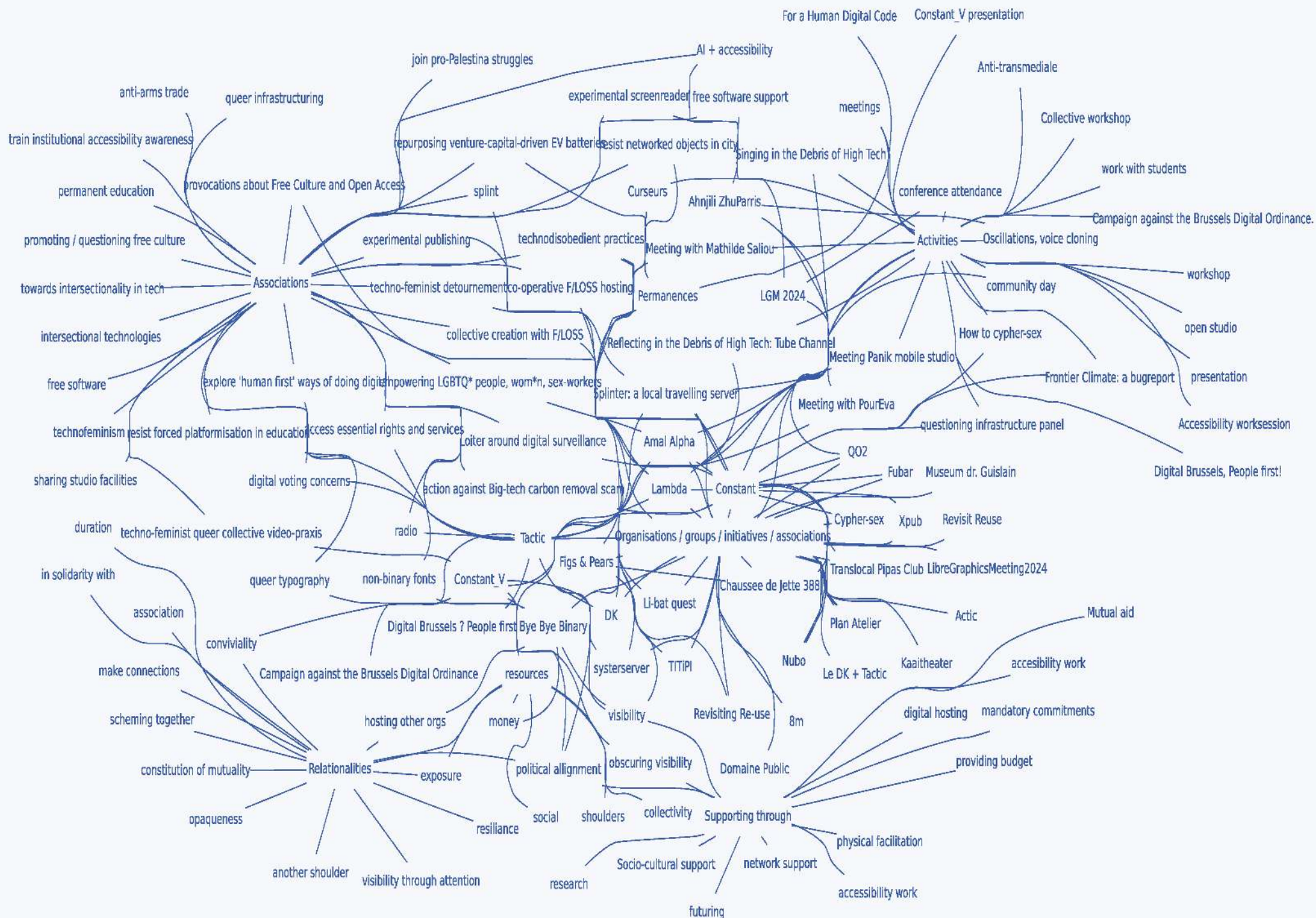


A CANE, STICKY NOTES, ANOTHER BODY





EXPLANATION OF THE TITLE

3DIMENTIONAL TITLE

A cane, sticky notes, another body addresses the different dimensions through which we have been thinking and making access across 2024 at Constant.

A cane speaks of physical objects. A cane can be used to support one leg while walking.

Sticky notes refers to small strategies. Sticky notes can be used to remind specific things to someone suffering from memory loss.

Another body tells the importance of considering our body as one in a network of many others, and how our needs for support and access differ and are always transitory.

Constant is a Brussels based organisation, which develops its artistic research around technologies, combining feminisms, activisms, free-culture philosophy, and other forms of care for and critical engagement with the world. The year 2024 was dedicated to **accessibility**, understood in its multiple dimensions and senses, and it formed the second thematic year of Constant's 5-year trajectory called SPLINT, in which we explore the question: what could/should SPeculative, Libre and INTERsectional Technologies be.

As ecological and political catastrophes unfold at a worrying speed and intensity, it is urgent to pose ourselves the question of what technologies we need for life to be sustained and for resisting the computational monoculture. Access needs remind us that a solely “anti-tech” response is not a viable solution, that while we refuse the ‘always unlimited’ regimes of the GAFAMs, we need to continuously learn how the same limits impact everybody differently, that meeting basic needs for everyone will take everyone’s care.

In this Zine, we have gathered pieces and bits, traces, snippets, writings, images and sounds of the past year’s activities on and around multiple access questions, from building renovations to alt-text poetry. It is not a complete overview of last year’s programme, but a polyphonic, polymorphic, sometimes messy, but always engaged storytelling of our experiences. Most of all it is an opening for its readers to take this work and extend it in new directions and towards the future. It is also an invitation, if you feel tempted by this material, to get in touch, to join forces through multiplicity and divergences.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Explanation of the title | 5 |
| Drempel Drempel Drempel | 10 |
| (Connecting) Buttons | 23 |
| It's technical and I don't understand much of it anyway | 29 |
| Commission Screen-to-soundscapes | 36 |
| Snowpoles from a worksession | 38 |
| Worksession A Cane, Sticky Notes, Another Body | 51 |
| Alt-text as text | 59 |
| Bugs in the brain | 68 |
| Associating Associations | 77 |
| CDJ Calendar | 82 |
| Studio Accessibility | 84 |
| Feedback loop | 90 |
| Staring at white supremacy | 94 |
| Colophon | 96 |

DREMPEL DREMPEL DREMPEL

From a warp¹ about Constant internal worksession: <https://constantvzw.org/wefts/drempel.en.html>

In March 2024, Constant organised an internal worksession called Drempel Drempel Drempel. “Internal” because this session gathered mainly Constant team, team members of its two main partners for the year 2024, Kaaitheater and Museum Dr. Guislain, and a few ‘external’ contributors: Loraine Further, Alyssa Gersony and Ahnjili Zhuparris. The session was an opportunity for us, as institutional workers, to examine and learn from different crossings, overlaps and gaps in our understanding of and effort towards accessibility.

INTRODUCTION: THE TEAPOTS

To start things off we made a small introductory exercise. We asked each participant to draw the institution they're involved with in the shape of a teapot. This small exercise was to try to move away from the traditional introduction moments during which every person would present themselves with their name, role, etc and instead focus on their perspective on ‘their’ institution. It was also an

1. warps on our website are articles documenting Constant's main activities.

attempt to take the attention away from the individual only and get to know them in relation to a specific context.

The week was organised around three main focus points:

- 1 Physical spaces: how to traverse them, how to make signage for them and other forms of institutional navigation.
- 2 Language: exploring the possibilities and challenges of multi-languages practices, a look at AI as access tools connected to language.
- 3 Digital spaces: exploring how the three institutions’ websites operate within certain guidelines and practices on accessibility.

STARTING OFF WITH A DEFINITION

The term “accessibility” can feel overwhelming due to the myriad of things that it potentially conveys. Though it feels necessary not to shy away from it because it keeps reminding us of a work that is never finite, always in the process.

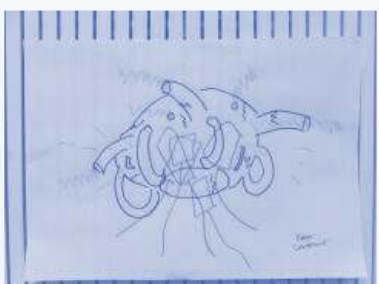
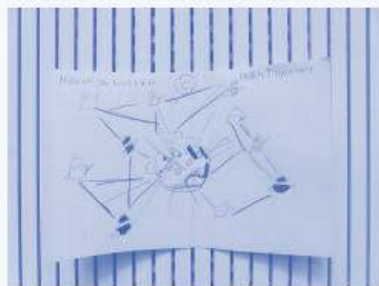
Throughout the rest of the days we delved into some texts to understand accessibility via different lenses. We understood that a unique definition for accessibility isn't helpful. It is an ever shifting and deeply intersectional and contextual concept. One of the starting texts we read gave us some historical context of the word ‘accessibility’:

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According to the Oxford English Dictionary, use of “accessible” as an adjective dates as far back as the fourteenth century, when it denoted being “capable of being entered or approached” and “readily reached.” It was only in 1961 that “accessible” began to be used to denote the ability to be “readily understood.” As a noun, “access” derives from the fourteenth-century Old French “accès” (denoting both the “coming on” or “attack” of an illness or emotion) and from the Latin “accessus” (“a coming to, an approach”). Describing “the power, opportunity, permission, or right to come near or into contact with someone or something,” [...].

“Access” can rectify exclusion; however, such efforts remain incomplete without a critical assessment of how those exclusions first came to be and how they continue to function. [...] For radical disability activists, the tension in “accessibility” also arises from use of the term to denote inclusion in an unjust system—or, as activist organizer AJ Withers (2015) terms it, “accessing privilege.” In this view, a truly radical approach to accessibility requires considering the tensions between “accessibility” as a solution or checklist versus “accessibility” as an ongoing negotiation. For radical disability activists, the potential of “accessibility” is precisely to mark “access” as an ongoing and shifting process rather than as a mode of solving individualized problems.[...]

While “accessibility” is regularly presented as a way of extending social inclusion to those who have historically been marginalized by ableism or other forms of oppression, this conception of “access” regularly (though rarely explicitly) comes into conflict with “security culture,” “safe space,” or forms of intellectual engagement such as dense



theoretical writing or complicated word usage not deemed to be “readily accessible.” Like “accessibility,” these forms of exclusion are also commonly presented as a self-evident good, in which access is deliberately restricted for some in order to create a different kind of access, or community, for others. Importantly, the access barriers created by “security culture,” “safe spaces,” or through particular kinds of intellectual engagement like “inaccessible” writing, are usually taken to be necessary. Indeed, these practices are often necessary in order to create boundaries so as to thwart different kinds of attacks by the state and other enemies. The result is that the assumed good of creating access is pitted against the assumed good of maintaining security, creating community, or deepening our understanding of ourselves and our world. Here, far from being a self-evident good, “access” functions as a kind of attack upon boundaries that have been constructed for a particular purpose.[...]

The question remains: how might we address the divide in radical practices between celebrating access and acknowledging the need for particular exclusionary spaces within radical milieus to defend ourselves from attack? If, despite its violence, exclusion is a category we want to embrace in certain moments (for example, in calls for sovereignty or in contests over occupation), then it may be through “access” as a boundary practice denoting both “contact” and “attack” that we might find the means of navigating this fraught terrain.

</anotherbody>

Excerpt from “Accessible” written by Kelly Fritsch
from the book “Keywords for Radicals:
The Contested Vocabulary of Late-Capitalist Struggle”.

PHYSICAL SPACES

For the day on physical spaces, we started by telling each other about our offices and buildings. We shared what we thought needed thinking and intervention and how we were planning to go about it. We looked together at maps, videos and images.

There, the differences between our institutional realities became quite visible. For instance, Constant, whose office and studio space are not ‘public’, is not held by the same standards than the ones of Kaaitheater and Museum Dr.Guislain. They feel a sense of responsibility and care towards the public; the priority is to ensure the safety of the people in the space. This safety comes with many standards and regulations from various funding institutions that do not allow for much speculation/experimentation when thinking along the multi-layeredness of accessibility questions. Since Constant does not accommodate a big audience like Kaaitheater and Museum Dr. Guislain, it also allows us to take integral part to the thinking on access in our own spaces instead of having to hand over the whole process to external experts; without much space for collective thinking and making. Though, the differences in the scale of the buildings and resources of Kaaitheater and Museum Dr.Guislain showed significantly more possibilities for ambitious renovations and redoing regarding access than our DIY approaches/attempts. This does not mean that Constant will not aim for accessibility as do bigger institutions or that we will not look at standards and regulations in the process. In fact, we can allow ourselves

to take these standards as a starting point and go beyond their rigidity to accommodate people's needs on a finer and more nuanced level. This type of work requires time, transparency, collaboration and solidarity with communities.

SIGNS EXERCISE

"Sometimes we find people wandering in the hallways of the museum while they are searching to access the hospital."

The question of orientation and signage came up several times in our discussions; it appeared that unclear, confusing or just non-existent signs are a common issue in (public) buildings. Since we were thinking of access in relation to physical space, we proposed to work with signs as tools for facilitating access. We divided into three groups, each taking one area for experimenting with the possibilities of signage. One team was in the kitchen, one in the entrance and the third one in the garden. To introduce the exercise, we all followed a ritual by the collective MELT. We offered this ritual for the way that it makes us be thoughtful and attentive to the space we occupy.

<anotherbody>

"Ritual for bad listening: Take a piece of paper or your smartphone and for 5 minutes, write down every sound that you hear and/or sense (the humming of the heater, the chirping of a bird, the temperature in the room, the brightness of the light). Repeat this ritual in different settings if possible. When and where are you comfortable with listening/sensing? Do you listen/sense deeper with time? Are any of the

things you hear/sense an access barrier for you or for someone you know? You can use this ritual as a way of checking in with a new space. This ritual is based on a text by Jonathan Smilges."

