

IV CONVEGNO INTERNAZIONALE E INTERDISCIPLINARE
SU IMMAGINI E IMMAGINAZIONE

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A cura di / Edited by
Stefano Brusaporci, Pamela Maiezza, Adriana Marra
Ilaria Trizio, Francesca Savini, Alessandra Tata

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Atti del IV Convegno Internazionale e Interdisciplinare
su Immagini e Immaginazione

Proceedings of 4th International and Interdisciplinary
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IMAGIN(G)
HERITAGE

Atti del Convegno | Proceedings



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INDICE

STEFANO BRUSAPORCI IMAGIN(G) HERITAGE	21
TOPICS	22
FRANCESCA FATTA Scene da un Patrimonio	25
ALESSANDRO LUIGINI Sguardi plurali sulle immagini di un patrimonio immaginario	27
ADRIANA MARRA Esperienze di imagin(g) heritage. I contributi del volume	29
IMG23: PAPERS	
 HERITAGE EDUCATION EDUCAZIONE AL PATRIMONIO	
CHIARA AGAGIÙ The subconscious heritage as a psycho-pedagogical category Il patrimonio inconscio come categoria psicopedagogica	42
ALESSANDRA DE NICOLA, FRANCA ZUCCOLI Heritage fruition and interpretation A path of kit construction: the importance of images Fruizione e interpretazione del patrimonio Un percorso di costruzioni di kit: l'importanza delle immagini	50
ANITA MACAUDA, VERONICA RUSSO, MARIA CHIARA SGHINOLFI Writing images: a verbal-visual approach in teachers training practice Scrivere le immagini: un approccio verbo-visivo nella formazione degli insegnanti	58
SALVATORE MESSINA, ANITA MACAUDA, CHIARA PANCIROLI Heritage education and media literacy. Analysis of digitization practices Educazione al patrimonio e media literacy: analisi di pratiche di digitalizzazione	66
STEFANO OLIVIERO, MARIANNA DI ROSA Heritage education and heritage learning: toward a participatory perspective Heritage education e heritage learning: verso una prospettiva partecipativa	76
CHIARA PANCIROLI, PIER CESARE RIVOLTELLA The Cooperation Human-Machine. Educating for Creativity in the AI Age	82


|||||
GRAPHICAL STUDIES
STUDI GRAFICI

LEONARDO BAGLIONI, SOFIA MENCONERO Objective model and ideal model: physical models compared for the study of painted architectural space Modello oggettivo e modello ideale: modelli fisici di confronto per lo studio dello spazio architettonico dipinto	92
PAOLO BELARDI, VALERIA MENCHETELLI, GIOVANNA RAMACCINI, MARCO WILLIAMS FAGIOLI HERITAGE UNIPG. The image of the University of Perugia from the Super Specula of 1308 to the Official merchandising of 2022 HERITAGE UNIPG. L'immagine dell'Università degli Studi di Perugia dalla Super Specula del 1308 all'Official merchandising del 2022	100
STEFANO BRUSAPORCI Models Theory and Visual Sciences in Digital Representation of Architecture Teoria del Modelli e Scienze Visuali nella Rappresentazione Digitale dell'Architettura	108
ALESSIO CARDACI, ANTONELLA VERSACI A story in pictures: Bergamo and its surroundings in Luigi Angelini's drawings Un racconto per immagini: Bergamo e la Bergamasca nei disegni di Luigi Angelini	114
IRENE CAZZARO Hypothetical Cultural Heritage and its users: challenges in the interpretation and communication through verbal and visual methods	122
ENRICO CICALÒ, MICHELE VALENTINO Visualizing Archaeology. The Graphic Sciences' Contribution to Research in Archaeology Visualizzare l'archeologia. Il contributo delle scienze grafiche alle ricerche in ambito archeologico	134
ANDREA DONELLI The digital graphic/geometric construction in CAD-BIM. Models for building drawing La costruzione grafico/geometrica digitale in CAD-BIM. Modelli per il disegno edile	144
TOMMASO EMPLER, ALEXANDRA FUSINETTI The forms of representation and narration of the coastal defense systems of Elba Le forme di rappresentazione e narrazione dei sistemi di difesa costieri elbani	154
MARGHERITA FONTANA A proposal for a bunker aesthetics from Paul Virilio's archaeology to virtual architecture	162
ELENA IPPOLITI, MICHELE RUSSO, MIRUNA ANDREEA GĂMAN, NOEMI TOMASELLA, GIULIA FLENGHI Rediscovering Stratified Urban Context by Visual Pathways: the Esquiline of Rome	170


