COLLECTIVE WISDOM

CO-CREATING MEDIA WITHIN COMMUNITIES, ACROSS DISCIPLINES AND WITH ALGORITHMS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Produced by the Co-Creation Studio at
MIT Open Documentary Lab

(Draft)

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Written by

Katerina Cizek and William Uricchio, with co-authors Juanita Anderson, Maria Aqui Carter, Detroit Narrative Agency, Thomas Allen Harris, Maori Holmes, Richard Lachmann, Louis Massiah, Cara Mertes, Sara Rafsky, Michèle Stephenson, Amelia Winger-Bearskin, and Sarah Wolozin

ABSTRACT

Collective Wisdom is a hybrid field study that sets out to map, define, and shed light on co-creation methods within media (arts, documentary, and journalism) and adjacent areas of knowledge (design, open-source tech, urban and community planning). While the concept of co-creation is gaining prominence, it is an ancient and under-documented dynamic. Media co-creation has particular relevance in the face of today's myriad of challenges, but is not without risks and complications.

In this study we identify four types of co-creation in media: within communities (in person and on-line); across disciplines and organizations, and increasingly, humans co-creating with living systems and artificial intelligence (AI). We also identify the risks, as well as the practical lessons from the field on how to co-create with an ethos grounded in principles of equity and justice. This qualitative study is not comprehensive, but it is a first step in articulating contemporary co-creative practices and ethics, and in doing so it connects unusual dots.

Full Study release in May 2019
at MIT PubPub and a living series and extension at IMMERSE

Go to cocreationsudio.mit.edu for updates
Follow us at @OpenDocLab and on Facebook, Instagram
Press Contact: Andrew Whitacre / awhit@mit.edu

INTRODUCTION

The concept of co-creation appears to be swirling into popular usage, but the practice is nothing new. Since the dawn of humanity in Africa, co-creation practices have offered alternatives to media projects sparked by single-author visions. Take for instance, the ancient art of rock carvings.

Travelling to the Qobustan petroglyph site, across the flats of central Azerbaijan, one arrives at the base of a sudden, enormous heap of rocky boulders jutting out of the semi-desert. Up inside the rocks, in hidden crevices and sprawled across its interior rock faces, lies a spectacular collection of more than 6,000 prehistoric rock carvings etched over the course of 40,000 years.

Petroglyphs of Qobustan (Azerbaijan) Photo: Walter Callens

The petroglyphs feature human figures dancing, warriors with lances in their hands, antelopes and wild bulls fleeing, battle scenes, long boats with lines of armed rowers, caravans of camels, and images of the sun and stars. Here, inscribed in stone, is life on earth, and the cosmos as understood by humanity over millennia. These carvings also provide evidence of the recurrent practice of the co-creation processes that have shaped our languages, music, early texts, performance, architecture, and art over the millennia. Yet, these collective practices are often under-documented, under-recognized, and under-funded, especially in the past 150 years, with the industrialization of cultural production.

"In the Eyes of Animals"
Marshmellow Laser Feast

Eurocentric commerce and scholarship have tended to focus on industrial forms of top-down production, meaning-making, and media that privilege the idea of a singular author, and by extension a singular authority. This methodology of media production often serves as a rationalization of extractive, harmful, and commodifying practices.

By contrast, as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie said in her 2009 lecture: "When we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise." Co-creation is increasingly recognized in such areas as education, healthcare, technology and urban design. Although each of these and other fields have distinct approaches, fundamentally co-creation is an alternative to—and often a contestation of— a singular voice, authority, and/or process. Further, within digital infrastructures, the lines between audiences, subjects, and makers are blurred, and often erased.

DEFINITION AND TYPES

AS A RESULT OF THIS STUDY, WE HAVE ARRIVED AT THE FOLLOWING DEFINITION OF MEDIA CO-CREATION:

> Co-creation offers alternatives to a single-author vision, and involves a constellation of media production methods, frameworks, and feedback systems. In co-creation, projects emerge from a process, and evolve from within communities and with people, rather than for or about them. Co-creation also spans across and beyond disciplines and organizations, and can also involve non-human or beyond human systems. The concept of co-creation reframes the ethics of who creates, how, and why. Our research shows that co-creation interprets the world, and seeks to change it, through a lens of equity and justice.

To clarify, we do not oppose authorship and attribution as valid cultural modes, especially in a time of social breakdown in trust and consensus around verifiable facts. Despite rigor and resonance with audiences, media makers who have practiced and modelled deep media co-creation approaches for decades, notably many artists of color, have been sidelined or dismissed as making community media.

More than ever, media makers from all cultural backgrounds and lived experiences are required to contest threats to democracy, particularly in the context of extractive technology economies and pathologies of trolling.

More than ever, media makers from all cultural backgrounds and lived experiences are required to contest threats to democracy, particularly in the context of extractive technology economies and pathologies of trolling.Recognizing the systemic support and extensive literature dedicated to single authorship, this study aims to articulate the values and affordances of co-creation, and argues for their importance in an

age of digitally-enabled cultural change and the socially-mandated reassessment of business as usual within the field of media making. Additionally, would-be media (and research) subjects demand more than representation; they are actively participating in both shaping and telling their stories, especially online. Many are critical of long-standing, extractive storytelling practices in documentary, journalism, and the arts, and are disinclined to perform their trauma or otherness for the narrow lens of an authoritative outsider. More broadly, audiences from all cultural backgrounds and lived experiences are asking new, more complex questions pertaining to power imbalances implicit in legacy-storytelling contracts between makers and subjects.

TYPES OF CO-CREATION

We have distinguished four types of co-creation that are often interlinked: within real-world communities and virtual communities, across disciplines, and humans working with non-human systems. These types of co-creation have distinct qualities and concerns. Co-creation within communities, is the most commonly identified protocol in this study. While we have separated in-person and online co-creation in order to highlight unique conditions and challenges, most contemporary community projects involve in-person and online practices. The following describes the types of co-creation that were investigated in this study, and the major issues that were considered with each:

1. CO-CREATION WITHIN COMMUNITIES, IN-PERSON

With community based co-creation, central discussions in our interviews revolved around power dynamics and relationships, i.e., who decides the terms of engagement, what media is made and by whom, and why and who benefits from this type of project. Key concerns identified included the hidden, unfunded work of co-creation. Artists of color and other historically marginalized groups are often burdened with additional responsibilities not recognized in formal media-making.

