



**Projects from 2024, our 10th year!**

**[thentrythis.org](https://thentrythis.org)**

**[contact@thentrythis.org](mailto:contact@thentrythis.org)**

**Then Try This is a non-profit research, design and development organisation, for environmental and social purpose. This review covers the work from our studio in 2024. Everything we make is open source, so it's all freely available to use and modify.**



[thentrythis.org](https://thentrythis.org)



[contact@thentrythis.org](mailto:contact@thentrythis.org)



[mastodon.thentrythis.org](https://mastodon.thentrythis.org/@thentrythis)  
[/@thentrythis](https://mastodon.thentrythis.org/@thentrythis)



[@then\\_try\\_this](https://www.instagram.com/then_try_this)

**We are working towards  
a world with equitable  
access to knowledge,  
where thoughtful tools  
and interventions help us  
play with complexity and  
make better decisions,  
and environmental and  
social issues are centred  
and addressed with  
careful urgency.**



## ORGANISED ATOMS

This autumn we ran two more of our workshops searching for semiconducting crystals in mine waste, and using them to make electronic sounds.

As in 2023 we teamed up with the fabulous Rosi Jolly, and this time we were supported by the Royal Society of Chemistry and United Downs Raceway - who graciously let us take over their race track for a couple of days (previously known as the Ale and Cakes Mine). Our second workshop was also a Fun Palaces event.

We heard stories of grandparent miners pocketing crystals and displaying them in the local pub, discovered many types of beautiful minerals, made loud electronic noises and gave out 16 cardboard crystal synthesiser kits to families to take home.

**Read more and build your own cardboard synth**  
[thentrythis.org/projects/organised-atoms](https://thentrythis.org/projects/organised-atoms)





# NERGAL

We've been working with Dr. Matt Silk and Nitara Wijayatilake at the University of Edinburgh to make a new citizen science game, called Nergal, to help understand how social decisions change the way diseases spread around communities.

Most simulations of how diseases spread assume that people make perfect decisions, which definitely isn't the case. But - it's really hard to track individual people's decisions in a real life epidemic situation. By making a game world we're trying to reach a sweet spot between a simulation and the real world. In a game, people can make their imperfect decisions without any risk of actually getting sick, and we can track every decision made and all the impacts.

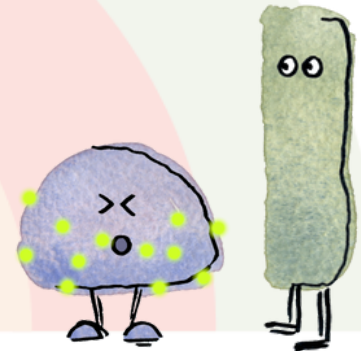
The game is due to be released at the end of January 2025. Once the data starts coming in, Nitara will be analysing it as part of her PhD project. The results will hopefully be useful for public health purposes.

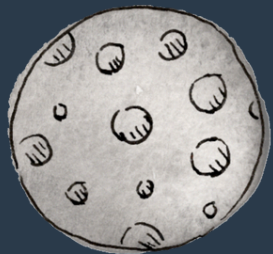
## Read more

[thentrythis.org/projects/nergal](https://thentrythis.org/projects/nergal)



My name is  
nergal





## CITIZEN SCIENCE FOR PEOPLE WITHOUT SIGHT

We were really lucky to get some funding from the EU scheme Impetus, which gave us some time to experiment and focus on designing more accessible citizen science games.

We've worked with iSight Cornwall and their clients to figure out how to design Nergal (on the previous page) so it's playable by people with little or no sight. We made a high contrast version as a start, but also reached the point where it can be played through the sound alone, including building a bespoke screen reader within the game. These will be released as options within a single version of the game in late January 2025.

We hope this work will eventually not only lead to health improvements through the research data collected, but also act as an example of how to make citizen science (and indeed other online projects) less exclusionary.

### Read more

[thentrythis.org/notes/2024/12/12/workshop-testing-nergal-citizen-science-game-for-people-with-little-or-no-sight](https://thentrythis.org/notes/2024/12/12/workshop-testing-nergal-citizen-science-game-for-people-with-little-or-no-sight)





# BOSTANLYTICS

This year we released the Farm Crap App for Argentina, translated as BostAnalytics (bosta is the slang term for dung and analytics hints towards the analysis of the fertilisers).

