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WOMEN IN ACTION

Playing with Time and Limits

Experiencing Ursula Ferrara's Animation Process

Elisa Bertolotti

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Keywords

Animation, Italian Animation, Craft, Tacit Knowledge, Ursula Ferrara.

Abstract

Ursula Ferrara's body of animation work was made over the course of almost 40 years and lasts only 30 minutes in total duration. Working in solitude between Pisa and the hills of Lucca in Tuscany, she animates using her hands, frame by frame, painting and drawing onto large sheets of paper, cardboard and acetate, amongst other materials. She is recognized by many as one of the greatest living female animators, yet she is little-known outside of the animation community. Ferrara opened the doors of her studio during my doctoral research while she was working on three separate animated sequences for three independent documentaries. She was embracing the limited time available on these commissioned films as an opportunity to experiment with alternative techniques which would allow her to work faster and less inhibited, whilst remaining true to her own way of animating.

Using primary research, collated through interviews and fieldwork, this article will reflect on Ferrara's independent animation practice, the highly inventive ways she played with time and the various techniques and processes she employed during this period.

1. Ursula Ferrara. From Photography to Moving Images and Back

Ferrara was born in Pisa in 1961. Her mother was a painter and sculptor and her father was a chemist, geologist, volcanologist and photographer. As a result, art, science and technology were always a big part of Ferrara's life. From a very young age, she started to experiment with drawing, painting and photography (Bignardi, 2007). After studying graphics and photography at the Art Institute of Porta Romana in Florence, in the mid-1980's she began her career as a self-taught animator. For Ferrara, animation was the natural synthesis between drawing and photography. At that time there was nowhere to study animation in Italy, so she started to experiment independently with Polaroids, a Super 8 camera and later with a 16mm camera.

Ferrara's first film, *Lucidi Folli* (1986), was made in black and white with markers on glossy sheets of paper. Her three following films: *Congiuntivo Futuro* (1988), *Amore Asimmetrico* (1990) and *Come Persone* (1995) were drawn with pencil and paper, also in black and white. In 1997, with *Quasi Niente*, Ferrara introduced colour for the first time, creating single frames from acetate sheets painted one by one with oil pastels. From this film onwards, Ferrara's works have all been in colour, accompanied by her own original soundtracks. *Cinque stanze* (1999) and *La partita* (2002) were also made with this technique. In 2006, the director's last independent film, *News*, was completed. The work was created from thousands of individual mixed-media collage frames. In 2007 Ferrara co-created *Les inconnus dans la boite*, the only collaborative

work in her filmography.¹ In addition to her self-produced, independent films, Ferrara has created short animated sequences for several documentary films: *L'amore e Basta* (2009) by Stefano Consiglio, *Pivano Blues. Sulla strada di Nanda* (2011) by Teresa Marchesi and *La passione di Laura* (2011), directed by Paolo Petrucci.

In recent years, Ferrara has cut back her audio-visual output, because she says “[productions] are exhausting”. Despite this reduction in creativity, she recently participated in the development of a video installation entitled *Vite sospese* (2019).² The piece was made in memory of Jewish students and teachers expelled from The University of Pisa in the 1930’s because of racial laws. For this film, Ferrara produced paintings from photographic portraits of students and teachers taken in 1938. Meanwhile, Ferrara has recently returned to her first loves: experimentation with tactile film and photography processes and research into early photographic techniques. She has been working with wet plate and large format photography, transforming a van into a giant camera that also functions as a darkroom, which she named *Cameravan*. She underlines that photography, like animation, is “nothing more than the succession of one frame after another”.³

1 *Les inconnus dans la boîte* is a collaborative project made by Ursula Ferrara and Manuela Sagona in 2007 during the artistic residency *Match de Catch à Vielsalm* organized by CEC La Hesse in Belgium. The film can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZtsBhdKZOY>.

2 *Vite sospese*, video installation curated by Gianni Lucchesi, Chiara Evangelista, Ursula Ferrara, Massimo Bergamasco, Michele Emdin, Pisa, 2019. <https://www.santannapisa.it/it/event/vite-sospese-1938-universita-ed-ebrei-pisa-storie-di-docenti-e-studenti-ebrei-espulsi>.

3 From *Il “camera van” di Ursula Ferrara* by Thomas Martinelli, on Alias, Il Manifesto. <https://ilmanifesto.it/il-camera-van-di-ursula-ferrara/>.

Although not widely known outside a limited circle of animation connoisseurs, Ferrara's work is internationally recognised. She has screened her work at various prestigious film festivals, such as Cannes and Annecy, and exhibited at several solo retrospectives and international shows throughout her career.⁴

2. Solitude and Silence. The Animation Landscape in Italy

There is very little industry supporting contemporary Italian animation and as a result few animated feature films or serial projects are produced. The independent animators active in Italy today tend to support themselves by producing work for small commercial commissions, such as the development of title sequences or television advertisements. Some also self-finance their own projects, working in their own time to produce auteur films. To this day, there are still very few places to study animation as an artform in Italy and it has only become an established subject in academia relatively recently⁵ (Bendazzi & Bellano, 2017).

