

A I & C

Research Area: ENABLE: Design and Art Competences, Material Culture and Human Development | Project Timespan: 2021-ongoing

Design&Conflicts. Toward a critical perspective of Artificial Intelligence and its impact on cultural processes

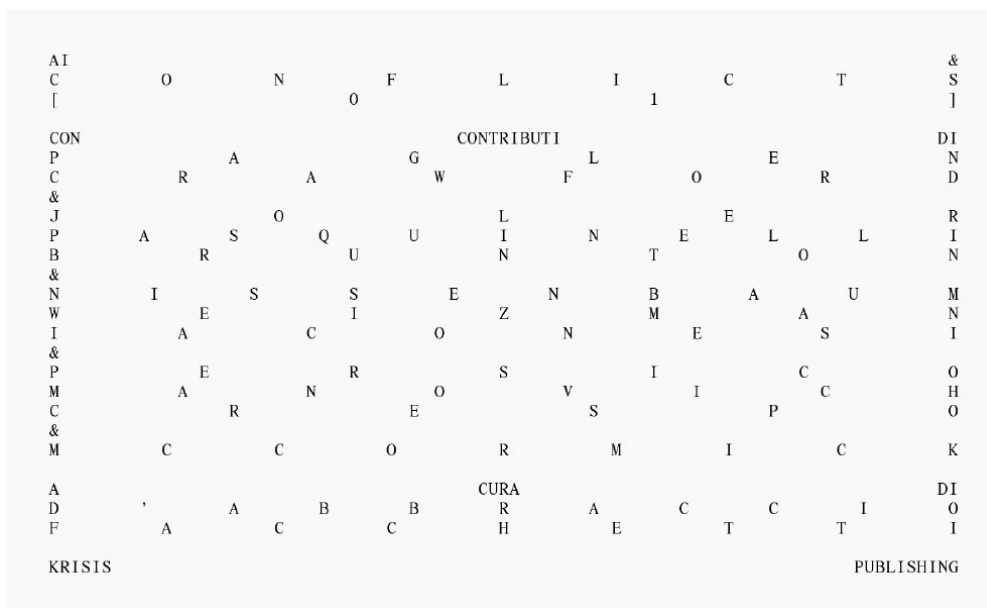
AI & Conflicts brings together and presents for the first time in Italy some of the most important perspectives on artificial intelligence and its impact on contemporary culture.

Team:

PI: Andrea Facchetti

External collaborators: Krisis Publishing, Francesco D'Abbraccio

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The project investigates the increasing presence of digital technologies within design and artistic practices and the realm of visual culture. Within this area, the project addresses the visible and invisible consequences implicit in the employment of such devices and technologies within processes and practices aimed to build and develop visual forms of knowledge, and in general visual cultures. Technologies employing what is commonly called Artificial Intelligence (AI), Neural Networks (NN) and algorithmic technology today play a crucial role in the global cultural ecosystem. They prescribe what we should see, listen, read and buy, they shape our understanding of social reality, and contribute to build our cognitive framework. But they work also in the creation and dissemination of cultural products (Bratton 2017, Manovich 2018). In professional cultural production, AI and NN have already been employed to produce movie trailers, music albums, fashion items, products and web design, architecture, etc.

During the last decade, the relationship between these technologies and practices of cultural production and consumption has been analyzed and investigated by many authors and researchers in the fields of cultural and media studies (Franklin 1999; Quaranta 2010; Manovich 2018a, 2018b, 2017; Pasquinelli 2015, 2019), philosophy and aesthetics (Dalston and Galison 2007; Morton 2009; Bratton 2015, 2017), sociology (Brunton and Nissenbaum 2015; Eubanks 2018; Zuboff 2019), art theory and design (Bridle 2018; Crawford and Joler 2018; Paglen 2016; Steyerl 2016; Weizman 2019). Within these new interdisciplinary fields of study, common knowledge about these technologies have been challenged and deconstructed, in order to provide new concepts for the understanding of media, design and aesthetics, and the way they affect culture and society.

