

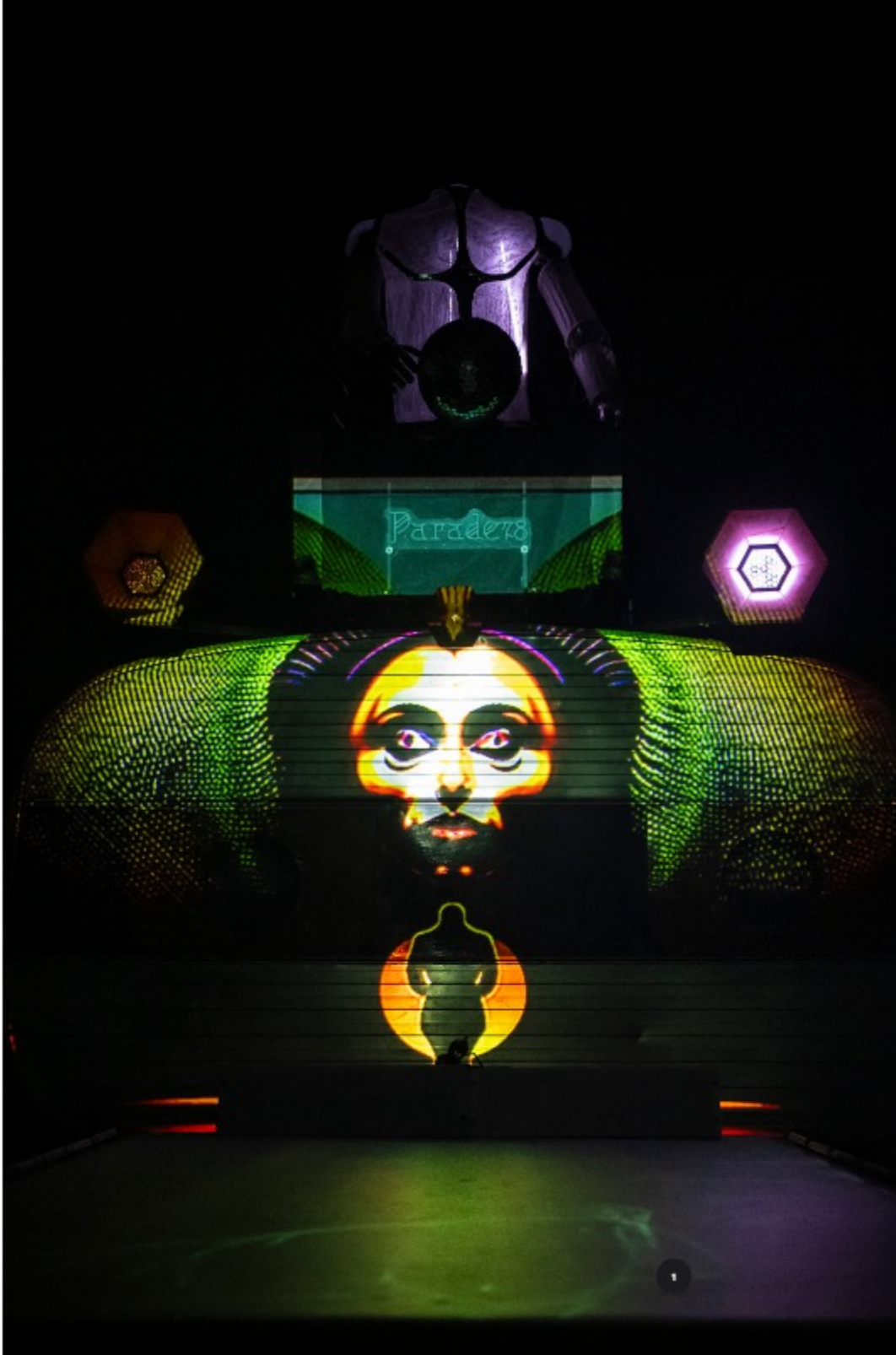
FREAKS' – Digital Handbook of Best Practices: for a tokenized circus company

Includes

1. artistic statement of Cordata F.O.R.
2. practices of community engagement during the creation process of Freaks'
3. Toolkit: Orientarsi nella tecnologia nel circo - Pratiche per artisti consapevoli
4. Riflessioni finali

This handbook is an evolving archive.