</anotherbody>

Excerpt from CONF(FUSE)ING AND RE(FUSING) BARRIERS
by Ren Britton & Isabel Paehr

EXAMPLES OF THE SIGNAGE EXERCISE:

Sarah entered the kitchen, looked around and very pragmatically said "Well, this cannot be a public space".

The team in the kitchen focused on the many ways that the space could be hazardous; that angle was possibly prompted by the nature of the equipment generally present in kitchens. The signs were used to warn (slightly humorously) about the dangers present in the room. The making of signs for the kitchen highlighted how much the studio's kitchen made with a DIY ethos could constitute a barrier for many: a space relatively large becomes narrow because of the accumulation of appliances and scavenged items, a tap with sometimes scorching running water because of an old water boiler, a missing cooking hood which causes the room to sometimes fill with dense smoke etc.

The team in the entrance proposed a prototype for another type of signage. They attached a yellow neon string from the entrance door throughout the hallway (around 10m long) to guide people. As we were all walking after one another holding the string in one hand, someone suggested

“what about a large fluffy string to make it nicer?”

In this way, visitors are guided by holding the string and following it through the space; this was another type of signage that would not rely on visual clues. Though, a visual sign was still created to explain the presence and purpose of the string. The possibility of changing this visual sign into an audio one was also mentioned.

The group in the garden made use of the signs as a way of conceptualising the function(s) or the potentialities of the space. Here, the sign does not give operational information but instead invites the persons looking at it to compose with it.

For the making of the signs, we used this tool: <https://observatory.db.erau.edu/generators/signs/>

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

ALT-TEXT EXERCISE

A series of exercises coming directly from <https://alt-text-as-poetry.net/>, a project developed by artists Bojana Coklyat and Shannon Finnegan.

We read each others' communication materials and considered whether we understood what was communicated. We had a try at translating a text into simple language. Constant, who is used to being playful and experimental with languages, felt it was important to try to find a balance between its usual experimental modes and the necessity of simple language.

Example of exercise: The text describing the project ATNOFS on the feminist server 'rosa' was selected by one of the participants.

'original' text: rosa (they, them) is a feminist server that travels between different locations, providing a mobile infrastructure for learning, documentation, and experiments for the meetings that happened during the A Traversal Network of Feminist Servers project. rosa is not only its constituting hardware or software, but also the multitude of relations which are created around the making, maintaining and passing on of this infrastructure: the processes that are performed, the affective charge of their actioning, the communities around them.

the text rewritten by some of the participants: rosa (they, them) is a feminist travelling server. Rosa provided a digital space for learning, documentation and experiment for the meetings of the project called A traversal network of feminist servers. rosa is not only a technological device it is also a community with practices of making, maintaining and sharing.

DIGITAL SPACES

AI AND TECHNOABLEISM

One question that informed the preparation of the worksession, but was not clear when and how to bring it to the table, was the one regarding the many A.I.-fueled projects directly engaging with accessibility needs. The issue points to an intersection of different political vectors:

companies with extremely exploitative and extractive agendas like Microsoft, OpenAI or Zoom are at the same time able to offer advanced software “solutions” for access needs. This includes for example automated closed captions during a videocall, image recognition of documents, automatically generating alt-text from an image and situational pictures that can help people with visual impairment as well as people who don't speak the bureaucratic language of the country they live in.

We found ourselves oscillating between the advantages and usefulness of these technological solutions ‘offered’ by profit-driven companies and our own urgencies to cultivate other modes of relating to technological processes and devices. With the rise of data collection and the increasing demands and regulations for web accessibility, we remain wary of how these two combined are used to mine and extract data that feeds back these companies' initial goal: the capitalisation of the users.

During the session, AI use came up in relation to time-intensive tasks such as the production of alt-text. The necessity for alt-text tends to catalyse institutional workers' anxiety regarding a consequential piling up of tasks in their already tight workflow.

<anotherbody>

This could be a good use of chatgpt

</anotherbody>

<anotherbody>

We were approached by a company to automatise these procedures and become more efficient

</anotherbody>

<anotherbody>

Powerpoint actually has an AI feature that writes the alt text for you

</anotherbody>

As we were discussing and uncomfortably testing out some chatgpt features, we wanted to figure out whether these models, which promote their efficiency, do really help when it comes to specific language-based tasks?

During the session, we tested Capito's tool. Capito drew our attention, because it is a group that started working on accessible/simple language in 1999. They seem to have embraced the AI craze and created a tool to automate some of the labour they used to do. The results were, in some part, unsurprising and in another, unexpectedly weird.

The previous text rewritten by <https://capito.eu>

<anotherbody>

Rosa is a project that travels to different places. It offers a space for meetings, learning, and trying new things. The project is part of the A Traversal Network of Feminist Servers. The space has chocolates, candies, and a soft toy for celebrations. Rosa is more than just its hardware

and software. It is also about the people who use it and the relationships they create. These relationships include the processes, emotions, and communities involved. The users are an important part of Rosa's infrastructure. They perform actions that affect the technology and the people around them. Sharing Rosa involves passing it on to others. These relationships are important for understanding how Rosa works and how it can be improved.

</anotherbody>

(CONNECTING) BUTTONS

<anotherbody>

What kind of button would your brain, neurodiverse or otherwise, like to exist? What gesture does your hand/other body part want to do to activate something (technologically)? What material do you find pleasant? What shape should such a button have? At what scale?

</anotherbody>

In March and June of 2024, we speculated and created prototypes of on and off buttons, within the framework of A Cane, sticky notes and another body. The workshop had a very wide spectrum of ways of creating, from soldering to sewing. We experimented with silicone casting, types of interactions, inflatables, textile and electronics. The material choices, with how they feel, were most apparent in the research. We left open the potential narratives around the button. Not only what they would look like but also what they could activate or deactivate was part of the speculation. In this zine you will find an arbitrary selection of the creations. In those still images we have tried to include the aspect of movement, of body gestures.

PLANETARY BUTTONS



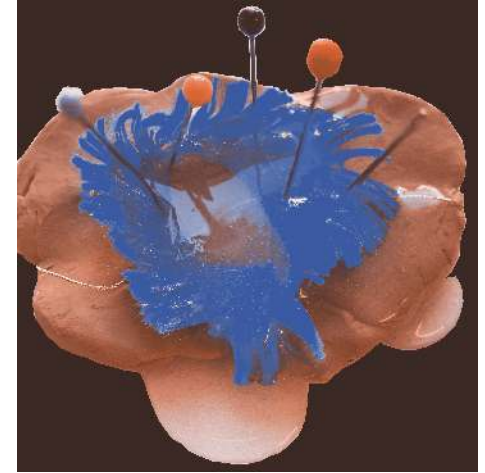
A planet like shape is being held by a hand. Two other celestial bodies are suspended from it, they are being held by a conductive thread. They are colliding.

SQUEEZING



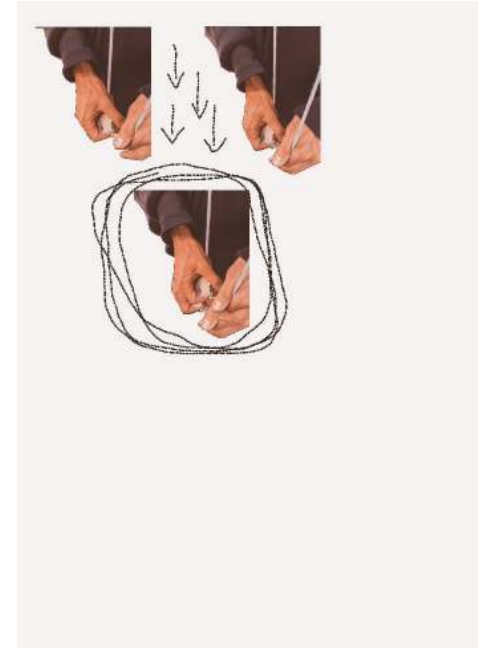
A black rubber glove is connected with an inflated red balloon. When the balloon is squeezed, the glove inflates and vice versa

CASTING SILICONE



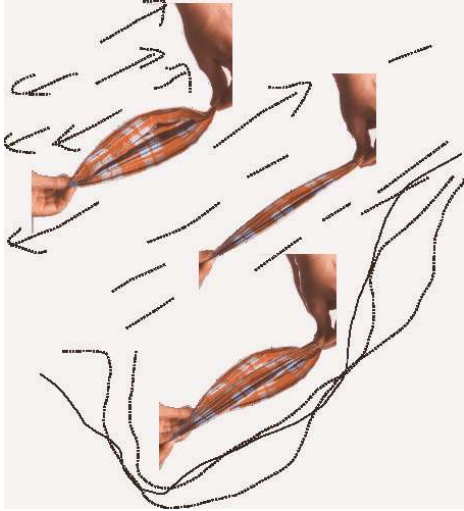
A clay shape is holding a fluffy blue textile thread. The thread is being held with pins, translucent silicone has been poured all over.

HOODIE



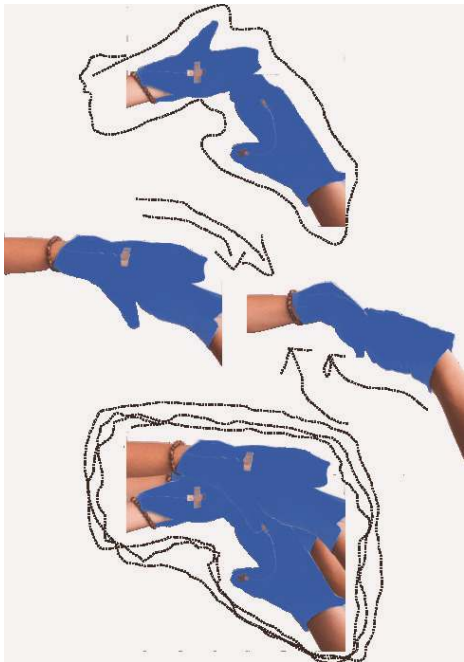
Prototype of a hoodie cord, in order to be able to discreetly activate or deactivate a device. The hoodie is black, and a hand is pulling the light grey conductive cord. Small electronics are held by the same hand.

SNAPPING



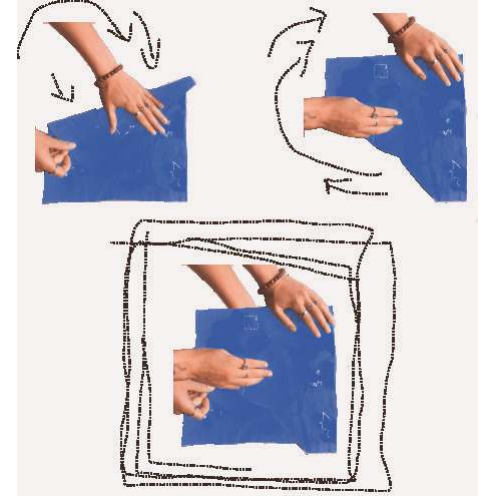
A rigid folded button made with woven colourful plastics. When opened and then pulled swiftly with both hands, the active zones touch and go to their folded position. The conductive fabric layers inside touch.

DOUBLE GLOVE



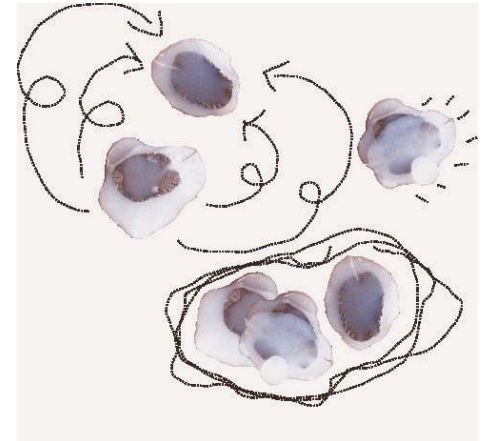
Two light blue gloves with conductive threads and electronics connected to them shake hands. They are lefthanded.

MANIPULATING THE MAP

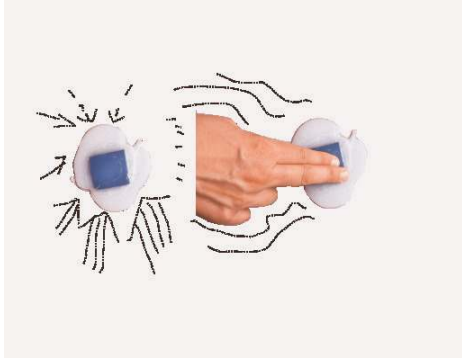


A bright blue map is being folded in two different ways. Each time it is folded in a different way, a different kind of button action can be imagined. There is conductive thread worked into it.

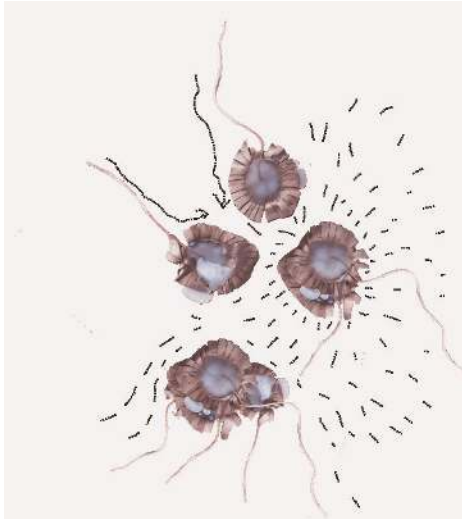
BLOBULAR



Two translucent blobs need to touch each other to activate something. Depending on how they touch, they will work or not.

PRESSURE

A translucent body needs to be pressed to be activated. The harder you push, the more contact is made.

CREATURES

Two creatures with conductive flagella have to touch to connect. They can only touch a little bit and they can activate or de-activate.

