

**Koumaria 2024 Open Call**  
**By artist collective Medea Electronique**  
<http://www.medeaelectronique.com/>

May 15-May 26

**Sound—Image—Movement: Creating  
Networks of Care Via In-Situ New Media Art:  
(Re)Imagining Sellasia**  
**Application Deadline: March 20**

**Short Description:** This dissemination workshop will focus on the creation of site-specific new media art incorporating a variety of media, and involving artists working across the arts. How can collaborative cross-art practices contribute to an ethics of care in the arts? This residency will be practice-based—we will create art with this theme in mind.

**Residency**

Since 2009 the artist collective Medea Electronique has organized an annual 10-day experimental artist dissemination workshop, Koumaria, near Sparta in Greece (the village of Sellasia), focusing on improvisation and new media practices. New-media artists from all over the world, inspired by the Greek natural landscape, come together to create a multicultural and cross-media 'dialogue' culminating in a collective presentation in Sellasia, and high-quality documentation of the works produced there. Past participants have formed lasting friendships and new artistic partnerships. For us the workshop serves as a model for future creative collaborations.

The workshop is held at an organic olive oil farm at the foot of Mount Taigetos in Sparta. Our home base is a modern and comfortable house, features dormitory-style bedrooms, large and comfortable common rooms (featuring fireplaces and magnificent views of the surrounding mountains and fields), two primary spaces for project development and practice, terraces, rooftop overlooks, and a large and modern kitchen. The surrounding hills, mountains, villages and the not too distant sea, coupled with a vast expanse of sky, stars, and ever-changing mountain vistas, afford the participants ample space and opportunity for creative work. Meals are taken communally, with an emphasis on fresh and local produce and traditional recipes. In this environment artists not only have the chance to live and work together interacting with the Greek landscape, but also to trade their experiences concerning everyday life and culture. Chores are

undertaken collectively, but there is ample time for participants to work, create, explore the surroundings and enter into new artistic partnerships.

## **This Year's Theme**

Preamble:

Medea Electronique is embarking on a multi-year project focusing on (re)imagining rural communities in the light of the many pressures that such communities face as a result of a variety of forces such as employment, migration, encroachment of urban and industrial environments, climate change immigration, among others. This project is a result of our now 15-year history of working both in and with the village of Sellasia, adjacent to Koumaria. How can new media artists create a network of care that can both help the inhabitants of rural communities think creatively about possible futures for their communities, and perhaps contribute to realizing these futures? What are possible roles for artists in such world-envisaging projects? How can artists work ethically with rural communities, particularly if they themselves are not members of such communities, and may inhabit both spatially and conceptually distant urban spaces? How can we avoid simply being art and "out-reach" tourists? What commonalities do rural communities face in imagining their futures, and what differences result in divergent, perhaps conflicting, imagined futures?

Medea plans to create a network of arts collectives based in rural Southern Europe to think through these issues together, and to work with and in a variety of rural communities. With so much focus on the impact of assorted global pressures and challenges on urban centers, we hope to *de-center* this focus, and turn a critical, creative and artistic lens toward the rural.

The theme:

Given the above, we plan to work in and around the local village of Sellasia (and other nearby villages), inviting the residents of this village, and interested artists from the region, to work with us on envisaging possible futures. Over the past 15 years we have forged a deep and lasting relationship with the near-by village of Sellasia (a short walk from the residency site). The village (with a year-round population of under 275) looks forward to our annual workshop and has come to expect that we will both work in the village, and with the villagers, in realizing our artistic outputs, and that we will present these outputs in and for the village. In a sense the villagers have become permanent participants in Koumaria. Over the years we have collected both historical narratives of the village, and personal histories of its residents, while using numerous sites in and around the village for both performances and in-situ installations. We have also had an impact on, and worked with, individuals from other villages nearby, creating an annual new media art program that in many ways galvanizes the region. This year we will focus on possible futures for the village, in close collaboration with the villagers own imaginary desires for what Sellasia might

become. How can we creatively present possible (re)imaginings of Sellasia, incorporating both the villagers' ideas and our own? Our presence in Sellasia will be as creative agents intent on artistically realizing and presenting the villagers' own imaginings for a future Sellasia. We will employ sites in the village both for performances, installations, and other creative events, and will work closely with the villagers. In our present age with so many aspects of our collective futures in doubt, with so many challenges we all face to imagine our way out of our present reality and into a safer, freer, more inclusive, more egalitarian, more ecologically focused tomorrow, Koumaria will this year model what artistic imagination can bring to our collective (re)envisioning of tomorrow. This is an important way artists can manifest care for the rural communities they work with—leveraging artistic imagination and the power of digital art to assist rural communities in envisaging their collective future.