A space to inhabit the relationship between technology, digital culture, and live performance. It emerges from the case study FREAKS', a multimedia project by Luca Carbone / Parade78, and develops in dialogue with its context, within Digital Soul Protocol (DSP) – a Creative Europe cooperation project of which Cordata F.O.R. is a partner.



STATEMENT

TOKEN = RELATION / ACCESS / PARTICIPATION



This **handbook** proposes a rethinking of tokenization within contemporary circus, shifting its meaning from an economic tool to a methodological device. In the work of Cordata F.O.R., this approach unfolds through practices that activate participation, circulation, and governance of shared knowledge.

In this perspective, content and practices are not commodified, but remain accessible, situated, and co-inhabited. Value does not lie in ownership or exchange, but in continuity, participation, and the collective construction of meaning over time.

This handbook is meant to be digital, since it comes from a concrete need: to maintain an open dialogue with a community spread across Italy and Europe.

Technological tools become extensions of the creative process, capable of prolonging what happens live and making it accessible and shareable over time.

As Sara De Vylder reminds us within Digital Soul Protocol:

“The goal with DSP is not the money making, it is about making people believe in Art again.”

This is where this work begins: from trust as a condition for building shared practices and lasting relationships.

The experiences developed with partners – SDVVorks, Berlin Circus Festival, La Maison des Jonglages, Circus Network Gallery and Particle Agency – have shaped a situated approach, based on adaptation, translation, and transformation.

This handbook gathers practices, attempts, and failures.

And it remains open.

Teresa Noronha Feio

 **NOTA DELLA CURATRICE**

WHY DO WE DO THIS?

Our goal goes beyond simply presenting performances.

Through tokenization, we aim to:

- **Make the creative process visible:** Break the barrier between backstage and stage, sharing research and artistic development that often remain hidden.
- **Disseminate knowledge:** Provide practical tools (such as this handbook and toolkit) to explore how technology can expand the performing arts.
- **Develop new creative methods:** Explore the co-presence of human and machine, using artificial intelligence to generate new scenic languages.
- **Build an engaged community:** Tokens are not seen as speculative assets, but as tools to maintain connection and belonging over time.

WHO IS THIS FOR?

The project addresses a diverse ecosystem:

