



## RULES AND PROCEDURES OF THE CALL FOR COLLABORATORS FOR THE COLLABORATIVE PROTOTYPING WORKSHOP LAB#03 SYNTHETIC MINDS

### 1.- PRESENTATION

**Synthetic Minds** is the third of a series of **LAB(s)** that **Medialab Matadero** will be running over the course of 2023 and 2024. Conceived as multidisciplinary research and collaborative production laboratories, each LAB offers a cyclical programme of **Collaborative Prototyping Workshops, Artistic Projects, Transversal Workshops and Seminars** and **Public Events** related to the main lines of research of Medialab at Matadero Madrid.

The main activity of each LAB consists of a two-week long **Prototyping Workshop** mentored by renowned international artists and thinkers during which 8 collaborative projects related to the themes of *Synthetic Minds* will be developed. These projects are selected by means of an international and public call for proposals. Once they have been selected, the projects are made public and a second call for proposals is launched to find collaborators interested in taking part in their development.

### 2.- TOPICS OF THE LABORATORY

Distributed cognition, cybernetics, non-human intelligences, AGI, complex systems, alien semiotics... these are just some topics at the core of 'Synthetic Minds', the third speculative research and production laboratory developed by Medialab Matadero. LAB#03 Synthetic Minds consist of a eight-month interdisciplinary program where citizens from all over the world can join a diverse group of artists, critical thinkers, and experts from various fields to **explore the role that the deliberate composition of intelligent systems will play in shaping our collective future.**

In a time defined by the revolution in machine learning, data mining, machine vision, and so called artificial intelligence technologies, our enquiry must go beyond the purely technological, to the very essence of the concept of 'intelligence': how does intelligence materialize in non-human or even non-biological forms, and how do these forms challenge our perception of the world and our own agency within it?

LAB#03 is a journey into the core ontology of intelligence itself, intertwined with the planetary potential nestled within its reconceptualization. We embrace the notion that minds are not solely organic entities located in our brains but englobe a wide array of systems operating simultaneously and interdependently across multiple scales and forms –from neural networks or ant colonies up to vast distributed intelligences operating within natural ecosystems or financial markets–. Any given system able to unfold the necessary feedback loops to recursively respond and adapt to its environment is, in essence, a mind. Aligning with certain schools of thought in cognitive science and philosophy of mind, this approach sees cognition not as a property confined to individuals, but as a distributed, emergent property of



complex systems.

But what role do we, as humans, assume in this expansive cognitive landscape? Are we mere passive components in this apparatus of multi-layered intelligence or do we have some agency within its interplay? Among the most pressing issues in the coming decades will be to unfold our ability to function as a mediating agent among these various forms of intelligence. Is in this context where we reclaim the term 'synthetic', not to denote something necessarily artificial, but to describe minds that are deliberately composed—be they biological, technological, or a blend of both. However, this process of deliberate composition compels us to reflect on the ethical, socio-political, and environmental dimensions of designing 'minds'. Guided by complexity science, our goal is to design new forms of intelligence capable of addressing the challenges of our interconnected world, while keeping them aligned with the critical human and ecosystem values necessary for a viable planetary future.

The Collaborative Prototyping Laboratory seeks to develop experimental projects that explore the composition of intelligent systems, regardless of their scale or condition. We accept all kinds of proposals, from the most technical to the most speculative, and at any stage of development, from emerging ideas to projects in their final stages of definition and testing. Proposals should benefit from the collaborative and co-creation environment offered by Medialab. As a guide, we propose three distinct agendas developed with the mentors of LAB#03, **Bani Brusadin**, **Bogna Konior** and **Ed Keller**, each delving into different facets related to Synthetic Minds. "**Infrascapes of Cognition**" examines the intricate infrastructure and societal dynamics producing and produced by synthetic cognition; "**Co-evolutionary Emergence**" explores the intertwined evolution of cognition and technology, challenging traditional notions of distinct minds; and "**Promethean Transformations**" investigates the widespread emergence of synthetic intelligence across multiple disciplines and its profound impact on human life and the future of Earth.



