



artistic intelligence

COST Action CA23158 on Artistic Intelligence
WG1 Adaptation Strategies

Workshop on AI in the Processes of Artistic Intelligence **Archives, Memory, Situated Knowledge and Human–Machine Co-Creation**

01 – 02 October, 2026

University of Porto - Edifício Abel Salazar, Porto, Portugal.

Adress: Largo do Prof. Abel Salazar 24, 4050-456 Porto.

In person (1st day) + hybrid (2nd day)

No previous AI or coding experience required

Short description

AI in the Processes of Artistic Intelligence is a two-day, practice-led workshop and collaborative WG1 working session examining how artificial intelligence participates in artistic practice and artistic research beyond the production of generated images and texts. It focuses on the methodological, epistemic and political processes through which AI enters artistic enquiry and on how these processes can be translated into shared research resources.

Led by Evans Akanyijuka and co-hosted with Majella Clarke (TBC), the programme draws on Akanyijuka's S+T+ARTS Afropean Intelligence project concerning photographic archives, situated datasets and human-machine co-creation. His practice provides a grounded perspective on the relationships among AI, memory, representation and cultural authority.

Akanyijuka's LORAs as an Archive, A Living Archive examines collaborative dataset construction, photographic memory, generative archives and the politics of representation. On Day 1, this practice supports presentations, facilitated dialogue, process mapping and practical experimentation through which participants develop situated protocols for responsible AI use or refusal.

On Day 2, WG1 members will build on the methods and materials generated during the workshop to co-develop a WG1 Situated AI Artistic Research Toolkit and a jointly authored paper. The intended outputs are a first integrated toolkit, a substantial working paper draft and an agreed editorial pathway for further refinement and dissemination. No coding experience or commercial software subscription will be required.

1. Premises

Discussions of artificial intelligence in art frequently privilege the generated output, whether an image, text, sound work or performance. This two-day workshop redirects attention from the artefact to the processes through which artistic knowledge is formulated, tested, communicated and preserved. It therefore considers AI as one component within a wider ecology of artistic research rather than as an autonomous creative agent. Day 1 develops a shared critical and methodological framework through situated practice, process mapping and experimentation; Day 2 converts the resulting methods and reflections into collective WG1 outputs.

The central question is: *What role does AI play in the processes through which artistic intelligence is produced, shared, contested and preserved?* Participants will examine how AI enters the selection of source material, the construction of archives, the interpretation of cultural knowledge, the production of variations, the documentation of practice and the negotiation of authorship. Artistic intelligence is conceptualised as relational and collective because it emerges through interactions among artists, communities, materials, histories, institutions and technologies.

2. Context

The workshop responds to the COST Action's interest in the ways artistic and practice-based research produces knowledge, as well as the conditions through which this knowledge becomes accessible, connected and traceable. It approaches AI as both a methodological resource and an object of critical enquiry. This dual orientation makes it possible to investigate what computational systems enable while also attending to their epistemic and political limitations.

The programme draws on Evans Akanyijuka's work within S+T+ARTS Afropean Intelligence, an Afro-European initiative that brings artistic practice, technological experimentation and critical reflection into dialogue. His situated research project provides a conceptual foundation for examining AI as an archive, a technology of memory and classification, an interpretative mechanism, a speculative collaborator and a site of cultural and political negotiation. The workshop will be co-hosted with Majella Clarke (TBC). The second day extends this enquiry into a collaborative WG1 production process, using the methods and protocols developed on Day 1 as source material for a practical toolkit and a jointly authored paper.

3. Central question

How can AI participate in artistic research without displacing the situated, embodied and collective forms of intelligence on which artistic practice depends? This question

positions technological participation as a matter of method, authority and responsibility rather than simply one of technical capability.

The workshop will ask who selects the material from which an AI system learns, which histories and forms of knowledge remain absent, and what changes when cultural material becomes machine-readable data. It will also consider when reconstruction becomes invention, who has the authority to interpret or circulate an archive, and under what circumstances refusal may constitute the most responsible artistic decision.

4. Workshop objectives

By the end of the two-day programme, participants will be able to undertake the following forms of critical and methodological analysis and translate them into shared WG1 resources. These objectives connect conceptual reflection with methods that can be applied within participants' own research and collectively developed beyond the workshop.

