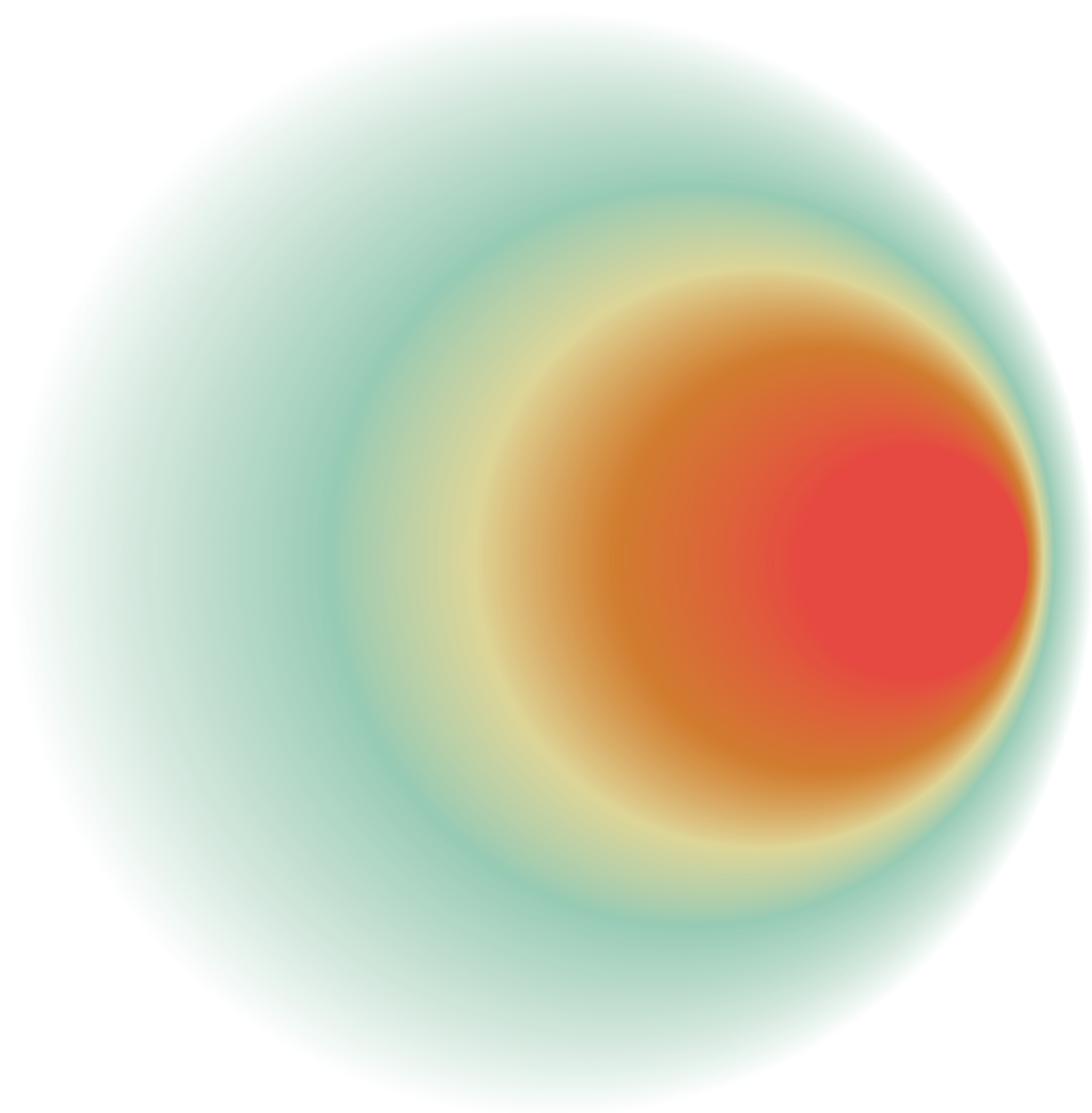


MNEMOSPHERE

Designing a Neologism between Memories, Emotions and Atmospheres

edited by Marta Elisa Cecchi, Clorinda Sissi Galasso



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MNEMOSPHERE

Designing a Neologism between Memories, Emotions and Atmospheres



edited by Marta Elisa Cecchi, Clorinda Sissi Galasso

D.I. **FrancoAngeli** 
DESIGN INTERNATIONAL

MiniFARB project, *mnEMOsphere – Un sistema per l'allestimento della memoria dei luoghi attraverso le emozioni* [Design Department, Politecnico di Milano, 2019-2023].