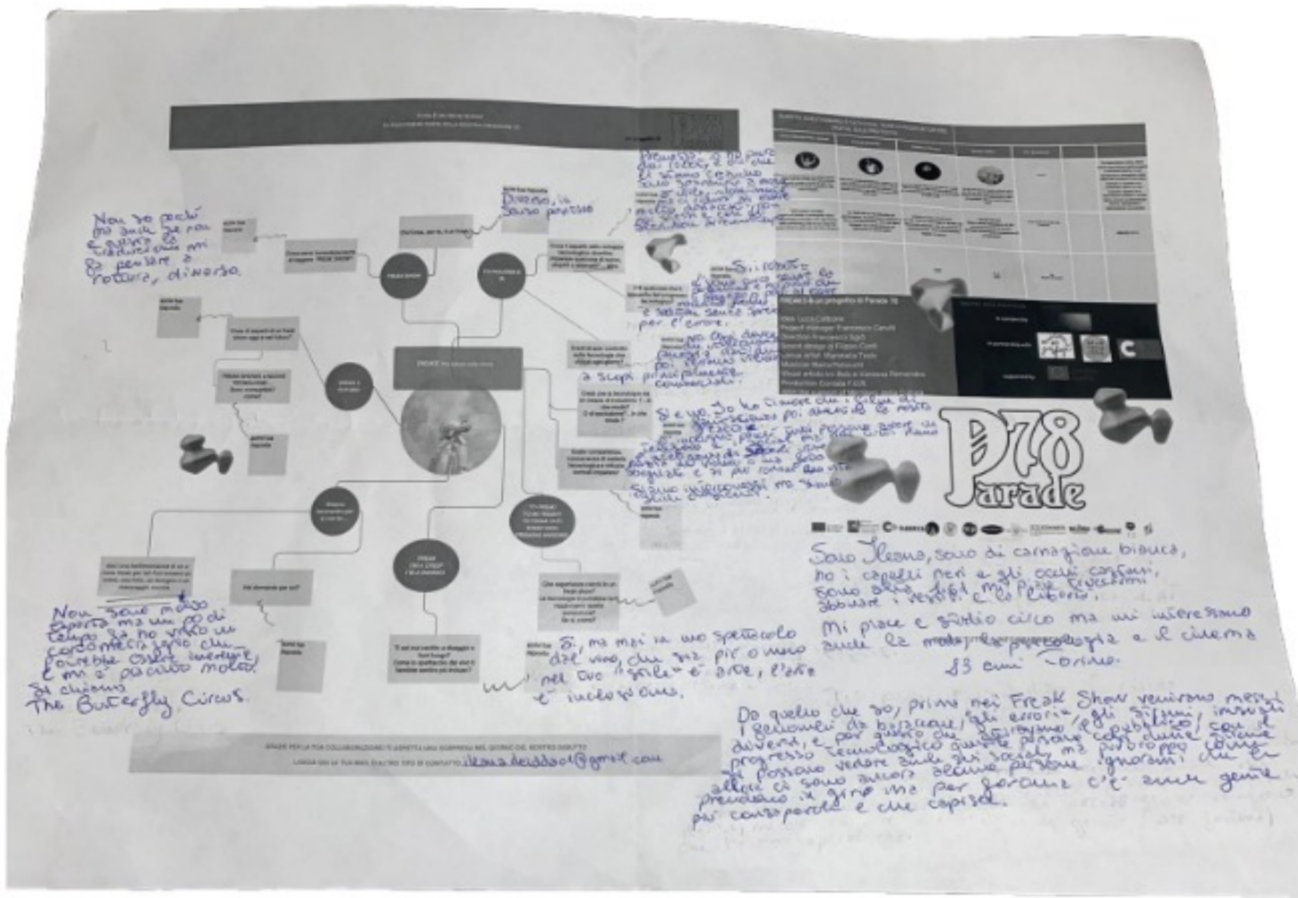
- **Artists and companies**
Working across performing arts (circus, dance, music) and interested in new forms of collaboration and post-production.
- **Students and researchers**
Engaged in artistic, historical, or theoretical investigation.
- **Tech and digital audiences**
Curious about how blockchain and AI can move beyond finance and become tools for expression and relation.

We designed different formats to allow active and critical engagement:

- **Podcast and micro-videos**
Interviews with artists and technicians offering intimate and technical perspectives on their work.
- **Public talks and "Work in Progress" sessions**
Moments of dialogue before or after presentations, where audiences can witness the process in real time.
- **Feedback and participation**
Encouraging comments, questions, and opinions – the audience is not passive, but part of the process.
- **Toolkit and handbook**
A collection of practical materials that share best practices and make knowledge accessible.

◆ HOW CAN YOU USE IT?





RELATIONAL DEVICES PRACTICES TO ACTIVATE COMMUNITIES WITHIN THE CREATIVE PROCESS



Strategie di relazione con la comunità

- ◆ - [Title of the practice]
- Initial gesture**
(a strong frase, manifesto)
- Device**
(what is it concretely)
- What it opens**
(what kind of relation / thinkig / space it generates)
- How it activates**
(methods, tools, formats)
- What it produces**
(data and not only → relations, questions, shifts)
- Access to**
(link, materials, output)



◆ CIRCOTECH TALKS / Q&A

Initial gesture

Creating a space for conversation.

Device

Open Q&A encounters.

Conversations with artists, researchers, and invited partners.

What it opens

A space to make complex topics accessible.

To slow down, question, and reflect together.

Themes such as blockchain, NFTs, web3, video mapping, sustainable technologies are brought into a shared and situated context.

How it activates

Through targeted invitations.

Each encounter starts from a voice: a partner, an expert, an artist.

Each conversation is situated – not theoretical, but practice-based.

What it produces

Understanding.

Positioning.

New questions.

A first level of familiarity with tools and concepts that gradually enter the creative process.

These encounters always precede a FREAKS' work-in-progress.