The project aims to reconstruct the complex field of studies where new technologies are questioned and critically analyzed as *dispositif* (Foucault in Agamben 2008) for the design, creation, dissemination and consumption of cultural products. In order to provide an exhaustive comprehension of such complex phenomena, the project explores some emerging trajectories within AI theoretical public debate through different disciplinary approaches. A multitude of perspectives will highlight some of the crucial needs related to

data and intelligent device systems:

— Data politics and the extraction model

The need for an ecological-driven perspective to extend our consideration of AI systems to resources, agencies and other cultural issues.

— AI and politics of information

The need to display how AI can interfere in producing collective narratives and shared perspectives.

— Non-human intelligence

The need to set new imageries regarding Artificial Intelligence and to go beyond the Human Brain Simulation narratives.

— Data and activism

The need to develop new strategies to approach big data and privacy-related issues.

— Hermeneutic of AI

The need to observe AI devices through diachronic, historical and cultural perspectives.

— AI and Aesthetic

The need to observe the impact of AI on our way to shape culture.

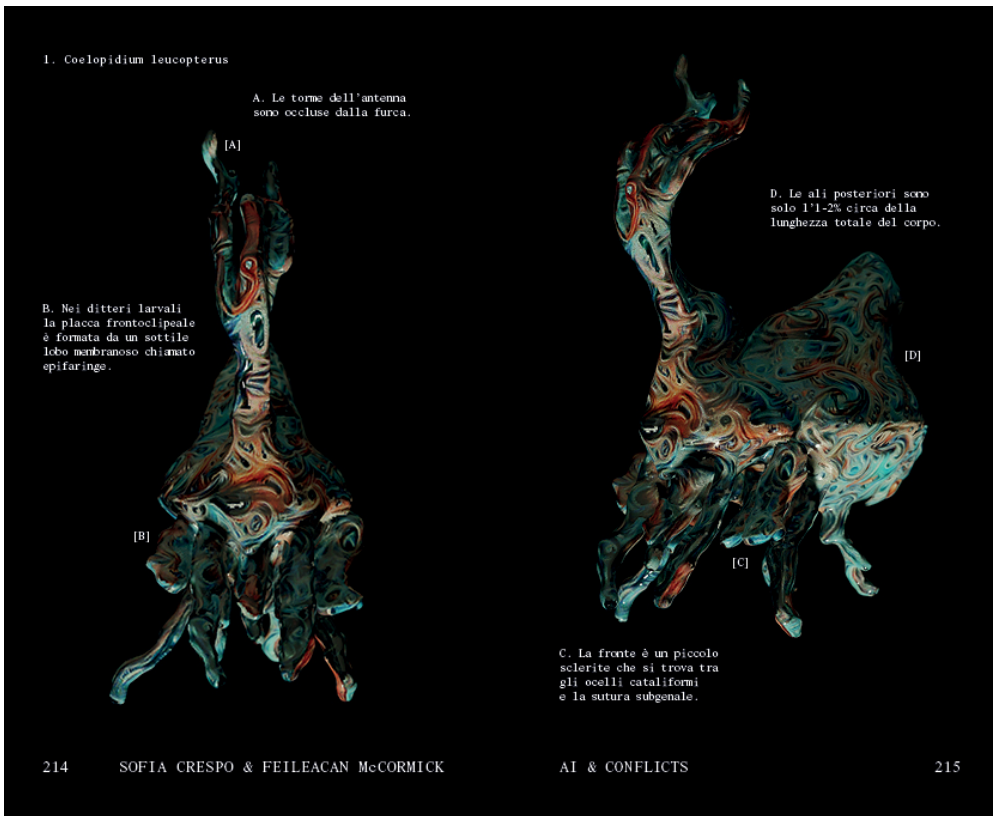
Objectives and expected outcomes

The main objectives of the project are:

- to collect the most interesting points of view that have emerged in recent years on the relationships between new technologies (such as AI, Neural Networks and algorithm technology), visual epistemology, politics of information and design practices;
- to organize and articulate the discussion on the relationship between design practice and new technologies through some thematic areas and contexts of the contemporary socio-cultural landscape, in which we see some critical issues or problems emerge;
- to link the discussion on the relationship between design and new technologies with the broader discussion on the relationship between criticism and design and artistic practices;
- to introduce within the Italian cultural environment a discussion that takes place mainly in Anglo-Saxon academic contexts, and that uses the English language;
- to solicit and trigger a discussion on the same issues within the Italian cultural environment;
- to create a collaborative and research network between authors and researchers working on these topics.