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Designing a neologism

Marta Elisa Cecchi and Clorinda Sissi Galasso

Design Department, Politecnico di Milano

Why do we need a new wor(l)d?

From a terminological perspective, dealing with a new word has always been a delicate and complex operation. The lexical novelty still struggles to find a common definition that brings together all the fields of knowledge involved. In Linguistics *new word* is viewed as an umbrella term for any newly coined word, whereas *neologism* is reserved for novel terms that bring lexical enrichment to the language (Mattiello, 2017). Neologisms can be original single words, never imagined or pronounced before, or terminological compounds that live from the relationship between already existing words. Using the words of Szymanek (2005) it is possible to distinguish between new lexical formations «created *ex nihilo*, with no activation of any morphological process” (p. 430) and *derivational neologisms*, “coined according to some well-established and productive patterns» (*ibid.*). Cabré (1999) provides a *psychological definition* of what a neologism is, namely «a neologism is a word that is perceived as new by the language community».

According to Newmark (1988), who raises the issue of translation in literature, there are several types of neologism, which make it even clearer what is meant by ‘neologism’ and ‘new’ word, and they are: Old Word with New Senses, New Coinages, Derived Word, Abbreviations, Collocations, Eponyms, Phrasal Words, Transferred Words, Acronyms, Pseudo-neologism (similar to Abbreviation)¹. Nevertheless, the lexical particle ‘neo’, or ‘new’ in these new words, new uses, new expressions, and new senses, means that

1. The classification of neologisms has yet to be settled; there is no single way of classifying them. Indifferent classifications worked out by scholars and different aspects of neologism have been considered.

the word, use, expression, and senses did not exist before². Neologisms are a highly relevant linguistic category for numerous of reasons: they are the elements that make a language alive and dynamic rather than static; they are indicative of language evolution; they are a significant barrier in computational analysis and translation; they help to demonstrate a language's productive morphology. The alteration of a language occurs on various levels – phonetic, morphemic, lexical, syntactic, and so on – and the first three are the most susceptible to change, which may be visible even to one generation. Syntactic changes happen more slowly, and we only notice them years later via achieved texts. Lexical changes are most visible because misunderstanding can occur when we encounter a new word.

Enriching and expanding a language's vocabulary is essential for its development. The recently generated or borrowed terms known as neologisms entered the stock of the lexicon as an integral component after a set period of being perceived as usual and new. The process that leads to the formation of a neologism goes through different steps that can be grouped in *creation*, *consolidation*, and *establishment* (Schmid, 2011).

The first phase sees the word initially voiced and then written by a speaker. In this way, it materializes and begins to have semantic value. Very frequently, the new word does not arise after a specific design process. Still, it occurs for more *impromptu* reasons: to reduce syntactic complexity, to synthesize, for lack of suitable words to express a particular concept, for the need to combine distant concepts. Different situations that all lead to the creation of an «*ad-hoc* formation, a previously non-existent combination of existing morphemes» (*ivi*, p. 73).

The second phase, that of consolidation, starts when new formation begins to spread and to be involved in the language, transforming the *ad-hoc* formation into a real neologism able at this point to survive. The third phase appears as the most difficult to achieve for the term. The novel lexical item has to be recognized by institutions as an entity that overcomes the meaning of its terminological components by creating a new horizon of sense.

2. It is important to mention that the concept of “novelty”, “newness”, is limited itself as depends on what period is taken into consideration. Furthermore, Maarten Janssen (2005) shares his view on the ambiguity and the paradoxicality of the term ‘neologism’ itself, stating that the simple fact that the word is new should imply that it is now part of the language but was not previously.” However, language does not develop in distinct phases in which terms in the new lexicon may be compared to words in the old lexicon. To begin with, ‘new’ is a relative concept; some terms may be older than others, but there is no fixed time for being new. Second, there is no well-defined, stable lexicon of a language against which newness can be measured – a language cannot be stably defined within its time-based, unique, and social dimensions.

Going even more in detail, a neologism needs to be distinguished from *nonce words* as well. The former are stable and their permanence in language passes through a process of institutionalization, the latter are «one-off coinages that when newly minted seemed apparently bound to enter the general vocabulary, but soon vanished, lost amid the linguistic ephemera» (Green, 1991, p. vii). Despite the marked conceptual nuances, what seems to be the common substrate for all neological variables is being the answer to a change. A neologism is motivated, in most cases, by the need for adaptation. The adaptation of language to change, the lexical support for the world's constant transformations, whether physical or conceptual.