PAMELA MAIEZZA, STEFANO BRUSAPORCI Rebuilding the Past. For a Taxonomy of Virtual Reconstructions of Non-Existing Architectural Heritage Ricostruire il passato. Per una tassonomia delle ricostruzioni virtuali di beni architettonici non esistenti	178
LEONARDO PARIS, MARIA LAURA ROSSI, ANGELA MOSCHETTI The spatial syntax for diachronic analysis in the transformations of historical centres. Experimentation on Porta Cintia in Rieti La sintassi spaziale per l'analisi diacronica nelle trasformazioni dei centri storici. Sperimentazione su Porta Cintia a Rieti	186
FRANCESCA SAVINI, ALESSIO CORDISCO, ILARIA TRIZIO Digital Story Modelling: from digitising architectural Heritage to reconstructing the past Digital Story Modelling: dalla digitalizzazione del patrimonio architettonico alla ricostruzione del passato	196
STARLIGHT VATTANO Digital visions of an imagined Venice: the Biennale of 1985 Visioni digitali di una Venezia immaginata: la Biennale del 1985	204
ORNELLA ZERLENGA, CARLO DI RIENZO, VINCENZO CIRILLO Image/in intangible heritage. The ephemeral celebration in Paris in 1739	212
	
HERITAGE & MUSEUM PATRIMONIO & MUSEI	
RITA CAPURRO, FRANCA ZUCCOLI Bringing a museum to life from the imagination. The distributed museum at Milano-Bicocca University Nascita di un museo immaginato. Il Museo diffuso dell'Università di Milano-Bicocca	224
MARCELLA COLACINO Heritage, documentation and creation of meaning. Museum generativity in the case of the Brera Art Gallery Patrimonio, documentazione e creazione di senso. La generatività museale nel caso della Pinacoteca di Brera	232
MYRTO KOUKOULI, KATERINA SERVI, DIMITRA PETOUSI, MELPOMENI KARTA, NATASA MICHAILIDOU, LABRINI PAPASTRATOU, GEORGIOS I. GOGOLOS, KONSTANTINOS KALAMPOKIS, KONSTANTINOS PETRIDIS Channel to the Past: Combining different digital experiences in a single visit to the museum	240
ROBERTA SPALLONE, FABRIZIO LAMBERTI, DAVIDE CALANDRA, DAVIDE MEZZINO, JOHANNES AUENMULLER, MARTINA RINASCIMENTO Connecting objects, times and places: Digital VR re-contextualization of the standing Sekhmet statues in the Museo Egizio, Turin, from the Temple of Ptah at Karnak	248
FEDERICA ZALABRA Recomposing Heritage. Technology to support art-historical storytelling at the Museo Nazionale d'Abruzzo Ricomporre il patrimonio. La tecnologia a supporto della narrazione storico-artistica al Museo Nazionale d'Abruzzo	258

|||||
HERITAGE & ARCHIVE
PATRIMONIO & ARCHIVIO

- CECILIA BOLOGNESI, DEIDA BASSORIZZI
Images of old projects, models of new spaces. Architecture translation: from archives to AR
Immagini di antichi progetti, modelli di nuovi spazi. Traduzione di architetture dagli archivi alla AR 266
- SALVATORE DAMIANO
Implementing the archival heritage: virtual reconstruction of an unbuilt villa by Giuseppe Samonà in Sicily
Implementare il patrimonio archivistico: ricostruzione virtuale di una villa non realizzata di Giuseppe Samonà in Sicilia 274
- PATRIZIA MONTUORI
L'Aquila and the new urban 'doors' for welcoming tourists and travellers. The Hotel Castello and the Motel Amiternum
L'Aquila e le nuove "porte" urbane per l'accoglienza turistica e dei viaggiatori. L'Hotel Castello e il Motel Amiternum 282
- CATERINA PALESTINI, GIOVANNI RASETTI
Unknown urban heritage: graphical-visual memories of architectures from the second half of the twentieth century in Abruzzo
Ignoti patrimoni urbani: memorie grafico-visive delle architetture del secondo Novecento in Abruzzo 292
- MARCO PAOLUCCI, SIMONETTA CIRANNA
The other side of Gran Sasso: Campotosto area in the 20th century. From the peat and hydroelectric industry to tourist-accommodation districts that have never been built
L'altro Gran Sasso: l'areale di Campotosto nel XX secolo. Dall'industria torbifera e idroelettrica ai comprensori turistico-ricettivi mai realizzati 302
- |||||
VISUAL HERITAGE
PATRIMONIO VISUALE
- DARIO AMBROSINI, ANNAMARIA CICCOZZI, TULLIO DE RUBEIS, DOMENICA PAOLETTI
Optical methods: imagin(g) the hidden world of cultural heritage 312
- CARLO BATTINI
No contact detection technologies: artistic expression as well?
Tecnologie di rilevamento no contact: anche espressione artistica? 320
- ALAN CHANDLER, MICHELA PACE
Heritage in a van. The paradox of intangibility 328
- ALESSANDRO LUIGINI
AI imaging, imagery and imagination. Considerations on a future that is already present, for a digital humanism in poetic and educational processes 336
- DONATO MANIELLO
Being in time. The fragment as a vision device
Essere nel tempo. Il frammento come dispositivo della visione 344
- SEBASTIANO NUCIFORA
The controversial heritage. The colonial architectural heritage in western sub-Saharan between its material presence and the persistence of memory

