

Mobilizing Arts, Knowledge and Education to Reclaim Human Agency. Strategies for the Age of Machine Thinking

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The Makers: Mobilizing Arts, Knowledge and Education to Reclaim Human Agency. Strategies for the Age of Machine Thinking

The Makers could be a name for a band, like the Beatles, the Ramones, or the Sex Pistols. But it isn't. It is the name of an international research initiative in the humanities and arts, that brings together twenty partner organisations from ten countries, including universities, cultural institutions, and NGOs.

Our aim is to strengthen human agency and address a fundamental question:

what does it mean to have — or lack — a sense of agency in an age of machine thinking, when computational systems can perform tasks once considered the exclusive domain of human intellect and generate synthetic content that permeates everyday life?

At the heart of the project lies the concept of dreamability, understood as the capacity to turn dreams into action and to imagine oneself in a desirable future by reshaping existing structures, both mental and institutional. Dreaming has transformative power. We believe that dreamability can be cultivated collectively and argue that it is a key component of the sense of agency.

The project operates in three areas. The first is the production of diverse, locally grounded knowledge. The second is education, bringing together critical media literacy, critical pedagogy, speculative design and political ecology in the spirit of contributory research, as developed by philosopher Bernard Stiegler. The third is the arts, through which we demonstrate that computational technologies can be redesigned to serve human flourishing beyond the values of capitalism.

Our work challenges the dominant paradigm in which education, professional development and so-called future skills, including creative or critical thinking, are treated primarily as tools for adapting people to market demands and to the pressures of AI adoption within institutions. Instead, we place human agency, dignity and revolt at the centre. We see them as the foundation for meaningful participation in social life and for reinventing the forms of knowledge needed to live decent lives in a world being rapidly reshaped by digitalisation and the ecological crisis of capitalism. This is precisely the kind of reinvention that dreamability makes possible and worth pursuing.



The Makers consortium consists of:

EU Academic Partners

University of Silesia in Katowice (PL, coordinator), Université Paris 8 (FR), University of Primorska (SI), University of Nova Gorica (SI), Academy of Fine Arts in Prague (CZ), Czech Academy of Sciences (CZ), Slovak Academy of Sciences (SK)

Associated Academic Partners

Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities Skopje (MK), Universidad de las Artes (ECU), Simon Fraser University (SFU)

Non-Academic Partners:

Arsenal Gallery (PL), Working Group Foundation (PL), Contributory Lab Foundation (PL), Biennale Warszawa Foundation (PL), Europe, A Patient Association (PL), Disnovation.org (FR), La Générale Association (FR), Maison du Futur Transdisciplinary Cultural Platform (CH), Open Place Platform for Interdisciplinary Practice (UA), Centro Ecuatoriano de Arte Contemporáneo (ECU).

Project Coordinator



Consortium Members



Academy of Fine Arts
in Prague



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