

FREEReport 1: MEME MANIFESTO

A laboratory on memes as hyperstitional technology, between identity politics and conspiracy theories

with the Clusterduck collective

The **Meme Manifesto** laboratory is an exploration of the potential of memetic symbolism and its elusive meanings. We will dive into the history of weird esthetics and consider memes as hyperstitional technologies that uncannily delve into identity politics, the esoteric and conspiracy theories. Surprisingly (or not), from this vertiginous vantage point we are able to get a glimpse of the depths of the web, but also inspect the strange and sometimes disturbing ways in which internet cultures become politicized, and how this politicization can mutate into incomprehensible, or overtly toxic, phenomena.

The Clusterduck collective will introduce you to their collective field research methods in order to discover, track, observe, collect, and reassemble live material from different places of the web, from Google search to Facebook Groups, Discord Channels, 4chan threads and many other social media platforms. Taking Clusterduck's own [Meme Manifesto](#) as a starting point, you and your team will be encouraged to choose your own thread of investigation and start your own visual and cultural "detective hunt". The final output will be a mix of visual and textual notes, a "detective wall" where hints of every kind will be digitally "hung" and unexpected, unstable connections will be drawn between the dozens of pieces.

The ultimate aim of this laboratory is to map collective creative production and develop new strategies for aesthetic and cultural intervention through networking and cooperation. Eventually, the output of this laboratory will become part of the #MEMEMANIFESTO ecosystem, an ongoing transmedia project that each time is taking different shapes: a website, a series of fanzines, an artwork, a series of collaborative workshops and finally an art book.

Led by Clusterduck, an interdisciplinary collective working at the crossroads of research, visual communication and transmedia, focusing on the processes and actors behind the creation of Internet-related content. In the last couple of years they curated the online exhibition #MEMEPROPAGANDA, hosted by Greencube Gallery, which was presented at several international festivals such as The Influencers (Barcelona), Tentacular (Madrid), IFFR (Rotterdam), Urgent Publishing (Amsterdam, Arnheim), Radical Networks (Berlin) among others.

Clusterduck is currently developing Meme Manifesto, a physical collection of printed memes and a web-based collective project aiming to show how deep the web can go. The first stage of the project has been developed at IMPAKT (NL) during the EMAP / EMARE residency programme this year and presented at Ars Electronica 2020.

Clusterduck is also creating the new participative exhibition format #MEMERSFORFUTURE, investigating the role of memetics in the global climate justice movement. The exhibition has been shown IRL at re:publica 2020, and to other locations around the globe.

<http://clusterduck.space/>

<http://mememanifesto.space/>

Curated by Bani Brusadin, co-curator of Matadero's own Tentacular festival and co-founder, together with artists Eva & Franco Mattes, of [The Influencers](#), a festival of unconventional art, communication guerrilla and radical entertainment (CCCB Barcelona, 2004 - 2019). He teaches courses related to art production, digital cultures, technology and society at the University of Barcelona, Elisava Design School and Esdi.

<https://theinfluencers.org/bani-brusadin>

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Schedule: **UPDATED**

The first two online sessions (week 1) will be held in the morning from 11:30 to 14:00.

1. Monday November 23 (about topics, examples, methods)
2. Wednesday November 25 (about tools and strategies)

The second week is practical and will take place in the afternoon from 17:30 to 19:30). Sessions 3 & 4 may admit a flexible schedule.

3. Monday November 30 (feedback and discussion of participants' cases)
4. Tuesday December 1 (team mentoring shorter sessions)
5. Friday December 4 (showcase, feedback and farewell online party)

Format & instructions:

The whole program takes place both on and offline and it is open to people from anywhere.

Online work = syncing:

As a general rule, Meme Manifesto is not going to be a screen intensive program and participants will spend limited, yet quality time while online. The online sessions in the calendar are shared moments with short lectures, explanations of tools, questions and answers, but also chatting and exchanging impressions, ideas, and feedback.

Online sessions will be devoted to:

- Introductions to topics and methods
- Learning basic tools and strategies for online artistic research
- Work sessions & follow-up: participants cases, advice, doubts

- Informalities and getting to know each other
- Final showcase and comments on participants' work.