L'eredità controversa. Il patrimonio architettonico coloniale in Africa sub-sahariana occidentale tra presenza materiale e persistenza della memoria	350
ANNAMARIA POLI The Visual Heritage of Spoon River: intangible and tangible cultural heritage, from monuments and history to poetry and cinema	360
FEDERICO REBECCHINI Uzo Nishiyama and the drawing of domestic mutation Uzo Nishiyama e il disegno del mutamento domestico	368
FEDERICO RITA A heritage to be enhanced. The design and cultural perspectives of digital technologies Un patrimonio da valorizzare. Il design e le prospettive culturali delle tecnologie digitali	376
MARCELLO SCALZO Italy on the walls. Localities and Italian cities in tourist posters between the first and second post-war periods L'Italia sui muri. Località e città italiane nei manifesti turistici tra primo e secondo dopoguerra	386
PASQUALE TUNZI Between history and memory. The role of illustrations in early 19th century italian periodicals Tra storia e memoria. Il ruolo delle illustrazioni nei periodici italiani del primo Ottocento	396
	
HERITAGE INTERPRETATION AND MAKING INTERPRETAZIONE DEL PATRIMONIO E HERITAGE MAKING	
FABRIZIA BANDI Alive ruins: imagining cultural heritage through virtual reality Rovine viventi: immaginare il patrimonio culturale attraverso la realtà virtuale	406
MIRCO CANNELLA, VINCENZA GAROFALO, MARCO ROSARIO GERAZI, LUDOVICA PRESTIGIOVANNI The Recovered Image: the Majolica Floor of the Oratory of San Mercurio in Palermo L'immagine recuperata: il pavimento maiolicato dell'Oratorio di San Mercurio a Palermo	412
ALESSANDRA CIRAFICI, CATERINA CRISTINA FIORENTINO, PASQUALE ARGENZIANO The Cimarosian identity in Aversa. Visual paradigms and communicative codes L'identità cimarosiana ad Aversa. Paradigmi visuali e codici comunicativi	422
ORNELLA CIRILLO, CATERINA CRISTINA FIORENTINO, ROBERTO LIBERTI Procida's manufactures in the threads of history. An interdisciplinary approach to heritage making Le manifatture di Procida nelle trame della storia. Un approccio interdisciplinare all'heritage making	432
FRANCESCO DE LORENZO, AGOSTINO URSO Formal configurations of urban space. The design of blocks in the drawings of the Ente Edilizio of Reggio Calabria Configurazioni formali dello spazio urbano. La progettazione degli isolati nei disegni dell'Ente Edilizio di Reggio Calabria	440

LAURA FARRONI, MATTEO FLAVIO MANCINI Real, virtual and digital images from the Room of Pompeo quadratura at Palazzo Spada in Rome	448
ALESSIA GAROZZO, FRANCESCO MAGGIO Memory of the past between old and new images La memoria del passato tra antiche e nuove immagini	456
ROSINA IADEROSA The tradition of ancient crafts by means of images. Their tales between analogue and digital La tradizione degli antichi mestieri attraverso le immagini. I loro racconti tra analogico e digitale	464
ELENA IPPOLITI, FLAVIA CAMAGNI, ANDREA CASALE Seeing Urbino through the eyes of the Renaissance. A multimedia travel notebook Urbino con gli occhi del Rinascimento. Un taccuino di viaggio multimediale	472
SILVANA KÜHTZ, ALESSANDRO RAFFA Image and imagination.Re-inventing heritage in Matera. For a definition of heritage in marginal areas	482
ALESSANDRO LUIGINI, BARBARA TRAMELLI, FRANCESCA CONDORELLI, GIUSEPPE NICASTRO, ALESSANDRO BASSO Three experiences of imagin(g) heritage Tre esperienze di imagin(g) per il patrimonio	490
ADRIANA MARRA Reconstructing images through 3D printing: Application to archaeological finds at Amiternum (AQ) Ricostruire le immagini attraverso la stampa 3D: applicazione ai reperti archeologici di Amiternum (AQ)	498
VALERIA MENCHETELLI, FRANCESCO COTANA, CHIARA SPIPPOLI Images to interpret Cultural Heritage. Fortified Architecture in Umbria Between Survey, Cataloguing and Communication Immagini per interpretare il patrimonio culturale. Le architetture fortificate in Umbria tra rilievo, catalogazione e comunicazione	508
SONIA MOLLIKA Physical and perceptual images. The visual representation of the paintings of the Basilica of S. Giorgio in Venice Immagini fisiche e percettive. La rappresentazione visuale dei dipinti della Basilica di S. Giorgio a Venezia	518
JONATHAN PIERINI, GIANLUCA CAMILLINI The editorial practice as a device for enacting archives Una pratica editoriale come dispositivo di riattivazione dell'archivio	526
ADRIANA ROSSI, SARA GONIZZI BARSANTI "Augmenting" Reality: a recent goal? "Aumentare" la realtà: un obiettivo recente?	534
DANIELE ROSSI, ALESSANDRO BASSO Exploring Cultural Heritage Through Virtual Tours: The Loggia of Galatea in Villa Farnesina	544
MICHELA ROSSI, SARA CONTE Visual Heritage and Memory Design	554

