

✦ BALTAN LABORATORIES

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This autumn, we host a 6-day Camp on Vernacular Technologies at Casa Cafausica, a large farmhouse with a surrounding five-acre park located on the border between San Cesario di Lecce and Cavallino in the region of Apulia (IT). In this camp, we propose vernacular technologies as an attitude that arises from a relationship with technology grounded in agency, self-sufficiency, problem-solving, and practicality.

Casa Cafausica

CROOKED REMEDIES FOR BULLSH*T INNOVATION

San Cesario di Lecce
(IT)

CAMP ON
VERNACULAR
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Think of the farmer fixing their own machines, creating their own production lines, coming up with non-existent machines for real-life problems, reusing and reforming what is at hand so it functions for what is needed. Technological skills in this attitude are often self-taught and not reliant on corporate infrastructures but instead rely on local community alliances and knowledge. Technology is not treated as a product, but as a tool that serves a specific purpose.

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

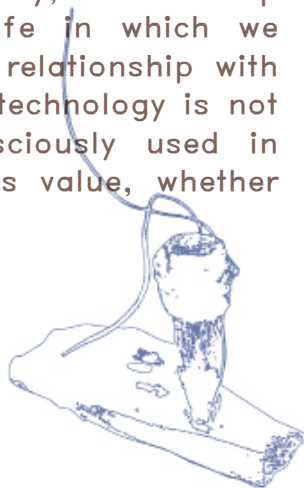
intro

why vernacular tech

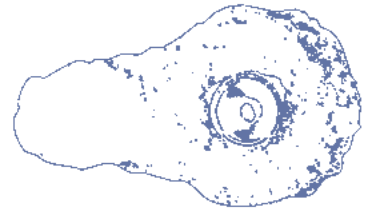
Casa Cafausica is the headquarters of [Fondazione Lac o Le Mon](#), an experimental centre for the arts, based on self-led education, led by artists Emilio Fantin, Luigi Negro, Giancarlo Norese, Cesare Pietroiusti and Luigi Presicce. In their activities, they always aim to bring together the language of knowledge production and artistic research with the place that participants are actually inhabiting.

[\[interventions\]](#)

During the camp, participants will produce interventions that take the Casa's context as a starting point: its architecture, the relationship between inside and outside spaces, the land it's located on, its limitations, its anti-technological attitude, and its water- and electricity self-sufficiency (through solar panels and its artesian well). These interventions can have many shapes and forms, for example: using the building, its spaces and knowledge for artistic interventions, developing tech rituals or installations attuned to the energy limits (e.g. using the data from the solar energy production), creating practices of attention to the landscape and its non-human inhabitants, exploring strategies to resist the cognitive overload of social media, etc. In this way, the camp is about rehearsing a life in which we actually have a different relationship with technology, one in which technology is not omnipresent but is consciously used in those areas where it adds value, whether practical or poetic.



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[\[practicalities\]](#)

We have the capacity to host 14-20 participants. In the weeks prior to the camp, we will organise two online sessions to: introduce and provide theoretical grounding in the notion of vernacular technologies; brainstorm possible interventions and identify the technical support and materials needed for them; get to know each other both personally and professionally; and forge possible collaborations.

[\[artist guidance\]](#)

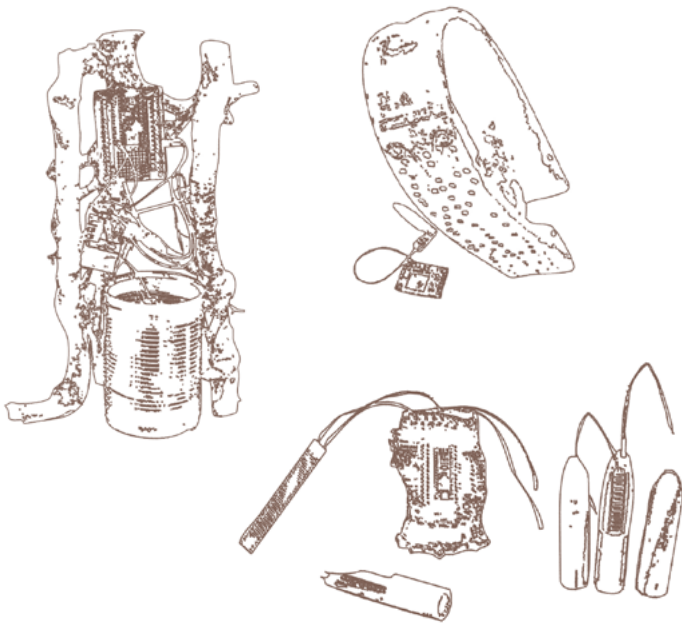
Next to Casa Cafausica's artists and the Baltan team, Carlo Gioia is part of the organisational team. Carlo is the co-founder of the [Radura \(IT\) collective](#), a research and open-experimentation platform operating at the intersection of artistic practices, political ecologies, and emerging technologies in rural contexts. Carlo will bring expertise in working on technology-related projects in real-life rural communities.

[\[for whom\]](#)

The camp is intended for practitioners who, in their practice, work with, reflect on, or question the current extractivist and accelerationist dynamics in the tech sector. During the camp, we will question these dynamics - based on the idea that technological progress is relentless and should feed on the inconsiderate extraction of resources, human and non-human ones - and explore how we could do technologies otherwise, inspired by a vernacular attitude. Participants may include academics in the humanities, researchers at technical universities, design and art researchers, writers, designers, artists, hackers, members of community-led initiatives, or anyone with a general interest in these topics, without necessarily having a (professional) practice in these.

CROOKED REMEDIES FOR
BULLSH*T INNOVATION

Why Vernacular Technologies?