Thanks Alex, Marie, Raaf, Zsolt and all the wonderful participants/partakers of this workshop

IT'S TECHNICAL AND I DON'T UNDERSTAND MUCH OF IT ANYWAY

-- Written by Imane B.K.

In the process of explaining and writing about the series of meetings called *confusing coding situations* which I organised and sometimes co-organised, I get lost in the difficult terms, trying to explain what and how and with whom it happens.

In the end, I am continuing to keep the long and confusing title even though it might not be helping. Some say that coding is hard, yet coding is something we do all of the time. Coding is defined as a set of instructions we write to a computer so it executes a certain task. This is a technique that is present in many other practices so, I have always been intrigued as to why computer coders and programmers are always seen as *very unique people*. It felt as if their job requires some specific skill or knowledge that is very difficult to acquire. While I do not want to delve deeper into why I find it weird how coding has become a highly appreciated thing in the mainstream, I do want to point at a specific thing I noticed in my own parcours in the coding realm that inspired me to take a critical look at

coding: most things came down to being able to write instructions that the machine understands and ask the right questions to solve the equation at hand.

The other thing I wanted to bring forward is my wish to create a space that was a bit different than the typical hacking and coding spaces, which tend to be male dominated and very much focussed on progress (too unclear what you mean by progress), learning technical skills etc. Inspired by the people that joined the sessions, I have been trying to understand what coding mean for people that [who] say:

<anotherbody>

Yes I am a programmer but actually, I would really like to not be in front of the computer.

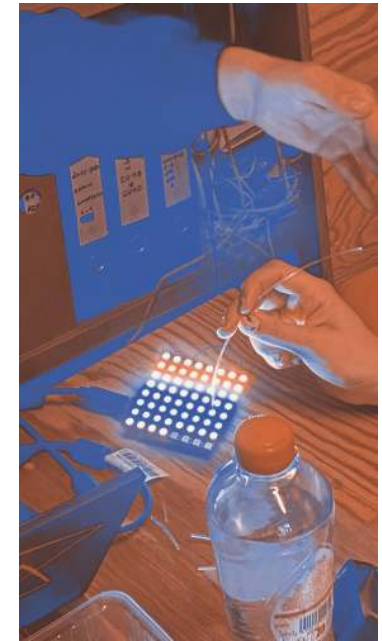
</anotherbody>

It took a while to start, mainly because I hoped to draw in people with various backgrounds: curious people, programmers, people with no computer-related knowledge, people wanting to code with other people, knitters, theorists, artists activists, etc.

So, I wanted a soft start that wouldn't scare people off while not being too boring for those who had prior affinities with and knowledge of techno feminist practices and coding.



a table full of snacks, Cato brought some homemade sesame cookies as well, it was just two but we split them amongst the whole group



Maarthe brought a device that they wanted to work on during the open time, the device has this led lights and when lit up as it is on the image, it displays a fun little rainbow

1. STARTING WITH HTML

After some tinkering in my mind, I was finally set on having a first session where we looked at practical coding skills when we did the html exercise where we looked at how to write code, from finding an IDE to writing the first html tags. What I enjoyed is hearing how the people who joined felt welcome and excited to continue. There were suggestions that helped stir the course of the coming sessions such as:

<anotherbody>

Today we took a very technical turn. Can we do more reflective stuff? Can we also read stuff, not only be hands on... Maybe read about the human experience of the internet?

</anotherbody>

<anotherbody>

I didn't understand everything but, it was nice to be here and so great that I finally got to use the terminal

</anotherbody>

2. OPEN WORKING TIME

For the second session I made the decision to organise an open moment. The intention was to create a small pocket of time where people with different interests could come and share what they are busy with or simply join out of curiosity of what others might bring. The people in the mailing list seemed to be super interested in the vagueness of the sessions, and although the title of the sessions gave the impression that we were focussing on *coding related projects*, it didn't seem to shy people away from joining and doing everything but coding which I found very nice and refreshing.

The session could have taken many directions, especially since engagement and inspiration from the participants shouldn't be a given. But some brought a project to work on during the time and shared about it, others came with

good energies, different curiosities and questions. The session ended up being a collective discussion on some topics around surveillance, security and the digital *footprint*. There was also a tangent on Palestine and activism which brought us to think with the necessity to boycott wix, a widely used zionist project.

Below you will find some links and resources that were shared in the moment:

- Zotero: open source tool to organize source materials: <https://github.com/zotero/zotero>
- Some links we looked at on surveillance:
 - Public surveillance cameras: <http://www.insecam.org/>
 - A collection of tools to help anarchists and other rebels **understand** the capabilities of their enemies, **undermine** surveillance efforts, and ultimately **act** without getting caught: <https://www.notrace.how/>
- Wix graveyard: <https://nekrocemetery.anarchaserver.org/>
- How to download a website and make it static: <https://www.httrack.com/>

3

After the open work time, The group hinted at having a session to focus on Palestine and the technologies that are complicit in the genocide in Gaza. I was happy to invite Sakinus to lead the reading session. This was a great way to experiment with the varying possibilities of the sessions as many were eager to read complicated texts together around technological entanglements.

4

For the fourth session I wanted to connect coding with crochet. I was mostly curious to see what it would mean for coders to apply the same logic of coding to a different technique such as crochet and pattern making. It served as an introduction to computational thinking via a hands-on activity. We ended up introducing the slime mold so as to move away from the binary approach of pattern making and coding.

5. FOREVER WORK IN PROGRESS

The idea was to use some of our time to take a look at our relationship with work and time.

Starting from the feeling that being a coder produces symptoms correlating with productivist and solution-driven mindsets, the concept of *crip time* was introduced.

Crip time invites us to slow down, rethink what progress is, and honor the messy, non-linear nature of creation. We looked at what can resist the idea that productivity is the ultimate measure of value, reminding us that there is worth in the incomplete and the unresolved. This was part of a counter-narrative that questions the very culture of efficiency. The sessions brought forth questions on unionizing, organising and remembering different struggles through history.



3 friends hooking themselves on a long chain and making some crochet blobs

COMMISSION SCREEN-TO- SOUNDSCAPES

Constant continues its series of artistic commissions this time in the context of "A cane, sticky notes, another body". The commission format was created to make resources available for artists and researchers to develop their own body of work intersecting with the yearly theme.

For this commission, Constant invited Ahnjili ZhuParris. Ahnjili is a machine learning engineer, Ph.D. candidate, artist, and science communicator. Ahnjili's artistic research and science communication efforts are dedicated to raising awareness about A.I. and algorithmic violence, which encompasses the violence that may arise from or be justified by automated decision-making systems. Ahnjili was joined by Alyssa Gersony, artist & vision rehabilitation therapist, Colette Aliman, sound designer and Dan Xu, user experience designer. They together set up the project called Screen-To-Soundscape and were joined by the co-creators Chris Alexandre, Bruno Defalque, Joris Verhulst, Raphael Bascour, Vincent Leone who gave advice and expertise on the user experience.

Screen-to-Soundscape adopts a creative and experimental approach to reimagining screen reader voices. The project aims to develop a speculative design prototype that

transforms a browser or screen into an immersive soundscape. This prototype will feature multiple layered voices reading all readable text in unison with spatial audio enabling users to discern the text's location within the browser. The motivation behind this initiative is to overcome the inherent limitations of traditional screen readers by offering users with visual impairments a more intuitive and immersive way to navigate digital content. This not only benefits users with visual impairments but also provides a richer, more engaging web experience for all users.



Image of the Screen-To-Soundscape prototype. We see the screenshot of a simple interface made of a plane with several spheres placed apart.

This project was supported by Constant, the Processing Foundation, and the Stimulerings Fonds.

SNOWPOLES FROM A WORKSESSION

The snippets gathered below are part of a documentation process that we practice in Constant, which we call 'snowpoling'. Snowpoles are used in areas where significant amount of snow regularly fall. When paths disappear under a mass of snow, the snowpoles allow someone to still find their way. Similarly, we use a snowpole marker in lots of written text to find back a specific fragment.

During events, we write collectively on etherpad pages. A keyword is added whenever is written a phrase or paragraph that is relevant to a specific thematic. Through these keywords, the relevant bits of text can be grouped, and for example used in preparation of a publication, giving a glimpse into fragments of contrasting types of writing/ thinking around a similar theme.

*Below is a selection of fragments from the snowpoles: +
+ableist-questioning-framework++ and +
+Interdependencies++ which were used in the context of the worksession "A Cane, Sticky notes and Another body", December 2024 in the Museum Dr. Guislain.*

ableist-questioning-framework

Today was kind and confusing, a day filled with encounters and questions. Coming in and feeling the ghosts, but being touched by the beauty of the building nevertheless. Then sitting and feeling comfortable with a group who knows how to hold space gently. Feeling unsure of what this is all about, trying to piece it together. Bit by bit, wandering in the space, supervised or not, awestruck by all that's there. Also feeling yourself being more comfortable expressing and being present with your own divergence, in a space that allows it. At times, feeling bored or upset, because of the hazy frame. At times, feeling warmth and flexibility that are too absent from this world. Many spaces are there, waiting to be explored.

Natural realities of the planet that exist beyond our comprehension/capacity. We are using terms and organising specific ways where ecology, technology or war fit.

framework: how do we think about the world and how this informs how we think about tech and other topics in general.

If we are thinking about small and vernacular tech, it's like different perspectives than what has been discussed here. How does tech fit different environments and contexts? Using technology in terms of different contexts.

Thought experiment:
not thinking about software or abstraction or encoding of features but also to think of infrastructures, the actual networks connecting places around Earth. Thinking of different ways to be connected to places which would not have been brought up by colonialism and imperialism

"By endorsing accessible futures, we refuse to treat access as an issue of technical compliance or rehabilitation, as a simple technological fix, or a checklist. Instead we define access as collective, messy, experimental, frictional and generative. Accessible future requires our interdependence."
Crip technoscience Manifesto, 2019

Questions: why so analogue? - **to avoid technosolutionist attitudes - to depart from people's needs rather than technological constraints**

(–is this how you use a snowpole? – almost! two plusses around the tag, five plusses above and under the quote;)) (– thank you so much)

What about positioning disabilities within "more" or less frameworks? Is that how we wanna think about this?

What about the fact that we're asked to make work regularly about disability? neurodivergence? This kind of forcing or legitimizing into a boxed certain context, what about that?

Interdependencies

1977 504 sit-in black panther and disability justice
 One of the 504 Sit-in participants Corbett Joan O'Toole shared, "At that time in history, there was simply no access — no right to an education, no public transit. You couldn't get into a library or city hall, much less a courtroom." Disabled people wanted to see the government committed to disability inclusion and access. The disabled activists warned that if Joseph A. Califano Jr., who served as the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare during President Jimmy Carter's administration, didn't take action by April 4th, nationwide protests would ensue.

Most of the protests happening across the country ended that day. However, the story in San Francisco was different. Following the San Francisco rally, nearly 150 people with disabilities streamed into the Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) Federal Building. They began climbing to the fourth floor where the HEW regional offices were located. Over 120 activists occupied the building, and they refused to leave the federal building until their demands were met, even when threatened with arrest and eviction.

The disabled protesters worked closely with and received support from a wide range of organizations and individuals, including labor unions, religious groups, and civil rights activists. Groups that supported the 504 protesters included the Black Panther Party, Glide Memorial Church, Gay Men's Butterfly Brigade, Delancey Street, the United Farm Workers, the Gray Panthers, Salvation Army, and more. Because of this, the 504 Sit-in is considered an important moment for cross-movement organizing.

<https://disabilityrightsflorida.org/blog/entry/504-sit-in-history>

Is the question like --> how to choose your own dependencies and is that possible?

"Freedom and friendship used to mean the same thing: intimate, interdependent relationships and the commitment to face the world together. At its root, relational freedom isn't about being unrestricted: it might mean the capacity for interconnectedness and attachment. Or mutual support and care. Or shared gratitude and openness to an uncertain world. Or a new capacity to fight alongside others. But this is not what freedom has come to mean under Empire."

"Friend" and "free" in English ... come from the same Indo-European root, which conveys the idea of a shared power that grows. Being free and having ties was one and the same thing. I am free because I have ties, because I am linked to a reality greater than me."[49]

A few centuries later, freedom became untied from connectedness. The seventeenth-century philosopher Thomas Hobbes imagined freedom as nothing more than an "absence of opposition" possessed by isolated, selfish individuals. For Hobbes, the free man is constantly armed and on guard: "When going to sleep, he locks his doors;

when even in his house he locks his chests."[50] The free individual lives in fear, and can only feel secure when he knows there are laws and police to protect him and his possessions. He is definitely he, because this individual is also founded on patriarchal male supremacy and its associated divisions of mind/body, aggression/submission, rationality/emotion, and so on. His so-called autonomy is inseparable from his exploitation of others.

When peasants were "freed," during this period, it often meant that they had been forced from their lands and their means of subsistence, leaving them "free" to sell their labor for a wage in the factories, or starve. It is no coincidence that these lonely conceptions of freedom arose at the same time as the European witch trials, the enclosure of common lands, the rise of the transatlantic slave trade, and the colonization and genocide of the Americas. At the same time as the meaning of freedom was divorced from friendship and connection, the lived connections between people and places were being dismembered.

Joyful Militancy — Chapter 2 : Friendship, Freedom, Ethics, Affinity

...

I thought things would be more social - this is not the anarchism that I need.

how can you do open source medicine? -- access to medicine and the DIY aspect of it --

imperialism & empiricism --> not the same things
empires and how people - the power structures you are in, an academic look into it how big farma holds patents

Helminthic therapy wiki:

"Solid scientific evidence shows that millions of years of co-evolution have created a symbiotic relationship between humans and helminths that provides us with essential immune regulation."