1. Identify the distinct roles that AI may assume within an artistic research process
2. Examine how archives and datasets are constituted through selection, exclusion and institutional power
3. Analyse questions of provenance, consent, bias, authorship and cultural authority
4. Map the distribution of decisions across artists, communities, institutions and computational systems
5. Develop a situated protocol for the responsible use or deliberate refusal of AI within an artistic research project
6. Translate individual process maps, protocols and workshop findings into a reusable WG1 toolkit for situated AI artistic research
7. Develop a shared argument, structure and substantial working draft for a jointly authored WG1 paper.

5. Programme

Day 1 - Critical and methodological workshop

09:30. Welcome and opening provocation: Where is the intelligence?

The opening session distinguishes among artificial intelligence, individual artistic practice, artistic research and collective artistic intelligence. This conceptual differentiation establishes a shared vocabulary for the day and prevents computational capability from being treated as synonymous with intelligence in a broader cultural or epistemic sense. Participants identify one form of intelligence within their own practice that would be difficult to reduce to data, such as touch, rhythm, material sensitivity, oral knowledge, memory, movement, intuition, community trust, ritual or a relationship to place. These contributions form a collective map of situated and embodied intelligences that computational systems may overlook, flatten or misrepresent, and the map becomes an initial reference point for subsequent discussion.

09:50. Situated practice: AI, memory and the politics of the archive

This extended session introduces the artistic research practice of Evans Akanyijuka as a situated environment in which the meaning, authority and limitations of artificial intelligence are actively tested. The project is not presented merely as an example of an artist using AI. Instead, it demonstrates how artistic research can interrogate the infrastructures, categories and assumptions through which AI systems produce meaning. Beginning from a problem of representation, the session asks whose histories are present in digital systems, who has collected and classified source material, and what occurs when a model encounters an archive that is incomplete or institutionally constructed. The presentation is followed by a facilitated dialogue that considers whether AI can contribute to cultural continuity without repeating the structures through which knowledge has been extracted from its original contexts.

Evans Akanyijuka

Evans Akanyijuka's practice begins from the uneven representation of African and locally situated visual cultures within large-scale generative AI systems. His project examines how this unevenness is reproduced through datasets, categories and model architectures. It also asks whether a deliberately situated generative system can function as a critical alternative to claims of universal visual knowledge.

LORAs as an Archive, A Living Archive: selection, participation and generative memory

Commercial generative models are often described as though they possess a comprehensive visual knowledge of the world. In practice, their outputs reflect the materials available within their training datasets, the labels applied to those materials and the institutional priorities that structure the systems. Some people, places and histories are extensively represented, while others appear primarily through stereotypes, tourist imagery, news photography or externally imposed archival categories.

The project employs customised LoRA models to examine these conditions. A LoRA provides a comparatively lightweight method for adapting a larger generative model through a smaller and more specific body of material. Within Akanyijuka's practice, this adaptation is not simply a technical means of reproducing an aesthetic, but a deliberately limited and situated archive whose composition can be questioned.

The selection of training material is treated as an integral component of artistic research. Dataset construction consequently becomes both a curatorial and a political act because it determines which images, histories and categories enter the model. Collaborative selection also makes visible that no generative archive is neutral or complete.

The process requires participants and collaborators to consider who produced the images, which period or community they represent, what is absent and what forms of consent are necessary. It also requires attention to the language used to describe the material, including whether categories arise from within the community or have been imposed by external institutions. Decisions about what should remain private, culturally restricted or unprocessed are therefore as significant as decisions about inclusion.

These choices relocate artistic agency from the final prompt to the prior processes of collection, selection, description, annotation and exclusion. Before the system generates an image, a network of human judgements has already defined its field of possibility. The model's outputs must therefore be understood as consequences of a situated research process rather than as spontaneous acts of machine creativity.

Photography and collage provide important methodological precedents within Akanyijuka's practice. A photograph appears to record, yet it always frames a scene by including certain elements and excluding others, while collage makes the construction of relations among fragments materially explicit. The LoRA can be understood as a computational form of collage that reorganises selected visual traces, although the sources are absorbed and transformed rather than preserved transparently.