Ferrara is one of only a small number of internationally recognised animators working independently in Italy today. Together with fellow animators such as Gianluigi Toccafon-

4 Ursula Ferrara's films have been screened in many international film festivals, including the Torino Film Festival, Annecy Film Festival, Cannes Film Festival, The Toronto Worldwide Short Film Festival, Berlinale, London International Animation Film Festival, International Film Festival - San Francisco and the Sao Paulo Film Festival. Her works have been presented at several group exhibitions, including Hors Piste, at the Center Pompidou in Paris in 2010, as well as numerous retrospectives at, among others, Annecy, Locarno, Montevideo, Montreal.

5 The most internationally renowned animation institution in Italy is the Urbino school, a small experimental secondary school from which generations of filmmakers have emerged, including Toccafondo, Catani, Massi, Muratori and Guidi.

do, Roberto Catani, Simone Massi, Massimo Ottoni, Magda Guidi and Mara Cerri, Ferrara is considered to be an active member of the Neo-Pictorial Current (Bendazzi, 2016; Mancini, 2016). While these animators are each very distinct in their practice, the members of the Neo-Pictorial Current share some common characteristics: a deftness with painterly gestures, materials and techniques; a strong relationship with the figurative image; a fascination with the human body; an inclination to explore domestic and natural landscapes;⁶ a propensity to depict movements through fluid metamorphoses and transformations; a preoccupation with deforming and manipulating backgrounds and environments; an interest in subjective points of view; and a tendency to convey intimate, very personal stories. Perhaps most importantly these animators are also known for working in solitude often with small, self-financed budgets, usually far away from the distractions of big cities and expensive studios.

However, working in solitude is also common in the field of animation in general because the practice often requires patience and an understanding of how to be creative in isolation. As a result, the slow process of animation is sometimes spoken about as a somewhat mystic and meditative practice (Bendazzi, 1988; Dumala, 2011). This might be because the very nature the animation work is contemplative and it is often arduous, usually necessitating long periods of silence

6 The surrounding territories from which these animations were made are often evoked in the films of these artists. We can notice recurring landscapes such as the inner spaces of houses, where we can sense the hills, countryside and sea.

and concentration. The members of Neo-Pictorial Current are known to take this solitary approach to an extreme

[To do animation] you need to know how to take a very long view of the process and not be in a hurry. I am an animator because I know how to work for years on the same project, I have patience and consistency. I work every day from eight in the morning to eight in the evening, with very few interruptions. (Della Torre, 2009)

Some interpret the solitary works of these animators as acts of resistance, responding to a deep cultural, economic and social crisis in Italy. In many ways these measures of solitary resilience share similarities with the practices of the medieval amanuenses, who retreated into the quiet, secluded corners of monasteries in order to copy out ancient texts. In this sense, the work of the Neo-Pictorial Current is an expression of their own existence through intellectual and artistic means (Galbiati, 2014).

3. A closer look

I met Ferrara for the first time at a conference dedicated to her work in Milan in 2009. At this time, I was undertaking my doctoral research, investigating the practice of craft animators and how production limitations such as the availability of time, money and crew, could condition a project. My research hypothesis was that by studying the experiences and processes of craft animators, a type of technical black box (Hérbert, 2005; Wells & Hardstaff, 2008) could be activated. This black box might inspire the contemporary practices of professional animators as well as people more broadly involved with au-

dio-visual productions in general. With this in mind, I was interested to undertake a close study of Ferrara's work. Through my research, I sensed that she was pushing the margins of the mainstream storytelling and filmmaking with a unique animation practice, deeply intertwined with the act of painting.

Artists can often be reluctant to open their workshops to outsiders (Arnheim, 1962) and animators are particularly known to search for places of silence and solitude (Dumala, 2011) to carry out their work. However, there is also a tradition amongst animators to unveil the mechanisms behind their work (Bertolotti, 2012). It has been said that this tradition is in some ways connected to the ancient relationship between animators and magicians (Manovich, 2001; Willoughby, 2009; Bendazzi, 2016). These issues of privacy might partly explain why negotiating access to Ferrara's studio for a close observation of her craft took more than one year. My visits happened at a time when she was making short animated sequences for documentary films. Arranging meetings during periods of intense and complicated work required continuous rescheduling in order to avoid disturbing her and to reach her at moments of pause between the development of one process and another. I visited Ferrara several times in the period between November 2010 and November 2012. I also conducted digital interviews with her in November 2011 and at the end of January 2012, to explore some of the ideas that emerged in our face to face discussions more deeply. At that time, Ferrara was going back and forth between her home/studio in Pisa, where she was living with her daughter and husband, and a studio/workshop in the hills of the Lucca countryside.



