Venetian Drawing Conversations

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ABSTRACT

This one-day workshop invites designers, researchers and practitioners whose work might involve design, to collectively speculate about designed artefacts and technologies through the creation of drawing conversations: visual dialogues resulting from the merging of drawings created by different people. The workshop aims to use drawing as an activity for collaborative engagement with ambiguity, interpretation and mutual learning. Through drawing activities, we aim to join in Venice's rich creative traditions, and develop speculative visualisations in order to find common grounds between the diverse research interests of our organisers and participants.

CCS CONCEPTS

• **Human-centered computing** → Interaction design.

KEYWORDS

Design, Drawing, Speculative, Collaboration

1 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

This one-day workshop aims to contribute to an established body of work that acknowledges drawing as a form of knowledge production [8, 10–12, 14, 16–21, 23–26], and that recognises collaborative drawing in particular as a useful practice for facilitating visual dialogue and shared creative engagement [3, 4, 6, 15, 16, 18, 26]. Specifically, drawing has been used to help defamiliarize research

processes and bridge gaps between practitioners from diverse backgrounds [15, 26] and our workshop will focus on identifying interdisciplinary connections and design opportunities through speculative drawing.

Our workshop builds on previous work of *Drawing Conversations* [26], which focuses on collaborative speculation through visual dialogues created between two individuals. Through Drawing Conversations, new speculative spaces are generated by merging drawings of familiar yet seemingly unrelated artefacts. Inspired by ideational drawing and art-based creative exercises [1, 5, 7], Drawing Conversations grew as a further development of *Fluid Speculations* [26], which utilises watercolour as a material for engaging with ambiguity and defamiliarization of designed artefacts. The defamiliarization of technologies through visual representations that encourage ambiguity, reinterpretation and free associations can be particularly useful for opening new spaces of *what could be*. While defamiliarization was originally proposed as a method built on literary style for narrating domestic technologies in unfamiliar formats [2]; our workshop will use drawing as a visual method for collaboratively attending to familiar artefacts and rendering them as strange in order to question assumptions and identify opportunities we might not have seen otherwise. Ambiguity has already been acknowledged as a valuable resource in design research [9, 13, 22] and our workshop will encourage a shared engagement with ambiguous spaces to stimulate creativity and collaboration.

2 SIGNIFICANCE

Methodologically, our workshop will further contribute to work on drawing as a form of creative making and practice-based research. While functional prototypes often have privileged status with interactive computing and creative technology, recent work has demonstrated how drawing and other forms of visual representation are important modes of making and inquiry in their own right [3, 6].

We believe that getting together to draw after the long period of isolation caused by the global pandemic will be a valuable way to meet in person with the research community, establish new links with other practitioners and connect with Venice, the city hosting our conference. Venice has been historically drawn and painted by both amateur and professional drafts people and artists seeking to capture its character, architectural beauty and craftsmanship. Our workshop seeks in part to join in this rich cultural tradition through hands-on drawing activities that combine collaborative imagination and speculation, and connect with the conference theme of
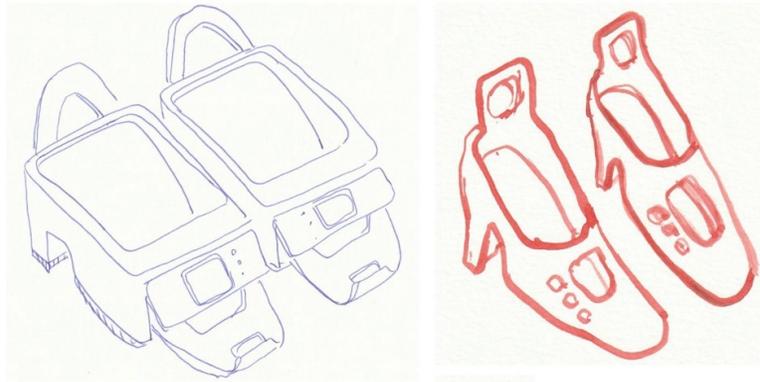
Figure 1: Drawing Conversation with an industrial designer

Figure 2: Drawing Conversation between two of the authors

"*Creativity, Craft and Design*". We believe that drawing together on the "City of Water" can be an inspiring and enriching experience, where together we can explore forms of creative inquiry. We invite anyone interested in playing with ambiguity and experimentation - regardless of their experience with drawing - to join us in this one-day workshop. We will work with a selection of drawing materials, such as markers, pens, pencils and watercolour, and encourage participants to experiment with them through drawing.