We made this for Dr. Robert Dunn at Rothamsted Research (funded by the BBSRC) to help farmers choose the right amount of different manures to spread on their fields, reducing dependencies on artificial fertilisers and also helping with the problems of over-fertilising.

The app's available on Android in English and Argentinian Spanish (automatic depending on the language your phone is in), and is free and open source as always. It's not fully tested yet, so if you install it and spot any problems, please let us know!

## Read more and download

[thentrythis.org/notes/2024/04/25/bostanalytics-released](https://thentrythis.org/notes/2024/04/25/bostanalytics-released)



### SET UP MY FIELDS

Add or edit your field names and sizes below:

FIELD 1

FIELD 2

+ ADD NEW FIELD

### SET UP MY MANURES

Add details about your analysed manures below:

MANURE 1

+ ADD NEW MANURE

### SET UP MY COSTS

How much do you pay for your commercial fertilisers?

Currency Arg \$ US \$

N  Arg \$/kg

P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>

K<sub>2</sub>O

MgO

SO<sub>3</sub>

### ADD NEW FIELD

FIELD NAME

FIELD SIZE (hectares)

DELETE SAVE

### ADD NEW MANURE

MANURE NAME

N CONTENT (elemental, kg/t)

P CONTENT (elemental, kg/t)

K CONTENT (elemental, kg/t)

Mg CONTENT (elemental, kg/t)

S CONTENT (elemental, kg/t)

QUALITY

Farmyard manure

DELETE SAVE

### CALCULATOR

FIELD

Field 1

MANURE

Manure 1

AMOUNT OF MANURE (tonnes)

Enter number

Accurate spreading of manures is reliant on good calibration of spreading machinery, and this should be done prior to the spreading of slurries/manures.

NUTRIENT	AMOUNT IN MANURE (kg/ha)	SAVINGS FOR FIELD (Arg \$)
N	-	-
P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	-	-
K <sub>2</sub> O	-	-
MgO	-	-
SO <sub>3</sub>	-	-

STORE DATA

### STORED DATA

28 August 2023 - FIELD 2

16 July 2023 - FIELD 1

10 July 2023 - FIELD 1

10 July 2023 - FIELD 2

EXPORT DATA

### STORED DATA

10 JULY 2023

FIELD 2

MANURE 1

20 TONNES OF MANURE

NUTRIENT	AMOUNT IN MANURE (kg/ha)	SAVINGS FOR FIELD (Arg \$)
N	-	-
P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	-	-
K <sub>2</sub> O	-	-
MgO	-	-
SO <sub>3</sub>	-	-

DELETE THIS ENTRY

Quality dropdown options:  
 Slurry (DM2%)  
 Slurry (DM 6%)  
 Slurry (DM 10%)  
 Farmyard manure (incorporated)  
 Farmyard manure (removed)

## ALGORITHMIC PATTERN

We have continued to explore algorithms in heritage pattern-making to inform new creative technology. This past year included work exploring Khipu-inspired knots in string with Paola Torres Núñez del Prado, hand-drawn choreographic notations with Kate Sicchio and Luke Iannini, pattern-sensing sticks with Mika Satomi and Lizzie Wilson, and communication through weaves with Kristina Andersen and Pei-Ying Lin.

### Read more

[thentrythis.org/projects/alpaca](https://thentrythis.org/projects/alpaca)  
[algorithmicpattern.org](https://algorithmicpattern.org)

### Watch a video of the khipu-inspired system in action

[youtube.com/watch?v=TET1HETw\\_Ow](https://youtube.com/watch?v=TET1HETw_Ow)





## ALGORITHMIC PATTERN RESIDENTS

Basket weaver Geraldine Jones continued her work exploring Fibonacci shells, together with maths education researcher Charlotte Mégrouèche (who we will be working with more!), creating some incredible woven wire structures.

Researcher and maker Anu Reddy explored computational Kambi Kolam patterns (South Indian geometric line drawings), making sashiko machine-embroidered substrates for stitched Kolams, and leading a hands-on workshop as part of our Pattern Club series.

### **Read more**

Anu Reddy and Alex McLean. 2024.

'Drawing Kolam Patterns in Stitches and Code'.