Figure 1. Ursula Ferrara, Lucca, Italy, November 2011.

Figure 2. One of the frames from the film *La partita* by Ursula Ferrara, 2002.

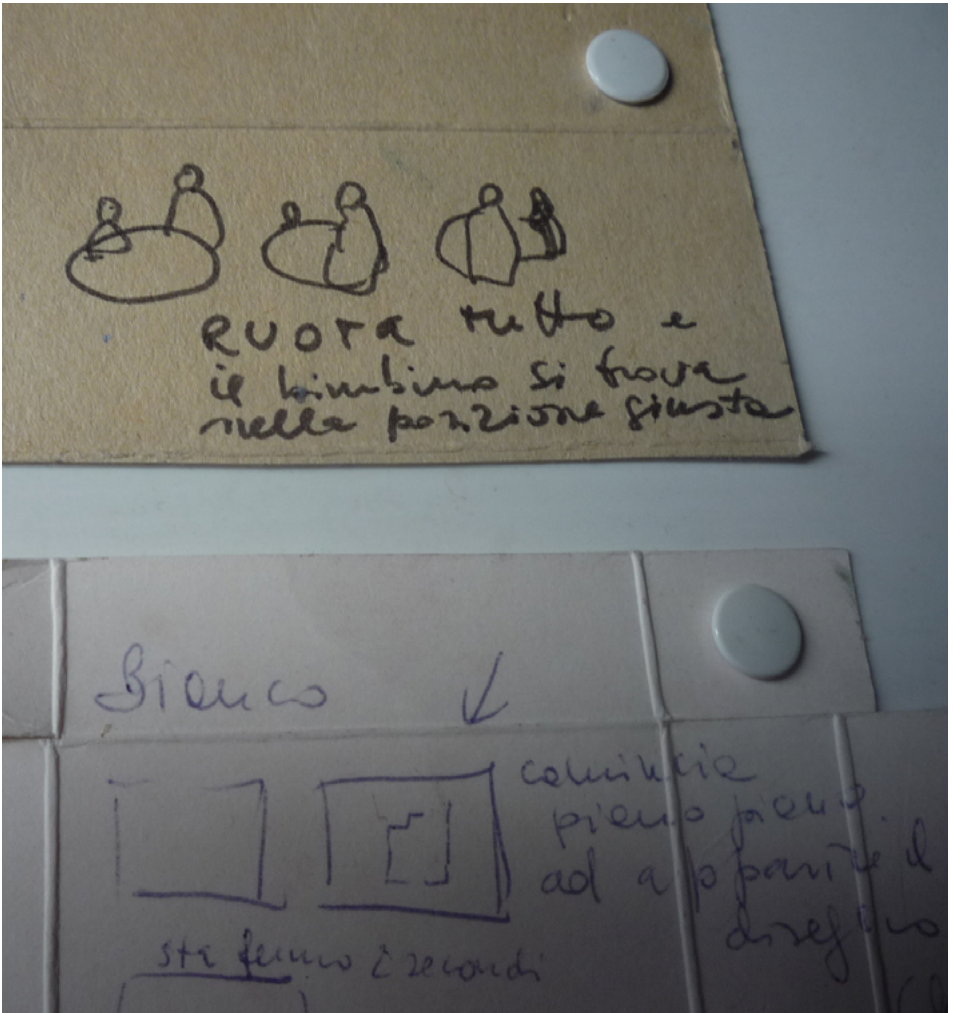


Figure 3. Photographs of Ferrara's notes and ideas, Pisa, Italy, November 2011. Her notes were sometimes drawn on the backs of medicine boxes, or disposable objects that she had to hand at the moment of finding an idea, often at night. The notes are extremely concise, utilising few words and fast sketches. They are usually for her to retain ideas, and to leave traces to return to later, they are not meant to be understood by others. When she writes too much or draws too well it means that she has not yet found the way. When she finally finds her path, her notes are very simple, with only a few words and few lines: "Usually the more important my notes are, the more indecipherable they are" (Bertolotti, 2011).



Figure 4. Some storyboard images by Ferrara, Pisa, Italy, November 2011. For her the storyboard is a synthetic visual note used in order to remember an idea. Ferrara usually works alone so does not need to communicate her ideas to clients, producers or collaborators.

Here she could work in almost total silence and tranquility, surrounded by olive trees and vineyards.

Her studios/workshops were like living collages, containing recently completed silk-screened fabrics and shelves full of colours, books and catalogues. Glued and hung to the walls of the studios were evidence of continuous iconographic research: hundreds of small drawings, cropped images, newspaper clippings, small notes, the backs of medicine boxes where ideas had been sketched in the middle of the night. The extensive archives of her past projects, with large boxes containing the frames of her films, were housed in her home and workspace. Some of the frames in the archive, such as those from the film *La Partita*, were almost a meter wide.