Quipu Project Photos courtesy of María Court and Rosemarie Lerner

2. CO-CREATION ON-LINE AND WITH EMERGENT MEDIA

On-line, the blurred boundaries between makers, subjects, and audiences afford new opportunities, but also open up new risks vis-à-vis questions of ownership, governance, and authority. Distinct questions around issues of accountability and trust arise with journalism in particular. Additionally, in projects involving emergent media, co-creators often prioritize training, literacy, and community access to expensive and complex technologies, which are considered crucial for inclusion and equity.

Fireflies, a Participatory Virtual Reality Game Project in collaboration with the Brownsville Community Justice Center.

3. CO-CREATION ACROSS DISCIPLINES AND BEYOND

When co-creation teams cross disciplinary lines, institutions, organizations, scholars, and makers embark on parallel paths of discovery rather than privileging one discipline's priorities over the other. This often requires comparatively long timelines and joint spaces. Importantly, these projects are frequently partnered with communities outside the academy. Many consider that co-creation resides beyond inter-disciplinary space, and prefer the terms trans-disciplinary, or even anti-disciplinary to describe their practices.
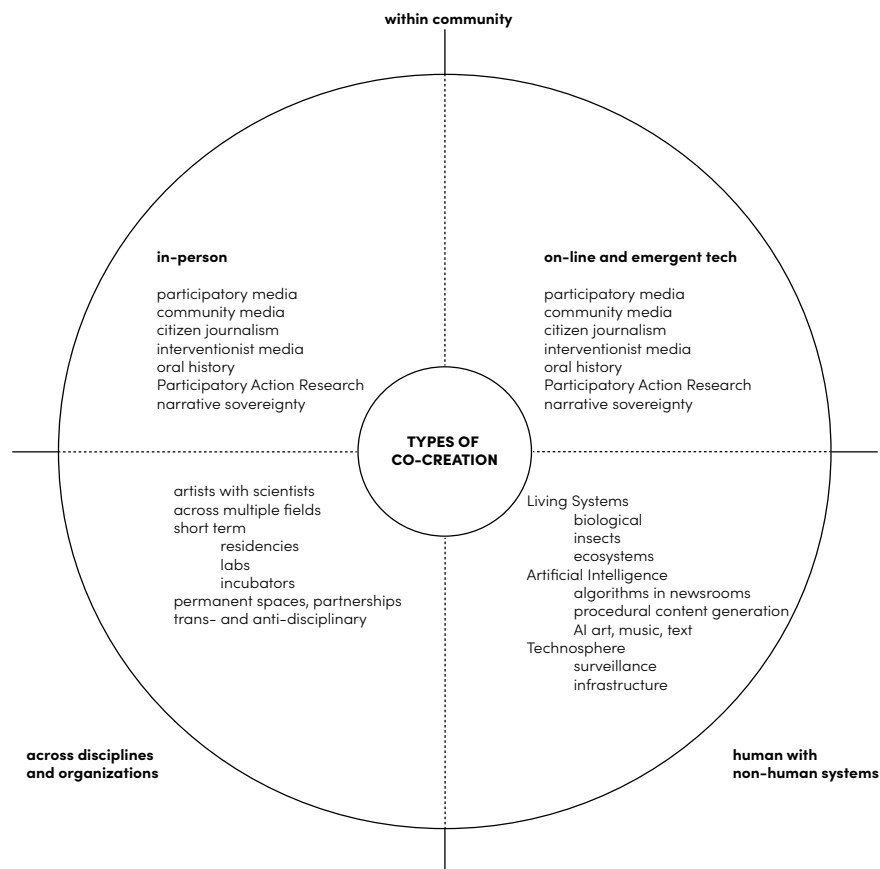
NEW INC a unique residency program for art + tech at a museum.

4. CO-CREATION BETWEEN HUMANS AND NON-HUMAN SYSTEMS

In a more speculative type of co-creation, artists, scientists, and provocateurs are also examining their relationships with living systems, artificial intelligence (AI) as well as technological infrastructures. These processes, too, de-centralize single authorship, but consider questions about the definition of agency and singularity that ask what co-creating with non-human systems looks like, and ponder the phenomena of humans increasingly becoming entangled within larger systems and infrastructures.

Agnieszka Kurant is an artist that co-creates with living systems such as slime molds, termite mounds, and AI-organized human labour such as Amazon Mechanical Turks.

within community

in-person

participatory media
community media
citizen journalism
interventionist media
oral history
Participatory Action Research
narrative sovereignty

on-line and emergent tech

participatory media
community media
citizen journalism
interventionist media
oral history
Participatory Action Research
narrative sovereignty

**TYPES OF
CO-CREATION**

artists with scientists
across multiple fields
short term
    residencies
    labs
    incubators
permanent spaces, partnerships
trans- and anti-disciplinary

Living Systems
    biological
    insects
    ecosystems
Artificial Intelligence
    algorithms in newsrooms
    procedural content generation
    AI art, music, text
Technosphere
    surveillance
    infrastructure

**across disciplines
and organizations**

**human with
non-human systems**

WHY CO-CREATE NOW?

Throughout the research participants identified these key reasons to co-create in this historical moment:

- Co-creation helps us navigate **uncharted territories of change** that are sweeping the planet: technology, digital culture, political and economic upheavals, all intertwining in patterns that legacy 20th-century models of media production are unequipped to handle.
- Co-creation **confronts power systems** that perpetuate inequality, and offers alternative, open, equitable, and just models of decision-making that is rooted in social movements.
- Co-creation can help tackle **complex problems,** especially climate change in the epoch of the Anthropocene, with the commitment to finding solutions at the local level.
- Co-creation **deals with time differently,** and recalibrates our sense of time, by insisting on responsiveness but at the same time expanding the timeframe of consequences.
- Finally, co-creation is part of an ecosystem that can **redefine concepts of the public good, civic trust, and the commons,** including our public spaces, cities, platforms, and narratives.

There is a political yearning and narrative turn toward a more ethical and respectful form of storytelling

There is a political yearning and narrative turn toward a more ethical and respectful form of storytelling as expressed by participants in this project, one made possible in the co-creation process. A central question emerged during the study: How do we share the world with each other in equitable and just ways?