"This site presents the extensive research supporting this practice, along with more than a thousand personal stories demonstrating it's effects, plus tips to help manage the therapy and optimise its benefits. This is a collaborative, crowd-sourced site administered by volunteers with no commercial interest in the therapy."
bodies getting sick from the lack of exchanges with the environment improving health through such paradigm cannot be accomplished through a capitalist economy solidarity and alternative networks are necessary to support people's healing outside a capitalist framework
<https://www.helminthictherapywiki.org>

What does it mean to shift our ideas of access and care (whether it's disability, childcare, economic access, or many more) from an individual chore, an unfortunate cost of having an unfortunate body, to a collective responsibility that's maybe even deeply joyful? What does it mean for our movements? Our communities/fam? Ourselves and our own lived experience of disability and chronic illness? What does it mean to wrestle with these ideas of softness and strength, vulnerability, pride, asking for help, and not—all of which are so deeply raced and classed and gendered? If collective access is revolutionary love without charity, how do we learn to love each other? How do we learn to do this love work of collective care that lifts us instead of abandons us, that grapples with all the deep ways in which care is complicated.

Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha

"It seems to me that we're all supported in our movements by various kinds of things that are external to us. We all need certain kind of surfaces, we need certain kinds of shoes, certain kinds of weather, and even internally we need to be ambulatory in certain ways that may or may not be fully operative in all of us. And I'm just thinking that a walk always requires a certain kind of technique, a certain support. Nobody takes a walk without something that supports that walk, something outside of ourselves. And maybe we have a false idea that the able-bodied person is somehow radically self sufficient."

"I think that idea translates also into so many other, different fields, this idea of independence. That an able-bodied person can take a walk independently without anything else is sort of a myth. They do always need certain ground, they do need shoes, as you said, they need social support. And I think that's something that definitely affects the image of disabled people. That somehow disabled people are perceived as more dependent, or that they are the ones that are dependent, when in actuality we are all interdependent, that is, dependent on different structures and on each other."

Sunaura Taylor in conversation with Judith Butler
(Interdependance)

"First, it's a false divide to make a we/them: either able-minded, able-bodied, or disabled. After all, how cultures define, think about, and treat those who currently have marked disabilities is how all its future citizens may well be perceived if and when those who are able-bodied become less abled than they are now: by age, degeneration, or some sudden — or gradual — change in physical or mental capacities. All people, over the course of their lives, traffic between times of relative independence and dependence. So the questions cultures ask, the technologies they invent, and how those technologies broadcast a message about their users — weakness and strength, agency and passivity — are critical ones. And they're not just questions for scientists and policy-makers; they're aesthetic questions too. Second, in many cultures — and certainly in the US — a pervasive, near-obsession with averages and statistical norms about bodies and capacities has become a naturalized form of describing both individuals and populations. But this way of measuring people and populations is historically very recent, and worth reconsidering."

"Well — it's worth saying again: All technology is assistive technology. Honestly — what technology are you using that's not assistive? Your smartphone? Your eyeglasses? Headphones? And those three examples alone are assisting you in multiple registers: They're enabling or augmenting

a sensory experience, say, or providing navigational information. But they're also allowing you to decide whether to be available for approach in public, or not; to check out or in on a conversation or meeting in a bunch of subtle ways; to identify, by your choice of brand or look, with one culture group and not another. Making a persistent, overt distinction about "assistive tech" embodies the second-tier do-gooderism and banality that still dominate design work targeted toward "special needs." "Assistive technology" implies a separate species of tools designed exclusively for those people with a rather narrow set of diagnostic "impairments" — impairments, in other words, that have been culturally designated as needing special attention, as being particularly, grossly abnormal. But are you sure your phone isn't a crutch, as it were, for a whole lot of unexamined needs?"

All Technology Is Assistive - Sara Hendren

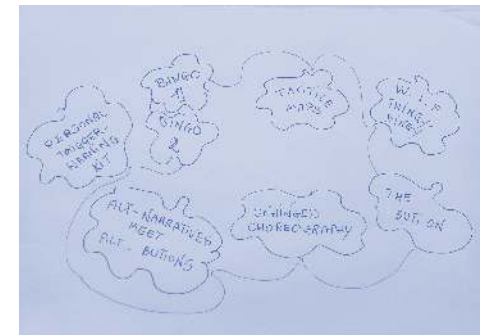
As Caroline Lazard says "Access has this capacity to break through mediums. Contents might exist as a description, as sign language, as a transcript, or as a tactile object." How do you feel about the coexistence of different mediums? Do they add to each other? Do they interfere with your understanding?

WORKSESSION A CANE, STICKY NOTES, ANOTHER BODY

AN AFTERNOON OF PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

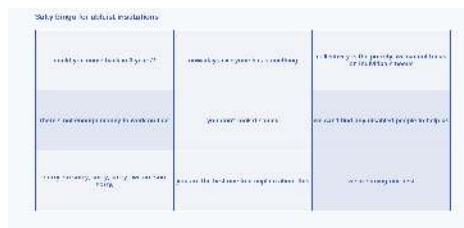
In the afternoon of Saturday 7th of December 2024, the participants at the worksession A Cane, Sticky notes, Another Body shared, between themselves and with some visitors, the ideas that popped up during a week of closely working, eating, getting frustrated, thinking, relaxing, feeling uncomfortable and laughing together. These ideas took different forms.

The titles of the presentations are spread on a whiteboard. Each title is encircled in a little cloud. There is a thread that links the clouds, following their chronological order. The clouds linked by the thread form a wobbly circle.



SALTY BINGO FOR ABLEIST INSTITUTION

What better way to express and share one's frustrations with public institutions that are meant to be inclusive but are often ableist than through a lively selection of 'salty' songs? The Salty Bingo for Ableist Institution was born.

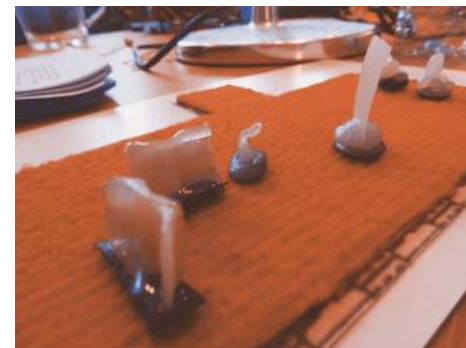


A screenshot from the Bingo website. The title of the Bingo is in the centre, on top of the page. Underneath the title, a bingo card is displayed. The card is composed of nine rectangles. Each rectangle contains a phrase. 3 rectangles are highlighted.

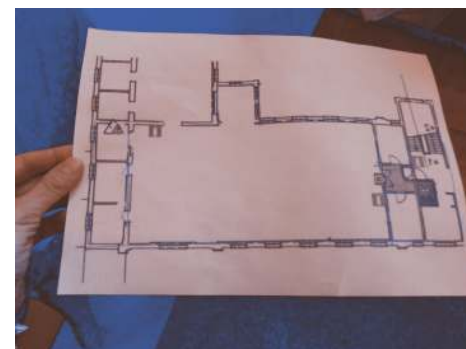
TACTILE MAPS

A Map is a Promise! Often museum's directions for disable people are very static and not efficient as they promised to be. They are put together in a specific moment in time, then art works and furniture are moved around, but the tactile maps don't change. As usual it costs money to do that. How to navigate in these everchanging spaces? What about a felt map where objects can be moved and put back in the right place by the visitors themselves? Or a map made of stitches like a dress?

A close up of a map made in felt. The base of the map represents the floor of the room. Different shapes are attached to it. They are made in silicon and represents the removable walls where the paintings are hung, sculptures, armchairs and benches.



A hand is holding a sheet of paper. On it a map of a museum room is stitched with a dark thread.



W.I.P THINGY-DINGY INSTALLATION

The Museum Dr Guislain, where we were hosted, was an important presence during the whole week, for its past history as a psychiatric hospital and for its imposing group of old brick buildings. To deal with this, sometimes it is better to look at things through a different, reduced perspective, for exemple through a lens, negatives and sunlight (or a pocket light on a grey winter day).



A cardboard box is photographed at an angle. There are slits cut in the upper face. Photographic negatives are threaded into the slits. The light from a portable lamp illuminates the negatives on the left. A laptop computer, a window, and a projection screen can be glimpsed in the background.

THE BUTT-ON

Buttons and how to rethink them in a non-normative way took a lot of place during this thematic year and also during the worksession. And it was fun! They could be activated by other parts of our body like in the case of the pillow *Butt-on*.



A person is holding a flat grey pillow with two hands. On the pillow is sewn the word **Trust** with white thread. Another person is holding on their lap a black portable computer covered with stickers.

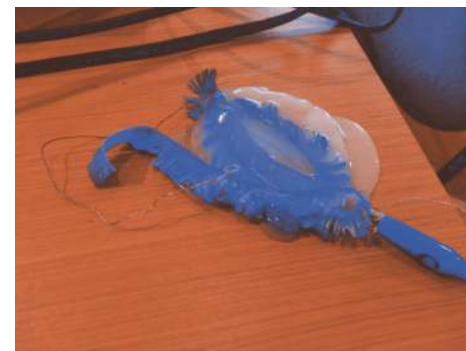
ALT-NARRATIVES MEET ALT-BUTTONS

Or they can speak to us, telling stories in a soft voice.

A photo taken from above of an installation resting on a wooden table. The installation consists of colorful cables, electrical circuits, a socket, and crocheted and fabric objects.



A close-up of one of the buttons present in the installation. The button has a V shape and is made of a blue glittering fabric and silicon.



UNHINGED CHOREOGRAPHY

The permanent exhibition of the collection of the Museum Dr Guislain was called *Unhinged* or *Déséquilibré* in French and *Op losse schroeven* in Dutch. This expression puzzled us greatly. Different languages and translations, idioms, the

way they are used, can be very problematic for people with neurodivergences and represent a real threshold that is difficult to cross. So there was an attempt to re-interpret the exhibition's title through the language of the body, a way of visualising it through an *unhinged choreography*.



This is a picture of a dance choreography in a series of four. A dancer dressed with dark trousers and a white, long-sleeves T-shirt is bending to the floor. There are two carpets on the floor, one big and one small, with colorful patterns. People are standing or sitting all around the dancer. There are also small tables and armchairs and a lamp.



This is a picture of a dance choreography in a series of four. A dancer dressed with dark trousers and a white, long-sleeves T-shirt is bending to the floor, leaning on his left side. There are two carpets on the floor, one big and one small, with colorful patterns. Behind the dancer a person is standing. She is dressed in black with white shoes, she wears glasses and is reading on a telephone. People are standing or sitting all around the dancer. There are also small tables and armchairs and a lamp.

This is a picture of a dance choreography in a series of four. A close-up of a dancer dressed with dark trousers and a white, long-sleeves T-shirt while he is rolling with his legs up on a colorful carpet.



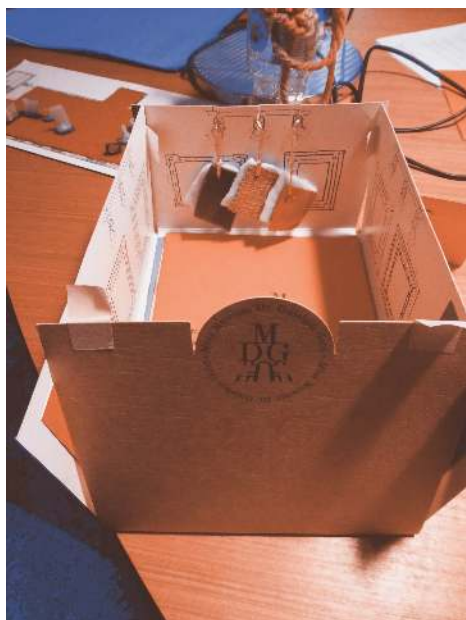
This is a picture of a dance choreography in a series of four. A dancer dressed with dark trousers and a white, long-sleeves T-shirt is lying on his belly on the floor. There are two carpets on the floor, one big and one small, with colorful patterns. People are standing or sitting all around the dancer. There are also small tables and armchairs and a lamp.



PERSONAL TRIGGER-WARNINGS PROTOTYPE

Often the personal and collective exchanges we had during the week revolved around the difficulty of relating to *material* with an emotional and historical charge. Is it right to show objects that may offend or hurt the sensitivity of the spectators? Should we warn the spectators in advance without breaking the magic of discovering a new performance? And how to decide which is a 'sensitive

subject' and which is not, without excluding other sensitivities and points of view? Maybe we should just let the visitors decide for themselves and leave their own *comments*, if they like. For this purpose a kit of sensory pins were created: made of fabric or other materials that were interesting to the touch, and following a colour code, they could be hanged next to a particularly problematic item showed in the exhibition, for exemple. Or a very plesant one as well!



A cardboard box with the museum logo is on a table. The upper face is missing and you can see the inside. The inner part of the box is drawn in black and white like a museum room with paintings hanging on the walls. Three small squared cloths of different colors are attached with a golden cord to one inner side of the box.

BINGO FOR LITTLE WINS

We ended the afternoon on a light tone with a round of a bingo for little wins!

ALT-TEXT AS TEXT

ALTERNATE ACCESS

Image descriptions, also known as alt-text, help blind people and people with visual impairments to access images and other visual content. They are one of the most known code-based accessibility technology, thanks to the work of institutional standard organisations such as W3C's WACG, but also thanks to the efforts of communities inhabiting text-based social media.

Even though it is now associated with visually impaired folks and screen-readers, it has not been developed with disabilities in mind. In fact, it is an old legacy function made available since the early stages of HTML, when the support for images was added to web pages in 1992. At the outset, its purpose was related to the fact that the newly supported images would not be accessible to some users with different equipment. While computers with graphical user interfaces and visual browsers were becoming common, many users still used a text-based interface and text-based browser. The newer `` tag was then designed to include an "alt" attribute for older browsers without image support, offering an alternate rendition of the same element.