Figure 5. From my observation of Ferrara's studio, frames for one of Ferrara's animation interventions for the film *L'amore e basta* by Stefano Consiglio, Pisa, Italy, June 2011. This animated sequence is made from a video shot by the animator herself. Some of the frames were printed onto photographic paper and then scratched with different tools and reworked by adding acids. Depending on how much the surface was scratched or corroded, the colours imprinted on the various layers of the photographic paper are highlighted. The photographs subjected to this process were then photographed one by one, eventually becoming the frames of the animation.



Figure 6. Frames from one of the animated sequences for the film *L'amore e Basta* (2009) by Stefano Consiglio. In this case, the animation is made by painting with acrylics on page after page of an old psychiatry book. This was the only animation for Stefano Consiglio's documentary that was not created with photographic material.

At this time, Ferrara was tirelessly working on presenting and talking about her work, finding ways to communicate her practice with the public through lectures and tours of her studio. During these public unveilings of her working process, Ferrara would pull out and open her heavy archival boxes, scattering the frames haphazardly around the house, barely giving a thought to the work involved in putting everything back in order afterwards. These piles of drawings and paintings were tangible things that could be held in one's hands. This helped to demystify the process, allowing people to see animation as a physical and visible practice.

I could not see the animator actually at work, despite my requests. Only one of her sisters has been able to occasionally visit her while she animates, managing to gather rare documentary video footage of Ferrara's process. However, such observations remain infrequent because the ideation and the making require so much concentration and silence that the animator needs to be alone. My visits were therefore surveys of the spaces, tools and materials integral to Ferrara's work. Not being able to see her at work directly, meant that I would have to reconstruct her production process from story fragments. I collated these pieces of narrative through exploring her workspaces and having direct conversations with her. Since I was already very familiar with Ferrara's filmography, I focused less on her past work and more on the small commissioned films in progress at the time of my visits. In order to represent the technical work and tacit knowledge embedded in her practice, I attempted to convey Ferrara's use of time, her ways of collaborating with others and her production processes. Visualising these findings was much simpler than it might have been, had I been researching a bigger production or TV series with a larger crew. Indeed, the solitary nature of Ferrara's work gave me the opportunity to get closer to her practices and understand the communicative qualities of her audio-visual tools. One particular example of this were her storyboards. Storyboards are usually a way of visualizing and communicating an idea of a story within the context of a timeframe. In Ferrara's case, her storyboards were used less to communicate ideas to other people and used more as visual traces of an idea. In this sense the storyboards were like flashback-provokers or visual aide-memoires.

Each visit to her studio became an extended dialogue about her work. We discussed the animation and art markets, digital technologies, an animator's inherent isolation, the sheer effort involved and the many sacrifices that are made in order to create films. Ferrara applies many tools to experiment, design and animate, through both analogue processes with materials such as books, cards and pens and digital processes with equipment such as DSLR cameras, video cameras and iPads. She reiterated to me how important it was to work with high quality materials. This was almost her mantra and she often repeated the words: one must be generous with one's passions.

4. Different Times, New Techniques. An Independent Approach Meets a Commissioned Project

Ferrara's independent animations are based on a frame-by-frame approach, where every movement is created from scratch. The frames are often large in scale and are drawn and coloured by hand individually. She animates between 12 and 24 frames per second with each frame of artwork photographed painstakingly, one after the other. The sequence of images obtained through this process are very close to the final animation. Ferrara also collects and studies sounds alongside the animation process, offering her the chance to give rhythmic structure to the film as she works. This organic way of working helps her to find gaps and to go in search of sounds using a little tape recorder. When her animation and sound recordings are finished, Ferrara goes to a recording studio and collaborates with a sound engineer who helps to assemble her audio and to produce a musical score. Later on, she works with an editor to complete the final assembly of her film.

The freedom that she enjoyed with her commissioned work offered an opportunity for the animator to experiment with new rhythms and approaches. Careful not to distort her unique way of animating, she introduced a series of techniques that allowed her to work out of her comfort zone and save time. She tested the use of live action video as a means to integrate painting and drawing into her films, exploring technical approaches that had begun to emerge in the director's previous independent film, *News*. These videos served as guidelines for her animations, almost like homemade rotoscopes.⁷ The frames for these videos were printed onto various materials, such as photographic papers of different weights. This technique saved the animator much time because she did not have to build the actual animations from scratch by drawing. Ferrara explains how this sped up the process: "With a white sheet it would have taken triple, quadruple time. The calculations, the drawings, drawings [...] It's half of the time, at least" (Bertolotti, 2011).

In more than 35 years of activity, Ferrara has produced roughly 35 minutes of film, including 10 minutes of commissioned material. Her films vary between 12, 18 and 24 frames per second, meaning she has made approximately 37.800 frames in total. Each frame is an individual design, and most are created on a 21x29.7 cm format or on a 30x42 cm format.

