Hi, I'm Mauro Porcini. PepsiCo's Chief Design Officer. Join me for our new series, where we dive into the minds of the greatest innovators or time. With the goal of finding what drives them in their professional journey and in their personal life, trying to uncover the universal truths that unite anyone attempting to have a meaningful impact in the world. This is In Your Shoes.

I work with data as a storytelling and narrative material. I feel that data, if you see it as an abstraction of reality, it can reveal hidden patterns of our own human nature and society, that we can then understand better.

I'm I'm quoting today's guests, an Italian born information designer, and advocate for data humanism.

Before joining Pentagram as a partner in 2019, she co-founded Accurat, an acclaimed data driven research, design and innovation firm with offices in Milan and New York.

In addition to working with companies like IBM, Google and the United Nations, she has received awards and honors from the Kantar Information is Beautiful Awards, the the Cannes Festival of Creativity, Milan Design Week, and the Design Museum Beazley. In 2018, she joined MIT media lab as directors fellow and was named one of the first companies, 100 most creative people in business. She's also a member of the world economic forum's Global Future Council on New Metrics and the Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. Her work is in the permanent permanent collections of the Cooper Hewitt and the Museum of of Modern Art.

She's a co-author of Dear Data and the new interactive book Observe, Collect, Draw: A Visual Journal.

And her Ted Talk on humanistic data has over 1 million views. She holds a master's degree in architecture and earned a PhD in design at Politecnico de Milano.

Georgia Lupi, Welcome to In Your Shoes.

Thank.

Thank you Mauro, ciao Mauro, it's my pleasure.

It's really, really a pleasure to have you with us today. So the first question I want to ask you is, is what is an information designer? There are many business people that for sure don't know what we're talking about. And, but I'm sure also many designers eventually the beginning of their journey in the design world, they're trying to figure out exactly what kind of designers they will be. I think they would be very inspired by this idea of an information designer, what you do in an extraordinary way.

Yeah, well, um, I think there's many different definitions of information design and what an information designer is

depending on what industry you work on. I define myself as an information designer in the sense that every day I work with data. Qualitative, quantitative big data or small data. Data that organizations that I work with, um, sometimes already have, or most of the times actually data that are crafted and collected by myself and my team in collaboration with our clients and data that then we represent visually through data visualization, interactive experiences with these data visualization, both in the physical and digital space. So really encompassing all of the aspects of like different design output, but all of the time using data as a, for lack of a better word, I would say a storytelling material. Um, and, and that really means from a design perspective, give people who are not as expert in data, access to information and access to data through design and through visual representation. So you make them more accessible, user-friendly, eventually even more enjoyable. You, you talk about humanizing data. actually, Yeah and that's my hope. I think, uh, there's a lot to say about data, especially in this very moment in time, but data is or actually, you know, I have to start saying data are cause to me, data are really plural. So the data is it's also something that we can talk about it, but data are really beautiful and data come.

From.

And, uh, and there really, and data are really always about people. So I think even giving them back to people and making them accessible, enjoyable, um, you know, making them a new source of knowledge is a, I think it's a great, uh, job to have.

So give us some examples, actually, I'm going to help you with that to start. You didn't like too much the way Governor Cuomo was presenting his data in the middle of COVID, what happened there. tell us the story.

So, um, you know, if you, if you were in New York or if you have followed anything about New York at the beginning of the pandemic, uh, Governor Cuomo started to have daily presentations and became pretty famous for his slide, his PowerPoint, and, uh, in all of his PowerPoints with his punchlines about New York strong and how, you know, we we're all gonna make it, uh, which I think, you know, then we can talk about Cuomo, but I think we sort of like needed that at the beginning of the pandemic, having a leader. Um, he also in these PowerPoint slides had always the same charts. One about the number of hospitalizations, uh, about, um, actually the, the ratio of infection and numbers about the number of people who died. Um, and I have to say that we've

been with my team inspired by that, and it's not a critique to his slides in the sense that we didn't appreciate it, but we started to ask ourself how about like giving, and this was a speculative project, giving people access to so much more, because many times with these big numbers that we have just numbers of hospitalizations, they're kind of like numbers in a vacuum. And so we started to add some layers of data that actually the administrations had about the number, the number of infections, the number of tests made because obviously like the positive and the negative test and the number of tests made, in.

