WORKSHOP
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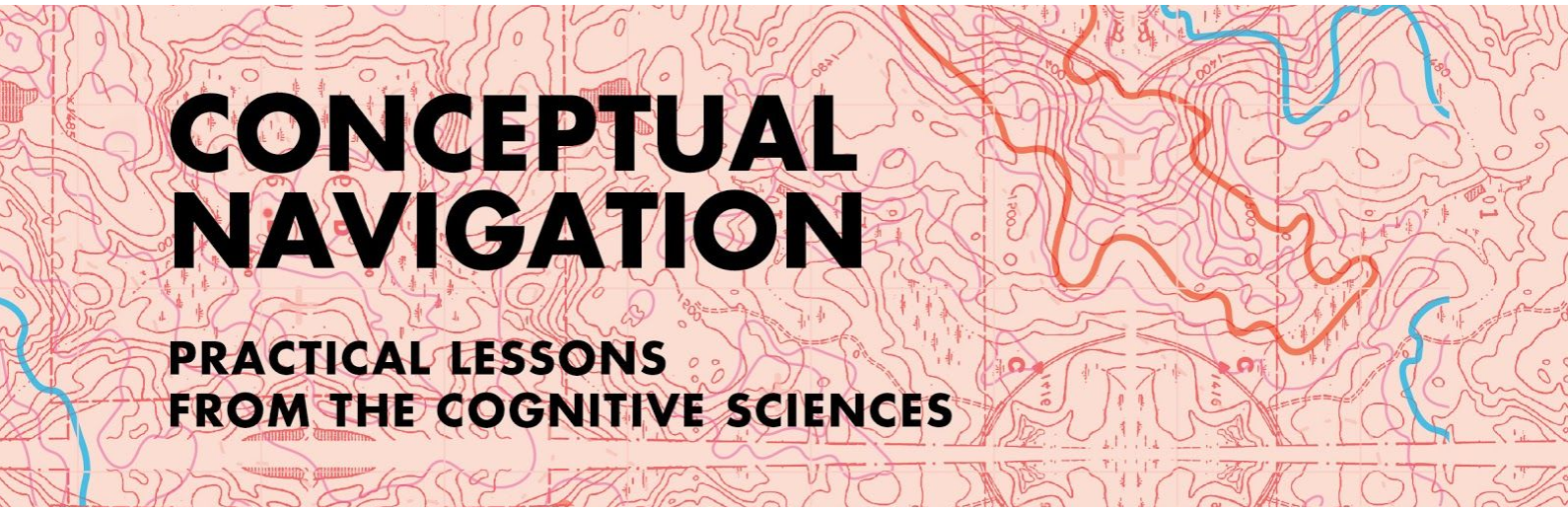

CONCEPTUAL NAVIGATION

PRACTICAL LESSONS FROM THE COGNITIVE SCIENCES

ABSTRACT:

The native language of our mind isn't reason or logic but poetry. For our mind, rhythm and metaphors are more basic than deduction or syllogism. Our brain's signature isn't its capacity to process information but its power to create meanings and imagine the world through them. These meanings emerge out of the interaction between our bodies and the environment. Brain-body-environment takes part in an ecosystem in which thoughts are born, grow up, mate, breed and perish.

This ecological vision of our mind that arises from the different Cognitive Sciences allows us to understand some of the resources we use to think, to interpret the world and to create in it. In this workshop we explore some of the advances in the Cognitive Sciences to propose different strategies that can help us navigate our mental spaces more fluidly and effectively, fostering a productive imagination in the service of creative thinking. We will learn to apply consciously some of the mechanisms we use subconsciously in our creative processes.

OBJECTIVE:

The first goal of this workshop is to gain a deeper and broader understanding of how we think. A view that places the body-environment interaction at the core of all cognitive processes. This view affords us a more tangible appreciation of the workings of our mind and sets the stage for the second goal: to provide participants with a set of tools for navigating their mental spaces with greater fluency and control, and thus creating more opportunities for generating new connections and novel ideas.

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CONTENT:

The content of this workshop is organised around the tools and exercises proposed to the participants. These tools and exercises vary depending on the duration of the workshop and the participants' needs. For clarity, here we present the content structured in four thematic blocks of theoretical nature:

1. **Anatomy**: A brain in a bucket is not a brain. Our thoughts emerge from a brain in a body. The characteristics of our bodies, brains and the environment they are embedded in shape what and how we think.

   With different experiments, we challenge the participants' assumptions regarding how we think and perceive the world. We shift from a static world of objects to a dynamic world of interactions.

2. **Categorization:** Categories articulate our thoughts. In a reality that presents itself as a continuous assault on our senses, we must abstract differences to see sameness and magnify differences to see singularities.

   By appreciating how the categories we use transform the very way we understand reality, participants will learn the importance of playing with categories.

3. **Conceptual Metaphors:** Metaphors give birth to abstract concepts. It is through metaphors that we are able to go from the very literal experiences to the most abstract concepts. Metaphors allow us to think and talk about what we cannot point at.

   Participants will learn to exploit the power of metaphors: to experience and think about the world in fluid and novel ways.

4. **Diagrams:** Diagrams sit evenly between our conceptual inner world and the physical outside environment. Diagrams help us put our thoughts into the world and the world into our thoughts. They fixate our ideas on paper so that we can set them in motion, question them and experiment with them.

   Through exercises, participants will learn that the power of diagrams not only lies in the clarity but also in their ambiguity. Diagrams promote better questions.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Students and professionals who understand their craft as a space of creativity in which existing solutions are the starting point from which to explore and propose new questions.