

Ekaterina Volkova

Portfolio

Artistic research, installations, performances,
publications, social design

2024

Ekaterina Volkova (1992, RU) is an artist and designer exploring critical making as a response to large-scale political issues.

Through her work, she brings together material, visual, and codified strategies to explore issues of democracy, conflict, diaspora and labour. Working with *Iskra Vukšić* she forms the artistic partnership *vukšić&volkova*, their temporal work combines visual and linguistic storytelling with performance, spatial design, sound and scent. Through artistic research, they have ventured into topics like voter abstention, coastal labour, revolutions and border bureaucracy.

Together with *Julien Thomas*, compose alternative alliances and strategies for the production and reception of earthly knowledge. Through installations, objects, publications and presentations, the duo engage academic institutions, government agencies, and publics in weaving together nascent narratives and latent symbolisms that act as tools and techniques for navigating late modernity.

Cold Fronts and Warm Baths (2024)

Cold Fronts and Warm Baths is a limited-run publication presenting the outcomes of an artist residency at the Koninklijk Nederlands Meteorologisch Instituut (The Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute – KNMI).

The publication's title draws a connection between indoor and outdoor climates at KNMI. From this starting point, the booklet reflects upon the organisational climate of the primary institution tasked with communicating climate risks to the Dutch public.

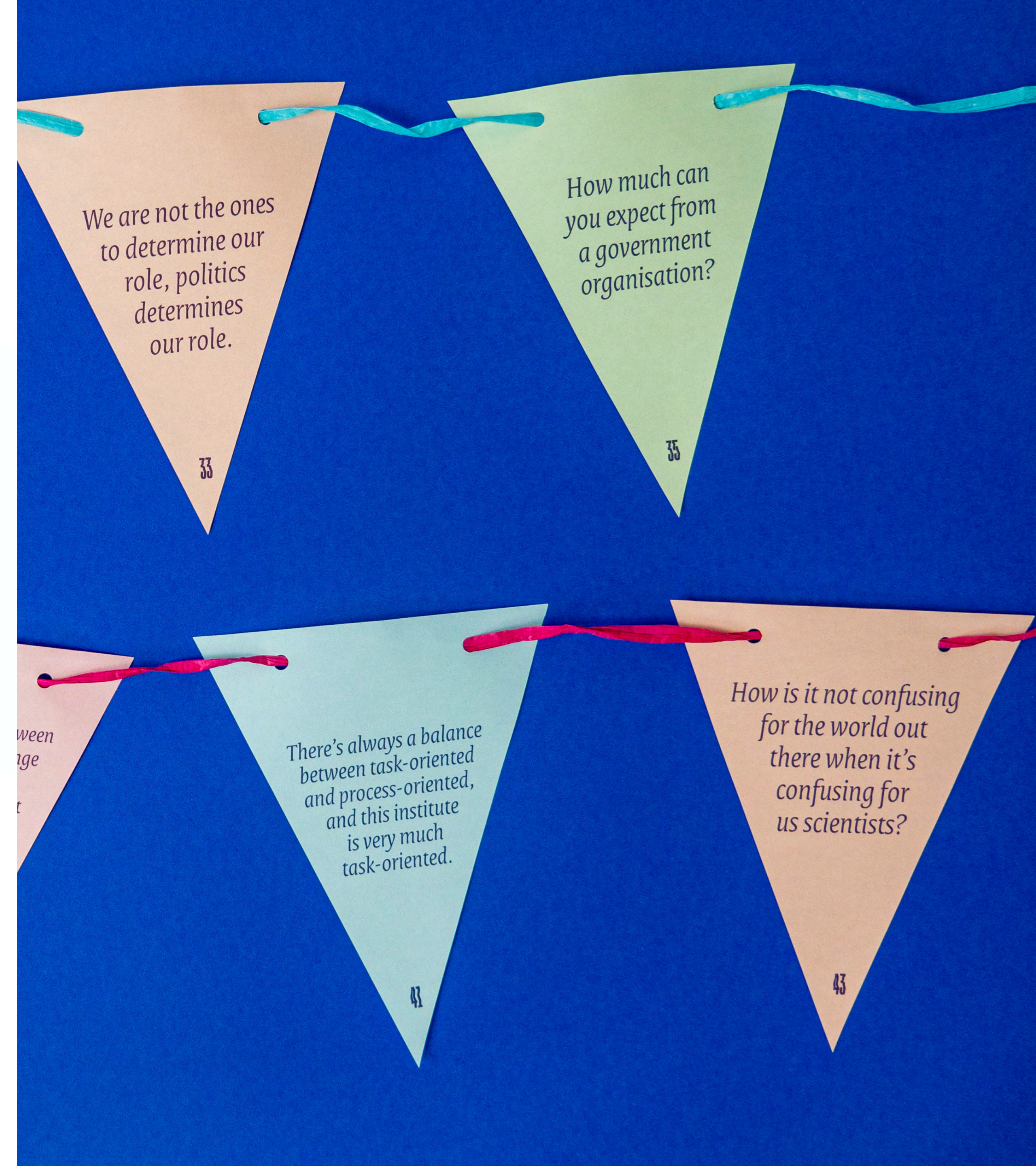
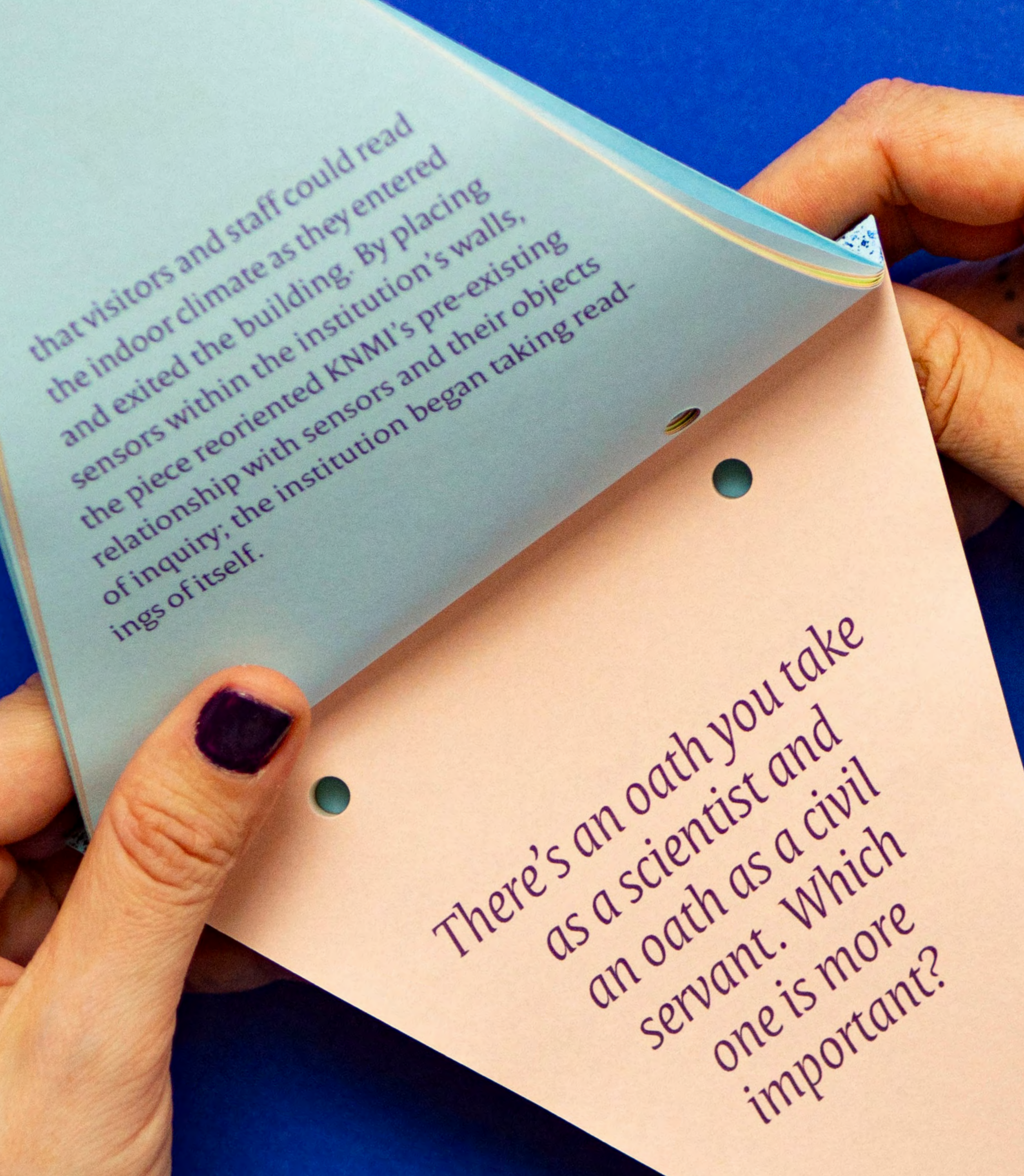
In collaboration
with Julien Thomas