The conversation prepares the gaze.

The vision activates a return.

◆ DSP-FREAKS Questionnaire

Initial gesture

Asking a question.

Device

A questionnaire used as a space for listening, not simply as data collection.

What it opens

A possibility to position oneself.

A first connection between the creative process and the community.

How it activates

Analog and digital formats: conversations, paper, Google Forms.

Distributed through relationships: email, messaging, meetings, social media.

What it produces

Not definitive answers, but traces.

Signals from a community.

A first dialogue.

35 responses from approximately 900 people reached.

Not a matter of quantity.

A beginning.

Output

→ Blank Quiz (Responses)

This cycle is not linear. It is a continuous movement. It is an ecosystem.



RELATIONAL DEVICES
PRACTICES TO ACTIVATE
COMMUNITIES WITHIN THE
CREATIVE PROCESS



◆ **DSP-FREAKS Work in Progress presentations**

Initial gesture

Showing.

Device

Public presentations of FREAKS' in creation.

What it opens

An exposure of the process.

Not a finished product, but something still in formation.

A space where the audience enters before the final shape.

How it activates

Through live sharing moments, often preceded by talks and conversations.

The vision is not isolated – it is prepared.

The audience arrives with tools, references, and questions.

What it produces

An active gaze.

Implicit and explicit feedback.

A direct relationship between stage and community.

The process becomes visible – and, in doing so, transforms.

Relation to the process

This is the point where everything converges.

Questions, conversations, and listening

return to the body, the stage, the present moment.

◆ **DSP - INTERFACCIA**

A brunch of practices beyond conventional spaces

Initial gesture

Being together.

Device

A hybrid gathering between literary café and practice space.

Two days, two performances, one lecture, and time for open conversations.

A horizontal, situated environment, in an unusual place: Eredi Borgnino, in the center of Turin.

What it opens

An environment for active participation.

Not spectators, but emancipated presences.

A space of relation between practices, visions, and questions.

How it activates

Through the encounter itself.

With artists and collectives such as Saloranta & De Vylder, who propose alternative models: membership platforms, hybrid physical and digital spaces, active communities.

An attempt to shift power:

from platforms to communities.

What it produces

Shared knowledge.

Questions:

On technology, community, and ownership of content.

On how these dynamics shape a company.

New connections between artists.

A sense of belonging.

◆ **DSP-FREAKS Toolkit / Podcast**

Initial gesture

Listening.

Device

A toolkit that takes the form of a podcast.

What it opens

Direct access to practices.

Artists' voices become tools.

They do not explain – they traverse.

Different approaches, doubts, choices, refusals.

A way to enter processes, not just outcomes.

How it activates

Through interviews.

Situated conversations within the FREAKS' process.

Each artist shares their way of working, and their relationship with technology – including AI.

What it produces

Critical thinking.

Possibility of appropriation.

Positioning.

It does not offer a single method, but a plurality of practices.

Relation to the process

The toolkit does not document the process – it is part of it.

It transforms experience into shared knowledge,

making explicit what often remains implicit.

In short, this project is an invitation to build shared value, where each contribution from the community helps FREAKS' grow as something that belongs to all its participants.

THE TOOLKIT

NAVIGATING TECHNOLOGY IN CIRCUS - PRACTICES FOR EMPOWERED ARTISTS

This toolkit emerges from the need to understand more deeply how we work with technological tools.

It is not just a toolbox. A toolbox gathers different tools. A toolkit puts them into relation. It is a set of practices that gain meaning within a shared vision. This toolkit takes shape through conversations with the artists involved in the creation of FREAKS'. It is a practice-based collection, built from shared experiences and reflections and it takes the form of a podcast.

This choice allows us to listen directly to the artists' voices: their approaches, their doubts, their practices. It allows listeners to activate critical thinking, to appropriate the content, and to take a position. The aim is not to transmit a single method, but to offer tools for self-determination – through a practical and critical understanding of how technological devices enter artistic processes.

In this sense, the toolkit is not a container. It is a practice.



Luca Carbone -A vanishing village - freaks and technology.