7 Animating using as a basis frames from videos is not something that Ferrara invented, but a common practice, in both industrial and independents animation. The presence of a photographic basis can be hidden or unveiled. In the Italian Neo-pictorial wave Gianluigi Toccafondo has extensively worked in this direction, making very evident the use of printed and photocopied frames as a basis for animation, where the act of painting transforms the pictures in something else, in a continuous metamorphosis.

This means that, by an approximate calculation which excludes abandoned works, Ferrara has produced around 2.380 square meters of drawings throughout her career.

The short films made for the three documentaries increased the duration of Ferrara's entire animation output of 35 years by almost a third over three years. This gives an insight into how Ferrara approaches time within a production and suggests that the duration of a project is, for her, a specific choice at the beginning of the creative process. Ferrara works slowly because this is necessary for her research, as a craft animator. She has demonstrated that by adapting procedures and tools according to the specific requirements of a project, her production can be faster or slower. For Ferrara, time is simply another element that can be played with, a device to be manipulated and tested.

5. The Right Spot to Jump Into the Water. A Conversation Around the Process of Invention in Commissioned Works

To help describe her pre-production processes, Ferrara used the example of her animation sequences for the film documentary *Pivano Blues. Sulla strada di Nanda* (2011), which started with in-depth research into the character of Pivano, the Genoese intellectual, looking specifically at her biography. She searched for small details and evocations of memories that would help her in the development of a narrative about this character and help produce the visual skeleton of her animation. Sometimes a single word would help her in finding an image: "She always said peace and love, and so this [use of] black and white came from yin and yang.



Figure 7. Ursula Ferrara working on the main animated sequence of the film *Pivano Blues. Sulla strada di Nanda* (2011), where a young girl is running. Around 500 sheets were used for this scene, each of the frames was 30x40 cm.

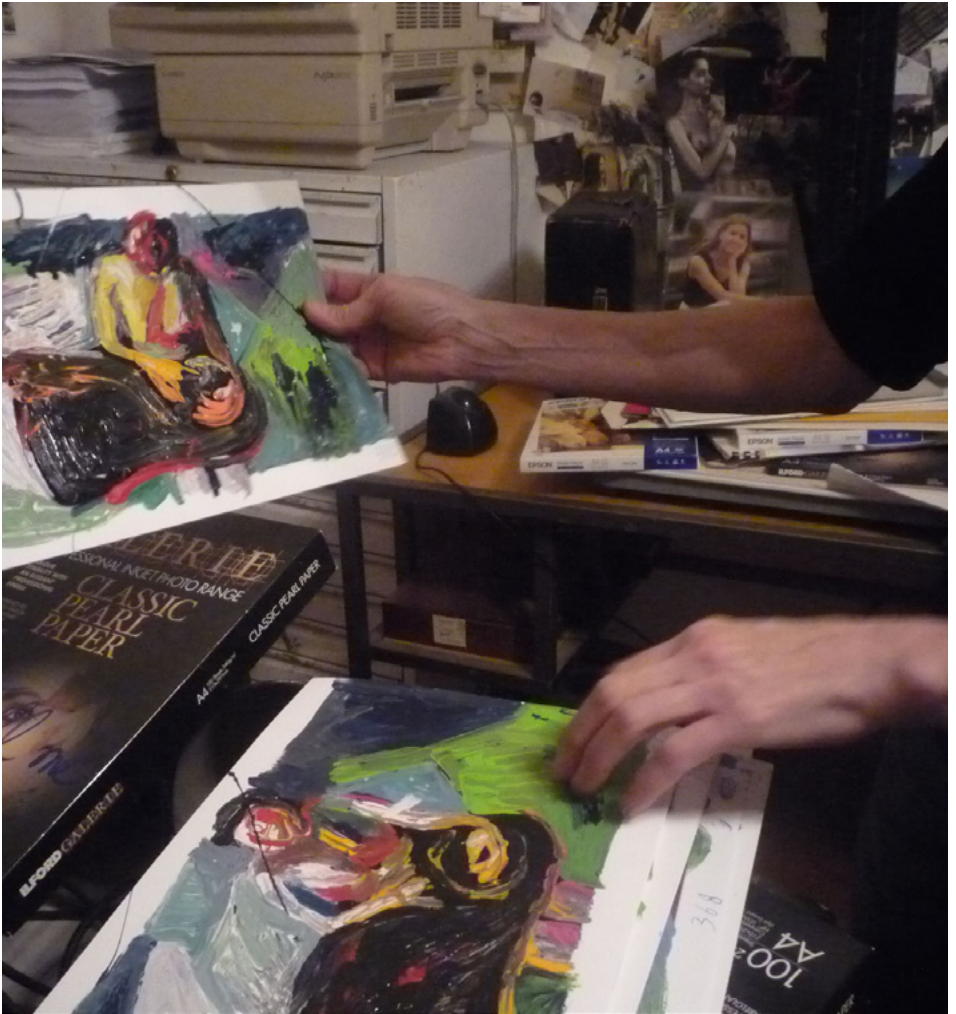


Figure 8. Frames for the main animated sequence of the film *Pivano Blues. Sulla strada di Nanda* (2011). Animating a person running from scratch is extremely time consuming. To speed up the process, Ferrara shot a video, then selected frames she needed from it and printed them onto paper. Ferrara placed acetate sheets over these frames and traced them using special acrylic paints that adhere to plastic.