Where is the grey area between stating that climate change is dangerous and instructing people what to do? And how do we move within that area?

inst ructions

1. Pull out the pages with quotes that resonate with you.
2. Want to add more? Write your own thoughts that need to be heard within your organisation using the empty pages at the end of the book.
3. Get a piece of string and hang the flags together. Coffee corner decorations?



Cloudnet (2023)

Cloudnet is a 110 square metre camouflage net, handwoven with the image of a cloudy sky. The installation interweaves thermal blankets, funerary shrouds and camouflage netting to fabricate a space that anticipates the disappearance of marine stratocumulous clouds due to future climate change.

The work was presented during the 2023 Jan van Eyck Open Studios Over the duration of the exhibition, an array of programmed elements were hosted within the netted structure to fuse scientific, artistic and activistic practices and approaches toward the future of altered cloudscapes.

In collaboration
with Julien Thomas







Ritual elements from *Sillage :: In the Wake of Clouds*, a guided meditation by John James accompanied by incense of Linden, Mugwort and Wormwood.



[Link to the guided meditation](#)



Public Program at Jan van Eyck
Open Studios, 25.06.2023

Demystifying Clouds:
Pouriya Alinaghi (TU Delft)



Rebellious Researchers:
Arthur Oldeman (Utrecht University)
and Koen Lemaire (Vrije Universiteit),
members of Scientist Rebellion

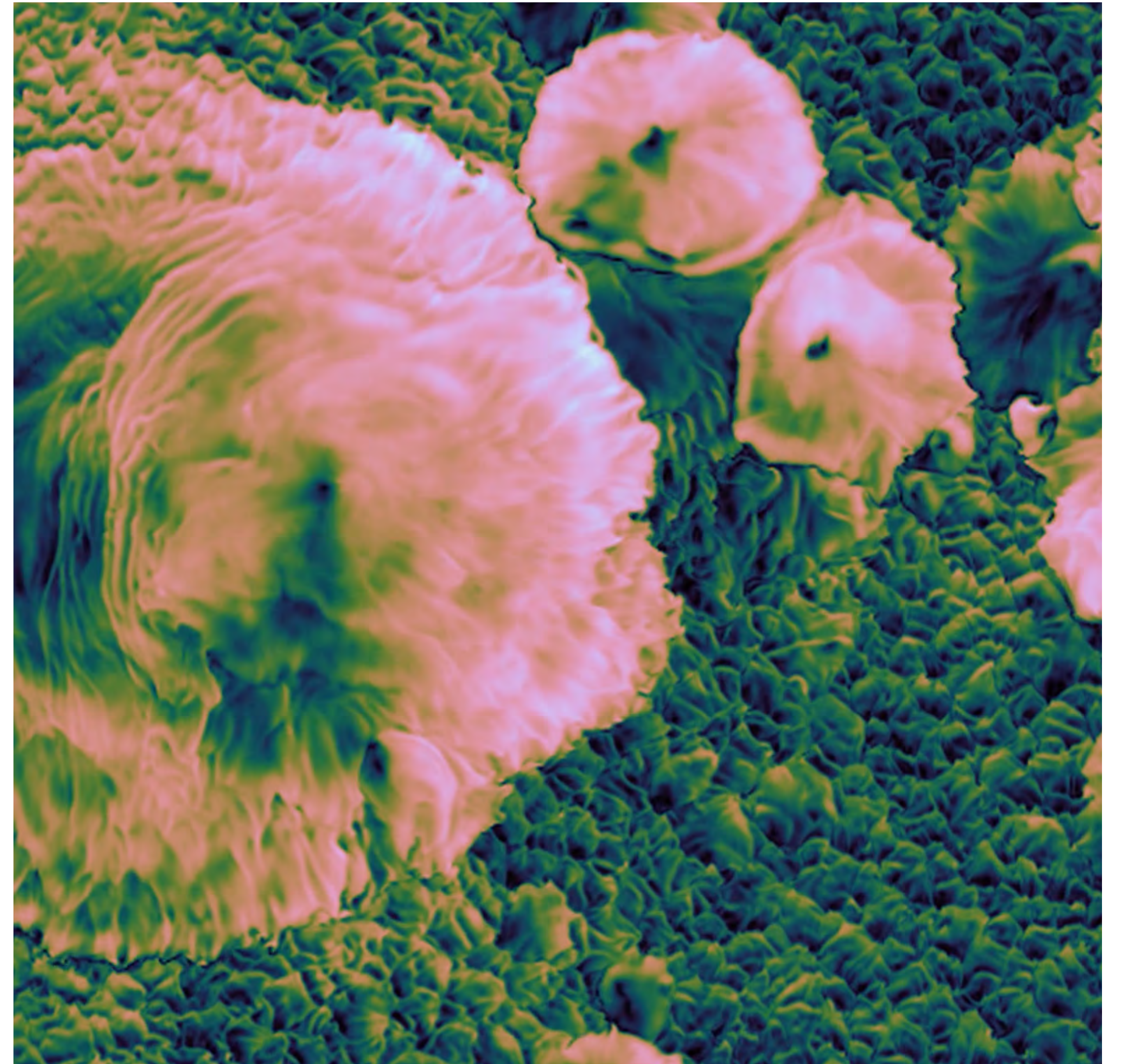
Ruptured Render (2023)

