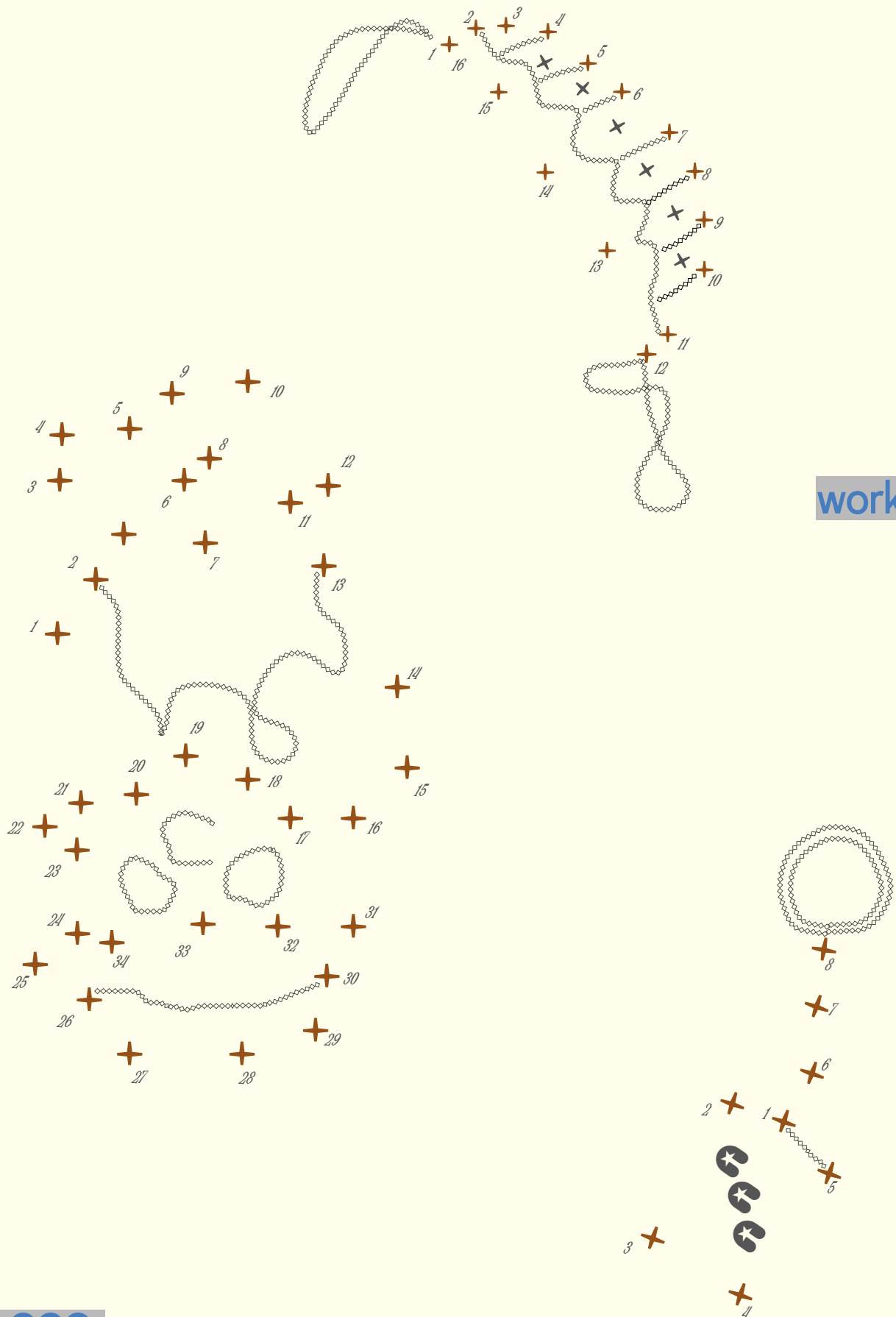
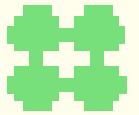


(Counterfactual Canon of the Contemporary)



a
workshop

by CCC

CCC ¹ is an ongoing artistic research, performative writing and workshop project, initiated by Levi van Gelder and Heleen Mineur in 2021. The project explores ways to assemble an interpersonal archive (of references, interests, consumed media, personal stories, research, found footage, a.o.) and to use this as a pool of content to *counterfactually* interact, speculate and create with.