According to McCormack, the need to find new words is to compensate for our inability to dialogue and express ourselves: «for describing new things but also when no word currently in existence can accurately express our sentiments. The words we invent to describe our experiences of the world inherently and concurrently reflect our attitudes about the world in which we live. The study of neologisms or neology is a valuable tool for uncovering cultural changes as they occur» (McCormack, 2013, p. 88). Nevertheless, as a general rule, a new unknown word captures attention and makes one wonder or speculate about its meaning, denotative and connotative. It may even perplex or arouse negative emotions and memories.

The *halo* around words

Ultimately, a final key aspect concerning neologisms, but more generally the power of words, is that of having a tendency to evoke a particular “intentionality”: namely, their ability to release their own ‘halo’ of meaning and evocation could provide a better alignment for those who use them. But what does it mean that words have a halo around them from the way they are written, read and spoken?

Observations by Ludwig Wittgenstein, logician and philosopher of language, can help to better understand this ‘invisible’ but perceptible aspect that words have, especially neologisms. According to the author, the atmospheric halo of words coincides with the musical aspect of communication, with the tone of the discourse. This ‘musical’ accompaniment is not added outside the phenomenon but constitutes its intimately expressive dimension. At the center of Wittgensteinian thought is the term ‘atmosphere’ in which the philosopher analyses our way of talking about psychological processes and, in particular, linguistic comprehension, viewed as a ‘private’ mental experience. Wittgenstein emphasizes the communal aspect that takes place between speakers, i.e. there is a kind of ‘attunement’ that involves them in shared aesthetic feeling.

Thus words appear enveloped in a mysterious aura of meaningfulness as they have a recognizable melodic profile and are inserted from time to time in specific activities in which the intonation of the discourse clarifies the context. According to Wittgenstein, atmosphere coincides with the musical aspect of language, with the tone of discourse, with the accompaniment that is not added from the outside to the phenomenon but constitutes its intimately expressive dimension; «to understand atmosphere correctly is to give a face to how our words look to us» (Oliva, 2015, p. 244). In the first pages of the book *The Empire of Signs* written by Barthes (2002), the author states how he grasps the known language as breathing, emotional aeration and pure signification in which he then finds himself moving lightly in the void.

In this perspective, the atmospheric halo around any neologism often allows one to grasp it even before fully understanding its meaning. In the case of ‘mnemosphere’, the activities that were organized to visualize its attributes started from the atmospheric effect that the new term embodied and what feelings emanated from this word having neither form nor definition.

Interpreting the present time

We are now experiencing profound changes at a global level and a different way of connecting with places, memory, and the atmospheres generated by their relationship. We are moving from an anthropocentric conceptual model to a designed *topophilic* attachment to space (Tuan, 1974) that seeks an empathic emotional dialogue with the surrounding environment. In this framework, the need to update languages is real and urgent (Cabré et al., 2012) and there is a growing demand for words that can renew the diffusion of ongoing changes and communicate their implications and nuances. Algeo illustrates the contingency we are assisting with this sentence «we use some new words because we take delight in them... They reflect changes in material and intellectual culture. And they show us something of the way human beings cope with problems and laugh at the absurdities of life» (1991, p. 15). On the other hand, neologisms are often aimed at understanding contemporary and evolving relationships between living beings and the environment.

In the Internet Age, with the ever-faster development of new technologies, numerous neologisms are bubbling to the surface and enriching the language. One example is the letter and sign ‘e-’ transferred to anything electronic, becoming the marker of today’s digital culture, e.g. e-Mail, e-Commerce, e-Book, e-publishing and many others. Among the most famous neologisms of recent years is undoubtedly the notion of ‘non-place’, or ‘non-location’, a French term introduced by French anthropologist Marc Augé in 1992 in

his book *Non-lieux. Introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité*³. The neologism non-place defines two complementary but distinct concepts: on the one hand, spaces that are constructed for a particular purpose and, on the other, the relationship that is created between individuals and those spaces. Marc Augé defines non-places as opposed to anthropological places, i.e. all those spaces with the prerogative of being non-identitarian, relational and historical. Indeed, non-places are spaces primarily destined for circulation, consumption and communication, often located outside urban centers: airports, railway stations, shopping centers, supermarkets, hotels, petrol stations, sports facilities, tourist resorts, and refugee camps.