Comparison to the population were as important number of hospitalization, but also number of people that then got out of the hospital because they got cured. So really layering, uh, other information that could give people a better understanding on the context, how this data has been collected and how the number of hospitalization. Again, there was a raw number needed to be interpreted in any moment of time. Then there was a second part, he um, and the middle of his talk, every day paused then with a serious and very, I would say grave tone, um, said a number. 755 people died, uh, yesterday. And he only had the number, uh, on these slides and what we tried to do, is truly quantifying these slides. And so our redesign of that part was actually, uh, adding little dots, imperfect dots as human lives, um, to the visualization.

And then after that, I guess it was after that you did this project called Happy Data, right? It's called Happy Data and it's connected once again to the COVID crisis and also to the George Floyd killing and the Black Lives Matter movement. Can you tell us more about that?

Well, during the pandemic, again, with my team, we embraced a few speculative projects. So self-initiated projects because we wanted to respond as designers to what was going on. And like one was actually, again, the speculative redesign of Cuomo's PowerPoint. And another one after a few months of the pandemic was, um, the look for Happy Data, like going to look for positive statistics that could actually cheer us up in a world that was actually really grim. And these didn't want to be a Pollyanna project. We knew the gravity of the situation, but we also felt that everybody, uh, looking out from their windows and being in lockdown for months was in the lookout for positive statistics. So Happy Data is a series of hand drawn visualizations, where every day we were looking for positive, uh, statistics about people who donated their time, volunteers helping out, uh, in the health care system, but also when the Black Lives Matter movement, um, you know, really

started, a statistics about how people got together in Lakefield communities. And we would draw a hand drawn these little charts onto windows that have been submitted by people, windows looking outside. So it was really our idea in lockdown to look outside the window for positive and happy data. And it got, it got pretty viral in the sense that people really started to submit their own windows, submit their own data, uh, and, and became a serious that I think, you know, cheered up, uh, some of our days.

And did it help you also to understand something more about the pandemic, about the Black Lives Matter situation on top of accessing the data, did you learn something out of this exercise?

Yes. I think that, um, with the work that we do, um, it is always a learning process because if you think about it, it's like every time immersing yourself in a topic. And as you go and look for the data you read about the context you read about who are the people that are making these data, uh, you read about your organizations that are promoting these data. And I think that with a pandemic, um, the more you look for data is really to me, the more you look for stories. And so really we, it helped contextualize, um, you know, what was going on in the city, even if we were all in lockdown at home, and the many people that would actually in the frontline, which was really an incredible number that some times maybe we forget, uh, so that really helped contextualizing all the efforts.

And I think it helped, uh, at least to me and to us, giving us a sense that the country really wanted to rebuild and they wanted to build again, resilience and strength. Um, really probably at doubling down on connections and communities and the most bottom up type of helps. At least, you know, these, these were the statistics that we were looking for. I think there was also a deep sense of obviously wanting to connect and many of these volunteer initiatives, uh, I think embraced this idea that we all want to be together in the rebuild of, you know, what we know being the post COVID world. Are we in a post COVID world? I don't know,

In transition more or less. By the way, opening up parentheses is crazy or fast. We're getting out of the COVID mode, the mask and distancing and everything. Thanks to the vaccination in New York city. Uh, and I remember many conversations happening in the middle of the pandemic about the fact that we won't go back to public spaces. We won't to go back to restaurants, right. I mean, there is an explosion of people going back at the speed of light too. There are some human needs, by the way, defined

by a human scientist in a very clear way, you can just read the Maslow pyramid to understand what drives us. You can't change with a, with a crisis, with a war, with a pandemic with, with anything like this,

But it's totally true. And I think, you know, we've seen it. It's, uh, there's always this personal evaluation of benefits and risk and how scared you are and how much inside, your so itchy to get back to something that feels like normal. I mean, we could open up topics that are like probably relatively touching upon design that are about our mental health, our collective mental health that, you know, up to a certain point need to be as important as physical health if we wanted to, you know, survive and thrive. So, yeah, I, especially in New York city right now, we're seeing a world that to me looks like pretty much like pre-pandemic besides maybe wearing masks on public transportation.