[doi.org/10.21428/108765d1.53f112a6](https://doi.org/10.21428/108765d1.53f112a6)

## MONGOOSE2000

We are making a new version of our remote behavioural data logging system which has been in use in Uganda for the last ten years. We designed a system for use by researchers at the banded mongoose field site at the Mweya Peninsula, in the Queen Elizabeth National Park, western Uganda. Using a set of Android tablets and a Raspberry Pi we made it rigorous enough to put up with unpredictable power, unstable internet and curious wandering elephants.

It's used to keep track of a population of mongoose families, and record their daily squabbles and life events. Now it's time to update it and make it work on more modern devices, while maintaining it's long term stability.

### Read more

[thentrythis.org/projects/mongoose-2000/](http://thentrythis.org/projects/mongoose-2000/)





# SMOGOFF

We're starting further development of our air quality sensor system, which has real-time on street visualisation of pollution levels, and is calibrated to council equipment so communities can use the data they collect to ask their councillors to act. Thanks to funding from the University of Exeter's Civic University Agreements funds, we're making the sensors easier to use, and working with Dr. Jo Garrett to see how test communities around the UK use the sensors.

## Read more

[thentrythis.org/projects/smogoff/](http://thentrythis.org/projects/smogoff/)



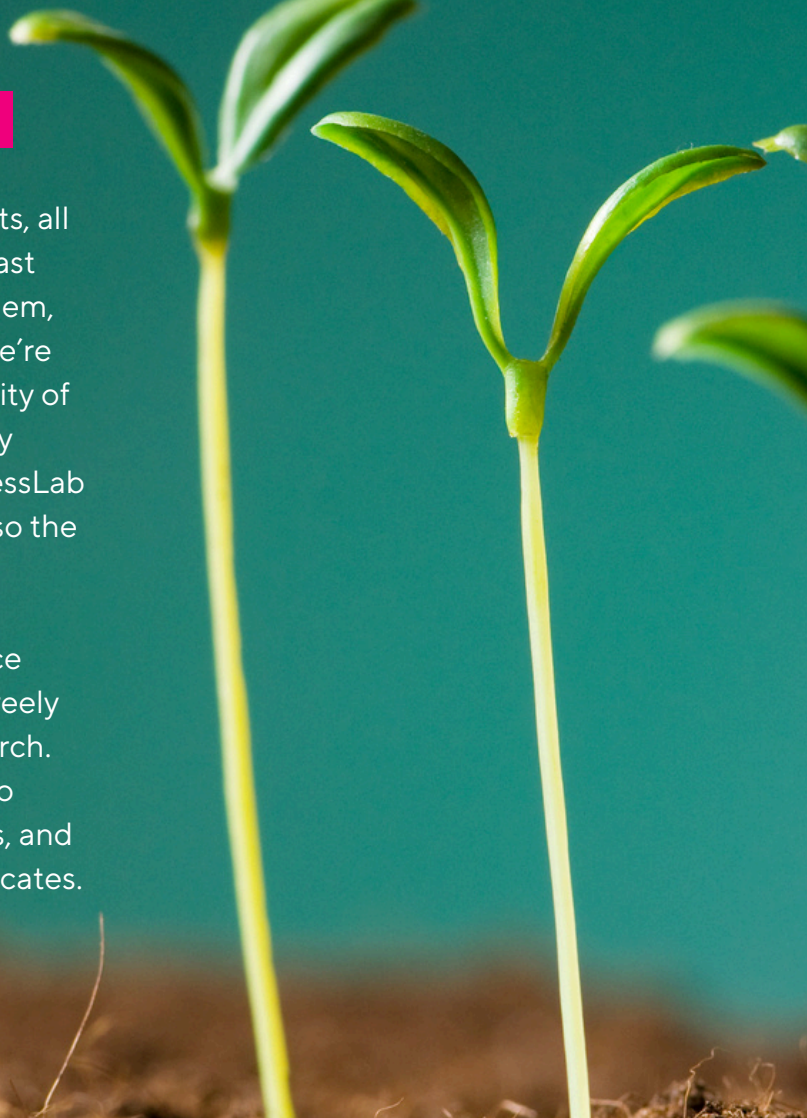
## ACCESSLAB - HEALTHY SOILS

AccessLab is one of our long term flagship projects, all about broadening access to scientific research. Last year we were showing other people how to run them, now we're back at it ourselves. In January 2025 we're running an AccessLab for Dr. Elze Hesse (University of Exeter), on the theme of 'Healthy Soils', funded by Elze's UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship. This AccessLab was fully booked nearly 2 months ahead of time, so the demand is clearly still there.