It is not a coincidence that it was a system developed to keep a diverse technological ecosystem (extending a feature to older text-based browsers) that turned out to provide the means to widen access to millions of blind and

visually impaired folks. And alt-text is still useful for overcoming other access barriers too, for example in areas with poor internet coverage it allows to alternatively read images that would otherwise take ages to load. They are completely different issues of access, but doing things with a care for and awareness of an exclusion can have outcomes that go beyond the initial aim, offering a useful means to tackle other exclusions later on.

CARE ROUTINES

For the past 18 years Constant has been using SPIP for its website. While alt-text attributes are well supported in SPIP, during our last website redevelopment, 7 years ago, we did not pay attention to these textual descriptions. As in 2024 we started the process to develop our new website, we realized this lack and we agreed on making accessibility a priority from the beginning. Alt-text is one of the easiest first steps to take, so without waiting for the new website, it was relatively quick to fix the templates and add correct alt-text support in the current SPIP website.

Still, at the time of writing this text, a quick look at the source code of our homepage revealed that most of the images attached to our newer articles did not have an alt-text attached. Even after the discussions and the decisions. Why? Partly, because it is one more step in the flow of making articles appear on a website every month, a flow we sometimes struggle to find space-time for. To enable a new form of collective attention, you need to think where to place this task in-between the many steps that are involved in meaning-making. While writing this text, it was easy to

find where to place alt-text writing from now on, in a structural way. In our bi-weekly meetings, one recurring task we check in with each other are the translations of the articles for our newsletter (we work in three languages, English, Dutch and French, but not everyone speaks them fluently). The task of translation is assigned at one line of the meeting's etherpad, so adding an "Alt-text check" next to the "Translation check" will make it happen from now on.

This is a pretty trivial way to place a form of care in the everyday practices, and there are many different approaches. If the one described above is more "organizational", other approaches available are more "technical". For example, Wagtail, the free and open-source CMS we are working with to develop our new website, pays particular attention to accessibility issues, for example signaling all images that do not provide alternative text rendition to the editor.

ALT-TEXT AS WORK...

Writing alt-text is care and it is work, and it is important to reflect on how we relate to this type of work that has the effect of widening access. From the disability justice movement (<https://circulations.constantvzw.org/2024/drempel/reader/2-physical-spaces-building-access/funambulist-disordinary-architecture.pdf>) we learn that it is fundamental to understand this work as something that enriches our practice and the significance we try to put in it, rather than a daunting task to add to the to-do pile. Seeing it as a boring task that will use up limited resources is an ableist relation to what one does, and a missed

opportunity for opening another channel of meaning-making.

As in all other contexts, when we deal with accessibility, when we talk about work and limited time/resources, we will inevitably be solicited with technological solutions to tackle some of the work. It is quite a layered question, and following alt-text as a track, we get a sharp but nuanced cut through these layers.

There are plenty of so-called “AI solutions” available, such as the ones that Microsoft and other GAFAMs have built-in to automate alt-texts in their aquariums. Preparing presentations in Office 365 you will be offered a one-click solution to add automated alternate descriptions to your slides, and Meta's platforms are fully alt-texting images for you “automagically”. Ironically, the same companies that are actively limiting access to their platforms due to their economical model (not seeing content without accounts, freemium models, mass advertising with its visual overload, etc.), also seem to champion some forms of accessibility. When we choose to refuse their services, because we refuse to depend on extractive, ecocidal, fascist-leaning platforms such as OpenAI, Microsoft and Meta, we still remain with the open question of possibly automated accessibility features.

In fact, this question appears outside of corporate gated communities, too. On the federated social media network Mastodon, both the network's user base and its software developers are more attentive to accessibility questions

than on its corporate counterparts. It is refreshing to see how the question is approached on such a de-centralized platform: different methods are proposed, more than one way is available. Regarding alt-texts, we can consider the example of two user-developed “bots” to deal with undescribed images, with different degrees of automation. If you choose to follow the alt-text reminder, developed by @pup_hime, this bot will privately notify you when you post an image forgetting to add an alt-text. In the same situation, instead, the Altbot by MicrObyte will use Google's Gemini image recognition capabilities to reply in public with an automated description of the un-described image.

Choosing between two bots seems an easy choice of how one decides to go about alt-text, but once again it is not a binary question, in reality there will be many situations where you want to use just *some* automated alt-text. In our case, while we can write alt-text for newly added pictures, in Constant's 17-year archive of past activities most images would still be without description. It is very unlikely we will have the time to go and do this work, so nuanced in-between solutions are to be considered, for example writing them where they would be most needed, or generating the description with a less-rotten image recognition model. But the question of work would not disappear, it would just hide deeper.

...AND AS HETEROMATION

Automated alt-text is still work, even though a different type of work. The image recognition tools that generate these descriptions have all been developed by “training” models

on a dataset of annotated images. Each image in the model has a corresponding description, and by millions of repeated correlations these models will extract the association of a certain pixel-shape to a certain set of words. This is the extracted work of millions of descriptions, of various kinds and from various sources. But who has done the work of annotating millions and millions of pictures? We found a very insightful analysis of one such image dataset in Christo Buschek and Jer Thorp's text "Models all the way down".

In a fascinating close-circuit, we find out that the annotations that come associated with the massive image collections are in fact "scraped" from existing alt-texts on the web. In the image dataset LAION-5B, one of the most common datasets used by image recognition models to distil from millions of image-text pairs, these are some of the sources of those alt-texts:

- SlidePlayer allows users to upload their PowerPoint slides, so it will attach ALT text to images based on the text that users wrote in the slides.
- Pinterest prompts its users to write ALT tags before they 'pin' their images, as these become the captions for the images, too.
- Shopify users often have their eyes on high Google PageRank scores, so they will write ALT tag descriptions with SEO (Search Engine Optimization) in mind.
- All of this means that ALT tags are not so much descriptions of image contents as they are artifacts of the web's workings and of creators' retail ambitions.

Researchers Hamid Ekbia and Bonnie Nardi have proposed the word heteromation to describe this seemingly magic relation to the work that happens in other moments and in places we do not see. It is good to keep in mind how what work will be mobilized to produce the alt-text: the distilled efforts of all those annotators, their biases, the different extractive logics involved will be virtually called in in every text generation.

ALT-TEXT AS MEANING-MAKING

It is worth making a conscious decision, trying to be realistic with what is the work that we choose to dedicate to, while keeping a radical understanding of how our resources are invested. One needs to refuse the scarcity framework of ableism that treats access questions as 'extra work', and at the same time one needs to deal with capitalist time that is organizing everyone's practices. DIY solutions are always an option, but they might only get so far, in many cases automation will add a basic layer of access that would not be there otherwise.

From the point of view of Constant, a structurally funded cultural and artistic organization, we chose to do the future work without mobilizing so-called AI, in the same way as we write and translate articles without delegating them to be written by a Large Language Model. As the core of our publicly funded work is caring for our relation to the world and for the meaning that circulates through our activities and publications, we choose not to have that meaning be organized by something so intertwined with extractive practices. We now consider alt-text writing as an integral

part of our work, that is in relation with the surrounding text, the image and the rest of what is published. And this relation is alive and multiplies meaning in all directions.

An amazing and inspiring example of the effects that this type of care can have, can be seen in the movie **Ancestral Clouds Ancestral Claims** by Arjuna Neuman and Denise Ferreira da Silva, a beautiful critical work revolving around Lithium extraction in the Atacama desert of Chile. The movie proposes a special form of closed-captioning for its whole duration: apart from the subtitles to the spoken word, the music and sounds heard are described in another part of the screen, adding an additional layer throughout the whole movie. The concise poetic attention that was paid to these descriptions has an effect beyond the one of making the work accessible for d/Deaf and hard-of-hearing people. That careful form of writing and interpreting is shared with every viewer, adding just another layer to this brilliant movie.



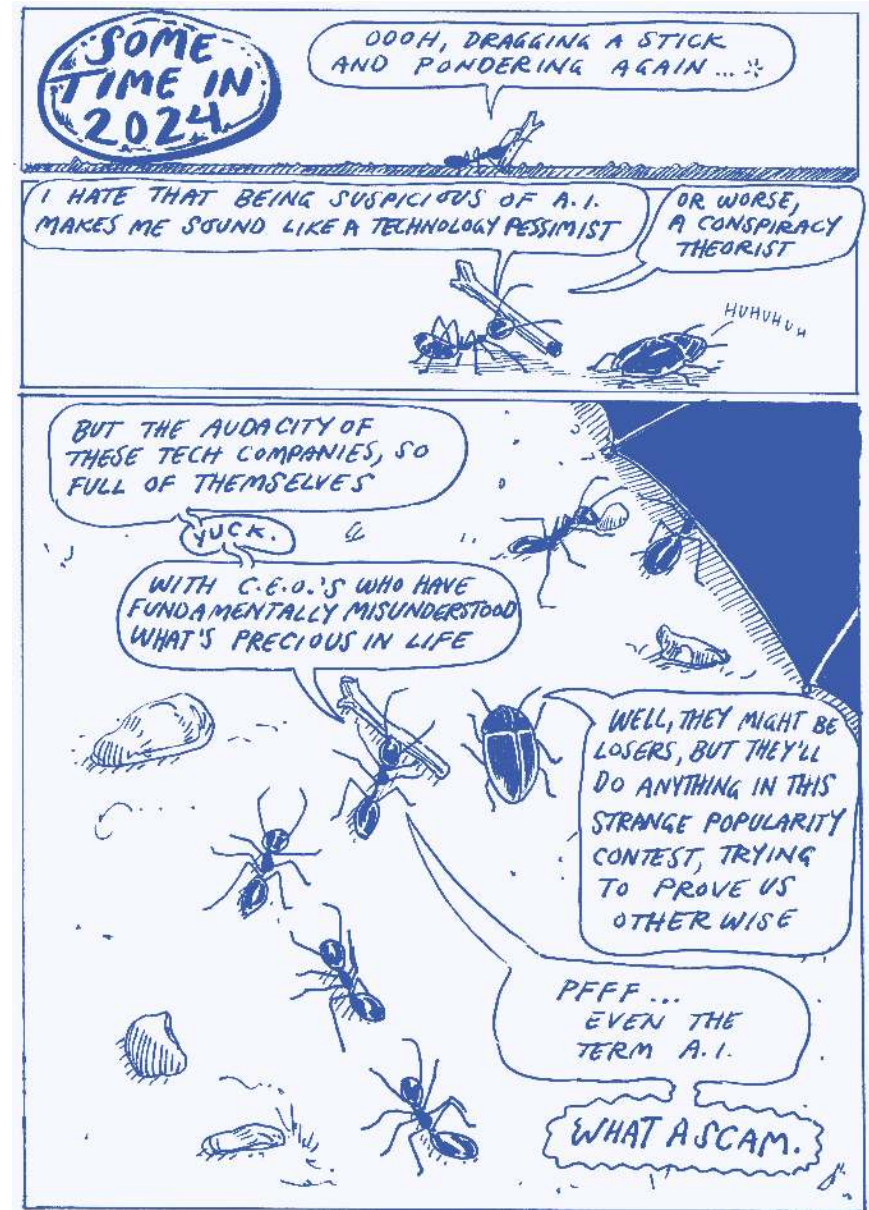
Screen capture from the movie: an aerial view of a coast, the dark sea meeting dusty rocky soil, with the caption "blues hum, an anticipation"



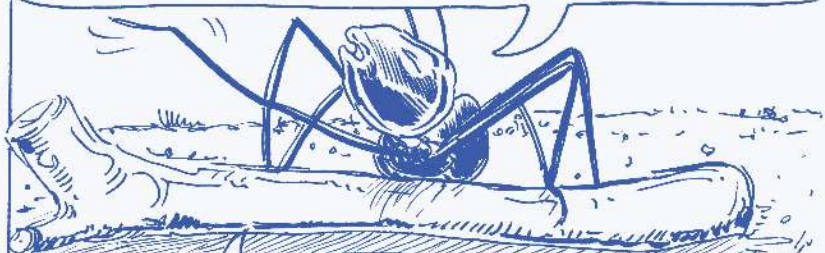
Screen capture from the movie: large conduits running along a road in the middle of a rocky desert, stretching back in the foggy horizon, with the caption "thick watery hiss pushes through the folk melody"

BUGS IN THE BRAIN

There are bugs in our brains, echoing conversations we have been having recently. Unresolved ramblings, returning questions with undefined answers. This time they're speculating about so-called artificial intelligence.



JUST A REBRANDING OF MACHINE LEARNING AND DATA-DEPENDENT APPROACHES. BUNCH OF BOUGHT UP LABS AND START-UPS PROMOTING A.I. AS A MULTI-TOOL FOR EFFICIENCY AND PRECISION

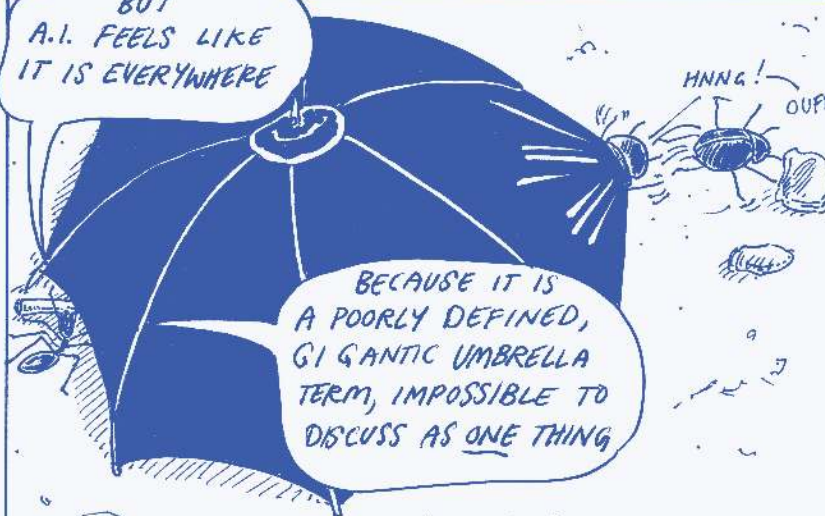


AND LOW AND BEHOLD, NOW A.I.