Ruptured Render uses cloud modelling software to imagine future cloudscares. Climate models project that higher concentrations of CO2 and rising ocean temperatures could cause marine stratocumulus clouds break up, leading to a catastrophic 12 degree rise in global temperatures.

The video installation presents this incomprehensible future through the same lens of abstraction used by climate scientists, in order to invite a consideration of climate tipping points beyond the binaries of hope and despair.

The work was presented during the 2023 Jan van Eyck Open Studios.

In collaboration
with Julien Thomas



[Link](#) to video documentation

Digital Foreshadow (2023)

Digital Foreshadow is a video installation that links Google Maps' 2013 digital erasure of clouds as a foreshadowing of the disappearance of clouds due to climate change.

The work was presented during the 2023 Jan van Eyck Open Studios.



The cloud casting this shadow
is missing from the image.

In collaboration
with Julien Thomas

[Link to video documentation](#)

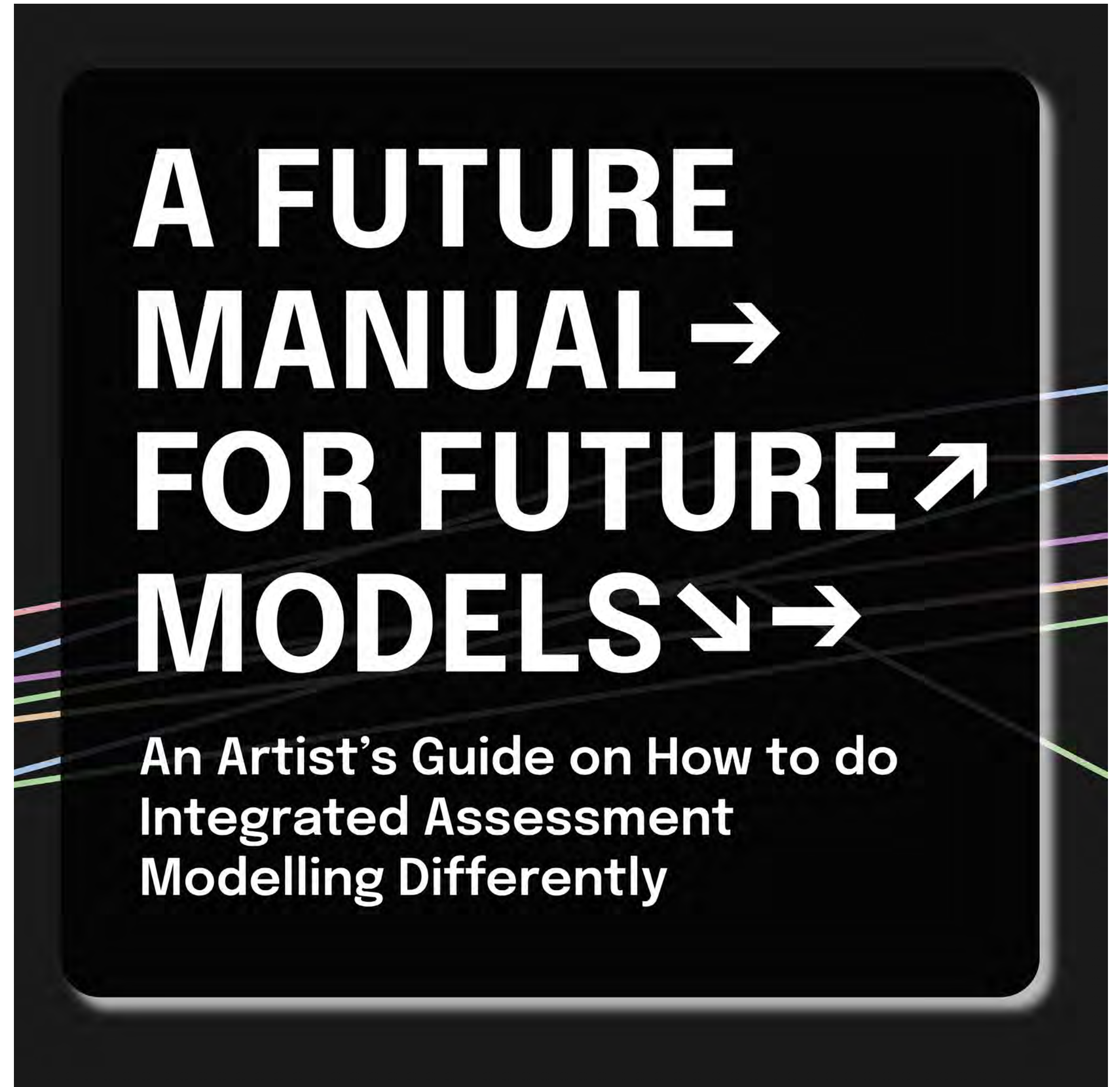
Future Models Manual (2022)

A Future Manual for Future Models is an alternative guide to Integrated Assessment Models, vast computer programs that indicate future consequences of climate change, and form the scientific basis of climate change discourse and policy.