As Augé repeatedly clarified, there are no places and non-places in an absolute sense. However, it is clearly more unlikely that signs of social ties and collective history can exist in places of transit by definition, such as airports and stations. Augé described non-places as spaces typical of surmodernity: another neologism he coined about the social, intellectual and economic phenomena typical of the development of Western societies at the end of the 20th century, in particular, the overcoming the post-industrial phase and the spread of globalization. He attributed to this new phase of modernity the characteristic of ‘excess’: an excess of events that historians struggle to interpret; an excess of easily accessible or usable spaces, in which non-places proliferate; and an excess of ego, i.e. the tendency of people to interpret information on an individual level and not based on a meaning defined at a collective level. Another famous neologism, even if it is not openly referred to as such, can be recognized in the concept of the *opera aperta* (the concept comes from Umberto Eco’s 1962 essay of the same name but also from Roland Barthes’ distinction between readable and writable texts, dealt with in the 1967 essay *La mort de l’auteur*).

However, what is meant by an *opera aperta*? The term means, in the broadest sense, a work of art whose aesthetic, formal or material identity is not defined once and for all but is subject to factors of variability that make it always different within more or less extended limits. Hence, a work of art of completed form and limited in its perfection is also *open*, with the possibility of being interpreted in a thousand different ways without its irreproducible singularity being altered. In each new fruition, the work lives again in an original perspective. Nevertheless, the most appropriate words seem to be the derivational neologisms, made up from existing morphological material (Schmid, 2008), and suitable for combining very distant themes.

3. The Italian term was registered as a neologism for the first time in 2003 and was then accepted in the lexicons of all Italian vocabularies.

By bridging together concepts, and even different fields of knowledge, these words become tools capable of activating new design perspectives and changing cultural horizons.

In this sense, *Mnemosphere* project here presented will investigate the rich soil of a new word formation which, naturally not yet delimited by a univocal definition, become a connective and polyphonic instrument on parallel themes such as the memory of places, the entirety of emotions and the atmosphere of spaces. Through a series of online and offline activities, the project explores what it means to design for a neologism, what parameters, guidelines and research actions can be activated to define the unknown.

The MiniFARB Research Project - *Creation*

The immediate comprehension of a composite word seems to fade as soon as one attempts to give it an unambiguous definition. This mechanism frequently occurs when trying to define “the particular air one breathes in a unique environment”, i.e. the atmosphere, or “the memories linked to a place that emerge and blend into its fabric”, i.e. the place memory. These are affective and spatial dimensions that establish a subjective emotional connection with the perceiver, difficult to grasp without evoking further imagery.

It is precisely starting from this premise that *Mnemosphere* project, in the field of design culture, intends to trigger activities, processes and research reflections for the development of a new concept. Furthermore, it is tempting to claim that it is a pure neologism. Actually, this term has been used sporadically in literature⁴, although a definition has never been formalized in any disciplinary field. Even in the culture of design, it appears as a new word that offers itself to numerous experimentations.

Mnemosphere project lives in this context, uses the new lexical item as a title, and its definition as a principal objective. *Mnemosphere* is a research project, still in progress, which was born in the context of MiniFARB call for proposals, involving PhD students and research fellows, for the allocation of funds for interdisciplinary research projects, promoted by the Department of Design of the Politecnico di Milano. The MiniFARB's emphasis on interdisciplinarity has led to a project being characterized by a composite research team, guided by the common goal of achieving multiple interpretations of the addressed issues. *Mnemosphere*, therefore, bases its approach on a synergic collaboration among distinct fields of knowledge [Fig. 1].

4. The neologism *Mnemosphere* derives from a topical research, but is not strictly related to either English or Italian, but is intended to transverse all cultures and disciplines.

As previously mentioned, the term *mnemosphere* is formed by the merging of three words (MN+EMO+SPHERE), which in turn refer to the themes investigated, namely memory (MN), emotions (EMO) and atmosphere (SPHERE). The purpose is not to consider the extent of each thematic component, but the actual relationship between them. *Mnemosphere*, in fact, was born as a terminological response to the need for a single term, a conceptual entity, able to represent the result of the interaction of mnemonic, atmospheric, and emotional fields. In this context, it should be made clear that the topics presented, in order to be considered a *mnemospheric union*, are first examined from specific perspectives.

The theme of memory is interpreted in its connection with the places where collective and individual narratives are stratified over time. These sites are read as complex objects of territorial interpretation (Assmann, 1997), essential for mnemonic communication and an integral part of the landscape.

