



International Pragmatics Association
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ABSTRACTS



18th International Pragmatics Conference

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18th INTERNATIONAL PRAGMATICS CONFERENCE

SPECIAL THEME: The shape of interaction: the pragmatics of (a)typicality

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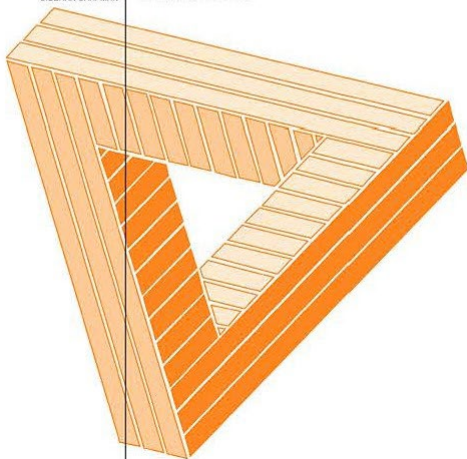
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When divergence opens to the exploration of Alterity. Experiences of Infopoetry as abductive design

Panel contribution

***Prof. Salvatore Zingale*¹, *Ms. Arianna Bellantuono*¹**

1. Politecnico di Milano

This contribution will focus on *divergence* and *convergence* as semiotic processes within design activity.

Convergence occurs when, starting from different positions, there is a tendency towards a single goal or purpose.

We, therefore, interpret convergence as moving towards an intended goal or effect.

Divergence is the opposite movement: moving away from a common point. Or, according to our interpretation, the detachment from established visions and beliefs that are obvious and unchangeable.

Design shifts from these two directions, which can be seen as the paths through which the sense of design is sought. Suppose convergence incorporates everything experimented with a method, procedure, respect for parameters, and, therefore, that which follows the path of deduction and induction. In that case, divergence suggests abduction: acting in unusual ways by associating ideas and exploring possibilities. At the same time, if convergence leads to the identification of an identity (values, objectives, and brand characteristics), convergence also brings about an encounter with alterity: that which appears alien, that which is culturally problematic, that which is still unknown, and which the project may unearth. Abduction is divergent thinking, driven by the need to find alternative solutions to the possibilities already explored and traditionally pursued. With abduction, the design aims at the valorisation of differences while simultaneously reflecting on the role that design can play as an inventive act, non-identitarian but projected towards alterity.

This theoretical premise will be supported by the presentation of a design practice that we have been experimenting with for years in the Data Visualization laboratory at the School of Design of the Politecnico di Milano and that we have called *Infopoetry*. It is a neologism that combines ‘information’ and ‘poetry’ on the lines of the better-known *infographics*. Infopoetry has a twofold purpose: (i) to *show* data and (ii) to make them *feel*, seeking the emotional involvement of the user. Compared to infographics, the designer is here called upon to *expose* himself as subjectivity and intentionality. Moreover, using metaphor as an element of mediation between the object to be visualised and its artefactual expression, the practice of Infopoetry is necessarily implemented by urging design thinking to find unusual ways of representation. The designer explains his or her point of view on the chosen phenomenon *via discourse* that aims to make tangible the aspects of the content plane considered most pertinent through an aesthetically appropriate level of expression.

The starting dataset is first interpreted according to the specific relevance chosen by the designer, then *translated* into a communicative image, resorting to various forms of expression, exploiting the tools of multimodality, multimedia and multisensoriality.

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