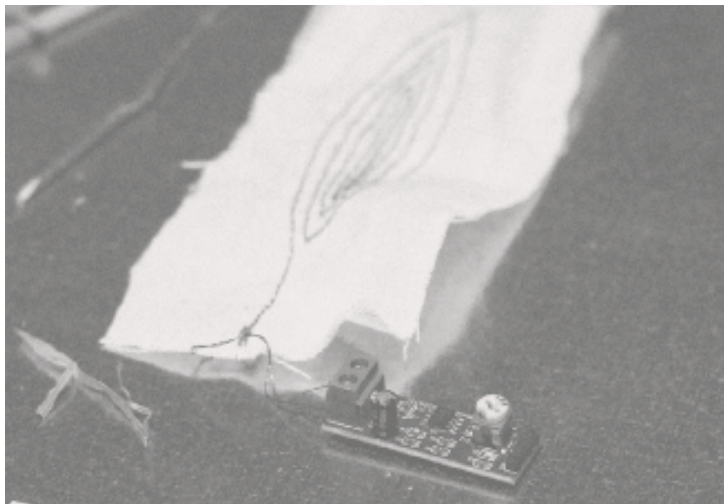


The term vernacular technologies takes inspiration from the practice of vernacular architecture: it encompasses architecture done outside any academic tradition, without the involvement of professional architects, that serves immediate, local needs, is constrained by the materials available in its particular region, and reflects local traditions and cultural practices. The term dates back to the end of the 19th century but was popularised by a 1964 exhibition at MoMA and a subsequent book, “Architecture Without Architects,” by architect Bernard Rudofsky, featuring black-and-white photographs of vernacular buildings around the world. In the book, Rudofsky kept the definition of vernacular quite open: he refers to it as “vernacular, anonymous, spontaneous, indigenous, rural.”

In our camp, we want to borrow this term and its loose definition to try imagining (and thinking through-making) what technology without technologists, and rooted in a situated context, could be and mean. We will do that by observing and learning from local, indigenous, and everyday tools, techniques, and systems created by ordinary people to solve localised problems. Rather than relying on mass-produced solutions, they utilise locally sourced materials, traditional knowledge, and community-level engineering to meet specific practical needs.

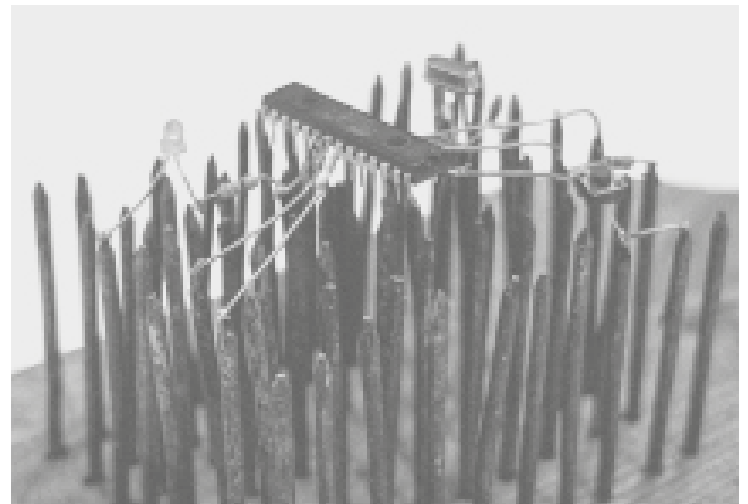
A rural object built for a specific purpose—be it a basket, a trap, or a work tool—can be found, due to its morphological and functional similarity, in many other places, even distant ones. This is because they are not the product of the genius of a single “designer,” but rather

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archetypal responses to common needs. Those who make these tools do not hold the patent, but are temporary executors who draw on open-source and collective know-how shared by the community. Rural culture anticipated the concept of open source by centuries: it has always been based on knowledge born of doing and the need for free sharing to ensure collective survival.

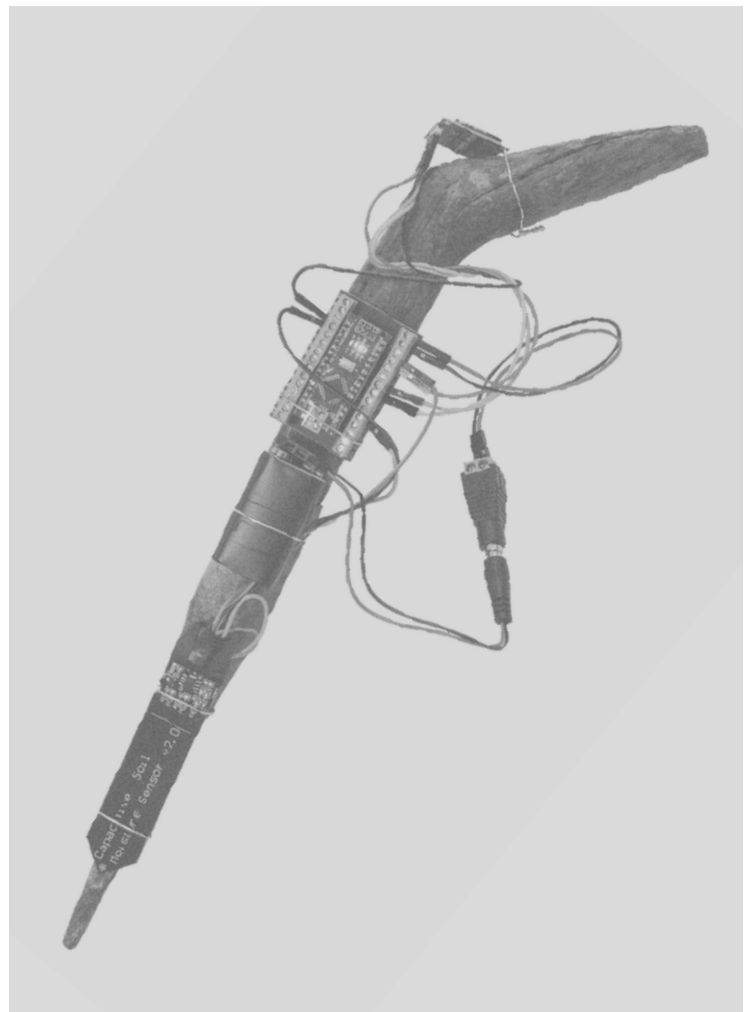
Furthermore, these techniques, fixes, and tools are by nature sustainable; see, for example, traditional air-trapping or “free cooling” techniques used in regional architecture that regulate indoor temperatures without relying on electric air conditioning. If we could find ways to blend modern open-source technologies with ancient, context-specific knowledge, we would be able to develop open and decentralised innovations for energy-efficient solutions, for example. The interventions we aim to realise together with the participants intend to address the interweaving of past heritage and contemporary urgencies through hybrid technological and artisanal methodologies.