The manual takes the form of a website, and explores climate models from the perspective of creative practices such as film making, graphic design, storytelling, and translation in order to propose alternatives to current climate modelling practices.

The project was conducted during the Imagining Low Carbon Futures residency, Jan van Eyck Academie and Urban Futures Studio, Utrecht University.

In collaboration
with Julien Thomas



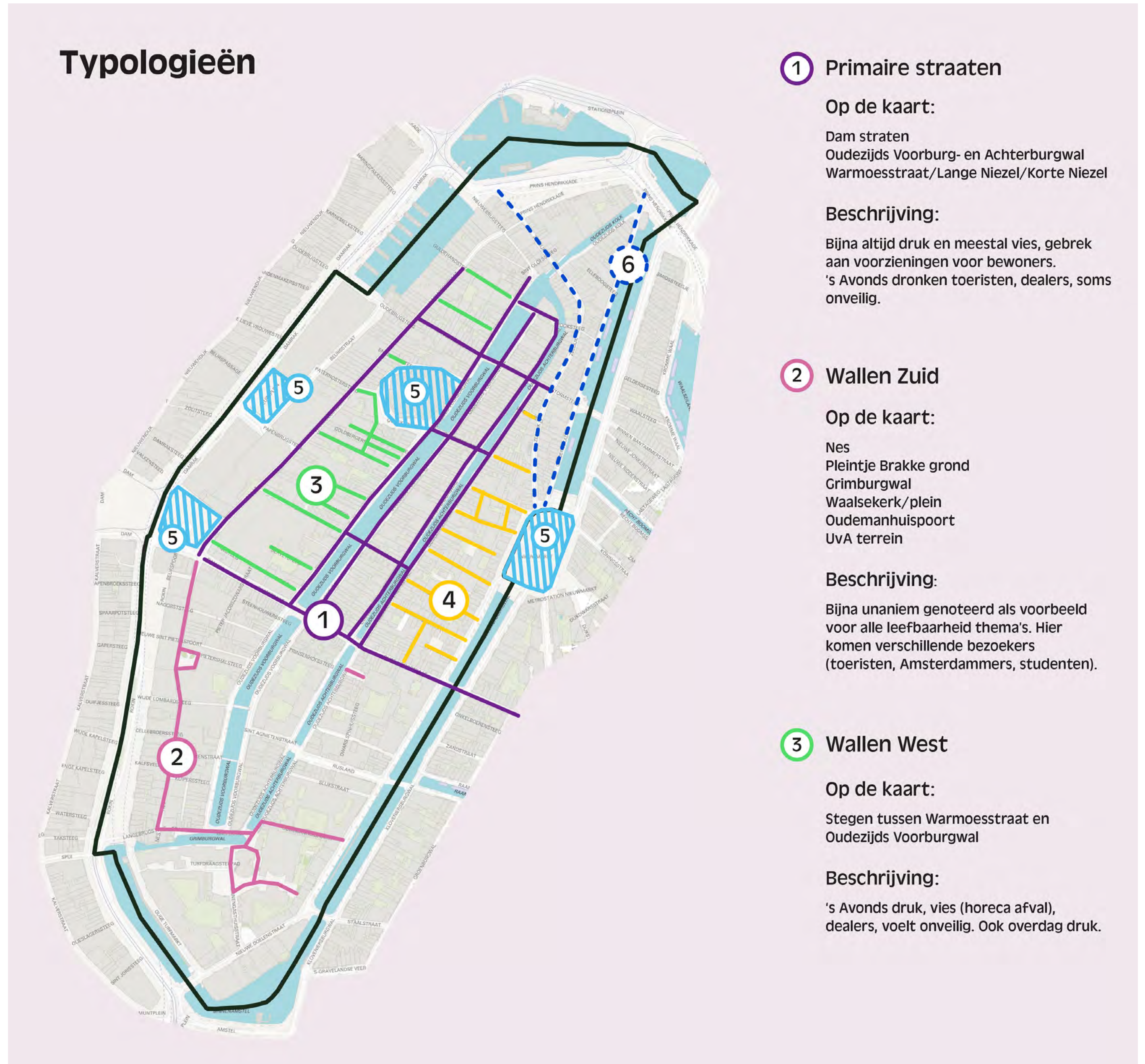
[Link to the project](#)

Context Mapping Leefbaarheidspanel Wallengebied (2022)

The City of Amsterdam's Leefbaarheidspanel Wallengebied was a two-year project in which civil servants work with residents and business owners to co-develop new policies and urban designs that address tensions in Amsterdam's Red Light District.

A series of mapping exercises led to the identification of specific typologies in the neighbourhood that were previously unknown to the government. Working in granular detail allowed the Panel to address the specificities of the area on a street-to-street basis.

In collaboration
with Julien Thomas



Uw Buurt en Windmolens (2021)

Uw Buurt en Windmolens was a spatial participation method developed for the City of Amsterdam's Regional Energie Strategie.

Through maps, questionnaires and texts, 270 participants contributed hopes and concerns for the future of their neighbourhood in relation to wind energy production within city limits.

The final report Onze Stad en Windmolens was presented to City Council as a proposal for future co-design activities with citizens.

In collaboration
with Julien Thomas



No Sikiriki (2022)

No Sikiriki explores the notion of waiting as a form of labour within precarious and informal jobs. The videogame features an expanded cast situated in St. Petersburg, the Adriatic Magistrala and Paris. A caricaturist, a landlady, a museum attendant and a manual labourer each face their own challenges in which they are forced to wait for work to pick up – or not. Their waiting is a psychological game of endurance, a battle against the elements and a tense see-saw between investment and return. *No Sikiriki* reflects on the loss of social security in the context of post-socialist realities and immigration. Its workers remain forever trapped in the precarious tension between work and wait.