SABATINO MICHELE Remembering and documenting heritage through images. The farmhouses O.N.C. Of the land of the "Mazzoni" Ricordare e documentare il patrimonio attraverso le immagini. Le case coloniche O.N.C. della terra dei "Mazzoni"	564
ROSSELLA SALERNO "Reading" a place: between identity and globalization "La lettura" del luogo: tra identità e globalizzazione	572
KHAOULA STITI Revisiting participation in research. A literature review to rearrange the definitions of "research with" in heritage	580
ALESSANDRA TATA Memory and photography in the digital age: the case of L'Aquila Memoria e fotografia nell'era digitale: il caso dell'Aquila	588
TRAMELLI BARBARA Finding, seeing and comparing. Visualization Methods in the Lyon16ci Database	598
CHRISTIAN UPMEIER, ISABELLA KÜCHLER The Sounds of Heritage: a prototype for the Haus Am Horn of Weimar I suoni del patrimonio: un prototipo per la Haus Am Horn di Weimar	608
AGOSTINO URSO, FRANCESCO DE LORENZO Puzzles and representation. The puzzle image as a useful tool for graphic, multimedia and interactive storytelling Puzzle e rappresentazione. L'immagine del puzzle come utile strumento di narrazione grafica, multimediale e interattiva	616
ORNELLA ZERLENGA, MARGHERITA CICALA, RICCARDO MIELE Images for the fruition of Cultural Heritage. Virtual itineraries for the knowledge and enhancement of the Roccarainola castle Immagini per la fruizione del Patrimonio Culturale. Itinerari virtuali per la conoscenza e la valorizzazione del castello di Roccarainola	624
	
LANDSCAPE	
PAESAGGIO	
GIUSEPPE AMORUSO Rebuilding Amatrice. The authentic representation of the historical urban landscape Ricostruire Amatrice. La rappresentazione autentica del paesaggio urbano storico	634
MARINELLA ARENA Imago Memoriae	642
GIOVANNI CAFFIO Beyond villages. The challenge of drawing as a method of investigating depopulated villages Oltre i borghi. La sfida del disegno come metodo d'indagine dei paesi in spopolamento	650
ANTONIO CONTE, MARIANNA CALIA, ROBERTO PEDONE, ROSSELLA LAERA Creative heritage and fragility in Lucania small towns. Reconstruction through images of human events as a palimpsest of housing memory Patrimoni creativi e fragilità nei piccoli centri della Lucania. Ricostruzione per immagini di vicende umane come palinsesto della memoria abitativa	658