We'll be pairing all the participants up with science researchers, who'll pass on skills for how to find, freely access, and judge the reliability of scientific research. The researchers see first hand how tricky it is to do research without overpriced journal subscriptions, and tend to emerge as enthusiastic open access advocates.

### Read more

[thentrythis.org/events/accesslab](https://thentrythis.org/events/accesslab)



## AUTHORIAL ILLUSTRATION

As professional development, one of our directors has embarked on a two year part-time Masters course at Falmouth University, in 'Illustration - Authorial Practice'. Authorial illustration is about using imagery to tell stories, which could mean anything from making a kid's picture book, through to reportage (news reporting via illustration) or data visualisation.

It's early days but it's clear that there will be benefits for our studio work. We've made quite a lot of traditionally illustrated games like Wasplove and Nergal, and these might get a bit more daring in future. We'll also be able to expand into printed work like posters and books. There are obvious opportunities for doing beautiful interactive articles on serious topics, with more illustrative data visualisation work that isn't as cold as the usual stuff.

### Read more

[thentrythis.org/notes/2024/12/05/illustration-ma-a-little-update](https://thentrythis.org/notes/2024/12/05/illustration-ma-a-little-update)





## WORKSHOPS & EVENTS



In October we packed up a big suitcase full of woven robots, air pollution sensors and rocks and took them to Knowle West Media Centre in Bristol to introduce a new audience to our work as part of their “What If…” event.

We continued running Sheffield Pattern Club craft+tech events with Ray Morrison and Lucy Cheesman, and lead Algorithmic Pattern workshops and seminars in six countries outside the UK (no flights involved!). Creative performances included an algorithmic rave at the legendary Corsica Studios cub in London, a festival in Herefordshire and a castle in Slovenia.

We also did talks on our Smogoff sensors for the European Citizen Science Association’s working group on Air Quality, and for the GW4 Air Network Symposium.

**Watch a talk on SmogOff:**

[youtube.com/watch?v=WoThwvBG2Kg](https://youtube.com/watch?v=WoThwvBG2Kg)

## WE ARE TEN

This year we celebrated our ten year milestone of existence as a “strange organisation”. We put up decorations, made vegan cakes and invited lots of friends and collaborators new and old to an open studio event to play with some of our creations.

We’ve had many a bewildered business expert over the years tell us we can’t possibly exist, so it’s nice to reach the point where we have existed for so long.



## PUBLICATIONS

McLean, Alex, and Kate Sicchio. 2024. 'Live Notation for Patterns of Movement'. *The Drama Review* 68 (1): 104–16.  
[doi.org/10.1017/S1054204323000576](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1054204323000576)

McLean, Alex. 2024. 'From Konnakol to Live Coding'. In *Proceedings of the 12th ACM SIGPLAN International Workshop on Functional Art, Music, Modelling, and Design*, 36–41. FARM 2024. New York, NY, USA: Association for Computing Machinery.  
[doi.org/10.1145/3677996.3678290](https://doi.org/10.1145/3677996.3678290)

McLean, Alex, and Luke Iannini. 2024. 'Making Space for Algorithmic Alphabets'. In *Proceedings of Undone Computer Science*. Nantes, France: Université de Nantes.  
[doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10813407](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10813407)

## TEACHING

Amber and Dave set a brief for students at the Falmouth University Computing & Robotics course. The students' mission was to create robots to assist in climate breakdown protests, and they responded with giant cardboard robots that would disrupt traffic then dissolve in the rain, art robots for making people think about what they throw away and wearable robots to look after protesters.

Dave also continued teaching Critical Programming at the Institute For Music And Media of the Robert Schumann School of Music and Media in Düsseldorf.





DAVE GRIFFITHS  
Director



AMBER GRIFFITHS  
Director



ALEX McLEAN  
Research Fellow



JULIETA ARANCIO  
Non-Executive Director



JANE SUTHERLAND  
Non-Executive Director



KAREN ANDERSON  
Non-Executive Director

## WANT TO WORK TOGETHER?

**If you have a project you'd like us to collaborate on or help you with, just get in touch and we'll see what we can do. We're open to a wide variety of projects, and we can work in lots of different ways:**

- Research projects - we lead, collaborate, and help with grant applications.
- Fellowships - we are the host organisation for a Future Leaders Fellowship.
- Commissions - we do commissions, like software, hardware, exhibitions...
- Teaching - we provide guest teaching for universities all around the world.
- Other project bids - we also lead and collaborate on projects aren't research based, and can support you to write your bid.