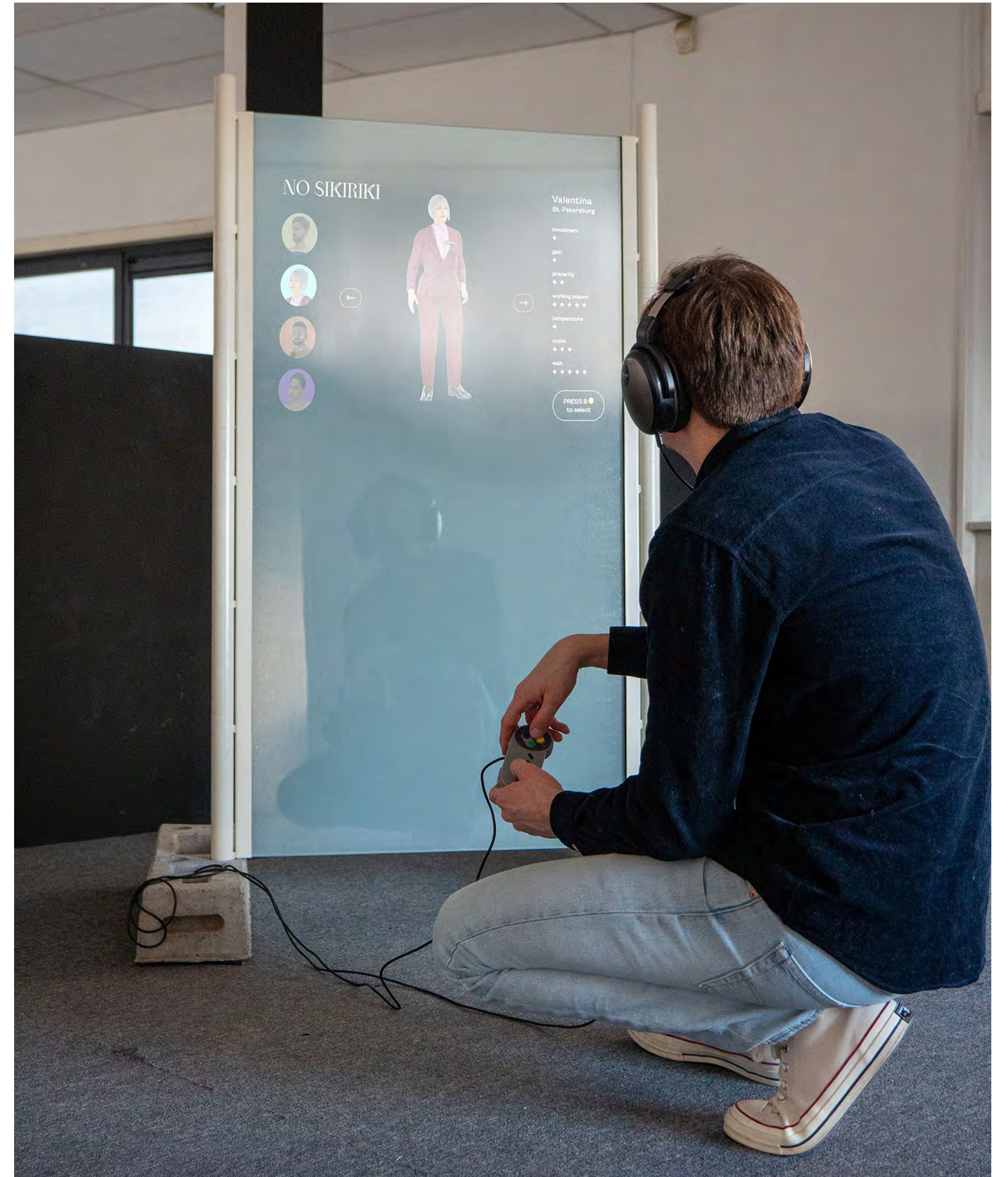
In collaboration
with Iskra Vukšić



[No Sikiriki refers to an album by Bosnian rapper Edo Maajka. Since its release in 2014, the phrase was adopted as slang for don't worry, derived from the original wording "ne sekiraj se". It's namesake song is the only happy and light song on the album, the rest being, according to Maajka "dark like the times we live in".]



Installation view at W139, Amsterdam



Installation view at Donauweg 8, Amsterdam

Javna Tajna (2021)

Javna Tajna [obvious secret, from Serbo-Croatian] is a field research on the moonshine production of rakija. Through conversations with people surrounding the Kamen Artist Residency in Hercegovina, we explored how the knowledge of home-manufactured spirits is shared between generations. How did people learn to distill and do they still? Talking about rakija opens the door to accounts of shrinking rural regions, mass-emigration, conflict, care and the perseverance of tradition. In the performance-installation *Javna Tajna*, we took the audience on a walk from a vineyard without grapes, past a plum-tree without plums, to end with a toast of rakija in an installation of collected objects. *Javna Tajna* reflects on the importance of “being-there” for embodied knowledge that seems to be time and space specific. How do we brew rakija without grapes? Without hands to pick them?

In collaboration
with Iskra Vukšić





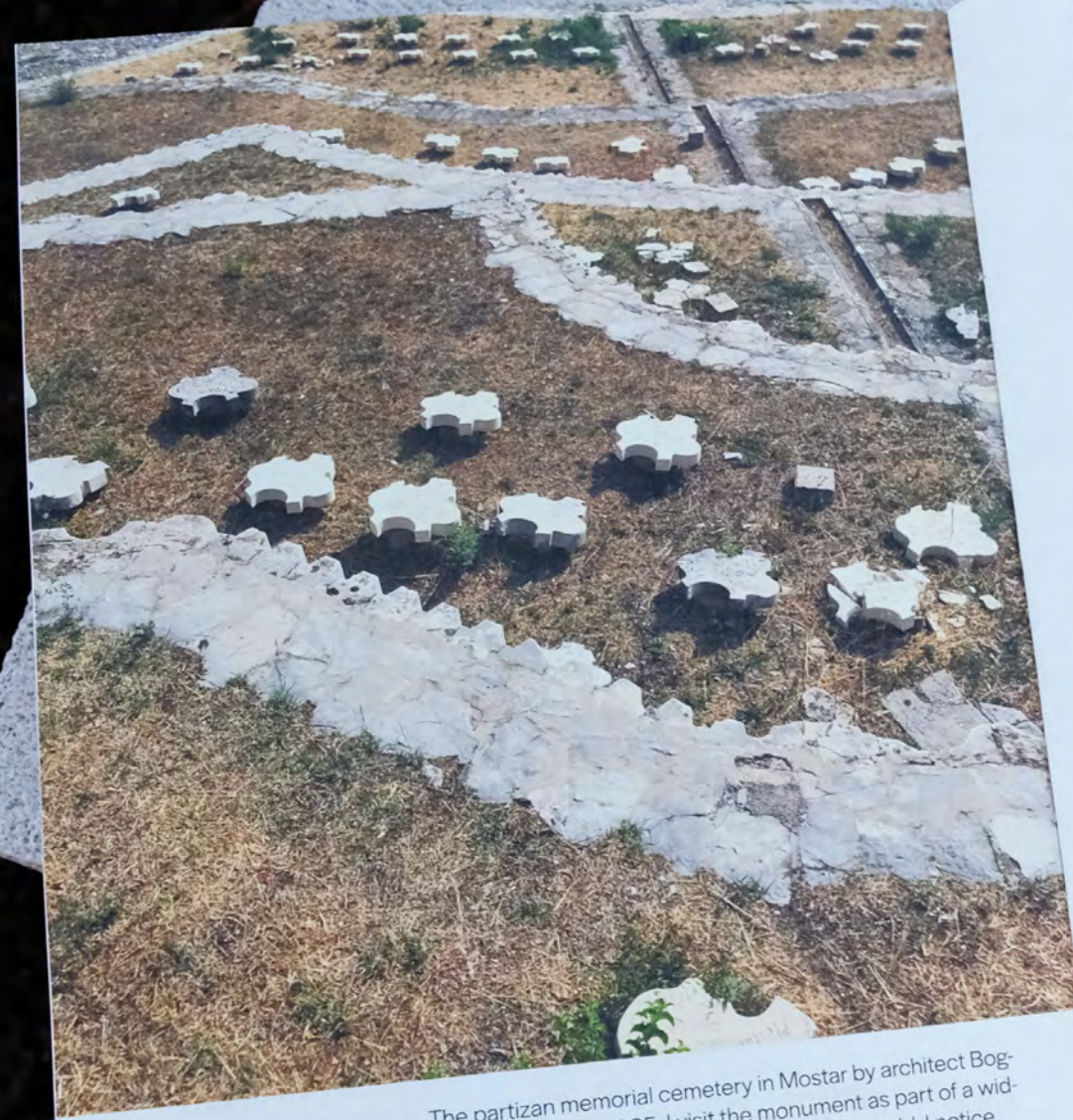
Javna Tajna (2021)