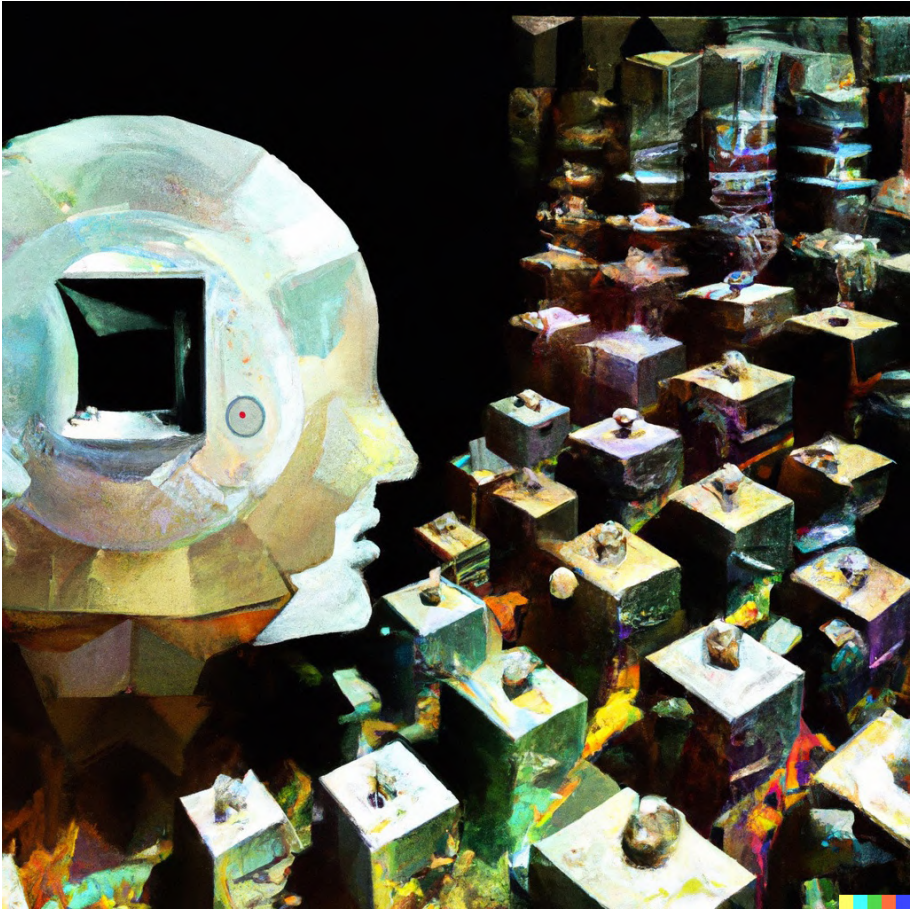
- CONCEPCIÓN RODRÍGUEZ-MORENO, MARÍA DEL CARMEN
VÍLCHEZ-LARA, JUAN FRANCISCO REINOSO-GORDO,
ANTONIO GÓMEZ-BLANCO, JORGE MOLINERO-SÁNCHEZ
Images of a disappearing cultural landscape: The factory-flour complex of
Los Tajos of Alhama de Granada (Spain)
Imágenes de un paisaje cultural que desaparece: El complejo fabril-harinero
de los Tajos de Alhama de Granada (España) 666
- CAMILLA SETTE, BERNARDINO ROMANO
Public landscape heritage. The Unsustainable Planning of Soil Consumption 674

|||||

ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE
PATRIMONIO ARCHITETTONICO

- FABRIZIO AGNELLO
Image and Imagination: Light as a material of architecture
Immagine e immaginazione: la luce come materia dell'architettura 684
- ALESSANDRA BELLICOSO
Constructing images and preserving memory. The New Provincial Insane
Asylum of L'Aquila
Costruire immagini e conservare memoria. Il Nuovo Manicomio Provinciale
dell'Aquila 692
- STEFANO BRUSAPORCI, PAMELA MAIEZZA, ADRIANA MARRA,
ALESSANDRA TATA, LUCA VESPASIANO
Reliability of HBIM models for built heritage management
Affidabilità dei modelli HBIM per la gestione del patrimonio costruito 702
- LUIGI CORNIELLO, GIANLUCA GIOIOSO, FABIANA GUERRIERO, GENNARO
PIO LENTO, PEDRO A. JANEIRO
A heritage of images. The survey model
Un patrimonio di immagini. Il modello di rilievo 708
- ANGELO DE CICCO, ANDREA MALIQARI, ANDRONIRA BURDA,
GENNARO PIO LENTO, FABIANA GUERRIERO, ROSA DE CARO, ADRIANA
TREMATERRA, GIANLUCA GIOIOSO, LUIGI CORNIELLO
Images of the UNESCO heritage site of Berat in Albania. Photographic and
photogrammetric surveys of the cistern in the castle
Immagini del patrimonio Unesco di Berat in Albania. Rilievi fotografici e
fotogrammetrici della cisterna nel castello 716
- DANIELE ARTURO DE LUCA, RAMONA QUATTRINI, CHIARA MARIOTTI
HBIM strategies for the phygital interaction with the architectural heritage.
Palazzo Olivieri-Machirelli and the Auditorium Pedrotti in Pesaro 724
- GIANCARLO DI MARCO, JUAN CARLOS DALL'ASTA
Architectural materiality as an image of the future past. 3D printed concrete
at the intersection of aesthetic language evolution and technological
development 734
- ERIKA ELEFANTE, GIUSEPPE ANTUONO, PIERPAOLO D'AGOSTINO
Gamification for participatory communication of information models.
Imagining the heritage of inaccessible architecture
Gamification per la comunicazione partecipativa dei modelli informativi.
Immaginare il patrimonio dell'architettura inaccessibile 742
- MASSIMILIANO LO TURCO, ANDREA TOMALINI, JACOPO BONO
A Heritage of images witnessing the passage of time. The renovation of the
Torino Esposizioni complex 750