This finds its shape in the production of experimental video work, writing and publications, but also in the sharing of these developed tools in educational contexts. We developed a *workshop* that converts the tools that we employ in CCC into *scores*, by which participants learn how to assemble, reassemble and activate their web of inspirations through re-translating into scripts, characters, and (essentially) creating *fanfiction* in various media. *Collaboration* is integral to the workshop; we want to create co-writing moments that are playgrounds for transference of thought and (failed) adaptation.

Our aim is to lay bare the many paradoxes of current times; celebrating its abundance and entropy. We want to explore the *sensibilities* of a post-truth era as an homage or extension of the lineage of camp ². The project aims to reclaim and re-appropriate narratives inside and outside the (often) copyrighted content of late capitalism by giving contemporary issues a voice, a smell and perhaps even a set of lyrics.

¹ Counterfactual Canon of the Contemporary or Courteney Cox Courgette (a.o.)

² 'To snare a sensibility in words, especially one that is alive and powerful, one must be tentative and nimble. The form of jottings, rather than an essay (with its claim to a linear, consecutive argument), seemed more appropriate for getting down something of this particular fugitive sensibility. It's embarrassing to be solemn and treatise-like about Camp. One runs the risk of having, oneself, produced a very inferior piece of Camp.' *Susan Sontag, Notes on Camp.*

+ *introduction*

+ *the counterfactual* ^(as research) + *script as medium*

+

+ *workshop v.01 & v.02*

+ *other installments*







We use *the counterfactual* as a research method to extend our understanding of fiction writing, media literacy and cross-genre reading and writing. In this workshop, we extend this further than speculative fiction, and take deep inspiration from the parasocial engagements and inherent anti-copyright³ nature of *fanfiction*. In *fanfiction*, to build upon the creation of someone else—often unsolicitedly, sometimes even illegally—is to invest into personal interpretations of a source text, leading to new compounds; unauthorized stories. These *misrepresentations* might be more telling than the truthful original, since it speaks of how people interact with the content they consume. We learn about the processes of transference, adaptation and essentially *collective ownership* of these stories.

The way we aim to employ *fanfiction* transcends the relation to another work of fiction. *The counterfactual*—as a method of interpretative speculation on *reality*, current affairs, history, etc.—can be seen as a method of *queering*, a reclamation of a realm that nowadays is mostly associated with right-wing post-truth politics.

³ Fanfiction always exists in a constant negotiation with the highly invasive entertainment industry. It is a way to interact with the (copyrighted) images, stories and characters that grow and nestle in our brain, shaping creation and creativity, and afterwards made impossible to employ by intricate schemes of intellectual property. Fanfiction writers take ownership of representing (or misrepresenting) stories outside of profit margins and the corporate objectives, essentially reclaiming them for their own agency and desires.

⁴ For us, queering lies in deconstructing and reclaiming institutions that exist in boundaries and binaries. It means questioning modes of communication, community, distribution and the representation of contemporary culture by allowing discord and misrepresentation to roam as free as more theoretical, astute questions.

The workshop investigates the limits of critical writing in script-for-performance (*or not-performance*). The script here is not only in service to video or performance, but a medium in itself. This mode of performative writing—in which themes and concepts are characterized into beings, props or locations—is an accessible way to activate inspiration into writing. Strands of theory or complex ideas can be transformed into characters that express opinions or desires in dialogue. Through accessible scores, we prompt meaningful interactions with content that participants may find difficult to access or locate in their practice.

We challenge participants to practice *counterfactual creating processes*. We invite them to give voice to unspoken sensibilities in their own network of inspirations through the use of *scores*⁵ that are written by us or by the participants. The participants are encouraged to adapt these diverse scores to provoke or incite their own working processes, or invent new ones.

The workshop essentially has three different components:

- 1 Establishing a personal artistic archive and reassembling this into cut-ups, fictitious theory and a lexicon.
- 2 Script writing prompts and characterization exercises, leading to a list of (speculative) characters and implementing these in individual and collaborative scores.
- 3 Scores focused on visual translation of content previously created.

Alongside daily archiving and scores we want to have collective moments of reflection and constructive feedback, next to providing some theoretical context to the workshop by readings and group discussions (*f.e. Susan Sontag, Ursula K Le Guin, Fredric Jameson, Catherine Gallagher, Larry Mitchell*).