KEY FINDINGS

We heard, throughout the research, that:

Co-creation does not replace single authorship but is an equally valid approach to making media, one that has not been well-documented, recognized, and properly funded.

Co-creation cannot occur without equity and justice, but it can also offer a way to deepen and extend equity and justice.

Marina Zurkow is a media artist exploring interactions between nature and culture, such as invasive species and petroleum dependence. Her work utilizes a variety of media, including animation, dinner parties, biological materials, and software. Still from Hazmat Suits for Children, 2012. Software driven animation and Tychem TK sculptures. Installation documentation, bitforms gallery. Photo: John Berans.

Therefore, in this study, we identified the following findings:

Co-creation has risks

While co-creation has a proven track record of negotiating divides, and the results emerge as more than the sum of their parts, it can also be abused. Numerous risks were articulated by participants across the research who warned that co-creation could:
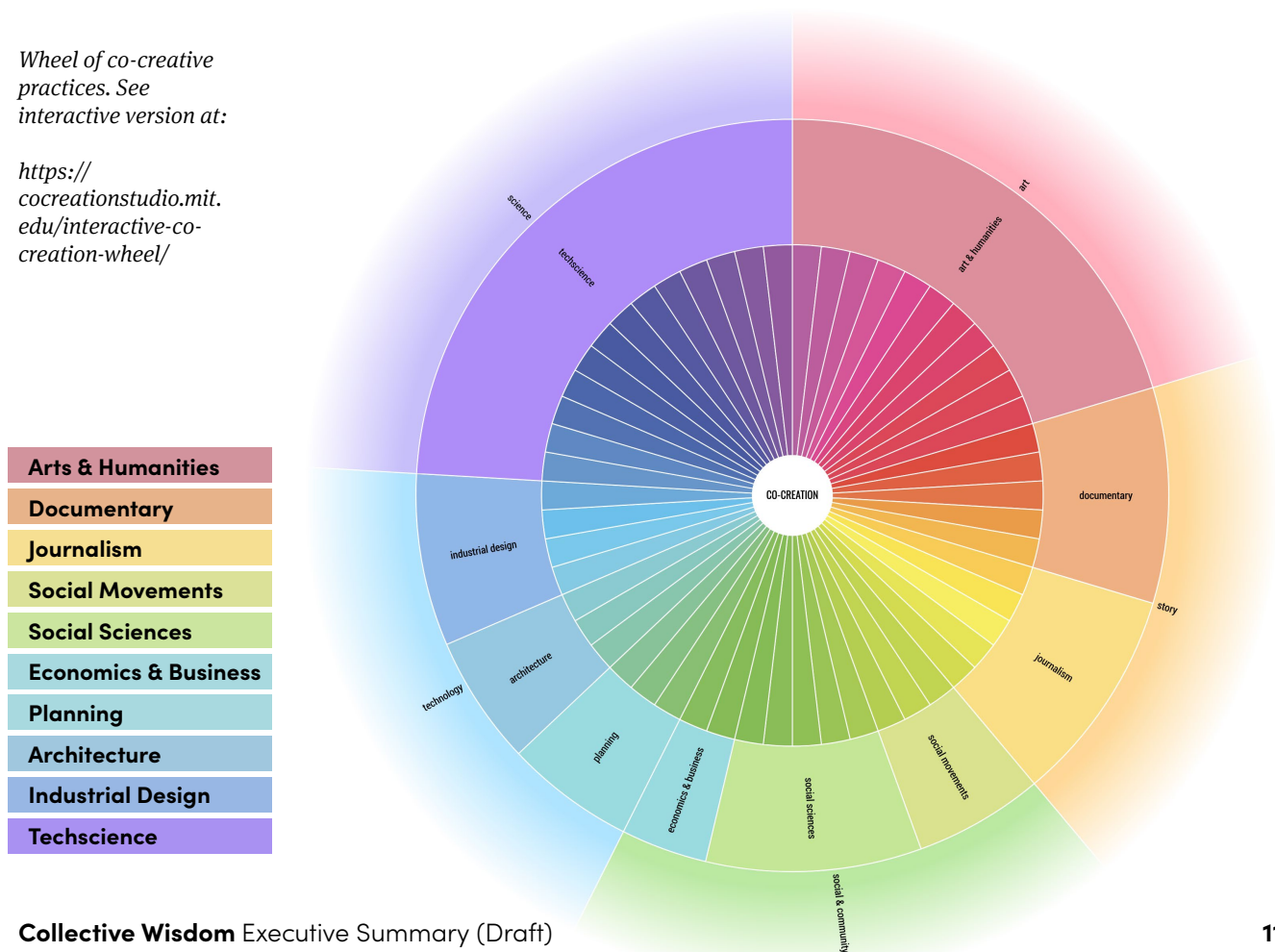
- Threaten editorial integrity and artistic independence.
- Heighten expectations of trust, commitment, and time on all sides.
- Have unintended consequences, especially online and with AI.
- Marginalize makers and their work by categorizing them into the sub-genre of community media, especially artists of color.
- Exploit labor, steal ideas and profit from them.
- Be co-opted for the marketing of projects that reproduce power inequities.

Co-creation lives within an ecosystem of practices.

Co-creation lives within a large dynamic ecosystem of practices situated across many areas of knowledge.

Wheel of co-creative practices. See interactive version at:

https://cocreationstudio.mit.edu/interactive-co-creation-wheel/

Arts & Humanities
Documentary
Journalism
Social Movements
Social Sciences
Economics & Business
Planning
Architecture
Industrial Design
Techscience

Co-creation has best practices and practical lessons from the field

Several recurrent, key, practical lessons emerged from our conversations with co-creators. The following approaches help to both facilitate co-creation and mitigate risks. Co-creation:

- Begins with deep listening, fostering dialogue and learning rather than coming in with preset agendas.
- Involves identifying common principles and negotiating terms and benefit agreements on individual, organizational, and community levels. These terms are determined beforehand to ensure equity and inclusion, by clearly spelling out decision-making, ownership, and governance issues.
- Involves balancing the project's process with the outcomes, rather than pre-defining relationships and processes solely by the deliverables.
- Fosters diverse, alternative forms of narrative structures. Co-creators can shed linear, conventional formats, and embrace non-linear, open-ended, ongoing, multi-vocal and circular, spiral narrative forms.