"IS"

AN INESCAPEABLE PRODUCT OF BREAKTHROUGH INNOVATION

BUT A.I. FEELS LIKE IT IS EVERYWHERE



BECAUSE IT IS A POORLY DEFINED, GI GANTIC UMBRELLA TERM, IMPOSSIBLE TO DISCUSS AS ONE THING

HNNG! OUFF.



YEAH. WHAT ISN'T A.I. AT THIS POINT?

SOON EVEN THE PREDICTION OF A LOUSE HIDING UNDER THIS PEBBLE WHEN IT RAINS QUALIFIES AS A.I.

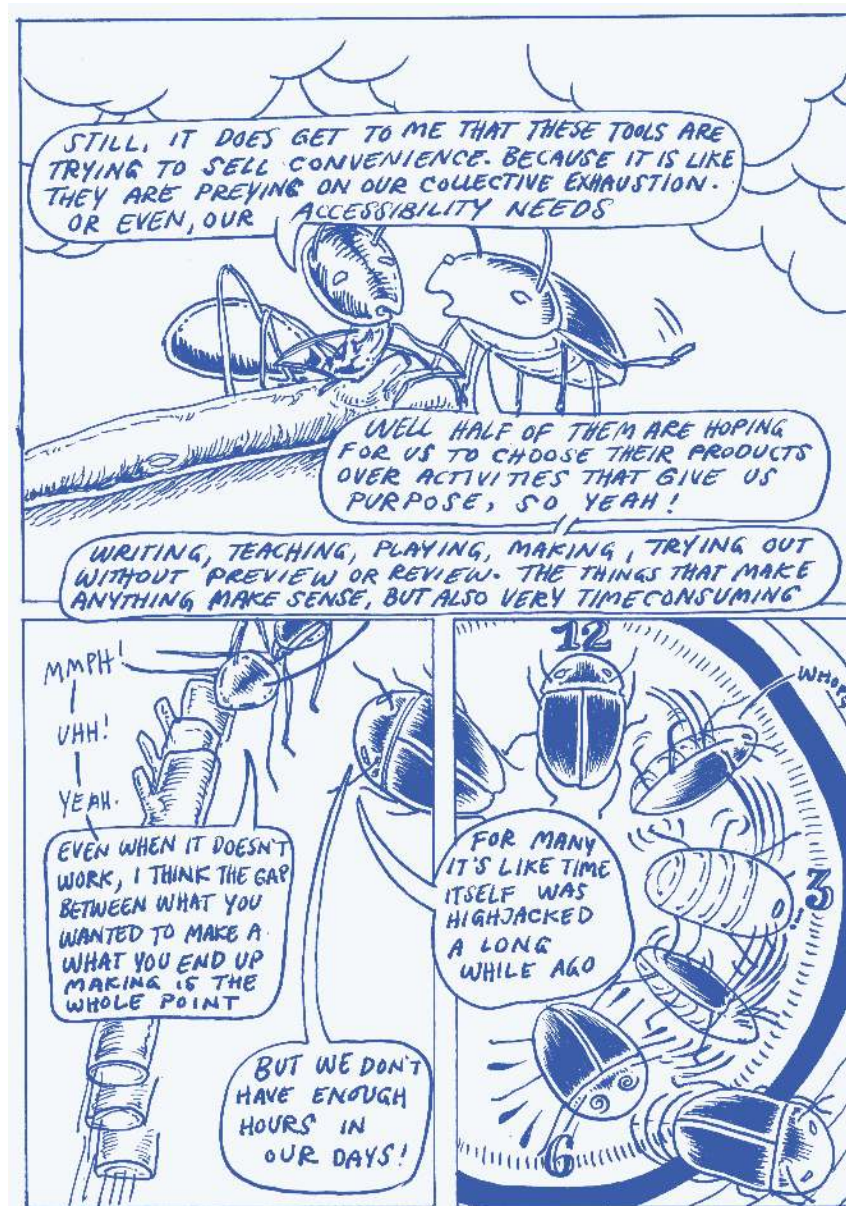
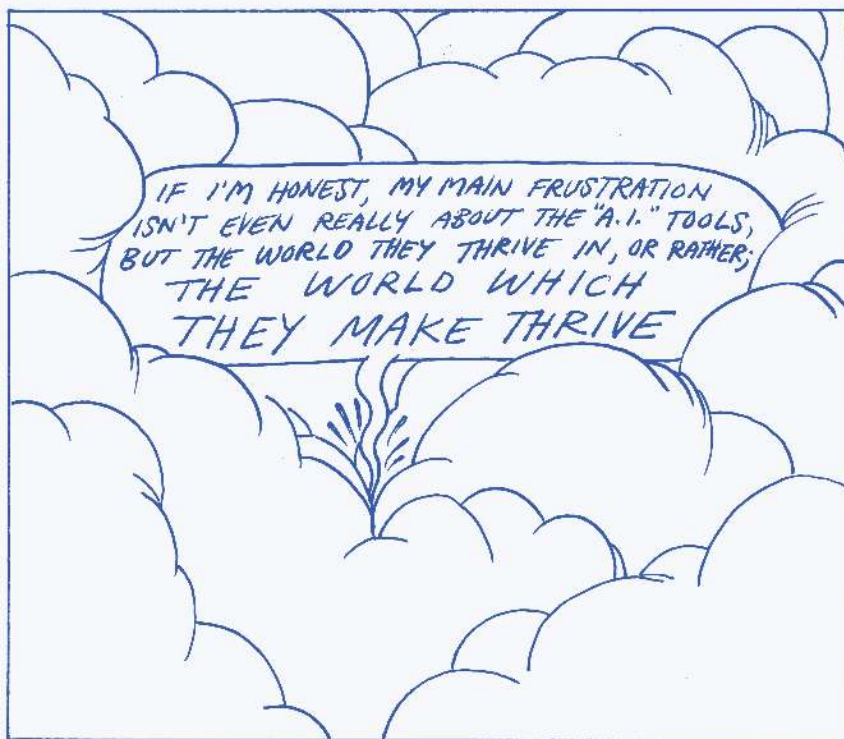


NEVER SAY NEVER. IF THE PEBBLE ONLY WOULD'VE BEEN SCALEABLE AND ALSO USEFUL AS A WEAPON OF WAR, IT MIGHT GET SOME A.I.-FUNDING TOO

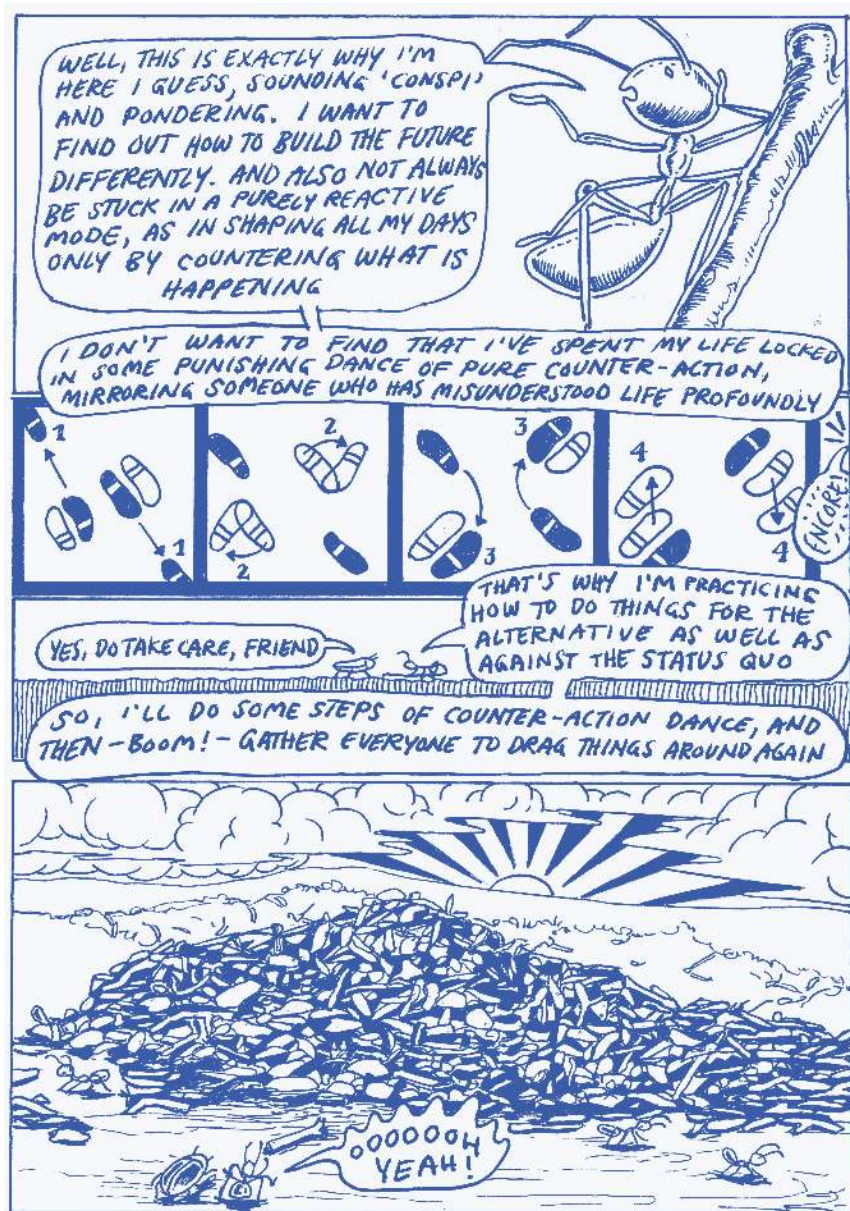
BUT THERE MUST'VE BEEN MEANING TO THE ORIGINAL

CLOUD SERVICES THAT FLIPPED FROM SERVING US TO USING EVERYONE WITH A SMARTPHONE AS ITS OWN DATA-COLLECTING SERVANT.

UFF!



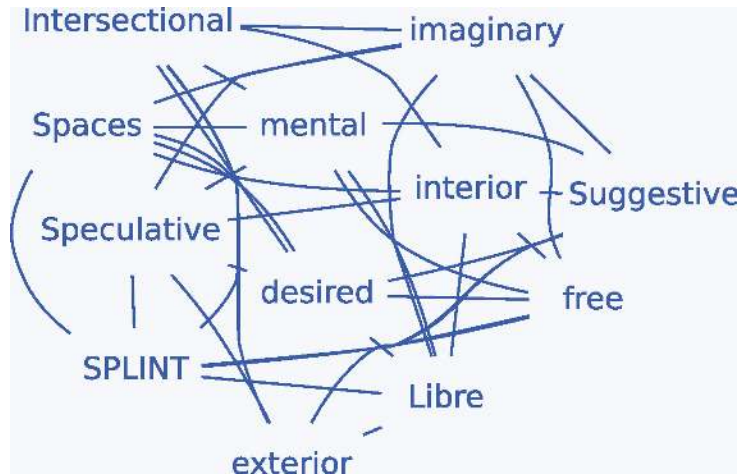
ASSOCIATING ASSOCIATIONS



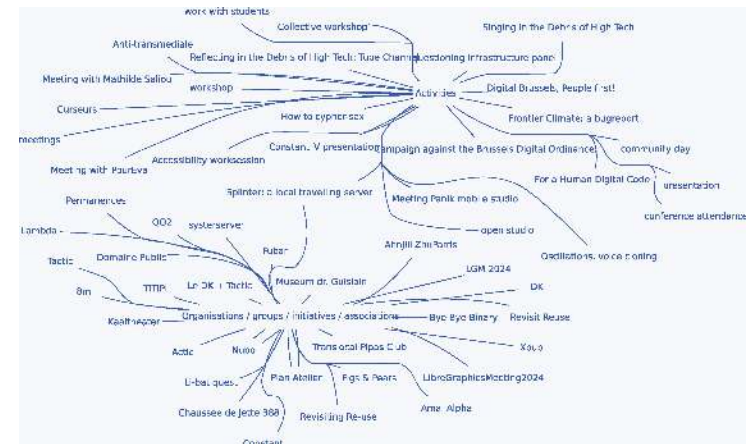
The graphs below and elsewhere in this zine, are attempts to visualise relations that occur throughout the work of Constant. Using a diagram-generating software called 'tardigraph'°, terms, names, places and practices, intentions and ambitions that come from our 2024 programme are associated. The outcome is often quite incomprehensible, very much due to the inexperience of the maker :-)

but what is nice is that it does allow for different kinds of readings of the relationalities, densities, proximities, interrelations, multiconnections and recurrences of what went on during 2024.