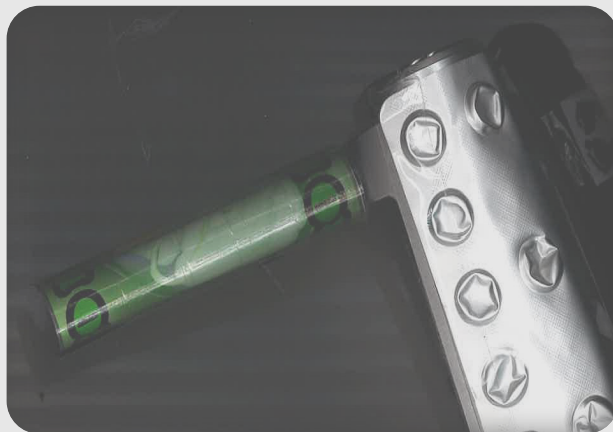
The duration of the workshop is flexible. Based on the needs of the school,³ organization or expertise,² expectations of participants, we adjust the workshop outline; extending or compressing certain scores to fit within the curriculum and timeframe. In the *Condensed version* of the workshop we focus on activating the archive into writings and concepts (1 and 2). In the *Continued version* of the workshop, we practice translating these writings and concepts into a visual, sonic, performative or other experimental medium (1, 2 and 3). The final (communal) 'work' can be contingent on the type of education,³ organization and the (aspired) expertise of participants.

⁵ We see scores as a compilation of settings and prompts. A score in performance is often a list of 'ingredients' for a performer to (freely) move around in. It can be as short and abstract, as well as detailed and specific. What we take from this method is the use of obstructions; inside these limits there is a room for experimental making and unknown ideas.





You snored. You farted. You talked. You had a nightmare.



Cup
(the pythagoras cup) global warming

The Big Brother House Confessional Chair^z
singular truth



1 Condensed (1-5 days)

This workshop serves as a method to create new perspectives and more insights in your artistic practice, collect inspiration and starting points for new projects or initiate writing processes. A variety of archiving and writing scores act as a kick-starter into undiscovered (and perhaps scary) territory of writing and making. The participants will be personally supported by us and each other to activate their archive and navigate their creative processes.

Starting the workshop, we will establish an archive, based on the participants' research and personal fascinations—and implement this in a step-by-step approach into cut-ups, scripts, lexicons and a *Counterfeit Character Catalog*. In the latter, we propose a reimagining of objects in personal research as characters, to bring them together in scenes, to make them interact with each other and create new unexpected compounds to continue with. We will be working towards a *Collaborative Cluster of Content* whilst briefly sharing our insights, research, creating moments for sharing and *Collective Constructive Criticism*.

2 Continued (6-10 days)

In the continued version we will be working towards visual translation(s) of content that emerged from the scores to find new narratives through making processes. Again working with exercises and restrictions, participants will be triggered to work in an intuitive way; with copying, prototyping and experimenting to make something unimaginable.

Another set of tools is introduced to visualize the archive participants have established. These tools and working methods are contingent on the context and aspirations of participants. *Collaboration* is central in the continued segment of the workshop; archives merge and clusters of content collapse into each other.

Potential formats for continued version of the workshop are to be found on the next page »

MERRY (i)MESSAGE MEMOIR

In a GROUP/DUO collect current fascinations/aspirations/sources (or anything but), starting a FUNDAMENTAL ARCHIVE

- > choose a medium quickly in reach but not frequently used - like iMessage!
- > copy paste img/links + snippets of text - or, srsly anything! the more the merrier
- > we utilize and continue this archive throughout the whole workshop

SPOOF THEORY

3 WIKIPEDIA/ 3 TWEETS / 3 INSTA CAPTIONS/ 3 GOSSIP HEADLINES / 3 LYRICS / 3 TIKTOK SCRIPT / 3 RECIPES CUT-UP

- > bring at least 3 diverse combinations of the SOURCES listed above
- > make 1 A4 of cut-up THEORY - using as much CTRL C+V from the sources

EXAMPLES OF SCORES

COPYCAT (PERFORMATIVE) SCRIPT

MARK LECKY (rhythmically short on the go adventure) / RYAN TRE CARTIN (repetitive and oversharing/fight/vlog) / SIN WAI KIN (robotic/intense/catastrophic, news anchors)

- > Quickly choose 2 names for characters having a conversation based on previous writing, appearance/form is not important
- > Write a script using these two characters based on either the writing style of LECKY, TRE CARTIN or SIN.

COUNTERFEIT CHARACTER CATALOGUE

1) Name 2) Characteristics of behavior/speech 3) Relation to other characters (or not) 4) visually/appearance - and things such as age, hometown, favorite food (5/6/7 etc.)

- > starting with the 2 characters of the previous score, and based on the content made, make a CHARACTER LIST containing at least FIVE more characters
- > the very helpful list of factors above are important yet open to be super ridiculous and abstract
- > work messy, copy pasting/sketching. Editing can happen later.