The *Javna Tajna* publication is imagined like a photobook of collected photographs and fieldnotes. In diary-style language, it takes the reader through conversations and observations of Herzegovina. Prominent characters of the research – a saleswoman on the market called Slavica, the rakija-legend Baba Olga, our printer and other encounters – share their insights on rural life and heritage through their own experiences with rakija-production. It contains an English translation of the Serbo-Croatian performance text on shrinking communities and embodied knowledge. The cover and introduction text are derived from a series of posters which were part of the *Javna Tajna* installation.



In collaboration
with Iskra Vukšić





The partizan memorial cemetery in Mostar by architect Bogdan Bogdanovic, 1965. I visit the monument as part of a wider reflection on a disappearing or forgotten world. I notice that conversations on the process of *rakija* inevitably open the door to conversations on economic crises, conflict and labour conditions.



One of the forest fires surrounding Orah in August 2021. We pack for potential evacuation and then wait for news of how the fire develops. We pour ourselves a glass of *travarica*. I remember what Zlatko told me: with *rakija* you laugh and with *rakija* you cry, *rakija* accompanies you in everything.



Sporadic bottles of *travarica* on the market depict the home-production that is a *javna tajna*, a public secret: not completely allowed to be for sale but mostly tolerated as part of the local habit.

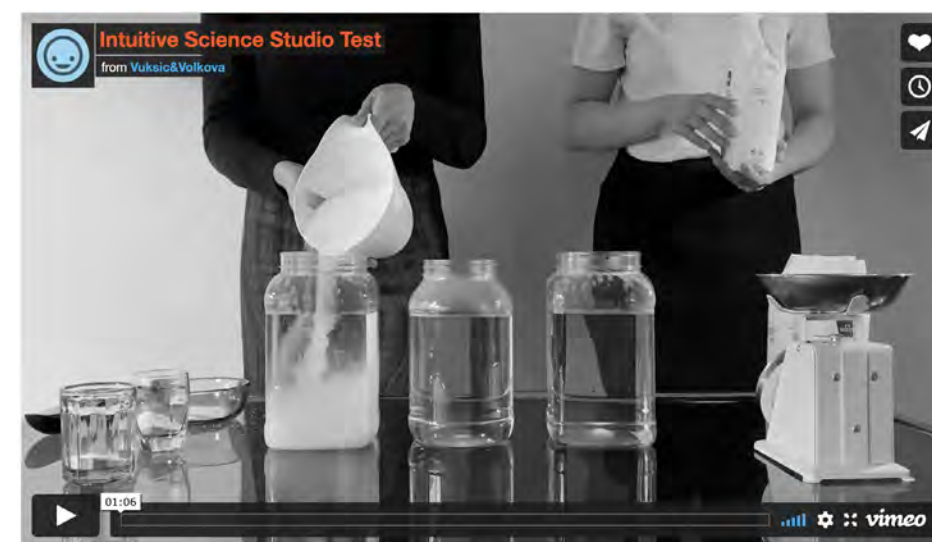


Several bottles of *lozu* amongst other local products for sale on a city bench.

Intuitive Science (2021)

Intuitive Science is an ongoing artistic research through which we explore generational gaps and polarization in contemporary politics. We imagine how the performance of traditional practices like fermenting and distilling can bridge the past and the future. The repetition of the manufacturing rituals of our ancestors functions as a language through which we communicate with their spirits. The project explores the way that knowledge is transferred between generations and how we can tap into its potential for joy and resilience for contemporary times. The images show the first studio experiments for the installation-performance *Intuitive Science*. The materials, yeast cultures and the conditions which sustain them, are alive and create autonomous movement. Rather than having full control on shaping them, we are in dialogue with each other. The project is accompanied by a linguistic vocabulary in which scientific terms are paired with their social and psychological interpretations.