This distinction produces a productive tension between archive and generation. Archives are commonly associated with preservation, evidence and continuity, whereas generative systems are designed to produce variation. Describing the model as a living archive therefore raises questions about what is preserved, what is transformed and whether an output maintains an evidentiary relation to its sources or merely produces resemblance.

The project's interactive dimension makes these questions accessible to audiences through a web-based interface. Rather than concealing AI behind a completed artwork, the interface allows participants to observe how the source material, model structure, prompt language, available categories and prior training condition the generated result. It consequently functions as both an artistic environment and a form of public pedagogy.

Machine error becomes particularly significant within this framework. An inaccurate or culturally generic output may indicate the absence of relevant material, the dominance of an external stereotype, a conflict between institutional and local categories, or the limitations of translation. The artist's role is not merely to correct such errors, but to interpret what they disclose about the archive and the system through which it is activated.

The project also complicates conventional accounts of authorship. A generated image may involve the subjects and makers of source photographs, those who preserved the material, collaborators who selected the dataset, engineers who developed the base model, the artist who adapted it and the participant who supplies a prompt. To attribute the result to a single author would obscure this distributed network of labour, decision-making and influence.

Akanyijuka's practice therefore frames artistic intelligence as a collective process of constructing, questioning and activating an archive. The model's generative capacity is only one element of this process. Equal significance is attached to the social and curatorial decisions through which the model becomes situated, interpretable and accountable.

Questions arising from the practice

Can a generative model function as an archive when it transforms rather than retrieves its source material, and how can the process of dataset selection be made visible to audiences? Who should participate in deciding what enters a community-based AI archive, and how should photographers, subjects, collaborators and source communities be credited? These questions also invite consideration of whether a deliberately small dataset can challenge the universal claims of a large model and what machine errors can reveal about bias, absence and misclassification.

Facilitated dialogue: What does the machine remember?

The facilitated dialogue extends Akanyijuka's practice into participants' own research contexts. It provides a basis for distinguishing preservation from generation, institutional metadata from community knowledge, and access from authority.

The discussion will also foreground tensions between accessibility and extraction, individual authorship and collective contribution, and the appearance of accuracy and the acknowledgement of uncertainty. These distinctions will organise the facilitated dialogue. The session will not seek a single definition of artistic intelligence. Instead, participants will consider how intelligence is distributed among artists, communities, materials, archives, institutional arrangements, technical systems and acts of interpretation. This distribution provides the conceptual bridge between the situated practice and the practical exercises that follow.

1. Reconstruction and invention

AI reconstructions and generative archives can both produce visually coherent and persuasive images, yet coherence does not establish historical or cultural accuracy. The facilitators will examine how artistic practice can mark speculation as speculation, preserve uncertainty and prevent generated material from being misread as evidence.

2. Access and authority

Digitisation and generative systems can broaden access to cultural material, but availability does not determine who possesses the authority to interpret, transform or

circulate it. The discussion will therefore distinguish access to information from ownership, custodianship and interpretative authority.

3. Archive and relationship

An archive is often understood as a collection of objects, images or records, but the workshop framing suggests that it may also be approached as a set of relations. These relations connect photographs to subjects and makers, institutions to histories of collection, datasets to acts of selection, and audiences to new forms of interpretation. Participants will conclude the session by identifying where artistic intelligence is located within the presented practice and within their own projects, and how that location shifts across the research process. The purpose is not to designate a single source of intelligence, but to demonstrate how artistic knowledge is produced through distributed and situated relations.

11:15. Break

11:30. Process-Mapping Laboratory

Before the prompt, after the output

Participants will map an existing or proposed artistic research project in order to identify where AI enters the process and which decisions it is permitted to influence. The exercise emphasises that the prompt is only one moment within a longer sequence of research, selection, interpretation and circulation.

Each map will address five interconnected areas. These areas locate technical choices within the social, cultural and institutional conditions of the research.

1. The originating research question, together with the people, places and communities to which it relates
2. The source materials, experiences and archival structures on which the project depends
3. The point at which AI enters, including the decisions delegated to the system and those retained by artists or communities
4. Materials that should not be processed, together with the ethical or cultural reasons for their exclusion
5. The intended audience, mode of circulation and evidence required to document the research process

Participants will also consider who collected, classified and described the source material, what remains absent and what happens to material uploaded to an AI platform. The resulting AI in Artistic Research Process Map will provide the basis for the subsequent process clinic.