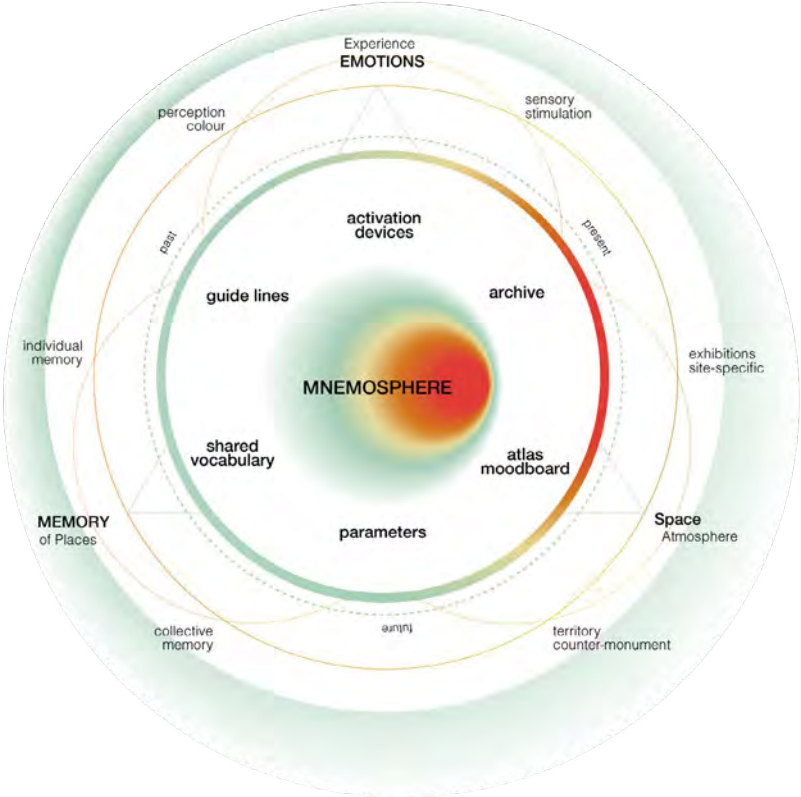


Fig. 1 – *Mnemospheric theoretical framework, 2020.*

The theme of atmosphere, on the other hand, is closely linked to the designed space and has as its main theoretical reference the aesthetic concept of “atmosphere” (Böhme, 2016; Griffero, 2017) developed in the neo-phenomenological philosophy (Schmitz, 1980) which has recently been discussed in the international arena. More specifically, the atmosphere of the space is explored in the field of the exhibition-installation space since it is precisely through these temporary devices that the visitor is involved in a particularly stimulating narrative and emotional experience.

With regard to the theme of emotions, the overall designation refers to the sentimental aspect of experience and is determined by subjective as well as physiological and behavioural components. Colour in this context is one of the fundamental elements in the design of the mnemonic-spatial experience capable of stimulating a strong perceptual and emotional response in individuals, conditioning their behaviour (Kotler, 1973 in Yildirim et al., 2007). The research project, therefore, proposes an approach to the study of emotions starting from colour in its relationship with memory and space.

Online Activities and research phases - Consolidation

Mnemosphere was launched in June 2020, when the Covid global emergency was leading to a total rethink of research and didactic activities.

The project transformed all planned actions from offline to online, together with a progressive redefinition of the most suitable methods and tools to be employed. The need for a general reconfiguration of methodology was not a limitation for this research, but proved to be an opportunity to create engagement with a wider audience and privileged access to other, broader contexts.

In the dialogue within the Design discipline, the research on the derived neologism Mnemosphere has analyzed the relationship between different themes that, in their overlap and mutual influence, allow the development of a set of tools aimed at communication and enhancement of the territory through emotions and mediated by the designed space.

The experimentation intended to examine the research themes from both a theoretical and practical point of view, establishing how the different disciplines contribute in a specific and transversal way to the topic and investigating the neologism through field activities.

In view of this, the research project was structured in three methodological steps described below: *Recognition, Meta-Analysis, Synthesis*.

Phase 1 - Recognition

The first phase dealt with the analysis of the specific state of the art of each disciplinary field involved, with the aim of reaching a shared theoretical framework. The research took its first steps in the intrinsic intangibility of the various topics covered and the plurality of voices contained. The initial action was the semantic delimitation of the term and the related constellation of concepts. As primary output, it was decided to adopt a shared vocabulary containing a varied lexicon of reference; it was developed through an internal questionnaire with open and closed answers. Interpretive synthesis of the responses and extrapolation of the keywords identified by each team member resulted in a Mnemosphere glossary, a valuable hermeneutic research tool.