In collaboration
with Iskra Vukšić



[Link to Intuitive Science studio test](#)

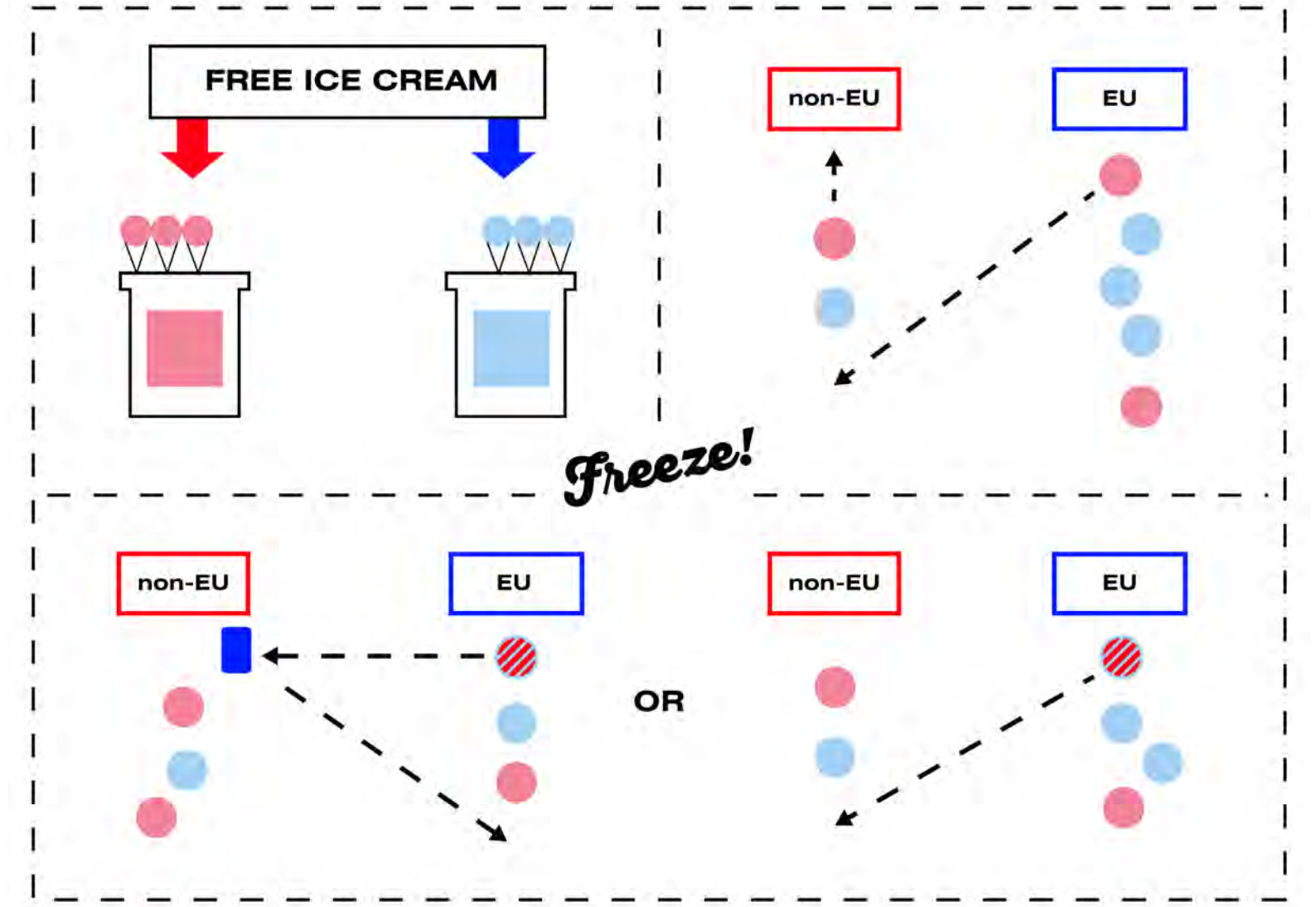


Freeze! (2017)

Freeze! is an interactive performance which reflects on the acquisition of residence permits from a non-EU citizen perspective. As a fictional economy, *Freeze!* questions the indirect purchasing power of legal documents as well as the exclusive nature of casual consumption activities. Is control only perpetrated by authorities or does it travel down the line? *Freeze!* consists of a red and a blue ice cream booth where visitors show their ID in exchange for free ice cream. In the transaction, it is revealed that non-EU citizens receive red icecream while EU citizens receive the blue one. The ice cream stains the lips of the visitors in this colour coding. The *Freeze!* exhibition text was printed on wrappers around ice cream cones.

In collaboration
with Iskra Vukšić





ANAPATIN® (2016)

Imagine a world in which political apathy is classified as a mental disorder. *Anapatin®* is a medication that cures voter apathy in a speculative future based on the current stigmatisation of voter abstention. As a fictional company, Anapatin Pharmaceuticals focuses on resurrecting a system which increasingly fails to engage citizens without offering alternatives for their limited influence. *Anapatin®* is the last of our series informed by an interest in voter apathy. The installation resembles the interior of a medical clinic with boxes of *Anapatin®*, capsules and custom plexiglass furniture. Various performative and designed elements create an atmosphere of biopolitical coercion through which visitors' decision-making ability is challenged.



In collaboration
with Iskra Vukšić

ANAPATIN®
cure our collective body



What is Anapatin and what is it used for?

Anapatin can be used to cure various forms of voter fatigue, e.g. political apathy, political impotence, bystander syndrome and rational ignorance. In some cases, it has been reported to positively affect chronic protest.

To induce vigour in the patient during periods of high political activity, e.g. election periods and referendums.

What is Voter Fatigue?

Voter fatigue is a condition in which the patient feels emotionally disconnected from political decision-making. Voter fatigue is an overarching term for voter apathy, bystander syndrome, rational ignorance and political impotence. Voter fatigue is a common condition and the main reason for low voter turnout in established democracies. If you have doubts about taking Anapatin based on the conditions described in this leaflet, please contact your general practitioner or pharmacist.

1. Forms of voter fatigue:

1.1. Voter apathy

Patients suffering from voter apathy often have a negative sentiment directed towards candidates, policies and electoral debates. A recurring symptom is a disinterest in influencing the negative situation. This is usually caused by distrust in the democratic system or in politicians in general. Voter apathy can be diagnosed through the following symptoms: complaints directed at candidates' physical appearance, blaming politicians for events that seem unrelated, disinterest in formal, active politics. Chronic symptoms can occur in cases where the patient is being judged for their abstention when they express signs of political opinion.

1.2. Bystander syndrome

Bystander syndrome refers to cases in which individuals don't offer help to victims when other people are present. Patients with bystander syndrome do have a

political opinion and often express the desired outcome but rely on other voters in its realisation. Bystander syndrome is often accompanied by low self-esteem or anxiety in the patient, resulting in doubts about the significance of their vote. Please note that bystander syndrome is a highly contagious condition in which patients encourage abstention in their surroundings.

1.3. Rational ignorance

Rational ignorance is a form of apathy where the patient constantly weighs the cost of educating oneself about an issue against potential benefits one could expect to gain. Rational ignorance occurs as a result of disappointing results over a long period of time. Common symptoms of rational ignorance are avoiding political topics in general and avoiding media which discuss upcoming elections. Patients suffering from rational ignorance are usually not vocal about their abstention and their condition can go undiagnosed for a long period of time.