Some buzzwords for things we can help with: Citizen science, community technology, participatory science and technology (including facilitation), game design, decision support tools, software, hardware, data visualisation, illustration, design, public engagement, research impact, civic involvement, open science/data, appropriate technology.



## Funders

Royal Society  
Impetus, Horizon Europe  
BBSRC  
University of Exeter Civic University  
Agreements fund  
UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships  
Royal Society of Chemistry

## Collaborating/Commissioning Organisations

University of Edinburgh  
iSight Cornwall  
Rothamsted Research  
University of Exeter  
United Downs Raceway  
Jolly Goodh CIC

## Residents

Anu Reddy  
Geraldine Jones



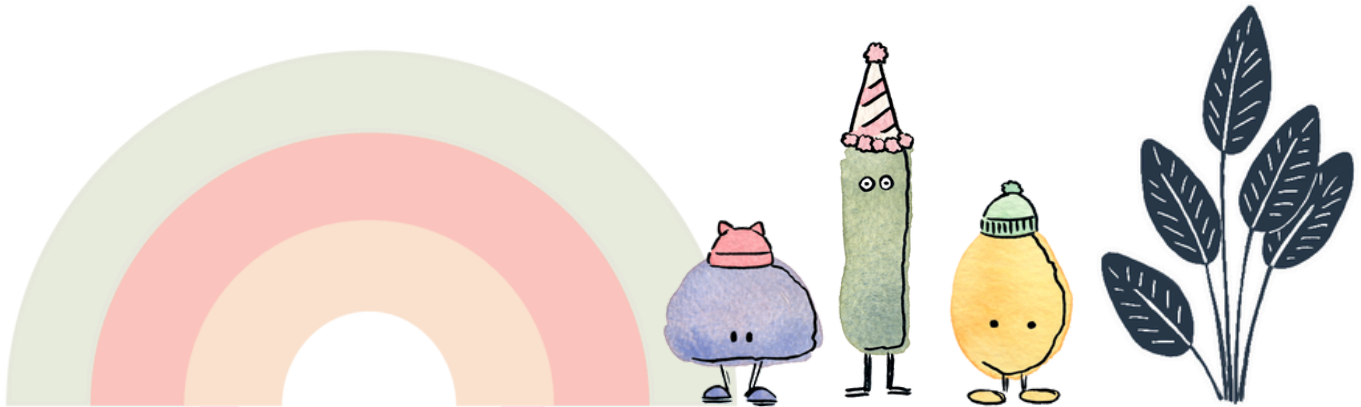
## Collaborators

Elze Hesse  
Lotty Brand  
Matt Silk  
Nitara Wijayatilake  
Katherine Roberts  
Francesca Willow  
Carole Theobald  
Bethan Perry  
Sophie Butcher  
Robert Dunn  
Rosi Jolly  
Jo Garrett  
Justin Pickard  
Ray Morrison  
Lucy Cheesman  
Wataru Uegaki  
Kristina Andersen  
Pei-Ying Lin  
Paola Torres Núñez del Prado

Kate Sicchio  
Luke Iannini  
Julian Rohrerhuber  
Lizzie Wilson  
Mika Satomi  
Sarah Heneghan



**What's next?** In early 2025, we'll be releasing Nergal and running our AccessLab on Healthy Soils. After that we'll be doing a bit of extra work to get Nergal ready for using on exhibition touchscreens, updating Mongoose2000 so the field team in Uganda can keep on tracking mongoose behaviour, and working on getting SmogOff out to our community testers around the UK. On the Algorithmic Pattern front we'll be exploring weaving with maths teachers, playing with music-making Khipu with children, starting new collaborations with linguists and percussionists, running an artist development course, and organising a conference/festival in Sheffield. That means half the year is booked out with projects already! We're excited as always to see what strange new ideas come through our doors to fill the rest of the year...





**In memory of our  
lovely, feisty little  
studio dog Oskar  
2010-2024**





UK limited by guarantee company no. 09073427  
All our work is Creative Commons licensed (CC BY-SA)