At the same time, the graphic identity of the research was defined, emphasizing a degree of sensitivity in visually integrating thematic areas and restoring homogeneity to a single concept-container. The logo [Fig. 2] was developed starting from the circle, as a dynamic expression of abstract concepts, and from the unifying element of the sphere, which alludes to the three-dimensionality of space. Finally, it was decided not to represent sharp contours, but to use nuances that visually enhance the conceptual connection between the themes. Due to the aforementioned pandemic situation, it was necessary to extend the research to virtual platforms of interaction that would bridge the distance and seek out a sense of proximity and involvement.

For this reason, it was decided to develop a social approach with the intention of informally disseminating the preliminary results achieved, but above all to reach a vast heterogeneous audience. The connective vocation of the Instagram platform (@mnemosphere.project) acts as an evocative device and design tool to narrate the research in its progressive development, setting the graphical interface as a composite visual table of the mnemosphere lexical nebula. By assembling this moodboard format, the theoretical tones intended to be communicated to users are made more explicit, inspiring collective and intimate participation.

Phase 2 - Meta-Analysis

The intermediate phase of the research aimed to collect data through a series of organized online activities focused on the visual component of the images. The lexical and textual apparatus was undoubtedly fundamental in structuring the depth of the themes dealt with, but seemed insufficient in defining, representing and communicating the perceptive dimension of “mnemosphere”. Content visualisation also appeared necessary to express

the neological value inherent in the imagery produced by a visual-formal composition. For these reasons, an *Open Call for Images* was launched online, in order to use a tool typically belonging to the visual arts sphere and apply it in the field of design, triggering a process of cross-fertilisation, or rather hybridisation, between different disciplines.

The open call consisted of a short questionnaire and the uploading of a maximum of three images per participant. The first part consisted of general questions about the identity of the participant as well as open and closed questions related to Mnemosphere definition; the second part of the open call was entirely about uploading images. Each participant was asked to upload a maximum of three files with a title and description, without any restrictions in terms of format, communicative and figurative language. The images collected demonstrated a wide range of media – photographs, illustrations, paintings, collages, drawings and sketches – which together added heterogeneity and expressive variety to the Mnemosphere topic.

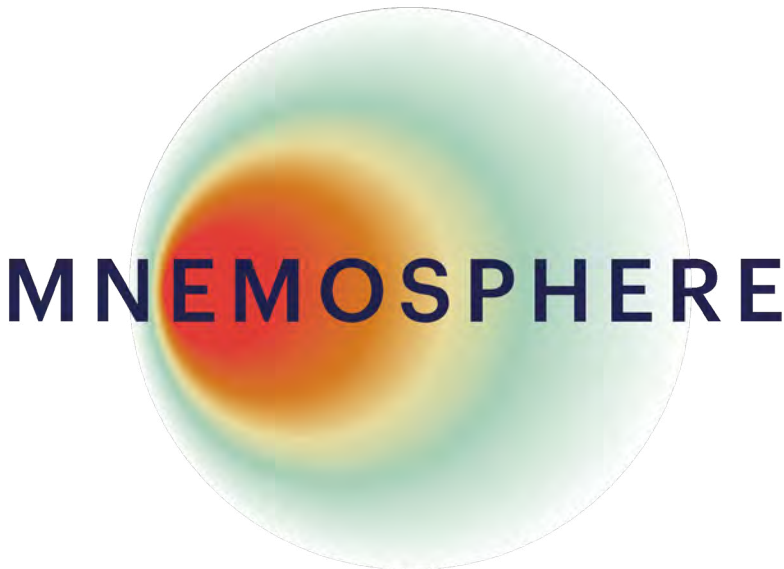


Fig. 2 – Mnemosphere project logo, 2021.

Phase 3 - Synthesis

The final phase was dedicated to the synthesis and critical processing of the results obtained to determine a system of parameters and guidelines.

The Open Call took place between mid-January and the end of March 2021, and more than 200 participants from all over the world contributed, uploading over 400 different images capturing the subjective essence of mnemonic perception. All the collected contributions (images, titles and descriptions) were uploaded in progress to the official platform of the research project, i.e. the website <https://www.mnemosphere.polimi.it/> as a digital database and open online exhibition. The preliminary step of the analysis of the contributions consisted in creating a series of *Identity Cards* [Fig. 3].