Offline work = your contribution:

The program is aimed at getting participants to observe their own environment (both online and offline), find inspiration in other participants' reports, create (images, methods, stories, platforms, etc.), and then share the results with the rest of the gang.

Examples of specific tasks to be performed autonomously / locally:

- Assignments, exercises, challenges
- Observation, exploration, and research tasks
- Drafting or developing a project proposal

Available seats:

This lab is designed for 10 teams of participants, which we call "nodes". You are warmly encouraged to apply as a team. Check the FAQ for more details.

Price:

The participation fee for each "node" or team of participants is 80 €. Team applications will get priority, but you may still apply as an individual. Students, unemployed or retired people may apply for a 50% discount if they will provide valid documentation of their status (discounted fee applies only to individuals, not teams).

Technical requirements:

None in particular, you will be introduced to some basic tools and strategies in the first sessions. We will discuss later some specific tools for coordination, online conferencing, sketching, sharing, etc.

Signing up:

<https://form.jotform.com/202712523658353>

We warmly recommend you to sign up as a team (which can be between 2 and 5 people). Teams can be either an existing collective / work team, or a group of people who are joining forces for the occasion. Participating as a team will make face-to-face work possible and learning from online sessions easier and more rewarding. Please remember that a good team includes people with different skills and points of view. The participation fee for a team is the same as for an individual (80€).

If you have any question, email us at talk@freeport.institute

Applications will close on November 15th and we will let you know in the following couple of days.

Registration will be completed only after paying the fee according to the instructions we will send you.

Language:

Mostly English. Spanish, English, or Catalan with the program coordinator.

Certificate of attendance:

Matadero will issue a certificate of attendance at the end of the program.

FAQ

- **You say that this is an online and offline laboratory. What does that mean, exactly?**
It means that we will have some online shared moments (see online sessions above) while the rest of the time you will work with your team in person, if possible. Each team's autonomous work is key to make this laboratory happen.
- **Are there any required skills to participate?**
No specific expertise is necessary to attend this program, and yet some basic skills with digital creation technologies will definitely help, as well as familiarity with either art making, video making, design, journalism, or online activism. The purpose of FREEPORT is to circulate ideas, tools and tactics to accelerate creative practices in any of those fields.
- **I'm no expert in the topic of this laboratory, yet I'm passionate about it and I have a few ideas. Should I apply?**
Absolutely! The key aspect of this program will be mixing up creative people with different backgrounds, strong motivations and – why not? – wild ideas. That's why experienced artists or designers are welcome to join, as well as creators with a shorter or incipient career, including undergraduate and postgraduate students. If you are not sure whether your profile fits in this program, please let us know in your application email and we'll try and give you an opinion.
- **You encourage participants to apply as a “node” or small team. What does that mean?**
The participants in this hybrid decentralized lab will be “nodes”, that is: small teams, preferably teams whose members will be able to meet in person. We may not be allowed to have all of you working in the same room due to the pandemic, but you may still be able to meet in person with your team.
- **So, what should a “node” look like?**
A “node” should be a small team of 2 to 5 people. A node can be either an existing collective, studio or work team, or just a group of people that join forces for the occasion. The best nodes/teams may be the ones with a mix of different skills (visuals, graphic design, writing, tech, performance, etc. etc.)
- **I don't have a team, can I still apply as an individual?**
Yes, but if your application will be successful you will be warmly encouraged to work in a team with others.
- **What kind of output should I expect? How will this lab help me in my work or research?**
The output of this program really depends on you. Our purpose is to assist in the

development of your ideas, both new or rooted in your previous projects. We will encourage discovery and unconventional paths in research and creation. So, if you already have some ideas but no specific plan about them, after this program you may be able to design a first draft to turn them into an art/design/critical technology project. Or, if you are already developing a project, after this program you may be able to update it, evolve it or make it stronger.

- **Will you support the production of output?**

We will consider your proposal and if it is consistent with the topic and objective of the lab we will be ready to cover some basic production expenses.

- **Is there a waiting list for those who have not been selected?**

Yes! If there will be the chance to include more applicants, people on the waiting list will be notified immediately as soon as there will be a free seat in the workshop.

- **Should I attend all online sessions?**

It's highly recommended. If possible, at least one person of each node/team should attend online sessions. Otherwise you will not have the chance to get feedback about your work and showcase it in the final sessions.