12:30. Process clinic

Participants will discuss their maps in small groups by asking what the AI is being asked to do, which forms of artistic or cultural intelligence remain outside the system, and who

bears the consequences when the system is wrong. Each participant will then revise one element of the mapped process in response to the discussion, with particular attention to decision-making, accountability and the limits placed on computational intervention.

13:00. Lunch

14:00. Practical experiment

One source, three machine encounters

Participants will select a non-sensitive source item connected to their practice, such as a photograph, short text, sketch, object description or fragment from a public-domain archive. The exercise is designed to compare different methodological positions for AI within the same research context rather than to reward the production of a polished output.

Source material must not contain private, sacred, culturally restricted or personally identifiable information. Participants who do not wish to use an AI platform may undertake the same exercise through facilitated paper-based simulation, thereby keeping the workshop technically and ethically accessible.

Encounter 1: AI as descriptor

The system will be asked to describe or categorise the selected source. Participants will analyse the resulting assumptions, omissions, imposed terminology and cultural generalisations in order to identify how classification structures interpretation.

Encounter 2: AI as generator

The system will be asked to produce a variation or speculative interpretation of the source. Participants will examine what has been transformed, flattened or invented, and whether the result derives persuasive authority from visual or linguistic coherence rather than from contextual accuracy.

Encounter 3: AI as research interlocutor

The system will be used to generate questions concerning provenance, context, silence and possible interpretation rather than to produce a finished artwork. This encounter tests whether AI becomes methodologically more useful when positioned as a generator of questions rather than as a generator of conclusions. Participants will retain an annotated record of the three encounters, including significant decisions, failures and discoveries.

15:10. Break

15:25. Critical workshop

The archive is not raw material

Participants will draw on the situated practice and practical experiment to formulate principles for responsible and situated AI practice. The discussion will address provenance, consent, cultural ownership, colonial archives, data extraction, unequal access, attribution, translation and institutional authority.

Particular attention will be given to the distinction between making knowledge accessible and making it available for extraction or unrestricted reuse. Rather than seeking a universal checklist, participants will consider how responsibility changes according to the material, community, location, institutional context and purpose of each project.

16:05. Situated AI Artistic Research Protocol

Each participant or group will develop a one-page protocol that translates the day's critical discussion into a practical framework for artistic research. The protocol will be specific enough to guide a project while remaining open to revision as relationships, materials and research questions develop.

1. Research intention and situated context, including the artistic question and the people, histories and places to which it relates
2. The precise role and limits of AI, including tasks that will remain under human or collective authority
3. The provenance and governance of source material, including consent, cultural restrictions, credit and compensation where relevant
4. Methods for documenting uncertainty, bias, machine error and the distribution of decisions across the process
5. The conditions of public presentation and the circumstances under which AI will not be used

The completed protocol will be applicable to an existing or future artistic research project and will provide a concise record of methodological commitments. It will also serve as one of the source materials for Day 2, where individual protocols will be compared and translated into a reusable WG1 toolkit.

16:45. Day 1 closing circle

What must remain uncomputable?

Each participant will identify one possibility opened by AI, one responsibility created by its use and one form of knowledge or relationship that should not be surrendered to computation. The closing discussion will return to the collective map produced in the opening session and consider how participants' understanding of artistic intelligence has changed during the day.

Day 2 - WG1 toolkit and joint paper development lab

Day 2 shifts from individual and small-group enquiry to collective production. The process treats the maps, protocols, questions and critical distinctions generated on Day 1 as research material from which WG1 can formulate reusable methods and a shared scholarly argument.

09:30. Re-entry and synthesis: From protocols to shared outputs

Participants will revisit the strongest insights, tensions and unresolved questions from Day 1. The group will identify recurring methodological needs across practices and distinguish what is sufficiently generalisable for a WG1 resource from what must remain situated and context-specific.

09:50. Toolkit architecture: What should WG1 be able to use?

