



Research Cluster: Trans-Form – exploring design, art and social practices for political and eco-social transitions | Timespan: 2017 - 2018

Futurist editorial experimentations: Fortunato Depero and Depero Futurista

Team

PI: [Gianluca Camillini](#)

External partners: University of Reading, UK

More information: design-art@unibz.it

Following a long period that had seen him involved in various professional collaborations since the early 1920s, in 1927 Futurist artist Fortunato Depero (1892-1960) decided that the time had come to take stock of what he had achieved up until that point; he did this by publishing a book which sought both to celebrate his multi-disciplinary output and help promote his artistic activity.

The result was Depero Futurista (fig. 1), perhaps “his masterpiece, [...] the most memorable” work of Depero’s career and one that, in time, would pique the interest of both academics and non-academics[1] .

Depero Futurista is a work of art in the form of a book, a tool for publicising and celebrating its author, the Futurist Fortunato Depero, a hybrid condition that makes it a common study text for art and design disciplines, a popular icon that has also attracted the interest of a non-specialist public but which has never really been analysed in detail.



Figure 1: Depero, F. 1927. Depero Futurista. Milan: Dinamo Azari. Front cover.

Starting from this premise, the aim of this study is to examine Depero Futurista by Fortunato Depero, examining the book in greater depth than existing studies.

To do this I divided my research into two distinct parts: part one takes an objective analytical approach in order to provide an exhaustive description of exactly what Depero Futurista is², analysing the way in which it was defined by historians and examining the graphical and artistic context, with a particular attention to the forms of typography and publishing that developed around the time of the book's release in order to understand the circumstances in which it was published. Finally, my analysis moves onto the book as an object, focusing on its formal features - its structure, typefaces and layout - and on the creative typesetting and printing processes that led to its creation.

In contrast to this first descriptive part, the second part is more conversational and reflective in tone. I go beyond the objectivity of the book and use Depero Futurista as a research index from which I extrapolate other areas of interest, pulling out pages that refer to a certain topic and developing my arguments about it.

By 'index' I mean a list of research topics connected with Depero Futurista and Depero which are drawn directly from the book's content. Beginning with specific content from the book I aim to show how this bookwork specifically corresponds with existing historical and critical accounts of Depero's work. In particular, my aim here is to show how this bookwork might add something important to the existing accounts and, as part of this, might act as a multi-faceted contextual and reflective device as well as an experimental formal exercise of book design and production.

The project results have been featured and presented in national as well as international contexts among which: BoltedBook.com, Thames&Hudson, Designers&Books, TipolItalia, University of Reading, IUAV - Venezia, Progetto Grafico, Galleria121+, La Triennale di Milano, Immagini? Brixen.

Footnotes:

[1] Heller, S. 2017. 'Depero: Futurista'. In Depero Futurista Reader's Guide. Pp. 7-9. New York and London: Designers&Books and Thames&Hudson

[2] Exploiting what I have already explored in my previous research project (2015-2016)