MÓNICA LÓPEZ-PIQUER, CINTA LLUIS-TERUEL, JOSEP LLUIS I GINOVART Comparison of the methodology used for the analysis of the main section in Romanesque buildings in Val d'Aran	762
FANWEI MENG, YU HUAIYUAN The oldest catholic church in Beijing: Nan Tang	770
LUCA ROSSATO, FABIO PLANU, GRETA MONTANARI, DARIO RIZZI, FRANCESCO VIROLI The Rocca Malatestiana of Verucchio. Integrated survey and SCAN to HBIM process for cultural heritage management La Rocca Malatestiana di Verucchio. Rilievo integrato e processo di SCAN to HBIM per la gestione del patrimonio culturale	778
ADRIANA TREMATERRA, GIANLUCA PINTUS, ANGELO DE CICCIO, FABIANA GUERRIERO, ROSA DE CARO, LUIGI CORNIELLO Images of Sacred Heritage. Enhancement of Montenegro's Orthodox Monasteries for Sustainable Religious Tourism	788
GRAZIANO MARIO VALENTI Non-canonical representations: the aid of reflection Rappresentazioni non canoniche: l'ausilio della riflessione	796
LUCA VESPASIANO Fragments from Renaissance. The loggias in the historial center of L'Aquila Frammenti dal rinascimento. Le logge nel centro storico dell'Aquila	804
Index of aurnhors/Indice degli autori	816



The Cooperation Human-Machine

Educating for Creativity in the AI Age

Abstract

This article's aim is to start a reflection on how creativity can be educated with AI. The starting point is the concept of creativity and the synthetic reconstruction of the history of its relationship with technology. On this basis, we go further analyzing the relationship between AI and creativity, before indicating a possible work path for education. The conclusions concern the role of the author and creative production.

Keywords

Artificial Intelligence in Education, Creativity, Human-AI co-creation, History of Technology, Data Literacy.

A DEFINITION OF CREATIVITY?

The debate on creativity is broad and crosses the different disciplines. Our goal is not to reproduce it, nor to provide an exhaustive definition of creativity, but only to point out some dimensions of it.

First of all, creativity has to do with non-standard use of language and thought. This means: from the point of view of semiotics, forcing and redefining the codes of a language (Maldonado, 1979); cognitively, thinking beyond boundaries and standards.

Second, creativity can be understood referring to the competence of heuristic problem solving. This is the name given to the ability to seek unknown solutions to unknown problems, while our usual way of solving problems - procedural problem solving - consists in applying known solutions to known problems. This difference, as well as being investigated by cognitive psychology, is confirmed by neuroscientific evidences on decision making (Goldberg, 2009).

Finally, it is possible to highlight the close relationship between creativity and some more specific skills. To be creative is being able to perceive what is essential in one's field of experience. To do this, it is necessary to eliminate what is found in excess and which would not allow us to grasp unexpected relationships between the different elements (Berthoz, 2009/2012), or to inhibit what our brain has fixed in routines thanks to the repetition of its experiences (Houdé, 2017).

To do this, means using analogical thinking (Hofstadter & Sander, 2013). And this depends on two more elements: vicariance, that is, precisely on the basis of the analogy, knowing how to use something at the place of something else (Berthoz, 2020); and cognitive transfer, i.e. the ability to import/export concepts and/or constructs from one context of action or thought to another one (Berthoz, 2013/2017).

CREATIVITY AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY: A THREE STAGES HISTORY

According to what we said, if we consider technology as a language, then it can be thought as a medium and space for and of creativity, particularly in the case of digital technology. Let's see how this relationship between creativity and digital technology was developed. ...

The first stage is at the beginning of the digital revolution (late 50s / mid 60s). In those years Vannevar Bush invented the Memex, the "grandfather" of hypertexts and of the Internet. Doug Engelbart (1962), just thinking of Bush's invention, talked about a machine that «would allow the use of a new text composition process (...). New ideas could be integrated more easily and thus continuously harness creativity (...). All this will probably make it possible to develop and use even more complex procedures to put one's talents to use...». Digital technology is used for augmenting creativity.

The second stage is centered on the use of computers to support creation. This allowed the first experiments in the field of computer graphics, animation and artistic works (late 60s / early 80s). The emphasis is clearly on process and product. We can think, for instance, to Brian Eno and Benoit Mandelbrot who use algorithmic and generative principles to make music (Eno) or to produce images of fractals (Mandelbrot). This is the period of computational creativity (or creative computation).

In the third and final stage (since the 80s to now) we pass from first generation systems (Autocad, Photoshop, Word), which imitate analogic tools with digital methods, to second generation systems, in which humans and machines negotiate together the creation process. The final outcome are third generation systems, thanks to which the creative process results from a conversation between machine and human. Control and decisions are made in cooperation with the system itself. The most meaningful impact lies in freeing up time and energy to deal with higher levels of creative outputs. This is the stage of assisted creation.