No, uh, with the work you do in design with information and data, there is also a very important responsibility. There is a responsibility with any work of any designer working on anything. But especially when you manage information, you can use design to push a content or the order. This is true for any kind of design applied to the world of information content. You know, sometimes, eventually some data were missing because certain people were trying to push a certain agenda, certain kind of information. So it's more that data you decide to visualize and how much emphasis you want to put on each data that you visualize. And now you make them accessible to people. Uh, you can push the meaning or the order, or the right content or the order. So there is an ethical responsibility. It can be used for the good, or it can be used for the bad. What's your point of view on this?

This is, this is the never ending conversation. I think, first of all, I would like to start by saying that, um, in all of the situation when you work with data, you need to remind yourself and the people you work with and the people who will have access to the data through your design, the data are not objective. Data are never the real truth. They're always a filtered representation of reality. And they're always in primarily human made because even if they come from a sensor, a human being, as you mentioned, designed the sensor and decided what to collect and what to leave out. So the life course of a data set is in any case, a journalistic effort in a way, an authorial perspective from the very beginning of the data collection. So if this is the premise and we are understanding that data are an amazing material that can help us having more facts to tell a story, well I think then the point of view

changes and then, time by time, client by client, situation by
situation, you need to be, I think, rigorous to the data. And
so not manipulate what's in the data, but understanding the very
goal at hand, and again, understanding your audience.
You're very through, true design can push, uh, one aspect or the
other. You can represent a data set in so many different ways.
You can include the emphasis on the chronological, let's say,
sequence of.
The events, or you can put the emphasis on the ranking of the
events, or you can put the emphasis on the categories. And
so once more, I think the more we are able as designers to
educate the final population and the readers about the
subjectivity of data and the more people will learn how to
speak data in a way, the more, I think even these choices become
less scary, but really become just part of the process. And as
designer, as a designer, you just really need to be very
upfront and transparent about your sources about your
methodologies. But again, we also need to, and this is really
a topic that I care about a lot, um, make the global population
data fluent and data literate, not only on how to read a chart,
but really on how to ask themselves critical questions
about how the data got collected, interpreted,
designed, and represented in the end,
Talking about data... They, there is a... There is some
people that think that the combination between data and
then artificial intelligence may replace designers. May replace
the need of human interaction, both in the way you represent
the data themselves and then in the way you interpret them and
you use them to create any kind of solution. New product, new
service, a new piece of content. Obviously they are thinking
about an advanced artificial intelligence, not probably what
we have today. I mean, it's too early. What's your point of view
on this? I have a very strong one but I'.ll ask you first!
Definitely and then let's have a conversation about it. I mean,
it's, it's very risky. It's very tricky. I also think though that
as every technology, again, for lack of better word, that has
been introduced on the planet, there's always this bubble
moment where, uh, we are faced with the fear that this
technology will replace humans. I mean, this is starting from
the industrial revolution, like, and I think we've seen how the
very fundamental human needs, human drives and human questions
and really goals, uh, up until now at least have survived the
bubbles of technology. Well, now the situation I think is similar
with this like caviat that is artificial intelligence can all
can almost replace human decisions, but I think that,
again, more and more, we will be able to understand the biases

that go into designing algorithms for any artificial intelligence process. And so starting from that, we will design algorithms that will serve human purposes, hopefully for the good, rather than as it happened in the past, leaving everything to the power of the machine to be sold. I also very much think that when we talk about data, uh, we should think about any data processing process as, uh, lead in to open up more questions rather than necessarily giving us defined and final solutions. And so I think that should be true also for a AI, uh, but Mauro, what do you think what's your strong point of view here?