The approach is grounded in practices of repair, disassembly, reuse and technological disobedience found in rural culture that question the logic of contemporary and standardising technological design, through the transformation of what are perceived as obsolete tools and materials (remnants of a pre-industrial world and peasant culture) into assemblages with current DIY electronics that expand their original functions. In this practice, cultural memory shifts from passive conservation of pre-industrial techniques and solutions to active re-adaptation

and remediation with electronics, sensors, and actuators. By doing this, we do not own these objects any more than those who built or used them before us did; we simply become the current custodians of a rural technology that, to survive, must be shared, “hacked”, and put back into circulation, crystallising cultural memory as a dynamic knowledge that is handed down and reshaped across generations. Through this approach, we aim to highlight a vast reservoir of tacit and contextual knowledge, often invisible, which is innovation in its own right, crucial to the development and well-being of local communities.

What results from this process are objects with a weird aesthetics, chimeras of rural materials/tools/systems and electronics in which the tension between these seemingly incompatible worlds is rendered visible (see images 1-5 from Radura and Carlo Gioia’s *Folk Interfaces* from which this approach is inspired). But it also reminds us of the aesthetics of jury-rigged solutions (or kludges, but more negatively connotated or accrocchio in Italian), meaning

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Images 1-5
“Folk Interfaces,”
Radura, and Carlo Gioia.
[Link](#)

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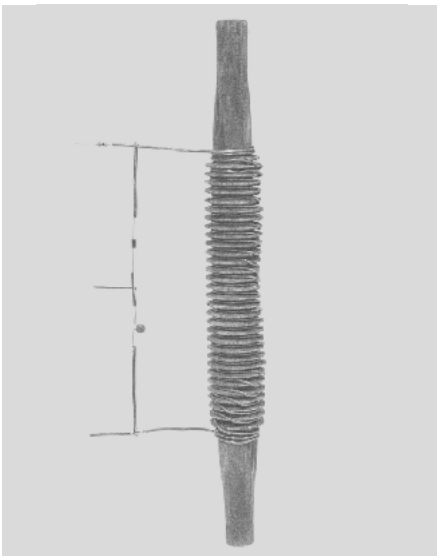
something built, fixed, or arranged quickly using whatever parts or tools are nearby because you do not have the right things for a real fix. This practice taps into the profile of the bricoleur, which we would also like to adopt as a guiding attitude for the camp. The concept originates with the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, who introduced the term in *The Savage Mind* (1962) to describe a mode of creation that contrasts with that of the engineer.

Whereas the engineer begins with a clearly defined problem, identifies the appropriate tools, and systematically develops a solution, the bricoleur works with the materials already available. Rather than relying on purpose-built resources, the bricoleur repurposes existing objects, remnants, and residual materials—originally intended for other functions—to construct something new. The bricoleur attitude is not that far from that of the farmer, who doesn't differentiate between high-tech and low-tech solutions, as long as they are available and functional for the need at hand.

Adopting the posture of the bricoleur allows us to treat technology not as an autonomous, self-referential system, but as a site of negotiation, maintenance, and collective memory.

This approach reclaims the right to alter, repurpose, and re-signify the technological landscape using the materials and knowledge at hand. Through this hands-on experimentation, the camp becomes a space to test how localised, improvised fixes and remedies can cultivate a practice of making that is at once deeply rooted in place, politically conscious, and built on shared inquiry, in which tools become conversational sites for doing and learning together.

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CROOKED REMEDIES FOR
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CONTEXT

the area
and the Casa Cafausica

techniques

local craftsmanship

and materials

approach and structure

The area and the Casa Cafausica

The Casa Cafausica farmhouse is located between San Cesario di Lecce and Cavallino, two little towns in the Italian province of Lecce in the Apulia region of south-east Italy. It lies in the Cupa Valley, a portion of the Salento plain surrounding the capital city of Lecce, characterised by a large karst depression. It is located halfway between the Ionian and Adriatic Seas, about 20/30 km away. It is considered a fertile valley, a place chosen by the aristocracy since the 15th century as a holiday destination, with the consequent construction of numerous villas. It is populated by vineyards and olive groves, and vast countryside, as well as small and medium-sized residential towns.

The house spreads over 600 square metres over two floors (plus a cellar and two terraces), surrounded by approximately two hectares of land and a hortus conclusus with a citrus grove. It comprises nine bedrooms, a very spacious kitchen, and five bathrooms, two of which are outside, and can accommodate 20-25 people. Since the Foundation took up residence there, only minimal refurbishment work has been carried out to create the new bathrooms, leaving the architectural layout identical to the original. Thanks to public funding, a philological restoration and reinstatement of the monumental “cucina economica” (economic kitchen) — formerly used by a community of farmers — has also been carried out. The house is the result of an early 20th-century extension to a pre-existing farmhouse. The build quality is very high (Lecce stone, high vaulted ceilings, floors of antique stone slabs and, on the first floor, early 20th-century “cementine” tiles). The bedrooms are on

the upper floor, whilst the ground-floor rooms are used for communal activities (kitchen, screening room, workshop spaces, meeting room).

Casa Cafausica is currently — thanks to solar panels, an ancient hand-dug artesian well, and a constructed wetland system for sewage treatment — self-sufficient in electricity, water, and sewerage, and is therefore an extremely rare example of a self-sustaining historic building. This makes the venue ideal for training programmes that consistently prioritise ecological issues, low or zero environmental impact, and an understanding of and care for the site as fundamental elements of every training and creative-productive process that takes place there.

Also for our camp, the house can be seen as a brief for possible interventions that could apply vernacular technologies to specific areas of the house or issues which still need to be tackled, such as: reactivating the rainwater cistern, designing the acoustics of the spaces, increasing the air circulation, improving the visibility of the street entrance or monitoring the soil condition.