Fig. 1 - The development of interaction between technology and human creativity.

Stages	Years	Technology role
<i>Augmented creativity</i>	Late 50s / mid 60s	Creativity empowerment
<i>Computational creativity</i>	Late 69s / early 80s	Creativity support
<i>Assisted creation</i>	Since the 80s to now	Cooperation with human

THINKING ABOUT HUMAN-AI COOPERATION: PRODUCTS AND PROCESSES

There is a close relationship between creativity and cognitive skills, including the development of human divergent thinking in collaboration with machines. We've already mentioned in the first paragraph some of these cognitive skills.

Boden (1998) already tried to synthesize these skills by recognizing 3 ways into which creativity can express itself:

- (1) the new combination of familiar ideas;
- (2) the exploration of new conceptual spaces;
- (3) the development of transformations favoring the generation of ideas otherwise impossible to develop.

Recently she tried to more specifically analyze the contribution of AI to creativity (Boden, 2018; 25). Her hypothesis for the future - however still far from being possible to be realized - is an AGI (Artificial General Intelligence) referring to an interaction among the body (located "here and now" and continuously open to stimuli and perceptions), the mind and the machine. But nowadays, what kind of contribution AI could give to creativity, especially in terms of cooperation?

Cropley & Knappler (2021) suggest that two factors are particularly important in human-machine collaboration: the process and the product.

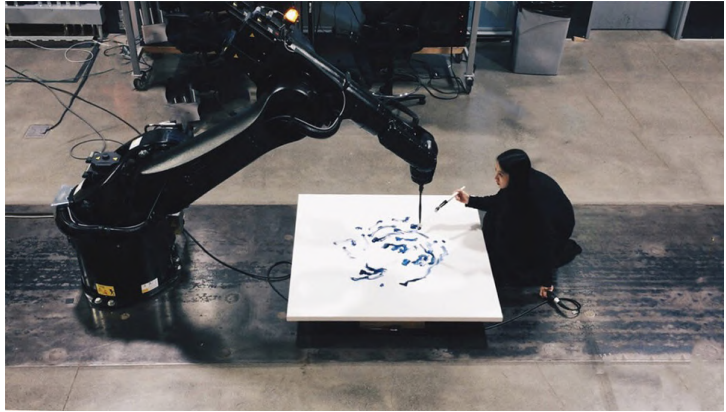
Creative products are measured in relation to their novelty and effectiveness (Cropley & Kaufman, 2012), where novelty refers to an original idea and effectiveness is the product's ability to achieve the expected result. In recent years, studies on creative product evaluation using AI-based methodologies are emerging. In this regard Cropley & Marrone (2022) demonstrated how AI can evaluate creative solutions using convolutional neural networks. Beaty and Johnson (2021) and Olson et alii (2021) also demonstrate the use of latent semantic analysis to evaluate student responses in terms of creativity understood as a cognitive activity, alternative to the traditional one.

The process, still not so well explored, is defined on the basis of the cognitive mechanisms involved in developing new and effective solutions to problems in which the creative effort arising from the collaboration between AI and human has an increasingly important role.

For instance, we can think of a case of creative process in the artistic field; here we have a robotic arm, trained on artificial neural networks through machine learning techniques, able to detect the artist's recurring patterns; this happens not through making copies of the artist's memorized drawings, but generating synchronous interpretations. In this way, the preset initial data is extended and modified precisely through the interaction and cooperation between the machine and the artist.

Another case is the use of Chat-GPT. In this case a user puts in the software's prompt a first request; GPT gives its response back; the user, starting from it, and collaborating once more with Chat-GPT, puts in the prompt another request; GPT gives one more response back. It could be possible to go on in this conversational activity and it is clear that the user and the machine are really collaborating, suggesting one another creative solutions for going further with their creation.

Fig. 2 - Sougwen Chung's painter robots.



HUMAN-AI CO-CREATION: NEW CHALLENGES FOR CREATIVITY EDUCATION

Educating creativity means teaching people to think with style (Bozzetti, 2011). This does not only mean acquiring the ability to reason with elegance - without redundancy, arguing consequentially, practicing brevitas - but also to do that in a critical and original way. Precisely these two characteristics of the style of thinking - the critical attitude and originality - are difficult to be practiced today.

The critical attitude collides with the huge mass of data: it is a question of control. This data grows on itself at great speed and deprives man of the possibility not so much of being able to manage them (it should be impossible!), but even of producing an approximate map of them. Added to this, there are problems of little or no transparency (the algorithms cannot be seen, it is not sure what kind of use will be made of our data) and always, in the history of Media Literacy, the opacity of a text or a information has been a problem precisely in relation to the possibility of its critical review.