These devices summarized all the data inherent to each contribution in a more effective, synthetic and visually intelligible way, allowing the images to be ordered for analytical observation. Each card offered multiple interpretations relating to written information (concepts and descriptions), visual information (percentages of images and colours) and sensory information (relating to the senses involved in the narrative of each image). Subsequently, internal online and offline workshops were organised with a mix of different approaches depending on the thematic and disciplinary perspective addressed, to classify and structure all the submitted responses.


<div style="text-align: right;">047</div> <p>J. WLASZYN French/Polish Work Art, research, teaching & experimentation joanna.wlaszyn@intransitivity.net</p> <p>Words in Freedom Your Mnemosphere description: insteternal, orbiquity, misty, immaterial, windy</p> <p>What Mnemosphere is not: reality</p> <p>Mnemosphere visualized in terms of size: large - public - outdoor limited - private - interior hybrid</p> <p>Mnemosphere visualized in terms of movement: passive - contemplative active - participatory hybrid</p> <p>Mnemosphere visualized in terms of colour and tone dark clear vivid soft cold colours warm colours neutral colours</p> <p>How ephemeral Mnemosphere is: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>What form Mnemosphere can assume: site-specific installation monument memorial counter-monument work of art temporary installation photography video public space object performance scenography</p> <p>Do you think the mnemosphere is linked to a specific place? yes / no</p>	<div style="text-align: right;">047</div> <div style="text-align: right;">IMG_1</div> <div style="text-align: right;">J. WLASZYN</div>  <p>Title Timeless Places_1</p> <p>Keywords # insteternal, immaterial, ephemeral, timeless</p> <p>Free image description: Timeless places series refers to the idea of a window that opens to external worlds, to others, and to what is beyond reality.</p> <p>Year/Place 2021</p> <p>Which themes your image conveys: memory emotion colour atmosphere space</p> <p>About percentages: 5 memory 2 emotion 2 colour 5 atmosphere 4 space</p> <p>Emotions from the image or emotions do you want to trigger: nostalgia, surprise, the desire to project himself into the image</p> <p>5 senses stimulated in the image: sight but also hearing</p> <p>Anything else you want to add? No</p>
--	---

Fig. 3 – Mnemosphere project ID cards, 2021.

The workshop activities proved to be useful methods to extract transversal key concepts that could be translated into parameters for the design of mnemonic spaces and atmospheres.

The first workshop focused on image processing from an atmospheric-spatial point of view and sorted into seven *a priori* categories that allowed the identification of shared morphological elements, modes of representation, particular framings and recurring themes. The approach was purely visual and less linked to image textual descriptions.

The identified categories are [Fig. 5]:

- Atmosphere as Air: in which open spaces, skies and horizons emerge;
- Atmosphere as Bubble: in which the theme of circularity emerges;
- Atmosphere as Fog: in which emerges the theme of undefined spaces, in movement and out of focus;
- Atmosphere as Diaphragm: in which elements connecting interior and exterior emerge, such as entrances, corridors, doors and windows;
- Atmosphere as Net: in which complex, interconnected spaces emerge as well as conceptual and real connective elements;
- Atmosphere as Colorful: in which images emerge in which the main character is colour, tones and abstract symbolism;
- Atmosphere as Void: in which singularities, empty spaces, full of nothingness and desolation emerge.

The second workshop was developed from the mnemonic perspective, using an opposite approach, i.e. focusing on the interpretation of texts and descriptions rather than an analysis of the visual content.

In this context the images were divided into four typologies [Fig. 4]:

- Individual memory: in which faces of people and bodies often emerge;
- Collective memory: in which monuments and memorials emerges;
- Physical environment: in which natural environments, such as landscapes, and urban and domestic environments emerge;
- Abstract dimension: in which symbols and free, highly coloured illustrations emerge.

After making the visual compositions, henceforth called *atlases*, it was possible to analyze the colour elements of each central theme and develop an exploration of the emotion theme from the chromatic point of view. The analysis was supported by 25-colour charts developed for each visual atlas which permitted the identification of similarities and divergences in the thematic atlases, the detection of harmonic and contrasting relationships and

the conceptual link within the semantic clusters. In this way, it was possible to affirm that the colours of nature and materials of certain places influence the individual and collective memory linked to them, and consequently, the related emotional 'temperature' felt by the perceiver/open call participant. Indeed, the process of gradual incorporation of the place into the user's emotional experience alters the hues, brightness and saturation of the realistic representation of the place and landscape.