Nairobi Berries by Ng'endo Mukkii is a project develped at Electric South, a co-creative immersive production group in South Africa that explores hybrid and alternative forms of narrative structures using emergent tech and Africa-based artists in diverse fields such as fashion, design, cinema and photography.

- Centers healing, safety, and sustainability by employing trauma-informed practices. Co-created media projects are deeply connected to the well-being (and transformation) of the participants and community rather than repeating and reproducing trauma for the benefit of audiences or end-users. As such, ritual often replaces performance in co-creative practices.
- Both allows for, and demands, appropriate forms of leadership, language, and technology.
- Provides community access to technological and media digital literacy as core to many co-creative projects.
- Demands alternative models of funding, evaluation, and impact.
- Involves always being iterative, circling back (rather than ploughing ahead).

FIELD STUDY APPROACH

In the interest of accountability, we acknowledge that due to institutional constraints and proximity, this study has two primary authors — a scholar and a documentarian — who are not living at the social locations reflective of where some of this work emerged. To begin to address these constraints, our approach to this work was designed to reflect multiple perspectives.

Our research team was multidisciplinary, comprised of journalists, technologists, placemakers, researchers, and students who are concerned with the history, relevance and opportunity of collective methods.

Our research team was multidisciplinary, comprised of journalists, technologists, placemakers, researchers, and students who are concerned with the history, relevance and opportunity of collective methods. Additionally, we intentionally sought out the expertise of members of historically marginalized communities both within and outside academia. We invited co-authors to write chapters and participate in the conversations, and in one case we were invited to enter into a written community benefit agreement. Finally, we embarked on an extensive participatory reviewing and editing phase of this document.

Overall, we conducted 99 individual interviews and held 10 group discussions; a total of 160 people working in media and related fields participated actively in the study. Recognizing that this approach is not comprehensive, we will publish this manuscript as a live, dynamic study on innovative digital platforms that enable further conversations and that will encourage more voices to join the discussion.

We conducted a literature review and gathered lists of 222 readings and 251 projects relevant to this field of study.

We used a hybrid methodology, with a first phase of exploratory, open-ended, one-on-one interviews with key practitioners and stakeholders (including a snowball methodology to help identify other potential participants/projects). We combined this approach with a second phase informed by participatory design, and that involved group discussions. The geographic scope of the project was significantly limited to North America, although several projects and people reside elsewhere in the world. Further, many participants referenced work tied to their ancestral and diasporic communities.

Some of the questions posed in this study are based on 20 years of the team's co-creative experience. This includes Katerina Cizek's decade-long sojourn at the National Film Board of Canada where she worked on two long-form, co-creative documentary projects that involved in-person and on-line communities, and were inter-disciplinary, as well as involved non-human systems.

Author Katerina Cizek worked in co-creative methodologies at the National Film Board of Canada, including a project called HIGHRISE.

After Professor William Uricchio and director Sarah Wolozin invited Cizek to join the MIT Open Documentary Lab as a visiting artist in 2015, the team soon recognized a need for a hub to document, research, incubate, and support co-creative practices. Work on the Co-Creation Studio was begun with seed funding from MacArthur Foundation, with the idea and funding for this field study originating with JustFilms at the Ford Foundation.

The team sought to take active measures to arrive at a field study that is reflective, as much as possible, of a wide range of worthy work, of politically challenging content, and actionable tools.

This field study sought to: document historical and contemporary co-creation projects; identify risks and tensions as well as practical approaches; co-define

co-creation practice and principles; highlight types of co-creation occurring across media disciplines and adjacent fields; and showcase exceptional projects.

Most importantly, this worked is shaped by many. Author and placemaker Jay Pitter guided the MIT symposium, and contributed valuable key questions as well as a framework for the executive summary. Further, this report includes chapters that highlight the first-person voices of the Detroit Narrative Agency (DNA), Amelia Winger-Bearskin, Louis Massiah, and an extended excerpt from a conversation between Thomas Allen Harris, Michèle Stephenson, Maori Holmes, Maria Agui Carter, and Juanita Anderson. The report also features papers and spotlights (case studies) written by Sarah Wolozin, Dr. Richard Lachman, and Sara Rafsky. The report is polyvocal in that it is primarily built of direct quotes from over 100 interviews and discussions. It also includes vibrant examples of 251 such as the following, which suggest the diversity and abundance of approaches to co-creation projects:

LANDMARK CO-CREATED MEDIA PROJECTS
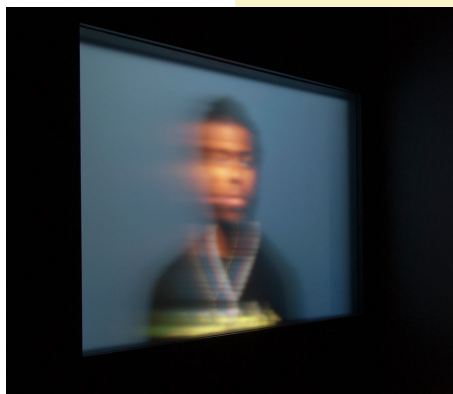
Question Bridge

This is a documentary project in which the co-creators interviewed Black men across the US; these men were invited to record questions for subsequent interviewees. The project has taken many forms including a five-channel video installation, book, mobile app, and community events.

Photographs courtesy of Question Bridge

Edge of the Knife

This is a dramatic feature film shot entirely in the Haida language (British Columbia, Canada), and was co-created by three organizations: the Haida Nation governmental body, Isuma Productions (a Canadian Inuit Production Company), and the University of British Columbia.

Photo credit: Farah Nosh. Copyright Isuma Distribution International

Family Album USA

Artist Thomas Allen Harris co-creates a living and growing family picture album of America by travelling across the country and inviting community members to share images and stories from their personal family archives. The resulting work involves live interactive performances, documentary films, web projects, and now, a TV special series on the PBS (US) television network.

Images Courtesy of Thomas Allen Harris.
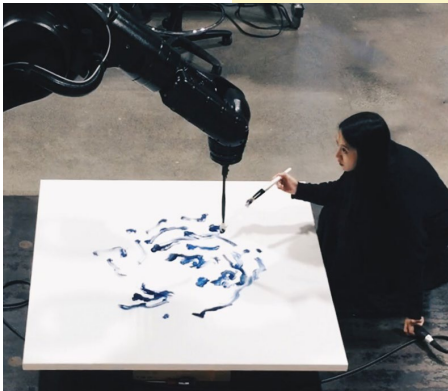
D.O.U.G.