Even originality encounters problems, and above all originality is the trait of thinking with style that affects creativity. The development of consumer computing has sacrificed the transparency of interfaces for their usability. This meant allowing the user to access applications without necessarily knowing their syntax. The use of scripts and style sheets serves this purpose: asking the user to limit himself to inserting content, then letting the application do the rest. The result is that formats can be chosen among a limited number of options, the same for any user: the age of access and usability is also the age of conformity and lack of originality (Lanier, 2010; Toschi, 2011).

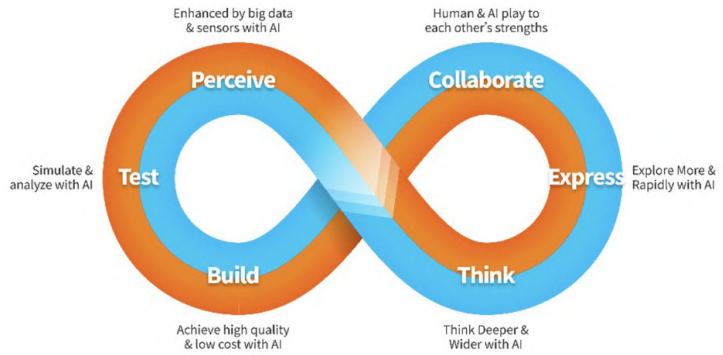
In this regard, does the diffusion of AI represent an opportunity, or just another possibility to give up originality, delegating the "creative" work to the machine? Does AI represent the end of human creativity, or conversely a space for its expression? And if so, how is it possible to develop creativity with AI?

The hypothesis we make is based on cooperation and conversation between human and machine and assumes the Human-AI co-creation model as a reference framework (Wu et al., 2021).

The steps of the creative process, in reality, are not 6 but 5, perhaps 3: collaboration, in fact, more than a step of the process, can be considered the meta-logic that underlies it; production and testing, on the other hand, have little interest in the creative moment strictly considered, but AI certainly lowers costs and optimizes yield.

When we try to refine our requests in the DALL-E prompt to generate an image, the feedback we get from the machine helps us to formulate better, change perspective, evaluate the output and understand

Fig. 3 - The Human-AI co-creation model (Wu et al., 2021, p.177).



what our request needs to be improved. We can do the same consideration when we use Chat GPT to generate a text. It is true that our intentionality is fundamental, but without the co-authorship of the machine it would not be enough for us.

Based on this awareness, we see how this collaboration takes shape in the 3 steps that we consider crucial in the experience of the creative process.

Perception - As Manovich (2021) has recently shown very well, one of the great pluses of AI is the possibility of making a huge mass of data available, together with the possibility of its visualization. It is precisely visualization that supports and orientates the perceptive process by providing an overview, favoring patternization and, thanks to this, allowing a better understanding of the relationships between phenomena or objects.

Thinking - Processing of huge masses of data and visualization also helps thinking to gain depth, working analogically and using cognitive transfer. Unexpected relationships can be grasped, above all the inhibition of habitual mental patterns can be encouraged by freeing up the opportunity to «think against oneself» (Houdé, 2017).

Expression - The moment of expression, which especially in artistic activity usually requires time and technical skills, can be carried out in compressed times, easily and in many ways without having the technical skills for doing this. In this way, creativity is favored over executive ability.

CONCLUSIONS: RETHINKING AUTHORSHIP AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

What can be concluded at the end of our analysis is the finding of two provocative research hypotheses.

The first one is that creativity in the case of human-AI cooperation confronts us with a case of authorship without an author. Who is the real author of a text, an image, a video, created in collaboration with a generative AI application? The AI, the human, neither, both? And how do you redefine the concept of author and authorial inscription? Barilli (1979; p. 103) already suggested several years ago, thinking of the art of those years, to consider the artist as «an animator, a trainer of the aesthetic surface of the community», or, recalling the last McLuhan, to imagine that he could be thought as «a masseur of the common sensorium». Taking his cue, one could say that today a creative person can be considered as a coach of AI, an animator of human thought and expression.

The second hypothesis is that we are faced with a case of creativity without manual skills. The result of human-machine cooperation are

“synchronic works” (Dorfles, 1979), soft works made of bits which are the result of the creative work carried out thanks to new tools (the applications of generative AI) without technical skills other than those related to mastery of languages: more than knowing how to do something, it is important to know how to tell the machine what to do.

CREDITS

The Authors share the idea of the article, the research path, the structure and settings of the single paragraphs. Chiara Panciroli wrote paragraphs *Creativity and digital technology: a three stages history* and *Thinking about Human-AI cooperation: products and processes*, Pier Cesare Rivoltella paragraphs *A definition of creativity?* and *Human-AI co-creation: new challenges for Creativity Education*. The two Authors wrote together the paragraph *Conclusions: rethinking authorship and creative activity*. Each part of the article was reviewed by the two authors.

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