1.4 Political impotence

Patients suffering from political impotence are especially hard to detect as they are often emphasising their political opinions and even urge others to vote. They often don't plan their abstention until doubts about their political opinion and their education on the topic act as a paralysing agent at the last moment. Political impotence is usually accompanied by shame and patients will deny their abstention. The condition can increase over the years as previous abstentions act as a traumatising factor causing permanent abstention if left untreated.

1.4 Chronic protest

The chronic protest is treated separately from voter fatigue as it occurs in patients with a heightened political awareness. It is unclear why this political interest results in abstention. Anapatin is not primarily developed against chronic protest but it has a reported effectiveness in some cases. However, it has to be taken into account

that this might be due to a natural weakening or instability of the chronic protest syndrome. In this case, the patient might have naturally cured of the condition. The prescription of Anapatin to patients still suffering from the persistent chronic protest is currently being clinically tested.

2. Before you take Anapatin

2.1 Possible side effects of Anapatin

While Anapatin increases political vigour in patients, it does not guarantee informed political action. In order to use Anapatin in a responsible way, patients should make sure they are aware of the current political state and candidate options. Using Anapatin irresponsibly could result in random voting, heightened the level of influenceability by other voters or an increased inclination towards populist politics. Anapatin does not cause any physical side-effects but should be consumed with caution by patients on a controlled glucose diet.

2.2 Use for children

Although Anapatin causes no physical side-effects in children, minors should not be treated for voter fatigue as it can disturb the natural development of political vigour in the child and cause resistance to the medicine later in life.

2.3 Taking with food and drink

Anapatin does not interfere with food or liquids. No side-effects occur from taking Anapatin alongside alcohol.

2.4 Important information about some of the ingredients:

Each Anapatin capsule contains 500–650mg of dextrose.

2.5 How to take Anapatin

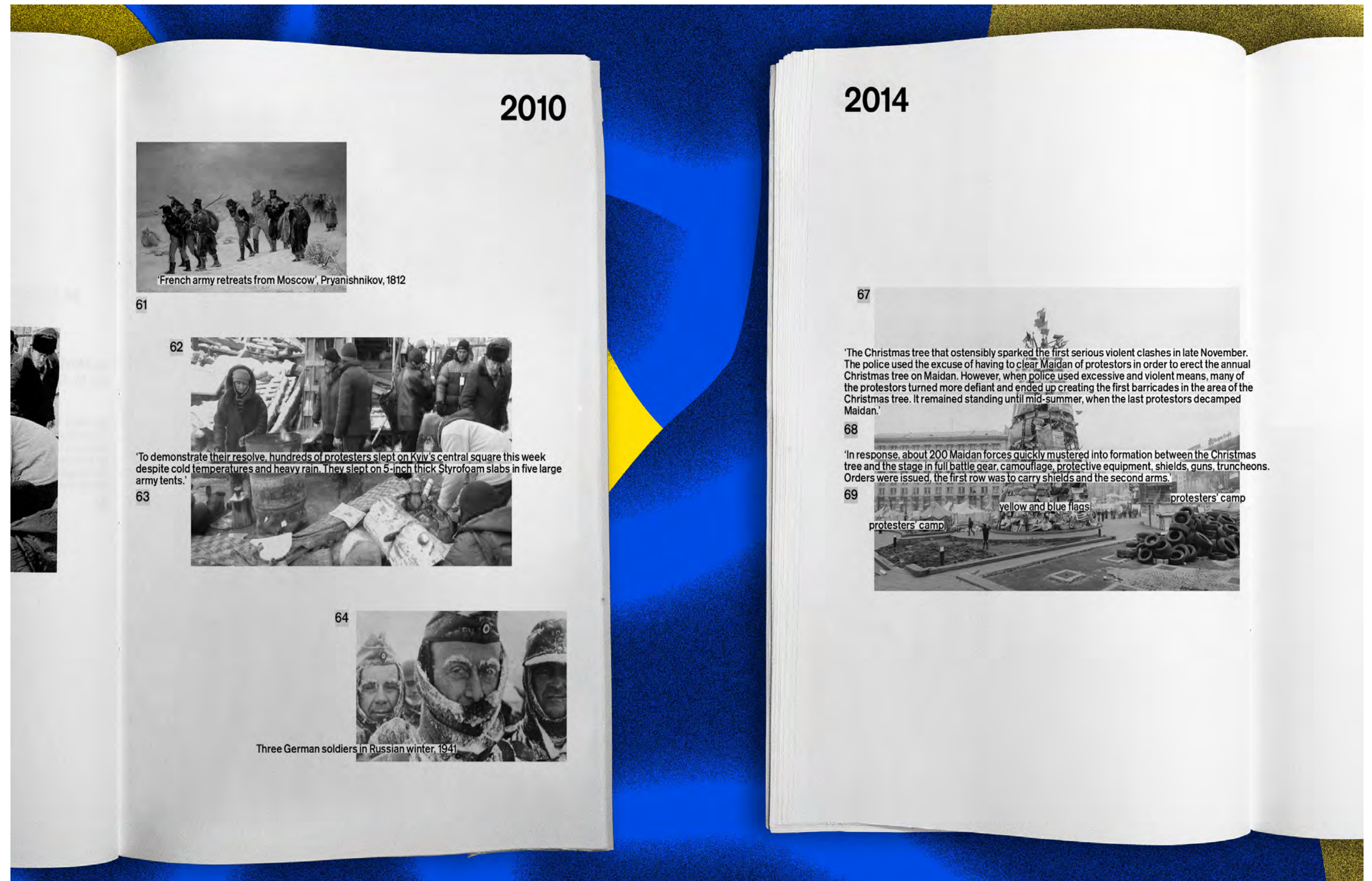
Take one capsule of Anapatin with water within 72 hours of expected need for political interest.

Consume Anapatin at your own risk



Yellow and Blue (2015)

Yellow and Blue explores 25 years of protest on the Maidan-square in Kyiv, Ukraine. From a student hunger strike against the Soviet Union to the pro-EU protest and its violent backlash in 2013–2014. Through visual research, we identified the spatial, architectural and social roles that the Maidan plays as a witness to uprising. In this black and white publication, the symbolic power of colours and objects is emphasised by superimposed text. Working in a cultural context relatively new to us, we decided to use collected existing text and insert an extensive source list to enable further research. *Yellow and Blue* is the result of our first collaborative process. In 2020, we remastered the publication with a new cover and introduction.



In collaboration
with Iskra Vukšić