I know that others may not even need these explanations, but they help me to transform them into images” (Bertolotti, 2011).

Ferrara soon realised that the most common images of Pivano were either photos from her youth or from her later years. These images, Ferrara felt, did not necessarily give justice to her complexity and liveliness. Her first attempts in depicting Pivano did not convince the animator, and she continued to explore new forms of narrative and visual representation. By weaving an abstract narrative plot, she found that the image of a running girl could represent Pivano’s vitality and energy: “Children never stand still, her life has always been full of research and activity. She runs, because life is short, she wants to do many things” (Bertolotti, 2011). This idea became a imperative device for Ferrara, almost like a rope is crucial tool for a climber. The theme was a critical implement to rely upon and with which to continue the long ascent of building a story: “hook onto it, like a climber hooks into an iron nail. Then from there the rope is long, for climbing, climbing”. It was at this time that she started to write down various aspects of Pivano’s life, almost as a stream of consciousness:

The college degree: in what? Moby Dick. Whale. Melville. Water. I add water. Water. Blue. Then what did she translate? Hemingway. [...] She used to go fishing. Always sea. What happened? A sailboat turned upside down and she went under the sea. She was the only one laughing, while her father and mother were very worried. Then she crosses the sailboat under the sea upside down, chased by a whale, which in turn is killed and turns into one of those fish that

Hemingway caught. Hemingway. Bullfight. The image of the bull.
She keeps running, running. (Bertolotti, 2011)

Ferrara says that one of the hardest things for her to achieve is finding the correct narrative path to pursue. The story has to sound engaging in order to work because otherwise the risk is that things can become too confusing. As a result, the ideation process is long, and is made up of a wealth of research material and notes. However, once Ferrara has found the direction for the story, the rest of the creative process is downhill. Drawing is the easy part, because it is comparatively quick: “With drawing there is always its difficulty. But you jump into the water and swim. The problem is the exact point to throw yourself into the water, without hitting a rock” (Bertolotti, 2011).

Ferrara’s creative process seems to take place in a constant working routine that requires a great mental effort. Although exhausting, she finds that if she tackles this process in the right way, moments of inspiration can appear like a lightning bolt: “It’s as if nothing ever happens, nothing ever happens, but at an unconscious level there’s work, the flow goes. And at a certain point, as if a tap were turned on, it’s all clear, all connected. At that point you only get it if you do all the other steps” (Bertolotti, 2011).

6. Conclusions

Materiality and immateriality seem to be intrinsic to the practice of Ferrara. On the one hand, the materiality of her animation work is exemplified through physically drawing or painting vast numbers of frames. On the other hand, Fer-

rara fears the immaterial nature of the completed film and is concerned by the risk that the animation may disappear due to a human or computer error. The animator's choice to create frames on large, bulky sheets of paper addresses these tensions in some ways. The tangible process somehow opposes the immateriality a film which, when finished, may soon fade away, eventually becoming lost or ruined.

It is important to Ferrara that each of her frames are elements that can be touched, they are blank sheets of cardboard on which she can intervene. Her way of animating demonstrates how control over a work can be achieved through the use of touch and in this way she researches the creative role of the hand. With her hands Ferrara learns, invents, builds and makes. These manual acts are almost her way of taking possession of the universe, becoming a kind of 'tactile flair' (Focillon, 1934). Her work is a tangible exploration that connects with our original ways of knowing and sensing the world around us through movement (Focillon, 1934; Sennett, 2008; Ingold, 2008 & 2011). However, while this may be a romantic notion, there is nothing romantic about the hard, repetitive and physically demanding challenges involved in craft animation (Hosea, 2019).

Learning about these uniquely physical aspects to her practice was a means to activate a 'technical black box' of experiences (Hébert, 2005; Wells & Hardstaff, 2008) that might help inspire others in the field. In addition, it was a way of gaining a holistic overview of some of the audio-visual methods employed by solitary animation practitioners.

Ferrara stresses that animation is hard work, which requires patience and dedication. Her career testifies the importance of slowness in order craft a well-made work which is reflective and imaginative (Sennett, 2008). By proposing alternative technical processes and production methods, and by creating offbeat visual and narrative worlds, Ferrara is at the forefront of a quiet poetic resistance. In an audio-visual landscape that tends to be predictable and familiar (Wells & Harstaff, 2008), there is an essential need for difference, variation and contrast. The film world, like the Earth itself, needs and thrives on biodiversity. It is not just about selecting which of the many possible stories we choose to tell, but about how the story is made, how it is technically constructed and, perhaps most importantly, how it is told, from a poetic point of view.