The Mnemosphere Atlas

The historical background for the open call images analysis takes as its model the visual research of one of the most famous modern art historians, Aby Warburg. Historical pioneer of the interdisciplinary study of culture, he stressed that researchers should stop policing disciplinary boundaries in order to gain insight into the processes of cultural memory (Erl & Nünning, 2008). The methodological process of the Mnemosphere atlases is inspired by his system of panels, materialized in his most important work, *Atlas of Mnemosyne* (1924-28). The images in the panels were assembled and arranged in groups or sequences, which made it possible to perceive an underlying harmony at first glance; visual components were not placed in a hierarchical relationship to each other, and their positioning was not fixed but fluid and could therefore continually change according to the investigation evolution (Forster et al., 2002). These assemblages made it possible to link different works of art, produced by artists in different periods and geographical contexts, which converged in large iconographic tables having a strong aesthetic and installation aura effect. In Warburg's *Atlas* images are the prime subject of study because they provide a transversal and striking way of narrating world cultures, histories and aesthetics. In *Mnemosyne*, the juxtaposition of images, which weave different elements around a central theme, creates different fields of energy that trigger an open and dynamic interpretative process in the perceiver.

The mnemospheric experimentation, which came to life thanks to the open call and the workshops and then took shape through the atlases, aims to offer a series of visual *hypertexts*. The images lose part of their initial meaning to acquire new significations capable of capturing the atmosphere and the memories of the places. The loss of sense of some images is not an uncontrolled aspect, but an engine of development for a shared and definition of the Mnemosphere. Inspired by Warburg, the *Mnemosphere Atlas* stands as an active tool of the neological research able to make tangible the mnemospheric imaginary in the field of design.

Conclusion - Establishment

Through the description of the main activities of the project, the attempt was to introduce Mnemosphere as a research activator in the design culture. Its participatory visualization through Open Call has made it a neologism open to many fields of knowledge and able to activate reflections in different disciplinary contexts such as art, photography and architecture. Although a solid process of establishment and institutionalization has not yet been completed, Mnemosphere appears today as a term moving from being a *word-formation* to an effective *concept-formation*. The definition seems much less blurred, and the new word discloses itself as an independent entity, transcending its conceptual components to show their composite intersection. It comes across a notion that lives and communicates its complexity through aggregation, and that is capable of generating deep involvement.



Fig. 4 – Mnemosphere Memory Atlases, 2021.



Fig. 5 – Mnemosphere Atmospheres Atlases, 2021.

It is important to highlight that there are a lot of different viewpoints concerning neologisms and their age. The main problem is to state when the new word becomes a neologism. Some scholars claim that the word should be at most 25 years old to be considered a neologism. In spite of its terminological and design evolution materialized through the atlases, what remains evident is the need for further experimentations and applications, especially in the form of exhibition spaces and installations, which are able to explore the multicomponential nature of the mnemospheric dimension.

Future prospects include the organization of a series of *Mnemosphere seminars* with academics and professionals to amplify the dissemination of the project; the curatorship of a collective exhibition in Lisbon, organized with Broteria Collaborative Space, to translate the idea of Mnemosphere into unique artistic experiments; the publication of the *Mnemosphere Atlas*, with all the guidelines and the results.

In this way the research will finally open up to offline activities that could involve the direct participation of people. In conclusion, it is hoped that this project will become an example of how, starting from a neologism, innovative and virtuous research processes can be triggered. But, above all, the aspiration is that this experience will not remain enclosed in a terminological definition made up of images and words, but that it may be the starting point for further reflections, practices and studies.

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This book is a collection of essays written by authors from different disciplinary and professional backgrounds, offering various points of view on *Mnemosphere*, which still does not have an unambiguous definition, drawing inspiration for considerations and insights. The *portmanteau* is nourished by the interaction between the spheres of memories, emotions, and atmospheres, also the sections into which the volume is divided. Its nature is mutable, metamorphic, open to continuous interpretation. What started as a university research project proves to be an engine of reflection and a design driver for multiple theoretical and applicative fields and disciplines. A new composite word becomes an active tool for culture and design. The nuanced essence of *Mnemosphere*, an entity without defined boundaries, is not a weak aspect but is embraced as one of the fundamental elements for the open and interdisciplinary encounter of themes and people around a common subject. From colour to photography, from aesthetics to the history of exhibition spaces, from the urban context to the concept of “emptiness”, and even to the memory of places.

Mnemosphere is a neologism that enhances our ability to communicate the complex realities we live and experience. It contributes to design research, manifesting itself in a visual exhibition accessible to all, which interprets its diverse conformations and meanings on an international level.