Artist Sougwen Chung co-creates paintings with a robot in front of live audiences. The robot is prompted by both the artist's actions and live data from urban surveillance systems.

Images Courtesy of Sougwen Chung.

Eviction Lab

This is a co-created, trans-disciplinary project that draws on the collective expertise of sociologists, statisticians, economists, journalists, web engineers, and community members who all are engaged in documenting the rising crisis of evictions across America in real-time.

Photographs courtesy of The Eviction Lab

The Folk Memory Project

Based in Beijing China, the Folk Memory Documentary Project collective invites young filmmakers to visit their home (in rural communities) to document the historical experiences of relatives and elders during the Great Famine of 1959-61. This body of work is growing with each annual return the filmmakers make, and the collection now includes over one thousand interviews. The collective performs the recordings to live audiences, using projection, dance, and multimedia. *Photo courtesy of the Folk Memory Project*

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEDIA CO-CREATION

Overwhelmingly, the research points to recommendations that involve supporting and investing in *process*, not solely in deliverables or products. This recommendation extends across individual projects, community initiatives, institutional support, and identifies a need for systemic changes in the ways media are produced and connected to social movements. Some of this work may be appropriate in partnership with the Co-Creation Studio at MIT Open Documentary Lab, while other work may best be suited elsewhere. Our key recommendations follow.

1. Research

More research should be conducted by multiple stakeholders in order to map and understand operations of co-creation given the context of a dominant culture, predisposed to individual ownership, accumulation, and appropriation. We need to understand the implications of co-creation in a society of systemic inequity and in an era of fast-changing biological and technological (AI, e.g.) developments. We need to continue to learn from historic and current human practices by studying and understanding co-creation: in business/organizational models; in diverse communities; internationally; in ownership and intellectual property models; art collectives; co-operative economic models; transdisciplinar models and partnerships in art and AI; in deepfake and synthetic media, and in new forms of convening.

2. A Library of Toolkits and Curricula

There is a need to create resources for teaching, sharing, and learning co-creative models. This involves co-creative strategic planning that will create networks and hubs to document, organize, and create an accessible library of existing toolkits (contracts, worksheets, community agreement forms), best practices, and that will map failures through modular curricula. These networks and hubs should include: media-makers; community groups; non-profits; private companies; public institutions; media institutions, and universities. The resources would be intended for professional development as well.

3. Structural Changes at Institutions

More research and testing within institutions, both public and private, must be undertaken, by acknowledging and funding process, and not just product. Modes of creation beyond traditional authorship should be recognized. This will develop pathways for co-creative practices internally, and methods to reach communities that already co-create. These processes must be ethical, just, transparent, and equitable.

An innovative human-centred design project at MIT Center for Civic Media is called "Make the breast Pump not SucK" which uses participatory design, community based practices to put a human, social and political context into the design of the breast pump.
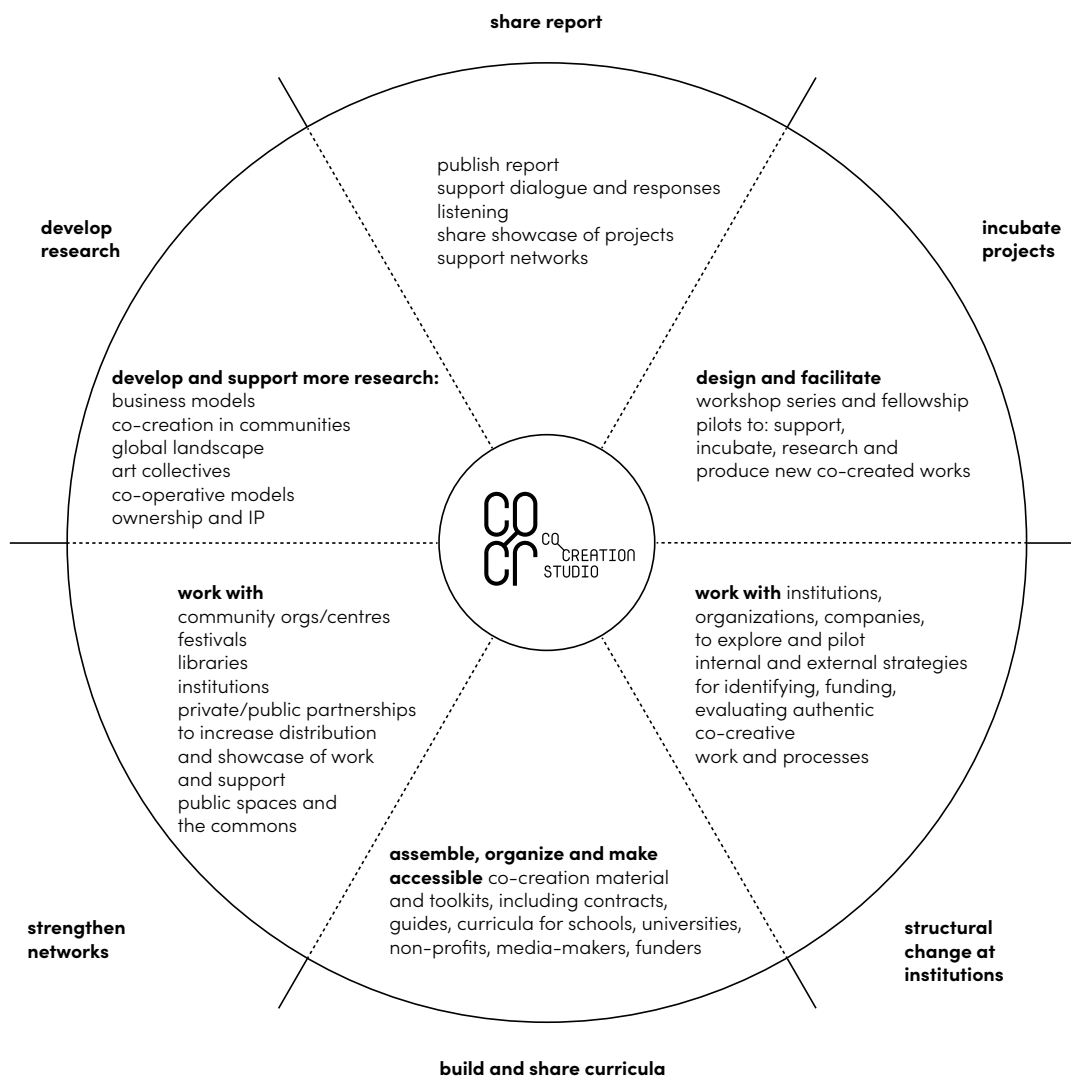
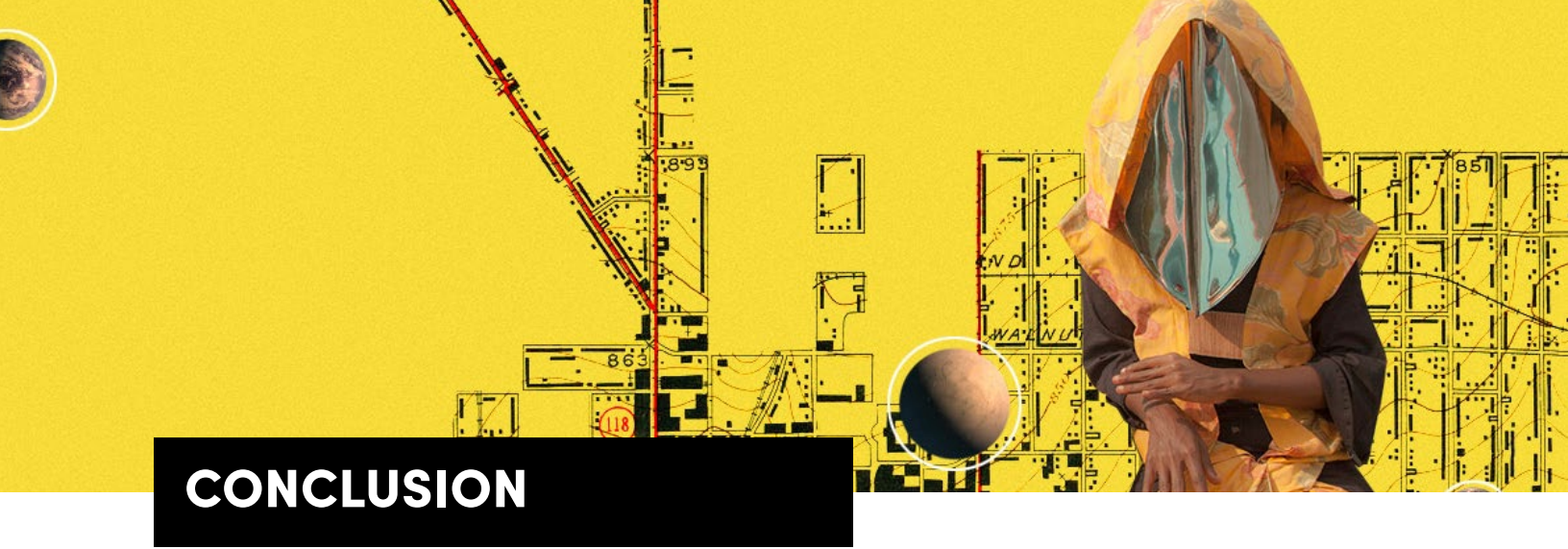*Photo courtesy of Catherine D'Ignazio*

