

# SEEING IS BELIEVING: VERACITY AND VERISIMILITUDE IN SCIENTIFIC VISUALIZATION

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## **Abstract:**

Scientific visualizations can bring the relationships between knowledge, understanding, and belief into sharp focus. In bringing certain elements and relations into focus, they also render others blurry, fuzzy, or obscured. Contemporary advances put algorithmically supported imaging and visualization technologies in the hands of more and more diverse image-makers, while older ways of seeing continue to inform the ways that we create, read and interpret new kinds of images. The literatures on representation and objectivity offer nuanced views on the ways that scientific images are made legible, credible, and authoritative – as well as the ways that they are misinterpreted, questioned, and appropriated. Given a fast-evolving and increasingly dense landscape of images, we propose to revisit basic issues in scientific representation: how do the makers and viewers of scientific visualizations negotiate between veracity – conformity to the facts of the situation – and verisimilitude – the appearance of truthfulness?

We invite abstracts for presentations focused on historical and contemporary forms of scientific visualization, from the hand-drawn to the algorithmically generated, for a discussion of the ways that we come to believe (or question) our own eyes – and the ways that we convince others to believe theirs. We are open to both traditional paper presentations and alternative approaches to presentation and discussion that can be made to fit the logistical constraints of the conference-room-panel-format and limited space and technology available there; proposals for short film screenings, performances, interactive presentations, and other interventions are very welcome.

## **Key words:**

visualization, representation, imaging