3   WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

3.1   Morning:

10-minute drawing introductions: brief introduction of materials and tips for those who may not be familiar with drawing.

Warming up: As a warming up exercise, we will each choose and draw an item related to our own research interest. We will then merge the chosen item – through drawing – with a Venetian artefact: a gondola, a pasta making machine, intercom doorbells, a carnival mask, a water fountain, etc. We will aim to produce strange drawings that will open-up ways of seeing the familiar in unfamiliar forms.

Drawing Conversations: Working in pairs, we will engage in Drawing Conversations. We will create drawings that transform the representations of our research interests and create fresh connections, reinterpretations and narratives.

Joint Lunch

3.2   Afternoon:

Group Drawing Conversations: Group work. Looking at the drawings created in the previous activities, we will collectively annotate them and consider their possible interpretations. We will redraw and refine some of our drawings and speculate about their functionalities and the experiences they may stand for. We will produce a collection of annotated drawings.

Discussion and Wrap-up: we will discuss what design opportunities our drawings may suggest and plan for possible further developments, disseminations or collaborations.

Display of our drawings for sharing with other conference participants and/or public audiences.
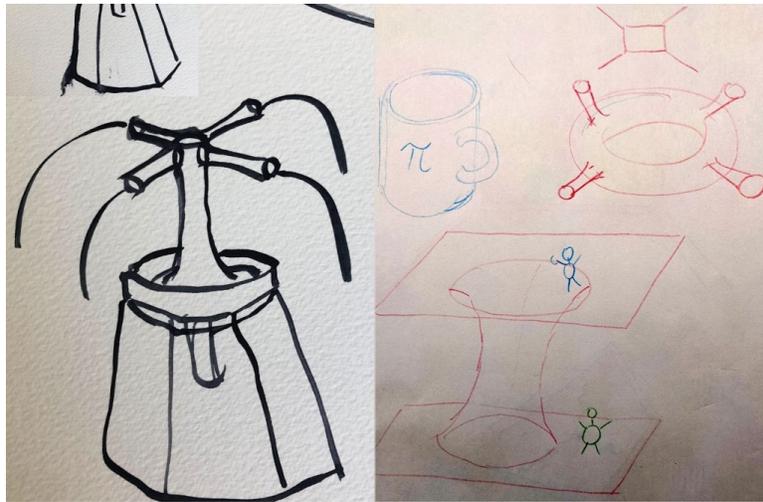
Figure 3: Drawing Conversation with quantum physicist Andreas Brandhuber

Figure 4: Drawing Conversation between two of the authors

4 GOALS

The focus of the workshop is to prompt collective free associations and speculation of ideas with a group of researchers and practitioners coming from various interdisciplinary perspectives. We aim for the workshop to be open, playful and fun, and to comfortably play and create new, strange and even silly forms or functionalities in artefacts and technologies. The activities will help us learn about each other's research interests, find connections between our work perspectives and develop fresh reinterpretations of what might have become familiar. Through discussions of themes emerged through our drawings we aim to produce a collection of annotated ideas and identify potential opportunities we may want to further pursue.

5 PRE-WORKSHOP PLANS

A website for the workshop (**www.drawing-conversations-2022.com**) has been set up, where information, call for submissions and accepted submissions is to be published.

6 VENUE REQUIREMENTS

Our workshop will require the use of a room with tables where we can draw with a diversity of materials, including watercolour or ink. We will also require some wall space to display our drawings for our discussions. If weather permits, we may try doing some of our drawings in an outdoor setting. We welcome the possibility of using a design studio or makerspace and hope their owners will be happy for us to temporarily turn the space into our own (by hanging our drawings on the walls and covering surfaces to protect them from any material that may stain).

We would greatly value the opportunity to exhibit and share our drawings with other attendees and/or members of the public. For this we would need access to a display room or area (this could

be at the Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, where the conference's artwork submissions will be displayed, or a similar venue). Ideally, we would like to be working in a room near the city's centre and arts Biennale so that we can be fully immersed in the city's cultural and arts heritage.

We will need access to paper and drawing material and will provide some of these materials ourselves.