Highlights

- Reimagining freak shows as inclusive spaces
- Interdisciplinary collaboration
- Technology as emotional catalyst
- Beyond representation: impact and experience

Reflection

Technology is not for display,
but for connection.



Marta Pistocchi & Filippo Conti Disruption in music - breaking expectations

Highlights

- Tradition and innovation meet in a hybrid musical language
- Dissonance and rhythm challenge perception
- Technology becomes an expressive extension
- The boundary between popular and "banal" is questioned

Reflection

The power is not only in technique,
but in the ability to disrupt.

IL PODCAST

LISTEN ALL ARTIST ON SOUNDCLOUD



Filippo Conti Archives, waste, and sonic creation

Archives, waste, and sonic creation

Highlights

- Errors as creative resources
- Sound waste as language
- Archives reactivated in the present
- Recycling as an aesthetic and political act

Reflection

What we discard
can become material.



Alessandro Fara AI, video mapping, and expanded creation

Highlights

- Technology as an extension of artistic thinking
- AI as collaborator, not substitute
- Hybrid identities between human and machine

Reflection

Creation happens
in relation.



Maristella Tesio "Identity, technology, and contradiction"

Highlights

- A fluid identity shaped by context
- A critical position on representation and "freaks"
- Technology as ecological infrastructure
- Performance as a space of awareness

Reflection

Perhaps the most powerful gesture
is not to speak louder,
but to become part of the space.



"THE GOAL WITH DSP IS NOT THE MONEY MAKING, IT IS ABOUT MAKING PEOPLE BELIEVE IN ART AGAIN!"



GLOSSARY

These terms do not define.
They open

NFT

A way to trace access and relationships over time, rather than objects to own.

AI (Artificial Intelligence)

A creative interlocutor that expands the process, without replacing it.

Mesh Network

A distributed network built through direct connections between nodes.

VR / AR

Extended spaces where perception moves between physical and digital.

Video Mapping

A technique that transforms space into a narrative surface.

Kinect

A device that translates body movement into digital interaction.

Prompt

A starting point that shapes the dialogue between human and machine.

Metaverse

A shared space where physical and digital experiences intersect.

Blockchain

An infrastructure that records and shares traces of interactions.

PRATICHE

- Begin without needing full clarity
- Create connections
- Open spaces for dialogue
- Invite personally for participation
- Listen again
- Repeat and re-iterate models
- Read all DSP handbooks



FINAL REFLECTIONS

Today, the question is no longer whether to use technology, but how to inhabit it:

how to let it enter the process without emptying it,
how to make it a space of possibility, not just a tool.

This is why I followed FREAKS': Luca, its creator, the artists, collaborators, technicians – on stage and off.

What is built, and what escapes.

Luca Carbone, Alessandro Fara, Maristella Tesio, Filippo Conti, Marta Pistocchi, Ivo Reis, Francesco Cerutti, and others.

I was not alone.

A team made it possible to hold a wider perspective:

Riccardo Massidda, Caterina di Piramo and Giorgio Judica.

This handbook comes from there:

a shared practice, an open field.

As I write, the project keeps moving.

For this reason, this text refuses a fixed form.

It does not close.

It remains porous.

It is a space of self-reflection, in relation with those who read.

The project is not finished – and maybe it never will be.

Voices are still missing. Perspectives are still missing.

Deviations are still missing.

This handbook is an incomplete body,

a liquid space, shaped by those who inhabit it.

If the project changes, this text changes too.

And it should.



DIGITAL SOUL PROTOCOL

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work exists thanks to the people and practices that have crossed it.

My thanks go to all the artists, collaborators, and partners who have shared time, knowledge, and trust throughout this process.

A special thanks to the partners of Digital Soul Protocol – SDVVorks, Berlin Circus Festival, La Maison des Jonglages, Circus Network Gallery, and Particle Agency – for the exchanges, questions, and perspectives that have shaped this work. This work is not mine alone.

Giulio Lanzafame
Giuseppina Francia
Francesco Sgró
Riccardo Massidda
Giorgio Judica
Luisella Carnelli
Caterina di Piramo
Andrea Macchia
Luca Carbone
Alessandro Fara

Handbook is produced by,

within the projet,



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

EU Disclaimer

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