4. Spaces for Incubation and Production

More sustainable programs, fellowships, workshops, and incubators should be developed to facilitate co-creative projects that honor the processes, multiple partnerships, and length of project time frames needed. The governance of these spaces and projects needs to be interrogated. These sites need to provide adequate resources, mentors, cross-disciplinary supports, witnesses, and, intentional healing and trauma-informed practices should be implemented.

5. Networks for Distribution

Spaces and networks for distributing co-creative projects need to be supported. These spaces include community centers, libraries, alternative spaces, schools, festivals, and universities. These spaces might be with allied funders engaged in projects.

share report

develop
research

incubate
projects

publish report
support dialogue and responses
listening
share showcase of projects
support networks

develop and support more research:
business models
co-creation in communities
global landscape
art collectives
co-operative models
ownership and IP

design and facilitate
workshop series and fellowship
pilots to: support,
incubate, research and
produce new co-created works

CO CR
CREATION
STUDIO

work with
community orgs/centres
festivals
libraries
institutions
private/public partnerships
to increase distribution
and showcase of work
and support
public spaces and
the commons

work with institutions,
organizations, companies,
to explore and pilot
internal and external strategies
for identifying, funding,
evaluating authentic
co-creative
work and processes

**assemble, organize and make
accessible** co-creation material
and toolkits, including contracts,
guides, curricula for schools, universities,
non-profits, media-makers, funders

strengthen
networks

structural
change at
institutions

build and share curricula

CONCLUSION

Of the thousands of engravings at the Qobustan petroglyph site in Azerbaijan, one inscription was likely the work of a single person. Probably the last carving of note here is graffiti, at the base of the site — carved out by a Roman legionary passing through in the First Century C.E., one who chiseled out a version of the message, "I was here." The sentiment feels lonely, almost mournful, however, when juxtaposed against the collective spirit rising from the petroglyphs across the interiors of the massive rock faces, and surviving across millennia. What vibrates instead is something joyful and ecstatic, a proclamation that, "We are here!"

The Soviet filmmaker Dziga Vertov is known for his films and writings that explored the language and social implications of cinema in the beginnings of the 20th century. Founder of the Kino-Eye filmmakers group, he advanced the use of the camera as an extension of the eye and mind to achieve a unique cinematic-truth (Kino-Pravda) that could challenge the social reality in a context of class contradictions.

Together, we share a vast history of co-creation. From early rock art, to the development of our sacred texts, to the politicized twentieth-century newsreel collectives, to the latest experiments in immersive technologies fueled by AI, co-creation is remarkably commonplace. But it is also remarkably invisible.

Before it is co–opted by digital empires, and marketeers, we have a chance to define it, claim it, and ground it to principles of equity, justice and authentic collective models of ownership.

Before it is co-opted by digital empires, and marketeers, we have a chance to define it, claim it, and to ground it in principles of equity, justice and authentic collective models of ownership. Media co-creation allows for new, better questions, and for paths in which there are not always singular answers. Co-creation can enrich daily practice, it demands self-reflection, and forges harmonious, equitable relationships between partners, within and across communities, beyond disciplines, and working with non-human systems, many of which we do not yet fully understand.