To get a sense of the historical range of Medea projects, we invite applicants to explore past Koumaria performances/projects as found at:

<http://medeaelectronique.com/koumaria/>

*Your application should include a statement of your interest in this year's theme, and a sketch of a way you might want to explore it collaboratively with other artists across disciplines and media. It should foreground the way in which you view your creative practice as different from/complementary to an expansion upon/ adding to, the creative practice of Medea (based on your knowledge of Medea as found in our archive, link above). We are looking for artists excited by the idea of collaborative artistic creation, grounded in an improvisatory spirit and practice, and interested in working closely with the villagers and in the village.*

It is worth emphasizing that Koumaria's focus is COLLECTIVE art creation. You should expect, and desire, substantive input from other residents, and be open to having projects morph considerably during the course of the residency.

This call is directed towards artists working in any media or art form, as long as one is willing to collaborate with others who may have a focus on new-media art.

Medea Electronique, being an eclectic art collective, is interested in people from diverse cultural and artistic backgrounds. Past residents have come from a variety of artistic backgrounds, and from numerous countries. While assorted nationalities and ethnicities have been represented, the common language of the residency is English (although fluency is not necessary, an ability to interact with other artists in English is necessary).

Members of Medea Electronique will be on hand to both guide the overall direction of the residency, and to fully participate in the residency as artists.

(Note: This is a remote region of Greece, with limited ability to obtain tech/electronic materials while we are there. Residents will need to check in advance concerning what materials will be available, and what they will need to bring. It is far easier to get in the area a ball of wire, or a piece of pipe than a semi-conductor or an obscure battery!)

### **Medea provides *free of charge*:**

#### **A. In terms of hospitality**

- 1) Housing and food supplies during the course of the workshop
- 2) Transportation to all the sites around the workshop
- 3) Clean bedsheets and blankets

While there are few expenses the residents need to consider while at the residency, it is worth having some funds for trips to local cafes and the like. Calculate approximately 5-10 euros a day for such incidentals.

#### **Notes:**

- Rooms, Bathrooms at the residency are shared
- Cooking and cleaning the house during our stay is undertaken collectively. We will create a cleaning rota so everyone knows what day they are expected to do what (say help that day with evening dishes, or sweep)
- While it is not a requirement of the COST program that you stay at the residency, this is highly recommended, as our collaborative workshop activities take place throughout the day and evening, and there are very limited accommodation options nearby. There is no charge for accommodation at the residency.

**In addition, successful applicants will receive up to 900 Euros to cover their transportation costs to and from the workshop site.**

Please see COST travel reimbursement rules:

[https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2024/01/COST\\_Travel\\_Reimbursement\\_Rules\\_Nov\\_2023.pdf](https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2024/01/COST_Travel_Reimbursement_Rules_Nov_2023.pdf)

### **How to Apply**

This workshop is part of the COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology)- funded project: TOOLKIT OF CARE (TOC), CA21102 (<https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA21102/>)

### **Who can apply?**

Practitioners/researchers of any nationality or place of residency affiliated with an academic or other legal entity in one of these countries: Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus,

Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, the Faroe Islands, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kosovo, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Republic of North Macedonia, Netherlands, Norway, Palestine, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, as well as in one of the EU Member States Outermost Regions (French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Mayotte, Reunion Island and Saint-Martin, Azores and Madeira, and the Canary Islands)

\*Examples of such an affiliation (non-exhaustive list): work contract, enrolment in a PhD or Post-Doctoral programme, voluntary service in a NGO, emeritus professorship

*\*TOC is an international project led by an interdisciplinary group of creative practitioners, academics, researchers and arts organizations that specialize in creative technologies and that have considerable experience in the production and dissemination of this kind of knowledge across Europe and internationally, who have come together to form a “critical network of care”. The network will collaborate to share their collective expertise and technical knowledge employed in creative ways to develop knowledge and methodologies of care. The main aim is to produce a well formulated and integrated TOOLKIT OF CARE comprising articles, prototypes, audiovisual documentation, technical manuals, theoretical analysis, prototypes, and data. It will act as a model of how to successfully share knowledge and expertise across different geographical regions and social groups.*

*\*\*COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is a funding agency for research and innovation networks. Our Actions help connect research initiatives across Europe and enable scientists to grow their ideas by sharing them with their peers. This boosts their research, career and innovation.*



**Paperwork to submit**

- 1) A personal statement saying why you want to participate. This statement should speak to this year's theme. (see above)
- 2) A small sample of your individual work (web-site, videos, pictures etc.)
- 3) Your C.V.

Send these materials to: Emmanuil Manousakis: [mmanousakis22@gmail.com](mailto:mmanousakis22@gmail.com)

- 4) Please indicate in the email title "Koumaria Application"