



Barcelona launches an office open to the public at the DHub to recreate lost or undocumented memories using artificial intelligence

- The Public Office of Synthetic Memories at Disseny Hub Barcelona (DHub) is a project backed by the creative studio Domestic Data Streamers in collaboration with Barcelona City Council and Ciutat Proactiva BIT Habitat
- The office, which will be open from 17 May to 29 September, will feature an AI-based memory reconstruction service and an exhibition of the recovered memories of Barcelona's residents that will steadily grow.
- Led by the creative studio Domestic Data Streamers, the project aims to create a space that will help future generations understand and preserve the history of their past
- This is the first project in the CUB laboratory programme, the Dhub's new space dedicated to experimental processes, research residencies and open-door laboratories



Núria remembers her summers in Sant Pol de Mar where, after spending the morning on the beach, she met her husband to go to lunch



Roser remembers the balcony from where he saw his father, who was in La Model, imprisoned during the Spanish Civil War

Barcelona is launching the **Public Office of Synthetic Memories** at Disseny Hub Barcelona (DHub) **from 17 May to 29 September**. This is a speculative project that is being developed by the creative studio **Domestic Data Streamers** in collaboration with Barcelona City Council through the call for urban-innovation grant and subsidy applications 'The Proactive City', promoted by the BIT Habitat Foundation.

The Public Office of Synthetic Memories is a space that is open to the public for the reconstruction and visual recovery of all those memories that were never recorded, and are now at risk of falling into oblivion. The aim is to **create an archive of AI-reconstructed visual memories** to help future generations understand and preserve the history of their past.

The project uses generative artificial intelligence (GEN-AI) to make visual reconstructions of the memories of visitors to the office in the form of images and videos. This technology acts as an intergenerational bridge: it encourages older people in the city to recreate their memories while at the same time getting the younger generations involved in the reconstruction process.

This process is split into two stages. The person wishing to visually recover their memories is first **interviewed** in detail about a specific experience they themselves have chosen. **AI images based on that personal testimony are generated** during the interview and presented to them at the end of the session.

At a time when AI is the subject of increasingly polarised visions that either promise utopian futures or predict dystopian realities, the Public Office of Synthetic Memories project takes an **alternative stance**. Instead of trying to replace or control an existing process, it seeks to increase our ability as a society to connect, empathise and build bridges between generations and experiences. This is the first time that this technology has been used to **give visibility to previously undocumented stories** that are part of their protagonists' identity. The aim is to use this opportunity to democratise a technology that can provide a link between different generations.

A creative centre open to everyone

Anyone can make an appointment to create a visual reconstruction of their memories at the Public Office of Synthetic Memories. The office features a team that specialises in both the use of this new technology, and the process used to recreate these memories. **Each session takes 45 - 60 minutes**, during which a written and visual testimony of each personal story is created.

After the interview, the person is asked whether they agree to the inclusion of their story in the exhibition space in the office itself. **A collective exhibition is being organised, featuring the memories generated over the course of the three-month project** by those who do indeed choose to give their permission. Participants who do not wish their testimony to be made public are given the printed images of the memories generated during the session.

An experiment by Domestic Data Streamers

The initiative is part of the *Synthetic Memories* research project designed by the creative studio Domestic Data Streamers. The studio includes designers, researchers, artists, programmers, data scientists and journalists who are exploring how to express and work with new data languages using communication, design, interaction, robotics, AI, websites, performance arts and space design. Furthermore, the studio has been supported in this project by partners such as Ojalá Projects and Gennís Senén.

More specifically, the *Synthetic Memories* project uses AI to recreate memories hitherto unrecorded memories and preserve the unique identity of the people to whom they belong. The project started in 2022, recovering the memories of migrant and refugee communities who had lost the photographs of their past on their journeys. In November last year, the initiative was taken to São Paulo's Bom Retiro neighbourhood, recovering memories of migrants from Brazil, Bolivia and Korea. Over the two years that have passed since the project began, *Synthetic Memories* has visited **four countries** to recover **personal stories at risk of disappearing** due to ageing or the restriction of freedoms. The project has been published in international media such as [ABC](#), [The](#)

[Atlantic](#), [MIT](#) and [Quartz](#), and it has already obtained research support from Google Arts, BIT HABITAT, the University of Toronto, the University of British Columbia, the Ramon Llull Institute and Disseny Hub Barcelona (DHub).

Now, a new location has been added to the experiment - Disseny Hub Barcelona, where from **17 May to 29 September**, Barcelona will be able to participate in what has already become one of the studio's flagship projects.

Innovative solutions for better coexistence

The Public Office of Synthetic Memories was one of the **winning projects** in ***The Proactive City 2023***, the annual call for urban-innovation grant and subsidy applications held by Barcelona City Council's BIT Habitat Foundation. Specifically, the 2023 edition sought to find innovative solutions to improve coexistence in the city, awarding grants to cover 80% of the winning projects' costs. All *The Proactive City* winning projects include the implementation of the initiatives in real environments, and the ability to verify the achievement of the expected impacts.

A total of **29 projects have been supported** since *The Proactive City* was first launched as part of the strategy aimed at placing urban innovation at the service of the city Barcelona city and its inhabitants in 2020.



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