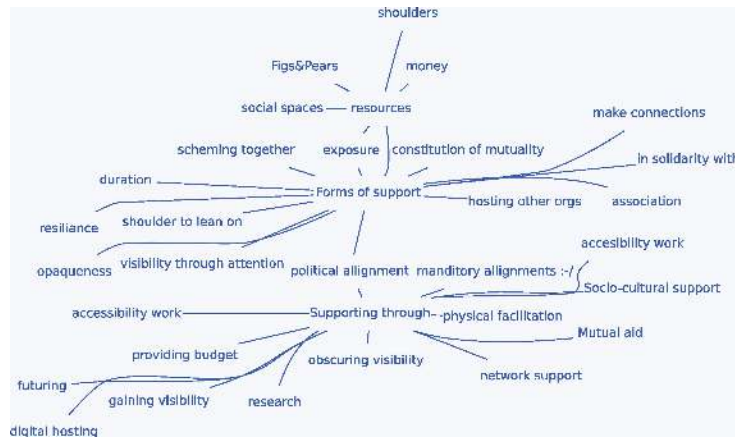
°code available: <https://gitlab.constantvzw.org/titipi/tardigraph>



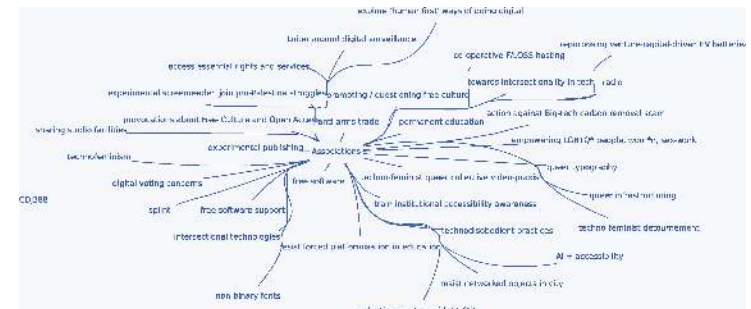
The above graph attempts to relate two things: Our long running framework **SPLINT** which stands for: Speculative Libre INtersectional Technologies, and different types of **spaces**: Mental spaces, suggestive, free, exterior, interior, desired, imaginary spaces. By exchanging the adjectives both key notions open up for new meanings.



Constant organises public and semi-public **activities** but is also engaged with **people, organisations, structures and groups** in different ways that are less visible on the program. Reasons can be to study something together, to join collective brainstorm, to scheme actions, to formulate critiques, or to support research and development processes.



We team up with many for various reasons: to imagine alternatives, to think together around urgencies that arise or with situations that need attention. Concretely, Constant can **support** with **resource**, but also with time and energy. To give an example: the beautiful work that Tactic organised in DK throughout the year 2024 was announced through our newsletter. Constant is also supported by others: we joined the network-of-networks, temporarily called the Translocal Pipas Club made of comrades from The Institute for Technology in the Public Interest, Varia, the Cell for digital discomforts and others. The Translocal Pipas Club gathered around a research on 'Anti-Colonial Tech through Resistance and Discomfort' that was prepared for, but eventually withdrawn from the Transmediale Festival, as a result from TM's decision to leave no space for expressing any form of solidarity with Palestine in times of genocide.



As a an association run by artists, designers, researchers and hackers, Constant creates collaborative situations that engage with the challenges of contemporary techno-life. The graph shows interests and affinities that were mentioned in the activity program of 2024, such as for example: experimental printing, practices of techno-feminist queer collective video, in(ter)dependent hosting, queering typography or accessibility awareness. Through these, Constant **associates** with a distributed network of friends, people, allies, partners, organisations, in past present and future.

CDJ CALENDAR

This is a print of the collective agenda for the shared space that we keep between the artists working in the studio building CDJ388. The space is for mixed usage, sometimes research and production for diverse artistic projects, sometimes workshops for invited people, sometimes modest public moments.

| | |
|----|---|
| 1 | .._NOPUBLISH.. |
| 2 | |
| 3 | CHAUSSÉE DE JETTE |
| 4 | ----- |
| 5 | CALENDAR FOR DOWNSTAIRS COMMON SPACE |
| 6 | ----- |
| 7 | ** 2 0 2 4 ** |
| 8 | |
| 9 | JANUARY |
| 10 | 8-21 : Sarah, Marius, Alex : Felting (need all the space) |
| 11 | |
| 12 | FEBRUARY |
| 13 | 2-3 February TITIPI/PIP meeting |
| 14 | Alexander, Sarah and Marius : Our residency in February got postponed so if no one |
| 15 | needs the space we will use until the internal worksession :) |
| 16 | 17 February TITIPI annual meeting (Femke) |
| 17 | 29 February presentation of This System is Killing Us book (might move elsewhere) |
| 18 | |
| 19 | MARCH |
| 20 | 12 March: drempe! drempe! drempe! worksession of Constant |
| 21 | 19 + 20 March: Femke with Antje Guenther |
| 22 | |
| 23 | APRIL |
| 24 | 1-5 April : Declarations worksession by Doriane (Constant_V) |
| 25 | 8-12 April : textile production Alexander & Khoulha |
| 26 | 13 (and 14?) April: Eva + Femke preparation Ecologies of dissemination |
| 27 | 17 April: TITIPI meeting (Femke) |
| 28 | 27 April -> 4 May Ecologies of dissemination CCAR revisiting (Femke, incl. build up) |
| 29 | |
| 30 | MAY |
| 31 | 27 April -> 4 May Ecologies of dissemination CCAR revisiting (Femke, incl. build up) |
| 32 | 11 May Nubo Usermeeting 15h-18h with BBQ |
| 33 | 27 May Afternoon: Constant meeting: Elodie + Sarrita |
| 34 | With some degree of privacy appreciated |
| 35 | |
| 36 | JUNE |
| 37 | 12 from 10h - 14:30 13 from 14:17:30h Festival Visuel preparations Jimena |
| 38 | 16 June Fix and repair, next meeting, BBQ |
| 39 | 17 to 19 Festival Visuel preparations - Jimena |
| 40 | 20-22 Re-appropriating lithium batteries workshop |
| 41 | 24-26 June: Doriane workshop web-fabulations |
| 42 | https://constantvw.org/site/Declarations-Website-fabulations.3912.html |
| 43 | 29 June : bday bbq for neighbour-friend + garden concert Borokov Borokov |
| 44 | |
| 45 | JULY |
| 46 | 2 and 5 What has been stored (won't be there on Tuesday morning) Jimena |
| 47 | 10-12 July Constant Websprint -> |

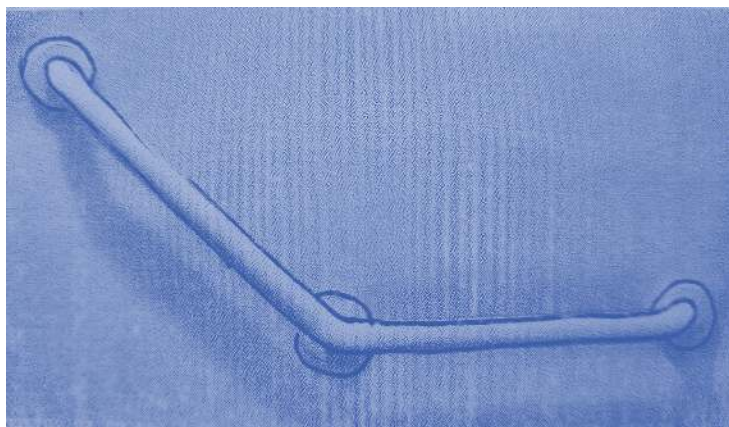
A screenshot from a etherpad page that was used by the users of the CDJ studio building to program the sharedspace in 2024

| | |
|-----|---|
| 48 | AUGUST |
| 49 | !!! No activities in the downstairs space between 19 August and mid/end September |
| 50 | (renovation works in progress) !!! |
| 51 | |
| 52 | SEPTEMBER 2024 |
| 53 | !!! No activities in the downstairs space between 19 August and mid/end September |
| 54 | (renovation works in progress) !!! |
| 55 | |
| 56 | 2 to 5 september: textile lab (Alexander & Celine) |
| 57 | |
| 58 | 6 + 7 september: workshop on website-fabulations by doriane, subscribe via |
| 59 | imane@constantvw.org or |
| 60 | https://constantvw.org/site/Declarations-Website-fabulations.3912.html |
| 61 | 8 september: Diego's b-day bbq, salads, music! welcome to join from 3pm on |
| 62 | 9 september: textile lab (Alexander & Celine) |
| 63 | 10 september 11:00-16:00 Nubo mis au vert (Femke/TITIPI) |
| 64 | 11 + 12 september: textile lab (Alexander & Celine) |
| 65 | 12 september: constant bbq! welcome to join met een (vegan)vleesje :D from 5pm to |
| 66 | 8pm (2) (constant/team) |
| 67 | 15 september: permanence emplacement (constant/martino) |
| 68 | 16 + 17 september: textile lab (Alexander & Celine) |
| 69 | 18 september: BMS battery maintenance day (constant/martino) |
| 70 | 19 + 20 september: textile lab (Alexander & Celine) |
| 71 | 21 september: Constant hackathon Commission (constant/wendy) |
| 72 | 23 to 28 september: textile lab (Alexander & Celine) |
| 73 | |
| 74 | OCTOBER |
| 75 | 1-3 What has been stored - research project Jimena |
| 76 | 4 + 5 + 6 October (including build up + clean up) research session Complicit Chipe |
| 77 | (TITIPI) |
| 78 | 7 -> 10 October (including build up + clean up) The Social Life of XG Studio Event |
| 79 | (TITIPI) |
| 80 | 14 -> 21 October (including build up + clean up) Brussels: A History of Violence, A |
| 81 | Story of --- |
| 82 | Monday 14 + Tuesday 15 October: RENAUD works on ELECTRICITY |
| 83 | 16 oktober: afternoon meeting Jubilee |
| 84 | 18 October: BMS mutualized battery meet up |
| 85 | 21 okt : textile lab Alexander & Celine |
| 86 | 24 okt: studentes Max Vantwerpen |
| 87 | 26 October: clean up weekend: prepare for demolition |
| 88 | 26 & 27 : textile lab Alexander & Celine (compatible with clean up?) |
| 89 | 28 October FIX starts RENOVATIONS COLLECTIVE SPACE OUT OF USE |
| 90 | |
| 91 | NOVEMBER |
| 92 | ACCESSIBILITY RENOVATIONS -> COLLECTIVE SPACE OUT OF USE |
| 93 | 5 November Constant collective training |
| 94 | 10 November Constant collective training |
| 95 | 10 November: House meeting |
| 96 | 18 -> 30 November : Leo would love to use the space for 4 or 5 days in end of november |
| 97 | with his collective "platform.org" - but i see that the space will be in renovation -> |
| 98 | just note it down here, in case that things change and the space might be free :) |
| 99 | |
| 100 | DECEMBER |
| 101 | RENOVATIONS COLLECTIVE SPACE OUT OF USE |
| 102 | 19 December: house meeting |
| 103 | + |
| 104 | opening party of renovated space! (cancelled) |
| 105 | |
| 106 | SC |
| 107 | |
| 108 | |
| 109 | |
| 110 | |

A screenshot from a etherpad page that was used by the users of the CDJ studio building to program the sharedspace in 2024

STUDIO ACCESSIBILITY

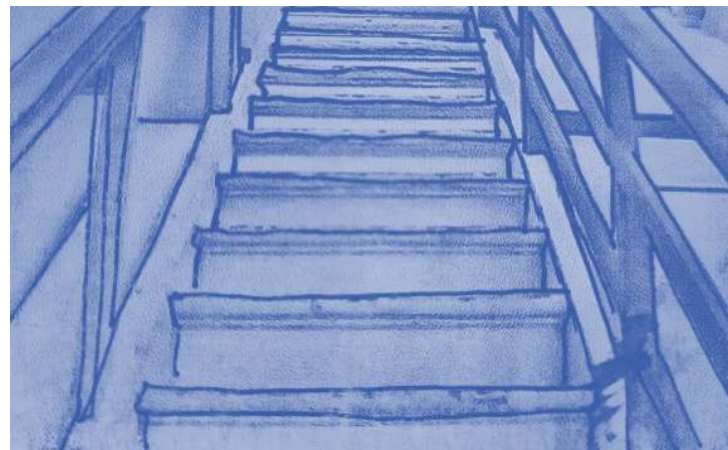
During the last months of 2024, renovations took place in the shared studio building. For accessibility reasons, some adaptations were made to the downstairs space that is used as a collective space. These are some elements that were added / altered.



Frontal view of a tubular grip of about 1 meter

Support grip in downstairs toilet

It is a big help to have some extra grip next to the toilet. This one is stable and anchored in the wall.



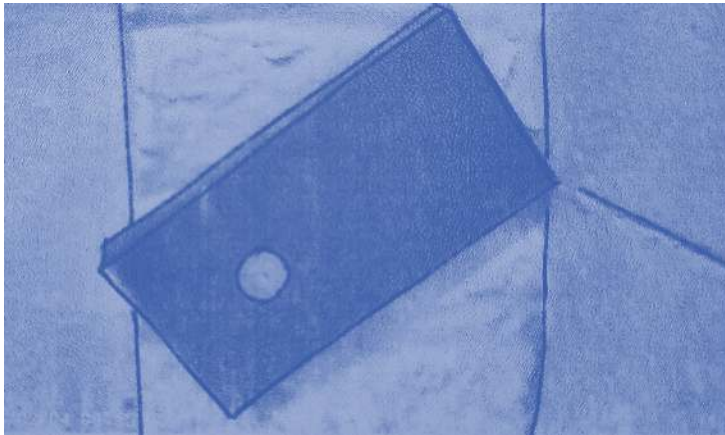
Staircase photographed from below looking upwards, showing handrails on both sides of the stairs



Detail of the end of the newly added handrail.