Local craftsmanship, techniques and materials

We have identified some local craftsmanship, techniques and materials that could be involved or be in conversation with for the participants' interventions (part also of the camp excursions):

Leccese Stone

"Pietra Leccese" is a unique limestone from the Salento region of Puglia, Italy. Formed from ancient sea mud, it is very soft and easy to carve when first dug from the ground, but grows hard and turns a warm, honey colour over time. There are several craftsmen and artists (including one of the most famous, [Maurizio Buttazzo](#), a few metres from the Casa) working with it in the area.

Papier-mâché

A popular craft material made from paper and rags mixed with a sticky binder like glue, starch, or flour paste and supported with a structure of metal wire. The technique is so prevalent in the area that it prompted Università del Salento and the Accademia di Belle Arti di Lecce to offer a first-level university master's degree titled [The Art of Papier-Mâché between Tradition and New Technologies](#). It blends historic Salento craft traditions with digital design, material science, and modern restoration techniques.

Printing

there's a long-standing tradition of printing in the area and several museums ([Museo della Stampa Città di Lecce](#)) and type archives dedicated to old techniques.

Textile-making and weaving

These practices are really widely present in the territory. One of the most important places preserving this local craftsmanship is [Fondazione Le Costantine](#), a non-profit cultural centre in Puglia, Italy, dedicated to women's empowerment, traditional craftsmanship, and biodynamic agriculture. Founded to lift rural women out of poverty, it preserves the ancient art of Salento hand-weaving with historic wooden looms, a practice that recently earned global recognition through a high-profile collaboration with Dior. Today, the foundation operates as a peaceful community hub near Otranto, combining professional textile training with sustainable organic farming.

Rural culture and agricultural tools

The area around the Casa counts 5 museums of rural culture and tools (in Italian [Museo della Civiltà Contadina](#), that literally translates to Museum of Peasant Civilisation, highlighting the importance of this knowledge for this region).

Ceramics

There are several ateliers and kilns for both functional and artistic ceramics. The most notable one is [Fornace Coli](#) (Cutrofiano), dating back to 1650, renowned for producing traditional handmade terracotta and majolica cookware, decorative items, and utilitarian pottery. In the same town, there is one of the richest ceramics museums in the region ([Museo della Ceramica di Cutrofiano](#)).

Approach and structure of the camp

The camp provides participants with an occasion to respond to the prompt of vernacular technologies through:

A situated context;

Theoretical discussions → starting from the framework of this call and the positioning offered by the reference list included (see Reference List section below);

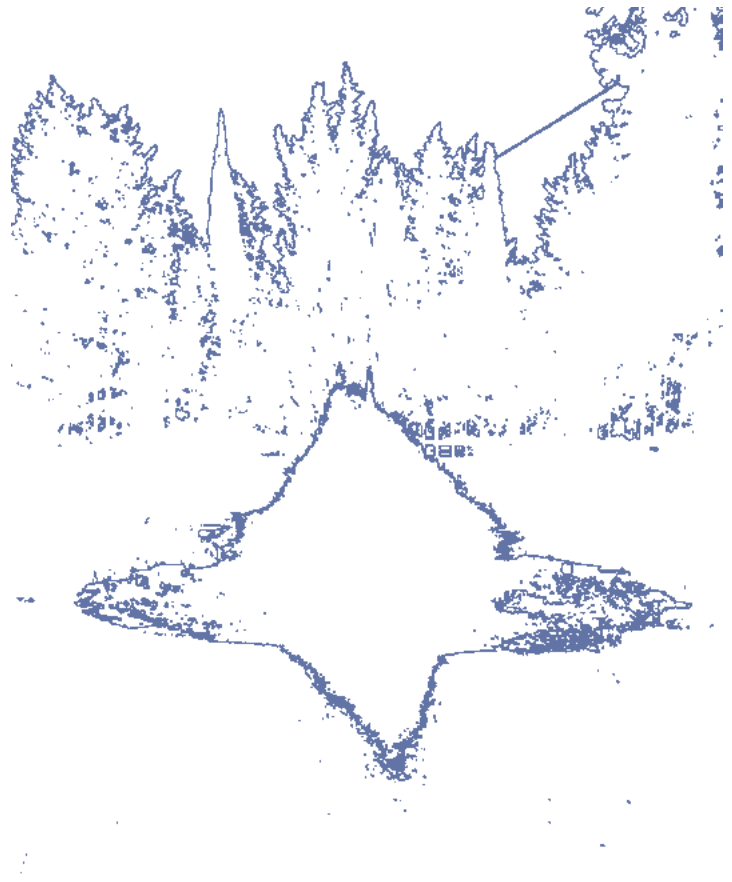
Interventions → opportunity to translate the theoretical discussions into interventions that can be inspired by the observations of rural or local tools, solutions and systems; connected to the Casa Cafausica and meant to stay there as part of the (artistic) interventions that already populate it; as extension of your already existing personal practice or research in the context or theoretical framework provided. Working on a project/intervention is not mandatory for participation in the camp;

Curation → facilitation and personal coaching by Carlo Gioia, Lorenzo Gerbi and Marlou van der Cruisen; contextualisation and support by Cesare Pietrojusti and Luigi Negro (see Facilitators and Contributors section below);

Production guidance → from local craftsmen, artists, and practitioners, selected based on participants' planned interventions (see Context section). We will visit their ateliers as part of the excursions in the program, but they will join us at the Casa for dedicated support;

Technical guidance → by Carlo Gioia and Radura;

Documentation → of the outcomes and presentation (tbc) at [KORA - Contemporary Center](#) (center for multidisciplinary research on the contemporary, Castrignano de' Greci, Lecce).



