

FREEPORT 0

OPEN CALL

November 18 to 22, 2019

FREEPORT is an independent study program for a world of humans and machines. It promotes radical research and creative production combining art methodologies with the language of design, activism, Internet communities, critical engineering, and journalism. The ultimate goal of FREEPORT is to help in the development of unconventional ways to explore a networked planet, seizing its aesthetic opportunities and exposing its political ambiguities.

FREEPORT 0 - Signals and storms is the first pilot activity in the program, to take place from November 18 to 22, 2019 in a larger framework designed jointly with the Tentacular festival. It consists of a week of activities led by international artists and researchers [Geocinema](#) (Asia Bazdyrieva and Solveig Suess) and [James Bridle](#).

A group of 25 participants from Madrid and the rest of Europe will face the challenge of observing, exploring and narrating the planet - and Madrid in particular - as a hybrid and accidental mega-structure interconnecting human beings, their habits, their infrastructures, and other agents, both natural and artificial.

Participants will be encouraged to think creatively of new ways of talking about what human senses fail to capture, including both non-human factors, as well as other elements of human origin (such as infrastructure, data layers, etc.), which are often designed to operate in the background and blur their bias, control systems, and power hierarchies.

Geocinema and Bridle's work will be the starting point and at the same time a method. A first-hand knowledge of the most specific aspects of their projects will allow participants to find inspiration for possible creative strategies to collect data, create images and build stories. We will discuss narrative and aesthetic choices; and finally we will try to build visual, audiovisual, narrative, and even performative or literary prototypes according to the participants' skills.

Studying and possibly piercing the irregular solderings of this megamachine is the challenge of this first Freeport program.

Track 1 - Geocinema

'Geocinema' considers planetary-scale sensory networks— roving satellites, surveillance cameras, geosensing arrays, billions of cell phones — as a vastly distributed camera. Sensing fragments of the earth, each signal and transfer runs through their own sets of scales and tempos while producing terabytes of raw data. Here, the representation of the earth is the sum of a decentralized editing process with its image anything but whole.

Filmmaking, in this 'geocinematic' sense, is happening constantly and all around us: whether it's the traffic CCTV cameras triggered by unusual behaviours of cars, or satellites scanning

the earth's surface every 16 days. These more-than-human cinematic mediations are being directed by meshes of planetary-scale sensory networks. Hierarchies and priorities imposed onto such techniques of sensing and imaging are informing differences that matter in very real ways, co-creating the strange new natures that we are embedded within.

With 'Geocinema', this workshop asks participants to read the signals of storms. Whether economic, political or social turbulence, here we want to create space to collectively think through notions of time and movements which are being written by and into our surrounding environments.

Together with the participants, we will talk through the method of 'matrix storyboarding'— a way to map out a site based on rulesets for experiences— which will be used as a starting point towards further narrative experiments. Departing from the introduction of 'Geocinema' as methodology, the workshop will be structured through research and creative assignments, fieldwork, daily discussions and screenings where we turn to feedback loops between science and technology and their relationship to film and broader filmmaking practices.

Track 2 - James Bridle

All around us in the city are other beings and other intelligences, mostly unseen and often unnoticed. Trees release pheromones in response to air pollution; bats call in ultrasonic frequencies; bees share information with other hives across rooftops. How does this non-human life shape our lives, and how do we shape it in turn? From urban agriculture to DIY electronics, we'll explore the ways and means to access and engage with, listen to, and ultimately learn from the other lives around us.

Participants will be invited to explore the city around Matadero, make new maps illustrating their relationships with non-human citizens, and develop strategies for visualising and communicating with other intelligences.

The main stages of our creative work will revolve around these questions and methodologies:

- What's out there? (reading and mapping: urban animals, plants and trees)
- How do these things communicate or shape the world around them? (research, observation – field trip to urban beehive?)
- How do we illustrate those communications visually in the world (record, video, draw, paint, replicate)
- How might we integrate non-humans into human politics? (let's try it!)

Each stage/question will require specific tools, both technical and conceptual, and will trigger narrative and aesthetic decisions. Each participant, individually or in group, will develop her own way to approach this matter.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Curator: Bani Brusadin

Schedule

Monday November 18th to Thursday 21st: 10am - 6pm (includes lunch break)

Friday November 22nd: 10am - 2pm

Format: each day will be slightly different but will always include the same basic elements: an introduction to a topic or a tool, usually based on the instructors' own work; tasks, assignments or field trips; a time for sharing results; some self-organized moments to chill out, chat, or organize informal presentations of participants' projects.

Available seats: 25 participants

Basic technical requirements: you will have to bring your own laptop. Any imaging device will also be useful (for instance a high quality cellphone camera; a GoPro camera, etc.), though not mandatory.

Check the complete **FAQ** for more information.

Signing up: send an email by October 30th to freeport@mataderomadrid.org, including:

- a short description of who you are, what's your background and where are you based.
- a simple and short text (5-10 lines will be enough) to explain why you are interested in this program.

Language: mostly English

Certificate of attendance: if you need one Matadero will issue one at the end of the program.

Price: 80 euros.

A 50% discount is available for students, unemployed people, and pensioners.

Signing up for this program you will also receive one ticket for the **Tentacular** festival (November 21-23).

FAQ

Is 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, activism, or critical engineering. 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 these fields, yet I'm passionate about them and I have ideas about how to deal with them. 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. Bridle, Suess y Bazdyrieva will give valuable insight on rather complex matters, but the key point in the program will be learning through creative exchanges among all participants, faculty included. 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.

Is this a technical workshop? Will we follow a specific methodology?

FREEPORT aims at combining the best of the workshop format with the best of the residency format, minimizing the intrinsic limits of both and promoting the development of existing and future projects.

This pilot session is structured around two independent tracks, led respectively by James Bridle and Geocinema's Solveig Suess and Asia Bazdyrieva. There will be some common moments and participants will also be able to work with both teams. In fact, you won't sign up for one track, but for the whole program with no distinction.

The workshop is not so much about learning technical tools, but to seek inspiration in the methods, styles, and strategic decisions by the invited artist-researchers in order to extend each participant's knowledge and work, no matter if within an academic, art, activist, or hybrid context.

The participants will work in small groups in a spirit of collaboration and will join forces to enhance each other's knowledge and improve the collective.

Each day will begin and end with moments common to both teams. We will also make sure there will always be time devoted to conversation, informal exchanges, individual presentations and also field trips, both online and offline.

What kind of output should I expect?

The output of this program really depends on you. Our purpose is to assist in the development of both existing projects and new ideas, encouraging unconventional creative practices, especially those who look apparently weird and don't seem to fit in just one category.

So, if you already have some ideas but no specific plan about them, after this program you may be able to design a first working plan to turn your ideas into a 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.

Can I apply to be an assistant or facilitator?

Yes, we will review candidates for 2 jobs as assistants. If you are familiar with the key topics of the program, have worked or have a project of your own in this field, you could help as an assistant and facilitator. This means that you can participate for free, even though your primary task will be assisting the workshop leaders and helping others (even with basic tasks such as translation or setting up tools). Of course, you must be reasonably fluent in English and Spanish.

If you are interested, please let us know in your application email (the process is the same as regular applications).

When will I know if I have been selected?

Applications will close on October 30th and we will let you know in the next two or three days. If you don't live near Madrid and need to plan your trip in advance, please let us know in your application email.

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 by November 8th.