Ferrara, with her 35 minutes of film made over 40 years, goes to the heart of this creative matter. She silently invites us to question everything, starting by asking ourselves if making something is really necessary, and if so, what we want to do, why and how.



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IV

BIOGRAPHIES

Anna Barbara

Architect and Associate Professor in Interior and Spatial Design at Politecnico di Milano. She has been visiting professor at Tsinghua University, School of Art and Design, Beijing (China); Kookmin University, Seoul (South Korea); Hosei University, Tokyo (Japan) and many other international universities. She was Canon Foundation Fellow 2000 in Japan. Awarded by Premio Borromini, selected by Archmarathon and ADI-Index 2019. Sense/time_based design is her the main topic developed in education, conferences, publications, curatorship and professional works.

Author of *Storie di Architettura attraverso i sensi* (Bruno Mondadori, 2000), *Invisible Architectures. Experiencing places through the senses of smell* (Skira, 2006) and *Sensi, tempo e architettura* (Postmedia Books, 2012), *Sensefulness, new paradigms for Spatial Design* (Postmedia Books, 2019) and many other publications.

In 2021 she will launch with POLIdesign the first international course in Olfactive Spatial Design.

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Elisa Bertolotti

Elisa Bertolotti works with storytelling, moving image and communication design. With a Ph.D and postdoc from Politecnico di Milano, Elisa is currently teaching design at the University of Madeira, Portugal.

She is also co-curator of the Atlantic Wonder research program, focusing on alternative methods for learning outdoors and developing new ways to foster innovation between design and the natural sciences.

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Letizia Bollini

PhD in Industrial Design and Multimedia Communication (Politecnico di Milano). Associate professor of Communication/Interaction/Transmedia Design at the Faculty of Design and Art, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano.

Research and design topics since 1995: interaction, experience, multimodal interface design, visual, social and spatial representation, with a strong focus on tech evolution, and accessibility in the field of Cultural and Intangible Heritage and Archives. Previously researcher at the Department of Psychology of the University of Milano-Bicocca (Theory and Technology of Communication; Psychosocial Science of Communication), professor at the Politecnico di Milano and faculty member of the HEC in User Experience Design, the University of Bologna (Internet Science) and the Milan State University (Digital Communication).

Coordinator of the Commission "Theoretical, historical and critical research and editorial projects" of the ADI Design Index, preselection of the Compasso d'Oro Award.

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Valeria Bucchetti

She is Full Professor at the Design Department of Politecnico di Milano where she teaches "Visual Communication" in the Communication Design Degree and "Communication Design and Gender Culture" in the Design Master Degree (School of Design); she is Chair BSc + MSc Communication Design.

Her interest involves visual and gender identities in communication design field. She studies theoretical aspects of identity systems and their communication components and developed projects of basic and applied research. She is a member of the Ph.D Design board and of "Centro di Ricerca interuniversitario Culture di genere".

She won the "Compasso d'Oro" Design Award as co-author of the project for the multimedia catalogue of the Poldi Pezzoli Museum (Milan, 1995) and received Honourable Mention, Compasso d'Oro ADI (XXV), for the project "WeMi. La città per il welfare". She is author of several books: *La messa in scena del prodotto* (1999), *Packaging design* (2005), *Altre figure. Intorno alle figure di argomentazione* (2011), *Anticorpi comunicativi* (2012), *Un'interfaccia per il welfare* (2017), *Progetto e culture visive* (2018).

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Francesca Casnati

PhD Candidate at the Design Department of Politecnico di Milano, she works in the research area involving communication design and stereotypes concerning social discriminations, specifically gender discriminations.

After the master degree in Communication Design, with a thesis about gender stereotypes in the communication field, she joined the research group DCxCG (Communication Design for Gender Cultures) contributing to projects on gender issues

and supporting the teaching activity on some courses at the School of Design – Politecnico di Milano – including the Communication Design and Gender Cultures course of the master degree.

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Paola Ciandrini

Archivist and record manager by training and profession, member of the DAP Digital Archives Perspectives group of the Università di Macerata, curator of the Ibridamente.it project. Contract professor in Università di Macerata for Master FGCAD, contract professor in APD School of the Archivio di Stato of Milan. Research lines: records management system design, historical archives valorisation.