7 CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

We will invite interested participants to submit a one-page visual/drawing of an artefact that is related to their research interest, with annotations about how it could be reinterpreted or altered. Alternatively, participants can submit a one page annotated visual presenting a research or design project that is somehow related to the workshop's themes. We encourage broad participation, including from those with little or no expertise in drawing. We especially encourage applications from researchers, scientists and creative practitioners working in or interested in areas such as:

-Experimental design methods
-Drawing as research
-Research through design: artefacts as knowledge production
-Speculative and critical design
-Ambiguity and defamiliarization
-Visualizations as design methods
-Ideation and futuring techniques
-Aesthetic interactions

Submissions should be sent to info@drawing-conversations-2022.com

8 ANTICIPATED AUDIENCE AND CHANNELS FOR PROMOTION

We invite designers, researchers, artists, technologists, and scientists to explore drawing as a form of speculative inquiry to participate in our workshop. Participants do not need prior experience with drawing to participate in this workshop. We will advertise the workshop through HCI and design email lists, social media channels, and through direct invitation. We intend to host up to 14 participants. We will select participants based on diversity in submissions.

9 POST WORKSHOP PLANS

We will document our speculative drawings and activities and publish this material through the workshop website, and on social media. Following the workshop and in collaboration with interested participants, we may want to co-write a publication, for instance a pictorial for C&C or DIS.

10 ORGANIZERS

All organizers are HCI and design researchers who use speculation and/or estrangement and defamiliarization in research-through-design. Furthermore, most of the organizers use drawing and sketching in their design research practice and have experience with the Drawing Conversations method through participating in online sessions with the first author. Several authors have experience with running workshops at ACM and other conferences.

Paulina Yurman is a designer, researcher and lecturer in industrial design at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London. She is interested in the ambivalent relationship with designed artefacts and technologies and her work adopts critical, speculative and experimental design approaches. Her *Fluid Speculations* and *Drawing Conversations* work explore drawing and the materiality of drawing as forms of speculative sense making. Paulina has a PhD in Design from Goldsmiths and an MA in Industrial Design Engineering from the Royal College of Art. Her work can be seen at www.yurman.co.uk

Marie Louise Juul Søndergaard (she/her) is a designer and postdoctoral researcher at The Oslo School of Architecture and Design, Norway. Her research explores critical and speculative approaches to imagine and design digital technologies for menstrual and sexual health. Marie Louise has co-organized workshops at CHI and DIS on topics of women's health, sexuality, futures, and more-than-human design and AI. She has a PhD in Interaction Design from Aarhus University. www.mljuul.com

James Pierce is an Assistant Professor in Interaction Design at the University of Washington. Working at the intersection of interaction design and human-computer interaction (HCI), his research integrates designing and making with qualitative empirical research, and theoretical and critical analyses. His research interests include speculative design, and the privacy, security, and ethical challenges related to interactive, networked, and data-enabled technologies.

Nadia Campo Woytuk is a PhD student in Interaction Design at KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Sweden. Her work focuses on critical and intersectional feminist design of technologies for menstrual health and intimate care. She has lead and contributed to projects involving new media art, textiles, software art, and postcolonial computing. She is currently interested in ecofeminist framings of the body and the social and environmental ecologies it entangles. https://nadiacw.com/

Anuradha Reddy is a post-doctoral researcher at Malmö University. Her research aims to understand if design research conducted as a part of maker/hacker communities and free/libre movements, can contribute to a creative critique of the data society. Through critical making, craftivism, and reappropriations of AI industry methods, she explores how participatory and collaborative media technologies can help advance civic data literacy and user empowerment. Anuradha has a PhD in Interaction Design from Malmö University and a background in Electronics Engineering and New Media Design. www.anuradhareddy.com

Matt Malpass is a designer and theorist working to advance design's agency through critical design practice. He is a Reader in Critical Design Practice at University of the Arts London, Central Saint Martins, where he leads the Industrial Design Programme. His research works to contextualize the field of critical design practice by considering the approaches used to establish the critical move through design. He advocates design's agency in tackling complex social, political and environmental problems through critical, speculative, empathetic, plural and participatory design practices. His work explores the role critical and peripheral design practice plays in expanding design's disciplinary purview. Matt is an experienced Principal Investigator, PhD supervisor, examiner and editor. He has led a number of AHRC and EU funded projects. He is regularly

called upon to comment on design issues in academic contexts, design press and popular media.

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