A REALLY BAD VIDEO ESSAY

Make a 60 seconds video based on a piece of writing using just FOUND FOOTAGE + SUBTITLES. Focus lies on the JUXTAPOSITION of sources, not on quality of the video.

- > we work solely on a smartphone editing app
- > Start collecting found footage - we only use .mp4 +.mp3
- > Text content only appears in form of subtitles (no voice over just yet)

Video

Taking inspiration from low budget filmmaking and modes of parody and satire in (queer) film (*Brice Dellspenger*, *Ryan Trecartin*, *Sin Wai Kin*), we challenge participants to stage scenes from their score writing, bringing characters to life through any type of experimental filmmaking in a bootcamp setting. This can be through documenting acting performances, mockumentary, puppeteering, stop motion, found footage montages, etc. Here, emphasis could also be less on filmmaking and more so on performance, live action roleplay.

Publication

Here, we guide participants in merging their archives to compile a publication. Content can be reimagined as drawings, digital images, graphs, poetry, to assemble into a publication that is collaboratively designed. Here, we focus on scores that guide participants through the graphic visualization of their archives, from typesetting to printing.

In agreement with your organization, we can design a custom version of the workshop that fits the possible amount of days available, aspirations of the participants and their skill set.

EXAMPLES OF SMALL ACTIVATION SCORES



SCORE 22—

CATHERINE ZETA THUNBERG

Take 2 Wikipedia pages of two separate (improbable but not impossibly related) entities and create a hybrid entity.

SCORE 25—

HACKTIVIST NET.ARTIST / ANTI-WOKE PODCASTER

Choose a career. Write a dialogue between two aliens role-playing into humans (that have this career.)

SCORE 30—

'ZULEIKA DOBSON', 'TIFFANY LAMPS'

List things that are "... " (term chosen from own lexicon)



The hallways were kinda sticky.. like pointy and sad looking,
followed by a dark-academia statue of a non-binary bagel



ABOUT US

We are two cross-media artists, who simultaneously graduated at Sandberg Instituut. Our practices are driven by performative research, visual storytelling and contemporary narratives, with research topics ranging from the semiotics of mass media and pop culture, post-truth sensibilities to care in times of capitalist dread. We work with moving image, performance, script- and essayistic writing and graphic design, with an eye for meaningful kitsch and a steady, sharp, satiric and very queer pencil.

LEVI VAN GELDER

In experimental video work, artistic research and pedagogic collaboration, Levi taps into the dormant spaces of critical and whimsical play nestled inside others. He sketches out a realm that ranges from provocative tropes within pop culture to history formation. Through quick-witted storytelling and critique, he creates a (hyper)reality show of distorted nonhuman characters that question authenticity and reveal layers of depth in the superficial.

HELEEN MINEUR

Heleen Mineur pays a cross-media homage to nuances of contemporary chaos/care. Rhythmic works knit together script, (moving) image and relics; in sonic, symbolic or tangible form. Her practice questions semantics and bitter-sweet tropes of the Now; through confabulated theories, poetic-satiric voices and neuro-spicy subtext. Being neuro-divergent, she plays with fabricated layers of truthisms, attempting to extend the standards and methods of narration. Her ongoing study in process-through-translation resonates with her teaching practice (HKU i.a.), along with speculative dreaming workshops (BAK) and occasional art explorations with kids.

During a previous residency at Workspace Brussels in March 2022 we developed tools and assignments to activate ourselves and our own collective archive of input and inspirations. In a process of trial and error, we tested how we can challenge ourselves when interacting with and reassembling segments in popular media, theory, textual and semiotic fascinations. We compiled an archive of research, scripts, characters, glossaries, lyrics, essays, images, screengrabs of videos, drawings, scores, prose and fiction, established from our own lexicon of references, interests and pool of associations.

This process served to be very fruitful, resulting in creating visuals, scripts, other writing and video work. However, we found that the process of getting to these products; the retranslation, reappropriation and counterfactual speculation, was the most crucial thing we designed. From this experience, we started developing a workshop to engage people in writing and performing fanfiction, and to explore alternative ways of knowledge production and interacting with media and source text.

Apart from the workshop, we have been developing an experimental video work, which process also started at Workspace Brussels. This is an extension of the scores for script-writing, where we sought to make low-budget video reimaginations of our own scripts and characters. This was a participatory project in collaboration with Indigo Deijmann and Megan Bruinen.

We will continue working on this video work during our residency at BUDA Kortrijk in March 2023, as well as experimenting with textual (live) scoring in a performative setting, and creating more scores for new textual content