We imagine these elements above organised in the following tentative timeline:		
Online session [Part 1] 3 hours, in the week of September 21st. Introduction to provide theoretical grounding in the notion of vernacular technologies. Selected reading materials will be provided in advance to prepare for the session. Online session [Part 2] 3 hours, in the week of September 28th. Collective brainstorm about possible interventions and collaborations among participants and materials and production/technical support needed.		Day 3 O& 9th Excursion day: visiting local craftsmen, artists, museums and ateliers, Lecce and/or seaside. Day 4 O& 10th Working day: starting and ending the day with a plenary moment, during the day time to work on your intervention, possibility to discuss with facilitators and production guidance (either at the Casa or visiting their atelier). Day 5 O& 11th Morning and afternoon: last preparation for the presentations in the afternoon, documentation of the interventions / Evening: presentations of all the interventions at KORA - Contemporary Center (tbc)
Day 1 O& 7th Arrival date. After all participants arrive and get settled, we use the remaining time of the day for contextualisation: an introduction, a tour of the house and possible areas of intervention, and getting to know each other; introductions to Radura practice by Carlo Gioia and to the artist collective Lu Cafausu by Cesare Pietroiusti and Luigi Negro. Day 2 O& 8th Morning: plenary moment for theoretical discussions or presentations by external contributors / Afternoon: time to work on interventions, personal and group coaching / Evening: free time.		Day 6 O& 12th Breakfast together, wrap-up and possible next steps, departure.
CAMP ON VERNACULAR TECHNOLOGIES		CROOCKED REMEDIES FOR BULLSH*T INNOVATION

PRACTICAL INFO

Language → English

Dates of the camp and online sessions → 2 online pre-sessions in the second half of September; Camp: 7 (arrival date) - 12 (departure date) Oct.

Location → Casa Cafausica, via Cavallino 19 (S.P. 10), 73016 San Cesario di Lecce, Italy. More info on how to get there at this [link](#).

Fee → Regular fee: 650 euro (ex. 21% VAT). Early Bird: 590 euro (ex. 21% VAT). The participation fee includes accommodation, transfers to/from Brindisi airport or Lecce station, and participation in the full programme with workshops, lectures, and excursions.

For those who want to join the collective meals, we will handle coordination and ask for €10 per person per day for groceries (this will be discussed in the online pre-sessions).

Registration → Registration is on a roll-in basis.

Step 1: Fill in the registration form on tally. You will be asked to fill in a short bio, motivation, a description of your practice, and how you relate to the camp's topic. Please enter the form via [this link](#).

Step 2: to confirm your registration we ask for a pre-payment of €50 ex VAT. For this you can use [this PayPal link](#).

Step 3: The remaining amount for the

participation fee will be invoiced to you separately after we reach the minimum number of participants (we will send you an invoice via email).

Step 4: Your registration will be complete after we receive the full payment.

Registration deadlines → September 11th for the regular fee; August 27th for the early bird fee.

Payment → We will send you an invoice after your registration. You can only participate once you have paid the fee.

Participants → We have a maximum of 20 participants; the camp will be organised with a minimum of 14 people.

Q&A session → Are you interested in joining the camp but still have questions or doubts? You can join the online Q&A session on Zoom on August 27th from 18:30 - 19:30. You can [register here](#).

In case you experience difficulties or need support during the registration process, please feel free to reach out to Marlou van der Crujsen at marlou@baltanlaboratories.org

FACILITATORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Lorenzo Gerbi and Marlou van der Cruysen (co-directors, Baltan Laboratories), Carlo Gioia (media artist, interdisciplinary researcher and Radura co-founder), Cesare Pietroiusti (artist and co-founder Fondazione Lac o Le Mon), Luigi Negro (artist, researcher and clinical sociologist, co-founder of Fondazione Lac o Le Mon), local craftsmen and contributors depending on the needs of the group (visits are also part of the excursions of the program, see Context section above).

Lorenzo Gerbi is a designer, curator and educator based in Eindhoven (NL). He is the co-director of Baltan Laboratories, a cultural interdisciplinary lab focusing on rehearsing alternative tech frameworks grounded in diversity, hope, solidarity, and regeneration, rooted in contemporary philosophy, art & tech, and activist tech movements. In his practice, he proposes a rupture in the broad discourse around inter-, trans-, and multi-disciplinarity by adopting an interdisciplinary approach that temporarily removes disciplines to foster better collaboration among them, not by having people from different disciplines work together but by learning together around a shared urgency. Alongside his work at Baltan, he teaches in the Geo-Design Master at the Design Academy Eindhoven (headed by the research and design studio Metahaven), together with Marlou van der Crujsen in their studio, Technologies Otherwise. Since July 2026, he has been a member of the scientific committee of Dedalus - New Media and Digital Culture Research Center, founded by IULM University in Milan and led by Simone Arcangeli.

He is a co-author of the publication *Humanities and Artificial Intelligence* (European Commission, 2022) and Editor-in-Chief of *Fictional Journal*. He co-initiated *Raise Your Voice*, a learning and coaching trajectory for socially engaged designers, as part of the exhibition *Italy: A New Collective Landscape* at the ADI Design Museum (Milan, 2023), featuring projects by 100 emerging Italian designers. One of his last books, *ARTECHÓ - Investigating Decentralized Action in Art* (April 2025), explores the intersection of NFTs, AI, and decentralised technologies in the context of the global creative sector, economics, and sustainability. It examines how these technologies can contribute to a more equitable future while challenging colonial and extractive legacies.

Finally, he co-edited *The Elephant in the Waiting Room — Stories for the Before and After* (January 2026), a collection of ten science-fiction stories of hope, tragedy, and rebirth for a world that seems to be reaching its end. We are in the waiting room — waiting for war, for uprising, for downfall. What are we without the wait to define us?

Marlou van der Crujsen is co-director at Baltan, a cultural and interdisciplinary lab based in Eindhoven, the Netherlands. At Baltan, she develops and facilitates learning trajectories, projects, and collaborations that explore societal issues through the intersection of art, design, technology, and science.

Marlou has a strong interest in supporting emerging artists and designers working on these themes, supporting their development not just artistically but also practically. She is a co-founder of Baltan's talent development trajectory *Raise Your Voice*, co-editor of *ARTECHÓ — Investigating Decentralized Action in Art*, a publication that brings together artists and researchers exploring the complexities of AI and decentralised technologies, as well as the new realities they introduce. She is a tutor of the studio *Technologies Otherwise* at the Geo-Design Master at Design Academy Eindhoven.