Well, because for instance, you can, you could apply this kind of thinking to the creation of packaging. You work in a multi-national corporation like PepsiCo, you need to design the next logo and identity of Pepsi. You have all the data of the planet in your hands that you accumulated it by the way over years. So the more we, time pass and the more solid data we have, and then you have a machine that somehow also understand inside our consumers, can eventually even some how test real time all the different ideas. In a matter of seconds, it could create the perfect visual identity and the perfect packaging. This is what, you know, people are thinking, this is one of the multiple applications, obviously earlier, we're talking about something much broader than this. I do think something. If we arrive to the level of sophistication of artificial intelligence, meaning that artificial intelligence... And so these machines will be able to also replace our ability to having intuitions, to make mistakes, also to make mistakes because often the breakthrough innovation, arrived randomly from a mistake that you make.

Yeah.

So if machines will be able to replace the humans at that level, then the problem will be much bigger. Because at that point, these machines would be like, wait a second. Why do we need these humans? Because they're so inefficient and they're polluting and destroying the planet. They're just totally unnecessary. Let's get rid of them.

Hopefully, hopefully we will all be always able to unplug them and shut them down. But you know, this is an interesting conversation because I feel that, yeah, um, what may be I'm still giving the, the hope to this planet that we humans will still have is the capacity and the ability to evaluate their results. And so it is very true that some times, uh, the most, uh, happy accident that starts with mistakes then really transformed the way we see things. But I think it's only the collective power to evaluate the, uh, let's say the potential and the results of all of these acts, then mistakes or projects

that actually is bringing us forward as humanity. I really, I mean, again, I am an advocate for data humanism. And so I think I still have a lot of hope and faith in us humans to be able to drive, uh, this process.

So you've wrote even a book about this, what's the name? Dear Data, right? It's Dear Data.

Dear Data is a book that comes from a project that, uh, that actually, I, it was a collaboration with an information designer from London where we got to know each other through sharing our personal data in a 52 week process of analog data drawing and a poster, uh, you know, put postcards sending across the ocean. So it was a project that then became a collection in and on itself. And then we reflected upon it making it a book where the idea is actually, uh, I think to de-mystify data and to really make people understand that primarily data come from our lives, from our transactions, from our activities, even from our thoughts, from our belonging and everything can be data in a way, but also data can be a creative material, even for people who are not necessarily computer programmers or, uh, that they can't, you know, use complicated softwares. All you need is a pencil and a piece of paper.

Well, actually there is a study that I read in an article about you. Your mom was, um, hwo do you say a...

My grandmother was a seamstress yeah.

Are you, how you say it in English?

Uh seamstress.

Seamstress. And you playing with all the different buttons and everything and putting them together. Can you tell us a little bit about the story? I'm sure you can tell the story better than I can do.

No it's funny that, that you remember that anecdote. I mean, I think obviously in retrospect that make me think that I've always been a data collector, but when I was a little kid, I think my mom and my grandmother just thought that I was really, really obsessive because I loved spending time on my grandmother's little shop. And every day, you know, I was just really excited to come down and like work with all of her belongings, like buttons, threads, ribbons, and every day there was a different way that I would lay them out on a table. Like one day it was for, according to sizes the other day, it would be according to different colors variation. The other day, if they were buttons, it would be grouping them for the one that had one hole, two holes, three holes, some other days it was combination of ribbons and threads, and probably would really even like unfolding going my grandmother's

ribbon thing and like building a very, very long, um, let's say thread of things that I would measure by size. And I remember that because it was almost five years old and I started to learn how to write. Then I would draw and write little labels for my grandmother to understand my rational. Uh, and obviously she was mad at me cause she had her own way to categorize things, but I remembered the pleasure that I had in grouping organizing, and then seeing my visual taxonomy every day. Um, as opposed to, I don't know, playing with Barbies or anything else.

Fantastic. And look there, there are probably many business leaders, CEOs listening to us right now and thinking, okay, how all of this apply to me, to my company. How can I use information designers in my company? Can you share some ideas? And mention even some example of apps and companies with what you do.