Throughout the making of this study, primarily through the listening, we have been humbled and inspired by the phenomenal stories of co-creation, and by the openness of all stakeholders to learn from each other and to engage in courageous questioning. The conversations have been nuanced, messy, difficult, exciting, and above all, overflowing. Co-creation carries with it a profound respect for each person's unique expertise, and also the knowledge that we must share both the burden and the liberation of determining our future collectively. There is an urgency to the challenges we face in this moment in history, and no one person, organization, or discipline can determine all the answers alone.

"Marrow, by Shirin Anlen, is a dynamic story series with generative characters that are given set parameters rather than specific traits and storylines. In this project, Anlen wonders if AI has mental capacity, can it also present with mental illness?
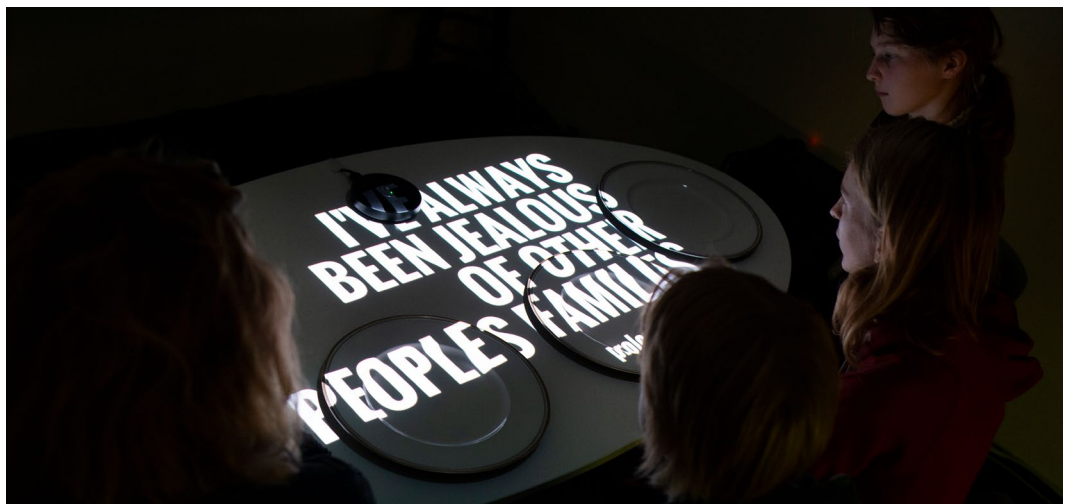
Making can divide, alienate, and exploit — or it has the potential to be inclusive, equitable, and respectful. The latter conditions are far more conducive to the collective efforts it will take to address the immense challenges of structural inequality, exponential population growth, the Anthropocene, and the ever-diminishing resources that follow in their wake. In reaching beyond the mere sum of our collective intelligence, we stand a chance at finding our collective wisdom. Co-creation offers hope.

BIOGRAPHIES

BIOGRAPHIES OF RESEARCH TEAM AND CONTRIBUTORS

Juanita Andersonis a veteran producer and documentary filmmaker who proudly hails from Detroit, Michigan. Her multifaceted career as a producer, director, production manager and executive producer includes a combined 17 years at public television stations WSIU, WTVS, and WGBH, before embarking on a career in independent media in 1993. Anderson joined the faculty of the Department of Communication at Wayne State University in 2003 where she currently heads the Media Arts and Studies program. She also serves as a principal advisor to the Detroit Narrative Agency. She is a co-author of the chapter, "Co-Creation and Equity, Five Media-Makers of Color Speak Out".

Beyza Boyacioglu is a documentary director and editor, and a media artist. Born and raised in Turkey, she has spent the past decade in New York and Boston. Her work has been exhibited internationally, at MoMA Documentary Fortnight, MoMA PS1, IDFA, RIDM, Morelia International Film Festival, and others. She has an MS degree in Comparative Media Studies from MIT and an MFA in Computer Art from the School of Visual Arts. She worked as a producer at MIT Open Documentary Lab between 2016 - 2018 and provided support and research for this study.

Josefina Buschmann, a Chilean filmmaker, researcher, and graduate student at MIT Comparative Media Studies, is a research assistant for this study.

Maria Agui Carter is an Indigenous Latinx/Chinese immigrant who grew up undocumented in NYC and graduated from Harvard. She is an award-winning filmmaker (Iguanafilms.com), teaches as an Assistant Professor at Emerson College, and serves on the Diversity Coalition of the WGA (Writers Guild of America). She is co-author of the chapter, "Co-Creation and Equity, Five Media-Makers of Color Speak Out".

Katerina Cizek is a two-time Emmy-winning documentarian working in the digital space. For over a decade at the National Film Board of Canada, she helped redefine the organization as a digital storytelling hub, through her long-form, co-creative documentary projects, Filmmaker-in-Residence and HIGHRISE. She is currently the Artistic Director of the Co-Creation Studio at MIT Open Documentary Lab. She is the lead researcher, author (with Uricchio), and co-principal investigator of this study.

Jessica Clark is the founder and director of media strategy and production firm Dot Connector Studio, the editor of Immerse.news, and a research affiliate at MIT's Open Documentary Lab. She works with media makers, funders and academics to research and develop new forms of social impact media. At Immerse, she is editing an extension of this study.

Sue Ding is a documentary filmmaker, and a creator and curator of emerging media. She is an alumna of MIT's Open Documentary Lab and the Comparative Media Studies program, and was a research assistant for this study. Based in Los Angeles, she is currently a USC Annenberg Innovation Lab Fellow and Senior Programmer for New Media at the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival.

Detroit Narrative Agency (DNA) incubates quality and compelling stories that shift the dominant narratives about Detroit towards liberation and justice, in collaboration with an ecosystem of community members, storytellers, mediamakers, and organizers. DNA are co-researchers, co-designers, and co-authors of the chapters: "If You're Not at the Table, You're on the Menu," "DNA Photo Essay," and "Community Benefits Agreements".