Carlo Gioia is a media artist and interdisciplinary researcher investigating the intersections of computational cultures, landscape ecologies, and marginal territories. Through his doctoral studies at Kunstuniversität Linz and his ongoing collaboration with Politecnico di Torino, he explores how (s)low-tech systems and relational computation can reconfigure community infrastructures.

Rooted in technological degrowth, his practice employs multi-channel installations to challenge systemic centralisation. He is the President and co-founder of *Radura*, a research platform activating rural contexts through open experimentation and political ecology.

Cesare Pietroiusti was born in Rome in 1955 and still lives there. He has a Degree in Medicine with an essay on Psychiatry (1979). He was co-founder and editor of the Artist-run space *Jartrakor* in Rome (1977-1985) and of the magazine *Rivista di Psicologia dell'Arte* (1979-1984).

He was one of the coordinators of the *Oreste* projects (1997-2001), of the conference *How do I explain to my mother that what I do is useful?* (Link, Bologna, 1997) and of *Oreste* at the Venice Biennale (Biennale di Venezia, 1999). He is co-founder of *Nomads & Residents*, New York (2000).

He was curator for the CSAV, the Advanced Visual Art Course at the Fondazione Ratti, Como (2006-2011); MFA Faculty, LUCAD, Lesley University, Boston (2009-2016). He was president of the board of the *Azienda Speciale PalaExp*, Roma (2018-2022). He teaches at the Laboratorio di Arti Visive, IUAV University, Venice (2004-ongoing) and at NABA Academy, Roma (2021-ongoing). As a member of the collective "Lu Cafausu", he is one of the initiators of *Fondazione Lac o Le Mon*, San Cesario di Lecce (2015 ongoing).

Since 1977, he has exhibited in private and public spaces — both designated and non-designated — in Italy and abroad. In 2019, the MAMbo in Bologna dedicated an extensive retrospective to him, entitled *A Certain Number of Things 1955-2019* (the winning project of the 2018 Italian Council call for proposals). In recent years, his work has focused primarily on the theme of exchange and on the paradoxes that can arise within economic systems and structures. Pietroiusti sees the workshop approach as a model that, by combining educational and exhibition activities, offers opportunities for the horizontal and collective development of thought and for transcending disciplinary boundaries. [Website at this link.](#)

Luigi Negro is an artist, researcher and clinical sociologist. Until 1996, he exhibited as a painter under undisclosed pseudonyms. From 1997 to 2001 he took part in *Oreste*, both through *Undo.net* and under his own name: a network of artists and curators invited by Harald Szeemann to *dAPERTutto*, the 48th Venice Biennale, where from 10 June to 7 November 1999 the project staged meetings, performances, round tables, lectures and lunches — close to a hundred events in all. The same cycle included the residencies at Paliano and Montescaglioso, in the province of Matera, the conferences held in Bologna (1997) and Lecce (2000), and the project's three publications. *Oreste* is where he met most of the artists with whom he later founded *Lu Cafausu*: Emilio Fantin, Giancarlo Norese, Cesare Pietroiusti and, subsequently, Luigi Presicce. With the collective he has exhibited and developed projects at *vertexList*, Brooklyn (2007, curated by Marcin Ramocki); *TENT*, Rotterdam (2007, curated by Angela Serino), together with Francesca Grilli; and *Sculpture Center for Performa 07*, New York (2007, with Joan Jonas and Steve Piccolo). These were followed by the *Second Life* version produced with the Stanford Humanities Lab (2008) and a public lecture at the ASU Art Museum in Tempe (2012); then *dOCUMENTA* (13), Kassel; *Kunsthalle Marcel Duchamp*, Cully; *Cabaret Voltaire*, Zurich; and *La Galleria Nazionale*, Rome (2017). Since 2010, he has curated *La festa dei vivi* (che riflettono sulla morte) (translated: *The Feast of the Living - Who Reflect on Death*), an annual event in a distributed format that reached its 17th edition in 2026.

He writes essays, short fiction and poetry, including under collective authorship. He is founder and vice-president of the *Fondazione Lac o Le Mon*. With Giancarlo Norese, he directs the publishing house *La Casa Cafausica*, which, alongside the collective's own titles, publishes works by external authors.

He has conceived and directed research and autonomous education programmes: *RES* (at Masseria

Torcito, with Cecilia Galiena and Gordon Knox), Ammirato Culture House (Lecce), Free Home University (with the Musagetes Foundation) and SoundRes (with David Cossin and Alessandra Pomarico).

He holds degrees in sociology and political science and a PhD in economic history, and works within a phenomenological framework whose recurring notions are active desistance, the threshold and the void as potentiality. Along these lines, he has investigated the phenomenology of coffee — tasting practices, perceptual protocols, the way taste is stabilised by language and collective gesture — including work carried out with the ethnomethodologist Kenneth Liberman.

He directs the Health and Social Care Area of the ASL of Lecce, where he works on cultural welfare and community mental and social health; he has worked as a clinical sociologist with the mental health departments of Trieste and Lecce.

ORGANISERS

The Camp on Vernacular Technologies is an initiative by Baltan Laboratories, organised in collaboration with Radura and Fondazione Lac o Le Mon.

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Baltan Laboratories is an interdisciplinary lab and development institution in digital culture, focused on (talent) development, learning, and research, based in Eindhoven (NL). Through para-academic and artistic research and cultural production, Baltan questions the current extractivist and accelerationist dynamics in the tech sector, based on the idea that technological progress is relentless and should feed on the inconsiderate extraction of human and non-human resources. In its current programme, Baltan gives centre stage to rehearsing alternative roles for technology in society by designing learning paths, projects, and collaborations that bridge different knowledge systems through creative strategies that go beyond a purely rational approach, including bodily, sensory, intuitive, and performative techniques. These alternative tech frameworks are grounded in diversity, hope, solidarity, and regeneration, rooted in contemporary philosophy, art & tech, and activist tech movements. In Eindhoven's tech ecosystem, Baltan offers a platform for debate on the societal effects of technology, connecting companies, cultural institutions, and academies in the region, nationally and internationally.