For sure. I mean, I think there's like probably two macro areas that we all know. One is the, uh, let's say projects or effort that, uh, are towards the business. And so towards the actual internal departments, organizations of the business. So let's say the B2B aspects of working with data. And then there's this other part that I think to me, especially for what I do right now at Pentagram is probably more exciting, but really to me personally, that is actually being able to talk to clients and find how customers about data and about their data in a way. So the first part is actually mostly for business functions in a way, that are about monitoring what's going on and maybe working on HR and resources purposes. And I think the challenge here right now is for example, when we were talking about people within our organization is how we can collect better data and how we can collect data that reflect the purpose and the mission of the organization. And don't necessarily get visualized because an IT department has the data already. So if I have to work with a client right now, that comes to me and says, listen, you know, we have all of these data about, let's say, uh, processes that are going on in my companies and I want to visualize them. I will start by saying, that's amazing, but like, what is the need for knowledge? What is the goal? How does this align with the success of your company and the mission that you're embracing for now and for the future, because maybe these data are the best to be visualized, but maybe we need to go and collect different data. And so that's really a conversation that I think sometimes get overlooked because when we think about data, we really think about what's already there as opposed to what we can actually collect. So that's one.

I think the most exciting thing right now to be in the intersection of data, branding and design though, is how can we change the way the brands and companies talk to their clients about their data and with their data. I mean, again, it's a very privacy related topic, but at this point in time, if let's say that I'm a customer for the sake of the conversation as a customer, we all know that the companies in brand that we love and use are collecting our data every day and they're using this data to make decisions, you know, and to, you know, change the way they talk to us. I would love to work with a brand that is finally open to, be open about it and taking a stance and say, yes, I own your data, but I want to give your data back to you. Informing something that you still don't know. And not only recommendation's of, if you like this, you could buy that. Really opening up conversation through design that can really open up a process of being more transparent. I think that in the long run, this will create such a more loyal customer base. Because I mean, we all want to know what companies, companies know about us and how they position us as this unique person that still fits into the space of all of the others. And so I think that that's a promising, um, I think area for me.

Can you give us an example of something like this? Just to make it really tangible?

Yeah. Well, I mean, not that I had projects exactly like this one, but for example, this is probably a different one that is likely, uh, more towards how a company can communicate through data to their customers about, uh, let's say missions and topics they care about. Uh, two years ago I designed a fashion collection. So really a line of clothings for the brand & Other Stories, which is part of the H+M group. And every year they have a collab collection with an artist or designer who's not a fashion designer and they give this person a complete freedom to design, 15 pieces of garment and clothes. Um, and the brief was pretty open. They said we want, I mean, obviously they knew my work and so they wanted to speak the language of data, but we would like to create a collection that can empower young women to aspire, to really dream big and to know that they can do it.

And so in the beginning, we're thinking about visualizing patterns on clothes of say the thousand women who've changed the world, but then, you know, we narrow it down and I pick the story of three women, Ada Lovelace, first computer programmer, Rachel Carson, first environmental activists, and Mae Jemison, the first African-American woman astronaut who went in space. And I went and looked for data in the

stories of their achievement, built myself data sets and created pieces of garments and clothes that really, um, visualize their mission, their legacy. And every time that the customer would buy one of these clothes, they had a paper bag with a legend that they can help us interpret what was going on in the dress. So hopefully a beautiful dress that you can take as a dress with a beautiful pattern with a deep meaning behind it. And I liked this project because I think it can be seen as the evolution of the t-shirt with the written message. What if all of the clothes that we wear can carry a message that we are proud about, as a pattern, not necessarily only as a written text. So I think these are ways in which I think, uh, clients can start engaging with their customer through data to tell meaningful stories that probably, again, they're a bit more meaningful and rich and dense and conversation starters that just a piece of text on a t-shirt. Talking again about data, in this specific moment, COVID has been accelerating the digitization of the world. Both companies on one side, and then also, uh, given many, many people, billions of people around the world started to use these digital tools for the first time or in ways they never use them before. Is your work changing because of this? What happened to the way we design information and we access information?