Stairs, added handrail

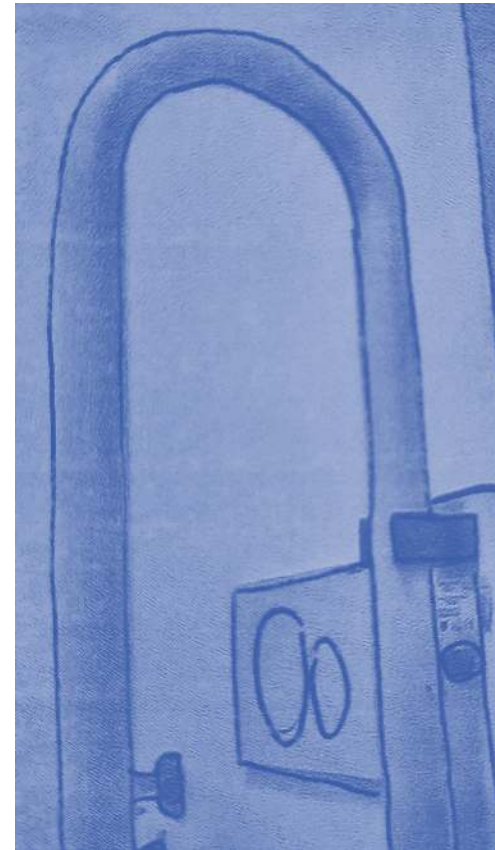
The top floor is not wheelchair accessible, there is a staircase, but no elevator. The stairs had a handrail on the open side, but not on the side of the wall. To give more grip and extra support for people who need it, a railing was added on the side of the wall.



A rectangular piece of wood attached to the wall with one screw in the middle, an axis around which it can spin

Basement cover

This turning piece of wood is a very basic solution for upkeeping the cover to the basement. The wooden cover on the stairs to the basement opens until vertical, and can then be locked in place by turning the small woodblock in front of it. It is nice to see that the builders found inventive solutions. Before it was difficult to enter the basement due to the heavy cover that was there, which had no hinges, but now we can more easily enter.



An arm rest made from tube metal, folded upwards

Fold down armrest

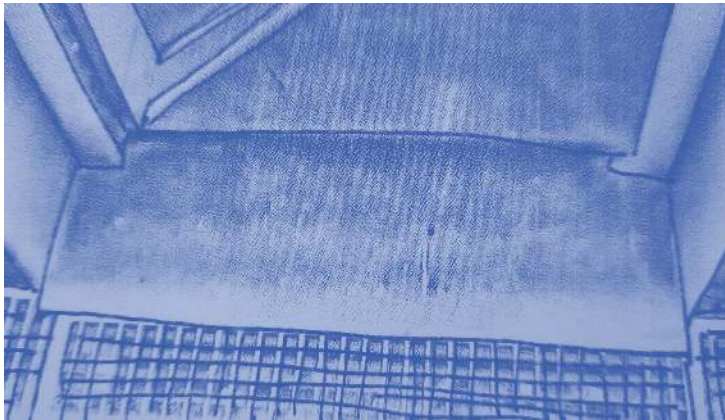
Some years ago, this armrest was recuperated from Kaaitheater which went into long term renovations, by In-Limbo, a platform that aims to facilitate the donation and reuse of materials within the socio-cultural sector in Brussels. (<https://www.inlimbo.brussels>) Two years ago we got it from them, and we tried installing it a few times, but it never worked. Now, finally it found its way to the renewed toilet.



A narrow pathway with bricks on both sides, a metal grid on the floor

Metal grid over outdoor corridor

A large grid was installed over the very uneven cobblestones of the outdoor passway, to offer better access for people using a wheelchair.

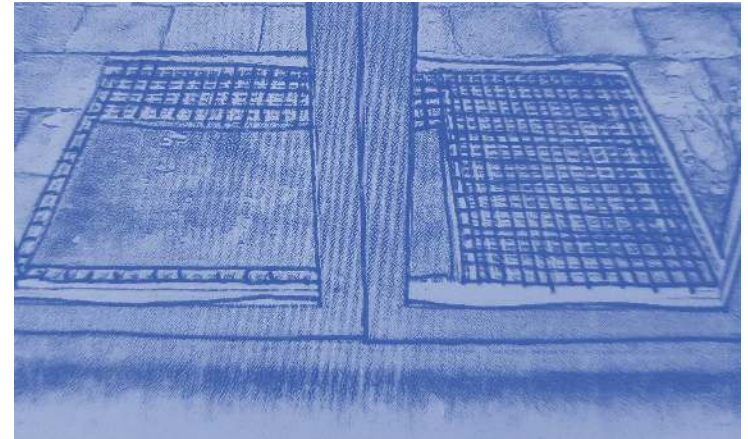


Door opening of the main building, picture made from outside, showing the absence of a height difference

Threshold at the entrance

The metal grid is also a slow slope towards the main

entrance of the building. The 20cm step that was there before is now gone.



Looking through the glass door towards the garden showing the metal ramp that is placed outside, and the absence of a ramp inside

Threshold to the garden

The doors opening to the garden have quite a high threshold. Outside a permanent ramp has been installed, which is made from the same metal as the sloping ramp towards the entrance of the building. But on the inside of the garden door there is no permanent ramp installed. Instead, a mobile ramp is available. But putting this when someone needs it remains an obstacle.

FEEDBACK LOOP

The feedback pool is a team of three persons invited each year to pay close attention to Constant on multiple levels. To think with us our institutional modes and internal workings. To review our programme of activities and reflect on the specific research topic of the ongoing year. And to see how this all sit in relation to our mission and our initial intentions.

The 2024 feedback pool members, **Ren L Britton**, **An Vandermeulen** and **Tunde Adefioye**, highlighted each in their own way some of the things Constant struggled with institutionally speaking; and especially throughout this past year. They notably told us “inclusivity and diversity frameworks aren't enough, you have to shift towards abolition & complicity”. This strong and explicit recommendation makes us pause, wondering what abolition and complicity would mean for Constant, what shape would it take and what would need to happen to shift in this direction? What follows is a slightly artificial construction in which edited quotes from the feedback pool (in bold) were selected out of the long recorded conversations. Later on, the team members were invited to write a response/ reaction to one of the quotes.

You can use the institution as a tool, to make certain things possible which normally aren't, to counter injustices.

Finding your spot in the grey zone of the grey zone. Let's think about a hammer, you can hammer nails into planks to make a table but you can also use a hammer to smash a

window. It feels important to define what we'd want this tool that is Constant to be used for; so that we also have a common understanding of its limits.

If you want to act against injustices, you cannot rely on the legal framework. And even so, governments have repeatedly been doing crimes within the legal frameworks they have themselves set up. So why shouldn't art institutions do crimes? What we do can't only be about art, for instance we got to know about labour laws, about internal security measures etc. as an individual as well as an institution, doing crime becomes needed in face of a justice system being so deeply unjust. helping out an undocumented person, the obvious right thing to do, is also often a crime. so you do crime. the problem as an institution, though, as a complex and faceted entity, is the political question of where you draw the line collectively, when it is right to disobey the law. like a real political question, you will have different answers even within the people that you work with, that frequent your activities, and read your publications. related, the question of how transparently you do so and speak about that, will produce even more disagreements. as the current european political climate is slowly becoming a bleak one, going towards a tightening of the right-wing ranks, and you start seeing soft silencing of dissident voices, being outspoken about doing crime might not always be the right move. so we need to be ready to go under, to develop modes of trust and of opacity and of solidarity that are not fully readable. I think there is a lot to learn from the work done in academia and education along the undercommons proposal, formulated

by Moten and Harvey. there is still a lot to be done to understand how that translates into the arts, that has a similar but different visibility imperative.. and i agree it is an urgent question :)

Being formally part of an institution can also be tricky because you have to accept being in the position of setting up your 'solidarity frame', like how and who you're going to help and support thanks to your institutional privilege. It might be difficult but I don't find it weird. It is a privilege, and it reminds me that the word privilege stands for positive fortune. We are lucky to do this. It also reminds me of the way my dad used to talk to me as a child about privilege, himself coming from a lower working class background, he used the word to talk about how fortunate we were to for example be able to go on a holiday together as a family. That it is important to take a moment and understand it when you know you are lucky. – So as an institution we set up our solidarity framework, and we don't forget that we are fortunate to be part of such a thing, and in that way don't take it lightly. Potentially difficult work, yes, but not weird.

The funding systems that were set up within arts and culture are quite incompatible with undoing white supremacy. Any oppressive regime breeds its own oppositions and these can be of many types. The work we do with Constant is oppositional in that it aligns with mutual support and solidarity. It is a slow but persistent work to erode oppressions, hollow them out, make them less dominant. It is true we probably will 'undo them' as in:

making them completely disappear. I think 'shifting out of gear' with white supremacist and other patriarcho-capitalist regimes is important. Within arts and culture we can create spaces of empowerment, experiment and discovery that are absorbing harm, and offer relief, rest, recuperation, resilience and resistance. There is militancy in queering calculation, language, togetherness, computation, organising and being, and there is pleasure and 'undoing' in tuning in with registers of collectivity and support.

STARING AT WHITE SUPREMACY

Next to the feedback pool, we were guided and advised by **Stephanie Collingwoode Williams** during internal sessions we called Conflicts with an attitude. At the end of these sessions, Stephanie showed us the fifteen characteristics of white supremacy culture and told us how much they're pervasive in our institutional modes. We've decided to keep them with us; one feedback pool member even explained that they printed them during their first day on the job. Another one said:

If we take white supremacist, ableist culture as being the basis of how we move through the world, the amount of things that one has to undo in order to be able to step out of that is A LOT. There's a lot of operations that need to happen for it to be the case.

We've decided to keep them present and visible, maybe it's our gentle way of inviting you to do the same?

PERFECTIONISM
SENSE OF URGENCY
DEFENSIVENESS
QUANTITY OVER QUALITY
WORSHIP OF THE WRITTEN WORD
ONLY ONE RIGHT WAY
PATERNALISM
EITHER/OR THINKING
POWER HOARDING
FEAR OF OPEN CONFLICT
INDIVIDUALISM
I'M THE ONLY ONE
PROGRESS IS BIGGER, MORE
OBJECTIVITY
RIGHT TO COMFORT

A list of white supremacy concepts

COLOPHON

LAST BUT NOT LEAST

We would like to express our gratitude to everyone who took part in this process.

During this year around accessibility, in which we have learnt so much but in which we also came up against limits, thresholds, frustrations, things impossible to achieve (on a short term), trials and errors, we were very lucky, as usual, to be surrounded by many smart, lovely and caring people.

THANK YOU TO (LISTED VERY RANDOMLY):

Sévérine, Femke, Laurence C., Sarah M., Peggy, Denis, Nadia, Al, Anita, Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie, Tina, Pierre C., Hans, Pierre De J., Ot, An M., Claire, Tundé, Rafaella, Winz, Giulietta, Miriyam, Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles Arts Numériques, Angeliki, Wouter, Pieter-Paul, Valérie, Sakina, Alix, Alice N., Annee, Agnes V., Julie, Jimé, Diego, Innoviris, Sarrita, Flo, Seda, Liesbeth, Ana, Sina, Wouter, Appa, Just for the record, Mo, Vlaamse Overheid, Reni, Rachel, Axel, Daniel, Nicolas, Michael, Kris, Pierre H., Marius, Sarah I., Laurent, Maximiliaan, Leonard, Greg, Thomas, Florence, Hélène, Alexander, ooooo, Ronan (Harry Studio), Quentin, Martin, Julie & Léa (Studio Purple), Charlotte L., Arnould, RABKO, Stéphanie, Agnes Q.,

Jessica, Mara, Lars, Nona, Helena, Maria, Olga, Kristine, Yoon He, Sarah, Felicie, Loraine, Maxime, Ahnjili, Alyssa, Dan, Alice G., Ava, Kamo, Simone, Sakinus, Norbert, OKO, Lorenzo, Lula, Menko, Niek, Shaan, Gülce, Juliàn, Sofia, Maribel Josefien, Ren, An V., Cato, Charlotte G., Sarah G., Maxigas, Tom, Vivien, Nubo, Marielle, Eugénie, Rita, Loes, An G., Teresa, Phyllis, Giorgi, Louisa, Cassandra, Jara, Marie, Cristina, Sakina, Helen, Raaf, Linde, Angeliki, Alex, Anna, Noah, Karl, Ludivine, Hypolite, Arthur, Jen, Laura, Doriane, Clara, Stéphanie, TacTic, Julia, Harry, Christel, Otis

PROCESS AND TOOLS

This publication was made collectively using etherpad, [paged.js](#) and lots of php/css/js. We were energised by tea and coffee, good vegetables, eggs, cookies and tangerines at Constant's office and studio in Brussels. The making and finalising of this zine was facilitated by Sarah Garcin.

FONTS

Lunchtype is a contemporary lunch-time design experiment designed by Stefan Wetterstrand under SIL Open Font License, 1.1. A classic sans-serif typography, making it easy to read for people with dyslexia or other reading difficulties. Text formatting follows accessibility principles (fairly large typeface, wide line-height, no text justification). Lunch type was found on the amazing <https://usemodify.com/> website.

Publi Fluor is a font designed by Speculoos/Open Source Publishing in 2011 (named Crickx) and republished in 2024 by the Crickx research group with the addition of post-binary glyphs on the Bye Bye Binary foundry under Collective Conditions for Reuse (CC4r).

Publi Fluor was the store where self-taught artist Chrystel Crickx sold hand-cut vinyl letters for signage and advertising purposes between 1975 and 2000.

Ouvrières is an inclusive font by Laure Azizi distributed by Bye Bye Binary under the CUTE license.

PRINTING

If you're lucky enough to hold the RISO edition in your hands, it's been printed at *chez Rosi* in Brussels (big thanks to them). If not, you're on your own and have printed your own edition at home (bravo!).

LICENCE

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conditions of solidarity and collectivity, states of being that we hope would orient your re-use of this booklet.

FUNDING

Even if money is not everything, it means a lot to be able to support many artists, researchers and collectives with meetings, workshops, commissions, and more.

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Until next year!



Wendy, Peter, Mia, Martino, Imane, Donatella, Elodie



A photo taken from above of the Labrador guide dog Otis, lying on a colourful carpet and surrounded by grey cushions on which are embroidered in white the words 'magic', 'disagree' and 'tech'.