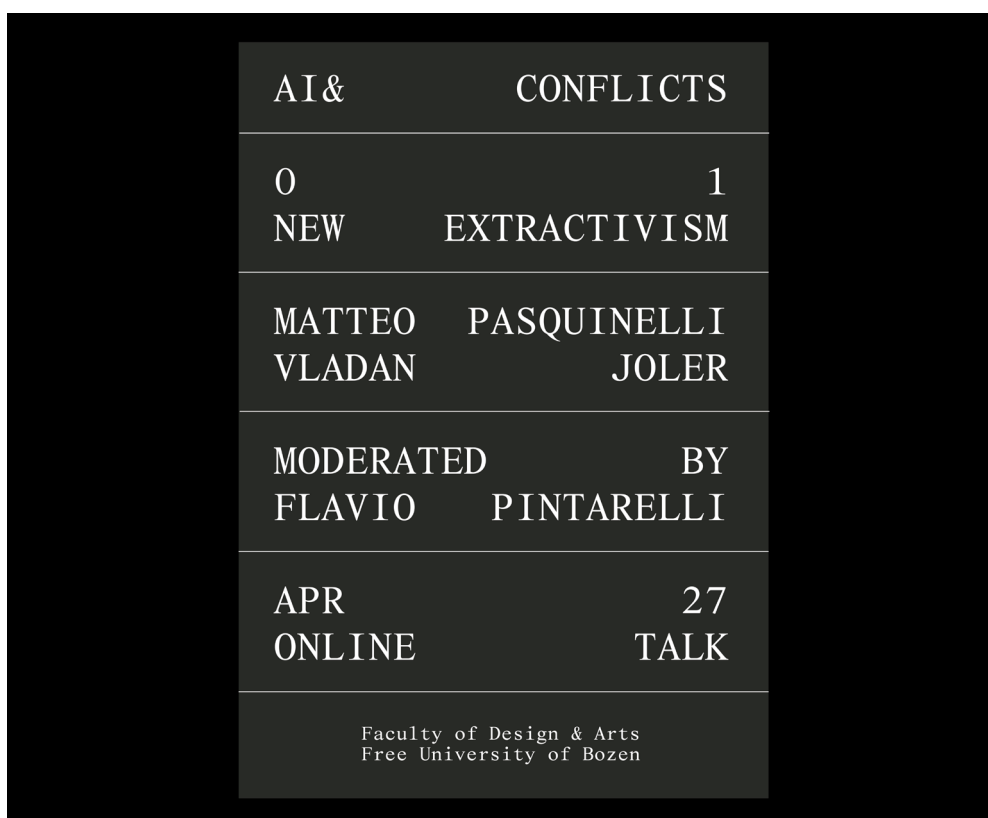
The book "AI & Conflicts. Volume 1"



Spread image from the visual essay "Artificial Remnants 2.0", by Sofia Crespo and Feileacan McCormick.

The main objectives of the outcomes are:

- creation of a collaborative and research network between authors and researchers working on these topics;
- publication of the book "AI & Conflicts. Volume 1", in collaboration with the cultural association Krisis Publishing. This publication focuses and questions the relationships between new technologies (such as AI and Neural Networks), visual epistemology, politics of information and design practices. The book collects and presents essays by: Eyal Weizman, Lev Manovich,
- Trevor Paglen, Kate Crawford and Vladan Joler, Finn Brunton and Helen Nissenbaum, Matteo Pasquinelli, Salvatore Iaconesi and Oriana Persico; and a visual essay by Sofia Crespo and Feileacan McCormick;
- organization of the following conferences:
 - "AI & Conflicts – New Extractivism". 27.04.2021. In collaboration with the Faculty of Design e Arts, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano. Guest speakers: Matteo Pasquinelli, Vladan Joler. Moderator: Flavio Pintarelli.
 - "AI & Conflicts – Artificial Truth". 07.05.2021. In collaboration with Re:Humanism, Museo MAXXI di Roma. Guest speakers: Federico



Digital poster for the conference "AI & Conflicts. 01 – New Extractivism".