Radura is an interdisciplinary research and artistic practice collective founded in 2023 in Basilicata (Italy). Operating as an active observatory in rural and mountainous territories, it explores the intersections of art, technology, and ecology through site-specific, participatory, and experimental practices. Within a post-natural and interlocal dimension, the collective adopts a research-creation and action-research methodology that weaves together technological arts, critical ecology, social sciences, and anthropology. Its activity leverages digital, artisanal, and relational infrastructures as tools for listening to and caring for the landscape, activating situated archives, interactive installations, and media art to open new perspectives on contemporary ecologies and to foster networks among communities, institutions, and research entities.

Fondazione Lac o Le Mon was established in 2015 by five artists (Cesare Pietroiusti, Luigi Negro, Emilio Fantin, Giancarlo Norese and Luigi Presicce) who, since 2007, have formed the collective Lu Cafausu. The Foundation has been operational since June 2016 and has already hosted around 50 seminars and workshops, as well as numerous public events (concerts, performances, exhibitions) free of charge. To date, more than six hundred people have taken part in the residential workshops held between April and November (typically lasting one or two weeks).

The Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to interdisciplinary artistic research and pedagogical experimentation, with a focus on issues of environmental sustainability and care for the local area. It was established to develop workshop models in which knowledge and new ideas are exchanged in a circular manner, through the collective acceptance and development of participants' aptitudes and proposals, so that the working group can reach situations in which sharing becomes more important than individual authorship. Rather than adhering to the traditional methods of academic and university teaching — which tend to separate the place (the university lecture hall) and the time (the class) from the places and times of everyday life (sleeping, preparing and eating food, having fun, playing with children, chatting, lazing about, etc.) — Fondazione Lac o Le Mon has always sought to offer participants in its various workshops and seminars the opportunity to live on site and to decide together with others how to share spaces, time, resources, practices, dreams and reflections. All this stems from the conviction that it is possible to conceive and experiment with forms

of existence based on sharing rather than competitive individualism, on valuing what already exists rather than the consumerist demand for the new, on knowledge to be built together and on the spiritual depth offered by each individual rather than on success measured by media exposure.

The role of the artist in this context is presented as a social and spiritual figure who, not content with a pre-established role or a defined disciplinary affiliation, seeks to challenge roles and disciplines, making this questioning one of the aims and practices of their research. To achieve this, the Foundation promotes direct dialogue and collaboration between artists from different sectors (visual arts, music, theatre, dance, etc.), as well as between artists and specialists from other professional fields (including the culinary arts), inviting them to explore their respective fields of inquiry, with particular attention to their margins and uncharted possibilities beyond those usually recognised and practised.

REFERENCE LIST



In the next pages you can find a reference list the camp is thought with, divided per topic and with a small description for each title, connecting them with the theoretical framework of the camp. This is not meant to be a list to be read in its entirety, since selected reading excerpts will be sent in preparation for the online sessions, but more as a set of references to better frame our approach and for a more in-depth analysis of the topics, if needed.

COSMOTECHNICS, PHILOSOPHY OF TECHNOLOGY, AND TECHNICAL OBJECTS

Simondon, G. (1958). ["Du Mode D'Existence Des Objets Techniques."](#) Paris: Aubier. [Trad. ingl.: *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, Minneapolis/Univocal, 2017]. Philosophical foundation: the technical object has its own genesis and existence. The concepts of concretization and dis-alienation are crucial for conceiving a relationship with technology that is not consumerist, but rather based on care and understanding.

Hui, Y. (2016). ["The Question Concerning Technology in China: An Essay in Cosmotechnics."](#) Falmouth: Urbanomic / Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Introduces "cosmotechnics": there is no single universal technique, but a plurality of techniques rooted in cosmologies and local contexts. Theoretical axis for thinking about situated, plural, and vernacular technologies.

Latour, B. (1991). ["Nous N'Avons Jamais Été Modernes."](#) Paris: La Découverte. [Trad. ingl.: *We Have Never Been Modern*, Harvard University Press, 1993]. Critique of the great nature/culture and human/non-human divide; objects as hybrids within translation networks. Useful for interventions attentive to non-human inhabitants and the technical-natural entanglements of place.

ANTHROPOLOGY OF TECHNIQUES, GESTURES, AND BRICOLAGE

Mauss, M. (1934). ["Les Techniques Du Corps."](#) [Trad. ingl.: "Techniques of the Body, Economy and Society," 2(1), 1973, pp. 70-88].

Foundational text of the anthropology of technique: "technical gestures" (walking, swimming, handling a tool) are socially acquired. Links body, skill, and the transmission of know-how - aimed at peasant "proto-interfaces".

Leroi-Gourhan, A. (1964-65). ["Le Geste et La Parole."](#) Paris: Albin Michel. [Trad. ingl.: *Gesture and Speech*, MIT Press, 1993].

Coevolution of gesture, technique, and language; the chaîne opératoire and the exteriorization of memory in the tool. Key reference for conceiving technique as an extension of the body.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1962). ["La Pensée Sauvage."](#) Paris: Plon. [Trad. ingl.: *The Savage Mind*, 1966].

"Bricolage": the thought that builds with what is at hand by recombining fragments and residues.

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It is the conceptual matrix of reuse, patchwork, and reassembled objects - opposed to "engineering" thought.

Ingold, T. (2013). ["Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture."](#) London: Routledge.

"Thinking through making": knowing by doing, corresponding with materials. Theoretical support for the Camp's laboratory and imitative pedagogy (learning with hands, on-site).

ANTHROPOLOGY OF MATERIAL CULTURE AND AGENCY OF OBJECTS

Appadurai, A. (a cura di) (1986). ["The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective."](#) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The "social life of things": objects have biographies and regimes of value that change as they circulate. A tool for reading found, discarded, and re-signified objects.

