



Report: Micro-project

Project Details

Title: **Artist Researchers In Residence (TAIGA)**

Tagline: AI Artist Researcher in Residence at UmArts

TAIGA Focus Area: AI & Arts

Start date: 15 augusti 2024

End date: 15 september 2024

Responsible person(s): Ylva Frenaeus (Dep. Director), Clara West (Research coordinator), Maria Bylund (Finance)

Summary

The UmArts Artist Researchers in Residence Programme (ARIR) provides the opportunity for artists and makers to contribute to the UmArts research environment for one month. The ARIR TAIGA artists will be invited to develop new projects investigating Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning as part of the UmArts Art and AI Working Group. The programme focuses on interdisciplinary practice-based researchers from the visual arts, sound arts, media arts, performing arts, architectural, design, maker and hacker communities to develop short term projects in the UmArts research studio and contribute to the UmArts Art & AI Working Group.

The selected artist **Zeno Gries** has an open-ended approach to artistic work, deliberately relinquishing control over certain aspects of the creative process. This methodology often leads him to collaborate with scholars, actors, and other artists from various disciplines. By embracing a performative surrender of power and control in his productions, Zeno Gries aims to challenge a traditional patriarchal approach to directing and art practice.

During the residency Gries worked and developed his current project, *I believe in death bots* (WT), an essay film about so-called “death bots”: AI that is trained with the data of deceased persons in order to create immortal digital versions of them. This exploration of “ghosts” in the context of new technologies served as a starting point to examine the everyday mystifications of modern technologies such as AI.

List of tangible results:

- Gries two projects which explored the everyday mystifications of modern technologies is going to be a rich contribution to the discourses





of ethics and politics of AI within the Arts and AI working group and the TAIGA context

- In Gries research practice, we can see direct interactions with the other ongoing projects within the Art & AI focus area, as well as with Humlab and the Department of Computing science which will deepen the collaboration, discussion and research between the departments further.
- Gries openness of working collaboratively is going to lead to a strengthening of the Umarts research network towards other TAIGA-affiliated researchers and ongoing activities within the Art & AI working group.

Method

Describe the method used to implement the project. What specific activities and work were carried out to achieve the project objectives? Who were involved in the project?

It was important for us to have a plan for Gries' research time at UmArts. Before arriving we set up a clear research plan and interaction plan with relevant researchers within the framework of TAIGA to get the most of Gries' micro project as it ran for a relatively short period. By doing so many or all of the tangible results could be incorporated. By implementing an introduction plan and scheduling meetings Gries got a great ground idea of whom to interact with and how to work in this setting. Gries met with Daniel Shanken, Artist and UmArts WASP-HS Art and AI Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Umeå School of Architecture, Umeå University and shared research studio with Shanken during his project period. He met with **Michael Lukaszuk**, UmArts Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Media Arts at the Department of Creative Studies and the Department of Informatics and had a half day introduction to HumLab its facilities and technical equipment. Gries also met with PhD Robert Collins and many more researchers and Artists working in the field of Arts and AI. You could say that our method was very much about conversation and sharing research practices and research topics to sow the seeds for future collaborations. And on the other hand, provide space and time for further development of Gries' own research work.

Results

Describe the results and achievements reached during the project, emphasizing its transdisciplinary aspects. Include quantitative and qualitative data that support the progress and success of the project and established collaborations. Links to articles written, or conferences organized may be mentioned, linked, or attached in this section.

This micro project resulted in several outcomes. UmArts aim of the micro project, and how we operated, was to commission new creative experiments to the interdisciplinary community at Umeå University and allow publics to





experience and engage with the ethical considerations and societal shifts that widespread use of AI brings, and feed this back into AI development. In Gries case through the field of art research.

Qualitativ data:

Gries gave a [HumLab Share 28 August 2024](#).

[UmArts Arts and AI workinggroup](#)- Presentation by Zeno Gries, 30 August 2024.

[Expired User Session](#)- Interactive performance by TAIGA Artist Researcher in Residence. Galleri Verkligheten, Umeå, 13 September 2024.

Quantativ data:

[Wicked problems and AI- Taiga symposium](#) 17-18 October 2024. Film screening of Gries work.

Resource allocation

In this section, provide an overview of how the allocated resources were utilized throughout the project duration. Deviations from the budget should be explained.

1. Personnel costs (inc. Overhead): 53046SEK
2. Material costs: 9643SEK
3. Travel costs: 8116SEK
4. Other costs (specify): 8345SEK (Appartment)

Evaluation

Reflect on how well did the project meet its objectives and contribute to TAIGA's overall objectives in the connected focus area? In addition to the concrete outcomes, what other results or unexpected findings and key takeaways for the future, were observed during the project?

This was UmArt's first Micro project via TAIGA. It was also the first time we started a residency program for artist researchers in residence. At first, we were overwhelmed by the number of applications we received. This shows how much demand there is for participating in the interdisciplinary research environment that UmArts together with TAIGA can offer. The feedback we received from Gries is that the project was very valuable for continued research. By getting to know so many researchers within the Arts and AI working group and also being able to share their own research, new doors have opened for Gries. The hope is that this micro project will lead to publications and/or artworks in the near future in collaboration with one or more affiliates with UmArts and the TAIGA framework.





UMEÅ UNIVERSITET

Responsible person(s):

Date: 2025-01-17

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ylva Fernaeus'.

Ylva Fernaeus, Deputy Director of UmArts