Definitely. So, well, obviously my work has changed, um, because of the modalities in the sense that obviously, I mean, I think being remote, uh, as you all know, change, change, it, it changes the dynamics that are going on your team with clients and sort of like changes, I feel the sense of yourself as being part of a company or not, or like displaced in this world of, "am I part of this?", but I don't, I mean, there's only screens. I don't understand. So there's that I think personally, um, I think that I feel that more and more, and I think it's because COVID has changed the way that the general population see data because we pass from a corporation where only a bunch of us cared about data to a population where everybody every morning would refresh, refresh the New York times or rather, uh, you know, news outlets, looking for charts and maps, to be able to make critical decisions about their lives, whether to go out and to wear a mask to travel or not. So we have been living and breathing data as a general population for the past year to the point that turns like flattening the curve have become colloquial. So I think that because of that, people are starting to understand more and more the value of understanding again, as we spoke about before, critically understanding data. And so I think that more and

more, I'm probably receiving questions, inquiries, for both, uh, let's say corporate projects, but also for art commissions that are really about sensibilizing people about what even data are. About the importance and relevance of missing data being treated as data points, about the importance of the context, the subjectivity. So if there's one thing that I think I am seeing changing is the awareness that companies have about how aware their customers are about data. We lightly touched, changing completely the topic. We lightly touched the topic of diversity. We've been talking about Black Lives Matter weekly. Um, obviously, you know, if I look at our reality in PepsiCo, uh, first, uh, the Me Too movement, and then Black Lives Matter, there is a new, uh, amplified tension accompaniment in the world of diversity. You are a woman, you are not American, you're Italian, uh, working in, in America. Uh, you build a brand name for yourself, a personal brand. You are a partner of Pentagram, one who the most famous design firm in the planet. Um, how difficult has it been for you as a woman, not American, growing, you know, in a, in this reality and then arriving all the way to become a partner of an agency so reknown all around the world? And I would say it has been a really interesting journey. I'm moved to the states nine years ago and really I like right now, I would say that I barely spoke English. I mean, I thought I could speak English before moving here, but definitely I remember the very beginning, like the language barrier was huge. Um, I could kind of like really make myself understood in most situations, but I really remember the frustration in like meeting with more people or even in situations where I don't know there was some sort of noise and I couldn't really jump in. It was really frustrating as I think many of us know. Um, and I think the cultural difference and, you know, we were from the same country and, uh, and then we're working here both sometimes. Um, I felt like I couldn't necessarily go rasp in the beginning what was the best way to go about proposing a strategy to go about talking about my philosophy. But, you know, I think I've been really a lot in the observing and listening mode in the beginning, trying to figure out my way to still be faithful about who I was and my heritage and my culture, my way to integrate here. I think I've been also really lucky to have had the opportunity then to join Pentagram. That was the first time that I was confronted with a truly, truly American only environment before I was still working with.
My Italian company. Most of my days were in Italian. So, um, I would say that, but I also think that in the space that I work,

which is data, I mean, right now we see many are right, you know, designers that work with data that are women and, you know, also many international designers, um, that are working with data. In the beginning I remember, especially when I was starting doing speaking engagements, I almost think I've been lucky to be a woman and to be an immigrant where I do vividly remember beginning where, you know, in some conferences that were primarily male dominated tech conferences, I would receive emails that maybe slightly touched upon the fact that they liked my work, but they wanted me as a speaker because they weren't as striking gender balance in a way. It isn't, it's an incredibly, incredibly good purpose to have, because then you start showing younger generations that, you know, well, you can actually do it if there's a woman that likes speak this broken English, that can be on stage there. You know, I can aim for that. So, I mean, I think it has been a good, good effort, uh, you know, from these big conferences. I mean, personally I would have loved to just, you know, being, uh, being contacted only because they liked my work, I believe they did.

Uh, so and I really think that this is also what needs to happen more and more in trying to include, um, trying to be more inclusive in our elite design environment. I mean, even at Pentagram, we, uh, have embarked a huge effort to become a more diverse and inclusive company. But sometimes the problem is really at the bottom up. I mean, you cannot find out ah designers who are from a minorities. You can really not, because there aren't, because it needs to start from higher education from higher education. And it needs to really, I think, present opportunities at that level, but also, but also doing it through how I've seen it. So having more and more of like people are presented at conferences at every kind of like, you know, management or a leadership roles in companies so that younger people can dream, um, more concretely about being able to do it. It's, it's, it's, it's not something that can be changed overnight.

