Mermaid effect: A new approach toward Assistive Technology design

AUTHOR
Maria Vlachostergiou

COMMITTEE
Daniel Cardoso Llach, Lining Yao, Daragh Byrne, Grisha Coleman

ABSTRACT
What if prosthetics could achieve more than just reproducing missing limbs? What if they invited users and designers to work together in order to reimagine what a body could be and do? The Mermaid effect is an inclusive, collaborative design practise that calls together designers and people experiencing motor challenges, to oppose purely medical perspectives on the disabled experience. While the latter ones aim at restoring according to the standards of fully enabled bodies, mermaid effect practitioners highlight the importance of creating technologies that go beyond engineering practicalities. Mermaid effect includes the healing of the emotion and social life of the user as well. Let's be in this together to interweave 'exploring' with 'solving', 'form' with 'function', 'embodiment' with 'computation, 'identity' with 'ability'. Let's reconstruct the narrative about what today is perceived as able, disabled, even normal.