Gell, A. (1998). ["Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory."](#) Oxford: Clarendon Press / Oxford University Press.

Objects as "indices" endowed with agency that mediate social relations. Foundation for treating artifacts as actors, not passive things.

Miller, D. (2010). ["Stuff."](#) Cambridge: Polity Press. Things make us as much as we make them: the more "invisible" objects remain, the more they shape identities and behaviors. An accessible theory of everyday material culture.

Bodei, R. (2009). ["La vita delle cose."](#) Roma-Bari: Laterza. Things make us as much as we make them: the more "invisible" objects remain, the more they shape identities and behaviors. An accessible theory of everyday material culture.

VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURES AND TECHNOLOGIES, CONVIVIALITY, LOW-TECH, AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES

Rudofsky, B. (1964). [Architecture Without Architects: An Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture.](#) New York: The Museum of Modern Art.

Architecture "without architects": anonymous, spontaneous, tied to local materials. It is the direct reference from which the Camp borrows the idea of "vernacular".

Illich, I. (1973). [Tools for Conviviality.](#) New York: Harper & Row.

Architecture "without architects": anonymous, spontaneous, tied to local materials. It is the di-

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rect reference from which the Camp borrows the idea of “vernacular”.

Watson, J. (2019). [Lo-TEK. Design by Radical Indigenism](#). Koln: Taschen.

Lo-TEK: indigenous technologies based on Traditional Ecological Knowledge, presented as a sophisticated alternative to extractive high-tech. Redefines what we mean by “technology”.

Escobar, A. (2018). [Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds](#). Durham: Duke University Press. Autonomous design and “pluriverse”: community-based, situated, and non-extractive design practices; political ecologies in rural contexts. Very akin to the Radura collective’s approach.

Borgonuovo, V. & Franceschini, S. (a cura di) (2015). [Global Tools 1973-1975: Towards an Ecology of Design](#). Istanbul: SALT. [Ed. ampliata: When Education Coincides with Life, NERO].

The widespread school of Italian Radical Design (Superstudio, Archizoom, Sottsass, Mendini...): laboratories “without students or teachers,” natural materials, ecology of design. Historical and Italian precedent of the Camp.

TECHNOLOGICAL DISOBEDIENCE, REPAIR, ADHOCISM AND CRITICAL MAKING

Oroza, E. [Technological Disobedience / Desobediencia tecnológica](#). [Progetto e archivio; libro: Fiebre Ediciones]. Cuban ingenuity of the “Special Period” as an archive (material library) of objects repaired and reinvented beyond their intended functions: a pivotal case study of technical disobedience under conditions of scarcity.

Jencks, C. & Silver, N. (1972). [Adhocism: The Case for Improvisation](#). [Ed. ampliata: Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013]. “Adhocism”: solving real problems with what is at hand, through trial and error. A manifesto of ad hoc making that anticipates hacking, reuse, and mass-customization.

Jackson, S. J. (2014). [“Rethinking Repair.”](#) in Gillespie, T., Boczkowski, P. J. & Foot, K. A. (a cura di), *Media Technologies: Essays on Communication, Materiality, and Society*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 221-240. “Broken world thinking”: breakdown, maintenance, and repair not as margins but as the center of technological experience. Reference text for repair studies.

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Hertz, G. (a cura di) (2012). [“Critical Making.”](#) Hollywood, CA: Telharmonium Press. [Concetto coniato da Matt Ratto, 2011].

Critical Making: combining hands-on fabrication with critical and social reflection on technology. Excellent reference for the pre-camp online sessions, to theorize interventions before “touching the ground.”

MEDIA ARCHÆOLOGY, OBSOLESCENCE AND FOUND OBJECTS

Zielinski, S. (2006). [Deep Time of the Media: Toward an Archæology of Hearing and Seeing by Technical Means](#). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

“Anarchæology” of media: their history does not proceed linearly from simple to complex. Excavating hidden layers to “discover the new in the old.”

Parikka, J. (2012). [What Is Media Archæology?](#) Cambridge: Polity Press.

Introduction to the field: “dead” media, obsolescence, reuse, and sedimented layers of technical culture. A framework for working on discarded technical objects.

Ernst, W. (2013). [Digital Memory and the Archive](#) (a cura di J. Parikka). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

A materialist theory of the archive and technical memory – useful for thinking about “impossible archives” and the technical persistence of objects.

Steyerl, H. (2009). [“In Defense of the Poor Image.”](#) e-flux journal, #10.

The “poor image”: aesthetics of low resolution, of the degraded and moving copy, of vernacular circulation. Key for a vernacular technological aesthetic in the digital realm. Free full text.

ARCHIVES OF IMPOSSIBLE, SPECULATIVE AND VERNACULAR OBJECTS

Carelman, J. (1969). [Catalogue d’objets introuvables](#). Paris: Balland.

The “catalog of unfindable objects”: a humorous archive of impossible and dysfunctional objects. Historical matrix of the speculative imaginary regarding everyday objects.

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Kawakami, K. (1995). [101 Unuseless Japanese Inventions: The Art of Chindogu](#). New York: W. W. Norton. Chindogu: “almost useless” inventions that solve a problem while generating others. Poetics of the impossible object and “reverse ergonomics,” with ten quasi-philosophical rules.

Dunne, A. & Raby, F. (2013). [Speculative Everything: Design, Fiction, and Social Dreaming](#). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Design as a tool to imagine possible (and undesirable) futures: “what if” questions as a catalyst for debate. Includes examples like the “solar kitchen,” akin to the Camp’s scenarios.

MORE-THAN-HUMAN ECOLOGIES, ATTENTION AND LANDSCAPE

Tsing, A. L. (2015). [The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins](#). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Salvage and collaborative survival in capitalist ruins; multispecies attention, non-scalability, and listening to the landscape. Matsutake mushroom foraging as a metaphor for precarious dwelling.

Odell, J. (2019). [How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy](#). Brooklyn: Melville House.

Resisting the attention economy by reorienting our gaze toward the landscape and non-human inhabitants. Directly useful for the “strategies against social media cognitive overload” envisioned by the call.