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Cinzia Ferrara

Architect and Visual Designer, Cinzia Ferrara holds a PhD in Industrial Design: she is Assistant Professor in the Department of Architecture at the University of Palermo, where she performs a series of duties such as conducting research on Visual Communication Design and holding courses for both the BA in Industrial Design and the MA in Design & Culture of the Territory. She's also the course leader for a series of masters and workshops, and an organiser of cultural events, conferences and exhibitions. From 2015 to 2018, she has been National President of Aiap (the Italian Association for Visual Communication Design) after serving as Vice President from 2009 to 2015. In 2017, she was one of 100 designers selected to be World Design Ambassadors for the Italian Design Day.

She's author of books and essays published on national and international journals: she's also part of editorial committees, observatories and European projects. She lives and works in Sicily, which is a continent, rather than just an island.

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Marinella Ferrara

PhD, associate professor of product design in the School of Design of the Politecnico di Milano. Since 2014 she has been the head of MADEC, the Research Centre of Material Design Culture in the Department of Design. Her researches are mainly focused on design-driven innovation, design for materials (advanced and smart materials), news technologies integration in product and interior design, Future Design Scenarios. With her research, she has made a significant contribution to methodologies of Design for Materials and historiographical work. Moreover, she deals other research topic like the design in Mediterranean countries, gender issues in design and Design History.

Co-founder of *PAD. Pages on Arts & Design* journal, since 2011 she has been the PAD editor in chief. Since 2015 to 2017 she has been a member of ADI's executive board, and currently coordinates the technical-scientific committee for long-life professional training of design professionals.

Since 2019 she has been a member of the executive committee of *AIS/Design. Storia e Ricerche* scientific journal.

Authors of more than 140 scientific publications, she is a member of scientific committees in international conferences, reviewer for international scientific journals, and research evaluator for academic research application in NL and PT.

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Maria Àngels Fortea

PhD in Design at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the Barcelona University (UB) and Degree on Advertising and Public Relations in the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB). She is titular professor of the Design Degree and Coordinator of the Master's Degree in Research and Design Experimentation of Design College of Barcelona.

In the research field, she is member of GREDITS (Design and Social Transformation Research Group). She has specialized on Historical and Historiographical Research of Design. Her research work is focused on Pop Art Design, and specifically on the development of graphical Pop Art in Catalonia and Spain as a result of her PhD thesis.

She is currently interested on research projects that seed to make visible the contribution of female graphic designers.

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Francesco E. Guida

Assistant professor at Politecnico di Milano (Department of Design, School of Design, Bachelor in Communication Design), he is secretary of the BSc + MSc Communication Design Courses. PhD in Design and Technology for the Enhancement of Cultural Heritage, he has more than 25 years of experience as a graphic design consultant.

Board member of Aiap (the Italian Association for Visual Communication Design), actually he is coordinator of activities and researches for the Graphic Design Documentation Centre (Aiap CDPG). Since 2013 he is a member of the editorial committee of *AIS/Design. Storia e Ricerche* journal and since 2014 of *PAD. Pages on Arts & Design* journal.

Starting from 1997 his contributions on graphic design and visual communication are published in journals, books and conference proceedings.

His main research activities are in the fields of visual identities, speculative and experience design, and graphic design micro-histories.

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Chella Quint

She is a Brooklyn, US-born, Sheffield, UK-based designer, writer, performer, researcher and founder of the Period Positive movement. In between performing feminist sketch comedy and studying for an MA in Education, she coined the term 'period positive' to describe the zeitgeist of her zines, art and craftivism, and developed the concept into a well-known desing initiative and campaign to find long-term solutions to menstrual illiteracy. She launched the first annual Period Positive Week in May 2019.

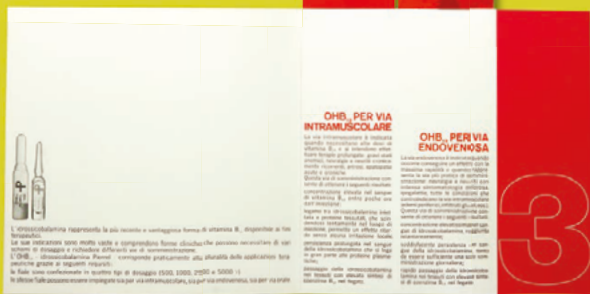
She has recently joined Lab4Living's 100 Year Life and Future Home project at Sheffield Hallam University. Her doctoral research explores ways to navigate aging and lifecycle changes where embodied shame can be a barrier to agency in co-design. She co-hosts the annual Sheffield Zine Fest and her zines are held in a number of international zine libraries and collections. She performs and exhibits regularly at science, literary and comedy festivals.

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TI SENTI POCO BENE? AIAP HA TUTTE LE SOLUZIONI PER TE. SCOPRILE.



Aiap CDPG, the *Graphic Design Documentation Centre*. Working to collect, catalogue, archive, enhance and promote any documents related to graphic design and visual communication. These documents (originals as well layouts of projects, books, posters, prints, catalogues, correspondence, photographs) help reconstruct the history of graphic design in Italy and support research and educational activities, as it is the CDGP's intention to make these documents widely available.



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