I agree so much with you. It is the same, uh, analysis that we made and have the same conclusion we arrived. During the Black Lives Matter crisis, we, we decided to create a team within my PepsiCo design organization, uh, for who's on the topic of diversity, helping us as a, as an organization to understand what we can do to help. And yes, one of the problems we faced was the, um, lack of diverse designers, especially black designers in the specific case in the community. AIGA, did a census on, uh, on, on designers. I don't remember the data exactly, but it's like something like 3%,

if I'm not wrong, or it could be less than three, um, of the
design population in America is black. So you can understand how
difficult it is. So we arrived to the obvious conclusion that
we need to have also, as you say, right now in high school
and before the colleges going there. So we have this program
to go to high schools and, and talk about design and what an
amazing job it is and the fact that you can actually make money
in it.
We have, I think this responsibility as companies and
design leaders and, and tell them, look, there is this job.
It exists. It's super fun. You can also have a career and make
money. And if you like it, go for it, because it's fantastic.
And it all starts there.
I couldn't agree more. I mean at Pentagram we are doing
exactly the same. We created a diversity and inclusion team
that has members from the partners and members from the
actual designers. Um, and since the beginning, we're meeting,
we're meeting every other week and we're tackling topic of
diversity and inclusion internally. So how can we hire
better? How can we create more inclusive environments, but also
externally? So how we're in this privileged position, how can we
start giving back? And I think, again, mentoring in high school,
starting to have the design classes really at the end of
high schools, uh, really even having master classes that we
can teach at Pentagram that can be really primarily addressing
minorities and like welcoming with even say financial aids.
People who normally wouldn't have access to that. I think
it's something that is our responsibility to do. Once more,
the thing that is a little frustrating is that I feel that
everybody would like to change everything right away, but like,
it's just a really long process.
Well, talking about new generations, just to close. What
would be an advice that you would give to your younger self
and afford to the new generations today? No matter the
background, what would you tell them?
Well, I mean, if they really need to think about my 20
something, let's say 22 years old self, uh, one thing that I'm
sure I would really tell her, it would be telling me would be,
you don't have to have it all figured out right now. I think I
had in my old twenties and maybe even early thirties, this idea
that I, you know, needed to know exactly what type of designer I
wanted to be, where I needed to work. I need to exactly to have
all of these skills in my arsenal to be able to do
everything right there, because it felt that, you know, then
it's only going to be the client. I need to figure it out
now, but I think that's so not possible in a way. I mean,

unless you're really lucky that you have a passionate curiosity that is really clear.

Um, I really think that my story can even be inspiring in the sense that I'm a trained architect. I studied architecture, didn't even study design. I didn't study data. Uh, and up until really almost 10, 12 years ago, I was not even working in the data visualization space because I didn't even know that this existed. So, you know, it's really something that you can build over time. I don't think there is, uh, there's really any path. Um, I also love something that my partner, Paula Cher, says always in terms of like the longevity of the possibilities. Uh, I mean, I think that if you ask Paula, what's your best work? She might respond something like, well, the ones that I still have to do. So, I mean, there's really this idea that you will always have, uh, chances and possibilities to, uh, explore more, to change your path and to figure out who you want to be. And I think also very few people at 22, 25 or even 30 are completely sure that that will be, uh, the path of their career. So I guess it's about embracing uncertainty in a way.

I love this advice. By the way you say that 10 years ago, you were not yet, data designer, information designer. And you say the earlier, also that your English was not very good and your English today was perfect. And you are a partner of an American agency. I had a very similar experience. Probably my English is still broken, but I learning this at 24. And I told it was just too late. I was at the end of the university, you know, I, the year after I was going to start the job and the, my friends, they all started when they were 10 years old. At Alameda school. I studied French. Because I decided I had to study French and so I thought it was too late. It's never too late for anything. I think you are the evidence of this in what you're doing, how you are leading the way.

And you to Mauro.

Thank you. Thank you. And thank you so much, Gorgia, for being with us today and for sharing your wisdom and your advices and your experience,

This was fun. It was my pleasure. Thank you Mauro. And bye everybody.

Ciao.

Ciao.