### **3.1.- Infrascapes of Cognition**

*Exploring the intricate infrastructural and societal dynamics producing and produced by synthetic cognition.*

Infrascapes of Cognition agenda within the Synthetic Minds program beckons us to reflect on how the intricate network of artificial cognition is profoundly embedded in our society's foundation. Focusing on the entangled web of sensing, encoding, decoding systems, decision-making processes, and multilayered abstractions, this agenda seeks to illuminate how synthetic cognition seeps into every facet of our lives. From energy infrastructures and warfare systems to labor management and even emotional and creative landscapes, our exploration delves into the dynamic interaction between synthetic and human cognition, fostering a distinct form of hybrid system.

Our main focus orbits around the ethical and political implications of this 'infrastructural uncanny,' where power dynamics are enigmatic and intertwined, and synthetic cognition may veil individuals from the consequences of their actions. Furthermore, we ponder on a potential paradigm shift: Could these AI systems reverse the uncanny, serving as mirrors that reveal our civilization's trajectory?

This agenda approaches large-scale computing systems as cultural artifacts wielding immense power, continuously shaping our collective culture. Key focus areas within this agenda include the risk and potentialities of synthetic cognition on specific societal sectors, placing particular focus on information architectures, power structures, and political models. Additionally, it delves into both, negative and positive considerations of synthetic intelligence surrounding accountability and transparency, and the impact that alternative applications of these technologies could have within our current societal systems.

### **3.2.- Co-evolutionary emergence**

*The intertwined evolution of cognition and technology, highlighting the inherently artificial nature of minds.*

The Co-evolutionary Emergence agenda within the Synthetic Minds program challenges the traditional demarcation of minds as distinct, organic entities untarnished by artificial influences. It emphasizes the intimate interplay between cognition and the 'artifice' through which it operates, including language and technologies of abstraction. Drawing inspiration from Marshall McLuhan's idea that modern technologies are extensions of our minds, we propose that our minds can be seen as synthetic extensions of the prevailing technics in our current era.

This agenda seeks to unravel the notion that all minds are inherently artificial and have always been so. It poses thought-provoking inquiries about the history of our species and the evolution of cognition under this perspective. Are human minds merely a transitional phase in intelligence's evolution? Can



cognition's long-term trajectory be sustained through computation independently? and what kind of 'bodies' or 'containers' might be necessary for a mind's existence?

The Co-evolutionary Emergence research line acknowledges the interconnectedness of evolution, environment, culture, and technology. It proposes that new types of minds can emerge through the interaction of various ecologies and techniques. While humans may not have complete control over the global evolution of life and intelligence, we can influence specific paths and develop frameworks to better understand these processes in the context of long-term change. Key aspects of this agenda include the evolution of cognition and technology, the interaction between humans and AI, the emergence of technologically-augmented ecosystems, and the role of human agency in shaping the future of planetary intelligence. The aim is to deepen our understanding of how minds operate, highlighting the possibilities and consequences of their ongoing evolution.

### **3.3- Promethean Transformations**

*The widespread emergence of synthetic intelligence across multiple disciplines and its profound impact on human life and the future of Earth.*

The Promethean Transformations agenda in the Synthetic Minds program starts with the assumption that humanity's future is intrinsically bound to the coming era of ubiquitous synthetic intelligence, and that our continued existence will require an unprecedented creativity and critical analysis of AI's impact across a multitude of disciplines. We already see a revolution in film, architecture, urbanism, genetic engineering, materials science, medicine, warfare, and all aspects of life, as AI tools are increasingly integrated into creative work and popular culture.

At the core of our response to this transformation are several vital questions: what forms of intelligence will manifest in the coming decade, how will they reshape human life, and crucially, when and how will they achieve sentience and sapience? What 'new forms of mind' will we create, and how will we coexist with them? And, of critical importance, what new interfaces, languages, or protocols of interaction must we develop to facilitate a coexistence?

The Promethean Transformations research agenda aims to chart the future of ubiquitous intelligence, offering insights into the ways that communication, interpretation, metalinguistics and gesture might develop in the age of AGI. Language and logic will evolve through our interaction with increasingly sophisticated machine intelligences; yet the latent spaces of cognition also exist beyond language. Our research will emphasize the need for radically multimodal, synaesthetic and concurrent models of computation and cognitive forms. We aim to explore both the vast potential and the existential risk posed by superintelligence; and we suggest that a viable cosmopolitics could be catalyzed by the trans-planetary structure of feeling which unites organic and synthetic cognition. We will strive to navigate the unprecedented geopolitical dynamics that emerge as we approach a technological



singularity. Our goal for this design research, with cautionary insights and tactical & strategic possibilities underscored, is to facilitate a deeper systemic approach to the future ecologies of Synthetic Minds.

