules that everyone can read online.

Good Supervision

In accordance with the CGC, we follow a Supervisory Board model. The members of the Supervisory Board are at this moment Hajo Doorn and Farid Tabarki. We are working on filling the two vacancies in our Supervisory Board. The duties of the Supervisory Board towards the directors and the foundation are clear. The articles of association address conflicts of interest. The requirements of the Code are maintained within the council and checked and discussed yearly.

The Mediamatic Program Council is a new approach in keeping with our values of change and innovation. This council consists of a diverse group of committed artists, curators, designers and innovators with various backgrounds. They help shape Mediamatic's program and they evaluate the progress and way of working together. With Henriëtte Waal (Luma Arles, Veenweide Atelier) we are exploring this new form of artistic direction.

Fair Practice Code

The principles on which the Fair Practice code is built provide a framework for Mediamatic. We have open and transparent discussions with external parties about each other's expectations at the start of a new collaboration. Volunteers are often active for several years, and interns regularly remain involved in Mediamatic in various roles. Both our employees and makers are at different stages of their careers. Mediamatic is committed to building sustainable collaborations, both with our team and with external parties.

Collaborations

Local: AMS Institute, Amsterdam Weerproof, Arcam, Consortium Expeditie Oosterdok, De Waag, Food Garden IJplein, Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Klimmuur Amsterdam, Kriterion, Leger des Heils, Marineterrein, Municipality of Amsterdam, NDSM Werf Foundation, OBA, Pakhuis de Zwijger, Shaffy's Tuin, shy*play, Spatwater, Tolhuistuin, Van Eesteren Museum,, VU microbiology, VU psychology, We Make The City, Weekend van de Wetenschap.

National: Architecture for Autism, De Dakdokters, Deep Time Agency, De Nederlandse Vereniging voor Autisme, GGZ, The Zoöconomic Institute, Public Spaces, Superuse Studios, Waternet, Wavin.

International: Akku.ev- Hamburg, Atelier Luma - Arles, Biruchiy - Zaporizhzhia, Field:arts - Dublin, NEUK Collective - Scotland , Offline Club, PRAXIS - Oslo.

Alongside our collaboration with organizations we also collaborate and support independently funded collectives and projects and have done so over the years. We do this by providing our space for free for their presentations and research. Recent projects include: What Design Can Do (traditional knowledge research), MATER (material research writing), The Dinner Table Method (design research foodsystems), Rietveld Academy/Sandberg Academy (student presentations Design Lab and MA Critical Design) among many others.

Evaluation Jan 2023 - Aug 2024

Mediamatic has consistently pushed boundaries and explored new avenues for artistic expression and social awareness. A core aspect of our focus the past year has been related to neurodivergent (ND) individuals in the cultural industry. In November 2023 we organized 2 Museum Nights centered around neurodivergence, one of which was low-stimulus, where more than 1200 visitors went through an artistic self-diagnosis. As part of this framework we hosted exhibitions by and about neurodivergent makers such as Genevieve Murphy, Yvonne Dröge Wendel, Jemima de Jonge, Ignacy Radtke, Vera Lelie, Jam van de Aa, Weimin Zhu and Thijmen Peters. Alongside this we presented 17 [monthly public meetings](#) with neurodivergent makers. As part of our research on the correlation between neurodivergence and gender diversity, we participated in Amsterdam Pride 2024 partnering with Queer365 and Aynouk Tan. We presented [The Queer Superdiversity Show](#) and hosted neurodivergent artists [Jesse Glazzard](#) and [Nora Nord](#) in residence.

We also focused on our relationship with the earth and the species that live in it. Social Designer Anne Hofstra presented [KIP](#), her theater performance for chickens. Together with Eva Meijer, we created the [Dog Dinner](#), a dinner for both dogs and humans, exploring new multispecies eating practices. In our [Living Tower Talk](#) series, curated by Arne Hendriks and architect Thijs de Zeeuw, we discussed with invited designers and scientists how we can grow and live together with nature. Since 2021, Arne Hendriks has been researching on location how we create urban environments with living materials by building [Pigeon Towers](#) from mycelium. In 2023-2024 we added 3 more Pigeon Towers in our location. We investigated how we can live harmoniously with a plant that is on the European death list: [Japanese Knotweed](#). Through a festival, symposium, exhibitions, workshops and a [NeoFuturist dinner](#), we celebrated the outsider and the oppressed through the plant and all its beautiful properties. In 2024 we closed the festival with a [Gastronomical Summit](#) where chefs and food-designers, like Henriëtte Waal and Uno Fujisawa gave presentations and workshops. We welcomed the public to participate through workshops, [Gentle Discos](#) (dancing as a way to prepare the mycelium blocks for construction) and interactive presentations. We have also participated in [Weekend van de Wetenschap](#) every year since 2019, offering free workshops for the young and old. In 2024 we developed 21 new workshop series. This ranged from new [fermentation workshops](#) with Eva van Dee in our Clean Lab to the revival of our [textile lab](#) led by designer Clemens Tomlow. Successful workshops are repeated to generate income for the makers. Between 2023 and 2024 we had more than 2,200 participants and the number will increase by the end of this year.

In 2024 Mediamatic phased a lot of structural and operational changes with founder and artistic director Willem Velthoven stepping down from his role and the appointment of a new General Director. We are currently in the process of restructuring our organization. Due to the scale of the recent developments, we have submitted an “aanbiedingsbrief” with our application, that expands on the changes and how we are adapting to them.

We will continue to relate to what is happening in society and see it as our task to create space to respond quickly. AFK (Amsterdam Fund for the Arts) scored our program proposal as current and innovative, highlighting the importance of Mediamatic for the Amsterdam cultural sector. In the current cultural landscape, we need now, more than ever, the support from the Stimuleringsfonds in order to keep carrying out our activities as a nonprofit institution. We are determined to preserve that space and, together with makers and designers, make room for experiment, reflection, participation, and research.

For an impression of what we have done, and a small insight into the entire 40 years of

Mediamatic, look at [mediamatic.net/show](https://www.mediamatic.net/show)