The group will define the purpose, audiences and structure of a WG1 Situated AI Artistic Research Toolkit. Rather than presenting a universal model of responsible AI, the toolkit will organise adaptable prompts, methods and templates that help artistic researchers make decisions in relation to specific materials, communities, institutions and technical systems.

The proposed toolkit architecture will include: a framing statement on situated artistic intelligence; an AI in Artistic Research Process Map; prompts for provenance, consent, cultural authority and dataset governance; methods for documenting uncertainty, bias and machine error; a Situated AI Artistic Research Protocol template; questions for authorship, attribution and collective contribution; and criteria for identifying when AI should be limited, refused or removed from a process.

11:00. Break

11:15. Co-design laboratory: Building the WG1 toolkit

Participants will work in small groups to draft and refine individual toolkit components. Each component will be tested against at least one concrete artistic research scenario in order to identify where language is too abstract, assumptions are hidden, or a proposed method risks flattening cultural and disciplinary differences.

The co-design process will prioritise usability without reducing responsibility to a compliance exercise. Each component will therefore pair practical guidance with questions that make visible who is making decisions, whose knowledge is being represented, what evidence is available and what remains uncertain or excluded.

12:30. Toolkit testing and consolidation

The group will review the drafted components as a single resource, remove duplication, identify gaps and agree a coherent sequence for use. By the end of the session, WG1 will have a first integrated version of the toolkit, together with a short list of revisions, examples or supporting materials required for publication or circulation.

13:00. Lunch**14:00. Joint paper framing: From workshop findings to a WG1 argument**

The afternoon session will translate the two-day enquiry into the conceptual architecture of a jointly authored WG1 paper. Participants will agree the paper's central problem, contribution and key terms, drawing on the workshop's focus on archives, situated knowledge, distributed authorship, cultural authority and the limits of computation. The group will identify which workshop materials can function as evidence or methodological examples, which claims require further literature or case material, and how the paper can contribute to debates on AI in artistic and practice-based research without treating artistic intelligence as equivalent to computational capability.

14:40. Collaborative writing sprint

Working from the agreed structure, participants will collaboratively draft a working abstract, introduction, core argument sections and a provisional conclusion. Smaller writing groups may take responsibility for specific sections while maintaining a shared vocabulary and explicit links to the toolkit and workshop methodology.

15:30. Break**15:45. Synthesis, authorship and editorial pathway**

The group will read across the drafted sections, identify conceptual gaps and agree principles for authorship, attribution and editorial responsibility. Contributions to facilitation, case material, toolkit development, drafting, revision and coordination will be made visible rather than reduced to a single model of contribution.

A small editorial pathway will be agreed for bringing the working draft to submission-ready form, including responsibility for consolidation, any additional research required, internal review and the selection of an appropriate publication venue. Specific names and deadlines can be confirmed by WG1 after the workshop.

16:30. Final review: WG1 outputs and next steps

The programme will close with a review of the two collective outputs: the first integrated version of the WG1 Situated AI Artistic Research Toolkit and the joint paper working draft. Participants will agree what is complete, what requires further development and how the outputs will be shared, revised and credited within WG1.

6. WG1 outputs

The two-day format is designed to produce tangible outputs for WG1 rather than ending with the workshop discussion itself. Day 1 generates the situated methods, questions and protocols; Day 2 organises these materials into collective resources that can be refined and circulated after the event.

WG1 Situated AI Artistic Research Toolkit

A first integrated toolkit will bring together the process-mapping method, situated protocol, provenance and consent prompts, questions for dataset and archive governance, methods for documenting uncertainty and machine error, authorship and attribution prompts, and guidance for deciding when computational intervention should be limited or refused. The toolkit will be designed as an adaptable WG1 resource for artistic researchers rather than as a universal compliance checklist.

Joint WG1 paper

A jointly authored working paper will synthesise the workshop's conceptual and methodological contribution, with particular attention to situated artistic intelligence, archives and datasets, distributed decision-making, cultural authority and the distinction between computational capability and artistic knowledge. Day 2 will aim to produce a substantial working draft, agreed structure and editorial pathway for further refinement and submission.

Together, these outputs will provide WG1 with both a practical resource and a scholarly articulation of the workshop's findings, allowing the methods developed through the programme to support future activities, comparative work and dissemination within the COST Action.