For more information: [Webinar with the LAB#03 SYNTHETIC MINDS mentors](#)

### 3.- OBJECTIVE

In accordance with the principles of transparency, equality and competition, and in line with the programming lines of Matadero Madrid, the purpose of this call is to select collaborators who wish to participate in the **LAB#03 SYNTHETIC MINDS Collaborative Prototyping Workshop**, between 24 January and 10 February 2024, as part of the working groups that will develop the proposals previously selected in the Call for Project Promoters.

A maximum of 40 collaborators (5 for each of the 8 projects selected) will be selected, 5 for each of the projects selected in the promoters open call.

#### Selected projects:

1. **Vytautas Jankauskas** (Vytautas), with the project **Latent Intimacies** (“Intimidades latentes”).
2. **Alice Bucknell** (Alice Harriet Leonie Bucknell), with the project **A Parliament for Heliotechnics** (“Un parlamento para la heliotecnia”).
3. **María Molina Sánchez**, with the project **Synthesis and (co)evolution of minimal forms of intelligence** (“Síntesis y (co)evolución de formas mínimas de inteligencia”) together with **Roni Maimon**.
4. **Will Freudenheim**, with the project **Interplay: Collective Intelligence in Virtual Worlds** (“Interacción: Inteligencia colectiva en los mundos virtuales”) together with **William Morgan** and **Darren Zhu**.
5. **Rebecca Bligh**, with the project **deepdreamcatcher** (“Atrapasueños profundo”).
6. **Lorena García Espino**, with the project **Unlovable Creatures** (“Criaturas inamables”).
7. **Alexandra Anikina** (Sasha Anikina), with the project **The Chronicles of Xenosocialist AI** (“Las crónicas de la IA xenosocialista”).
8. **Brittany Newell (Brittany St John Newell)**, with the project **EAT ME** (“Cómeme”).



### **3.1. OPERATION OF THE LABORATORY**

During the workshop, ideas will be tested and collaborative projects developed by working in interdisciplinary groups composed of several collaborators and coordinated by the project promoter. The groups will receive the support and advice of experts/mentors invited by Medialab (Ed Keller, Bogna Konior, and Bani Brusadin), and will have a workspace for the development of each project.

The role of the promoters is to propose an idea open enough to be collaboratively developed, meaning, it can be modified based on the contributions from the other group members. They should also be capable of energizing the group in order to channel the collective intelligence generated from the interaction between the different participant profiles through the project.

Likewise, the promoter will be responsible for receiving the financial allocation for the project production, the final expenses of which should be planned and executed by consensus with the rest of the group.

The role of the collaborator is to contribute their knowledge in a collaborative work environment, applying their perspective to the appropriate development of the project for which they have been selected.

It is assumed that the workshop will work with free and open software, that the projects will be based on open standards, and that the results will be available under Creative Commons licenses that invite reappropriation, reuse, and distribution of the same.

The workshop will be conducted in both English and Spanish without formal translation.

At the end of the workshop, on February 9th and 10th, 2024, there will be a public presentation of the resulting prototypes within the framework of the **OpenLAB#03** event.

As specified in point 9 ([Undertakings of Those Selected](#)) of the Rules and Regulations of the Call for Project Promoters for the *LAB#03 SYNTHETIC MINDS* collaborative prototyping workshop, the names of the collaborators participating in the projects will appear in the credits of the workshop. Medialab will also provide those collaborators who request it with a document certifying their participation in the workshop.

### **4.- PARTICIPANTS**

This call is aimed at individuals and groups of people of legal age from Spain and abroad of any level of qualification and from diverse disciplines such as design, art, architecture, urban planning, economics, film, photography,



journalism, digital media, environmental sciences, philosophy, engineering, social studies, political science, programming, materials science, activism or any other field.

It is essential to have at least a **medium-high level of English** that allows fluent communication with mentors and collaborators, and does not require consecutive translation in meetings.

The concept of a collaborator is fundamental to Medialab's approach to and development of its collaborative prototyping workshops, which are conceived as multidisciplinary workspaces in which the exchange of knowledge and informal learning are encouraged in a horizontal relationship between mentors, project promoters and the collaborators themselves. Collaborators can join the development team of one or more of the selected proposals according to their interests, contributing their knowledge and ideas while learning from the other members of the group and the workshop mentors. Notwithstanding the above, it is recommended that collaborators focus on only one proposal in order to ensure their full commitment to it throughout all phases of the workshop.