Thomas Allen Harris is an artist who uses media, photography, and performance to explore family and identity, in a participatory model of filmmaking, since 1990. He is presently in production on Family Pictures USA - a new PBS series that examines America through the lens of the "family photo album," slated for national broadcast in 2019. Born in the Bronx and raised in East Africa, Harris is a graduate of Harvard College with a degree in biology and is presently a Senior Lecturer at Yale University where he teaches courses related to his socially engaged art project, Digital Diaspora Family Reunion. He is a co-author of the chapter, "Co-Creation and Equity, Five Media-Makers of Color Speak Out".

Helios Design Labs an award-winning design studio based in Toronto, Ontario (Canada), designed this study and created its visual, graphic, and interactive elements.

Maori Karmael Holmes, is a filmmaker, writer, and curator. She is founder and artistic director of the BlackStar Film Festival. She has organized programs in film at a myriad of organizations including Anthology Film Archives, Institute of Contemporary Art - Philadelphia, Lightbox Film Center, Museum of Contemporary Art - Los Angeles, The Underground Museum, and The Whitney Museum. She is a co-author of the chapter, "Co-Creation and Equity, Five Media-Makers of Color Speak Out".

Professor Richard Lachman directs the Zone Learning network of incubators at Ryerson University and researches transmedia storytelling, digital documentaries, and mixed-reality experiences through the Experiential Media Institute. Richard completed his doctorate at UNE in Australia studying software recommendation-engines. He did his undergraduate in Computer Science at MIT, and holds a master degree from

the MIT Media Lab's Interactive Cinema group. He helped organize the breakout sessions during the Collective Wisdom symposium and drafted the chapter outlining attendee feedback for this study.

Louis Massiah is a documentary filmmaker and founder and director of Scribe Video Center in Philadelphia. He co-authored the chapter, "Scribe Video Center: Producing Methodology is Creative Work".

Samuel Mendez, a filmmaker and researcher, as well as a graduate student at MIT Comparative Media Studies, is a research assistant for this study.

Cara Mertes, the director of JustFilms at the Ford Foundation is co-author of the chapter "Considering Models for Co-Creation". At the Ford Foundation, she has designed and overseen an integrated social justice moving image strategy working across all of Ford's offices and strategies. Recent signature initiatives include creating the JustFilms Global Film Network, co-founding and supporting the evolution of DocSociety's Good Pitch model, creating and implementing the 'Stories of Change' initiative, seeding the 'Detroit Narrative Agency' social justice media hub, and serving as a founding Managing Partner for the 'Pop Culture Collaborative.'

Jay Pitter, MES, is an international placemaker and author whose practice mitigates growing divides in urban centres. She spearheads institutional city-building projects, rooted in neighbourhood knowledge, focused on:cultural heritage interpretive planning, gender-based mapping, inclusive public engagement, safe streets, and healing fraught sites. Jay shapes urgent city-building conversations through media platforms such as the Agenda and Canadian Architect—as a keynote speaker for organizations

like the UN Women and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)—and as lecturer and knowledge producer in urban planning faculties across North America. Recently, Jay consulted on Edmonton's new heritage plan; hosted a professional development luncheon for women city-builders in Detroit; and led (RE)IMAGINING CHEAPSIDE, a Confederate monument placemaking process in Lexington. She is currently working on the first phase of HER City and writing Where We Live , which will be published by McClelland & Stewart at Penguin Random House. She was the guide for the Collective Wisdom Symposium tethered to this study and contributed to the introduction.

Sara Rafsky is a writer and researcher who works at the intersection of journalism, press freedom, human rights and documentary film in the US and Latin America with organizations that include the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia University, Doc Society, MIT's Open Documentary Lab, Witness, Amnesty International, and the Committee to Protect Journalists. She received her MS in Comparative Media Studies from MIT in 2018. She was a research assistant on the project, and is the co-author of the chapters that examine collaborative journalism, the group Hyphen-Labs, and the Quipu and Question Bridge projects.

Kalila Shapiro is a digital media researcher and developer and was a research intern for this study.

Dr. Suzanne Steele, an editor for this project, is an award-winning poet, video-installation artist, librettist (Afghanistan: Requiem for a Generation [2012], Riel's Heart of the North [2020]), and scholar (the ethics of war narrative). She is an official Canadian War Artist (Afghanistan 2008-10), and a professional editor. Her work has been exhibited, studied, and broadcast internationally (BBC World Service, NPR, CBC, France, UK, China, Canada). She has a Master of Library and

Information Science, a BMus (voice), and she is Michif (Indigenous).

Michèle Stephenson is a Brooklyn-based media maker, author and artist who pulls from her Haitian and Panamanian roots to tell complex intimate stories by, for, and about, communities of color. Along with her partner, Joe Brewster, they co-founded multiple award-winning media production company The Rada Film Group. She is a co-author of the chapter, "Co-Creation and Equity, Five Media-Makers of Color Speak Out".

Deniz Tortum works in film and new media. His work has screened internationally (Venice Film Festival, SxSW, Sheffield Doc/Fest and True/False). He is an alumnus of MIT Comparative Media Studies and the Open Documentary Lab, and was a research assistant at the Open Documentary Lab, focussing on virtual reality and co-creation research.

William Uricchio is a Professor of Comparative Media Studies at MIT, and Professor Emeritus at Utrecht University (Netherlands). He is founder and Principal Investigator of the Open Documentary Lab. He is a Principal Investigator and author (with Cizek) of this study.

Carl Wilson, an editor of this study, is a cultural critic, writer, and editor based in Toronto.

Amelia Winger-Bearskin is an artist, creative

director, and organizer who develops cultural communities at the intersection of art, technology, and education. Amelia is Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) of the Seneca-Cayuga Nation of Oklahoma, Deer Clan. She is co-author of the chapter "Decentralized Storytelling."

Sarah Wolozin is director of the MIT Open Documentary Lab and co-principal investigator of this study. In her prior work as an award-winning media maker, she experimented with storytelling and emerging technology to make information and new technology more accessible and to shed light on alternative and unknown narratives. She is founder and editorial director of Docubase, co-founder and editor-at-large of Immerse, and co-founder of the Co-Creation Studio. She co-curates a bi-annual conference on topics relevant to documentary and emerging media and is a frequent speaker at festivals and conferences.

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Collective Wisdom: CoCreating Media within Communities, Across Disciplines and Algorithms brings together knowledge from interviews and group conversations with **166 practitioners** and scholars, **222 readings**, and **251 media projects**. The result is a story-rich field study of co-creative efforts that function outside the limits of singular authorship.

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