## **5.- EVALUATION COMMITTEE**

Medialab Matadero will set up an Evaluation Committee made up of an independent professional who is not part of the institution and who shall act as technical mentor for the **Collaborative Prototyping Workshop**, the Head Curator of Medialab at Matadero and a member of the Medialab team.

It will be chaired by the head curator of Medialab Matadero and will have a Secretary, who will take minutes of the sessions,

The regulation of the Evaluation Committee will be governed by the rules established for collegiate bodies by Law 40/2015 of 1 October on the Legal Regime of the Public Sector.

Exclusion due to non-compliance with the requirements, and evaluation, are the exclusive competence of the Evaluation Committee.

The decision of this evaluation committee will be communicated on 20 November 2023 through the website <https://mentessinteticas.medialab-matadero.es> and to the beneficiary or beneficiaries at the address they have provided.



## **6.- SELECTION CRITERIA**

Collaborators will be selected on the basis of their profiles, seeking a balance within the group as a whole in terms of gender, origin, knowledge and interests.

Medialab will arrange and cover the travel and accommodation expenses of up to a maximum of 8 people from among the selected collaborators who live outside the Community of Madrid.

In the event that meals are not provided by Madrid Destino, these will be paid for by the participants.

The selection of these 8 collaborators will be based on the following criteria:

- Suitability of their profiles (in terms of their experience, skills and specific knowledge) to contribute to the development of a specific project from among the projects selected.
- Value will be placed on a diversity of approaches and backgrounds, and on their integration within all the profiles that are to be selected.

## **7.- DURATION**

- All those interested in participating as collaborators in the workshop must fill in and send the form provided on the call website **before 19 November 2023 at 11:59pm CET**.
- The result of the selection will be made known to interested parties by telephone or email as of **20 November 2023**, and to the general public via the <https://mentessinteticas.medialab-matadero.es/> website.
- The Collaborative Prototyping Workshop will take place between **25 January and 10 February 2024**, both inclusive, in Medialab's facilities at Matadero Madrid.
- Following the workshop, the OpenLab public event will take place between **9 and 10 February 2024**, at which the projects developed will be **presented to the public for the first time**.

## **8.- UNDERTAKINGS OF THOSE SELECTED**

- Those selected undertake to participate in person during at least 50% of the workshop, which will take place from Monday to Friday from 10am to 6pm in an informal and relaxed atmosphere. Small





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workshops and presentations will occasionally be held between 6:30 and 8:30pm, attendance at which will be optional.

- Those collaborators whose travel and accommodation expenses are covered undertake to attend the workshop in its entirety at the times indicated.
- Comply with the rules and regulations of the Matadero Madrid spaces.
- The participants undertake to behave in a respectful manner with all other people taking part in the workshop. No expressions of hatred or intolerance in issues of gender, race, ethnicity, disability, social position, sexual orientation, religion or origin will be accepted. Male chauvinist attitudes or sexual harassment will not be accepted. Should any collaborator express any such attitudes, his or her participation in the workshop will be terminated immediately.

In the event that a successful application must be withdrawn, the candidate must give sufficient notice.

In an event of force majeure, none of the parties shall be obliged to fulfil their respective commitments.

## **9.- APPLICATION DEADLINE AND REQUESTED INFORMATION**

All those who are interested in participating in the call must fill in and send in the form they will find on the <https://mentessinteticas.medialab-matadero.es/> website **before 19 November 2023 at 11:59pm CET.**

Information requested (\*required field):

- Full name\*
- Email\*
- Telephone\*:
- Biographical summary\*
- Motivation and expectations\*
- Knowledge and skills that you can bring to the workshop (not only technical)\*
- Project(s) in which you would like to participate (from among those selected)\*
- Link to a short video presentation lasting no more than 2 minutes (in Spanish or in English). This can be just a video recorded on your mobile phone\*.
- City and country of residence\*
- Request for travel yes/no\*
- Request for accommodation yes/no\*



- ID (DNI) or Passport no.\*
- Comments
- How did you find out about this call?

## **10.- DOCUMENTATION TO BE SUBMITTED**

The selected collaborators must submit the following:

- A copy of their valid identity document (DNI, NIE, or passport).
- In order to participate in the prototyping workshop as a collaborator of the specified project, the duly signed Acceptance Form.

In addition, participants whose travel and accommodation expenses are covered must provide the following documentation:

- Participants residing outside the Community of Madrid must present a census registration certificate to justify the need for a travel and accommodation allowance.

## **11.- INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

Participants will answer for the originality and authorship of the documents they develop during the workshop, and guarantee that they legitimately hold all intellectual property rights to the projects and, in this respect, guarantee the peaceful use thereof by Madrid Destino and expressly release it from any liability for any direct or indirect damage or harm that could be derived from their failure to comply with this guarantee, without prejudice to any unauthorised material that is not their own property.

The collaborators authorise Madrid Destino to make use, in full or in part, of the different elements of the project, and when relevant, its result (whether it be texts, images, graphics or videos) exclusively for advertising or biographic purposes of Madrid Destino, i.e., the rights to publish, in paper or digital format, flyers, catalogues or compilations concerning the activities of Madrid Destino or for advertising its activity. Accordingly, commercial use is expressly excluded from this. The authorisation is granted for the maximum period allowed by law, for worldwide geographic scope.

Once the projects have been selected and during the course of the activity, the author is obliged to allow any other participants in the activity to use their work as the basis for other derivative works.

Likewise, the final result of the project may be considered a collective work.



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## **12.- PARTICIPANT'S IMAGE RIGHTS**

Participants understand that they may appear in images (photograph, video, etc.) taken in relation to their artistic project for subsequent informative or promotional dissemination of the Madrid Destino activity, and they authorise such use.

They also agree that their image may be used in catalogues or other documents compiling the activities of Matadero Madrid or Madrid Destino.

All of this with provisos and limitation on uses and applications that infringe the right to honour in the terms set out in Organic Law 1/1982 of 5 May on the Civil Protection of the Right to Honour, to Personal and Family Privacy and to One's Own Image. Any other use outside the above scope is expressly excluded from this authorisation.

## **13.- DATA PROTECTION**

Madrid Destino guarantees to the participants that their personal data will be processed in accordance with legislation in force and to this end informs them that such data will be incorporated into a file owned by Madrid Destino in the following terms:

Data controller: Madrid Destino Cultura Turismo y Negocio, S.A., with registered address in Madrid, Calle Conde Duque, 9- 11, Madrid (C.P. 28015).

Data Protection Officer: [dpd@madrid-destino.com](mailto:dpd@madrid-destino.com)

Purposes: To manage and comply with the relationship established (including management of the legal agreement, arrangement and storage of agreements and deeds, accounting administration, compliance with invoicing and fiscal obligations, and for transparency and control purposes).

Storage period: Storage shall be limited to the period necessary to comply with the contractual relationship and for the statutory period for civil, criminal, administrative and any other actions that may arise from the activity or service provided.



Recipients: The Tax Agency and other public bodies, in compliance with tax, transparency and control obligations; financial entities for management of collections and payments; and legal authorities. Transparency obligations require Madrid Destino to publish, on its website, a list of all the contracts that it enters into, thereby stating the signatories, the purpose of the agreement, its term, any modifications made, the parties obliged to perform the services or activities and the agreed financial obligations.

Lawful basis: Participation in a call for tender.

Rights: Rights to access, rectification, erasure, data portability and restriction on data processing or objection From may be exercised by sending an email to [dpd@madrid-destino.com](mailto:dpd@madrid-destino.com), with the subject “MEDIALAB/MATADERO”. The person making the request must identify themselves using their official ID document. You can also file a complaint with the Spanish Data Protection Agency (AEPD).

#### **14.- ACCEPTANCE OF THE RULES AND PROCEDURES**

The participants, by the mere fact of having entered the call, accept these rules and procedures.

#### **15.- CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

To resolve any issue or dispute arising out of the call, please write to Madrid Destino so that both parties may reach an amicable resolution.

Were such amicable settlement not to be reached, the parties, expressly waiving their own jurisdiction, submit themselves to the Courts of the city of Madrid.

Should you have any queries regarding the call, please write to [info.m@medialab-matadero.es](mailto:info.m@medialab-matadero.es) entering as the subject “*SYNTHETIC MINDS Call for Collaborators*”.

In Madrid, October 19, 2023